

Hawaii Ecotourism Association

Application for Reviewed Status

The purpose of this application is to provide a base from which Hawaii Ecotourism Association's Review Committee can determine the sustainability and level of commitment to ecotourism demonstrated by the applying company. Companies who pass the review will be recognized by the Hawaii Ecotourism Association for two years, will be provided a "Reviewed" seal to use on company marketing materials, and will be automatically entered for the HEA Ecotour Operator of the Year Award. Companies who do not pass the review will be provided with a short list of recommended improvements and will be invited to reapply six months later for half the normal application fee. This process is intended to be a learning experience and self-assessment for companies who must reapply. Provided that operators implement the recommended improvements, in a verifiable fashion, then they can pass the review upon reapplication.

The goal of the Review process is to recognize companies for their commitment to sustainable travel, and provide an easy means for customers to differentiate between true ecotour operators and companies that simply use ecotourism as a marketing tool. Please note that this is not a full certification process, however it is a first step in that direction.

The Hawaii Ecotourism Association Review Committee is made up of three current members of the HEA Board of Directors. Reviews are conducted every other month, and you will be notified of your result in the week following the HEA Review Committee meeting. Operators who pass the review are expected to maintain their commitment to and practice of sustainable travel for the following two years; at which point the HEA Review Committee will review the company's renewal application.

Thank you for your participation in the Review process.

Hawaii Ecotourism Association Goals

- Promote communication and education about ecotourism issues
 - Provide an information and resource network
- Promote a visitor industry that is environmentally and culturally sensitive
- Promote community-based, sustainable development that benefits local residents
 - Enhance visitors' experiences through effective interpretation
 - Promote resource conversation
 - Encourage repeat visitors, longer stays and multi-island itineraries
- Provide continuing education, professional development and training
 - Encourage volunteerism among members
- Advocate for small group, low-impact tours that are culturally and environmentally sensitive

HAWAII ECOTOURISM ASSOCIATION
Application For Reviewed Status

Hawaii Ecotourism Association's Definition of Ecotourism is:
Nature and culture based tourism that is ecologically sustainable and supports the well being of local communities.

COMPANY INFORMATION

Your Name: _____ Company Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Website address: _____

Island(s) on which you operate: _____

Location of operations (landowner, park/reserve name, etc.): _____

Contact name, phone number and/or e-mail address for landowner, overseeing park official, or regulating government entity (**Required**):

**If this does not apply to your company please contact us at (877) 300-7058*

REFERENCES

Please provide us with the contact information of 2 people who can testify to some of the efforts your operation makes toward the goals of ecotourism. Each reference should be associated with a different environmental, cultural, educational or community non-profit organizations or government agency.

Reference #1

Name: _____ Title: _____

Associated Organization/Agency: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please describe your company's relationship with the above reference:

Reference #2

Name: _____ Title: _____

Associated Organization/Agency: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please describe your company's relationship with the above reference:

(please complete the checklist on the following page)

ECOTOURISM REVIEW CHECKLIST

Applicants ARE NOT required to do all of the things listed below in order to pass this review. Please check all of the boxes that apply to your company's operations and expand upon each answer in the space provided below or on an additional sheet of paper. Each description should be kept to a maximum of 2 paragraphs.

PREREQUISITES (required)

- My ecotourism organization complies with all local regulations, permits and codes for use of natural areas, in which we operate.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

- My ecotourism organization operates in a manner that causes a minimum negative impact to the natural area, and has taken steps to reduce erosion, energy consumption, pollution, litter, human waste, and potential impacts on reefs or native species in the area.
Please briefly describe these steps.

- My ecotourism organization actively participates in preservation of the natural areas in which we operate through financial contributions, volunteer work, and standard practices of staff during operations (collecting rubbish, pulling weeds, etc.).
Please briefly describe your on-going conservation efforts.

- Interpretive material dealing with the native environment has been developed by environmental experts and is provided to customers.
Please briefly describe the product and how it is distributed to customers.

CULTURAL & HISTORICAL STEWARDSHIP

- My ecotourism organization consults with cultural-historical resources to ensure that: cultural sensitivities are being taken into account; cultural protocols are implemented; cultural-historical obligations are respected; cultural-historical information and interpretation is accurate.
Please briefly describe the resources you utilize and how this knowledge is implemented and shared with your staff and customers.

- My ecotourism organization contributes to cultural-historical appreciation and understanding through one or more of the following initiatives (*Please check all that apply*):
 - Interpretive material regarding local culture & history has been approved by members of that cultural group or recognized experts and is provided to customers.
Please briefly describe the product and how it is distributed to customers.

 - Employment of local indigenous people or endorsed cultural-historical experts as guides, guide trainers, instructors, or consultants.
Please briefly describe these staff positions and who fills them.

 - Cultural-historical experiences are facilitated through integrating appropriate and authentic cultural-historical elements from the local region into the activity or accommodation
Please briefly describe what and how these elements are incorporated into guest experience.

 - Staff participates in volunteer efforts and/or Hawaiian cultural activities that help perpetuate Hawaii's cultures.
Please briefly describe efforts in which staff has participated.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- My ecotourism organization makes tangible, positive contributions to the local communities in which we operate, including (*please check all that apply*):
 - Purchasing of local products & services and/or selling appropriate locally made souvenirs and handicrafts.
Please briefly describe the local products and services incorporated into your operation.

- Supporting local community groups and/or schools, events and activities through financial contributions, or in-kind donations, volunteer work, or providing discounted access to our product(s).

Please briefly describe these contributions.

- My ecotourism organization staff participates on local community committees, boards, projects, etc.

Please briefly describe these activities and your staff's role.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

- All customer service staff receives appropriate & accurate cultural and environmental training.

Please briefly describe the training provided to staff, including when it is provided, by whom, and content covered. If the training is provided internally, please describe trainer's credentials and/or how accurate information is obtained.

- Our customers receive accurate and effective interpretation of the natural and cultural landscape they will be visiting.

Please briefly describe the sources for information used with customer interpretation (i.e. scholarly journals, local experts, recognized training courses, etc).

Please briefly describe the interpretation techniques and media used by staff and/or interpretive training courses completed by staff.

- Our customers have an opportunity to learn more, via staff or materials provided by the operator. *Please give a brief summary or a sample of materials available to customers, if applicable.*