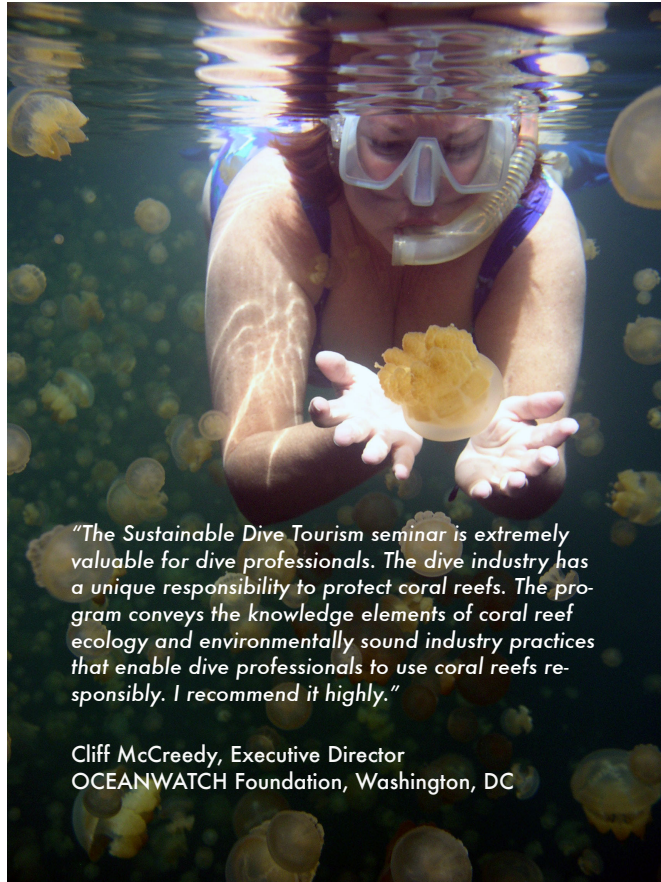


Sustainable Dive Tourism: What, Why & How

A Unique Educational Opportunity for Those Interested in Protecting the Environment While Increasing Their Bottom Line



"The Sustainable Dive Tourism seminar is extremely valuable for dive professionals. The dive industry has a unique responsibility to protect coral reefs. The program conveys the knowledge elements of coral reef ecology and environmentally sound industry practices that enable dive professionals to use coral reefs responsibly. I recommend it highly."

Cliff McCreedy, Executive Director
OCEANWATCH Foundation, Washington, DC

What's This Program All About?

Making more money while better protecting local marine resources

Travel and travelers have changed dramatically over the last decade. Many of today's holiday-seekers want a different kind of leisure experience than in the past. An increasing number of tourists want to bring home more than a sun tan and some souvenirs; they want to truly experience the environment and culture of the destination they visit. This requires a professional staff who can do more for clients than keep them safe and entertained.

It's also no secret that without healthy coral reefs, there would be no dive tourism. Yet, worldwide coral reefs are in serious decline. More than a

third have been completely destroyed, and if something isn't done to turn the tide soon, most of those remaining could be lost within our lifetime. To what degree tourism is responsible for this decline is debatable, but all agree that it must bear at least some of the blame. The explosion of tourism is also having a serious negative affect on people and the societies of many tropical tourism destinations.

Responding to these issues is what is changing the face of the modern dive travel industry, and has given rise to a more responsible way of doing business often termed "sustainable tourism." But what exactly is sustainable tourism and what does this really have to do with dive operators? More impor-

tantly, exactly how can dive operators take advantage of this emerging trend? Answering these questions is what this program is all about.

Sustainable Dive Tourism: What, Why & How is a 12-hour professional development seminar designed to give dive operators, and others involved in the dive tourism industry, an understanding of these emerging issues, and show them how to incorporate the lessons learned over the past several years into their business or organization.

For more information on how you can sponsor a program contact Dr. Alex Brylske. E-mail: brylske@aol.com. Phone: +239-471-7824

Dive Training
THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR NEW DIVERS & THEIR INSTRUCTORS



The creator and facilitator of the Sustainable Dive Tourism seminar is author, educator and conservationist Dr. Alex F. Brylske. Alex has worked with numerous companies and organizations around the world developing and conducting programs dedicated to coral reef conservation by integrating ecosystem management, sustainable tourism practice, and community partnerships. He is a recipient of the prestigious Walter B. Jones Memorial Excellence Award for Ocean and Coastal Resource Management for his contribution to sustainable marine tourism.

PROGRAM DETAILS & FAQs

WHO'S THE INTENDED AUDIENCE?

While the *Sustainable Dive Tourism* seminar was designed primarily for dive operators and their staff, experience has shown that it has great appeal and utility for a wide range of groups including:

- Marine park rangers and management personnel
- Government tourism and environmental protection officials
- Members of non-diving watersports associations
- Ecotour operators considering offering diving services
- NGO personnel involved with marine conservation and sustainable tourism
- Secondary and post-secondary teachers
- Students considering a career in the diving industry or in resource management
- Elected officials interested in tourism issues

WHAT BENEFITS DOES THE PROGRAM OFFER?

The most important benefit participants receive is the ability to provide a higher quality experience to their clients. Equally important, participants can take what they learn and use it to make their businesses more profitable. As one participant once put it, *"I learned how to turn tree-hugging into cash!"* Moreover, the program addresses a concern expressed by a growing number of dive operators and resource managers—the need to improve the environmental awareness of divers and snorkelers who visit coral reefs.

The job of fostering the necessary awareness and improved

behavior among divers, of course, falls to the professionals who teach and supervise them. But to do this, those with face-to-face involvement with divers themselves need specialized knowledge and accurate information about the issues at hand. More importantly, divemasters and instructors must be able to translate this knowledge into practices which promote what's now being called "low-impact" diving. They will learn exactly how to do this at this seminar.

WHAT ARE THE COURSE OBJECTIVES?

1. Learn how a business or organization's environmental commitment can translate into improved customer satisfaction.
2. Learn techniques to help make customers more competent divers, while at the same time improving their ability to dive in an environmentally-responsible manner.
3. Learn how to make diver training courses more "eco-sensitive," and how to develop specialty courses in coral reef conservation and low-impact diving.
4. Learn how to explain, in ways customers will understand and enjoy, the basic functional ecology of coral reefs.
5. Learn what problems coral reefs are facing, and what local actions individuals and organizations can take to stem the tide of destruction.
6. Learn ways to instill a responsible environmental ethic into your customers.
7. Learn what a "triple bottom line" is all about and, most importantly, how to increase it.

WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM INVOLVE?

The seminar consists of four three-hour modules (12 hours), but a shorter six-hour version can be offered. The program format is custom-designed for the destination. The options are to offer the seminar over two full days or four evenings. (The evening format is the more popular because it is less disruptive to the operators' work schedules.)

Importantly, the program is not just a series of lectures. Rather, it's highly interactive, and contains lively discussions that incorporate the personal experiences and insights of participants.

WHAT SUBJECTS ARE ADDRESSED?

Module #1: Cities Under the Sea—Understanding Coral Reefs

- What Good Are Reefs, Anyway?
- The Secret Life of Coral Reefs
- Strange Bedfellows: Species Interactions
- Coral Reef Fishes: What Nemo Never Told You
- It's Not Just Reefs That Are Important

Module #2: Coral Grief—The Global and Regional Picture

- State of the Reefs
- Challenges for Coral Reef Management
- The Top 10 Ways to Save Coral Reefs
- Healing Sick Reefs
- What You Can Do Locally
- Local Issues and Responses (Workshop)

Module #3: Merging Business And The Environment—A Guide To Marketing Conservation

- The Changing Traveler and Travel Industry
- The Economics of Coral Reefs and Marine Tourism
- Sustainability: What is It and Who Cares?
- Diver Perceptions: What Your Customers Really Think
- Tools & Tidbits: What Works and What Doesn't
- Success Stories: Case Studies
- Why Act Sooner Than Later?

Module #4: Putting It All Together—Promoting Sustainable Attitudes & Practices

- Loving Coral Reefs to Death
- Capturing Hearts & Minds: Instilling Environmental Ethics
- Remodeling Behavior
- Tricks to Creating “Low-Impact” Divers
- Dealing With Difficult Customers
- Successful Ideas From Around the World

WHAT HAVE OTHERS SAID ABOUT THE PROGRAM?

“The Sustainable Dive Tourism program provided the missing link between our dive instructors, the underwater environment and their role as nature guides - not just the usual safety monitors. The program was very detailed and well researched, a must for any dive professional or enthusiast. We learned a lot and the course enabled us to put things in perspective on a global and local scale.”

Stephen Broadbelt, Co-Owner
Ocean Frontiers Ltd., Grand Cayman

“HEPCA is an environmental Association which is primarily concerned with the conservation of the natural resources of the Red Sea through active participation in environmental projects and through awareness programs for tourists and citizens. As a participant in the Sustainable Dive Tourism program, I found the course to be extremely valuable for both dive professionals and NGO representatives, like myself. The dive industry has a responsi-

bility to protect coral reefs for the future generations and to ensure that more divers and tourists enjoy the beauty of the under water environment and the coral reefs. We do not hesitate to recommend this program for dive professionals in the Red Sea or in other part of the world.”

Hesham Tomoum, Executive Director
Hurghada Environmental Protection and Conservation Association (HEPCA)

“The Sustainable Dive Tourism course taught us all the things that as diving professionals, we should have learned years ago. I don't know why no one has done this before! Leave it to Alex to be a trend setter and as usual, make the diving industry take a giant leap forward in its thinking. Ten years ago, buoyancy skills were not considered very important. These days it's one of the most important skills taught. In a few short years, this course--like buoyancy today--will be considered compulsory for every diver and diving professional.”

John Williams & Bent Posejpal,
Siam Dive n' Sail, Phuket, Thailand

“The Sustainable Dive Tourism course In Barbados attracted over 40 people from dive shops, hotels, tour operators and government. While the course raised awareness on coral reef ecology and human impacts, as importantly it excited people to act. Barbados is now seeing the benefits; initiatives to create and enforce marine protected areas, operators beginning to use more environmentally friendly approaches, and a broader desire to educate visitors and Barbadians. Those that missed the course want to know when the next one will be. Course participants want additional sessions. The energy is infectious!”

Jeffrey Green
AXYS Environmental Consulting, Inc.

“I knew I was creating a lot of extra work for Alex when I organized a group of over forty people ranging from Coast Guard officers and marine park rangers, hoteliers and government marine scientists to the more usual dive shop operators. He did a great job of adapting the course to get the message across to this very diverse group, and the audiovisual presentation was excellent. The credibility that Alex has from having “been there, done that, and bought the t-shirt” in the diving world, meant that his own personal observations of

reef deterioration truly impressed, and concerned, this group of 'students' more than anything they had read or heard before on the topic. Several dozen people have asked me “when are you offering that course again?” and I am glad that I will now be able to say “this year I hope, If Alex will come back”.

Dr. Gordon Murphy
Ocean Ark Corporation
Barbados West Indies

“With the increasing awareness and growth of the scuba diving sector in Tobago this seminar was certainly very relevant and timely. We had an attendance of 32 persons from various government and non-governmental organizations in the country. They included more than three-quarters membership of the Tobago Dive Operators, representatives from the Department of Marine Resources and Fisheries, the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, the Institute of Marine Affairs, the Incoming Tour Operators Association and TIDCO. All participants in the programme thought the seminar to be interesting and found that it gave them a greater appreciation for the marine environment. I am sure that the Sustainable Dive Tourism programme would have certainly influenced the way they conduct their business. Alex Brylske was very knowledgeable and an excellent lecturer who provided us with a lot of research material on the subject.”

Neemah Persad
Marketing Manager, Americas
Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (TIDCO)

IS ANY CERTIFICATION OFFERED?

All attendees will receive a certificate of completion, and a PADI Distinctive Speciality rating in “Marine Resource Management” can be awarded to those interested. (Certification fee extra.)