



# New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I)

*Rochester Institute of Technology*

*Green Hotel Pilot Project Final Report*

## **Department of Environmental Conservation**

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## **A. Executive Summary**

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In the spring of 2009 and in conjunction with the New York State Governor's Green Hospitality & Tourism Partnership (the Partnership), NYS Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I) initiated a pilot test of a green certification program for the NYS hotel industry, using the Audubon International Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating Program as the third party certifier. To this end, the "Green Hotel Pilot Project" was created. The project's goal was to test a program aimed at assisting lodging properties in reducing their environmental footprint and improving their competitiveness while saving operating costs and increasing revenue by attracting environmentally conscious tourists. In addition to the participants demonstrating the certification process, they would increase the population of green certified hotels and be featured in green tourism marketing.

Working with the Partnership, NYS lodging properties were solicited to apply for participation in the project. Applications were received from 79 properties. Of those, 44 properties were selected based on criteria set by the Partnership. A total of 42 properties completed the pilot project. Using the Audubon International's Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-rating program, each property received a rating of 1 to 5 leaves (5 being the highest rating) indicating their level of environmental performance. The rating process included completion of a 52-page survey which represents the current state of their environmental practices, a site visit by Audubon International or NYSP2I for verification of the survey, calculation of the environmental score using Green Leaf proprietary software, and a Green Leaf Rating and Recommendation report.

As a result of the ratings, 15 properties (36%) received a Green Leaf rating of 2 while 24 (57%) received a rating of 3, and 3 properties (7%) received a 4 leaf rating. None of the participating properties received a Green Leaf rating of 1 or 5.

Certification has the potential to enhance New York's lodging industry by boosting the tourism sector's economic and environmental performance in the areas of pollution prevention, water conservation, waste reduction, resource conservation and energy efficiency. Stemming from Florida and Maine's environmental performance tools, NYSP2I developed a metrics collection tool to capture environmental measurements and track improvements incorporating occupancy rates. The baseline metrics collected in September 2009 will be compared to measurements a year after project initiation. This will enable properties to track their performance and target their improvement efforts. These metrics will be reported to NYSDEC in the Fall of 2010 to allow for a

complete year of metrics collection to recognize fluctuations in occupancy rates and seasonal changes.

This report provides a summary of the Green Hotel Pilot Project, including accomplishments, challenges and recommendations for the NYS hospitality certification program going forward.

## **B. Background**

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New York State is promoting a green hotel certification program as part of a larger initiative to support and market sustainable tourism throughout New York, highlighting the state's diverse natural resources as tourism destinations, connecting travelers to green businesses and assisting New York's tourism businesses to go green. The New York State Green Hospitality and Tourism Partnership (the Partnership) is comprised of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), NYS Hospitality & Tourism Association (NYSH&TA), NYS Restaurant Association, I Love NY, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, NYS Department of Labor, NYS Office of Parks & Recreation, NYS Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA), and the NYS Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I). The Partnership worked together to initiate the hotel certification program.

Because creating a State-run certification program was not an option in NYS, the Partnership decided to pursue a green hotel certification program using third-party organizations. NYSDEC staff extensively researched and analyzed green tourism certification programs in existence and presented findings to the Partnership. The “Green Hotel Pilot Project” was created to test the viability of the third-party approach.

For the purposes of the Pilot, various certification programs were invited to discuss pricing options with NYSH&TA. (NYSH&TA is America's oldest lodging association, offering programs and services to help add value to their 1,400 members in the hospitality industry and their properties. NYSH&TA also protects their members' interests by representing them as their legislative voice before state government.) Although the Partnership does not plan exclusive recognition of one certification program, one program would be utilized for piloting purposes. The Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating program was selected as it presented the best pricing scenario and viable certification process.

The New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I) was asked to pilot the program and provide feedback to assist the State in determining a direction for the program going forward. As such, NYSP2I led and provided funding for the pilot project. The goal of this pilot was to test a third-party program aimed at assisting lodging properties in reducing their environmental footprint and improving their competitiveness while saving operating costs and increasing revenue by attracting environmentally conscious tourists.

## **C. Pilot Project Rating Overview**

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### **I. The Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating Program**

The Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating Program is a three year program, which combines environmental awareness and education with best management practices tailored to hotels, motels, inns, and Bed & Breakfasts (B&Bs). For purposes of the pilot project, the Eco-Rating portion of the program was accelerated.

The rating process was as follows:

1. Participants became a member of the Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating program by paying the first year membership fee to Audubon International.
2. Participants completed the 52 page survey.
3. GreenLeaf Environmental Communications, Inc. reviewed the survey and prepared an environmental performance report recognizing the hoteliers' efforts and provided suggestions for improvement.
4. An eco-rating was awarded based on the survey score.
5. A site visit was conducted by either NYSP2I or Audubon staff to verify and assess the participant's environmental practices.

Per Green Leaf™ Eco-Ratings guidelines, ratings are defined as:

- 1 Leaf: Hotel shows they have identified and acted on some environmental best practices such as reducing energy and water use.
- 2 Leaf: Hotel has moved beyond basic awareness of environmental issues to a commitment to improvement accompanied by good progress in reducing impacts of its operations.
- 3 Leaf: Hotel has made excellent progress in adopting industry best practices for energy, resource conservation, and pollution prevention in all areas of its operations and management and score higher than 50 points.
- 4 Leaf: Hotel is fully implementing best practices and is a leader for initiatives and is having exemplary success and score higher than 70 points.
- 5 Leaf: Hotel is a world leader in eco-efficiency continually introducing new environmental policies and best practices that serve as a goal and target for the industry and score higher than 90 points.

On behalf of the entire New York State lodging industry, NYSH&TA negotiated a three year reduced rate for taking part in the pilot project. In addition, NYSP2I covered a significant portion of the 1st year membership fee for participating properties. These properties will also benefit in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years from the negotiated three-year price structure as follows (Table 1):

<b>Hotel Room Size</b>	<i>NYSH&amp;TA Negotiated cost</i>	<b>NYSP2I 1<sup>st</sup> year Contribution</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> year Hotel cost</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> year Hotel cost</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> year Hotel Cost</b>
1-50	\$300	\$225	\$75	\$150	\$150
51-100	\$425	\$300	\$125	\$220	\$220
101-200	\$475	\$325	\$150	\$240	\$240
201+	\$700	\$475	\$225	\$350	\$350

*Table 1: Audubon International membership 3 year negotiated cost structure*

## **D. Methodology**

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### **I. Project Timeline**

A summary of the project timeline since its initiation is as follows:

- May 18, 2009 NYSH&TA sends solicitation for applications to the Pilot Project
- June 30, 2009 Hotel application deadline for request to participate
- July 1, 2009 Hotels selected by NYS Governor's Green Hospitality Partnership
- July 22, 2009 Deadline to send Survey to the hotels
- Aug. 12, 2009 Site Verifier Training
- Sept. 30, 2009 Hotel Survey submission deadline
- Jan. 29, 2010 NYSP2I assigned site visits completed
- Feb. 28, 2010 Audubon International assigned site visits completed
- March 11, 2010 All hotel ratings completed, all site visits completed, all marketing efforts completed.
- April 12, 2010 Re-rating for Earth Day submission deadline
- April 16, 2010 Project completed
- June 2010 Final Report Completed

### **II. Participant Selection**

NYSH&TA's participation in this program provided a strong link with the hotel industry. A letter was crafted, as shown in Appendix A, to solicit NYSH&TA's bank of members to volunteer to participate in the Green Hotel Pilot Project. The letter was also emailed to the NYS Tourism Promotion Agencies. Cold-calls, emails, and faxes were also made to non-NYSH&TA member properties to gain their interest in the Project. To apply for participation, properties were required to complete an online SurveyMonkey™ questionnaire, prepared by Audubon International, providing answers to questions regarding their current environmental efforts, size and location of their property. (See Appendix B for questionnaire.)

Seventy-nine (79) lodging properties completed the online questionnaire. Despite the economic climate that the pilot project was conducted in, the level of participation from the properties is particularly compelling.

The goal of the Partnership was to select 4 properties from each of the 11 tourist regions in the state for a maximum total of 44 properties that comprised as heterogeneous a group of hotels as possible. Each of the 4 slots would be filled based on the properties size. A small property has between 1-49 rooms and a small-medium property has 50-99 rooms. A medium-large property has 100-199 rooms and a property with 200+ rooms is considered large. The Partnership also wanted to include “learners” and “leaders” to get a cross-section of environmental performance. “Learners” are classified as properties who according to the questionnaire, appeared to be at the beginning phases taking environmental actions. The “leaders” were classified as those properties that have policies, procedures or teams in place and have been already taking steps to reduce their environmental footprint. In the event no hotel was available to fill a slot, the Partnership moved to the next closest room size category and used the facility closest in size to the category with the open slot. The property earned points based on the criteria established by the Partnership as follows (Table 2):

Criteria	Scoring
1. Food and beverage	yes=1, no=0
2. Environmental policy	yes=4
3. Environmentally preferable products	yes=2
4. % energy efficiency lighting	all=2, greater than 50%=1, none= -1
5. Water efficiency	yes = 2
6. Towel/linen reuse	yes = 2
7. Recycling in guest rooms	yes = 2
8. Use of pesticides/herbicides	yes = 0, no = 2
9. Organic/local foods	yes = 2
10. Staff/room size	higher the number = 1
11. Unique property/characteristics	yes = 1
12. Property adds to diversity of geography	yes = 1
13. Length of service by management	higher the number = 1
14. Willingness to be an ambassador	yes = 1
15. Position of survey respondent	higher the number = 1

*Table 2: Participant selection scoring criteria*

The score was used to indicate whether each property was a “learner” or a “leader” to ensure the inclusion of both in as many Tourism Regions and size classes as possible. A higher score did not result in a property being selected over one with a lower score, unless that particular Tourism Region was missing a “leader”. For questions 10, 13 and 15, properties received 1 point if they had more rooms, management had been employed for more years and the survey score was higher than other properties in the same room size category. Through the selection process, every effort was made to select 4 hotels in each of the 11 regions. One hotel was originally selected in the Chautauqua-Allegheny Region and one hotel in the New York City region was selected but chose not to participate. Three alternative properties were selected as replacements based on their contribution to the diversity of the group of Pilot hotels.

NYSP2I notified the selected properties via telephone to congratulate them for being chosen for this state-wide project. In addition to the phone call, each participant received a Congratulations Letter and was required to complete a Pledge Card (Appendix C), showing their commitment to participate in the GreenLeaf™ survey process for a period of three years, and their agreement to be an ambassador for the program. They also received an Environmental Performance Worksheet (Appendix D) to measure and track their environmental and economic metrics. NYSP2I followed-up with the selected properties to ensure the Pledge Card would be returned.

The final list consisted of the following number of properties in each region (Table 3):

# of Properties	Region
6	Adirondack
4	Buffalo-Niagara
5	Capital-Saratoga
2	Catskill
4	Central-Leatherstocking
8	Finger Lakes
6	Hudson Valley
2	Long Island
3	New York City
3	Thousand Island
0	Chautauqua-Allegheny
43	TOTAL

*Table 3: Number of properties committed for each of the 11 regions of NYS*

(Note: A few months into the project, one property in the Adirondack region requested to be removed from the project due to the health concerns of a key staff member, leaving 42 properties to participate.)

### **III. Process for Rating Properties**

Audubon International's role was to administer the Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating Program and serve as the main point of contact for the properties. They were responsible for dissemination of the Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating Survey and providing assistance with the survey via telephone if requested. They were also responsible for collection of membership fees from the participating hotels. Scoring of the surveys and assignment of the eco-rating was to be provided by Audubon International's partner in the Green Leaf Eco-Rating Program, GreenLeaf Environmental Communications, Inc. Once the rating was assigned, GreenLeaf was responsible for generating a report recognizing current environmental efforts and providing recommendations for capital improvements as well as little to no cost improvements.

A verification site visit was required for each hotel. The site visit would take anywhere from 3 to 6 hours depending on the size of the property and the services provided. During the visit, the verifier(s) would meet with the General Manager or Operations Manager for the property and explain the type of information they needed to obtain. The verifier(s) would then meet with department managers and visit all areas of the property including guestrooms (2 at random), shipping & receiving, heating and hot water, recycling and solid waste area, offices, conference or meeting rooms, kitchen and/or restaurant, laundry, grounds and parking and all other areas of the operation to verify the information reported in the survey. Audubon International and NYSP2I would share the responsibility for site visits. Regions were assigned as follows:

Audubon International: Adirondacks, Capital-Saratoga, Catskills, Central-Leatherstocking, Hudson Valley, Long Island, New York City

NYSP2I: Finger Lakes, Greater Niagara, Chautauqua-Allegheny, Thousand Islands-Seaway

Audubon International was also responsible for adding each rated property to the Audubon International web-site (<http://greenleaf.auduboninternational.org>) and sending press releases to local media and trade publications.

#### **IV. Rating Process Execution** **Survey Dissemination**

Audubon International mailed each participant a printed copy of the 52-page Green Leaf Eco-Rating Survey, which required the hotel to report on environmental management, water use, waste, pollution prevention and use and handling of hazardous substances. Shortly thereafter, an electronic version was created and distributed. Hotels were able to submit their completed survey either electronically or hard copy. Participating properties were asked to complete the survey and submit by September 30, 2009.

#### **Training**

GreenLeaf Environmental Communications, Inc. provided a full day, hands-on site audit training which included an audit of the Crowne Plaza hotel in Albany, where the training took place. The training was initially scheduled for July 22, 2009; however issues with the trainer entering the USA from Canada pushed the date to August 12, 2009. The training session consisted of a presentation on what to look for as site verifiers when observing the property for the information submitted on the survey. After the discussion, attendees walked through the restaurant, kitchen, boiler room, pool and fitness area, offices, laundry and viewed several guest rooms. The goal of the training was to gain knowledge of critical information to gather during a site visit of the participating properties to allow an accurate and credible eco-friendly rating. A number of DEC employees and NYSP2I staff attended the training.

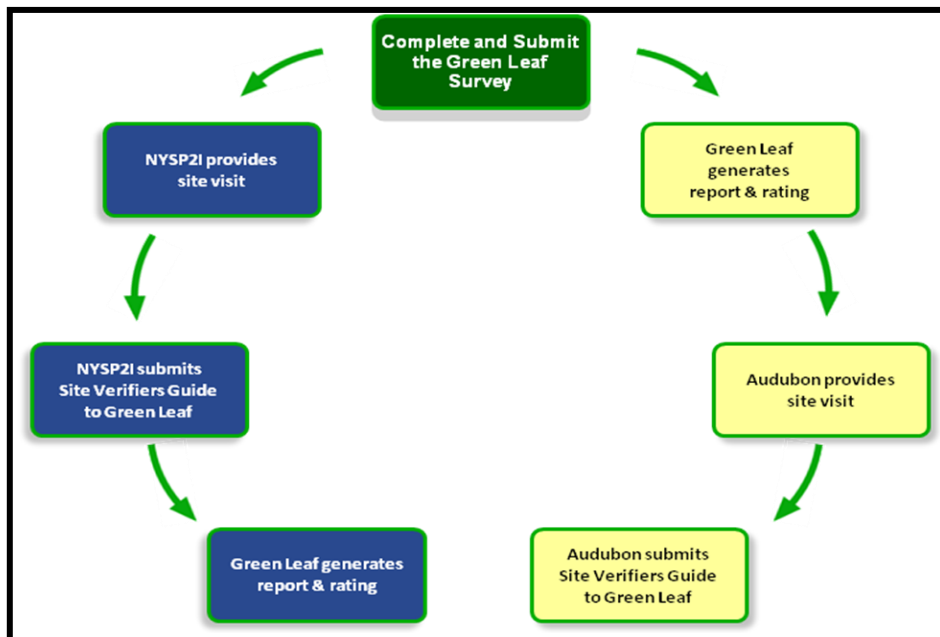
#### **Site Visits**

Site visits, often called audits, were an integral part of the pilot program and are intended to validate information completed in the survey. In carrying out the site visits, Audubon International and NYSP2I took 2 different approaches. Audubon International provided site visits after the survey was submitted by the lodging properties and after the rating and recommendations were generated based on the standard procedure followed by GreenLeaf Environmental and most other third-party certifying organizations. If a site visit reveals that inaccurate information was reported on the survey, the property would be re-rated without added cost to the property. However, there can be a lag of months between rating and site visits as the visits are grouped to reduce associated travel costs.

Because, it is commonly understood that the credibility of analysis (in this case resulting in a rating) is dependent upon validated data, NYSP2I conducted site visits after the survey was submitted by the lodging properties, but before the rating and recommendations report was

generated by GreenLeaf Environmental. This sequencing ensures an accurate initial rating and in turn, avoids the potential need to re-rate the properties based on corrections to the information provided in the survey.

Both organizations grouped site visits base on geographical location to minimize travel. The 2 processes followed are shown below in Figure 1:



*Figure 1: NYSP2I steps taken to award green hotel certification on the left side, and Audubon International steps on the right side*

Audubon International and NYSP2I developed a comprehensive site verifier guide which was essentially a checklist designed to follow the flow of the survey. (See Appendix E) This document was completed by the site verifier during the site visit. NYSP2I submitted the guides to Audubon International to be included with the surveys when sent to GreenLeaf Environmental for scoring purposes.

Across NYS, Audubon visited 27 properties in the Adirondack, Capital-Saratoga, Hudson Valley, NYC, Long Island, Central Leatherstocking, and Catskill regions. NYSP2I made site visits to 15 properties in the Buffalo, Finger Lakes, and Thousand Island regions. NYSP2I completed their site visits by January 29, 2010 while Audubon International completed their site visits by February 28, 2010.

### ***V. Rating and Reports***

Ratings were assigned based on the survey and site verifier guide information received by GreenLeaf Environmental to recognize steps the property is currently taking to reduce their environmental impact. Each participating property received a rating per Green Leaf™ Eco-Ratings guidelines as defined in Section C above. In addition, a report was created for each property which included suggestions as to where the property could place more effort to improve their environmental performance. (See Appendix F for a sample report.)

### ***VI. Marketing***

Once rated, each property was listed on the Audubon International web-site (<http://greenleaf.auduboninternational.org>). The names of the properties were also included on the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation website in recognition of their participation in this pilot project. The properties receiving a 3 leaf rating or higher were recognized further in a listing on the 'I LOVE NY' website. Also, during the pilot program AAA and Travelocity stepped forward and are recognizing the participants in their listings with an environmentally friendly icon.

### ***VII. Metrics Collection***

NYSP2I created and distributed an Environmental Performance Worksheet (Appendix E) to all participating properties. This worksheet provides metrics to NYSP2I regarding energy and water use, along with solid and hazardous waste disposal. It also allows hoteliers to track their historical usage and compare it to their current usage and utilize the data from this worksheet as a decision making tool for future improvements. The collection of this data is on-going to match the 3 years the properties participate in the Green Leaf program. Reminders and assistance from NYSP2I will be provided to the properties in an effort to collect the data over this time period and show the effect that any implementation of recommendations had on their environmental performance and impact on their bottom line.

Using the Environmental Performance Worksheet, hoteliers are requested to collect baseline metrics from 1 year prior to initiation of the pilot program, as well as current metrics during the program. Due to the pilot project launch date, the properties' baseline data will run September 1, 2008 through August 31, 2009 and the current metrics data will run through the pilot program timeline from September 1, 2009 to August 31, 2010. This time period allows hoteliers to capture one year of metrics influenced by seasonal changes and occupancy rates. Without considering the occupancy rate it would be unclear if changes in usage or cost are due to occupancy or any of the improvements the properties implement. The Environmental

Performance Worksheets will continue to be completed by the properties through August 2010 to provide data for the pilot project time period.

NYSP2I conducted an initial webinar on February 3, 2010 to answer questions concerning the Environmental Performance Worksheet and guide the hoteliers through the process towards completion. Golden Arrow Resort, the only 5 Green Leaf Eco-Rated property in the United States, conducted a test run of the tool and planned to participate in the webinar but unfortunately was unable to attend. However, they did offer their feedback and hands-on experience which was communicated by NYSP2I to the webinar participants. Another webinar is planned before August 2010 to ensure hoteliers continue to complete the worksheets and answer any questions that may have developed.

## **E. Results**

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The Green Hotel Pilot Program was scheduled to be completed by March 11, 2010. However, the Partnership decided to extend the project in order to accommodate the I Love NY Earth Day marketing campaign. Based on the Partnership's threshold of 3 leaves to be considered "green", the I Love NY team required a 3 Leaf rating or higher for a listing in their Earth Day campaign. Therefore, NYSP2I amended its agreement with Audubon International to extend an opportunity for 10 properties just under the 3 leaf threshold to increase their score in time for the campaign. As part of this effort, Audubon International contacted all hotel pilot properties with a 2 leaf rating that received a minimum raw score of 38% to give them the opportunity to increase their rating from a 2 to 3 leaf. This was the percentage deemed close enough to the 3 Leaf threshold of 40, whereby properties could reasonably implement a few additional environmental steps within the timeframe and move up to the level 3 rating. Audubon International provided the properties with the following goals identified by GreenLeaf Environmental as additional steps that would boost them to a 3 leaf rating:

- A written and posted Environmental Policy (required),
- A written Environmental Purchasing Policy (required)
- Proof of use of a minimum six environmentally preferable products (required)
- Baseline data provided to NYSERDA for Energy benchmark (optional)

The properties were required to submit documentation to Audubon International proving that the additional steps had been completed by April 12, 2010. Audubon International reviewed the documentation from the properties and upon satisfactory approval, the properties were re-rated

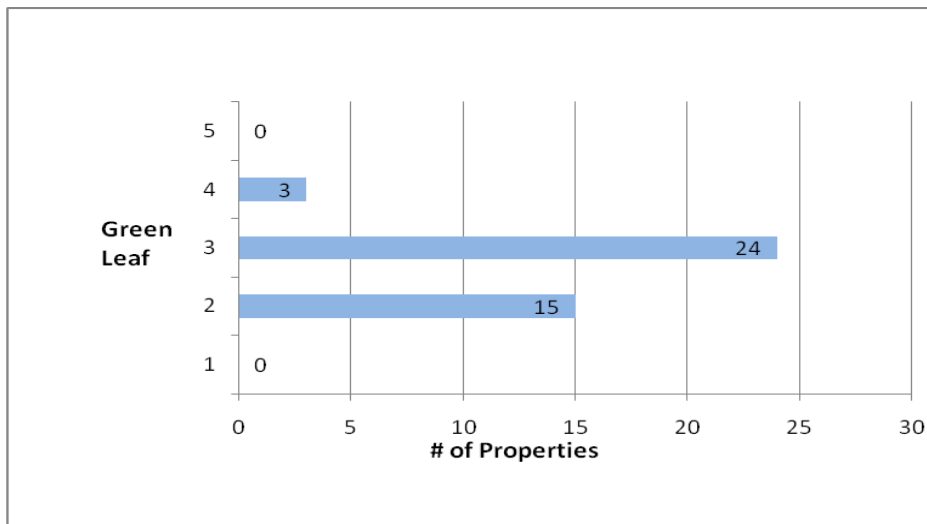
by GreenLeaf Environmental. Audubon International notified NYSP2I of the properties who increased their rating from a 2 to 3 leaf rating. When given the opportunity, six of the ten properties succeeded in reaching the 3 leaf rating.

The pilot project was completed on April 16, 2010. Table 4 below displays all participating properties and the corresponding Green Leaf Eco-Rating they received.

<b>Property</b>	<b>Green Leaf Eco-Rating</b>		<b>Property</b>	<b>Green Leaf Eco-Rating</b>
The Glen Lodge B&B	3		B&B Wellington	3
Elk Lake Lodge	2		Turtle Dreams	2
Shaheen's Motel	3		Aurora Inn & E. B Morgan	3
Holiday Inn	2		Bristol Harbour	2
Silver Bay YMCA	2		La Touelle	3
Asa Ransom	2		Radisson Hotel	2
Super 8	2		Sheraton Syracuse	3
Days Inn	2		RIT Inn	3
Adam's Mark	3		Fox Hill B&B	3
Saratoga Farmstead	3		The Rhinecliff	3
74 State	3		Bear Mountain Inn	2
Hyatt Place Saratoga	3		Ritz Carlton	3
Gideon Putnam	3		Tarrytown House	2
Crowne Plaza	3		Mohonk Mtn	4
The Fairlawn	3		The Stirling House	3
Glen Falls House	2		Gurney's Inn	2
Amsterdam Castle	3		Beekman Tower	3
Berry Hill B&B	3		Westin NY	4
Holiday Inn Utica	3		Grand Hyatt NY	4
The Otesaga	2		White Pillars	3
Best Western Carriage House	3		Capt. Thomson's	2

*Table 4: Participating hotels and the Green Leaf Eco-Rating they received*

As shown in Table 5, of the 42 properties, 15 properties (36%) received a Green Leaf rating of 2, while 24 (57%) received a rating of 3, and 3 properties (7%) received a rating of 4. None of the participating properties received a Green Leaf rating of 1 or 5.



*Table 5: Green Leaf ratings 1 through 5 and how many properties received each*

Thanks to the efforts of the Partnership and the initiation of this program, within just one year, there are now 42 Green Leaf certified hotels in New York State.

## **F. Pilot Project Findings & Recommendations**

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As any pilot project is intended to test and potentially improve the design of a program prior to full-scale implementation, the Green Hotel Pilot Project allowed NYSP2I to identify what went well and areas for improvement. Pilot Project successes, challenges, and recommendations are described below.

### **I. Communication**

NYSP2I contracted with Audubon International as the third party certification vendor for the pilot project. NYSP2I served as the project lead and worked side-by-side with Audubon International to execute the project. The ease of communication between Audubon International's office and NYSP2I made the project run smoothly. Phone and email communications were sufficient but to increase real time sharing of information, Audubon International created a file on DabbleDB.com. This online database provided a location for Audubon International to share up-to-date information on each property with NYSDEC and NYSP2I including the hotel name, number of rooms, region, contact name, phone number, email address, dates surveys were returned, when site visits were scheduled, and the Eco-rating and percentage received. The

Partnership was kept informed of project progress by both NYSP2I and Audubon International at monthly Partnership meetings. Using technology to provide real-time information and holding regular project update meetings kept the project on track and all relevant parties informed of challenges and successes as they arose.

Another success was the webinar conducted by NYSP2I for the properties to provide assistance with metrics reporting. Participants were able view the worksheet online and ask questions real-time. Using this medium, NYSP2I was able to guide the hoteliers through the process towards completion. As previously mentioned, in response to the interest from the first webinar, another is planned for the end of August 2010. The goal is to ensure hoteliers continue to complete the worksheets and provide a forum to ask any questions that may have developed.

During the pilot, NYSP2I staff also attended a series of EPA webinars specific to hospitality initiatives and one sponsored by the Northeast Assistance & Pollution Prevention Roundtable. These sessions proved to be very informative and provided links to resources which NYSP2I staff was able to pass on to the pilot participants.

## ***II. Participant Selection***

When selecting participants for the project, the operating season was not taken into consideration. Four hotels operating seasonally created challenges in performing the site visit. Although this was not a major issue, it made the site validation visit somewhat difficult. The purpose of the site visit is to physically view the administrative operations and rooms. However, when the lodging staff is limited and guest rooms are not being used, many of the items site verifiers need to check for were not applicable during the off season. For example, entering into a room, the site verifier notes the room temperature, whether the lights are on, and whether the curtains are open or closed. Walking into a seasonal property, in some cases, the power and water were off. Interview comments were noted on the site verifiers' guide and taken into consideration by Green Leaf during the scoring. For future site visits to seasonal properties, it is recommended to schedule the visit during the working season.

## ***III. Rating Process Sequencing/Site Visits***

Prior to the start of the pilot project, it was anticipated by NYSP2I that properties would over-report their environmental efforts. Based on the site visits, some of the survey responses were clarified or corrected. However, both NYSP2I and Audubon International discovered that most properties under-reported the great things they were doing. Since additional information was

collected and considered in the rating process from the site visit, it can be concluded that by providing the site visit before the rating and recommendations report according to the process NYSP2I followed for the pilot project, this information could be used to ensure the initial rating is accurate. (See NYSP2I steps - Figure 1)

The site visits also connect the hoteliers to a face in the certification program. Hoteliers were found to be enthusiastic to have the opportunity to show off their environmental efforts. Other certification programs that do not provide site visits miss out on this opportunity to increase pride in ownership.

#### ***IV. Training***

GreenLeaf Environmental Communications provided site verifier training at the Crowne Plaza in Albany. As part of the training, a hands-on site audit was performed. Having the opportunity to conduct the site audit with the trainer was a great learning experience, including the concept of training the eye to look for details. One potential process improvement discovered during this training session was the need for a guide or checklist of items to be observed. This would be helpful to the verifier and would provide assurance that the site visit was consistent and complete for every property. As a result, NYSP2I created a site verifier guide which was used for the pilot project by both NYSP2I and Audubon International.

#### ***V. The Survey***

The Green Leaf Survey proved to be a challenge for a number of reasons: 1) the survey was originally available only in paper form, 2) the length of the 52-page survey, and 3) the format of the survey.

In an effort to be environmentally conscience, Audubon International took the initiative of transferring the Green Leaf Survey into an electronic format. The transition from using a paper copy to an electronic version was the biggest hurdle and created challenges. Several properties had difficulty filling in some response fields that were not dedicated writeable fields. Others had difficulty saving the file in a proper .doc format. Others had difficulty emailing it back to Audubon International since a step was involved beyond clicking a 'mail' button. This lead both NYSP2I and Audubon International to make multiple phone calls to participants to walk them through the *Save As* or *Email File* process to ensure the surveys were returned.

These difficulties led NYSP2I to create specific instructions which were distributed to hoteliers in an effort to avoid continued struggles and participant frustration. Although the instructions

helped some properties, it was not useful for others. It was discovered that the problem stemmed from the version of Microsoft Word that was being used. Some participants ended up printing the file. Some thought they emailed it by clicking the *Email* button on the form but it was not sent from the 'outbox' box. While others were able to recover a copy from their *Sent Folder* in the email, others were not able to recover the file and had to complete the 52-page survey multiple times.

NYSP2I offered assistance to four properties to transfer the hand written version into an electronic version, then sent the electronic version to the hotelier for review and instructed them to submit it to Audubon International. Although this was extremely time consuming for NYSP2I, the service was provided to hoteliers to reduce frustration and encourage continuation with the program. Due to this difficulty with the electronic version of the Survey, two properties in the Finger Lakes regions had their site visits performed prior to the Survey being reviewed by NYSP2I staff.

The second major challenge with the survey was its length. Hoteliers begin the certification process with the 52-page survey that for some takes hours to complete. While a comprehensive survey such as Audubon International's is important, redesigning the survey to capture the information in a more concise format would be well-received. One way to accomplish this would be to structure the flow of questions differently. The current format divides the questions into 4 main criteria including, energy efficiency, resource conservation, pollution prevention, and environmental management instead of by hotel department (e.g., offices) or area (e.g., guest room). For example, the current format causes the hoteliers to move through the property to answer questions regarding energy in one area of the property then into another area. As they move onto the next topic (e.g., resource conservation) in the survey, they are revisiting areas or departments they already visited to answer questions regarding energy. The grouping of these criteria is useful for an environmental person but not logical for hoteliers. Based on hoteliers' feedback, a more effective method of gathering the information is to organize the survey questions by each department rather than the current environmental criteria. Questions grouped by the area or department allow hoteliers to walk through the property and respond to the questions based on the area they are standing in. Besides providing a more user-friendly format, this would also reduce repeated questions, thus shortening the survey.

## **VI. Rating Criteria**

One of the drawbacks of using a third-party verifier was lack of transparency. There are several states running their own green hotel certification programs similar to Green Leaf Eco-Rating Program. The difference is, the Green Leaf rating process is considered proprietary and does not provide a transparent rating system. Lack of transparency caused hesitation for some properties that initially showed interest in applying for the pilot project. In fact, a few of the properties did not apply because survey questions and scoring criteria were not available. Lack of transparency of the questions being asked as well as the weighted significance of each question towards the rating can be a deterrent for future participants.

Transparency would also provide hoteliers with a greater understanding and enthusiasm as to which steps they could take to achieve the next level rating. In addition, transparent weighting and scoring will allow the State to see how the information is evaluated and ensure acceptance of the third-party verifier's weighting of various environmental parameters. For example, regulations regarding chlorine use for pools, use of UV lights for pools and other restrictions from the FDA apply in NYS but not in Canada, making some recommendations in the Green Leaf report not relevant to US hoteliers. Points are awarded if recommendations are utilized however; points are not deducted if they are not implemented.

Furthermore, it was discovered that the Green Leaf level achieved does not incorporate some critical factors and upgrades that properties have invested in to reduce environmental impact. For example, Green Leaf survey asks if properties purchase environmentally certified products or recycled content but does not reflect how many devices that are Energy Star labeled, how many products contain recycled content, or how many programmable thermostats are used. The survey does consider the percentage of compact fluorescent lighting (CFLs) overall but does not expand the philosophy into these other vitally important areas. One out of five Energy Star appliances receives the same amount of points as another hotel that has five out of five Energy Star appliances or desirable items. The idea of a percentage for CFLs can be expanded to the number of appliances that are Energy Star rated and the number of items that contain recycled content against the remaining items purchased that don't contain it even though it is available.

## **G. Conclusion**

---

Although some modifications are recommended, the Audubon Green Leaf Eco-rating program serving as a third-party certifier provided an adequate rating process for a New York State green hotel certification program. Audubon Green Leaf is one of many hotel certification programs. In determining which third-party rating programs to acknowledge for the New York State program, a transparent rating system is recommended. In addition, it was confirmed that site visits are an essential component to a credible program. Ideally, the site visits would be conducted prior to the rating assignment to ensure accuracy of the initial rating received. In addition, to reduce the environmental impact and costs associated with travel, it is suggested that the certifier designate a period of enrollment for each region, allowing travel for site visits to be clustered and consolidated accordingly. It is also recommended that the State review the third-party certifier's data collection tool (in this case, Green Leaf's survey) to ensure all environmental elements are tracked and their measurements and weightings align with the state's objectives.

As an alternative option, the State may wish to develop their own custom rating system, including a transparent survey and scoring methodology. In this case, it is recommended that the lessons learned through this pilot project are incorporated into the program. A third party vendor could potentially be hired to administer the customized program. However, through this pilot project, NYSP2I did not find evidence to dissuade the use of existing green tourism certification programs.

## **H. Future Assistance**

---

NYSP2I will continue to offer assistance to hoteliers for completing the Environmental Performance Worksheet. This worksheet provides metrics to NYSP2I regarding energy and water use, and solid and hazardous waste disposal. It allows hoteliers to track baseline usage and compare it to current usage and utilize the worksheet as a decision making tool for future improvements. The collection of this data is on-going and dependent on NYSDEC funding to continue for the 3 years the properties participate in the Green Leaf program. Periodic reminders and assistance will be provided to the properties in an effort to collect the data over this time period and show the impact of the environmental improvements on their bottom line.

All of the participants of the pilot program asked the question "what can we do next?" After obtaining the Green Leaf rating and report of recommendations, properties are anxious and

excited to take the next steps and suggestions in the report. However, at times, they are unsure of how to implement the recommendations or where to find the types of products needed, such as environmentally friend shampoo dispensers, packaging or detergents. They are requesting guidance and assistance to aid them through the next phases.

## Appendix A:

Letter requesting participants: Page 1

New York State  
**HOSPITALITY  
& TOURISM**  
Association



80 WOLF ROAD ALBANY, NY 12205

[www.nyshta.org](http://www.nyshta.org)

(518) 465-2300 FAX: (518) 465-4025 (800) 642-5313

## Hotels Wanted for Green Hotel Pilot Project

*Special pricing available for test hotels*

For the past two years, the New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association (NYSH&TA) has participated in the New York State Green Hospitality & Tourism Partnership.

The group has been working towards developing a New York State endorsed green hotel certification for the lodging industry.

The Partnership is currently collaborating with the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I) and [Audubon International – Green Leaf Environmental](#) to conduct a

### **Green Hotel Certification Pilot Project.**

**Forty-four (44) Pilot hotels are currently being sought for participation in this project**

- **What is the NYS Green Hotel Certification Pilot Program?**

Hotels of various sizes will have the opportunity to participate in the Green Leaf™ certifying program. By earning between one and five green leaves in the Audubon Green Leaf™ Program, hotels can proudly display and confirm to guests their commitment to water quality and conservation, waste reduction, resource conservation, and energy efficiency.

- **Why is it Important?**

Hoteliers participate in a comprehensive and credible method for assessing the extent of the environmental measures undertaken and participating facilities can reduce environmentally-related costs gaining a marketing advantage.

- **What are the Benefits?**

- Hotels receive public recognition and marketing benefits as an environmental leader
- Third-party, credible verification by a non-profit environmental group
- Easy identification as an environmentally-friendly hotel for millions of travelers

- Structure, information, tools and advice to reduce operating costs
- Enhanced staff job satisfaction and increased morale through their involvement

- **What is the cost for you?**

On behalf of the entire New York State lodging industry, NYSH&TA negotiated a reduced rate for all participating hotels for the three year fee cycle. NYSP2I will contribute to the 1st year during the pilot project while the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years benefit from the negotiated price three-year fee structure is as follows:

<b>Hotel Room Size</b>	<b>NYSH&amp;TA Negotiated cost</b>	<b>NYSP2I 1<sup>st</sup> year Contribution</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> year Hotel cost</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> year Hotel cost</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> year Hotel Cost</b>
1-50	\$300	225	\$75	\$150	\$150
51-100	\$425	300	\$125	\$220	\$220
101-200	\$475	325	\$150	\$240	\$240
201+	\$700	475	\$225	\$350	\$350

If you are interested in participating, click [here](#) to complete the online prequalifying questionnaire by June 30, 2009.

If you have any questions, please contact Tracy Freas [tracy.freas@rit.edu](mailto:tracy.freas@rit.edu) or 585-475-5807 or contact Fred Realbuto [frealbuto@auduboninternational.org](mailto:frealbuto@auduboninternational.org) or 518-767-9051.

## Appendix B

### SurveyMonkey™ Questionnaire:

1. Property name
2. City
3. Region
4. Room category (small, small-medium, medium-large, large)
5. # of rooms
6. Food & beverage
7. Does your property have an environmental policy
8. Does your property purchase environmentally preferable products
9. Has your property changed over to energy efficient lighting? What percentage has been changed?
10. Does your property have water conserving appliances (low flow shower heads and low flush toilets)?
11. Does your property have a towel or sheet re-use program?
12. Does your property have recycling bins in guest rooms?
13. Does your property use pesticides or herbicides
14. Does your property serve organic, locally produced food?
15. How important is the environmental performance of your facility to you?
16. Why are you interested in participating in the pilot phase of the Audubon Green Leaf Eco-Rating Program?

## Appendix C:

### Sample Congratulations Letter:



**New York State  
Pollution Prevention Institute**

Rochester Institute of Technology • 111 Lomb Memorial Drive • Rochester, NY 14623  
585.475.2512, phone • 585.475.5250, fax • [nysp2i@rit.edu](mailto:nysp2i@rit.edu) • [www.nysp2i.rit.edu](http://www.nysp2i.rit.edu)

July 22, 2009

«AddressBlock»

«GreetingLine»

On behalf of the New York State Green Hospitality & Tourism Partnership, we congratulate your property for being selected to participate in the **NYS Green Hotel Certification Pilot Project**.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

During the Pilot Project the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I) at Rochester Institute of Technology and Audubon International-Green Leaf will assist you through the Eco-Rating process. Attached you will find a Pledge Card. Please sign this card confirming your interest and fax to Audubon International at 518-767-9076, by Monday, July 20, 2009.

Once the signed Pledge Card is received by Audubon International, your property will officially be accepted as a Pilot Project participant. Within two weeks, Audubon International will send you *The Green Leaf Assessment Survey* and other information to assist you in getting started.

*Please Note: It is anticipated that Governor Paterson will be making an official announcement of this Pilot Project and the selected participants in the coming weeks. As indicated on the Pledge Card, it is imperative that the selection of your hotel as a participant in the pilot be kept confidential until after the official announcement is made.*

If you have any questions please contact Fred Realbuto, Audubon International, Director of New York Operations, [frealbuto@auduboninternational.org](mailto:frealbuto@auduboninternational.org) or 518-767-9051 x-115 or Tracy Freas, R.I.T., Senior Staff Engineer [tracy.freas@rit.edu](mailto:tracy.freas@rit.edu) or 585-475-5807.

Once again, Congratulations! We look forward to working with you and your team!

Sincerely,

*NYS Green Hospitality & Tourism Partnership Members:*

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
  - NYS Governor's Office
  - NYS Hospitality and Tourism Association
  - NYS Restaurant Association
  - NYS Department of Economic Development-I Love NY Program
  - NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
  - NYS Department of Labor
  - NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
  - NYS Energy Research & Development Authority
  - NYS Pollution Prevention Institute
-

**Page 2 of the Congratulations Letter  
Pledge Card:**



**New York State  
Pollution Prevention Institute**

**NYS Green Hotel Certification Pilot Project Pledge**

As a participant in the NYS Green Hotel Certification Pilot Project, we, the undersigned:

- Agree to fully participate in the Audubon Green Leaf Eco-Rating Program certification process, including:
  - Completion of all Pilot Project materials by 09/30/09:
    - Application for enrollment in the AI/GL Program (including payment of the year 1 membership fee).
    - The Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating Program Survey (the assessment tool used to document your hotel's environmental performance).
    - The NYS Green Lodging Performance Worksheet Form.
  - Participation in a visit to our property by Pilot Program staff, to confirm information provided in the Green Leaf™ Survey by the end of the pilot project; March 11, 2010.
- Agree to be recognized in conjunction with the Pilot Project and the ongoing NYS Green Hospitality and Tourism Initiative.
- Acknowledge our role as an Ambassador for the NYS Green Hospitality and Tourism Initiative, which may include:
  - Referring inquiries from fellow hoteliers, guests, and others to sources of information regarding the NYS Green Hospitality and Tourism Initiative
  - When feasible, making our property or staff available to other hoteliers for the purposes of demonstrating the implementation of green practices.
  - Invitations to participate in panel discussions and other outreach events.
- Agree to keep confidential the selection of our hotel as a participant in the NYS Green Hotel Certification Pilot Project until after Governor Paterson's official announcement of the program and its participants.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

## Appendix D:

Sample of the Environmental Performance Worksheet representing Solid Waste Disposal (each tab on the worksheet has been developed for the various environmental media; i.e. – water consumed, electric use, fuel use, etc.)

Function Library      Defined Names      Formula Auditing

COUNT       $=((E11/D11)*(G11*\$D\$7))-(J11*\$D\$7)$

**P21 NYS Green Lodging Performance Worksheet**

Hotel Name: *Enter property name*

Baseline Period: *Sept. 1, 2009 - Aug. 31, 2010*

Current Period: *Sept. 1, 2010 - Aug. 31, 2011*

Average Cost: *\$15.00* /pick up

Month	Occupancy Rate		Waste Disposed						
	Baseline (%)	Current (%)	Baseline Containers	Over Filled Full 1/2 Full	Container Size	Current Containers	Over Filled Full 1/2 Full	Container Size	Est. Cost Decrease / (Increase)
e.g. March	65	68	10	Full		9	Over Filled		=(J11*\$D\$7)
1									#DIV/0!
2									#DIV/0!
3									#DIV/0!
4									#DIV/0!
5									#DIV/0!
6									#DIV/0!
7									#DIV/0!
8									#DIV/0!
9									#DIV/0!
10									#DIV/0!
11									#DIV/0!
12									#DIV/0!
<b>TOTALS</b>	n/a	n/a	0			0			#DIV/0!
			Cost Savings?						#DIV/0!

Notes:

Water Consumed    Electric Use    Fuel Use    **Waste Disposed**    Hazardous Waste

# Appendix E:

## Site Verifier Guide



### New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I)

#### Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating Program Hotel Verifier's Guide

Property Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Background

The Verifier's Guide is designed to look at approximately 20% of the information housed in the Audubon Green Leaf Survey. It works under the assumption that if the hotel's responses in the Survey match the verification, chances are they've answered the survey honestly and correctly. This is verification NOT an audit. We want the hoteliers to feel comfortable. We are there to help.

The Guide itself specifically looks at Environmental Management, Office and Administration Areas, Food Services Prep Areas and Restaurant, Public Washrooms, Collections Area(s) for Material Diversion and Guest Rooms. There is lots of space on the verifiers guide to add on other information about the property.

#### Office and Administration areas

- Environmental Policy? Request a copy of it for the file.
- Is the policy written and posted
- When asked, an employee is familiar with the policy
- Who has responsibility for the file (an individual, a team)


Identify the team members.

- Obtain a copy of any meeting minutes\_\_

Areas for which environmental audits have been conducted:

- Energy audit       Environmental management system, i.e ISO 20014 or EMAS
- Waste audit       Water consumption       Other audit \_\_\_\_\_

- Obtain a copy of the Table of Contents, report or certificate
  - Who is the Registrar \_\_\_\_\_








## New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP21)

Paper products with recycled content or are deemed to be more environmentally responsible.

<input type="checkbox"/> Card stock	<input type="checkbox"/> Printer paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Envelopes
<input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets	<input type="checkbox"/> File folders	<input type="checkbox"/> Copier paper
<input type="checkbox"/> Stationary	<input type="checkbox"/> Signage	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

There are a number of labels that can validate these issues. e.g. Environmental Choice, Green Seal, FSC, Chlorine Free. Look for those on the packaging.

Blue Box for recycling

Energy Star computers, fax, copiers and printers

Sleep mode used when devices are not in use

Double-side copy

Re-use paper for memos/scratch pads

Recycle toner cartridges? Used  Purchased

Pens with recycled content

Office lighting: T-8's , magnetic/electric ballast, fluorescents, LED etc.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting areas**

Water dispensed by:  pitchers and glasses or  Bottled water

Pads and pencils provided recycled content?

Temperature of the room: \_\_\_\_\_

Heated/cooled:  all the time or  brought up to temperature an hour before the meeting

Unused meals go to:  staff or  a food bank or  are put in the garbage

\_\_\_\_\_ %age of lighting in the room that is energy efficient

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pool/Whirlpool**

Chemical system (Chlorine, Bromine, UV or a salt water) used to maintain the:

Pool: \_\_\_\_\_

Whirlpool: \_\_\_\_\_

Heated with propane

\_\_\_\_\_ %age of lighting in the room that is energy efficient

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_



## New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP21)

### Gym

\_\_\_\_\_ %age of lighting in the room that is energy efficient

- Towels available
  - Disposable paper products
- Cloth or paper towels to clean the equipment after use
- Environmentally preferred cleaning products used
- Carpet tiles
- Water cooler or  Bottled water or  No water available
- Equipment turned off when not in use
- Tap aerators  low flow toilets in washroom
- Television in the room
  - On when you came in (only applies if there was no one else in the gym)

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

### Public Washrooms

- Identify the percentage of energy efficient lighting \_\_\_\_\_
- Water conserving items have been installed in the washrooms:
  - Tap aerators- Feel inside the tape to see if there is a screen
  - Toilet tank fill diverters (dams, bricks, bottles)
  - Toilets 1.5 gallons or less
  - Photo cell activated  men's urinals,  toilets,  faucets,  hand soap
- Air hand dryers
- Brown or  White paper towels  Pre-measured
- Hand soap environmentally preferable

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

### Food Services Prep Areas and Restaurant

- Identify the percentage of energy efficient lighting in restaurant \_\_\_\_\_
- Identify the percentage of energy efficient lighting in food prep \_\_\_\_\_
- Type of lighting: incandescent, CFL, T-12, T-8, LED
- Lighting turned off in certain areas of the restaurant not in use

Refrigeration items in use:

- Air blowers  Heat recovery on large units
- Open door buzzers on walk-in doors  Vinyl air curtains

Environmentally preferable products:

- dishwasher detergents,  general purpose cleaners,  hand soaps,
- hard surface cleaners,  other used?



**New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP21)**

hard surface cleaners,  other used?

These items may have third party labels or claims of biodegradability, no phosphates, low toxicity or non-toxic:



Detergents are dispensed from a wall unit in doses (provided by Johnson Diversy, Ecolab etc.)

Condiments dispensed in single serving packets

Bulk dispense condiments  sugar,  ketchup,  cream,  jam,  other

Leftover food scraps  Composted?  Thrown in the garbage?

Recycle the grease from the fryer? by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Collection Area**

Primary Recycling/Waste collector name \_\_\_\_\_ City or Private

Cost for tipping fees: \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency of pick ups: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Recycling/Waste collector name \_\_\_\_\_ City or Private

Cost for tipping fees: \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency of pick ups: \_\_\_\_\_

Aluminum	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	<input type="checkbox"/> reused
Cardboard	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	<input type="checkbox"/> reused
Carpet	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	<input type="checkbox"/> reused
Furniture/Mattresses	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	<input type="checkbox"/> reused
Batteries	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	<input type="checkbox"/> reused
Print cartridges	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	<input type="checkbox"/> reused
Name of company: _____		
Office Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	<input type="checkbox"/> reused
Check Blue Boxes to verify		
Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	
Magazines	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	
Plastic	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	
Shampoo, conditioner, lotion, soaps	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	<input type="checkbox"/> reused
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> recycled	<input type="checkbox"/> reused

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_



## New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I)

### Guest Rooms - view 2 different styles

Room #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Size/Style: \_\_\_\_\_

- Lights, television and radio off
- Curtains partially closed
- Ambient room temperature  Even temperature throughout the room
- Environmental policy statement in the "guest book"
- Recycling container in the room
- Recycling instructions for the guests, if so where? \_\_\_\_\_
- Signage for towel and/or linen re-use
- Programmable thermostat
- Refrigerator/Mini-bar in the room
  - Is there a good seal on the door
  - Are the coils of the refrigerator clean
- Kitchenette plumbing pipes insulated under the sink
- \_\_\_\_\_ %age of lighting in the room that is energy efficient
- 7-8 lamps in the room
- Carpet tiles
- Low flow showerhead
- Tap aerator
- Toilet tank fill diverters (dams, bricks, bottles)
- Toilets 1.5 gallons or less
- Environmentally preferable cleaning products used
- Individually packaged amenities;  environmentally preferred
- Bulk dispensers;  environmentally preferred

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_



## New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I)

- Room #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Size/Style: \_\_\_\_\_
- Lights, television and radio off
  - Curtains partially closed
  - Ambient room temperature  Even temperature throughout the room
  - Environmental policy statement in the “guest book”
  - Recycling container in the room
  - Recycling instructions for the guests, if so where? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Signage for towel and/or linen re-use
  - Programmable thermostat
  - Refrigerator/Mini-bar in the room
    - Is there a good seal on the door
    - Are the coils of the refrigerator clean
  - Kitchenette plumbing pipes insulated under the sink
  - \_\_\_\_\_ %age of lighting in the room that is energy efficient
  - 7-8 lamps in the room
  - Carpet tiles
  - Low flow showerhead
  - Tap aerator
  - Toilet tank fill diverters (dams, bricks, bottles)
  - Toilets 1.5 gallons or less
  - Environmentally preferable cleaning products used
  - Individually packaged amenities;  environmentally preferred
  - Bulk dispensers;  environmentally preferred



## New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I)

### Summary

In closing, it's important to make the hotelier feel comfortable about the process. This is verification not a tax audit. Get them engaged in the process. Ask them if there are any "outside the box" activities they may be involved in:

- bamboo flooring
- green roof
- bio-diesel fuelled fleet vehicles
- community involvement

In most cases you'll be able to identify something they are doing well that they may not have included in the Survey. At this point they have completed the Survey and may be more aware of what they can be doing and may be fully engaged in the process and likely looking for tips to improve their score.

### Exit Interview

Provide a brief narrative of your observations gleaned from the site visit. Elicit questions and comments from the interviewee. Share with the representative:

- Quick review of the Verifier's Notes
- What next steps they can expect
- What resources for assistance are available?
- What would they like more information or help with?
- NYSERDA Energy Audit?

### Special Notes

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## New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP21)

### Closing Discussion

#### -Things to ask your suppliers:

- Do you provide locally grown supplies?
- Do you provide organic items?
- What sustainable practices do you uphold?
- Look for the following green / environmentally friendly logos



#### -Cleaning supplies are one area where easy change has immediate effect

- Using non-hazardous / non-poisonous cleaning solutions
- Use cleaners formulated for use with cold water: Hot water requires energy
- Use concentrated formulas as they require less energy to ship
- Consider multi-purpose cleaners that can replace several separate ones

#### -Communicate efficiently with employees

- Use central memo board to replace paper copies
- Use electronic mail for internal communication

#### -Office tips

- Ensure printers are set to double-sided
- Use memo and letter formats that minimize unused space on the page
- Edit document on-screen rather than printing multiple drafts
- Recycle paper within the office for scrap-paper and note taking
- Set electronic devices for sleep / energy saving mode

#### -The continuity of the evaluation and the want to continue striving for a better rating

- Create a special team to re-evaluate and monitor the program

#### -Consider community and company events

- Ex. Hazardous waste days, Earth Day, volunteer to help locally
- Broadcast on the hotel TV channel; why you use bulk shampoo / conditioner, where recycling bins are located and why reusing towels can make a difference

#### -Next Steps:

- GreenLeaf Eco-Rating and report will follow in approximately one month
- Check [www.NYSP21.rit.edu](http://www.NYSP21.rit.edu) or [www.auduboninternational.org](http://www.auduboninternational.org) for education and outreach events
- Continue filling in the Environmental Performance Worksheet, call Tracy Freas at 585-475-5807 or email questions to [Tracy.Freas@rit.edu](mailto:Tracy.Freas@rit.edu)

## Appendix F:

Sample of a Green Leaf Eco-Rating Report - © Audubon International 2010

# GREEN LEAF™ RATING & RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

HOTEL NAME, CITY, NY



## INTRODUCTION

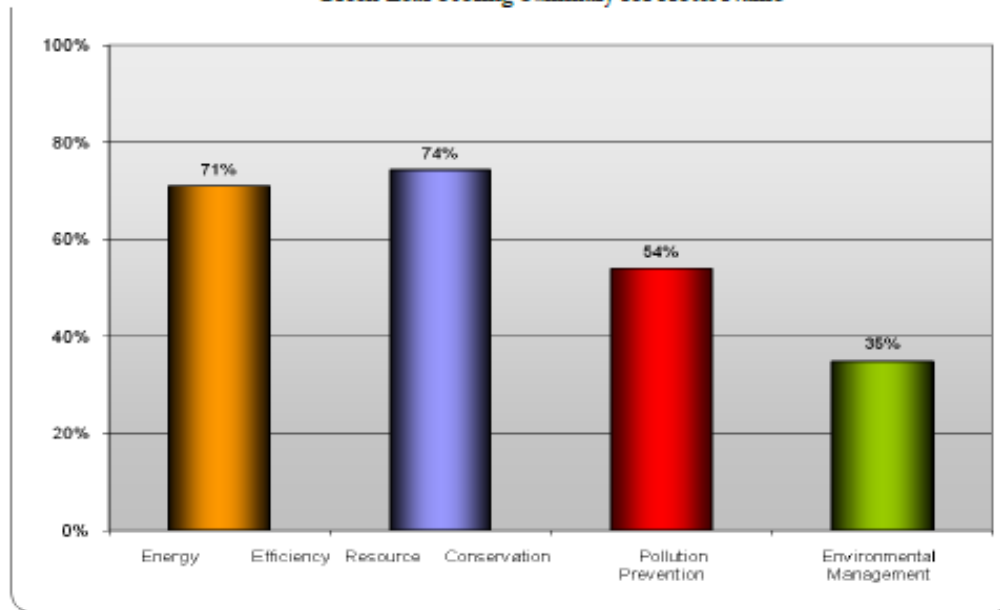
**Hotel Name, City NY has achieved a rating of 3 Green Leafs with an overall Green Leaf™ Survey score of 61%.**

Congratulations on becoming a Green Leaf™ Eco-Rated Member in the Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating Program for Hotels! Green Leaf Environmental Communications, Inc. is pleased to provide this assessment of your facility's overall environmental performance.

Your score of 3 Green Leafs confirms that **Hotel Name** is taking substantial steps towards environmental improvement. **Hotel Name** has made excellent progress in adopting industry best practices for energy efficiency, resource conservation and pollution prevention in all areas of its operations and management.

**Hotel Name** should be commended on taking steps towards realizing the cost savings and market potential behind adopting the accommodation industry's Best Environmental Practices. This Green Leaf™ Rating & Recommendations Report provides an indication of how well you measure up against the Best Practices that were applicable at your facility. Your performance in four key areas is outlined in the figure below.

Green Leaf Scoring Summary for Hotel Name



The remainder of this Green Leaf™ Rating & Recommendations Report pinpoints areas of strength in your current environmental performance, and suggests ways to improve your practices and increase your Green Leaf™ rating and cost savings.



## GENERAL ADVICE FOR IMPROVING YOUR SCORE



Keep in mind the easiest way to increase your score and overall Green Leaf™ rating may be to implement low-cost or no-cost operational changes. This includes things such as posting signs and procedures, improving equipment cleaning and general maintenance activities, formally tracking chemical and fuel use, and combining orders between departments. Each section of this report suggests opportunities for low/no-cost improvements. Review these to see which are the best fits for your facility.



EcoPurchasing is another important and relatively easy way to increase your score. Eco-purchasing means choosing replacement equipment and making routine purchases that have a lower environmental impact. Some of the simple steps you can take include:

- Asking your vendors if they offer an environmental alternative.
- Using 3<sup>rd</sup> party certified products to your advantage.
- Checking website listings of “green” products, such as [www.environmentalchoice.com](http://www.environmentalchoice.com)
- Keeping in mind product types that commonly have green alternatives such as office paper, paints, toilet paper and paper towels, cleaning products and soaps, and office equipment.



Having environmental improvement plans in place is essential. If you haven't already done so, develop an environmental policy, figure out your objectives, set targets for meeting your objectives and develop action plans. Don't be overwhelmed by the idea of developing and implementing policies – it can be quite straightforward. An example of just how easy it can be to move from policy to action plan is listed below.

Policy: Amongst other things, the policy may announce a commitment to conserving resources.  
Objective: An objective to help conserve resources may be to reduce wastes sent to landfill.  
Target: A specific target to help reduce waste may be to decrease landfilled kitchen garbage by 20%.  
Action Plan: To help reach this target, one action plan could be to compost vegetable food wastes.



Sooner or later, obtaining an even higher Green Leaf™ score will require actual capital investments. These investments may be easier to do in stages rather than all at once (e.g. retrofitting plumbing equipment or lights can be done one room at a time).



## GREENHOUSE GAS PROFILE & COST-SAVINGS

An optional report benchmarking the Greenhouse Gases produced by your facility is available to Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rated Members. This report also includes a dollar estimate of the cost savings available to your facility.

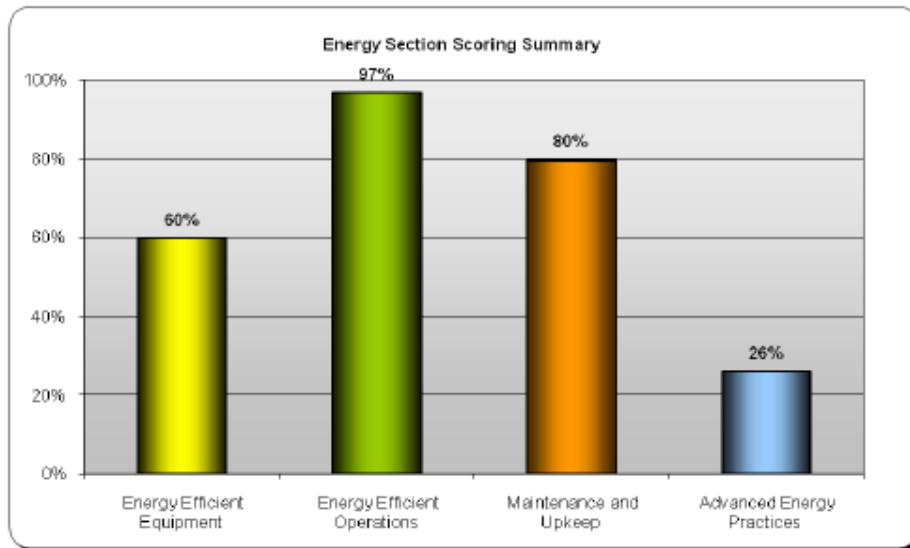




## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Reducing energy use provides your accommodation facility with significant cost savings. It also decreases your contribution to climate change and a variety of harmful air emissions such as smog, greenhouse gases, sulfur dioxide, hydrocarbons and particulate matter. Accommodation facilities have extensive opportunities to reduce energy use and the associated costs through choosing efficient equipment, limiting the amount of energy used at any one time, making routine energy saving choices and keeping equipment in optimum condition.

Your overall score for Energy Efficiency was 71%. The chart below provides a further breakdown of your score in three areas: Energy Efficient Equipment; Energy Efficient Operations; and Maintenance and Upkeep. To get a better idea of where you're performing well and where the best opportunities for improvement are, we've supplied highlights of your current environmental performance and suggestions for reducing energy use and the associated costs.



### Current Performance Highlights

- Except for guestrooms complete conversion to high efficiency bulbs
- Complete conversion to electronic ballasts
- Use of equipment with reduced power use on stand-by "sleep" mode
- Convection ovens
- Hot water boosters
- Air Misers/heat exchangers
- High efficiency windows
- Staff turn off lighting, heating and cooling according to a pre-set schedule, periodic reminders and own initiative
- Daylight/Motion sensors throughout facility; timers exterior lighting, pool, hot tub
- Dimmers
- All applicable maintenance and repairs on strict schedule
- Weather-stripping and caulking on doors and windows
- Entry doors generally kept closed
- Office machines turned off during weekends and evenings
- Temperatures of hallways and other common areas adjusted
- Efficient housekeeping operations throughout
- Complete package of insulation
- An attribute for advanced energy practices (positioning of lobby window)
- Guestrooms assigned sequentially

### Opportunities for Improvement

#### Minimal Cost

- Hot tubs filled with pool water to reduce heating costs

#### Higher Cost

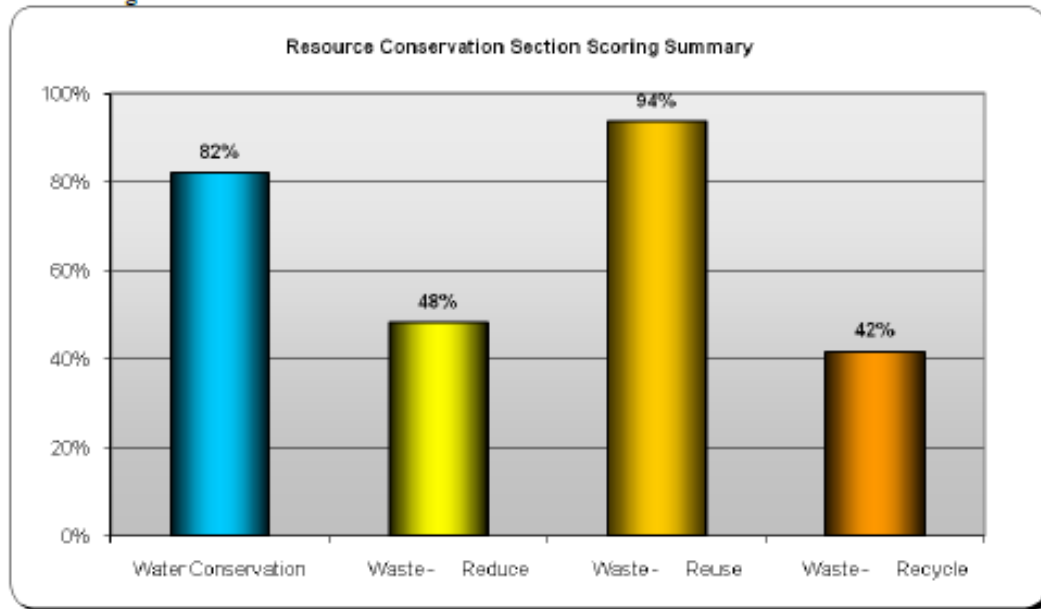
- Plan for future higher efficiency HVAC equipment
- Solar power for exterior lighting and/or complementing pool heating or other water
- Complete conversion to high efficiency bulbs in guestrooms
- Tankless or "point of use" water heaters
- Long term: automated control system for at least some guestrooms
- Medium term: real time energy monitoring



## RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Natural resources are both valuable and finite; they shouldn't be wasted. The Resource Conservation section addresses reductions in water consumption and the quantity of materials sent to landfill. Excess water use leads to the side effects from water treatment chemicals, from energy for pumping and heating, and from the release of wastewater back into the environment. Sending large amounts of waste to landfill without first reusing or recycling also represents a tremendous loss of resources and contributes to coinciding impacts to groundwater and air. Reducing, reusing and recycling leads directly to environmental and cost savings.

Your overall score for this section was 74%. The chart below provides a further breakdown of your score in four areas: Water Conservation; Reducing Waste; Reusing Waste; and Recycling Waste. To get a better idea of where you're performing well and where the best opportunities for improvement are, we've supplied highlights of your current environmental performance and suggestions for reducing resource use and the associated costs.



### Current Performance Highlights

- General use of tap aerators, water-conserving toilets and low-flow showerheads
- Taps and toilets checked at least weekly for leaks
- Taps and toilets adjusted annually if necessary
- Dishwashers generally filled to capacity
- Native plants, trees and shrubs are used to lessen watering needs
- Rain water is collected for use in watering
- Sidewalls are swept and not hosed off
- Overall water pressure is monitored and set at the lowest possible level
- E-Mail used to reduce paper use
- Automatically provide all occupied guestrooms with a morning paper
- Efficient housekeeping practices
- All materials recycled

### Opportunities for Improvement

#### Minimal Cost/No Cost

- Water conserving retrofit devices in toilets (e.g. dam tank fill diverter)
- Refillable pens
- Envelopes are re-used
- Washroom amenities provided in bulk
- Pool washroom shampoos, soaps, rinse provided in bulk containers
- More multi-serving containers
- Provide newspapers only upon request
- Partially used soaps are used in staff washrooms or donated to charity

#### Higher Cost

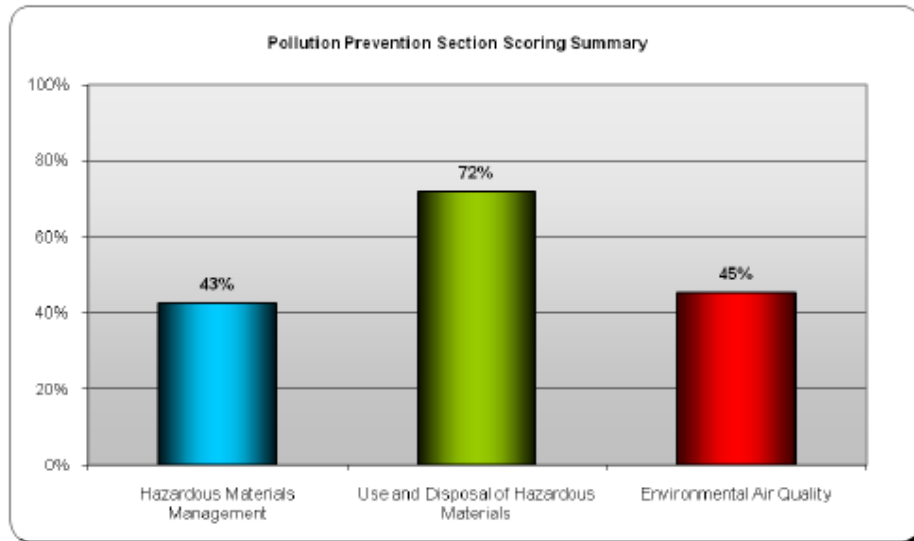
- Taps with photosensors in public washrooms
- Urinals with photosensors in public washrooms
- Low-flow showerheads in guestrooms
- Soil humidity and/or rainwater sensors



## POLLUTION PREVENTION

While the accommodation industry is not generally considered a major source of toxic wastes, facilities do use and dispose of a wide range of cleaning products, lubricants, water treatment chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides and fuels. Environmental Air Quality is an associated health and maintenance concern. The impact of chemicals, both on indoor air quality and on the ecosystem at large, can be mitigated through using less toxic alternatives, reducing quantities used and properly storing and handling the materials. In all cases, good housekeeping practices and the appropriate equipment will reduce pollution produced at the facility. These simple actions can also decrease the costs for both purchasing and arranging for special removal of these chemicals.

Your overall score for this section was 54%. The chart below provides a further breakdown of your score in three areas: Hazardous Materials Management; Use and Disposal of Hazardous Materials; and Environmental Air Quality. To get a better idea of where you're performing well and where the best opportunities for improvement are, we've supplied highlights of your current environmental performance and suggestions for reducing resource use and the associated costs.



### Current Performance Highlights

- Staff dealing with hazardous material have received training
- Staff emergency response training
- Emergency response plan
- Appropriate signage for chemical storage
- Complete elimination of synthetic chemical fertilizers and replaced with natural alternatives
- Target areas monitored for signs of mold and replaced as necessary
- Physical traps used whenever possible
- Commonly used hazardous materials sent to appropriate waste facility
- Asbestos and PCBs never introduced at facility

### Opportunities for Improvement

#### Minimal Cost

- Clean up procedures for spill are in place and well-known by staff
- Indoor air quality complaint procedure
- Automatic indoor air quality monitors installed
- “Flash out” or off-gassing period after construction or renovations
- Burners are cleaned

#### Higher Cost

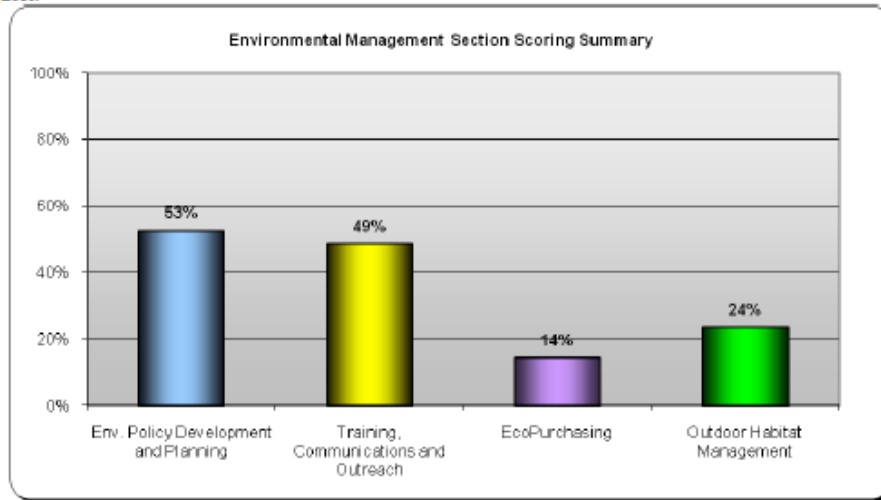
- Low VOC-emitting carpets, paints, and varnishes routinely used
- Chlorine alternatives for swimming pool
- Chlorine alternatives for swimming pool
- Indoor air quality parameters assessed for (CO, CO<sub>2</sub>, AND VOCs)
- Flue gas sent for analysis



## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Sound environmental management is the foundation upon which continuous environmental improvement occurs. Formal policies provide a guiding environmental vision for senior management, employees and guests alike. Setting goals, targets and action plans provide environmental responsibility and accountability in all operational areas. Training employees in environmental management and communicating achievements to guests further promotes and ensures success in reaching overall environmental improvement. The Environmental Management section also assesses how accommodation facilities are using their considerable purchasing power to substantially reduce environmental impact. Finally, outdoor habitat management is a highly visible area for the hotel to develop and showcase its green image.

Your overall score for this section was 35%. The chart below provides a further breakdown of your score in four areas: Environmental Policy Development and Planning; Training, Communication and Outreach; EcoPurchasing; and Outdoor Habitat Management. To get a better idea of where you're performing well and where the best opportunities for improvement are, we've supplied highlights of your current environmental performance and suggestions for improving environmental management policies and practices.



### Current Performance Highlights

- Environmental Policy incorporates specific commitments to address all relevant issues
- No-one is currently assigned responsibility for environmental issues
- Audit of energy and water consumption patterns within past 3 years
- Monitoring, tracking and reporting of all items used and solid waste disposed of at facility
- Signs and posters used to reinforce environmental messages
- Employees encouraged to practice 'good environmental behavior'
- Guest feedback/suggestion
- Guest tent cards
- Water only served on request
- Involvement in two or more community-based activities
- Green "days/theme"
- Solicit environmental suggestions/innovations from staff
- For longer staying guests towels/linen are changed every 2-3 days
- Newspapers only delivered on request
- List of specific environmentally preferred products
- Product environmental information requested from suppliers and periodic review of MDSs where applicable or other information
- Some activity of wildlife monitoring
- Bird baths

### Higher Cost

- 3<sup>rd</sup> party certified products
- Consider pilot "Green Rooms"
- Green purchasing targets
- Use of eco-labeled products
- Benign pest controls

- Purchasing decisions supporting better environmental choices
- Bulk purchases for up to three different products

### Opportunities for Improvement

#### Minimal Cost

- Designate an Environmental Coordinator (as part-time)
- Consider an Environmental Committee keeping minutes of its meetings
- Full set of strategic environmental action plans
- Environmental goals with specific targets e.g. quantity reduction of energy usage and time frames
- Waste stream analysis
- Monitor, track and report waste recycled, cleaning products and other chemicals (if applicable)
- Environmental awareness incorporated into initial training and repeated at least annually