



**Contact:**

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**1. Overview**

The Oregon Bed and Breakfast Guild green program was implemented at the April 2008 regional Bed and Breakfast conference in Hood River. We began the process of creating the program several months prior to introducing it at the conference. Our sustainability program has three levels; the first level being a self assessment and the only level currently available. Once we have trained a team of inspectors, we will roll out the second and third levels. At the Oregon Governor's Tourism Conference in April, we provided a description of the program itself and information on how to begin the process of becoming a sustainable lodging property.

Our interest in establishing a sustainable ("green") lodging program began with board members who were interested in providing this service and encouragement to our members. The reality of climate change and travelers interest in spending their leisure dollars in line with their values made a "green" program a valuable service for our members. In addition information regarding simple ways to decrease energy and water use has a financial benefit to our member innkeepers.

**2. Program Establishment**

The initial impetus to create a green program was expressed at a board meeting. A green task force was created of interested OBBG members, most of whom were currently using sustainable practices at their establishments. Task force members did independent research using whatever sources interested them. Suggestions were made for the actual activities to use for the program and a draft was submitted and discussed. The final form and costs of the green program were decided by the board, including the roll out at the April conference. Information was posted on the OBBG website and shared with our membership at the conference. At the same time we were creating our program we sought a partnership with Sustainable Travel International to bring their mini green tag program to our members in an easy and affordable fashion. We were able to roll out the mini green tag program at the April conference as an additional benefit of our program.

### **3. Goals and Benchmarking**

It would be wonderful to have 100% member participation in the green program, but just like the opt in necessary from guests, we need our members to join us voluntarily. At this time we have four inns actively participating. One inn is just beginning the process. We have \$250 in current mini green tag sales. We have had queries from two other bed and breakfast associations regarding our program and its implementation. We will continue to encourage participation in both the green program certification and the mini green tag program. The green program page of our website will continue to be assessed and managed as a resource for our membership interested in the sustainability of their establishments. We are willing to share our program with any other associations that are interested in implementing programs for their membership.

### **4. Outcomes and Environmental Benefits**

It is difficult to assess the impact of the program beyond numbers of participating inns and mini green tag sales. How do you measure the awareness that has been created by making this program and information available? It is difficult to know how many of our member inns are using the provided information to reduce their environmental impact without necessarily becoming a formal part of the program at this time. All change begins with an idea and the small steps that follow. The effects on the travel industry will be felt as more individual innkeepers find that stepping on the path to sustainability affects their marketability and financial bottom line. Innkeepers as individuals may be realizing that things they have been doing for years are many of the things they need to do to be recognized as a sustainable lodging. Finding that being an environmentally responsible lodging does not mean discomfort or inconvenience to our guests is an incentive to accomplish changes without concern for the impact on the reputation of comfort and pampering that guests desire. As guests begin asking for more information from innkeepers regarding their operations more innkeepers will be assessing their own activities in light of guest's desires for reasonable efforts to reduce the impact of their travel and leisure.

Change is here. We can lead, follow or be trampled by reality.