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The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)
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Leaders in Sustainable Tourism to meet in Vancouver, British Columbia, October 2008

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) Announces Host for Annual Conference

Washington DC, December 19, 2007—Leaders in sustainable tourism from across North America and beyond will be meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, October 27-29th, 2008 at the *Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference (ESTC 2008)*, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), announced today.

Hosted by the British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, the BC Sustainable Tourism Collective and the Council of Tourism Associations of British Columbia, the conference will provide opportunities for business leaders, travel and tourism professionals and community members to gain knowledge of the latest trends in ecotourism and sustainable tourism, learn practical skills, and participate in invaluable networking and knowledge sharing. The *ESTC 2008* will be held at the legendary Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, and will also include pre-conference trips to both Whistler and Victoria, B.C.'s capital city.

"We are pleased to be hosting the Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference in 2008," said Stan Hagen, B.C. Minister of Tourism, Sport and the Arts. "As a key economic driver for the province, tourism, and more importantly sustainable tourism, will play an influential role in how we reach our recently mandated goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020. This is the most aggressive target for any destination in North America."

This is the third conference by TIES focusing on sustainability in travel and tourism in North America. In 2005, TIES hosted the first Ecotourism in the U.S. Conference, which was followed by this year's North American Ecotourism Conference (NAEC) in Madison, Wisconsin, which brought together sustainable tourism professionals and businesses from across the U.S. and Canada.

Through the development of these two historic conferences, TIES has witnessed significant growth of the sustainable tourism community in the U.S. and Canada. Recognizing the importance of this movement for the region's tourism industry as a whole, TIES is holding the ESTC yearly to expand

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the network of industry practitioners and experts and to encourage greater awareness and implementation of the principles ecotourism and sustainability practices in the U.S. and Canada. “TIES is thrilled to partner with the B.C. Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, which is generously sponsoring the *ESTC 2008*, and to collaborate with the BC Sustainable Tourism Collective during a time when we are seeing the sustainable tourism industry experience unprecedented growth around the world,” says Kelly Bricker, TIES Executive Director.

As the conference name indicates, the annual conference will not only provide sustainable solutions for tourism businesses, it will also highlight innovative sustainable practices and case studies in the U.S. and Canada, and discuss effective ways to utilize the sustainable tourism community’s experience and expertise to tackle some of the critical issues and key challenges facing the industry today, including: climate change, sustainable business practices, wildlife conservation, community partnerships and innovative technologies for greening the tourism industry.

With British Columbia preparing to welcome the 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games to Vancouver and Whistler, the timing of bringing this conference to Canada is perfect. A recent study conducted by TNS Canadian Facts, a market and opinion research firm, reported that nearly two-thirds of Canadian travelers say they are concerned about global warming, as well as the loss of natural habitats and ecosystems. The study also found that 83 per cent of Canadian travelers agree that sustainable tourism practices would have a positive effect on the world’s future and that many Canadian travelers would take personal action including switching from a preferred holiday destination to another that supported sustainable tourism.

TIES has launched the *ESTC 2008* conference website—www.ecotourismconference.org—through which updates on the conference program will be announced in the coming months. Media inquiries about the *ESTC 2008* conference should be sent to: media@ecotourism.org or +1 202 347 9203 x412. To request information on sponsorship opportunities for the *ESTC 2008*, please contact: sponsorship@ecotourism.org or +1 202 347 9203 x422.

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About TIES:

As the world's oldest and largest ecotourism organization, TIES is committed to promoting the principles of ecotourism and responsible practices in travel and tourism. With the goal of uniting conservation, communities and sustainable travel, TIES serves its members in over 90 countries, and strives to act as the global source of knowledge and advocacy in ecotourism.