



June 2010

To: WLA Members

From: Paula Helsel, CHA, General Manager, Sleeping Lady Mountain Resort, Leavenworth
Co-Chair of the WLA Green Team and WLA Board Member
Gerry Link, CHA, Co-Chair of the WLA Green Team and WLA Board Member

Re: WLA's Greening Washington's Lodging Industry Program, Background and Update

In 2009, the Washington Lodging Association was awarded a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology to launch a statewide "Greening Washington's Lodging Industry Program." WLA's grant application was one of only 13 grants funded by Ecology in 2009. Of 100 grants submitted, WLA earned the fourth highest overall score; Ecology noted this was a "very impressive feat given incredibly fierce competition."

The primary focus of the Program, which is being implemented now thru mid-2011, is to conduct pilot projects with two hotel companies to:

- implement at least three new environmental practices at each of their properties
- measure the business and environmental impacts
- share the results and lessons learned with industry peers, guests, and the public

The Program is intended to help hotels throughout the state save money, maximize marketing opportunities, and capture new business, while being better environmental stewards for the benefit of their staff and their local communities. It will result in case studies documenting the actions and outcomes at the pilot properties and, as a result, WLA will provide the industry with web-based resources and educational forums.

WLA chose a consulting team led by Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. of Seattle, WA as its professional partner to implement the Program. Since 1993, Cascadia has pioneered a sustainable future by providing consulting services on issues related to the convergence of people, business, and the environment. Bringing high-quality, creative, data-driven solutions to public and private sector clients across the country, Cascadia expanded from its original Seattle office to open a Berkeley office in 2009, and merged with Environmental Planning Consultants of San Jose earlier this year. Throughout its transitions, Cascadia's mission has remained consistent: make a difference to their clients and the environment. The consultant team also includes two other key partners, MeetGreen®, an internationally-recognized green meeting consultancy, and Colehour+Cohen, a Seattle-based PR and communications firm.

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As planned, our efforts since our kick off in March have been focused on the two companies selected as pilots for the program, Columbia Hospitality and Best Western Peppertree Inns of Washington. Under the leadership and with the expertise of our professional partner, Cascadia Consulting Group, we have been working collaboratively with each company's team to identify and spearhead a number of new green practices at each property. In particular, our project activities have included:

- Conducting kick-off meetings with the project team
- Collecting baseline utility, purchasing, and other hotel data
- Performing on-site green audits at Salish Lodge & Spa and Best Western Peppertree Inn Spokane Airport
- Preparing surveys for pilots' employees and guests about green lodging knowledge, awareness, and preferences
- Identifying new environmental actions for implementation at all seven pilot properties
- Creating a summary-level green action plan for each pilot
- Generating media attention for the participating pilot companies
- Implementing early actions with each property
- Planning our first regional workshop at the WLA Annual Convention in October
- Continuing to add new members to our green interest group

Members of the tourism industry have volunteered to serve on the Green Team as an advisory body and "brain trust" to the Association throughout the implementation of the grant. The Green Team:

- **Offers industry-relevant insights**, constructive feedback, and access to additional resources through meetings and conference calls.
- **Champions** and provides industry leadership to the Program.
- **Encourages** members to participate in grant project open houses and workshops, and to take advantage of the resources offered through the Program.
- **Assists** with and participates in recognition programs for grant pilot properties and other lodging properties that achieve certifications or notable environmental successes.
- **Participates** in open houses, workshops, and other Program events.
- **Assesses next steps** for continuing to foster green lodging in Washington at the completion of the grant project.

Encompassing the depth and breath of the tourism industry and its leaders, the Green Team includes representatives from each of the pilot companies and their properties, plus:

- Autumn Marks, Program Development-Foodservice & Lodging, Cascade Natural Gas
- Adam Knight, Director of Outlets, Fairmont Olympic Hotel
- Les Utley, General Manager, Heathman Hotel Kirkland
- Dan Miller, Vice President-Western Region, INNCOM International, Inc.
- Gerry Link, CHA
- Patrick Maher, Partner, The Maher Group, LLC
- Jerri Lane, Vice President-Convention Sales, Seattle's Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Keith Backsen, VP & Director of Convention Sales, Spokane Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Nancy Swanger, Director, Washington State University, School of Hospitality Business Management
- Tim Altier, Chief Engineer, Westin Bellevue Hotel

We invite you to visit our updated WLA green lodging website (<http://www.walodging.org/programs>) to learn more about the details. You will also gain access to a number of publicly available resources aimed at making green more attainable for hotels throughout our state.