



KindTraveler™

Supported by



Embedding Measurable Impact in Tourism: A California Case Study in Destination Stewardship

Presented by: Jessica Blotter, CEO &
Co-Founder, Kind Traveler

Turning Guest Stays Into Local Impact: A California Pilot

Partners:

7

destinations

99

accommodations

11+

nonprofits



This case study explores how a public-private coalition in California leveraged traveler desire, responsible tourism models, and impact measurement to turn guest stays into positive local outcomes.



\$265K+

DONATED

22 months

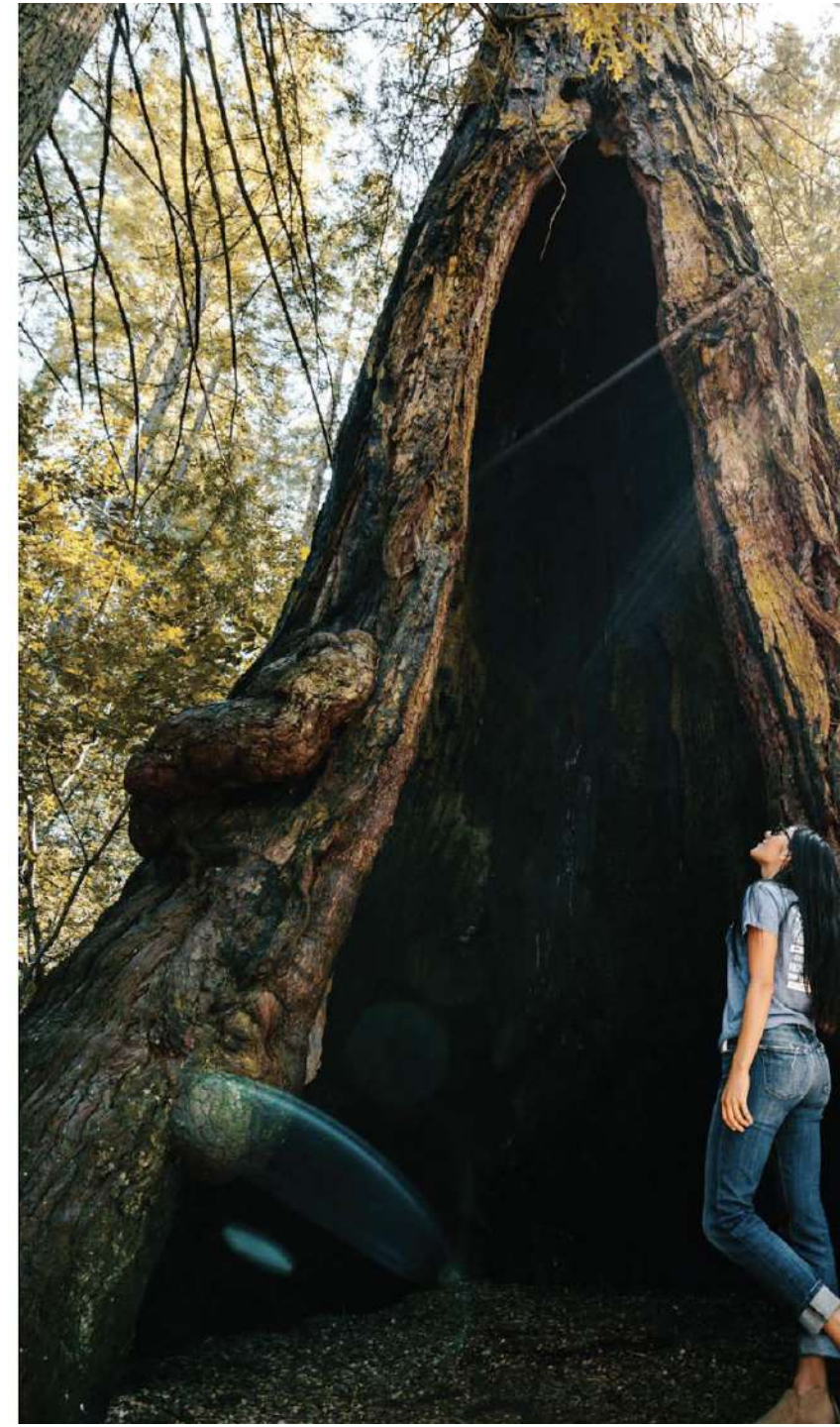
RESEARCH QUESTION + PURPOSE

- How can destination-aligned tourism, supported by hotel, nonprofit, and DMO collaboration, **deliver measurable community and environmental impact** while aligning with the GSTC Framework?
- Purpose: Validate a regenerative tourism model that **transforms guest stays into positive impact** for people and planet.



It turns out...

- **Traveler Intent Is Clear:**
71% want to give back, but nearly 50% are unsure how (Booking.com 2024, 2022)
- **Leakage Remains High:**
Only \$5 of every \$100 stays in local economies in developing countries (UNEP)
- **Demand for Regenerative Models:**
Tourism must shift toward equity, sustainability & climate resilience (UNWTO, 2021)
- **Case Significance:**
This model shows how DMOs, lodging partners & nonprofits can co-create measurable ESG outcomes



How the Model Works: Implementation + Impact Measurement

Destination

Lodging

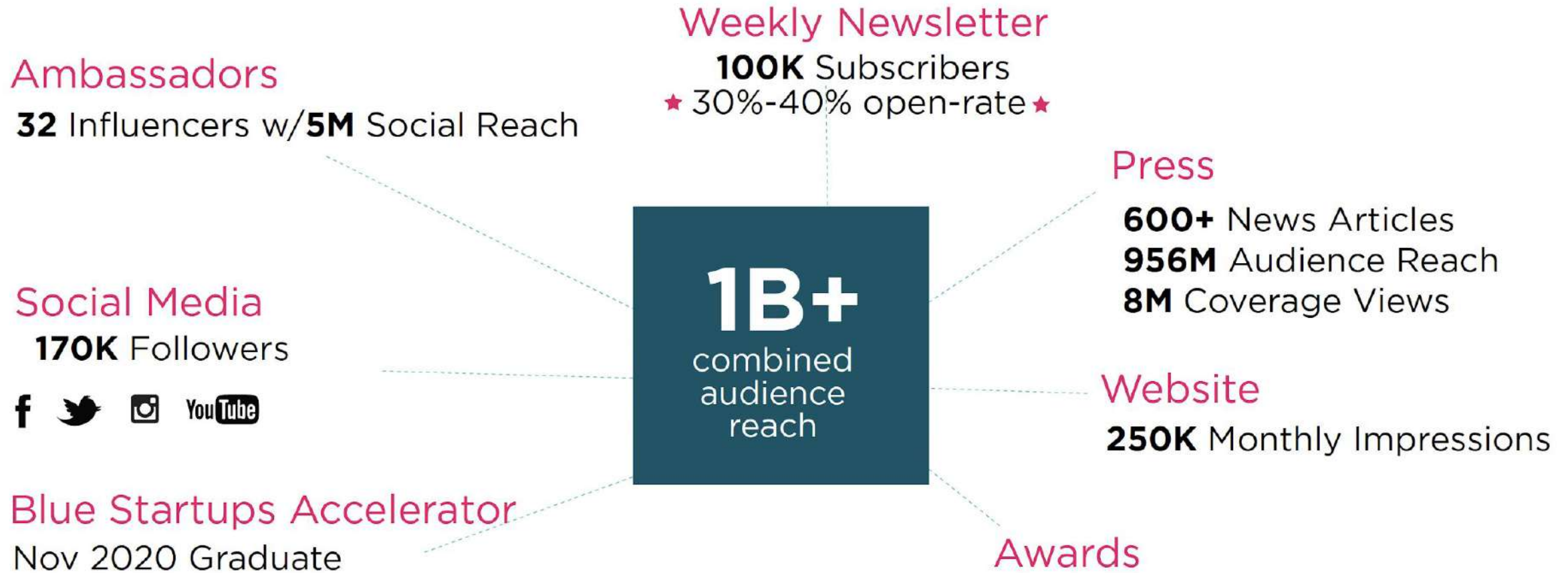
Local Causes

Live Report

- **Model:** Scalable statewide partnership model with Visit California
- **Partners:** 7 DMOs, 99 lodging partners, 11 local charities
- **Impact System:** Donations integrated into room rates (typically \$1/night)
- **Verification:** Monthly donation receipts + room nights verified by Kind Traveler
- **Measurement Tool:** Positive Impact Dashboards visualize results for each destination
- **Charity Selection:** Aligned with regional sustainability goals via DMO collaboration



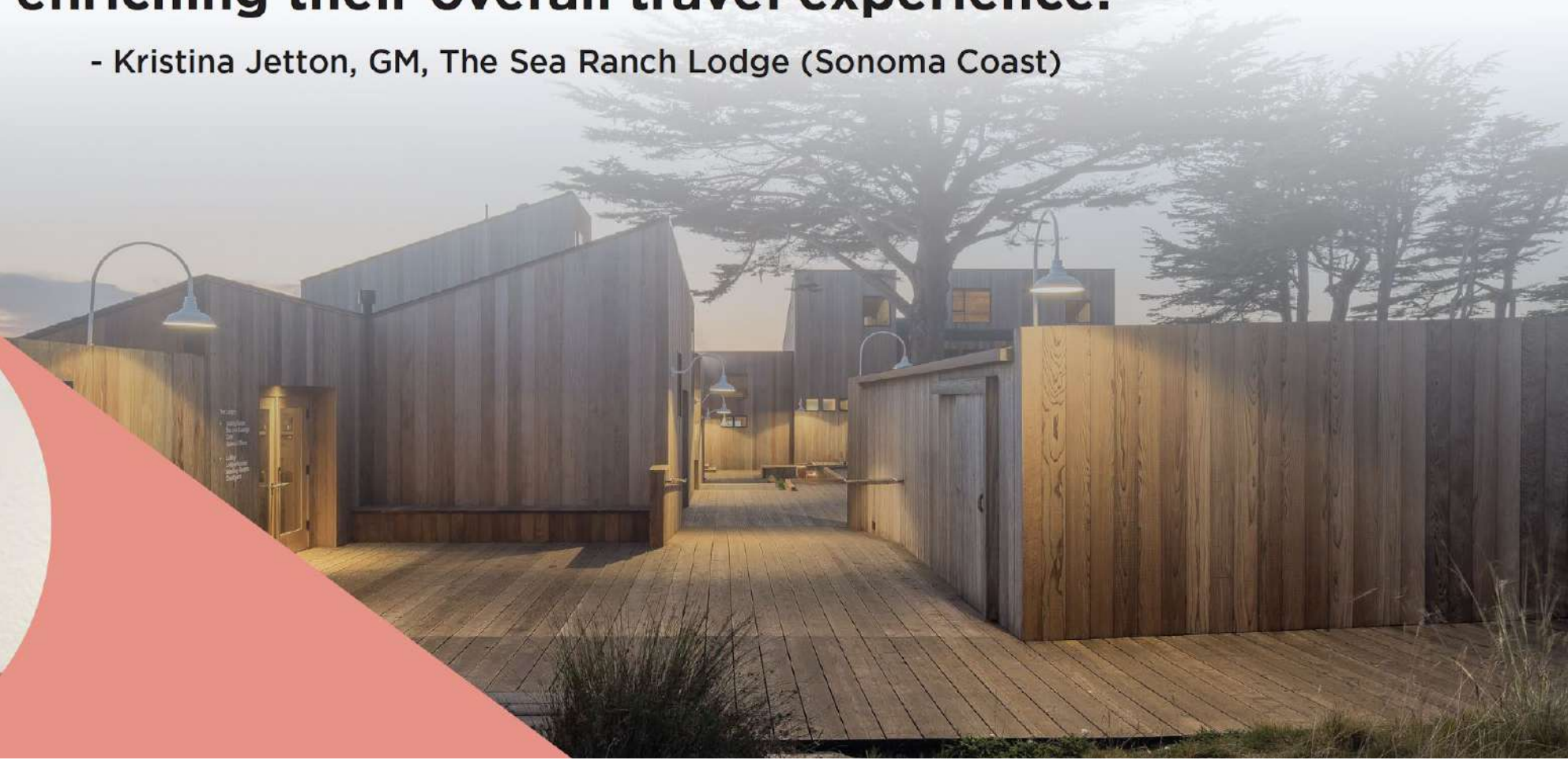
Visibility, Storytelling & PR Through Kind Traveler's Network: Owned & Earned Media Approach



“

Guests appreciate the chance to contribute to local causes and feel a deeper connection to the community, enriching their overall travel experience.

- Kristina Jetton, GM, The Sea Ranch Lodge (Sonoma Coast)



Wine Country Region

\$76,144

donated

499,025

lbs of river trash
removed



107,410

servings of rescued food
delivered



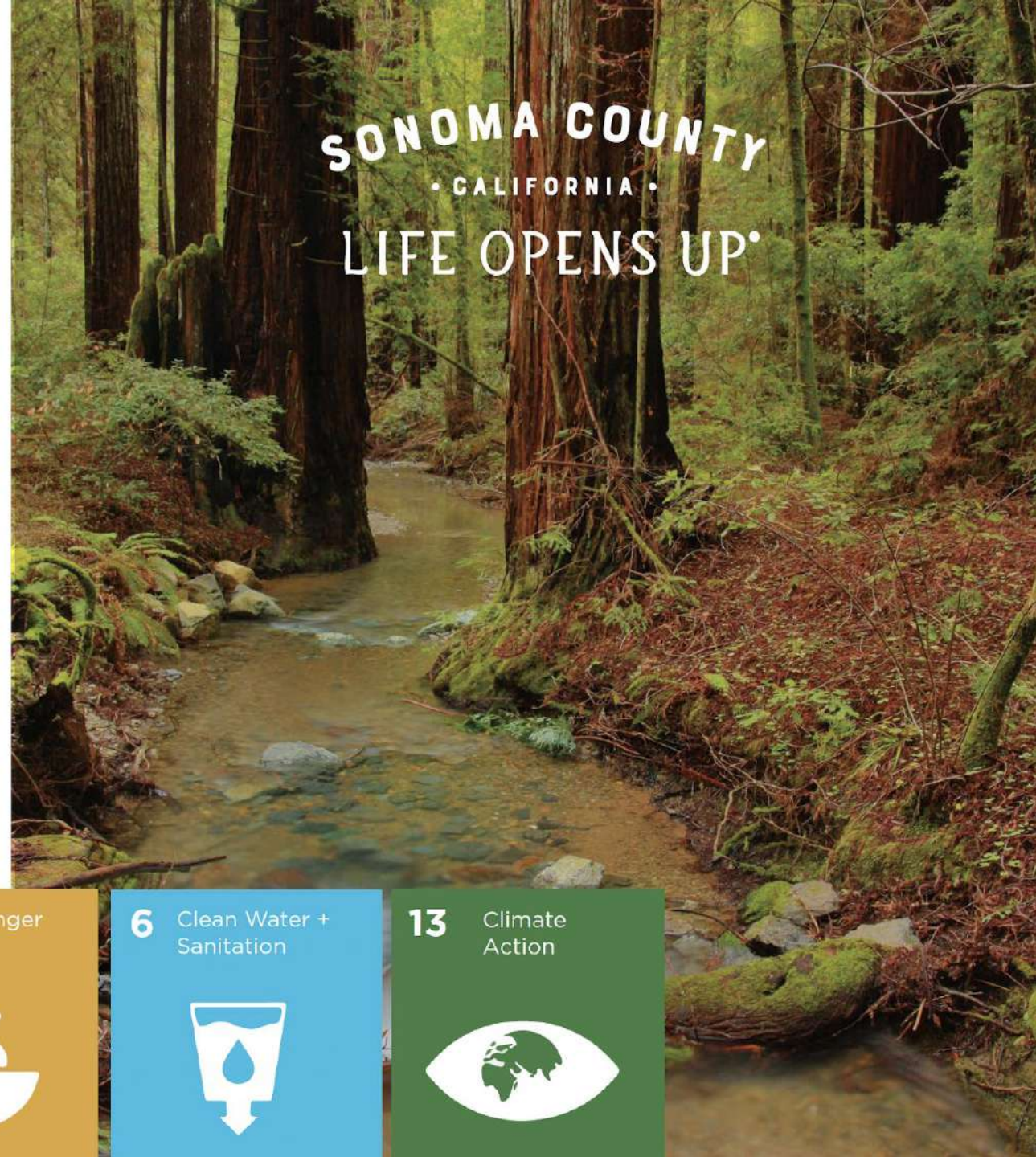
2 Zero Hunger



6 Clean Water +
Sanitation



13 Climate
Action



Central Coast City

\$85,000

donated

250

urban trees planted



11 Sustainable Cities
+ Communities



13 Climate
Action





Coastal Destination

\$19,885

donated

825

native species protected



1,163

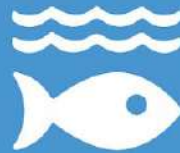
students reached through
edible garden education



4 Quality
Education



14 Life Below
Water



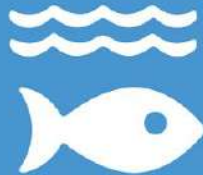
15 Life On
Land



LOVE CATALINA
ISLAND™



14 Life Below
Water



Island Destination

\$7,165

donated

1,818

marine meals served



261

underwater marine survey
dives funded



Desert Destination

\$28,635

donated

44,912

meals served to underserved
communities



3,482

participants in guided
environmental education hikes



visit  greater
palm springs
find your oasis

2 Zero Hunger



4 Quality
Education



13 Climate
Action





Fire Recovery

\$32,885

donated | live for only 2 months

rapid financial relief within 24 hours
to individuals and families affected
by wildfires in Los Angeles County.



1 No Poverty



3 Good Health +
Well-being



11 Sustainable Cities
+ Communities



13 Climate
Action



\$265,000

TOTAL CALIFORNIA DONATIONS

164%

INCREASE YOY

22

MONTHS

\$1M+

GLOBALLY





372
Pieces of Coverage

1.1B
Audience

3.72M
Estimated Views

262K
New Emails Acquired

159
Instagram Posts

Forbes

Condé Nast
Traveler

**TRAVEL+
LEISURE**



AFAR

**BUSINESS
INSIDER**

**GLOBAL
HEROES**



SB SUSTAINABLE
BRANDS



livehappy

prevue
meetings + incentives

TRAVELPULSE



WHEREVER**FAMILY**

Discussion & Implications

- **Scalable** across geographies, partners & ecosystems
- **Frictionless** for travelers and hotels—no tech integration needed
- **Transparent** with third-party validated dashboards
- **GSTC-aligned** across destination criteria
- **Story-driven** to emotionally engage travelers
- **Revenue-positive** for local nonprofits



GSTC Destination Criteria Alignment



- **A3: Monitoring & Reporting**
Transparent dashboards track & publish monthly impact metrics.
- **A4: Enterprise Engagement**
Tools support hotels & tourism businesses in sustainability adoption.
- **A7: Promotion & Information**
Messaging reflects destination values & community-driven impact.
- **B4: Support for Community**
Travelers give back directly—no volunteering needed.
- **D1: Protection of Sensitive Environments**
Donations fund habitat restoration & native species conservation.



Key Takeaways:

- **Make It Measurable:** Use transparent, real-time dashboards to show how tourism benefits local communities and ecosystems.
- **Engage Through Storytelling:** Pair local data with emotional storytelling to deepen traveler connection and drive behavior change.



References:

- Booking.com. (2024). Sustainable Travel Report. Retrieved from <https://www.booking.com>
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). (n.d.). Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030. Retrieved from <https://www.unep.org>
- United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) & GSTC. (2021). Baseline Report on Climate Action in Tourism. Retrieved from <https://www.unwto.org>
- Global Sustainable Tourism Council. (2023). GSTC Destination Criteria, Version 2.0. Retrieved from <https://www.gstcouncil.org>
- United Nations. (n.d.). The 17 Goals. Global Goals. Retrieved from <https://www.globalgoals.org>



TRAVEL+ LEISURE

“Kind Traveler offers a clever, easy-to-use system for both seeing the world and investing in making the world better.”

Presented by: Jessica Blotter, CEO & Co-Founder, Kind Traveler

Jblotter@KindTraveler.com | KindTraveler.com

