



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Suggested Headline: ROOST to Participate in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Pilot Program

Lake Placid, NY - The Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST) is proud to announce the organization will be participating in a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) pilot program with Travel Unity.

Travel Unity, a nonprofit focused on diversity in travel, recently launched DEI Standards for Travel & Tourism. This was developed with the input from more than 100 professionals across a variety of industries. The DEI Standards aim to assist travel companies and organizations in benchmarking their commitment to enhancing DEI in three primary categories - management and workforce, visitorship, and community impact - and serve as a roadmap for future efforts.

“We began working with ROOST in 2018 when we hosted the Travel Unity Summit in the Adirondacks and we look forward to continuing a partnership with them as they begin this next chapter,” stated Roni Weiss, Executive Director of Travel Unity. “Our standards and our approach to certification are rooted in the need for a commitment to a journey of change, active community involvement, and regular check-ins on how new developments are doing.”

In August 2020, Travel Unity invited tourism organizations that were “serious about change” to apply for the pilot of a DEI Certification Program. ROOST was selected to be one of five travel-based organizations from across the globe to participate in the inaugural program.

“We feel that the opportunity to participate in the pilot certification program will provide us with the tools to truly move the dial with regard to topics relating to diversity,” said Mary Jane Lawrence, Chief Operating Officer at ROOST. “Partnering with Travel Unity will allow us to take a holistic approach to being more inclusive as an organization, and in the work we do within the Adirondack Region.”

“Having the Travel Unity team's wealth of knowledge and network of contacts available to us as we move through this process will be invaluable,” added Savannah Doviak, who will be coordinating the program on behalf of ROOST as Special Projects Manager. “It’s more than a

one time training program, but rather a resource and an accountability check as we move forward.”

Additionally, ROOST has begun conversations with area Chamber of Commerce partners and other community organizations to build a network within the region to help advance these initiatives. “This is a great opportunity,” said Patrick Murphy, Director of the Saranac Lake Chamber of Commerce. “Having the ability to learn and grow as an organization and as a region will help make our communities more welcoming. We look forward to working with ROOST and Travel Unity.”

The Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism is the destination marketing and management organization for Hamilton and Essex counties, along with the communities of Tupper Lake and Saranac Lake, all located within the Adirondacks in New York State.

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