Tourism for Tomorrow Awards

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP AWARD

DESTINATION RØROS – NORWAY
WINNER

The old mining town of Røros, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1980, was originally established in 1646, and now hosts over 1 million visitors annually. With the end of mining in the late 1970’s, Destination Røros has been instrumental in facilitating a broad-based multi-stakeholder approach to reversing the area’s environmental degradation and economic decline and creating a thriving, sustainable tourism destination. Destination Røros’ action plan is based on six key areas of activity: maintenance and development of the World Heritage Site; introducing hospitality and local knowledge programmes to its members; encouraging environmental certification among its members; developing an integrated sustainability policy to be adopted by all Destination Røros members; positioning the region as a ‘health village’ in the Norwegian mountains. They are guided by a management plan that actively engages and builds cooperation among members and stakeholders. Since 2007, Destination Røros has also been a pilot project for Norway’s country-wide ‘Sustainable Tourism 2015’ initiative.

Emphasis is placed on showing good examples of how cultural and natural heritage sites as well as historical settings can be put to use in new contexts, thereby bringing tangible economic benefits to the local community. Destination Røros has launched initiatives to develop, support, and promote the local culture and indigenous heritage of the Sámi people. In addition, their efforts have also resulted in enhancing the natural environment, including an increase in the southern-most population of wild reindeer in Scandinavia. From the teaching of local traditions in dance, music, and cooking in local schools, to each high school class adopting and caring for a World Heritage site building, to ensuring that the old mining town, constructed entirely of wood, is inhabited year-round, a thriving modern community flourishes in the context of its traditions and history. Artisan trade collectives, support for locally-sourced produce and local farms in the Rørosmat collective, the on-going celebration of festivals such as the Winter Market that date back hundreds of years, all encourage cooperation, integration, and ongoing commitment to exemplary destination stewardship.