



Hawaii Ecotourism  
Association

PO Box 61796  
Honolulu, HI 96839  
Phone: (808) 235-5431  
hawaiiecotourism.org

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Contact: Annette Kaohelaulii  
Hawaii Ecotourism Association  
Email: [annettesadventures@juno.com](mailto:annettesadventures@juno.com)  
Phone: (808) 235-5431

## **HAWAII ECOTOURISM ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES 2009 ECOTOUR OPERATOR OF THE YEAR**

Honolulu, HI — February 16, 2009 — The Hawaii Ecotourism Association (HEA), an association of conscientious tour operators and responsible travel supporters, today announced **Hawaiian Sailing Canoe Adventures** as 2009's Ecotour Operator of the year award winner:

Each year, HEA recognizes a member company for their commitment to the principles of ecotourism and sustainable travel in Hawaii with the Ecotour Operator of the Year award. Submissions for the Reviewed Status designation by HEA members are evaluated by means of a peer review process conducted by a panel of HEA members who score each candidate's performance in the areas of 1.) Environmental Conservation, 2.) Cultural and Historical Stewardship, 3.) Contributions to Local Community, and 4.) Education and Training.

"This year marks the 14th anniversary of the HEA, and we are delighted to honor this young, entrepreneurial couple who are sharing the excitement and adventure of a sailing canoe with our visitors. [Hawaiian Sailing Canoe Adventures](#) is the ideal ecotourism offering because it encompasses both cultural and nature based tourism and because it provides an authentic, very personal experience." HEA Founding member and President Annette Kaohelaulii

Members who complete the review process are recognized by the HEA for two years; honored with the organization's "Reviewed" seal (an emblem of the association's mission); and one of the reviewed members group, is selected as the winner of the "Hawaii Ecotourism Association's Ecotour Operator of the Year Award" for its exemplary role in the industry. Operators who pass the review are expected to maintain their commitment to the principals of ecotourism and practice of sustainable travel for the following two years.

The recipient of the HEA's 2009 Ecotour Operator of the Year award along with the 2009 Travel Writer of the Year award will be recognized at HEA's Annual Awards Luncheon in Honolulu scheduled in April 2009. Additional information on HEA's Review Process is available at [www.hawaiiecotourism.org/Reviewprocess](http://www.hawaiiecotourism.org/Reviewprocess)

**About Hawaiian Sailing Canoe Adventures: Ecotour Operator of the Year 2009.** Hawaiian Sailing Canoe Adventures, owned by Liz and Sage Spaulding, embodies the best of ecotourism in Hawaii. Their unique ecotour is based squarely on perpetuating a critical component of the Hawaiian culture, the Hawaiian Sailing Canoe. By nature, the business is sustainable on an energy level since the canoe is powered only by wind and human energy, but the owners go an extra mile and utilize a biodiesel vehicle for any peripheral on land transport associated with the business. As part of their community outreach Hawaiian Sailing Canoe Adventures donates tours to youths in the community so they can experience firsthand the cultural heritage of Hawaii, providing them with a depth of cultural understanding and a sense of place.

**About Hawaii Ecotourism Association:** The Hawaii Ecotourism Association is a 501 (C) (3) Non profit educational organization whose members represent travel businesses, governmental organizations, educational institutions, non-profits, environmental organizations, business and individuals – all working together to guide the development of ecotourism in Hawaii. To learn about the benefits of Joining and supporting HEA, visit [www.hawaiiecotourism.org/joinus](http://www.hawaiiecotourism.org/joinus)