



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANTARCTICA TOUR OPERATORS

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IAATO is a member organization founded in 1991 to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic.



Polar Expedition Experts Descend on Sturbridge, Massachusetts for International Field Guide Conference

Conference gathers guides, expedition leaders and operations managers working for International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) and the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO)

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Sturbridge, Massachusetts USA: Polar field guides are descending on Sturbridge, Massachusetts today for the third bi-annual International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) and the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) joint Polar Field Staff Conference.

The two-and-a-half-day meeting, which started today (MON) has drawn more than 80 guides, expedition leaders and operations managers working for AECO and IAATO with the aim of sharing learning and knowledge to support the two associations' joint mission of promoting safe and environmentally responsible travel to the polar regions.

The packed program will include sessions on responsible leadership in the field, new developments, projects and initiatives in the Arctic and Antarctic, managing visitor expectations, Antarctic Ambassadorship, cultural considerations in Arctic communities, UN Clean Seas and citizen science projects.

Susan Adie, head of the IAATO Polar Field Operations Committee, said: "We are delighted to be hosting our bi-annual Polar Field Staff Conference with AECO and to be welcoming more than 80 delegates here to further our shared mission.

"Field staff are at the forefront of our responsible tourism operations, so this meeting is a hugely important date in our calendar.



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“Managing human activity in the poles to ensure the unique qualities are treasured and preserved is a huge collective effort but one which ultimately relies heavily on those leading expeditions in the Antarctic and the Arctic – the front line of responsible polar tourism.”

Formed in 1991, IAATO’s commitment to furthering its mission and vision has drawn support from government departments around the world, through the Antarctic Treaty System, scientists, environmentalists and other important polar partners, collectively facilitating the management of human activity on and around the white continent and sub-Antarctic islands.

Event coordinator, IAATO’s Erin Delaney, said: “With AECO and IAATO operating within different seasons, it is really important for both organizations – to come together and discuss experiences and ideas.

“It is an enormous privilege to travel to the poles – and no one appreciates that more than those who lead visitors on expeditions there; educating guests about the global environmental importance of the Arctic and Antarctic, and transforming tourists into ambassadors for the ongoing preservation of these special places.

“With so much knowledge and enthusiasm for the poles in the room this, our third bi-annual gathering promises to be lively and productive one.”

Ends -

Notes to Editors

The biannual joint AECO/IAATO Polar Field Staff Conference is aimed at operation managers, expedition leaders and senior field staff, who are working for members of AECO and/or IAATO. This year’s theme is responsible field leadership. The two-and-a-half-day conference will take place at Publick House in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, from September 22 to 25.

For press enquiries, please call Amanda Lynnes, IAATO Head of Communications and Environment via alynnes@iaato.org or +44 7879777036 (Timezone GMT)

About the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO)

IAATO is a member organization founded in 1991 to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic. IAATO Members work together to develop, adopt and implement operational standards that mitigate potential environmental impacts. These standards have proved to be successful including but are not limited to: Antarctic site-specific guidelines, site selection criteria, passenger to staff ratios, limiting numbers of passengers ashore, boot-



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washing guidelines and the prevention of the transmission of alien organisms, wilderness etiquette, ship scheduling and vessel communication procedures, emergency medical evacuation procedures, emergency contingency plans, reporting procedures, marine wildlife watching guidelines, station visitation policies and much more. IAATO has a global network of over 100 members.

Contact

For IAATO-specific press enquiries, please call:

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About the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO)

Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators is an international organization for expedition cruise operators and associates in the Arctic, dedicated to managing environmentally-friendly, safe and considerate cruise tourism. The 75 international members, included 46 vessel operators, owners and management, and 60 expedition cruise vessels that are organized by AECO, represent the great majority of these operations in the Arctic.

For AECO-specific press enquiries, please call:

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