

Gaia Riverlodge

Sustainable Management Plan

Environmental Plan

Water:

Our primary source for water is natural spring water. The water is channeled primarily from the source into a cistern. Between the catchment of the spring water and cistern exists an inline bypass valve so as to be able to divert water during the rainy season. The cistern is sealed and guttered at the corrugated roof to sustainably replenish itself from rainfall in the rainy season which guarantees clean water.

Water is pumped from the primary cistern into a secondary tank for sediment filtration and chlorination. Thirdly, water then flows into another tank for activated carbon filtration and water softening.

Reverse Osmosis systems are set up at key points for the distribution of water for washing etc. at our restaurant and staff housing.

Guests are provided with a recyclable container of drinking water daily and are allowed to refill any time at the restaurant if they desire. Crystal purified water is purchased in reusable five gallon containers for guests consumption.

Guests are asked to conserve water through non-offensive written notifications.

-Low flush toilets, and water efficient faucets and showers are utilized in all cabanas as well in the restrooms at our restaurant.

<http://www.deltafaucet.com/company/watersense/index.html>

<http://www.moen.com/eco-performance/commitment>

<http://www.americanstandard-us.com/pressroom/flush-more-with-less-american-standard-blends-maximum-toilet-performance-with-water-efficiency/>

-At present our grey water is released via soak away systems to reduce impact to the environment. Pipelines are treated with enzymes to aid in the decomposition process.

-Our sewage system is structured with a three layer septic tank. Dark water then flows to a bio-digester, which then flows to a soak away system that releases water via leach field to minimize

impact on the environment. Sewage is also treated with enzymes to aid in its decomposition process. Sewage is also extracted by a locally certified company by the name of Best Sanitation Ltd.

-Most recently our laundry building has been guttered at the roof to take advantage of rain water for our laundry operation as a backup.

-Branded reusable water bottles are now provided for tours and transportation for guests in an effort to minimize single use plastics.

Waste Management:

Gaia Riverlodge makes every effort to recycle where possible. Glass bottled beers and sodas are purchased mostly and supplier offers a deposit on the returned bottles. Wine bottles and other liquor bottles with quart capacity are given to a local small scale producer of coconut oil.

-Waste oil from engine services are recycled and used to protect the wooden frames of our raised vegetable beds at our organic garden.

- Soda bottles given on tours are recyclable

-Guests are provided with reusable branded water bottles for their stay and activities

-Papers are printed on both sides and recycled.

- Used cooking is accumulated and used at our organic garden to combat pests.

- Picnic lunches are provided in reusable snapshut containers.

Waste Management Protocol

Plastics

Plastic bottles produced by Bowen and Bowen for bar beverages are accumulated and returned to the supplier for a deposit.

Single use plastic on tours has been eliminated.

As a result of single use plastics being eliminated on tours. Larger reusable 5 gallon containers of water has been increased to accommodate the extra use of water for consumption on tours.

Plastic gallons are utilized at our organic garden as a tool to organically combat pests.

Ice cream containers with covers are reused at the staff kitchen for the storage of condiments and food

5 Gallon containers for cooking are reused for the transportation of used oil and given to a local producer of biogas.

Refuse: All none-recyclable material will be classified as garbage which will be transported to a respective dumpster.

Glass

Bowen & Bowen glass Bottles: Beers, Coca Cola, other sodas, are all accumulated in their recyclable crates for return to supplier. The supplier provides a deposit on their return.

Clear Glass Bottles (quart capacity): All clear bottles of quart capacity should be placed in the bottle recycling crate at the bar and given to Mr. Rosendo Juaraz for the production of coconut oil after accumulation.

Dark Glass Bottles (quart capacity): All dark bottles of quart capacity should be placed in the bottle recycling crate at the bar and given to WL Event Rentals and Decor for the production ornaments.

Other: Where possible, all unrecyclable glass material will be crushed and accumulated in the respective bin.

Organics:

All compostable organic material should be placed in the composter for fertilizer.

Chicken manure is accumulated from our chicken coop to use as fertilizers at our organic garden.

Paper:

Paper Re-use: All used office paper with print on one side shall be placed in recycle paper bin for a secondary use.

Newspaper: These items shall be stored in a dry state and used to wrap gift shop items that are fragile.

Cardboard: Card board boxes are all used to transport vegetables from our organic garden to our sister property.

Refuse: All none-compostable material will be classified as garbage which will be transported to a respective dumpster.

Cans: All cans should be crushed and accumulated in the respective bin.

Landscaping – Gaia Riverlodge is located within the very scenic Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve, one of Belize’s largest protected areas. The area is primarily composed of Caribbean Pine Savannah which was victim of a Southern Bark Beetle infestation over 20 years ago. Due to the infestation, which only affected the pine trees, we were forced to fill in the gaps around the property with tropical trees and plants including fruit trees that provide food for some of the local fauna in the area. The property sits on the very edge of the pine forest and is bordered to the north and west by the Eljio Panty National Park which is composed of tropical broad leaf forest.

Energy

As an off grid property Gaia has adapted its primary source of electricity as a renewable source of power by capitalizing on the natural flow of water in the Privassion Creek to generate hydro-electricity. The company had embarked on a very significant investment to optimize the existing hydro system to improve its performance. In the past the power system generated excess power in off peak times of the day’s operation and there was no means of storage; power fluctuation was also an issue. The current system has adapted 48 highly potent batteries and three inverters all engineered to collude and cater to the power needs of the lodge, which is distributed in a very stable manner. Excess power in off peak times are now stored in our battery bank and utilized at peak.

Our power system also allows for our back up diesel engine generator to subsidize through the same channel in the event that our battery bank runs low on power. Fortunately, hydro electricity is generated 24 hours daily and both power sources are able to feed into the battery bank simultaneously for power distribution to the lodge’s operation.

-As of July 2023, Gaia Riverlodge has committed to engage in the use of solar energy. SESB (local electrical engineering company) has curated a solar system to meet our power needs as we improved the culinary experience at Gaia, hence, more demand for cooling capacity and power.

It is expected to have solar added to the grid by late December 2023.

The following set of protocol has been adapted with energy conservation in mind:

- Laundry to operate one washer and dryer for up to 30% occupancy (5 rooms being occupied)
- Kitchen extractor fan is turned off immediately after shifts
- Photo Cells are utilized for pathway lighting
- Energy efficient bulbs are used throughout the property

- Pathways are lit with low voltage systems
- Water heating and laundry dryers are powered with LPG
- Employees are advised to turn off their lights when quarters are unoccupied
- Guests are advised during their orientation to kindly turn off their lights and fans when they leave their cabanas (included in guest information booklet)
- Tram/funicular is operated on guest request within the hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
- All workstation computers are turned off at the end of the days shift
- All restaurant and lobby lights are turned off at closing time
- Ice production should be done between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am being time of lowest energy consumption period off peak hours
- Light bulbs purchased for common areas and rooms are energy efficient with uniformity in color
- Staff television is turned off at night.
- For evening check-ins lights are turned on upon delivering guests luggage in the rooms prior to guest's entrance.
- Restaurant lights are turned off where not necessary in the day time and completely after closing hours.
- Candle lighting are used on restaurant table for extra lighting and also for pathway lighting to the restaurant in the evenings.
- All workstation lights in the kitchen are turned off at the end of the shift.

Vehicle Engines:

As part of our initiative to guest comfort the company has also made investments in our tour operation by acquiring our fleet of vehicles from Belize Diesel and Equipment Ltd and Bravo Motors (local dealerships). Vehicle servicing is scheduled and is done by our in-house mechanic. The fact that our fleet is all diesel engines makes them more economic on fossil fuel which gives more mileage per gallon. The most recent additions to our fleet has eco-boost feature.

As a requirement, a government environmental tax was paid on the importation of these vehicles.

Preventative Maintenance

Gaia Riverlodge's preventative maintenance schedule is outlined as follows for the specified items.

Hydro Electric System: Three times per week as outlined in our calendar. Maintenance includes the greasing of bearings, tightening of belts, and inspection of grid.

Monitor Power level: This is done daily by our maintenance department three times during the day (7am, 12 noon, and 5 pm) by our maintenance department and hourly by our night security from 9:00 pm to 6:00am by our night security.

Water Cistern Level: This inspection is done in the morning by our head maintenance personnel at 7:00 am and at 9:00 pm by our Night Security.

Battery Hydration: This is done at the beginning of every month

Tram: The inspection of our tram is done daily. Oil Level, cables, and shaft are to be inspected prior to use.

Diesel Generator: Our generator is serviced every 500 hours

Reverse Osmosis Inspection: Three times a week by our maintenance personnel as outlined by our calendar, serviced as needed.

Chlorine Inspection: Three times a week by our maintenance personnel as outlined by our calendar, restock as needed

Activate Carbon Service: The servicing of our activated carbon filtration system is done three times a month as recommended and scheduled as per our calendar.

Enzyme Application: The application of enzymes to our septic tank systems are applied three times a month as outlined by our calendar

Floor polishing at Restaurant: The polishing of the floors at our restaurant is done four times a month as outlined by our calendar.

Island & Bathroom inspection at Falls: The servicing of this area is done daily by our maintenance department.

Water Meter: The reading of our water meters are taken at the beginning and the end of each month to track the consumption of water.

Nature Trail: Our nature trail is inspected and raked once a month as outlined by our calendar

Ice Machine Water Filter: The filter on our ice machine is to be changed every two months at the middle of the month. Our ice machine has been acquired in December 2015.

Gaia Riverlodge Vehicle Maintenance

Log

Vehicle ID _____
Mileage: _____
Date: _____

Windsheild Washer	
Radiator Check	
Oil filter (every 10,000 KM)	
AC Filter	
Fuel Filter	
Air Filter	
Engine Oil	
Transmission Oil	
Front Differential Oil	
Rear Differential Oil	
Front Brakes Pads	
Rear Brakes Pads	

Wipers	
Front shocks	
Rear Shocks	
Brakes Lights	
Reverse Lights	
Signal Lights	
Hazard Lights	
Fog Lights	
Brake Fluid	
Signal Lights	
Power Steering fluid	
Tires	

Service Conducted by: _____

Gaia Riverlodge Vehicle Maintenance
(Mileage Tracker)

Next Service _____

Technician:

Oil Filter	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fuel Filter	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air Filter	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
AC Refiner	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Insurance Due: _____

License Due: _____

Gaia Riverlodge Vehicle Maintenance

Sustainable Business Plan

Customer Satisfaction – Gaia Riverlodge aims to give guest the best service possible. Quality management is an on-going process on property, whereby all employees and respective departments are knowledgeable of the company’s standards. Our Front Office produces daily occupancy reports on arrivals, stay-overs, departures, and tours and transfers for interdepartmental communication. This act as a quality assurance measure to ensure that all departments are informed of the daily activities and guests’ status. Clients now receive a digital survey via email after checkout for qualitative feedback, this eliminates the use of paper for this purpose. Guests are also encouraged at checkout to post their feedback at https://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g5550887-d308799-Reviews-Gaia_Riverlodge-Mountain_Pine_Ridge_Reserve_Cayo.html to share their experience with future travelers. In order to assure customer satisfaction, we are constantly improving wherever possible.

Business Relationships – The establishment of business relationships is an ongoing process. Our main goal is to give the locals in the nearby communities our first preference. However, we are always open to explore our options and giving other suppliers the opportunity for business. Relationships are readily established with entities that share the same business ethic, such as reliability, honesty and professionalism, as we do. As we engage in product development we also expand our business relationships. Gaia Riverlodge now collaborates with the Itzamna Society who are an NGO charged with the management of the Elijio Pany National Park. We pay an entrance fee of \$10 per person for each tour that leads through park. Gaia Riverlodge also collaborates with Belize Family Adventures, Chaac Mo’ol Adventures, Mountain Equestrian Trails, Green Hills Butterfly Farm, Calico Jacks, Authentic Travel, Ajaw Chocolate, and the San Antonio Women’s group.

Legal Compliance – Gaia Riverlodge complies with all legal and licensing requirements in Belize, inclusive of Hotel, Restaurant, and Tour Operator’s License. We have gone through the process of being “regularized” and recognized under the laws of Belize.

Communications – Through multiple mediums, such as our website, social media, verbal communication and our reservations circuit, we will be able to convey the relevant information on the company’s sustainable development plan and future endeavors in the “go green” initiative. In addition to this, we have developed a relationship with Zoi Agency who has strategically assisted with effective public relations outreach. (<http://agence-zoi.com/en/about/>) <https://www.gaiariverlodge.com/awards-reviews/>

Other partnerships include our relationships with reputable booking engines such as Expedia, Booking.com, Mr. & Mrs Smith, Tablet, and SLH among other wholesale travel companies that feature Gaia on their website.

As part of our digital outreach we have recently become more engaged with social media to convey what Gaia is all about. <https://www.instagram.com/gaiaRiverlodge/>

Language – Belize is an English speaking country and the primary language spoken at Gaia Riverlodge is English. We have several bilingual front line employees and can easily accommodate Spanish speaking clients.

Food Choices – All meals at the resort are cooked and served with fresh ingredients and vegetables obtained mostly from our own organic garden. Our dishes highlight both international and local cuisine as well as cater to different dietary needs.

Sustainable Social and Cultural Plan

Local Employment – Gaia Riverlodge has been committed to the Development of our local talents and skills. All employees are Belizeans inclusive of our management team. The higher percentage of our staff is from the nearby communities of San Antonio, El Progreso Village and San Ignacio Town. We hire and train local persons in high level management positions as well as more standard positions.

Employee Training – As a growing lodge almost all of our employee training is done by department supervisor with the assistance of our management team. We prefer this type of employee training since it enhances their work site experience and address issues currently relating to the relevant department. When possible, we also encourage all employees to participate in different workshops, trainings and skill development opportunities offered by other organizations. All employees are fully informed of the Company policies and perspectives on sustainability and are also educated on the environmentally sensitive issues related to their particular area. Employees are encouraged to share the company's environmental policies with our guests, whenever the opportunity arises.

- Gaia Riverlodge is committed to yearly first aid training for its staff members
- As a new member of the Belize Hotel Association, Gaia Riverlodge is committed to take advantage of yearly industry training organized by this association.

Community Development– Given our unique location of Gaia Riverlodge, our presence give us the opportunity to be a part of the development of nearby community of San Antonio village, el Progreso, Cristo Rey and also nearby towns of Santa Elena/San Ignacio. Our involvement includes employment, hiring of local tradesmen and companies, purchasing of goods within those communities and cultural inspired tours that highlight our neighboring communities. As a

human development initiative Gaia participate in the internship programs offered by the Cayo Center of Employment Training.

Gaia Riverlodge has also partnered with pack for a purpose for guests to be able to donate school supplies to needy students. [Gaia Riverlodge - Pack for a Purpose](#)

Gaia Riverlodge has also partnered with Kind Traveler which allows guests the opportunity to make a financial contribution to The Corner Stone Foundation who manages a feeding program for needy students. [Gaia Riverlodge, San Ignacio, Belize | Kind Traveler](#)

Housing –Gaia Riverlodge provides on-site housing for employees who live outside of the nearby villages or may choose to stay on the premises due to the long travel distances to and from the lodge. Staff housing has been designed to provide the necessary comforts needed for short or long term stays. Separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms have been established for male and female employees. Existing amenities: Staff kitchen quarter, staff cook, staff laundry area, a staff telephone, television and PlayStation entertainment system. We are committed to improving these staff amenities where possible.

Health and Safety – Our general staff are trained in First-Aid and CPR. Additional employee training includes emergency management and Search and Rescue. We have rendered aid to our neighboring hotels in both fire and other related emergencies. The general staff have been immunized against measles, mumps, covid19, and rubella under a program by the local health department. Sporting activities have been encouraged recently as friendly soccer matches has transpired with neighboring establishments. All restaurant employees have been certified for food handlers safety.

Privacy Commitment <http://www.gaiariverlodge.com/policies/>

Protecting your personal information and privacy is important to us, and we want to explain to you our online information practices and the way your information is gathered and used. This statement applies to all information submitted to or gathered on the GAIARIVERLODGE.COM website. GAIA RIVERLODGE is the sole owner of the information gathered on this site. We will not sell, share, or rent this information to others in ways differing from what is disclosed in this statement.

Personal Information <http://www.gaiariverlodge.com/policies/>

We use the information you provide about yourself when placing an inquiry only to respond to that inquiry. We do not share this information with outside parties, except to the extent necessary to complete the inquiry or request. We use return email addresses to answer the email we receive. These addresses are not used for any other purpose, and are not shared with outside parties.

Cookies <http://www.gaiariverlodge.com/policies/>

A cookie is a piece of data stored on the user's hard drive containing information specific to the user, such as login or order information. The use of cookies helps to personalize your visit to our website and also minimizes the number of times you have to supply login information. We use a cookie only to identify whether you are a return visitor.

Commitment to Data Security

GAÏA RIVERLODGE takes every precaution to protect our website users' information and to ensure a safe and secure online experience for our customers. We want you to be assured that personal information such as your name, address and, if required, your credit card number will be kept safe throughout your entire reservation experience. To prevent unauthorized access, maintain data accuracy, and ensure the correct use of information, we have implemented the appropriate physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information we collect online and otherwise. <http://www.gaiariverlodge.com/policies/>