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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEADING SPA INDUSTRY EXPERTS DEVELOP FIRST SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR SPAS

Spas intent on greening their operations have a new strategic tool to work with as the result of an intensive three-day meeting organized by **Green Spa Network**, a trade association devoted to greening the spa industry. The organization's first Green Spa Congress, held in Atlanta, GA on September 29-October 1, has developed the GSN Sustainability Assessment Tool – GSN SAT - to assist GSN member spas in their migration to becoming greener businesses.

This is the first tool of its kind developed specifically for the spa industry. During three days of intensive meetings, 24 members of Green Spa Network (GSN) from all parts of the country and throughout the spa industry met to hammer out the industry's first sustainability assessment tool.

The team used as a starting point the SCORE model, an innovative benchmarking tool used by cities, organizations and businesses to bring sustainability principles into all aspects of their operations. Darcy Hitchcock, SCORE co-developer, led participants through a series of exercises to identify the best practices on a range of sustainability issues from energy management to community involvement. Industry experts in spa marketing, architecture, design, equipment, human resources, skin care products and operations worked together to generate the spa industry's first sustainability assessment tool.

A key goal of GSN is to enable spa professionals to choose chemically clean and ethically produced skin/personal care products. Mark Wuttke, global sustainable business leader, gave a comprehensive presentation on the current lack of transparency, traceability, and accountability; in regards to standards for skin/personal care products in the US, and the emergence of natural and organic certification programs worldwide. A process for making conscious informed choices was developed at the congress as part of the assessment tool.

This event was the first of its kind. "I know of no other forum in which a group of spa professionals representing every aspect of the industry have gathered to go beyond talking about sustainability to actually building the tools that we need to get there," says Michael Stusser, founder of Osmosis Day Spa and GSN board president. "Now we have a way for members to measure themselves and to feed their experiences back into the assessment process. Our attendees were so enthusiastic they asked for another Congress in six months!"

GSN's Sustainability Assessment Tool is not intended to serve as a certification, but rather as a series of benchmarks and goals with which individual organizations can construct their own unique path to greening. Available in beta, the GSN SAT is now being field-tested by a group of participating spas.

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Led by an Award-Winning Facilitator

Darcy Hitchcock, the meeting's facilitator, co-founded AXIS Performance Advisors. Together with partner Marsha Willard, Ms. Hitchcock developed SCORE, a sustainability benchmarking tool that can be applied throughout all business sectors. Her award-winning book, "The Business Guide to Sustainability" is a leading text on corporate sustainability.

Event Patrons Share the Art of Tea

Congress sponsor Chado-En Tea of Bodega Bay, CA underwrote the conference and provided participants with an enchanting array of green teas. The meeting was hosted by Cici Coffee and Celia Tully of Natural Body Spas of Atlanta.

About the Organization

Green Spa Network is a trade association whose mission is to:

- Bring sustainable operating practices to the spa industry.
- Facilitate education, research and alliances in sustainable business practices.
- Promote the natural connections between personal wellbeing, economic sustainability, and the health of our planet.

Attendees Included:

Roberto Arjona, Rancho La Puerta	Dianna Jones, Absolute Nirvana
Sheila Armen, Strong House Spa	Doug McCord, Moran Architects
Holli Beckwith, WTS International	Jim Morrin, The Morrin Group
Tina Berger, WTS International	Peter Plishka, Natural Body
Twila Caldwell, Spa Development	Rhana Pytel, Gaia Spa
Cici Coffee, Natural Body	Michael Stusser, Osmosis Day Spa Sanctuary
Mark Dauenhauer, Naturopathica	Lisa Sykes, Universal Companies
Lara Davidson - Spa@Pebble Beach	Donna & Nez Tokugawa, Chado-En Tea Docents
Jonathan Paul DeVerville, Alamo Spa	Celia Tully, Natural Body
Darcy Hitchcock, AXIS Performance Advisors	Mark Wuttke, Wuttke Group
Pam Irvin, Sustainable Spas	Marci Zaroff, Under The Canopy

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