

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Starwood makes waves with water conservation initiative

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*The St. Regis Monarch Beach*

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By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Starwood Hotels and Resorts is furthering its efforts to reduce water usage across all its properties.

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**Luxury Daily**

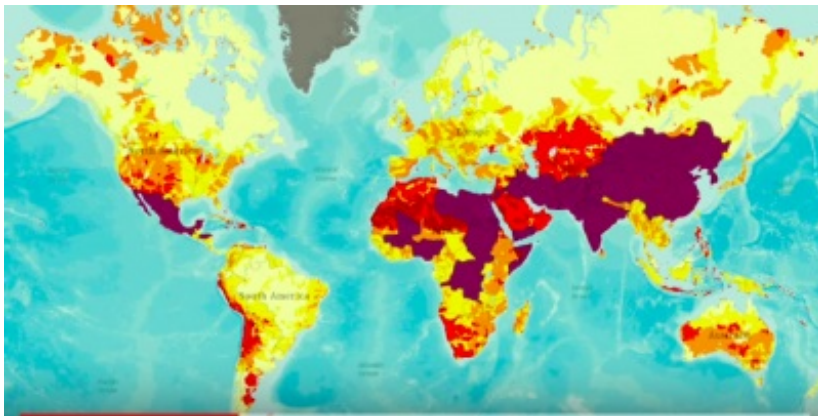
Efforts to conserve water will include more efficient irrigation, low-flow faucets, collecting and recycling water and an option for customers to request reduced housekeeping services in exchange for Starpoints, a voucher or a charitable donation. The initiative cements Starwood as a leader in water conservation efforts, emphasizes its global awareness and is likely to appeal to a younger, more environmentally-conscious demographic.

"Many properties incorporate environmental activities and education into their experience," said Ken Siegel, chief administrative officer, general counsel and head of global citizenship at [Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide](#), New York. "For example, in addition to harvesting rain water, reducing water consumption, using water filtration systems and other initiatives, The Andaman, a Luxury Collection Resort, Langkawi [Malaysia], invites guests to visit the Marine Life Laboratory and its coral nursery, take reef walks and even help rehabilitate the ocean by placing new coral on the reef."

## Making waves

Starwood has unveiled both an infographic and a video that contain statistics about water usage and the chain's conservation goals. In 2008, the brand announced their 30/20 plan, marking the start of the effort to reduce energy usage by 30 percent and water usage by 20 percent by 2020.

According to the infographic, Starwood had nearly attained its goal by the end of 2014, reducing water usage by 17 percent and saving upwards of 307 million gallons of water and \$2.1 million in the process. In addition, Starwood has diverted 1 million pounds of waste from landfills, created nearly 3 million bars of soap and raised \$30 million over the course of its 20-year partnership with UNICEF.



The video, entitled "Starwood's Water Story: Thinking Beyond Conservation," includes footage from Showtime's "Years of Living Dangerously," emphasizing the link between water conservation efforts and global warming. It also contains a heat map depicting the relationship between critical water issues and global conflict, areas in which Starwood operates or will operate in the future. The attention given to the Middle East and Africa emphasizes the role of water conservation in reducing violent conflict around the world.

In addition to allowing customers the option of declining housekeeping, Starwood will implement on-site filtration systems to reduce the usage of plastic bottles, allowing consumers the opportunity to participate in water conservation efforts. While the efforts themselves may attract a younger market, allowing consumers to participate allows the opportunity for Starwood to build customer loyalty.

"Being environmentally and socially conscious is the right thing to do and part of who we are at Starwood," Mr. Siegel said. "We believe our guests, investors and owners feel the same. And we know that our own associates feel passionately about it as Global Citizenship routinely comes up in internal surveys as important to associates around the world."

Embedded Video: [https://www.youtube.com/embed/uEa01\\_ZyC4Y](https://www.youtube.com/embed/uEa01_ZyC4Y)

*Starwood's Water Story: Thinking Beyond Conservation*

True blue

A report from Booking.com this June noted that as consumers become more aware of the

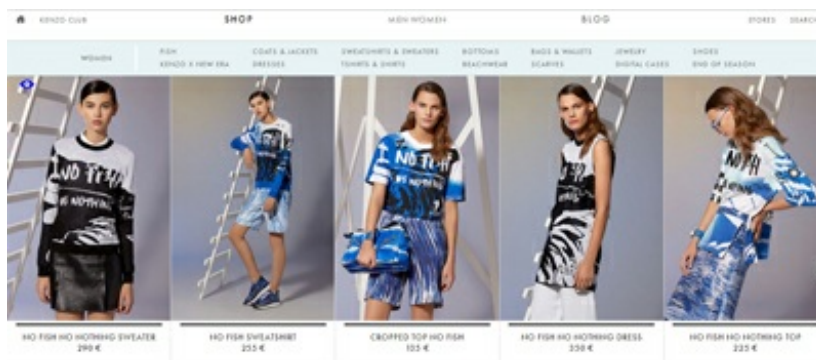
negative impact of their travels, they are increasingly favoring environmentally and socially responsible alternatives.

The impacts of travel are myriad, direct and indirect, and compound over time. As consumers see first-hand or learn about the cumulative effect of easy travel, they are turning their qualms into action ([see story](#)).

Accordingly, hotels are not the only brands emphasizing the importance of water conservation.

Last month, British retailer Selfridges looked to help save the world with the launch of a new initiative that bans the use of plastic water bottles storewide and draws consumers' attention to the issue of ocean conservation.

As an environmentally friendly alternative, Selfridges encourages consumers to bring their own water bottles from home and fill them at the new drinking fountain in the department store's food hall. Many luxury brands are increasingly devoting energy to initiatives that aim to make the world a better place in an effort to give back and emotionally connect with consumers ([see story](#)).



### *Kenzo's "no fish, no nothing" campaign*

Additionally, in 2014, French fashion house Kenzo partnered with Britain-based conservation group Blue Marine Foundation to help protect the oceans through fashion.

Kenzo launched a Blue takeover of both its London flagship store and its Web site, as well as a capsule collection to benefit the organization designed by the label's creative directors Carol Lim and Humberto Leon. As consumers are more and more interested in ecological causes, seeing a fashion brand take initiative on an issue may have had a positive impact for the brand ([see story](#)).

"Access to clean drinking water is increasingly becoming a human rights issue around the world," Mr. Siegel said. "Understanding our role as a business and realizing the collective impact we can have from actions within each of the communities where we operate is tremendous for our planet."

Final Take

*Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/xW14otsz0eg>

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