Greening North Carolina Travel and Tourism

Tips for Sustainable Practices in Tourism

(As published in VISITNC NewsLink)
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Office of Engagement, Innovation and Economic Development
East Carolina University
In partnership with the
NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development &
Department of the Environment and Natural Resources

Many tourism businesses understand that ‘going green’ is important. It can help reduce operating costs, a growing number of consumers are asking for green products and services, and there is growing evidence that if we do not change how we do certain things, the destinations we like to visit are at risk of being permanently negatively affected.

But ‘going green’ is easier said than done. Where do you start, who are the trustworthy experts to ask questions of, and what real evidence is there that going green is the right thing to do? Although there is no single answer to any of these questions, in an effort to provide some basic information, the Center for Sustainable Tourism and the Office of Engagement Innovation and Economic Development at East Carolina University, in partnership with the NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development and the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach have written a collection of sustainable tourism tips.

These tips vary in theme and subject matter, but they are all intended to provide solutions to help any tourism organization ‘go green.’ For any questions or comments related to these tips, please feel free to contact Alex Naar at anaar@nccommerce.com or by telephone at 252-737-1346.
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EDUCATION IN SUSTAINABILITY

1. INCREASING VALUE BY PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

According to a recent study by ClimatePath.org on eco-tourism, the number one travel motivator for green conscious travelers is learning about different cultures and ecologies (http://www.climatepath.org/forbusinesses/ecotourism). North Carolina provides travelers a wealth of opportunities to experience nature in ways that few destinations can offer. The N.C. Office of Environmental Education (www.ee.enr.state.nc.us) has a number of resources and support to supplement visitor experiences with nature based learning. The N.C. Office of Environmental Education has a calendar of local environmental education (EE) events, certified EE centers in your area, and an online searchable database of EE resources to help your tourism accommodation or attraction enhance the experience for travelers. For more information on how your tourism business or organization can become more involved with EE, contact Marty Wiggins at (919) 733-1362 or via marty.wiggins@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
ENERGY EFFICIENCY

1. NO COST WAYS TO REDUCE
With utility bills going up and growing concerns about climate change, many tourism-related business owners are becoming increasingly interested in how they can reduce their energy consumption. Before investing in a new, and possibly expensive, energy efficient lighting system, examine current lighting policies to see if there are any no-cost measures that can be taken. Is staff turning off lights when they vacate offices and conference rooms? Is seating in dining areas planned in such a way to minimize the need for lighting? Are shades and blinds open to take advantage of sunlight? Many of these small measures can result in significant reductions in the use of artificial lights and cost nothing but a few seconds of time to implement. For instructions on conducting a lighting audit, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/26/25979.pdf. A complete list of energy saving practices for the tourism industry can be found at www.ecu.edu/sustainabletourism/criteria.cfm. For more information on energy conservation in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. RESOLUTIONS TO SAVE ENERGY
With rising energy prices, energy conservation is sure to be a New Year’s resolution for many tourism businesses. There are many tools for business owners and managers to begin examining how they might make the next year a little brighter while reducing energy bills. One is EPA’s Energy Star Program (www.energystar.gov), which has an energy efficient purchasing and procurement guide (http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bulk_purchasing.bus_purchasing) as well as a program specifically for the hospitality industry (http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=hospitality.bus_hospitality). The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (www.p2pays.org) also has a wealth of information, such as an “Energy Savings and Opportunities” guide (http://www.p2pays.org/ref/38/37949.pdf). The N.C. Solar Center (www.ncsc.ncsu.edu) also has a number of resources, including a Renewable Energy Professional Directory (www.greenprofessionals.org) and a database of renewable energy financial incentives (http://www.ncsc.ncsu.edu/information_resources/renewable_energy_incentives.cfm). For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. AIR SYSTEMS
Keeping customers cool at a tourism business during the heat of summer is of utmost importance. However, inefficient HVAC systems not only consume large amounts of energy but can leave customers uncomfortable and unsatisfied. If the business has an older HVAC system, it may be best to consider upgrading to a more efficient system. (A directory of N.C. renewable energy professionals can be found at www.greenprofessionals.org). A number of low to no-cost measures can also help reduce summer utility bills, such as use rooms with the lowest cooling needs first (e.g. north-facing rooms); regularly inspect temperature settings and thermostat calibration; turn on exhaust and hood fans only when needed; and regularly inspect and clean air filters. For more information regarding smart energy use, visit www.renewabletourism.com or contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
4. **SEALING THE BUILDING**

According to the EPA, heating and cooling accounts for 46 percent of energy used by a typical hotel, costing about $0.65 per square foot of space. While maintaining guests’ thermal comfort is of the upmost importance, putting an HVAC system on overdrive to compensate for a drafty building not only greatly increases costs, but the results may give guests cold hands and feet in the winter and discomfort in the summer. Leaks in a building’s envelope are most often found around windows and doors but they can be found around electric outlets and poorly designed remodeling projects. There are a number of tools that energy efficiency professionals can use to identify potential envelope leaks in a building, such as a blower door and infrared imaging, but many leaks can be identified simply by walking through the property and feeling for drafts. And in many cases, repairing leaky windows and doors is as simple as re-caulk ing or replacing worn seals. For more information on improving a building’s envelope and for free technical assistance, visit www.wastereductionpartners.com, or contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.

5. **REAL LIFE ENERGY MONSTERS**

Everyone know about the monsters and ghosts that come out around the end of October and many tourism attractions and accommodations even partake in the seasonal haunting. But what few owners and managers might be aware of are the energy monsters that add to their utility bills every month. Phantom energy load is a real situation when an electrical device continues to use energy even though it is not being used. A common example of phantom energy is a computer monitor that is not turned off although the computer it is connected to is. Other examples include cell phone chargers, DVD players and stereos. To see how much energy typical appliances consume while not in use, visit tech.icrontic.com/articles/phantom_power/. And for a detailed report on the subject, visit www.aceee.org/research-report/a981. But the easiest way to reduce your phantom energy load is to use power strips with switches so that when you are not using an appliance, you can simply switch it off. For more information on energy efficiency, visit www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.
6. SMALL SAVINGS TURN TO BIG SAVINGS

A magical thing happens when you implement low-to-no cost energy efficiency measures: small savings from monthly energy bills start turning into big savings. It is relatively simply to calculate how much one energy efficient light bulb can save: take the wattage of the current bulb and subtract the wattage of the energy efficient bulb. Then multiply the difference in wattages by how many hours the bulb is used over a year to give the wattage saved per year. The final step is to multiply to total wattage saved by the cost of electricity. Unfortunately, energy efficiency upgrades are often much more complicated than replacing just one light bulb. For example, replacing older inefficient exit signs with LEDs typically costs between $20 to $40 to purchase and install but can save up to $37 a year in energy costs and $26 a year in labor costs, paying for the initial investment in the first or second year of installation. Although first year savings in energy might only be a few dollars, once the energy savings pays back the initial investment, guaranteed savings will grow over time by as much as $500 per sign over the life of the LED exit sign. In a building with 10 exit signs, that’s a cost savings of $5,000 that, once the signs are installed, you don’t have to do any more work to enjoy. And with energy prices trending upwards, savings will be even greater in the future. For more information on how to save energy and dollars contact, Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

7. BEYOND THE HEADLINES- EVERYDAY ENERGY SAVINGS

Earlier this summer, Travelocity released its list of “Cutting-Edge Green Hotels.” While it is always interesting to learn about new innovative sustainable practices being implemented, unfortunately, many of the sustainable practices mentioned in such articles are difficult to replicate. While not every hotel can have a garden on its roof or generate its own electricity, there are many sustainable practices that every hotel, restaurant or attraction can implement that lead to everyday savings. For example, replacing older exit signs with LED exit signs is an easy way to be more energy efficient that also helps reduce utility costs. Developing policies that take into account Energy Star options when any new equipment is purchased ensures that efforts to save energy are maintained at all levels of an organization. And while setting office equipment to sleep mode when not in use probably will not get a property mentioned in a national travel magazine, it will help save energy every day. For more examples of everyday, implementable sustainable practices, download any of the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s tip sheets. For more information on sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
8. **SWITCHING FROM COLD TO HOT**

With the end of winter quickly approaching, many tourism businesses are once again turning off their heaters and getting their air conditioners ready for the summer. According to the U.S. EPA’s [Energy Star](https://www.energystar.gov), central heating and air account for 46 percent of hotels’ energy use. Unfortunately, due to poor insulation, drafts and inefficient equipment, much of this energy use is wasted. But there are a number of strategies that can be implemented to help reduce air conditioning costs this summer. Conducting an energy audit with an energy professional can quickly identify what steps could be taken to improve the energy efficiency of an HVAC. Many utility companies offer their customers free-of-charge energy audits and/or consultation free of charge. Energy consumption can also be reduced by using energy efficient heating and cooling equipment, such as those certified by the [Energy Star](https://www.energystar.gov) program. For more information on energy efficiency in the tourism industry, visit [Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative](https://www.renewableenergycouncil.org/) and [Energy Star for Hospitality and Entertainment](https://www.energystar.gov), contact Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346. In addition, information from the [Feb. 14 webinar](https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/428016920) about energy efficiency programs offered through utility companies is now available.

9. **BEING AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER OF ENERGY**

Tourism managers know that success in the hospitality industry is dependent on maximizing guest satisfaction while simultaneously reducing the costs associated with doing so. This difficult balancing act often comes to a head with regards to energy usage. Between allowing guests to set the air conditioner much cooler than they would at home and keeping energy costs low can be greatly enhanced by using effective energy management strategies. A growing number of tourism-related facilities are using automated energy management systems to improve energy efficiency without sacrificing guest comfort. These systems can offer a number of energy solutions such as sensing when a room is unoccupied and adjusting temperature settings accordingly. Although having an automated system can greatly enhance your ability to manage energy use, there are also a number of simple and low cost measures any facility can implement. For example, filling north-facing rooms during the hot summer months can reduce the need for air conditioning. Even a simple measure like instructing housekeeping to close drapes to reduce heat gain in the summer or heat loss in the winter can help reduce utility bills. To learn more information on energy management, register for a free Sept. 2 webinar at [www1.gotomeeting.com/register/428016920](http://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/428016920). For more information on the webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148 or via [GCZ0123@ecu.edu](mailto:GCZ0123@ecu.edu). For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).
10. **SAVING FESTIVAL ENERGY FOR THE FESTIVITIES**

Festivals are one of the best traditions in the tourism industry. While festivals are a wonderful way to celebrate a community’s heritage, they take a lot of energy to put on. There are a lot of things every event manager can implement to help reduce the amount of electricity needed without having to enjoy the event in the dark. One way events can start saving energy that doesn’t cost any additional money is to have a plan in place to make sure lights and equipment are turned off when not needed. Using best idling practices for shuttles will not only save energy but reduce local air pollution. Some festivals have taken steps to work with vendors to be more energy efficient as well by providing a maximum power draw per vendor or requiring energy efficient lighting. Other festivals are greening up their energy usage by purchasing renewable energy credits or using on-site renewable energy such as recycling stations and biodegradable food/beverage containers. To learn more about energy efficiency at festivals and events, can download a Greening Festivals and Events tip sheet or attend the free Renewable Energy in Tourism’s Sustainable Events & Festivals webinar on Oct. 18. For more information on the webinar, contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach.

11. **EFFICIENT HOLIDAY DECORATIONS**

As the air starts to cool and the days get shorter, many tourism businesses have started putting up seasonal decorations. Although decorative lights are a wonderful way of sharing the holiday spirit with guests and customers, the decorations can result in inefficient energy usage if improperly managed. One easy way to reduce the energy consumption of decorative lights is to make sure they are set on timers so they are only on when needed. Another option is to use lights with LED bulbs rather than incandescent. Although more expensive, LEDs are more energy efficient, durable and have a longer life. If buying new LED lights, check that the product has a warranty to protect your investment. Seasonal LED lights are now available at many local and online retailers. For more information on seasonal LED lights, visit www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=dls.pr_dls. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

12. **KEEPING THE POOL’S BILLS COOL**

Having a swimming pool to is a great way to add value to a guest’s stay. But pools are energy and water intensive, which can add significantly to monthly water and electricity bills. The main water usage of pools is when the pool is first filled, but there is additional water usage to maintain the water level from water that is lost through evaporation. While a simple pool cover is the best way to reduce loss of water due to evaporation, reducing the water temperature can also lessen water loss, since warmer water evaporates more quickly. Keeping a pool covered whenever possible also helps reduce the amount of energy need to keep it warm, which can help lower energy costs. Using energy efficient lighting, just like outside of the pool, is an easy way to help reduce energy costs. For more information on water and energy efficiency in pools, visit Reduce Swimming Pool Energy Costs. For more information on sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
13. **KEEPING WARM DURING THE HOLIDAYS**

Despite the cold air outside, there is enough holiday cheer in hotel lobbies, meeting venues and restaurant dining rooms to warm even the coldest of hearts. But unfortunately that warm spirit doesn’t help toes and fingers stay warm. Keeping guests warm and comfortable sometimes mean additional heating has to be provided. To help keep the cost of heating down, there are a number of alternative heating strategies that can be implemented. The simplest and most cost effective alternative heating strategy is passive solar, which uses the sun’s rays to warm interior space. Active solar heating uses the sun’s energy as well, but uses collectors to concentrate the sun’s energy. Property owners and managers can also go underground to help keep their buildings warm. Geothermal heat pumps take advantage of the stable ground temperatures. And while traditional fireplaces may do a poor job of keeping guests warm, there are a number of energy efficient wood and pellet burning appliances. But the best way to keep heating costs low is to conduct annual or semiannual inspections to ensure your heating system is running properly and set correctly. For more information on energy efficiency in tourism, visit the Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative, or contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

14. **TAKING THE NEXT ENERGY EFFICIENCY STEPS**

According to the American Hotel & Lodging Association 2010 Lodging Survey, 88 percent of hotel properties are now using energy efficient lighting. This has left many hotels looking for the next green practice they can implement. While lighting is one of obvious choices, there are many other green practices. One option is to improve the energy efficiency of vending machines. According to the U.S. EPA, a conventional vending machine has an energy cost of around $366 a year. Some properties have improved the energy efficiency of vending machines by removing the interior lamp of machines in well-lit areas, which is estimated to save more than $50 a year per machine. Another option is to replace older vending machines with EPA Energy Star machines, which is estimated to save $150 per machine. Other easier energy efficiency choices include energy efficient office electronics and computers, installing lighting monitoring and control systems and taking advantage of government and utility rebate programs. For more information on energy efficiency in tourism, click here or contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

15. **A NEW KIND OF ENERGY DRINK**

Between all the equipment, cooling, and warming a great deal of energy is used to beer and wine. But more and more breweries and wineries are looking at alternative methods to both save, and increasingly, to produce energy. Some energy efficiency practices at wineries and breweries are standard industrial energy efficiency measures, such as efficient lighting and air compressors. But the unique needs of wineries and breweries have led to some unique innovations. The need for electric power, hot water and the opportunity for on-site energy generation led the Sonoma Wine Company to install a Cogenera Solar system, which produces both hot water and electricity from the sun. And the methane produced during the brewing process led Sierra Nevada Brewery to install a 250-kilowatt co-generation fuel cell system that generates both electric power and heat. Learn more about renewable energy at wineries and breweries during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Jan. 24 free webinar. To register, click here. For more information on the webinar, contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit the Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative.
16. **CALMING THE STORM OF ENERGY PRICES**

Any casual observer of the news is well aware of the volatility of energy prices. And the tourism industry, with its high energy use, is often directly impacted when energy prices drastically rise or unpredictably fall. In an effort to reduce their dependence on fossil fuel energy prices, many tourism businesses have started making investments in renewable energy sources. Many in the beer and wine industry, which are even more energy intensive than lodging or restaurants, have invested heavily in renewable energy systems. The Sonoma Wine Company has installed a Cogenera Solar system, which produces both hot water and electricity from the sun’s energy. And Sierra Nevada Brewery has installed a 250-kilowatt co-generation fuel cell system that generates both electric power and heat. Learn more about renewable energy at wineries and breweries during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Jan. 24 free webinar. To register, click here. For more information on the webinar, contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit the Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative.

17. **FINDING SPARE CHANGE IN THE “ENERGY EFFICIENCY SOFA”**

There is always a feeling of surprised delight when cleaning couch cushions and loose change is found. That feeling of getting free money also occurs when energy saving measures are identified and implemented that result in operational cost savings. Many energy saving actions, like replacing old emergency exit signs with energy saving LED exit signs or putting motion sensors on vending machines, have low initial costs and can start saving money within the first year of implementation. And the best part is these activities will continue to save money throughout the life of the product. However, it can be complicated to identify which energy saving measures will yield the best return on investment. To provide assistance, Waste Reduction Partners is offering a limited number of no-cost Green Assessments to North Carolina tourism-related businesses. The Hospitality Greening Assessment is an on-site, technical review of a business’s utility use and environmental practices, combining energy and water-use audits, solid waste recycling guidance, and other sustainability recommendations into one technical assessment. For more information, contact Russ Jordan with Waste Reduction Partners at (828) 251-7477. For more information on NC GreenTravel, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
**Secondary Tips:**

### 18. Saving Water and Energy

With dryer and warmer than normal weather this fall, North Carolinians are being reminded of the importance of being water conscious. Of particular interest to tourism business owners and managers are those opportunities where they can not only save water but also energy, doubling their savings. One of the best examples of saving energy and water in hotels is water efficient shower heads. By reducing shower water volume, while maintaining the coverage and pressure, one can maintain guest satisfaction and reduce use of hot water. Reducing the need for hot water reduces water consumption and energy use. Another great example of saving energy and water are pre-rinse spray valves at dish-washing stations. Pre-rinse spray valves can increase water pressure, improving staff ability to quickly spray down dishware, while reducing water volume, again saving hot water. And by reducing the need for hot water, the water heater does not have to work as hard, which will reduce maintenance costs and equipment failures. For more tips on saving water and energy, visit [www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm](http://www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm) or contact Keyes McGee at keyes.mcgee@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

### 19. EPA: An Age-Old Resource

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently celebrated its [40th anniversary](http://www.epa.gov). During those 40 years, the EPA has been responsible for developing a number of resources, programs, and initiatives that help small to mid-sized businesses be more energy efficient, conserve water and reduce waste. One of the most well-known EPA programs is [Energy Star](http://www.energystar.gov), which recognizes products and buildings for their energy efficiency. Energy Star has programs for specific business sectors, including the [hospitality and entertainment sector](http://www.energystar.gov). A similar EPA program that addresses water efficiency is [WaterSense](http://www.energystar.gov). Just like Energy Star, the WaterSense program identifies consumer products, such as toilets and showerheads, that meet an efficiency standard. The EPA has also developed the program [Recycle on the Go](http://www.epa.gov), which encourages recycling in public places such as parks, stadiums, convention centers, airports and other transportation hubs, shopping centers, and at special events. Find more information about EPA programs at [partner programs](http://www.epa.gov/partnerprograms) and [Businesses and Non-Profits](http://www.epa.gov/businessesandnonprofits). For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

### 20. Taking Some Bite Out of the Gas Sting

There are still a number of questions about how changing gas prices may impact travel this summer. While it might not be known how travelers will react to higher gas prices, rising gas prices do have a direct impact on operating costs. Higher gas prices mean guest shuttle services, gas-powered lawn equipment and company vehicles cost more to operate. But there are a number of simple steps that can be taken to help reduce fuel costs and improve fuel economy. The [U.S. Dept. of Energy](http://www.energy.gov) estimates that just by keeping tires properly inflated, gas mileage can improve by as much as 4 percent. Instituting a [no-idling policy](http://www.energy.gov) for company vehicles and shuttles can also significantly reduce a business’s gas costs. Another option to help reduce gas consumption is to replace gas-powered lawn equipment with electric versions. Not only do electric lawn tools cost less to operate, they are also quieter and easier to maintain. For more examples of other fuel efficient practices, visit [N.C. Project Green Transportation](http://www.projectgreentransportation.com). Also, contact [Tom Rhodes](http://www.nccommerce.com) at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or [Alex Naar](http://www.nccommerce.com) at (252) 737-1346.
GREEN MARKETING

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE GREEN?
One of the most common questions tourism businesses face when examining sustainable practices is what does it mean to be green? The Center for Sustainable Tourism has defined sustainable tourism as “actions that contribute to a balanced and healthy economy by generating tourism-related jobs, revenues and taxes while protecting and enhancing the destination’s socio-cultural, historical, natural and built resources for the enjoyment and well-being of both residents and visitors.” While this might seem like an easy definition to understand, it can become complicated. Questions such as “can a business be completely sustainable” or “how do you measure the total environment impact” quickly arise. And while these questions are difficult, the crux of sustainable tourism is quite simple. It means being committed to evaluating the broader impacts of business decisions to include areas of environmental and social impact. So while everyone can debate the specifics of zero waste or local foods, all should be able to agree that actions that help a business’ bottom line that are more environmentally and socially responsible, are more sustainable. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

2. SUPPORTING YOUR GREEN GUESTS
One way to really impress green conscious guests and customers is to offer them special discounts or benefits for their personal sustainable practices. Not only will this impress customers, it is a method of increasing customer loyalty and attracting new green consumers. Consider offering preferred parking for guests who use alternative forms of transportation such as car-pooling or alternative-fueled vehicles. Some hotels have offered financial savings to guests who participate in a linen re-use program. A growing number of retail businesses offer rebates to customers who use their own shopping bags. One hotel has even started offering a free drink for guests who choose to off-set the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from their stay. Businesses can also raise company morale by recognizing the green efforts of staff, such as include sustainability as part of staff evaluations, offer prizes to staff that have adopted sustainable practices. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. MARKETING YOURSELF AS GREEN
In its 2009 Travel Trends, TripAdvisor found that 34 percent of U.S. travelers will seek to visit an environmentally-friendly hotel or resort in the next year (http://www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-i208-c1-Press_Releases.html). For hotels looking to attract these green conscious travelers, it is important to develop a marketing plan that is honest, transparent and verifiable. Green conscious travelers want to know more than the destination they are visiting is green, they want to know what specific action have been taken to reduce environmental damage. The Federal Trade Commission has developed some guidelines to help businesses interested in marketing their environmental efforts (www.ftc.gov/bcp/frmrule/guides980427.htm). For more information on what you can do to attract green travelers, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
4. **TELLING YOUR GREEN STORY**

The growing number of tourism-related businesses advertising they have gone “green” can make it difficult for travelers to differentiate between organizations that have taken honest efforts to reduce their environmental impact, from those that only say they are “green.” To add to the problem, a number of environmental certification programs have emerged that are difficult to understand or know what environmental steps are needed to be certified. One way to help consumers decide whether or not your business has met its green tastes is simply to state what environmental practices you have implemented. This can be done by adding a page to your Web site, including a list of practices on your menu, or by including it as part of your brochure or advertisements. For a list of sustainable practices you can implement at your food service or lodging business, visit [http://author.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/criteria.cfm](http://author.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/criteria.cfm). For more information on sustainable tourism practices you can implement, contact Alex Naar at (919)715-3782 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.

5. **SHARING THE GOOD NEWS**

It’s not hard to find great examples of tourism businesses that have implemented sustainable practices – hotels with solar hot water heaters, restaurants using local-sourced produce, festivals composting, and attractions with recycling programs. Although many tourism businesses know how to go green, fewer are sure how to tell their guests and customers. There is a long tradition in the tourism industry of letting guests' satisfaction speak for itself. But for many green practices, if done correctly, guests may never know they are using less water every time they take a shower or are using less electricity when they turn the lights on in their room. But with a growing number of travelers taking notice of green travel, it is important to share a sustainability story. There are a number of ways to toot a green horn. For help on how to best share with guests how a property is greening, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346. There is also attend a free webinar on May 26 at 10:30 a.m. on green tourism marketing. For more information and to register, click [here](http://www.ecu.edu/sustainabletourism/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm) or contact Garrett Zeigler.

6. **10 GREEN PRACTICES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT TODAY**

Many tourism businesses and organizations know they should be adopting environmental practices but are concerned about how much such measures will cost. So the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU, in partnership with the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention, has put together a list of 10 sustainable practices that have low or no costs to implement. Many of the practices will start saving money almost immediately. To view the list, click the link at [http://www.ecu.edu/sustainabletourism/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/sustainabletourism/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm). For more information on conservation in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.
7. **MEASURING: THE KEY TO GREEN SUCCESS**

One of the most important steps in assessing if you are reaching your green goals is to establish a method to measure success. To effectively monitor which sustainable practices you are implementing lead to reduced energy and water consumption or waste reduction, you can develop any number of record keeping methods. Although many monitoring systems can include complex algorithms and sophisticated software, you can start with a simple spreadsheet that tracks monthly electricity and water usage. By using this simple method, you can see if new energy efficient measures are resulting in reduced electricity usage and really lowering bills. This record keeping can also assist in producing information that can be used in marketing materials. For more information on measuring your green success, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.

8. **AWASH WITH GREENWASHING**

A common concern of tourism marketers when using the adoption of sustainability practices to help advertise is the negative backlash that might occur if consumers feel the marketing message does not match the company’s real commitment to sustainability, a condition commonly referred to as greenwashing. Or marketers are nervous of the ramifications of a situation where they advertise to consumers the accommodation has implemented a recycling program and a guest observes a staff member throwing an aluminum can in the trash rather than the recycling bin. With Internet sites like www.greenwashingindex.com that spot examples of green washing, marketers have reason to worry, if they are indeed misleading travelers. But with a growing number of travelers actively seeking green travel accommodations and a growing number of tourism businesses implementing sustainable practices, there is increased pressure to include sustainability in travel marketing messaging. If a property is interested in including sustainability in its marketing efforts but is nervous about inadvertently greenwashing, there are a number of ways to check, many of which are listed at www.stopgreenwash.org. There is also a free webinar on May 26 at 10:30 a.m. on sustainable tourism marketing. For more information and to register, click here or contact Garrett Zeigler.

9. **HOW SERIOUS IS YOUR GREEN**

One of the newest meetings trends is the use of games or gamification to influence behavior. Because of its heavy use of games, the 2011 Green Meetings Industry Council’s Sustainable Meetings Conference was one of the most anticipated conferences of the year. But meetings and events are not the only travel industry sectors to use games. Last year, Travelocity also used a game as part of its Travel for Good program. Research has shown that peer pressure is a powerful tool to motivate guests to be greener. Making going green fun might motivate even more guests to reduce their impact while traveling. And sometimes, just being funny or creative is enough to help sustainability initiatives stand out or better engage travelers. For more information on sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
10. **WHY GREENING DOESN'T SELL AS WELL AT YOU MIGHT THINK IT SHOULD**

Last month, green marketing expert Jacquie Ottman raised an interesting question on her blog: *why is there such a disconnect* between the large number of consumers who say they take environmental issues into account when making purchasing decisions and the small number of consumers who actually purchase green products? Ottman provided three possible answers. The first is there still remains a fair amount of confusion in the market place as to what constitutes as a green product or service. The second reason is consumers may be overstating how green their purchasing decisions really are. Ottman blames the many confusing messages consumers are confronted with when making purchasing decisions but also concedes consumers are also likely overstating how green they really are to pollsters. The last explanation is marketers might be misinterpreting why consumers purchase green products. A growing number of green travel marketers are moving away from touting specific sustainable practices implemented at their accommodation or attraction, and increasingly focusing on how the sustainable practices create a better experience for guests. One of the best examples of how this strategy is used is Chipotle's use of *sustainably raised food*. While Chipotle is proud of its use of sustainable meats, its story starts with how doing so makes the food taste better. For assistance on green marketing of the travel and tourism industry or for technical assistance on the greening of the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes with NC GreenTravel at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

11. **SURVEY SAID....**

In the last month, both Harris Interactive and TripAdvisor have released the results of research on green consumerism and travel. While both studies indicate a majority of U.S. consumers and travelers are concerned about the environment, each study drew different conclusions. The Harris study, which focused on general consumers' attitudes and preferences, concluded that fewer Americans are taking sustainability into account when making purchasing decisions or in their personal lives. The TripAdvisor study, which examined Americans' attitudes towards green travel, found the opposite to be true. Amongst the 700 U.S. travelers surveyed by TripAdvisor, 71 percent reported planning to make greener travel decisions in the next year, compared to 65 percent in 2011. It could be argued the differences between these two studies is due to consumers only being attracted to sustainable options if it does not require any additional effort or cost. However, the TripAdvisor study found over half of their respondents would be willing to pay more for a greener accommodation, and 23 percent were willing to pay up to an additional $25 for a greener property. For more information on what the results of these surveys might mean for your tourism organization, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
12. **MARKETING YOUR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM EFFORTS**

The 2012 American Hotel & Lodging Association’s Lodging Survey found implementing sustainable practices has *become more common*. Yet despite the growth of sustainable tourism options, TripAdvisor recently found 60 percent of travelers say they know very little about hotels’ green initiatives, and 13 percent say they know nothing. Given that it is now well known that *consumers prefer more sustainable travel options*, it would seem much of the tourism industry is missing an opportunity to attract travelers by better marketing their sustainability efforts. There are many reasons why a hotel or attraction might shy away from promoting their sustainability effort, such as *being accused of greenwashing* or guests will think being green will lead to a lower quality experience. While these are valid reasons, with 57 percent of travelers reporting to TripAdvisor that they “often” take environmental factors into consideration when making travel decisions and half of travelers willing to pay more for green travel experience, not sharing green practices seems like the wrong discussion. To help navigate the *difficulties of marketing sustainability efforts* in the tourism industry, Xavier Font produced the report “Keep it real.” The report provides practical advice on who, why, what, where and when of sustainable tourism marketing. For more information on how to best market your sustainability efforts, or for technical assistance on implementing green practices, contact [Tom Rhodes](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdeh.org) at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or [Alex Naar](mailto:alex.naar@ncdeh.org) at (252) 737-1346.
LIGHTING

1. SAVING WITH LIGHTS
During these economic times, many tourism businesses are looking for ways to cut back on costs while still providing the highest level of quality for their guests and customers. One of the easiest ways to reduce expenses is to invest in more energy efficient lighting. Before purchasing new light bulbs though, it is important to first research which lighting system is the best for each situation. In many situations, simply encouraging customers and staff to turn off lights when not needed, using appropriate signage and changing staff procedures can result in significant reduction in utility bills. If investing in new lighting technology is an option, it is important to remember not all light bulbs perform the same. Lights bulbs vary not only in how much light they emit, but also in the color light they emit, which can change what color objects and spaces appear to be. Different light bulbs also differ in where they can be most efficiently used. For example, compact fluorescent light can have difficulty in cold temperatures where LED light bulbs can perform quite well in extreme weather conditions. It is also important to develop a system of monitoring energy usage to ensure that the changes made are leading to real results. For more information on energy efficiency in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. TURNING IT OFF
As the seasons change, smart tourism managers are once again evaluating their lighting policy to ensure that only necessary lights are used and turned on only when needed. The EPA estimates that lighting is responsible for 13 percent of the energy usage in commercial buildings and, while it is important to have lighting in essential areas to ensure customer and staff safety, leaving unnecessary lights on can lead to direct losses in your business’s bottom line. For example BlueMap Inc estimates that a typical hotel that leaves its parking lot lights on just one hour longer than needed results in $250 a year wasted in unnecessary energy usage. Turning off or down unnecessary lighting can result in additional benefits as well. The EPA reported that when the Comfort Inn & Suites Boston turned overnight lighting in guest hallways down by 50 percent, not only did they increase their energy savings, but overnight staff received fewer noise complaints from guests. To learn more about how turning off unnecessary lights can help your tourism organization start saving energy and reduce operating costs, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
3. FINDING A BETTER LIGHT BULB
Energy efficient lighting has quickly become the practice of choice for tourism businesses looking to cut costs while maintaining a quality product. And for good reason – lighting is the second highest use of energy in hotels after heating & cooling, and the third highest in restaurants after heating & cooling and food preparation. Until recently the best options for many businesses were compact florescent light bulbs, but according to a recent New York Times article (www.nytimes.com/2009/05/30/science/earth/30degrees.html?ref=science), LED lighting might soon be the bulb of choice. LEDs are more energy efficient, work in a wider range of situations and can be dimmed. But, like with any investment choice, it is important to research what options are the best fit for each specific situation. More information regarding energy efficient lighting can be found at www.p2pays.org/ref/26/25979.pdf. For more information on energy efficiency in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

4. IS THERE A LIGHT BULB FOR ME?
According to the Environmental Protection Agency, almost a quarter of a hotel’s electricity usage goes to lighting. In a typical restaurant, lights are on for as much as 16 to 20 hours a day. Given how much lights are used at attractions and accommodations, it is important to choose light bulbs that are energy efficient and help keep operating costs low. But it is equally important to choose light bulbs that make guests feel comfortable, put them in the right mood and feel safe. To help pick the right light bulb for your situation, the EPA has developed a Small Business Guide to Lighting, which even offers information on decorative lighting. You can learn more about energy efficient lighting, by attending a free webinar on energy efficient lighting for the tourism industry. Register for the Dec. 8 webinar at www1.gotomeeting.com/register/392577289. For more information on the webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252)737-2148 or via GCZ0123@ecu.edu. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

5. TIMERS, SETTINGS AND AUTOMATION FOR LIGHTING
Short days and the holiday season are the perfect mix for using more lights. And with everything that is going on this time of year, it can be easy to forget to turn the lights off when you leave, using more electricity and increasing utility bills. One option to help keep your operating costs down is to designate a member of your staff who is responsible for turning lights off. Another option is to use timers. There are all sorts of timers you can choose, from the very simple mechanical timers you can buy at any hardware store, to much more complex timers that are linked into an energy management system. If you use timers, it is important to remember to set them correctly and regularly check they are in working order. According to Green Lodging News, leaving your parking lot lights on just one hour too long in the morning and evening can lead to an increase of as much as $250 annually. You can learn more about energy efficient lighting by attending a free webinar on energy efficient lighting for the tourism industry. You can register for the Dec. 8 webinar at www1.gotomeeting.com/register/392577289. For more information on the webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252)737-2148 or via GCZ0123@ecu.edu. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
6. **USING ENERGY EFFICIENT “EXIT” SIGNS**

A recent study conducted by the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU found that 38 percent of North Carolina tourism businesses surveyed still use inefficient incandescent exit signs. Although this is better than the results of the AH&LA Green Assessment Survey, which found nationwide 50.3 percent of hotels still use inefficient incandescent exit signs (www.ahla.com/green.aspx), the Center’s survey results would indicate that a significant number of tourism businesses are not taking advantage of potential cost savings that can be achieved by switching to LED exit signs. LED exit signs use significantly less energy and due to the longer life of the bulbs require less maintenance. Not only will using LED exit signs reduce operating costs, but can also reduce a business’s carbon footprint by as much as 500 lbs a year per sign. For more information on switching to LED exit signs, visit [www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/upload/LED-Exit-Signs-Tip-Sheet.pdf](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/upload/LED-Exit-Signs-Tip-Sheet.pdf). For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

7. **ENERGY EFFICIENT LIGHT BULBS CAN STILL BE INEFFICIENT**

The [Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007](https://www.energystorage.gov/) includes a number of measures intended to help the United States become more energy efficient. One of the major provisions in the act, according to an article in [Green Lodging News](http://www.greenlodgingnews.com/), is incandescent light bulbs will be phased out starting in 2012. This will require accommodation and attraction owners and managers to use more energy efficient lighting throughout their property. But unless energy efficient lighting is used efficiently, they can still waste energy. One of the most common inefficient lighting blunders is when lights are left on when no one is using the space, but there are a number other common inefficient lighting oversights as well. Some examples include leaving exterior lighting on during the day, keeping the lights on in vending-machines when lighting is not needed, and not regularly cleaning fixtures. For more information on energy efficiency in tourism, visit [www.sustainabletourism.org/RETI](http://www.sustainabletourism.org/RETI). You can also register for a free Sept. 2 webinar on energy management in tourism by visiting [www1.gotomeeting.com/register/428016920](http://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/428016920). For more information on the webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148 or via GCZ0123@ecu.edu. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

8. **LED LIGHTS TIME HAS COME**

Until recently, when accommodations and attractions wanted to install energy efficient lighting to replace incandescent screw-in light bulbs, their best options were compact florescent bulbs. While compact florescent light bulbs (CFLs) are much more energy efficient than incandescent, they have a number of drawbacks. They don’t perform well in extreme temperatures and there is a short delay before they reach full brightness. Because of the ballasts, there are many situations, such as recessed lighting, where CFLs cannot be used. And although they are more environmentally preferable than incandescent bulbs, they still contain small amounts of mercury. LED light bulbs have existed for a number of years and have been used in a variety of locations, ranging from exit signs to holiday lighting, but early LEDs were too costly to replace incandescent bulbs. Recent improvements in technology have radically reduced the costs of LEDs by so much that many lighting experts expect LEDs to quickly become the bulb of choice. To learn about energy efficiency at meetings and events, register for an upcoming Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar or contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit [Renewable Energy in Tourism](http://www.renewableenergyintourism.org/), or contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
N.C. GREEN TRAVEL INITIATIVE

1. *NC GREENTRAVEL INITIATIVE WEBSITE UP AND RUNNING*

In October 2011, the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, in partnership with the Center for Sustainable Tourism, launched the NC GreenTravel Initiative website. The website provides users with a wide range of resources, including information on the NC GreenTravel Recognition Program, North Carolina’s first and only statewide sustainable tourism recognition program. The recognition program currently has criteria for hotels, B&Bs, vacation rental properties, restaurants, and museums, with additional criteria currently under development. There is no cost to participate in the program but tourism properties are required to submit an application to the Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. All applications for currently available sectors are posted on the NC GreenTravel website. Once the forms have been submitted, they will be scored and evaluated, and properties that score high enough based on the implementation of various sustainable practices will be recognized as a One, Two or Three Dogwood Blossom property by the N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

2. *FIRST PROPERTIES RECOGNIZED BY NC GREEN TRAVEL*

Since the launch of the NC GreenTravel Recognition Program, a non-regulatory and voluntary program managed by the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach in partnership with the Center for Sustainable Tourism, seven properties have submitted their application and have been recognized by the program. Old Edwards Inn and Spa in Highlands was the first property to be recognized by the program. Some of the sustainable practices adopted by Old Edwards Inn include energy efficiency, participation in the Global Soap Project, and energy assessment with the Waste Reduction Partners. There is no cost to participate in the NC GreenTravel Recognition Program and it is open to all hotels, B&Bs, vacation rental properties, restaurants, parks, ski resorts, and museums in North Carolina. Applications are currently being created for convention centers, airports, festivals, golf resorts, and many others. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

3. *WHY CERTIFICATION MATTERS*

The NC GreenTravel Recognition Program provides tourism-related businesses in North Carolina a no-cost, non-regulatory option to be recognized for their adoption of green practices. For many tourism businesses, being recognized by a green recognition program is one way to set their business apart from their competitors. Being recognized by a program such as NC Green Travel as a green hotel, restaurant, or attraction is also a great way to validate their efforts to be green. As more and more tourism businesses claim to be green, participating in a program like NC GreenTravel is a great way to show visitors your property not only talks about being green, but has taken action to do so. And as noted by Mandi McKay of Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, during the last Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar, being green is an excellent recruiting tool. The NC GreenTravel program also provides a number of resources and tools to help implement additional sustainable practices. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
4. *PICKING UP NC GREEN TRAVEL POINTS AT NO COST*

The NC GreenTravel Recognition Program provides tourism-related businesses in North Carolina a no-cost, non-regulatory option to be recognized for their adoption of green practices. For many tourism businesses, being recognized by a green recognition program is one way to set their business apart from their competitors. Being recognized by a program such as NC Green Travel as a green hotel, restaurant, or attraction is also a great way to validate their efforts to be green. As more and more tourism businesses claim to be green, participating in a program like NC GreenTravel is a great way to show visitors your property not only talks about being green, but has taken action to do so. And as noted by Mandi McKay of Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, during the last Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar, being green is an excellent recruiting tool. The NC GreenTravel program also provides a number of resources and tools to help implement additional sustainable practices. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

5. *NC GREEN TRAVEL INITIATIVE RECOGNITION PROGRAM LAUNCHED*

The N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach has recently launched its new NC GreenTravel Initiative. The website provides a wealth of resources on such topics as recycling, energy conservation, and on green meetings as well as contact information for additional green travel technical assistance. One of the key components of the new website is the guidelines to be recognized as a sustainable tourism business by the NC GreenTravel Initiative Recognition Program, North Carolina’s first statewide sustainable travel recognition program. Similar to comparable programs in other states, to participate, applicants complete a self-administered grading form, which is then returned to Tom Rhodes, the NC GreenTravel Initiative specialist. Tourism businesses will then receive a score based on the various sustainable practices they indicate they have implemented. There is no cost for North Carolina tourism businesses to participate in the three-tiered recognition program and it is currently open to all lodging, restaurants and parks across the state. Other tourism sectors will be added as the program grows. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative website or recognition program, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

6. *RECOGNITION PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW*

Grandfather Mountain in Linville being recognized as the first attraction to meet the NC GreenTravel criteria for recognition draws renewed attention to the program. The NC GreenTravel Initiative is a joint effort of the Division, N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU. It is designed to provide recognition for tourism businesses and organizations that have implemented green practices as well as provide technical support to implement more sustainable efforts. The NC GreenTravel recognition program requires attractions and accommodations to self-complete an application form. Once the application has been complete, it is reviewed and scored. If tourism businesses meet the necessary score to be recognized, they are awarded a One, Two or Three Dogwood rating based on how well they met the criteria. NC DENR has developed criteria for categories such as Lodging, Restaurants, Parks, Attractions, Museums, Camping, Rafting, and Nature Based, with additional criteria currently being developed. Tourism businesses that have been recognized by the program receive a window decal, a certificate indicating the level of recognition, and are listed on the NC GreenTravel website.
7. **MANY SHADES OF GREEN IN N.C. GREEN TOURISM INDUSTRY**

Sometime in the coming weeks, the number of businesses recognized by the NC GreenTravel program is expected to break 50; already the number is at 39. What makes this milestone all the more exciting is the diversity of tourism businesses recognized by the program. The NC GreenTravel Initiative was designed to provide support to the full range of businesses that make up N.C.'s travel industry - from the very large to the very small and across many different sectors. Additionally, with its three tiers of recognition, the program is intended to assist any tourism business interested in improving their environmental performance, including those that are just starting to think about greening their property. The NC GreenTravel program has a wealth of resources to assist tourism businesses in implementing sustainable practices, including resources on energy, composting, recycling, and water conservation. The NC GreenTravel team is also available to answer any questions about implementing sustainable practices as well as direct tourism businesses to additional resources such as the Waste Reduction Partners Hospitality Greening Assessment program and financial incentives for implementing energy efficiency. NC GreenTravel is also available for presentations to DMOs and their partners to further discuss the program and the benefits of sustainability. For more information on the NC GreenTravel program contact program manager Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

8. **ANSWERS TO YOUR GREEN QUESTIONS**

In addition to recognizing green attractions and accommodations, the NC GreenTravel Initiative offers a number of resources to assist tourism decision makers in adopting additional green practices. Resources include fact sheets, case studies, and links to additional organizations that can provide further assistance on a wide variety of areas, including water efficiency, recycling and energy conservation. The NC GreenTravel Initiative also provides a listserv with regular updates from across the state and the nation on new resources, trends and news about the greening of the tourism industry. One such example is the American Hotel & Lodging Association's newly published list of green guidelines. Each message from the listserv also includes links to tip sheets developed by NC GreenTravel partners. Tourism businesses are also highly encouraged to contact Tom Rhodes, NC GreenTravel Initiative Program Manager, at (919) 707-8140 with any questions about participating in the program or for technical assistance in energy management, water consumption or solid waste and recycling. Additional resources and assistance are provided by NC GreenTravel partners Waste Reduction Partners and the Center for Sustainable Tourism. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative, contact Rhodes or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
9. *CREATING VALUE THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY*

With the start of a new year, the [NC GreenTravel](#) program continues to grow and develop. There are now 45 tourism businesses from the mountains to the coast that have been recognized by the program, with many more applications to review. The Jacksonville area continues to have the largest number of recognized lodging establishments, all of which were recognized during the recent Onslow County Tourism's Arties Award Luncheon. The Asheville area, in part due to its success in becoming the first Green Dining Destination by the [Green Restaurant Association](#), has the most recognized dining establishments. In the past year, the NC GreenTravel program has recognized Grandfather Mountain, the first state attraction to be recognized by the program; the Proximity Hotel, one of the greenest hotels in the nation; and Cape Hatteras Bed and Breakfast, the first business NC GreenTravel-recognized accommodation along the Outer Banks. And the NC GreenTravel team, which includes the [N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach](#), [Waste Reduction Partners](#), the [Center for Sustainable Tourism](#), and the [N.C. Division of Tourism](#), anticipates developing additional recognition criteria, tip-sheets and other resources to expand the program even further in the new year. For more information about the future of the NC GreenTravel program or to become recognized by the program, contact NC GreenTravel program manager [Tom Rhodes](#) or [Alex Naar](#) with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

1. TAKING CARE OF THE INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

When most people think of environment management, they think of the world outside of buildings. But facility managers or property engineers might say indoor environmental quality is just as important as protecting the great outdoors. In fact, indoor environmental quality is so important, it accounts for almost 15 percent of the possible points of the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Existing Building certification. Indoor environmental quality can be impacted by a number of factors, including a building’s central air and ventilation system, indoor contaminants such as cleaning chemicals, mold and mildew, and cigarette smoke, and the amount of natural light. Addressing indoor environmental quality might have fewer initial cost savings compared to installing a new energy-saving lighting system, but according to one article, there are many benefits to investing in indoor environmental quality, ranging from improved staff morale and productivity to improved guest satisfaction. For more information on indoor environmental quality, visit the U.S. EPA’s indoor air quality for lodging, or contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252)737-1346.
RECYCLING

1. RECYCLING, THE TYPICAL STARTING POINT
Recycling is often the first practice that comes to mind when travelers think about sustainable tourism. But as anyone who has tried to implement a recycling program can tell you, successfully recycling is much more difficult than just setting out some recycling bins. Unlike many sustainable practices, such as energy efficient lighting or water-saving plumbing fixtures that just require equipment installation, recycling requires the participation of guests and staff in addition to having recycling bins. If guests throw trash in the recycling bins and recyclables in the trash bins, waste reduction efforts will be quite limited. There are a number of strategies that can be implemented that will greatly improve the chances of guests and visitors recycling correctly. For example, ensuring staff are provided training on recycling will greatly enhance the success of a program. Using recycling bins that are noticeably different than trashcans, either through different colors or different lids, will also help reduce confusion. There are a number of resources to help successfully implement a recycling program, such as Event and Venue Recycling, Recycle on the Go and the Waste Reduction Resource Center. For more help developing a successful recycling program, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

2. THE CHALLENGES OF RECYCLING
Despite having a simple message, many recycling programs can be confusing and difficult for recyclers to understand. What plastic is recyclable, can empty pizza boxes be recycled, and does green glass have to be separated from clear glass? These common questions can lead would-be recyclers straight to the trash bins. The best way to encourage recycling is to make it simple and easy for customers, guests and staff to follow. Consider using bins fitted with specialized slots designated for proper material or developing materials to help inform customers and staff about your recycling program. It is also helpful to monitor your recycling program to ensure it is working properly. For more information on creating a successful recycle program, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00420.pdf, or get in touch with your local waste reduction contact (a county-by-county database can be found at www.p2pays.org/localgov/PAYT/ncwaste.asp?choice3=Counties). For more information on tourism pollution prevention, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com

3. GETTING YOUR RECYCLING PROGRAM INTO SHAPE
According to a survey conducted by TripAdvisor.com, almost three quarters of travelers believe having a recycling program is the most important green hotel practice (www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-i235-c1-Press_Releases.html). To meet this demand, many tourism businesses have started a recycling program at their property only to find one of the biggest recycling challenges is getting patrons and staff to properly dispose of recyclables. After placing proper signage, there are a number of additional simple actions that can be taken to help increase recycling success.
1. Use materials that can be recycled. It will be difficult to reduce your waste if you use products in your own operation that cannot be recycled.
2. Place recycling bins and trash bins together. When people see a recycling bin alone they tend think it is a trash can.

3. Make sure your staff is well informed of your recycling policy and that it participates. There are few things customers dislike more than being told an organization is going green to later see a staff member throwing a recyclable in the trash.

For more information on developing a recycling program, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/49/48995.pdf or contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

4. WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED

In almost every consumer research study on sustainable tourism, recycling is consistently the most popular green practice which visitors report they expect to see at attractions and accommodations. In PGAV Destination’s “Survival of the Greenest” study, researchers found 87.9 percent of travelers expect to see recycling bins at green attractions. But do you and your staff know what your local recycling hauler will collect? For example, in many communities where paper and cardboard are collected for recycling, pizza boxes and phone books are not accepted. It is important to remember that just because a product has a recycling symbol on the packaging that does not mean a recycler picks it up. The best way to find out what can be collected by your recycling vendor is to contact them directly. If you do not know who your recycling hauler is, or would like to find one, you can contact your local waste reduction specialist, which can be found by visiting www.p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html. For more information on recycling at tourism attractions and accommodations, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

5. RECYCLING AT WORK

Recycling is a basic part of any efforts to reduce a business’ environmental impact, but despite the fact that many tourism professionals recycle at their home, some fail to continue their recycling efforts at work. Much of the time, the lack of recycling occurs due to a lack of knowledge and resources. So to assist North Carolina businesses interested in recycling, the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (NC DPPEA) has developed a Recycling Business Assistance Center, which includes a recycling markets directory at www.p2pays.org/DMRM/start.aspx as well as a business to business waste trader at www.ncwastetrader.org. You can also find local recycling contacts at www.p2pays.org/localgov/PAYT/ncwaste.asp and information on electronics recycling at www.p2pays.org/electronics/business.asp. For further information on recycling at tourism related businesses, contact Alex Naar of ECU’s Center for Sustainable Tourism at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com, or Tom Rhodes at NC DPPEA at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov.
6. **AS IF RECYCLING MATTERS**

When most people think about going green, the first thing that comes to mind is recycling. Research from [PGAV Destination Consulting](http://www.pgav.com) shows that recycling bins are the best example travelers consider of an attraction’s environmental commitment. And not having a recycling program can result in some strong emotions as one hotel found. According to the [Recycling Business Assistance Center](http://www.epa.gov), recycling is also good for North Carolina’s economy. Travelers, particularly event planners, are becoming more knowledgeable about waste reduction and are asking questions about where the recyclables go. So it is important that if there is a recycling program, it goes beyond just putting a few recycling bins in a lobby. For assistance, in implementing a recycling program at an attraction or accommodation, contact the local waste reduction contact or Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on recycling, visit [U.S. EPA Recycling on the Go](http://www.epa.gov), [N.C. DPPEA Event and Venue Recycling](http://www.ncmdupepa.org), or [Partnership for Bar & Restaurant Recycling](http://www.recycling-restaurant.com).

The [National Restaurant Association](http://www.restaurant.org)’s recent report on recycling is downloadable. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

7. **OYSTER SHELL RECYCLING**

Although it’s now at the end of oyster season, many of this year’s shucked oysters will live on to help produce more oysters for North Carolina. The North Carolina Oyster Shell Recycling program ([www.ncdmf.net/shellfish/recycle1.htm](http://www.ncdmf.net/shellfish/recycle1.htm)) collects oyster shells from events and businesses and places them back in the coastal water. The most productive place to grow oysters is on other oyster shells. By using used oyster shells to build oyster reefs, it helps create the ideal oyster home. Over 50 restaurants from across the state participate in the program, diverting what would normally be thrown away to help keep the coast’s water cleaner and producing more oysters. For information on participating in the program, contact Sabrina Varnam of the N.C. Division of Marin Fisheries at (252) 726-7021 or via [Sabrina.Varnam@ncmail.net](mailto:Sabrina.Varnam@ncmail.net). For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).

8. **VENUE AND EVENT RECYCLING**

Starting Oct. 1, in accordance with N.C. House Bill 1465 of the 2005 Session, plastic bottles will be banned from disposal at N.C. landfills. Although plastic bottles only make up a small part of residential waste, they make up a significantly higher percentage of waste at tourism businesses and events. Implementing a recycling program is not only important because of the new plastics disposal ban but, according to a study by PGAV ([http://www.pgav.com/images/Destin%2012-08.pdf](http://www.pgav.com/images/Destin%2012-08.pdf)), recycling is becoming increasingly important to potential guests and visitors. The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance have developed a number of resources to help your business implement a successful recycling program. These include the Partnership for Bar & Restaurant Recycling ([www.partnership4recycling.org](http://www.partnership4recycling.org)), The Green Plan for Hotels ([www.p2pays.org/hospitality](http://www.p2pays.org/hospitality)), and Event and Venue Recycling ([www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling](http://www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling)). To contact your local recycling coordinator for information on how to get involved, where to recycle or information on other services offered in your area, visit [http://p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html](http://p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html). For more information on implementing sustainable practices, contact Tom Rhodes at [tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov), or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).
9. **RECYCLING AT EVENTS**

Setting up special event and venue recycling is an important part of the recycling cycle. Many tons of recyclable materials are lost each year as a result of poor or nonexistent event and venue recycling programs. Recycling at indoor or outdoor sports arenas, stadiums, concert venues and civic centers can be challenging. Not to mention those outdoor special events held each year in communities, such as holiday day events, festivals, fairs, races, etc. But with the plastic bottle disposal ban, it is even more important that this material is removed from the waste stream. The N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach has a [website designed to help set up special](#) event and venue recycling. In addition, many cities, such as [Raleigh](#), offer assistance to event organizers regarding recycling at events. To learn more about making festivals and events more green, download a [Greening Festivals and Events tip sheet](#). For more information, visit [NC GreenTravel](#), or [Tom Rhodes](#) at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or [Alex Naar](#) at (252) 737-1346.

Coca-Cola Recycling is educating consumers all over North America about recycling and encouraging attendees at large-scale events, such as the Coca-Cola 600 race at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord last month, to recycle their empty bottles and cans. Watch a YouTube video about the program [here](#). As part of the program, [Coca-Cola provided a portable processing center](#) after the Coca-Cola 600 race.
RENEWABLE ENERGY

1. **THE COSTS OF RENEWABLE ENERGY**

   One reason tourism organizations are weary of using renewable energy is because of additional costs it might entail. Although most sources of renewable energy still have a higher initial cost, their prices are quickly dropping. Solar energy, for example, has seen a 55 percent reduction in price over the last three years, while commercial energy prices in general have risen. Secondly, the largest cost of a renewable energy system is the initial installation. However, after a certain amount of usage, a renewable energy system will not only cover its cost of installation but result in avoided energy costs. This is unlike traditional sources of energy that continue to have input costs even after the energy plant has paid for itself. The North Carolina Solar Center (www.ncsc.ncsu.edu) has developed a number of calculators that can help you determine a renewable energy system’s payback period. To find a local renewable energy professional visit www.greenprofessionals.org. For more information on renewable energy in tourism visit www.renewabletourism.com, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. **ENERGY FROM THE SUN**

   Many tourism businesses rely indirectly on the sun to power their business. The heat of the summer sun helps drive travelers to seek refuge along the coast, in the mountains or in the cooler climate of the countryside. But the sun’s energy can also power a tourism business directly. Through the use of existing and available technologies, a tourism business can relatively easily use the sun’s energy to heat water and convert its rays into electricity. Unlike traditional sources of power, the sun’s energy is provided free of charge. The main cost of solar energy is the installation of the system used to trap and convert solar energy to a usable form. After the system is installed, aside from minor maintenance costs, solar energy will be provided free of charge. You can learn about the dollars and cents of renewable energy for accommodations and attractions during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar on May 20. For more information on attending the webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148 or via GCZ0123@ecu.edu. And for more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit www.sustainabletourism.org/RET/About.cfm, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. **TOURISM AND RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS**

   When you visit the [N.C. Zoological Park](http://www.nczoo.com) in Asheboro, not only do you have the opportunity to see animals, but you also can see one of the largest solar energy projects in the state. The Zoo’s Solar Pointe is a 104 kilowatt, 9,600 square-foot grid-tied, photovoltaic solar system mounted on three picnic pavilions. Developed as a partnership between the NC Zoo and Carolina Solar Energy, the park’s solar panels produce enough electricity to power 13 average homes. The project is a great example of the sometimes complex but necessary partnerships needed to make renewable energy projects at tourism attractions work. The Solar Pavilion project took a partnership between the Zoo, Carolina Solar Energy, Randolph Electrics Membership Corporation, and NC Green Power. You can learn more about renewable energy projects at tourism attractions from Richard Harkrader, CEO and founder of Carolina Solar Energy, during a free Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar on Feb. 14. To learn more about attending the free webinar, or on renewable energy and energy efficient utility programs, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148. And for more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
4. **WHERE DOES RENEWABLE ENERGY GO?**

One of the major limitations of renewable energy, like solar and wind, is it is not always available at the same time as when energy is needed. Many early renewable energy systems addressed this problem by building complex battery systems. The batteries would store excess energy that was produced when the wind was blowing and the sun was shining for later use. But there are a number of challenges in using batteries, including cost. Now a number of renewable energy systems are tied to the grid. This means when the wind turbine or solar panel produces excess electricity, that energy is sold to the power company and is integrated into the existing electricity grid. So when the consumer needs electricity when the sun is not shining, they are able to pull electricity from the grid. There are a number of different models and purchasers of renewable energy and how to sell excess electricity depends on the regulations in a community. In North Carolina, NC GreenPower contracts with renewable energy generators to purchase excess renewable energy as well as sells renewable energy credits. Learn how renewable energy is sold back on the grid during a free Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar on Feb. 14. To learn more about attending the free webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

5. **REBATE AND INCENTIVE PROGRAMS**

It is well known that becoming more energy efficient can provide a number of benefits. It can help attract green-minded travelers, improve the comfort, aesthetic appeal and, in some cases, safety of a restaurant or hotel; and most importantly, being more energy efficient can help reduce operating costs. But there are a number of barriers managers and owners face when they start to consider upgrading existing systems to more energy efficient ones. One of the biggest challenges can be identifying upfront cash. To help address this problem, there are a number of incentive and rebate programs that are available. One of the best sources is DSIRE. Your local utility provider may also have additional programs, which you can learn more about by visiting their website or contacting them directly. To learn more about energy efficiency in the tourism industry, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative. To learn more about attending the free Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar on Feb. 14 on renewable energy and energy efficient utility programs, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148. And for more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

6. **WINERIES MAKING LIKE A GRAPEVINE**

Grapes, like all other plants, convert energy from the sun’s rays. And a number of wineries are also taking advantage of the sun’s energy to produce power. Solar energy and grape growing seem to go hand-in-hand for many wineries, ranging from the very large to boutique operations. The need for hot water has led many wineries to install solar hot water systems. Other wineries are using the sun’s energy to produce electricity. Electricity produced by the sun at wineries is being used for everything from powering insect traps to charging electric vehicles. And wineries are not the only beverage producer using renewable energy. Breweries are also using solar energy. Learn more about renewable energy at wineries and breweries during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Jan. 24 free webinar. To register, click here. For more information on the webinar, contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit the Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative.
7. **IS SOLAR ENERGY RIGHT FOR YOU?**

Solar energy is far from a new energy source, but for many attractions and accommodations it remains a mystery. While each property is different, Joanna Malcolm, communications director for FLS Energy, provided some generic answers to many of these questions during a May 20, 2010 Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar. During that webinar, Malcolm suggested simply contacting a commercial solar installation firm with experience in the tourism industry. A list of N.C. green professionals, including solar energy firms, can be found at the Directory of Renewable Energy Professionals, many of whom post current and past projects on their website. And like with any new strategy, it is always helpful to ask other attractions and accommodations that are already using solar energy how pleased they are with the technology or how they would have done it differently. Green Lodging news has put together a list of hotels using solar energy. The N.C. Energy Division, N.C. Solar Center, N.C. Sustainable Energy Association, and NC GreenPower are also available to help you find answers about solar energy and if it is right for your business. For more information about renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism, or contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
SUPPORTING LOCALS

1. GOING GREEN BY GOING LOCAL

With the growing season well on its way, farmers markets across the state are filling up not only with melons and tomatoes, but also with a growing number of customers interested in eating local. Besides the many social benefits of eating local, there are a number of environmental reasons for serving locally grown agricultural products at your tourism businesses. Local food requires less transportation, which results in less CO2 emissions. And eating local helps support the conservation of farmlands and open space. But unlike organic, there is no federal designation for locally grown products. If your business claims to serve locally grown products, it is important to share with customers which products are sourced locally and where they are from. For more information on local agriculture in North Carolina, visit http://ncsustainablefood.wordpress.com/. To find locally grown products, contact the N.C. Dept. of Agriculture Marketing Division (www.agr.state.nc.us/markets/) or your local Cooperative Extension Agent (www.ces.ncsu.edu). For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. INCORPORATING THE LOCAL AGRICULTURE OF NORTH CAROLINA

One of the many reasons that visitors travel to North Carolina is because of its natural and scenic landscapes. One of the best opportunities visitors have to interact directly with the land is through local agriculture. Preserving and supporting local agriculture has many environmental benefits and is becoming an increasingly popular tourism activity. There are many opportunities to incorporate agriculture as part of your attraction or accommodation. Restaurants can complement dishes with local produce or meats. Hotels and B&Bs can partner with local farmers to offer farm tours or cooking classes with vegetables guests pick themselves. Historical sites can educate visitors about historical agriculture with small on-site gardens. A list of North Carolina farmer’s markets can be found at www.ncfarmfresh.com and a document of what is in season can be found at http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/availabilitychart.pdf. For more information on agritourism opportunities, visit www.ncagr.gov/markets/agritourism/. For more information on local agriculture, visit http://greenleaf.uncg.edu, www.carolinafarmstewards.org and www.cefs.ncsu.edu.
3. LOCALIZING YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN

The farm-to-table movement is increasing its position within the tourism industry. The National Restaurant Association’s What’s Hot in 2011 survey once again put locally sourced food as the hottest trends of the upcoming year. Many North Carolina restaurants are seeing the benefits of using locally grown products. In addition, the Best Dish in N.C. competition, which just announced its finalists, continues to gain in popularity. But a number of tourism businesses are taking their commitment to supporting local economies one step further by making an effort to use local businesses for all their needs. This might include using local services, such as advertising and marketing firms, or purchasing from a local manufacture, such as a local t-shirt printing company. While there might be some initial challenges with “going local,” there are many long-term benefits, such as it supports the local economy plus helps create an authentic destination and a sense of community. While finding local sources for all needs may be challenging, making the effort to use local sources whenever possible is a good place to start. The North Carolina Chamber can help find a local chamber of commerce for help identifying local businesses. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

4. A COMMITMENT TO SERVING LOCAL FOODS

Pick up any travel or food magazine and you are almost guaranteed to read something about using local foods. But as almost any professional chief will tell you, using 100 percent local foods in a commercial kitchen is nearly impossible. What about just 10 percent? That is the challenge the Center for Environmental Farm Systems has set for North Carolinians. The 10% Campaign asks individuals and businesses to commit to spending 10 percent of their food dollars on local sources. Once you sign your business up, you will be emailed a few simple questions each week so your progress and progress statewide can be tracked. The 10% Campaign has a number of resources on its website to help you find sources of local foods. And participating businesses are recognized on the 10% Campaign website. For more information and to sign the pledge, visit www.nc10percent.com, or e-mail questions to nc10percent@ncsu.edu. For more information on the Farm to Fork initiative, visit www.cefs.ncsu.edu/newsevents/news/2010/0421stateactionguide.html.

5. SENDING BACK TO THE FARMS

With the growing popularity of farm-to-table tourism, businesses across North Carolina are making an effort to make locally grown fruits and vegetables available to customers. But few are sending much back to the farm, despite throwing away large amounts of compostable organic matter. Although your tourism business might not be ready for a full composting program, there are a number of smaller composting projects that every tourism business can try. For example, used coffee grounds can be collected and given away to local gardeners. For more information on coffee composting, visit http://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/story.php?S_No=545&storyType=news, or contact your local N.C. Cooperative Extension office at (www.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php?page=countycenters). For more information on composting, visit www.p2pays.org/composting or contact Brian Rosa via brian.rosa@ncdner.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
6. **HOLIDAYS WITH LOCALLY RAISED FOODS**

As many restaurants finalize what they'll be cooking up for their holiday guests, one way to add spice to a menu is to offer locally raised and grown foods. If you are unsure how many local products you can use in your menu, start by trying to using one or two locally grown products. And if you are a hotel or an inn, consider offering your guests local snacks, such as peanuts or cookies made with local ingredients. You can also add to your customers' experience using local agriculture. Painting and drawing classes using locally grown produce for subject matter, cooking classes using produce customers picked themselves, and farm tours are only a few of the examples of adding to tourist experiences using local foods. For more information on available local agricultural products, contact the N.C. Corporative Extension at [www.ces.ncsu.edu](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu) or visit the N.C. Dept. of Agriculture's Marketing Division at [www.ncagr.gov/markets/gottobe/findNCproducts.html](http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/gottobe/findNCproducts.html). For more information on sustainable local sustainable agriculture, visit the Center for Environmental Farming Systems at [www.cefs.ncsu.edu](http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu). For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at [tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov), or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).

7. **LOCALLY GROWN HOLIDAY TREES**

It is difficult to imagine holiday decorating without the time-honored Christmas tree – and there are many ways of reducing its environmental impact. The first is to choose a locally grown tree rather than an artificial tree made of PVC. North Carolina is one of the largest producers of Christmas trees, and Christmas tree farms can be located via [http://www.ncfarmfresh.com/farms.asp](http://www.ncfarmfresh.com/farms.asp) or [http://ncchristmastrees.com/choose_cut_farms.htm](http://ncchristmastrees.com/choose_cut_farms.htm). You can even choose a tree with its roots still attached so it can be replanted after use (check before planting to make sure your area is suitable for a specific type of tree). For other tree reuse options, visit [http://www.ncsu.edu/featured-stories/engaging-society/jan-2008/christmas-tree/index.php](http://www.ncsu.edu/featured-stories/engaging-society/jan-2008/christmas-tree/index.php). Also consider using energy efficient LED string-lights and purchasing used ornaments from thrift stores. Another option is to encourage guests and staff to make their own ornaments from old holiday cards and natural items such as cinnamon sticks and ribbons. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at [tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov), or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).
SUSTAINABILITY BY TOURISTS

1. **TIPS FOR TRAVELERS**

To protect North Carolina’s natural and scenic beauty, it takes the efforts of both destinations and visitors alike. A number of tourism organizations and businesses have started providing environmental education to help visitors travel greener. Last week, the Division partnered with East Carolina University’s Center for Sustainable Tourism to make available to journalists a list of green traveler tips and travel destinations across the state where each green tip could be practiced. The green travel tips are available at [http://media.visitnc.com/news/330/15/d_newsitem_latest_news.html](http://media.visitnc.com/news/330/15/d_newsitem_latest_news.html). Local tourism organizations can reuse these tips by matching them with destinations in their area to be shared with visitors. For more green ideas to share with travelers, visit the N.C. Office of Environmental Education: Informed Consumer at [http://www.eenorthcarolina.org/consumer.htm](http://www.eenorthcarolina.org/consumer.htm). For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. **GET HELP MAKING GREEN TRAVEL PLANS**

According to a report by PhoCusWright ([www.phocuswright.com](http://www.phocuswright.com)) only 8 percent of travelers know where to find a green hotel, although the same report stated that 44 percent of travelers consider the environmental practices of destinations important when planning a trip. A number of travel Web sites and guides are seeking to fill that gap, such as AAA’s eco program ([www.aaa.biz/Approved/eco.html](http://www.aaa.biz/Approved/eco.html)), and Travelocity.com’s green directory ([http://leisure.travelocity.com/Promotions/0,,TRAVELOCITY%7C5019%7Cmkt_main,00.html](http://leisure.travelocity.com/Promotions/0,,TRAVELOCITY%7C5019%7Cmkt_main,00.html)). New Web sites are popping-up to fill the void as well, such as [www.istaygreen.org](http://www.istaygreen.org). Even the EPA is getting involved ([www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?]). And there are a number of programs here in North Carolina, such as GoGreenPlus.org, SustainableSandhills.org, and GreenBusinessPlan.com. For more information on how your tourism business can help fill the gap, contact Tom Rhodes at [tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov), or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. **PAYING MORE TO GO GREEN**

One of the most common questions tourism business owners ask about sustainability is if travelers are willing to pay more for green attractions and accommodations. This is a challenging question to answer because of the many variables that must be considered. There is evidence to suggest there is a small segment of the travel market (studies vary between 4 and 10 percent) that are willing to pay more for a green trip, but it is important to understand the limitations of these studies. For example, there are a number of related benefits being green contributes, such as employee morale and indoor air quality, two factors many travelers would be willing to pay more for regardless of environmental performance. Another limitation of relying solely on consumer willingness to pay in evaluating the benefits of adopting sustainable practices is that many green practices may not influence travelers’ decision to visit your destination but can help reduce your operating costs. For more information on the benefits of adopting sustainable tourism practices, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
4. **DO TRAVELERS REALLY CARE IF SITES GO GREEN?**

When companies like [Wal-Mart](http://www.walmart.com), [Coca-Cola](http://www.coca-cola.com) and [Nike](http://www.nike.com) all have sustainability initiatives, going green has definitely gone from niche to mainstream. Many major tourism and hospitality businesses have also integrated sustainability into their operations – including [Marriott](http://www.marriott.com), [Expedia](http://www.expedia.com), [Darden](http://www.dardenrestaurants.com), and [Xanterra Parks & Resorts](http://www.xanterra.com) to name a few. A recent survey from [TripAdvisor](http://www.tripadvisor.com) found that 70 percent of accommodation owners plan on offering green programs in 2011. However, the question remains: do travelers really care if their hotel or restaurant offers a recycling program? There are a number of surveys that would indicate travelers are conscious of their eco-travel footprint, from [TripAdvisor’s 2011 Travel Trends Forecast](http://www.tripadvisor.com), [PGAV Destinations](http://www.pgavdestinations.com) and the [National Restaurant Association](http://www.nationalrestaurantassociation.org). But there still are a number of questions about how implementing green practices influences travel consumer choices. For example, where do travelers want to learn about tourism businesses’ sustainability initiatives? Are some sustainable practices more likely to influence travelers’ choices more than others? And do travelers care if a property admits to not being a perfect green steward? For the answers to these questions and many more, attend a free webinar on May 26 at 10:30 a.m. on sustainable tourism marketing. For more information and to register, click [here](http://www.tripadvisor.com) or contact Garrett Zeigler.

5. **GREENING AT A DESTINATION LEVEL**

There is a new trend in sustainable tourism recognition programs: destination level initiatives. The [Green Destination Orlando Program](http://www.greendestinationprogram.com) announced at the [Green Lodging & Hospitality Conference](http://www.greenlodgingconference.com), joins a growing number of destinations that are working to highlight the collective sustainability efforts of area attractions and accommodations. [Gatlinburg](http://www.gatlinburg.com) and [Virginia Beach](http://www.virginiabeach.com) have also established efforts to position their destinations as greener. The Asheville Independent Restaurant Association, in partnership with the Blue Ridge Sustainability Institute, is working to position [Asheville](http://www.ashevillesd.org) as the greenest dining destination in the country. With sustainability continuing to be a significant industry trend in both the meetings industry and the leisure market, the question will no longer be if a destination is green, but how green is it? For more information on how to green your travel destination, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

6. **GETTING THERE GREENER**

Whether it is by bike, train, airplane, or by car, every visitor gets to their destination by some form of transportation. And just as attractions and accommodations are getting greener, so is how travelers get to them. [Airlines](http://www.aaa.com) are testing biofuels to replace petroleum fuels. Electric vehicle charging stations are being built across the country, some of which are even using solar energy. Hotels are also joining in, providing electric vehicle charging stations on site, even when travelers are not really going anywhere. When liquid fuels are used, [fuel from french fries](http://www.frenchfries.com) is being used. And travelers can increasingly pick [transportation services](http://www.greentransportation.com) that run a greener fleet. These examples of greener transportation show one can travel and still be green. Register online to learn more during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s April 24 free webinar about renewable energy for transportation and how an attraction or accommodation can become actively involved in helping guests get there greener. For more information, contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit [Renewable Energy in Tourism](http://www.renewable-energy-in-tourism.com).
7. FOOD FOR YOUR CAR

With the local food movement well on its way, new opportunities for travelers to get a taste of local flavors are emerging. Naturally, there is local beer, local crafts, and even local t-shirts. But locally fueled transportation is also starting to make its way into the travel experience. Rickshaws or pedicabs can now be found in many urban travel destinations. For travelers looking to turn local food into local energy, there are bicycle tours. Fuels made from local plants and wood waste products are also being used to power cars. Some tourism businesses are taking local fuel even closer to home by recycling used fryer oil to make locally sourced and produced biodiesel. Other organizations are using the sun’s energy to produce energy to power cars. To learn more about opportunities to integrate local fuel in your tourism business, attend the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s April 24 free webinar. To register, visit https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/315587808 or contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism.

Secondary Tips:

8. PRINTED MATERIALS PRESENT CHALLENGES

Every tourism organization has its own marketing strategy, but whatever marketing strategy is used, printed materials are an important tool, whether they are convention center layouts given at trade shows or brochures distributed at visitor centers. While printed materials are a relatively cost effective way to get a message across, there is increasing concern over the environmental impacts. One option to reduce paper usage is to rely more on digital distribution of materials, but according to a report by PBS, digital media is not without its environmental impacts as well. It can be difficult to compare the impact of different media formats but the bottom line is every format has an impact. With thoughtful planning, though, impacts can be minimized to meet both the distributor’s and the consumer’s standards and needs. Just as important as what is printed is what it’s printed upon. Including information about how travelers can reduce their environmental impact while visiting a destination is yet another way to improve environmental performance even further. For more information on paper and recycling, visit EPA paper recycling. For more information on green travel tips for consumers that can be include in print materials, visit www.visitorcarecode.org. For more information on sustainability in tourism, contact Alex Naar or by telephone at (252)737-1346.
SUSTAINABILITY IN BUSINESSES

1. WHERE TO START?
Knowing how to begin incorporating sustainability can be difficult. One place to start is by crafting a formal environmental and social policy or including sustainability as part of your business’ mission or vision statement. With an organizational-wide approach, your environmental and social commitments are positioned to be incorporated in every part of your business. To help organize your sustainable efforts, you can create a green team. Green teams with diverse company representation are the most helpful because they provide insight to the entirety of your business as well as foster employee participation. For more information on implementing sustainable practices, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. WHAT TO DO FIRST
According to industry surveys and studies, there are a number of tourism organizations that are taking active steps to be green. With so many different sustainable practices, it can be difficult to decide which sustainable practices to implement, but there are some helpful strategies when deciding. The first is to choose practices that have the greatest environmental impact. By conducting an environmental audit and using industry pollution prevention calculations, the amount of pollution prevention per practice can be calculated and compared. Another strategy is to examine the resources needed to implement sustainable practices. This strategy often leads to tourism businesses implementing simpler practices first and then moving on to more complex and resource intensive practices. The last strategy includes implementing sustainable practices that are the most demanded by travelers. There have been a number of surveys that look at the preferences of both green travelers and travelers in general, but it can also be helpful to get feedback directly from customers and guests to see what sustainable practices are important to them. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346. And for information on participating in the NC GreenTravel Initiative, click here.

3. STARTING SMALL
The growing interest in sustainability has caused many businesses to start thinking about how they can green their work place. For many businesses and organizations, the idea of becoming sustainable can seem intimidating, if not impossible. It is important to remember that sustainability is a way of doing business, not a destination. Even the smallest of organizations with limited budgets can start making changes to reduce their negative environmental and social impacts. Start with small, often no-cost, steps such as setting printers and copiers to print on both sides, purchasing copy paper made with recycled content, and reminding staff to turn off their computers and lights at the end of each workday. Although these small changes might seem minimal, they can have a big impact over time; by successfully accomplishing small goals, you will feel more confident and be more knowledgeable when addressing complex sustainability challenges in the future. For a list of simple actions specifically for the lodging industry, visit http://www.p2pays.org/hospitality/main/tips.htm.
4. **FIRST, DO THE RESEARCH**

Many sustainable practices can result in increased cost savings, but any investment has its risks. It is important to research the short- and long-term effects of any green initiative before beginning the project and to remember what might be a good practice at one business might not be at another. Investigations can be done in a variety of ways: implementing more efficient appliances and fixtures in waves, consulting with pollution prevention specialists, and getting input from all parties involved, including staff whose work will be affected by the change. For a database of companies that provide a range of environmental services, visit [http://wrcc.p2pays.org/vendor.asp](http://wrcc.p2pays.org/vendor.asp). For information on efficient appliances, visit [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=find_a_product](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=find_a_product). To speak to a pollution prevention specialist, contact Tom Rhodes at [tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov). For more information on sustainable practices, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via [anaar@ncommerce.com](mailto:anaar@ncommerce.com).

5. **SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT GOING GREEN**

Most property managers have already implemented practices such as using compact florescent light bulbs, implemented a recycling program, and have a linen reuse program. But where can you go to get information on becoming a deeper shade of green? One of the best sources is the EPA Energy Star for **Hospitality and Entertainment**, which has comprehensive information on energy management. Another source of information is **Sustainable Travel International**, an international leader in providing education and outreach services that help travelers, travel providers and destinations support environmental conservation and protect cultural heritage while promoting cross-cultural understanding and economic development. And the **International Ecotourism Society** has been working to be the global source of knowledge and advocacy uniting communities, conservation, and sustainable travel for 20 years. For additional links to information on taking that next green step, visit the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s [contact list](mailto:contact list), or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via [anaar@ncommerce.com](mailto:anaar@ncommerce.com).

6. **MAKING A GAME PLAN**

Every day, more businesses are implementing practices to reduce their environmental impact, but some are doing a better job than others. One tactic that many successful attempts have in common is an organized approach to sustainability. By developing a plan, organizations can focus their efforts on practices that will have the most significant impact and that best meet greater organizational goals. The first step to developing a successful environmental program is to examine your organization’s mission statement and decide what environmental goals will best further your organization’s mission. Some organizations also develop corporate responsibility statements as well. Once broad goals of sustainability have been developed, it can be helpful to conduct an environmental audit or assessment to evaluate current practices. After setting broad goals and conducting an assessment, set more specific and tangible goals that can be evaluated and benchmarked. For more information on developing a sustainability plan, visit [www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00421.pdf](http://www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00421.pdf), or contact Alex Naar at (919)715-3782 or via [anaar@ncommerce.com](mailto:anaar@ncommerce.com).
7. AREAS TO ADDRESS
Sustainability is a growing trend in all industries and is now finding its way into mainstream tourism. The increasing popularity of sustainability has led to differing understandings of what sustainability really means, so to help clarify for industry professionals, the Center has developed a working definition that includes those actions that contribute to a balanced and healthy economy by generating tourism-related jobs, revenues and taxes while protecting and enhancing the destination’s socio-cultural, historical, natural and built resources for the enjoyment and well-being of both residents and visitors. The center’s director, Dr. Patrick Long, has identified twelve action areas where tourism professionals can address issues of sustainability: 1) greenhouse gas emissions, 2) solid waste management, 3) freshwater consumption, 4) wastewater management, 5) energy efficiency, 6) ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, 7) land use management, 8) air and noise pollution, 9) respect for local cultures and communities, 10) economic benefits to local communities, 11) responsible purchasing, and 12) education for employees and clients. To learn more about the Center for Sustainable Tourism visit www.sustainabletourism.org or contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.

8. FINDING THE RIGHT PROFESSIONAL
The growing number of salespeople offering environmental solutions can make distinguishing between solutions and swindles difficult. Your relationship with an environmental professional will proceed much more effectively if you first assess what your business or organization specifically needs before working with a consultant. For example, is your objective in working with an environmental professional to reduce utility bills or reduce your carbon footprint? Although many environmental problems are related, by having specific goals in mind, you will be equipped to develop realistic plans with an environmental specialist that will further your organization’s goals. Second, it is important to learn a little bit about the areas you hope to work with using an environmental professional. Once you have found an environmental professional you feel comfortable with, it can be helpful to include some sort of accountability in the contract. For example, if you work with an energy expert, include reductions in your electricity usage after changes are made as part of the contract. For a database of environmental professionals and services, visit wrcc.p2pays.org/vendor.asp or www.greenprofessionals.org/site/profd//index.cfm. For more information on finding the right environmental professional for the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (919)715-3782 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.
9. WHATS THE FUSS ON BEING GREEN?

Industry survey after industry survey shows that an overwhelming majority of tourism businesses are either actively taking steps to reduce their environmental footprint or plan to do so in the near future. Some experts have argued that the tourism industry has been involved in going green for a long time and the trend seems to only be moving upward. Some experts predict that sustainability will continue to grow in importance and gradually become a fundamental part of industry decision-making. But why are tourism businesses investing limited resources to go green when it’s still not clear how being green affects market positioning? Some have pointed to the fact that by going green, tourism businesses can reduce their operating costs. Others have pointed to the growing number of green-minded travelers. And while much of the effort to be green has been voluntary, there is growing evidence that future government regulation is possible. Many tourism businesses, such as Hilton and Ritz-Carlton, are going green because they believe it’s the right thing to do, even if the short-term benefits of doing so are not entirely clear. For more information on the benefits of going green, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252)737-1346.

10. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

During these uncertain economic times, a number of tourism businesses have had to make the tough call to reduce their philanthropic efforts. But despite this, there still are a number of ways any business can continue its social responsibility efforts. For example, providing local nonprofits with free meeting space when conference facilities are not in use, allowing local artists and craftsmen to display and sell their work onsite, and donating unwanted or obsolete equipment, electronics, furniture, drapes and carpeting to charity. Consider participating in a program like the Clean the World program (http://www.cleanteworld.org). Some tourism businesses have even partnered with local non-profits to provide travelers with “volunteer vacation” opportunities. For a complete list of sustainable practices, visit http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/Business-Resources-Checklists.cfm. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

11. BICYCLING

One of the newest green travel trends is offering bicycles to tourists (http://www.travelandleisure.com/blogs/carry-on/2009/8/10/two-wheel-trend-city-hotels-offering-bikes#, www.hotelworldnetwork.com/day89, www.thestar.com/article/675423#, and www.luxist.com/2009/04/22/hotels-offer-bikes-to-guests/). Although bicycles are a tradition at many North Carolina vacation spots, some of the accommodations now offering bikes are in urban city centers, such as the new Ritz-Carlton in Charlotte (http://corporate.ritzcarlton.com/en/Press/Properties/Charlotte/Releases/valet_service.htm). With travelers becoming increasingly interested not only in environmental health but their personal health as well, offering bicycles is one relatively low-cost way to differentiate your product while helping travelers reduce their carbon footprint. For more green ideas, visit www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/Business-Resources-Checklists.cfm. For more information on implementing sustainable practices, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
12. **IT'S ELECTRIC**

Despite their higher upfront costs, more consumers continue to buy electric and hybrid cars. Some drivers are motivated by the lower operating costs, others are motivated for environmental reasons, and other drivers are buying them because they see them as a luxury product. To make sure they are not missing out on potential guests, many hotels are now adding electric-vehicle charging stations. And more car rental companies are offering electric vehicles as an option to customers. It is hard to tell if charging stations are the new must-have hotel amenity, but the relatively low cost and many federal and local government incentives make offering charging stations, even free charging, attractive to hotels. Learn more about electric vehicles and alternative fueled vehicles during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s April 24 free webinar. Click [here](#) to register, or contact Nathan Hingtgen for more information. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit [Renewable Energy in Tourism](#).

13. **GREENING THE GREENERY**

The end of winter and the start of spring mean a number of changes for grounds staff at tourism businesses. Irrigation lines have to be checked, lawn mower blades sharpened and fertilizers applied. While it is important to make sure landscaping meets the expectations of guests and customers, poor landscaping practices can result in a number of negative environmental impacts. Using landscaping best practices can better manage operating costs. For example, overwatering lawns not only wastes freshwater, but it leads to larger water bills. There are a number of resources to help better manage business landscaping in an efficient manner, such as the Environmental Sustainability Resource Center’s [Landscaping Topic Hub](#). Landscaping best practices can also be found as part of the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s [sustainable practice checklists](#). For more information on sustainable landscaping practices, contact the appropriate local [N.C. Cooperative Extension office](#), Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

14. **EXAMINING INCREASED GUEST SATISFACTION AT GREEN HOTELS**

When hotels began implementing green practices, saving water and energy had to be balanced with providing guests top quality service. Now according to a recent article in [Fox Business](#), guest satisfaction shows an "increase" when hotels go green. Improvements in energy and water efficient technology now allow environmentally preferable products to perform on par with traditional options without sacrificing the customer experience, but the technological advances alone do not explain why guest satisfaction is higher at green hotels. Part of the explanation might be that an increasing number of consumers not only prefer [environmentally friendly products](#) but are more knowledgeable about [what makes a product green](#). When a hotel guest sees compact florescent light bulbs in the lobby or preferred parking spaces for alternative fuel vehicles, not only do they know what that means for the environment, but they are more likely to appreciate it. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
15. **MAKING FRIENDS IN STRANGE PLACES**
A growing trend in the travel and tourism industry is for-profit enterprises developing partnerships with nonprofit organizations. For a long time, these two groups were often seen as on opposite sides of various issues, but there now seems to be growing understanding that their respective interests are related. Destinations increasingly realize that to be a top tourism attraction, they have to have a clean environment and a rich and strong local community. And environmental organizations are recognizing that to protect the natural environment, they need legitimate business interests that can invest financial resources. Some examples of these public-private partnerships include the collaboration by Great Wolf Resorts and the National Geographic Society on Project Green Wolf and Double Tree’s work with a wide range of partners on various issues; perhaps the best example is the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, compiled of many private and public partnerships. For more information on how a private enterprise might partner with a nonprofit, or how a nonprofit might find an ally in a for-profit enterprise, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

16. **KEEPING YOUR GUESTS SAFE FROM CHEMICALS**
Every hotel manager and attraction owner wants to make sure guests not only have a great time, but that they are also safe while visiting. One of the biggest threats to guest safety is, fortunately, one that is easily avoidable and not very costly to address: the threat of poisoning from harsh chemicals. Cleaning products, pesticides and old paints can be a serious threat to guest safety if not stored properly. According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, poisoning is the second leading cause of death in much of the country. There are a number of online resources to help choose alternative cleaning products, such as the EPA Safer Cleaning guide. But sometimes, dangerous chemicals are necessary. In those situations, it is important that all precautions are taken to reduce the risk of poisoning, such as ensuring all harmful chemicals are stored securely, only the amount needed is stored onsite and all products are labeled correctly. For more information on preventing poisoning, visit the U.S. National Library of Medicine’s Household Products and the EPA’s Pesticides factsheet. For more information on reducing environmental risks, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252)737-1346.

17. **JOINING THE GREEN CLUB**
It is not news that a growing number of hotels, restaurants and attractions are implementing sustainable practices. But what is news is that many tourism businesses are increasingly working together to be greener. The Asheville Independent Restaurant Association recently partnered with the Blue Ridge Sustainability Institute to become a Green Dining Destination, working with the Green Restaurant Association. The Charlotte Green Team brings together a wide range of businesses to further the sustainability of the city. With meeting and event planners increasingly paying attention to the green practices of their events, according to a forecast by American Express Meetings & Events, communities that can offer a wider variety of green properties are well positioned to be more attractive destinations. By working together, tourism businesses can learn from each other, establish better terms with vendors, and generate local enthusiasm for the project. The NC GreenTravel Initiative is North Carolina’s first statewide sustainable tourism recognition program and provides destinations with an established platform to further sustainability at attractions and accommodations. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.


18. **SOME HELP MEETING THE GREEN MARK**

For many tourism businesses across North Carolina, meeting the requirements to be recognized by the [NC GreenTravel Initiative](http://www.greentravelnc.com) is second nature. These hotels and restaurants have been implementing sustainable practices long before there was a statewide program to recognize them, so becoming recognized is as simple as completing the application and submitting it. But for other tourism businesses, meeting the criteria for recognition is a daunting task. There are, however, a number of resources to help properties implement the necessary sustainable practices to become recognized. The Center for Sustainable Tourism has developed a number of [tip sheets](http://www.cst.org/tip-sheets) on topics such as LED exit signs, purchasing renewable energy credits, and oyster shell recycling. The U.S. EPA [Energy Star for Hospitality](http://www.energystar.gov) program also has a wealth of resources and provides the necessary tools to complete do energy benchmarking. There are also a number of no cost manuals that provide information on implementing sustainable practices, such as the Tourism Industry Association of Canada’s "[Green Your Business Toolkit](http://www.tia.ca)." And you can always request technical assistance from the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

19. **VALUE ADDED LANDSCAPING**

Tourism businesses are always looking for ways to provide additional amenities that do not increase costs to either themselves or their guests. One strategy to add value to properties that also helps keep costs low is using native plants in landscaping. When native plants are utilized, it increases the number of birds and butterflies that visit a property, which guests are sure to appreciate. Using native plants can help reduce maintenance costs and can even help keep a property looking great during [periods of drought](http://www.energystar.gov) without excessive watering. And using native landscaping improves the environmental footprint. Some tourism businesses, such as Highland Lake Inn’s [Season’s Restaurant](http://www.highlandlakeinn.com) in Flat Rock and [Big Mill Bed & Breakfast](http://www.bigmillinn.com) in Williamston, are even brining their landscaping inside by using edible plants in their restaurant. For more information on using native plants in your landscaping, contact the respective county [N.C. Cooperative Extension](http://www.cooperativeextension.ncsu.edu) office. Find more information about using native plants at the [Going Native](http://www.cooperativeextension.ncsu.edu/goingnative); find more information about [edible landscaping](http://www.cooperativeextension.ncsu.edu/goingnative) from the Center for Sustainable Tourism. For more information on sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
20. **MOVING UP THE CHAIN**

As tourism organizations look to adopt sustainable practices, they are looking not only at their own operations, but also at their suppliers and vendors, in an effort to **green their supply chain**. Hotels and restaurants across the country are starting to choose **locally and sustainably grown produce**, more **environmentally preferable cleaning chemicals**, and **website hosting firms that use renewable energy**. There are three ways organizations can green their supply chain. The first is choosing products that are more environmentally friendly to produce or dispose of, such as paper napkins made from recycled paper or compostable takeout containers. The second is products and services that are less harmful to the environment when they are used, such as purchasing energy efficient dishwashers or using integrated pest management. And the third area to consider is how the products are made or services delivered, which would take into consideration such things as how employees are treated, as well as the environmental performance of the company. There are a **number of resources** to help select more environmentally preferable products and services. There are also product certification programs, such as EPA’s Energy Star and Water Sense, as well **business certifications**. For more information on greening your supply chain, contact **Tom Rhodes** at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact **Alex Naar** at (252) 737-1346.

21. **CHARITY AND HOSPITALITY, TWO PEAS IN A POD**

Last month, Hilton Worldwide announced that through LightStay, its sustainability management platform, all of the company’s 3,750 plus hotel would have an **automated process to give donations to charities**. Hilton Worldwide also announced its **partnership with the Global Soap Project**. These two efforts by Hilton Worldwide are only two small examples of the many ways that the tourism industry actively participates in charitable giving. Almost every national brand and industry leader has a corporate social responsibility program in place, be it the **Biltmore Company**, **Marriott**, **Vail Resorts** or the **Walt Disney Company**. A new twist on giving is the number of tourism-related organizations that are providing volunteer and giving opportunities to their guests and clients. Organizations like **Visit Raleigh** work to connect visitors to volunteer opportunities in the community. For more information on volunteer tourism, visit the **Travelers’ Philanthropy**. For more information about sustainability in tourism, contact **Tom Rhodes** at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or **Alex Naar** at (252) 737-1345.
22. **GREENER THAN YOU THINK YOU ARE**

Many in the tourism industry might be surprised about how many sustainable practices have already been implemented. Many new buildings, for example, already have **LED exit signs**. Many restaurants have been using **locally-sourced produce**, sometimes from their **own backyard**. Perhaps a sustainable practice was implemented just by accident. Paper made from **post-consumer recycled content** has become so readily available and price competitive, it is possible a property is unintentionally stocking it. But regardless of why an organization has implemented a sustainable practice, there are a number of benefits to keeping track of what sustainable practices are in place. The first reason sustainable practices should be tracked is to effectively communicate with any other possible customer what sustainable practices are in place. While it is becoming clearer that not all green practices will attract customers, there continues to be growing evidence **consumers are aware and are influenced** by green practices. Keeping track of sustainable practices will also make becoming recognized by the **NC GreenTravel Initiative** simpler. For a complete checklist of possible sustainable practices that can be implemented across various tourism sectors, visit the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s **Business Resources**. To learn more about the **NC GreenTravel Initiative** or for technical assistance, contact **Tom Rhodes** at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or **Alex Naar** at (252) 737-1346.

23. **MAKE GOING GREEN FUN**

Almost any educator will say the key to getting student buy-in is by making the subject fun. The same is true for implementing green practices at attractions and accommodations. If staff feel having a recycling program is just extra work, it is unlikely the program will be successful. Guests and customers will respond in the same way. But if you can make going green fun, the chances of increasing participation will likely go up. Many organizations have established friendly competitions between departments to see who can save the most energy. Other organizations give away prizes for the staff that comes up with the best idea to reduce waste. Or maybe a contest is set up with a competing property to see who can improve their water efficiency the fastest. Customers can also join in the games as well. A few years ago, the City of Charlotte had a “**Get Caught Green Handed**” initiative that rewarded citizens for using recycling bins. And by going green, not only do staff and customers win, but the energy and waste reductions also lead to lower operating costs, leaving the organization as a winner as well. For more ideas on greening your property, visit **www.NCGreenTravel.org**. For technical assistance, contact **Tom Rhodes** at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or **Alex Naar** at (252) 737-1346.
24. **IS YOUR ATTRACTION OR ACCOMMODATION UBER ECO-FRIENDLY?**

A recent MSNBC.com article, "Luxury lodgings get uber eco-friendly," focused primarily on the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification program. While LEED does provide guidelines on green building, it would be a mistake to conclude an attraction or accommodation's commitment to sustainability is dependent on a certification. There are many green hotels that are not certified, and more than enough examples of certified properties that are not green. This does not mean certification programs do not provide a helpful tool, but it does question relying on certification as the sole criteria in determining if a hotel is green or not. In examining authentically green attractions and accommodations, one of the few similarities among them is an honest and top-to-bottom organizational commitment to being green. Some tourism businesses are less committed to being green, and others are uber committed, regardless of being certified. For more information on sustainable tourism and how you can implement your uber commitment, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

25. **DOES GOING GREEN WORK FOR YOU?**

There is no doubt going green adds value. Brad Tomm, director of sustainable operations at MGM Resorts International, noted this during a recent webinar on reducing food waste that his company is observing more meeting planners asking about sustainable practices. TripAdvisor found in its recent survey on eco-friendly travel choices, 71 percent of travelers plan on making greener travel choices in the future. And the number of tourism businesses implementing green practices is also growing. Last year, the National Restaurant Association survey found 65 percent of restaurants have a recycling program in place, and the American Hotel & Lodging Association Lodging Survey found similar trends in their industry survey. But the question of what makes a green attraction or accommodation remains difficult to answer. The NC GreenTravel Initiative provides a number of resources to help attractions and accommodations become greener. The program also includes a statewide recognition program for properties that have met the NC GreenTravel recognition criteria. So far, over 20 properties have been recognized by the program, with many more joining. For more information about greening your tourism business or about the NC GreenTravel Initiative, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
26. **FINDING THE RIGHT RESOURCES**

Survey after survey finds that not only are travelers more interested in greener travel, but also that attractions and accommodations are also striving to be greener. It can be challenging, though, to navigate the limitless greening options available. Even the most experienced managers find themselves faced with questions like where to start, how much will it cost, and how is success determined. Thankfully there are a number of resources to help. Most of the national travel industry trade associations, such as the U.S. Travel Association, National Restaurant Association, American Hotel & Lodging Association, Meeting Professionals International and many others have developed a number of resources on sustainability. Utility providers, such as Duke Energy, Progress Energy, as well as many local electricity co-ops also offer a number of resources to their customers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also has a number of resources on topics ranging from energy, waste reduction and water conservation, as well as general information. The NC GreenTravel program also has a wealth of resources to help. In addition, the Pollution Prevention Resource Exchange is one of the largest databases of resources on going green. For more information about greening your tourism business or about the NC GreenTravel Initiative, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

27. **GREEN, THE ONE COLOR THAT STAYS IN FASHION**

During this year’s Virtuoso Travel Week conference, Virtuoso joined a growing number of travel experts that recognize sustainable tourism as one of the key trends in the travel industry. Studies as varied as the Global Business Travel Association's "2012 Sustainable Travel Policies Benchmarking Study," Expedia's recent study with MindClick SGM, and TripAdvisor's eco-friendly travel survey, all show that travelers, both leisure and business, continue to prefer travel options that are more environmentally responsible. These studies also show that while green is still in fashion, travelers are now also asking more accommodations and attractions about their sustainability efforts. No longer is having a linen reuse program or putting a recycling bin in the lobby sufficient. Travelers are not only asking if an accommodation or attraction has implemented sustainable practices, but they are also asking for details about local food, carbon footprints and indoor air quality. This demand provides tourism business owners with the opportunity to implement sustainable practices, often reducing operating expenses, that can serve to attract visitors who are increasingly concerned with these issues. For more information on the NC GreenTravel initiative, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
28. **IT TAKES MORE THAN TREES TO MAKE A FOREST**

One of the newest trends in sustainable tourism is an increased emphasis on the greening of entire travel destinations, rather than just focusing on the greening of individual properties. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council has released its [criteria for destinations](#). The Convention Industry Council also included destinations in its green [meeting and events standards](#). And there are a number of cities across the state, such as Raleigh and Charlotte that are looking to leverage the sustainability efforts of the city to attract visitors. While there are many challenges when working to have a group of tourism attractions and accommodations collectively be greener, there are also many advantages. For example, the collaborative [greening effort in Onslow County](#), which currently has the most NC GreenTravel recognized hotels in the state, has allowed for hotels to work together with local government to advance recycling for everyone. For more information on the NC GreenTravel program, contact program manager [Tom Rhodes](#) at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or [Alex Naar](#) with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

29. **SOMETHING GREEN TO CHEER ABOUT**

Many sports fans are finding something else to cheer about in addition to their teams' performance on the field: the greening of sports. Teams, sporting venues and sporting events at all levels are working to implement efforts that reduce waste, improve energy efficiency and enhance the experience for athletes and fans alike. Fans can recycle when they are at a soccer tournament at the [WRAL Soccer Complex](#) in Raleigh or while tailgating at a [Carolina Panther's game](#) in Charlotte. Through the University of Colorado at Boulder's [Green Stampede](#), football games at Folsom Field are now zero waste events. Yet despite much of this progress, there are still many sustainability practices sports venues and events could implement. Dr. Jonathan Casper at N.C. State University recently [surveyed athletic departments](#) of NCAA Division I schools on their sustainability initiatives. His research found that while many departments recognized sustainability as an important direction, they often missed a number of opportunities to enhance the sustainability of university athletics. Learn more about Dr. Casper's study and the CU-Boulder's sustainability initiatives during the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Nov. 27 webinar on energy efficiency in collegiate sports. Click [here](#) to register. For more information, contact [Emily Aysuce](#). For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit [Renewable Energy in Tourism](#).

30. **GAME DAY GREENING**

Sports fans have an increasing number of places beyond the green of the field to find green at sports venues. A growing number of [professional leagues](#), [collegiate athletics](#), [road races](#), and international sporting events, such as the [London Olympics](#) did, are actively developing strategies to be less harmful to the environment. The diversity in what sustainable practices are being implemented is as diverse as the sports played on the fields, from [renewable energy](#) to [water conservation](#) to [waste reduction](#). Some venues, such as the University of Colorado at Boulder's Folsom Field, have become a zero-waste venue. You can learn more about CU-Boulder's Green Stampede and sustainability efforts at other collegiate sports venues during the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Nov. 27 webinar on energy efficiency in collegiate sports. To register, click [here](#). For more information, contact [Emily Aysuce](#). For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit [Renewable Energy in Tourism](#).
31. **GREENING THE GAME**
As sports fans gather around their favorite teams, many may notice that it is not just the fields that are green. From the pros to collegiate, all the way down to little league, teams, venues and fans are working to improve the sustainability of sports. For some, the relationship between sports and going green might seem foreign, but there is growing support for the greening of sports. The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association has developed a model that illustrates the relationship between environmental protection, social responsibility, and economic stewardship in collegiate recreation. The Natural Resources Defense Council has recently published a report on the greening of sports. And collegiate athletic departments and professional teams across the country continue to see value in going green. You can learn more about the greening of sports during the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Nov. 27 webinar on energy efficiency in collegiate sports. To register, click [here](#). For more information, contact Emily Ayscue. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit [Renewable Energy in Tourism](#).

32. **ASHEVILLE’S DINING GROWS GREENER**
The achievement of Asheville becoming the first city to be designated a Green Dining Destination allows the city to build upon its culinary traditions and positions the city to take advantage of the continued popularity of sustainability in restaurants and travel. Asheville efforts also differ in that it takes advantage of branding the destination itself as green rather than only individual properties at the destination. From the federal government to the private sector, there is increasing attention being paid at hosting meetings and events in destinations that facilitate green meetings. And being a Green Dining Destination is one way to further a destination's position as a green travel and meetings destination. For more information on how to green your destination, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

33. **MEETING GREEN MEETING EXPECTATIONS**
CVBs and convention centers of all sizes and locations have for many years now been aggressively working to offer more green meeting options. From offering community service projects to award-winning green practices and even going so far as generating renewable energy, meeting planners have more green options now than ever before. For many meeting destinations and venues, investing in sustainability is becoming a bigger part of how they attract meeting and event planners. With 45 percent of meeting planners reporting that when choosing a meeting venue, green practices are "somewhat important" and 18 percent saying it is "extremely important," being green can mean the difference between securing a meeting or not. Perhaps even more significant is the increasing number of meeting planners that are asking meeting venues about their green practices and the number of travel managers that are implementing sustainability initiatives for their managed travel programs. For more information on how a business can green its destination, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
CREATING VALUE THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY

In a recent Cornell University Hospitality Sustainability report, readers are reminded that the hospitality and tourism industry "creates value from its operations." This raises the question of how sustainability creates value in operations for tourism business. Sustainability does create value because lenders are increasingly willing to extend financing for greener projects, travel providers are integrating it in their supply chain, and travelers are demanding it. Sustainability is able to create value for tourism firms in four areas: reduced operating costs, increased consumer demand, reduced regulatory liability, and improved brand image. However, as noted in the Cornell report, how the value of sustainability is delivered depends on the perspective of the stakeholder. Property owners and managers see value in cost reductions, whereas consumers value enhanced guest experiences. Regardless of a business's green status, there is a green practice to help them meet their goal. To learn more about how to integrate sustainability at a business and increase its value, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

ADDING UP YOUR GREEN EFFORTS

A strategy many long-distance runners use is to break up big mile races into many smaller parts. A similar strategy can be used in greening attractions and accommodations. It can be a daunting task to become a green property, but rather than starting by trying to implement every possible sustainable practice, it might be more manageable to focus on one individual business process, such as food service or guest rooms, or a single area of impact, such as energy or waste reduction. For example, a hotel might concentrate on reducing their water consumption or on green purchasing. Another approach might be to develop and implement a new green practice once a quarter. By slowly implementing sustainable practices, a property can dramatically improve its environmental performance. The Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association offers its Green Lodging Calculator to help determine total reductions or possible reductions for implementing a new practice. There's also the EPA Energy Star Portfolio Manager to benchmark progress and see how well a business compares to similar entities nationwide. For more information about how one can break up greening into smaller parts, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
36. **GREEN TOURISM BECOMING AN EVERYDAY TREND**

Over the last two decades, a growing number of green tourism practices have gone from being fringe, to accepted, to commonplace activities. For example, last year’s American Hotel and Lodging Association’s Lodging Survey found that many green practices, such as linen/towel reuse and water saving programs, continue to be implemented in the majority of properties. According to the National Restaurant Association’s Restaurant Operator Recycling Survey, in many parts of the country recycling is becoming an everyday practice as well. These sustainable practices are gaining traction with managers and owners because they can help reduce costs, have a positive impact on guests and staff, and are cost effective to implement. There are a number of other sustainable practices that also provide these benefits that might soon be commonplace at all attractions and accommodations as well. Examples include **delamping** or installing motion detectors on vending machines, **LED lighting** replacing compact fluorescents and **recycling at sports and recreation venues**, among a number of other possible sustainable practices. With green travel remaining one of the most **important travel trends**, it is not impossible to think that one day all travel will be green. For more information on what you can do to implement these increasingly everyday green practices, contact **NC GreenTravel** program manager **Tom Rhodes**, or **Alex Naar** with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

**Secondary Tips:**

37. **SENDING BACK TO THE FARMS**

With the growing popularity of farm-to-table tourism, businesses across North Carolina are making an effort to make locally grown fruits and vegetables available to customers. But few are sending much back to the farm, despite throwing away large amounts of compostable organic matter. Although your tourism business might not be ready for a full composting program, there are a number of smaller composting projects that every tourism business can try. For example, used coffee grounds can be collected and given away to local gardeners. For more information on coffee composting, visit [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/story.php?S_No=545&storyType=news](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/story.php?S_No=545&storyType=news), or contact your local N.C. Cooperative Extension office at [www.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php?page=countycenters](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php?page=countycenters). For more information on composting, visit [www.p2pays.org/composting](http://www.p2pays.org/composting) or contact Brian Rosa via brian.rosa@ncdner.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
38. EPA: AN AGE-OLD RESOURCE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. During those 40 years, the EPA has been responsible for developing a number of resources, programs, and initiatives that help small to mid-sized businesses be more energy efficient, conserve water and reduce waste.

One of the most well-known EPA programs is Energy Star, which recognizes products and buildings for their energy efficiency. Energy Star has programs for specific business sectors, including the hospitality and entertainment sector. A similar EPA program that addresses water efficiency is WaterSense. Just like Energy Star, the WaterSense program identifies consumer products, such as toilets and showerheads, that meet an efficiency standard. The EPA has also developed the program Recycle on the Go, which encourages recycling in public places such as parks, stadiums, convention centers, airports and other transportation hubs, shopping centers, and at special events. Find more information about EPA programs at partner programs and Businesses and Non-Profits. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.
WEATHER AND CLIMATE

1. PREDICTING THE FUTURE OF TOURISM WITH WEATHER FORECASTS

Anyone who has worked in the tourism industry is acutely aware of the impact weather can have on visitation. A day of rain can flood indoor attractions with visitors. Warmer or cooler than normal temperatures can extend or shorten a season. Given the importance of weather, many tourism businesses have taken active measures to either take advantage or limit damage caused by weather, some of which are addressed in a video taken during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Climate, Weather, and Tourism Workshop. There are many other steps a tourism business can take to help it become weather savvy and many resources to help gather information about weather and climate.

For many tourism businesses, general information about precipitation and temperature are sufficient but for a number of other businesses, more detailed information about conditions such as wet weather or temperature variables may be necessary to better understand how weather affect day-to-day success. In an effort to better share with tourism businesses seasonal weather forecasts, the Center for Sustainable Tourism is developing a pilot newsletter that will include seasonal weather forecasts and possible implications for the N.C. tourism industry. Those interested in receiving the pilot newsletter should contact the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346. For more information on the relationship between climate, weather, and tourism, visit the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Climate, Weather, and Tourism webpage.

2. RESOURCES HELP PROPERTIES PREPARE FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy this fall and a wet summer in Europe, a number of tourism-related businesses are increasingly taking into consideration the impacts climate and weather can have on their business. Resources like the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center, the World Meteorological Organization and the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Climate, Weather, and Tourism Initiative offer a number of tools to help tourism business owners and managers better take into consideration the impacts future weather may have on day-to-day business decisions, knowing that even though tourism businesses might not be able to change the weather, but they can prepare for it. In an effort to further assist the North Carolina tourism industry, the Center for Sustainable Tourism is developing a pilot newsletter that will include seasonal weather forecasts and possible implications for the N.C. tourism industry. Those interested in receiving the pilot newsletter should contact the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346. For more information on the relationship between climate, weather, and tourism, visit the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Climate, Weather, and Tourism Initiative.
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT

1. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, CRITERIA & REPORTING

In late October, it was reported that the Convention Industry Council had completed 8 of 9 sections of the APEX/ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Meeting Standards. At the same time, the International Organization for Standardization is working on ISO 20121 for sustainability in event management, one of several types of environmental management systems. The Global Reporting Initiative is also developing a Sector Supplement for Event Organizers. While it may seem that these initiatives are redundant, they are in fact being developed in coordination with each other to provide the meetings and events industry with a robust set of tools to integrate corporate sustainability. The APEX/ASTM standards can be viewed as a list of specific actions that should be implemented. ISO 20121 is a framework to systematically and successfully implement the APEX/ASTM standards. And the GRI Sector Supplement allows for a successful reporting across economic, social, and environmental performance. For more information on the relationship between reporting, management systems, and criteria, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
WATER

1. A NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION TO SAVE WATER
With much of North Carolina still under unusually dry conditions (the North Carolina drought status can be seen at http://savewaternc.org/DroughtStatus.asp), water conservation will remain an important task for many tourism businesses in the New Year. A good place to start looking for information on water conservation is the EPA WaterSense program (www.epa.gov/watersense), which has information on water conserving fixtures and appliances as well as local contacts (www.epa.gov/watersense/partners/partners.htm). The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (www.p2pays.org) has manuals for general (www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00692.pdf), food service (www.p2pays.org/ref/04/03103.pdf), and lodging (www.p2pays.org/ref/43/42998.pdf) facilities. For more information on water conservation, contact Keyes McGee at (919) 733-4398 or via Keyes.McGee@ncmail.net. For a list of water efficient practices in the tourism industry, visit www.ecu.edu/sustainabletourism/criteria.cfm. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. WATER EFFICIENCY
With the drought of last summer now only a memory, the importance of saving water can easily get overlooked. But much of North Carolina is still abnormally dry and some areas are still experiencing drought conditions (a map can be seen at savewaternc.org/DroughtStatus.asp). There are numerous, simple low-cost changes any tourism business and organization can implement to be more water efficient, resulting in year-round water savings and reduced utility bills. For information regarding water conservation in commercial bathrooms, visit www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/upload/Water-Efficiency-Commercial-Bathrooms-Tip-Sheet.pdf; for restaurants, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/04/03103.pdf; and hotels, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/43/42998.pdf. For general information on water conservation, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/ or contact Keyes McGee at Keyes.McGee@ncmail.net. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
3. **EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE WATER EFFICIENCY**

Previous drought conditions highlight the importance of using water more efficiently. There are a number of simple measures that can help reduce water usage and operating costs. Without even investing in any new equipment, you can reduce your water usage by regularly inspecting and fixing leaks and drips. Often a simple repair, fixing a dripping faucet/showerhead can save up to 1,000 gallons of water per week. Another easy water-saving practice is installing low-flow aerators which use up to 75 percent less water. Low-flow aerators typically cost between $1-$5 with installation and can have a payback period as short as less than one month. In commercial kitchens, pre-rinse spray valves, which are used to clean leftover food and grease off dinnerware, can consume more water than dishwashers. New efficient valves, which can use up to 45 percent less water, have higher water velocity and more effective spray pattern – which not only save water but improve dish-washing. More water-saving practices and strategies can be found in the Water Efficiency Manual for Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Facilities at [http://www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00692.pdf](http://www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00692.pdf). For more water saving tips, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

4. **EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE AIR AND WATER QUALITY**

The tourism industry goes to great lengths to ensure everything is up to guests’ standards. But it is easy to forget what can’t easily be seen, like air and water quality, and a growing number of travelers are looking for allergy free and chemically sensitive accommodations. Air and water quality can greatly be improved by using environmentally preferable cleaning products which are less hazardous and less likely to contribute to a negative experience. For more information on environmentally preferable cleaning products, visit [www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/products/cleaning.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/products/cleaning.htm). Another important step in keeping guests and staff safe from potential harmful chemicals is to ensure that all potentially dangerous substances are securely stored and labeled correctly. It only take one small mistake of using the wrong chemically-based product to result in an expensive clean up. And lastly, it is important that staff have up-to-date training for any use of chemicals. Not only will properly training staff to use chemical products improve air and water quality, but it can lead to more efficient product use, which will reduce costs. For more information on improving air and water quality, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

5. **WATER CONSERVATION TIPS**

As of May 14, for the first time in over two years, no part of North Carolina was in drought conditions. But as water restrictions are lifted across the state, individuals and businesses are still encouraged to continue using water wisely. To assist businesses with water conservation efforts, the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance has recently released a new “Water Efficiency Manual for Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Facilities.” The manual includes information such as a self-assessment checklist, steps to conducting a successful water efficiency program, and information on how facility mangers can best respond to potential future drought conditions. The manual can be found at [http://www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00692.pdf](http://www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00692.pdf). For more information on water efficiency in the tourism industry, contact Keyes McGee at Keyes.McGee@ncmail.net. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
6. **HOW SAVING WATER REDUCES YOUR ENERGY BILL**

For many tourism businesses, water and energy are two separate utility bills, but when you conserve water you can also reduce your electric and gas bills because of the energy needed for hot water. One of the most common sources of hot water waste is at dishwashing stations where an inefficient pre-rinse spray valve can waste as much as 180 gallons of water and 1.5 therms of energy for every 3 hours of use. (It takes about the same energy equivalent of 1.5 therms to boil 140 gallons of water.) Another simple way to reduce your business’s hot water usage is to install aerators on your faucets, which typically can easily screw on to existing fixtures and can save up $100 in annual energy and water costs. Repairing leaky plumbing equipment and fixtures and developing policies to conserve water will also help reduce your energy bills. And not only will conserving hot water reduce your energy bills, but it will also reduce the load on your water heater, resulting in less wear and tear which cause costly repairs. For more water saving tips, visit [www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm](http://www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm) or contact Tom Rhodes at [tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov). For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).

7. **KEEPING GRASS GREEN AND REDUCING WATER USAGE**

With summer temperatures now hitting much of the state, facility managers and engineers have once again turned on landscape sprinklers to help property landscapes look their best. Outdoor watering is one of the tourism industry’s largest single uses of water and if improperly maintained can lead to a significant drain on operating budgets. Having a policy to routinely inspect functioning and settings of sprinkler heads, nozzles, lines and valves is an easy low-to-no-cost method of being more water efficient without sacrificing turf quality. For example, although sprinkler heads may initially be set correctly, they very easily become unadjusted or broken and no longer apply water uniformly or only to desired areas, wasting large amounts of water. It is also important to time watering to occur early in the morning or later in the evening when evaporation loss is lowest, but not too early or late that staff cannot regularly inspect. If you are upgrading or installing a new sprinkler system, you might consider a more efficient system, such as a drip or sensor sprinkler. For more information on saving water in the tourism industry, visit [http://savewaternc.org](http://savewaternc.org) or contact Keyes McGee at the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention & Environmental Assistance at (919) 733-4398 or via [keyes.mcgee@ncdenr.gov](mailto:keyes.mcgee@ncdenr.gov). For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).
8. **STORMWATER RUNOFF**
Many tourism businesses have a love/hate relationship with rain. Rain helps keep landscaping and the natural environment looking lush and healthy but rain at the wrong time can ruin even the most carefully planned outdoor event. An added problem with rain is stormwater runoff, untreated water that is not absorbed by the ground before it flows into a natural body of water. On its way to the nearest body of water, stormwater runoff can pick-up a wide assortment of pollutants including oil from parking lots, pet waste, sediment, and pesticides and fertilizers, thereby polluting local streams, lakes and other bodies of water. There are a number of actions any tourism business can implement to help reduce the amount of pollution caused by stormwater runoff. One of the simplest is to make sure all outdoor waste and grease receptacles are kept clean and leak proof. Reduce polluted stormwater runoff by making sure that all water from outdoor cleaning, such as pressure washing and cleaning automobiles, does not flow directly into a stormwater drain. For more information on what you can do to reduce stormwater runoff, visit NC DENR’s [Stormwater & Runoff Pollution](#) or contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252)737-1346.

9. **SAVING HOT WATER, TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE**
When implementing green practices, it is always helpful to implement practices that maximize financial savings. One of the best ways to do so is to identify green practices that save multiple resources at the same time. One example is replacing inefficient lighting, which not only wastes energy for lighting, but also causes waste heat that can require more HVAC to regulate. Another area where tourism businesses can save double is by reducing the amount of hot water used. When used inefficiently, there is waste of the water and the energy needed to heat the water. There are, however, a number of practical measures for commercial kitchens or commercial bathrooms that any hotel, restaurant or other facility can implement to save hot water. For more information on how you can double your savings by implementing green practices contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
WASTE REDUCTION

1. WHAT MAKES A PRODUCT GREEN?
As more tourism related organizations are going green, many businesses are looking for environmentally preferable alternative products to use in operations. Suppliers have answered the call by developing a sometimes overwhelming list of “green” products. Remember the three R’s: ask if the product reduces the amount of waste generated, if the product can be reused or recycled. Reduce could be less packaging, compostable product, or less resources were used to produce and/or transport it. Reuse would mean the product can be reusable as the same or another form, such as shredded paper for packaging. Recycle can be recyclable or made from recycled materials. To find out more about green procurement, visit www.ncprojectgreen.com/procurement/home.asp; to find out more about the benefits of using local products, visit www.sustainabletourism.org/upload/Tip-Sheet_Connecting-with-the-Locals.pdf. For more information on green product options in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. WASTE REDUCTION AT A PROPERTY
The NC GreenTravel recognition program gives almost 30 points for waste reduction measures. This includes points for having a soap reuse program, using bulk or dispensers for guest amenities, but the majority of the points come from having a recycling program in place and recycling various items. Many items are already most likely recycled in the back-of-the-house, such as cardboard and aluminum, but far fewer attractions and accommodations have recycling in the front-of-the-house. Typically, there are two separate but related reasons why tourism organizations are hesitant to have a front-of-the-house recycling program. The first is because many guests use front-of-the-house recycling bins like a trash bin, which means staff must sort through the recycling or just throw the recycling in with the trash. The second reason is because management fears having such a program will detract from the visitor experience. Every attraction and accommodation should develop its own recycling program to meet the needs of its guests and staff, but there are some general resources that have been developed that can help you get started on developing a program for your business. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
3. WASTE REDUCTION AT A PROPERTY PART II

One of the first questions many managers and owners ask when deciding if their property should implement sustainable practices is what is the cost of doing so? There are three different ways in which the cost of going green can be calculated. The first is the initial cost. For many sustainable practices, such as establishing a green team or setting copiers and printers to default to print double-sided, the initial cost is only staff time. New creative strategies, such as solar power purchase agreements, can allow your property to use solar energy at no initial cost. The next way the cost of going green can be measured is the payback period. This is the amount of time it will cost for a green practice to result in the same financial cost savings as the initial cost premium of implementing the practice. For some sustainable practices, such as LED exit signs, the payback period can be as short as one year. Since there are many criticisms of the payback period, many experts prefer the third method of measuring the cost of implementing sustainable practices: return on investment (ROI). Calculating the full ROI of implementing sustainable practices can be difficult though. Factors such as improved staff morale or PR can be difficult to link to one specific sustainable practice. There are a number of resources and calculators that can help determine the cost of going green. To learn more about the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

4. REDUCING YOUR WASTE

Recycling has now become the norm for many tourism related businesses, but some tourism organizations are now taking waste reduction even further. The best way of reducing waste is by eliminating it at the source, such as requesting multiple or unused catalogs no longer be sent. Another simple way of reducing waste is by finding new ways to re-use products, such as using non-sensitive shredded paper waste as packaging. Some vendors have take-back programs where empty containers can be returned and reused. Another re-use of materials is to convert worn-out linens such as table cloths and bed sheets converted into aprons or cleaning rags. Food service and restaurants can reduce waste by providing a discount to customers that bring their own re-usable mugs and cups, and providing condiments in dispensing units rather than single serving packets. It is also important to remember to close the recycling loop by purchasing products made from recycled content. For more information on waste reduction in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 via anaar@nccommerce.com.

5. BEING LESS WASTEFUL CAN STILL BE CLASSY

According to a recent article in USA Today, hotels are increasingly replacing single use mini-toiletry bottles with larger refillable bottles. Hotel amenity kits are quickly becoming the latest battleground for hotels looking to assert their green credentials. A follow-up poll to the USA Today story found that 83 percent of respondents would not use refillable containers for fear of what is in them. But a study by researchers at Cornell University found that guests preferred refillable dispensers over single use bottles. While it is unclear why there are contrary findings, it is clear that hotel managers have many options to reduce waste from toiletries. Organizations like Global Soap Project and Clean the World can recycle used soap and bottled amenities for distribution to developing counties. Some places might consider experimenting with refillable bottles to see how guests react. For more information on greening hotel bathrooms or on sustainable tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
6. **PAPER WASTE**
According to the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance, in 2009 North Carolina threw away enough paper to fill 1,558 football fields three feet deep. Wasting so much paper is not only bad for the environment but also add costs to tax payers and private businesses. By using the three Rs of waste reduction – Reduce the amount used, Reuse when possible and Recycle – tourism organizations can do a great deal to help reduce the amount of paper sent to the landfill. As with any waste reduction effort, the first step to reducing paper waste is setting practical and realistic goals. The success rate of achieving those goals is greatly enhanced if employees are engaged in the process and have a vested interest in improving waste reduction efforts. You can also help reduce paper waste by using paper made from recycled materials. For other ways to reduce your paper waste and for many other sustainable tourism practices, visit www.sustainabetourism.org/Business-Resources-Checklists.cfm. To request a free copy of Miles Media’s “Green Publishing Solutions for DMOs,” visit www.milesmedia.com/insight. To contact your local waste reduction specialists, visit www.p2pays.org/localgov/nvwaste.html or contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

7. **WASTE REDUCED SPRING CLEANING**
With spring now here, many tourism businesses are getting their property ready for peak season by doing a little bit of spring cleaning. However, improperly disposing of waste products that may contain harmful chemicals, “universal wastes” such as pesticides, batteries and florescent light bulbs, can pollute the environment and may negatively impact human health. And a growing number of waste products are now banned from landfills. But there are a number of resources to help properly dispose of waste. The N.C. Division of Environmental Outreach and Assistance has a database of local North Carolina waste reduction programs and contacts as well as a recycling markets directory. The U.S. EPA and the Center for Sustainable Tourism offer a number of resources to help reduce waste levels. Some items, such as used bars of soap and even used cooking oil, can be donated and re-used somewhere else. For more information on waste reduction in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

8. **GETTING RID OF FOOD WASTE IN N.C.**
North Carolina disposes of 800,000 tons of food annually, which constitutes 12 percent of all the waste sent to landfills. When food waste is sent to the dump, it generates methane, a greenhouse gas that is 21 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. And only 6 percent of food waste is diverted from landfills, despite opportunities to either donate excess food or compost food scraps. For more information on donating surplus food, visit http://www.epa.gov/osw/partnerships/wastewise/pubs/needy2.pdf. For more information on composting in N.C., visit www.p2pays.org/composting or contact Brian Rosa at (919) 715-6524 or via brian.rosa@ncdenr.gov. Also, the N.C. Food Diversion Task Force has put together a short survey to gauge the interest in reducing food waste across the state. The survey will help determine where to focus its efforts and attention. To complete the survey, visit http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=5gqmlMrTa8B0dJYCu8Xng_3d_3d. For more information on implementing sustainable practices, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
9. **ELECTRONIC WASTE**

Electronics have now become an essential tool for doing business. Computers help connect with travelers before they visit, while there visiting, and to follow up with them once they leave. Electronics even help reduce energy consumption with energy monitoring systems and programmable thermostats. Discovery News reports improperly disposed of electronic waste can pose both environmental and social problems. According to the Electronics Take Back Coalition, the U.S. scraps about 400 million units of consumer electronics a year, many of which contain toxic chemicals. Fortunately, there are a number of resources to help dispose of electronics properly. The U.S. EPA has a list of resources or contact a local waste reduction contact. And some North Carolina tourism attractions and accommodations have even developed programs to help their guests and local residents reduce e-waste, such as the N.C. Zoo and the Proximity Hotel. For more information on waste reduction in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

10. **DIVERTING WASTE TO REDUCE COSTS**

A recent New York Times article stated that the average hotel guest throws away about two pounds of trash per day ([www.nytimes.com/2009/10/06/business/energy-environment/06recycle.html?_r=2&ref=travel](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/06/business/energy-environment/06recycle.html?_r=2&ref=travel)), much of which can be recycled. With waste hauling prices going up and new N.C. legislation banning recyclables from landfills ([www.p2pays.org/BannedMaterials](http://www.p2pays.org/BannedMaterials)), business owners and managers have a financial incentive to reduce how much trash they throw away. To learn more about reducing your trash bills, contact your local waste reduction specialist ([http://p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html](http://p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html)). The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance can also assist with a wide range of recycling issues, from festivals ([www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling](http://www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling)) to ABC Permit Holders ([www.p2pays.org/BannedMaterials/ABCcontainer](http://www.p2pays.org/BannedMaterials/ABCcontainer)). To find out more about these and other resources, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

11. **HELP FROM WASTE REDUCTION PARTNERS**

Waste Reduction Partners, a team of retired, volunteer and staff engineers, scientists and architects in North Carolina who share their expertise with clients to reduce utility costs and improve environmental performance, is offering a limited number of no-cost Green Assessments to hospitality businesses. The Hospitality Greening Assessment is an on-site, technical review of a business’s utility use and environmental practices. These Hospitality Greening Assessments are unique in combining energy and water-use audits, solid waste recycling guidance, and other sustainability recommendations into one technical assessment. Businesses can use these assessments to meet the requirements of the NC GreenTravel Initiative or other green business certification programs. Participants will receive a report with a cost/benefit assessment of recommendations to improve management strategies for energy, water, solid waste and recycling efforts. For more information contact Russ Jordan with Waste Reduction Partners. For more information on NC GreenTravel, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
12. **DO PLASTIC BOTTLES HAVE A PLACE AT EVENTS ANYMORE?**

Enemy #1 for many green event planners is disposable plastic water bottles. Researchers at the Pacific Institute estimate that water from plastic water bottles uses more than 2000 times as much energy as tap water. A report from the Environmental Working Group points to the lack of transparency in the bottle water industry, leaving a number of health questions unanswered. So, in an effort to find other practices that help keep event and meeting attendees refreshed and hydrated, many meeting planners have turned to other alternatives, such as water stations, reusable water bottles, and washable glasses. Some venues, such as The Hub in Philadelphia, have gone as far as no longer offering bottled water at their site. For more information on how to reduce the use of plastic water bottles, download the report “Free Your Event from Bottled Water.” For more information on how to green an event or meeting, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252)737-1346.

13. **COMPLETING THE LOCAL FOOD CIRCLE**

Few in the tourism industry would argue using locally sourced foods has not transitioned from niche to mainstream. Now a number of restaurants, festivals, hotels, and breweries are taking the next step in local food by returning their food waste back to the land through composting. With food waste and landscaping waste making up 27 percent of the solid waste stream, there is growing reason to make use of that waste. Mother Earth Brewing sends their spent grain to local farmers as a feed stock for animals. The Blue Ridge BBQ & Music Festival has been composting since 2006, reducing their waste levels by 80 percent. The NC Zoo started composting in 1996. Even airports are now composting. And there are groups of businesses that team up to form Zero Waste Zones. Composting not only reduces the amount of waste sent to the landfill, but it can also reduce waste hauling fees as well. For general information on composting, contact Brian Rosa with the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at 919-733-1398. For assistance in developing a composting program at your business, contact your local waste reduction program. For more information, visit contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

14. **WASTE REDUCTION PARTNERS OFFERS NO-COST GREENING ASSESSMENTS**

It can be complicated to identify which energy saving measures will yield the best return on investment. To provide assistance, Waste Reduction Partners is offering a limited number of no-cost Green Assessments to North Carolina tourism-related businesses. The Hospitality Greening Assessment is an on-site, technical review of a business’s utility use and environmental practices, combining energy and water-use audits, solid waste recycling guidance, and other sustainability recommendations into one technical assessment. WRP is a team of retired engineers, scientists and staff in North Carolina who share their expertise with clients to reduce utility costs and improve environmental performance. For more information, contact Russ Jordan with Waste Reduction Partners at (828) 251-7477. For more information on NC GreenTravel, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
Secondary Tips:

15. SENDING BACK TO THE FARMS
With the growing popularity of farm-to-table tourism, businesses across North Carolina are making an effort to make locally grown fruits and vegetables available to customers. But few are sending much back to the farm, despite throwing away large amounts of compostable organic matter. Although your tourism business might not be ready for a full composting program, there are a number of smaller composting projects that every tourism business can try. For example, used coffee grounds can be collected and given away to local gardeners. For more information on coffee composting, visit http://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/story.php?S_No=545&storyType=news, or contact your local N.C. Cooperative Extension office at (www.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php?page=countycenters). For more information on composting, visit www.p2pays.org/composting or contact Brian Rosa via brian.rosa@ncdner.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
WILDLIFE

1. KEEPING THEM AND YOUR GUESTS SAFE

One of the highlights for many North Carolina tourists is the opportunity to see the state’s abundant wildlife. But, as the recent bear incident in Winston Salem illustrates, human and wildlife interactions do not always end well (http://www.news-record.com/content/2009/07/14/article/winston_salem_police_shoot_kill_bear). There are many actions you can take to keep both your guests and wildlife safe. The first step is educating yourself, staff and guests about wildlife in your area and how to interact with wildlife appropriately. Never feed or approach wild animals and if you or your guests have pets, make sure to keep them a safe distance from wildlife and on a leash when necessary. It is also very important to keep trash and food secure so as to not encourage negative wildlife behavior. For more information on interacting with wildlife visit www.ncwildlife.org/fs_index_06_coexist.htm. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. SUMMER WILDLIFE

Warmer temperatures not only draw out travelers but wildlife as well. While it is an exciting experience to observe wildlife in the natural surroundings, it is also important, for everyone’s safety, to always be respectful and keep a safe distance. Improper interactions with wild animals, even those that would appear to pose no physical threat, can cause a number of problems for both animals and humans. Wildlife can transmit diseases such as rabies and roundworm, become a nuisance if they lose their fear of humans, or become suddenly aggressive without any apparent provocation. And wild animals that become dependent on humans for food can have a difficult time feeding themselves once visitors leave for the season. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has a number of resources on interacting with wildlife as well as up-to-date information on wildlife in North Carolina. If visitors are determined to interact with wildlife, there are a number of N.C. Environmental Education Centers across the state that offer visitors the opportunity to get close and personal to wildlife in a safe environment. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

3. 112TH CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

With the passing of Thanksgiving, it’s time again for the Christmas Bird Count, when thousands of volunteers – families and students, birders and scientists -- brave the cold of winter to contribute the longest-running wildlife census. Participating in the bird count is simple and great way to help make your business more birder-friendly and tap into the 19.8 million U.S. birding traveler market. Counts can be conducted either at your own feeders if your property is located in an existing count circle or by joining a group. For more information about birding in North Carolina, contact Audubon North Carolina or the Carolina Bird Club. You can also find birding sites in your area along the North Carolina Birding Trail. For more information about sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.