



NC Green Travel

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Nation's First Master of Science in Sustainable Tourism Degree Approved

On January 8, 2010, the UNC Board of Governors gave its unanimous approval to the nation's first discrete interdisciplinary Master of Science in Sustainable Tourism degree. This degree will be conferred through the Graduate School of East Carolina University and administered through the Center for Sustainable Tourism, both units of the Division of Research and Graduate Studies at East Carolina University. The degree focuses on the critical issues of sustainability as they relate to tourism business practice, public policy and individual traveler behaviors blending practice and research in science and business management. Throughout their time at East Carolina University students will be actively involved in both research and community and tourism industry engagement activities. For more information on the program, contact [Dr. Joseph Fridgen](#) or visit the [program's website](#).

Tip of the Month



For many travelers, no winter vacation is complete without at least trying the somewhat mysterious oyster and the tourism industry has been happy to provide the bivalve mollusks to curious travelers and experienced huskers alike for generations. No matter if you serve oysters at a traditional country-style oyster roast or in a hip-modern oyster bar, serving oysters results in a great deal of oyster shells. Unfortunately, until recently many shucked oysters ended up in landfills rather than living on to help produce more oysters. [Scientists](#) have since found that the most productive place for oysters to grow is on other oyster shells. To help improve declining oyster numbers, many programs to recycle oyster shells as oyster reefs have started. The [North Carolina Oyster Shell Recycling](#)

[program](#) collects oyster shells from events and business and places them back in the coastal water. Over 50 [North Carolina restaurants](#) participate in the program and there are over 100 [shell recycling stations](#) across the state. For information on oyster recycling or how to participate in the program in North Carolina, contact Sabrina Varnam at the NC Division of Marine Fisheries by telephone at 252-726-7021 or by email at Sabrina.Varnam@ncdenr.gov or view the [oyster shell recycling](#) tip sheet.

From the Sustainable Traveler's Market Desk

[TripAdvisor.com's 2010 forecast](#) has predicted that travelers will be more environmentally conscious in 2010 than they were in 2009. But despite the growing number of green minded travelers, according to a recent [Sustainability Roundtable](#) held at Cornell University many hoteliers are still reluctant to go green because of the uncertainty of what 'green' means. Although a number of [definitions of sustainable tourism](#) have been written it can be unclear which of the [over two hundred sustainable practices](#) a tourism business can potentially implement will result in attracting green travelers. One option to address this issue is to become certified by one of the growing number of green tourism programs, many of which are now recognized by [AAA](#). Having a certification can be an important step in sharing with potential guests your property's commitment to sustainability. But as reported by [LodgingMagazine.com](#) there are many challenges to certification and according to research from [Harris Interactive](#) only 18% of consumers stated that they would rely on independent third-part certification to verify a retailer or restaurant's 'green' claims. Because of the many questions eco-labels and certification raises, GreenBiz.com has recently posted a list of questions and answers on sustainability certifications which can be [seen here](#). For more information on sustainable tourism certification programs and green marketing strategies, contact Alex Naar at anaar@nccommerce.com or by telephone at 252-737-1346.

NC Green Travel in Action

[The Weeping Radish Farm and Brewery](#) in the North Carolina Outer Banks provides an integrated approach to complex issues: craft brewing, sustainable agriculture and the survival of crafts. The central concept of the Weeping Radish Farm and Brewery is to bring the table closer to the farm. They accomplish this in part by shortening the physical distance that the food travels to the consumer, which cuts vehicle transport from 2,000 miles to 200 miles, reducing greenhouse gas emission. Many of the Weeping Radish's sustainable practices also have practical benefits as well as environmental. For example, for 20 years, the brewery has re-used its own bottles, and currently practices glass re-use. Customers may return their used bottles for a discount on their next purchases. Once the bottles have been returned, the brewery steams the labels off, cleans and refills them, reducing costs and waste. For more examples of tourism businesses that have adopted sustainable practices [click here](#).



Your University Partners



[William \(Bill\) L. Obenour II](#), Associate Professor, in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, is interested in assisting communities with sustainable development and planning to enhance the destination's image, reputation and tourists' perceptions of their experience. He has previous experience analyzing and evaluating the image of a nature-based tourism destination for a three county area along Lake Erie in Ohio. His research interests include destination image, tourism symbolic capital, sustainable tourism development and practices, travel constraints, tourism quality, travel narratives, and backpackers' journeys. For any questions regarding sustainable tourism as a competitive strategy or building your destination's image, contact Professor Obenour at obenourw@ecu.edu or visit the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies' [website](#).

The Center for Sustainable Tourism at East Carolina University is an interdisciplinary research center comprised of many university academic and non-academic units.

The goals of the center are to promote and support the adoption of sustainable practices throughout the tourism industry of the region, state and nation.

This is done through graduate level education, academic research, and outreach.

The Center offers solutions to challenges facing the tourism industry and destination communities as they balance economic viability with socio-cultural and environmental enhancement and equity.

For more information visit www.sustainabletourism.org or call (252)328-4969

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