Greening North Carolina Travel and Tourism
Tips for Sustainable Practices in Tourism

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Center for Sustainable Tourism &
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 to, 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 Department of the Environment and Natural Resources 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.

1. (July 9, 2008). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL

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](http://www.sustainabletourism.org) or contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. (July 16, 2008). 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.

3. (July 23, 2008). GETTING TO 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](http://www.p2pays.org/DMRM/start.aspx) as well as a business to business waste trader at [www.ncwastetrader.org](http://www.ncwastetrader.org). You can also find local recycling contacts at [www.p2pays.org/localgov/PAYT/ncwaste.asp](http://www.p2pays.org/localgov/PAYT/ncwaste.asp) and information on electronics recycling at [www.p2pays.org/electronics/business.asp](http://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.

4. (July 30, 2008). 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](http://www.p2pays.org/hospitality/main/tips.htm).
5. (August 13, 2008). **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@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).

6. (August 20, 2008). **CAN I REALLY SAVE MONEY?**
There has been a lot of talk about how going green can save you money. Rising energy prices, water restrictions and increasing government regulations and ordinances are posing many challenges to tourism organizations and businesses. The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (P2pays.org) can be a wonderful resource to tourism professionals seeking help in these areas. They provide resources such as The Partnership for Bar & Restaurant Recycling ([www.partnership4recycling.org](http://www.partnership4recycling.org)), SaveWaterNC ([www.savewaternc.org](http://www.savewaternc.org)), and NC Recycling Markets Directory ([www.p2pays.org/dmrm/start.aspx](http://www.p2pays.org/dmrm/start.aspx)). For more information on how you can take advantage of these resources, contact Tom Rhodes at [tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov). For more information on other sustainable practices, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).

7. (September 3, 2008). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: SLIMMING 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](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov) or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).

8. (September 24, 2008). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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 wrrc.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@nccommerce.com.

9. (October 1, 2008). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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, or contact Alex Naar at (919)715-3782 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

10. (October 8, 2008). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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. For more information on sustainable tourism practices you can implement, contact Alex Naar at (919)715-3782 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

11. (October 16, 2008). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: GREEN POWER IN NORTH CAROLINA
Reducing your tourism business’s dependence on fossil fuels is a challenging task. Choosing which option to pursue, how much to invest, and which organizations to work with can be difficult to sort through. One option is NC GreenPower, the nation’s first statewide, multi-utility green energy program. Participation in NC GreenPower, which is approved by the N.C. Utilities
Commission, helps grow the production of North Carolina green energy by offsetting the current higher costs of renewable energy production. NC GreenPower can work with you to find a renewable energy solution that meets your organization's specific needs, evaluate the costs of participation, and help market your support of clean local energy. Also, NC GreenPower is a 501(c)3 non-profit, so your participation may be tax-deductible. For more information on NC GreenPower, visit www.ncgreenpower.org, or contact Martha Gettys at (919) 857-9021 or mgettys@ncgreenpower.org. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or anaar@nccommerce.com.

12. (October 22, 2008). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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 anaar@nccommerce.com.

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.

14. (November 6, 2008). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: LIGHTING UP YOUR ENERGY EFFICIENCY
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.

15. (November 12, 2008). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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 offset 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 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

16. (November 19, 2008). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: SEASONAL SAVINGS
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.

17. (November 26, 2008). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: SEASONAL SEASONINGS
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
18. (December 3, 2008). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: OH CHRISTMAS TREE**
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 or 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. 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, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

19. (December 17, 2008). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW**
Winter weather may offer visitors the views of a lifetime but it also brings challenges for grounds staff and facility managers. One of the top concerns regarding winter weather is keeping walkways clear of ice, which is often accomplished using chemical de-icers, most notably sodium chloride (NaCl), a.k.a. rock salt. Although effective in melting ice on walkways, de-icing chemicals can have a negative impact on the local environment and cause damage to clothing and the interior of buildings. Therefore, it is important to choose your de-icing chemicals wisely. When applying chemical de-icers, remember to first remove as much snow and ice as possible, using a shovel if necessary. Once all excess precipitation has been removed, use only as much de-icer as needed and only where it is needed. Once ice has melted, it is critical to remove any excess moisture to prevent refreezing, which would require more application of de-icers. For more information on chemical de-icers, visit http://www.stormcenter.com/envirocast/2003-01-01/envirocast-article4.php. For more information on reducing the environmental impact during the winter season, visit http://www.epa.gov/epahome/hi-winter.htm.

20. (December 23, 2008). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: A NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION 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.

21. (December 30, 2008). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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.

22. (January 7, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: A NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION TO REDUCE WASTE

In 2008, there were a number of tourism-related waste reduction initiatives, such as the Partnership for Bar and Restaurant Recycling (www.partnership4recycling.org). In 2009, waste reduction is sure to remain a priority for many businesses. A good place to start examining how your organization can reduce its waste is by following some of the tips provided by the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (DPPEA) “Green Plan for Hotels” (http://p2pays.net/hospitality/). The DPPEA also provides a number of other resources, such as a Recycling Markets Directory (www.p2pays.org/dmrm/start.aspx), the Waste Trader (www.ncwastetrader.org/home.aspx), and a database of Waste Reduction County Contacts (www.p2pays.org/localgov/PAYT/ncwaste.asp). The Waste Reduction Partners Program (www.landofsky.org/wrp and www.tjcog.dst.nc.us/regplan/wastereduce.shtml) and the DPPEA can also provide a number of site specific resources. For more information, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

23. (January 14, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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 florescent 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.

24. (January 21, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: USING OLD PAPER

Choosing paper containing post-consumer waste (PCW) has now become a cost effective way for tourism businesses to reduce their environmental impact. Recycled paper containing PCW is made with paper that has already served its initial purpose and has been processed to make new paper. By choosing paper with at least 35 percent PCW, you are closing the recycling loop and reducing the amount of water, trees and energy needed to make paper while reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfills or incinerators. Many of the problems associated with post-consumer recycled paper in the past have been eliminated and a growing number of options for both office paper and printed materials are now available. Information on what recycling symbols mean can be found at http://www.afandpa.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Environment_and_Reycling/Recycling/Recycling_Symbol_Guidelines_small.pdf. The Environmental Defense Fund Paper Calculator can be found at http://www.edf.org/papercalculator/. General information regarding recycled paper can be found at www.epa.gov/osw/conserve/materials/paper/ and a detailed study on recycled paper can be found at http://www.p2pays.org/ref/03/02243.pdf. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

25. (February 4, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: GREENER TRAVELER EXPECTATIONS

A recent MSNBC.com article announced the end of green travel (view the article at http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28425799). The article argued that, in the future, sustainability will be the norm rather than the exception, and most travelers will not be willing to pay more for these services. The mixed signals regarding green preferences can make it confusing as to whether green leads to higher profits. This is why it is essential that before investing in the adoption of any sustainable practices, both the costs and benefits are evaluated. Some green practices, such as the use of post consumer recycled content paper, have a minimal cost; others, such as allowing local artists to display their work at your property, have no cost; and some, including installing aerators on faucets, start saving you money almost immediately. For a list of sustainable practices, visit www.ecu.edu/sustainabletourism/criteria.cfm. For more information on the benefits and the costs of adopting sustainable practices, contact Alex Naar at 919-715-3782 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

26. (February 18, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 10 GREEN PRACTICES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT TODAY

Center for Sustainable Tourism: Serving the Region, State and Nation
East Carolina University
www.sustainabletourism.org
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. 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@nccommerce.com.

27. (March 5, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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/grnrule/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 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

28. (March 11, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: GREEN PRACTICES AT CONFERENCES

A growing number of events are going green. Although no one standard for green events currently exist, there are a number of practices that are both cost effective and help keep the planet a little greener. One of the easiest practices is to use paper with post consumer recycled content for handouts and programs. Another good practice is to use as much local agricultural products as possible. The N.C. Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services offers a number of resources to locate local products at www.ncagr.gov/markets/. It is also important to share with everyone involved in the event why and how you are going green, including staff, vendors, caterers, attendees, and sponsors. By being honest and transparent, you can greatly benefit from the increasing interest in green events. For a more complete list of sustainable practices at conference and events, visit www.ecu.edu/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 anaar@nccommerce.com.

29. (March 18, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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
30. (March 25, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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](http://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](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/upload/Water-Efficiency-Commercial-Bathrooms-Tip-Sheet.pdf); for restaurants, visit [www.p2pays.org/ref/04/03103.pdf](http://www.p2pays.org/ref/04/03103.pdf); and hotels, visit [www.p2pays.org/ref/43/42998.pdf](http://www.p2pays.org/ref/43/42998.pdf). For general information on water conservation, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense/](http://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.

31. (April 1, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

32. (April 8, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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.

33. (April 22, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: COMPOSTING AND BIODEGRADABLE, WHAT’S THE DEAL?**

Although compostable and biodegradable are often used interchangeably, they do mean different things. According to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC), degradable,
biodegradable and photodegradable mean a product will “completely break down and return... into elements found in nature within a reasonably short period of time after customary disposal.” Compostable, again according to the FTC, means not only will a product break down, but will break down into usable compost, such as soil-conditioning material and mulch. For more information on composting, visit www.p2pays.org/composting, or contact Brian Rosa at (919) 715-6524 or via brian.rosa@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com. To view past Greening N.C. Travel tips, visit www.sustainabletourism.org and then click “Print Complete Tip Sheet.”

34. (April 29, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: KEEPING COOL
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.

35. (May 6, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: ARE WE MEETING CUSTOMER’S GREEN EXPECTATIONS?
TripAdvisor recently rereleased the results of its environmentally-friendly travel survey (www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-i235-c1-Press_Releases.html). The study found that although a significant number of travelers want to travel greener, most travelers are unsure how to do so or feel environmentally preferable options are not available. As the increasing number of tourism businesses that have adopted green practices try to attract this growing travel segment, it is important that marketing efforts remain honest and transparent and not fall into the trap of “green-washing” (misleading consumers regarding the company’s environmental practices, products or services). One company has even developed a Web site with resources to help businesses avoid the common pitfalls of green-washing (http://sinsofgreenwashing.org/). The American Hotel & Lodging Association’s new green guidelines are at http://www.ahla.com/Green.aspx?id=24560. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or anaar@nccommerce.com.

36. (May 13, 2009). GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: RECYCLING BECAUSE IT MATTERS
PGAV Destination Consulting recently published the findings of a study on the green attitudes of tourism attraction visitors (www.pgav.com/images/Destin%2012-08.pdf). One of the most interesting parts of the study was a ranking of actions visitors felt were the most representative of an attraction’s environmental commitment. Topping the list was recycling. (The PGAV study also found nearly 70 percent of all visitors are significantly more likely to visit an attraction that has adopted green practices). To help venues and events learn more about how to develop a recycling program, the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance will hold four free recycling workshops across the state this summer. For more information and to register for the workshops, visit http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=4uhpGlyOY9WdnhA2bkunTsw_3d_3d or contact
37. (May 20, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: GETTING CUSTOMER BUY-IN TO HELP GREEN**

Even with the majority of Americans considering themselves to be environmentally concerned, it can be difficult to effectively encourage customers to participate in environmental programs. In order to enlist guests to take advantage of a linen reuse program, some hotels have started using a log book in each room for guests to indicate if they would like to participate in the program. By doing so, future guests of that room can see how many other guests are participating. Research published in the Journal of Consumer Research (http://www.csom.umn.edu/assets/118359.pdf) on linen reuse programs confirms that using social norms result in increased customer buy-in. The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance has published a guide on using social marketing to increase participation in recycling programs (http://www.re3.org/React/3.pdf). For more information on developing a recycling program at your tourism business, 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.

38. (May 27, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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 managers can best respond to potential future drought conditions. The manual can be found at 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.

39. (June 3, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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.
40. (June 10, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: FINDING MORE INFORMATION**

With rising energy costs, increasing regulation and studies showing growing numbers of green-minded travelers, most tourism businesses are starting to take a hard look at what they can do to reduce their environmental impact. But for many tourism businesses, going green can be foreign territory. Although it is important to remember that sustainability is a direction rather than a destination, there are a number of free manuals that provide basic yet in-depth information on going green. The Tourism Industry Association of Canada offers “Green Your Business: Toolkit for Tourism Operators” ([www.tiac-aitc.ca/english/menu_featuredpublications.asp](http://www.tiac-aitc.ca/english/menu_featuredpublications.asp)). The Rainforest Alliance has its “Guide for Sustainable Tourism Best Practices” ([www.rainforest-alliance.org/tourism.cfm?id=guide](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/tourism.cfm?id=guide)). And the Center for Sustainable Tourism at East Carolina University, in partnership with Sustainable Travel International, has a series of Renewable Energy in Tourism Best Practice Manuals ([www.research2.ecu.edu/renewabletourism/practices.html](http://www.research2.ecu.edu/renewabletourism/practices.html)). For sustainable tourism practice checklists, visit [www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/Business-Resources-Checklists.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/Business-Resources-Checklists.cfm). For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

41. (June 17, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: MAKING SENSE OF THE NUMBERS**

One of the many challenges of going green is that it can be difficult to understand the impacts of daily choices on global issues. How many sheets of paper equal a tree or how much coal is burned when you leave the office lights on all weekend? The answers to these questions are often more complex than they might appear and can depend on a myriad of different factors. But it can be helpful to calculate the impact of actions in terms we can understand despite how incomplete those calculations might be. One of the best known eco-calculators can be found at [http://earthday.net/footprint/index.html](http://earthday.net/footprint/index.html); [www.carbonfootprint.com](http://www.carbonfootprint.com) provides users with carbon footprint information and [http://carbonoffsets.org/](http://carbonoffsets.org/) provides carbon information specifically for the travel and tourism industry. The U.S. Department of Energy has collected a number of other eco-calculators which can be found at [http://www1.eere.energy.gov/calculators/](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/calculators/). 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.

42. (June 24, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: EXITING TO ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

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](http://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.
43. (July 8, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: IS GOING GREEN STILL RELEVANT IN A DOWN ECONOMY**

In the current economic climate, it is only natural to question if now is the right time to commit limited resources and time to environmental and socially responsible practices. But despite the current economic situation, consumers are still buying green products and many are consuming more. One study found that while only 14 percent of consumers are buying fewer green products, 50 percent are buying the same amount and 19 percent are buying more (www.greenseal.org/resources/green_buying_research.cfm). Another survey reported that despite the current climate, 83 percent of consumers were more likely to visit a green store or restaurant in the future (http://www.torkusa.com/Pages/News/News.aspx?id=160913). Furthermore, there are a number of sustainable practices that cost little or nothing to implement (http://www.ecu.edu/cs- acad/sustainabletourism/upload/Ten-Sustainable-Practices-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.

44. (July 15, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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.

45. (July 22, 2009). **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: WILDLIFE, 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.
46. (July 29, 2009) **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DURING DIFFICULT TIMES**

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 (www.cleantheworld.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](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](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).

47. (August 5, 2009) **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: GREENING FESTIVALS AND EVENTS**

With festival season in full swing, a number of festivals are doing something new this year: going green. Although a number of festivals across North Carolina have implemented sustainable practices for years, going green for many festival organizers might seem too daunting a task. But with more and more travelers going green at their own homes, attendees have already started to expect recycling, energy conservation and water conservation at events. A number of manuals have been developed to help organizers implement green practices at an event: [http://sustainable.events.freef](http://sustainable.events.freef); [www.greenprintdenver.org/2009/04/27/sustainable-event-planning-guide/](http://www.greenprintdenver.org/2009/04/27/sustainable-event-planning-guide/); [www.theicarusfoundation.com/Images/images/Greening_Festivals_and_Events.pdf](http://www.theicarusfoundation.com/Images/images/Greening_Festivals_and_Events.pdf) and [http://www.napcor.com/pdf/NAPCOR_VENUE-Final2.pdf](http://www.napcor.com/pdf/NAPCOR_VENUE-Final2.pdf). The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance has a Web site with information on recycling at festivals, [http://www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling/index.asp](http://www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling/index.asp). 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](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).

48. (August 19, 2009) **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: KEEPING COOL**

With the summer heat in full swing, tourism businesses across the state are turning to their air conditioning systems to keep guests cool. In doing so, many tourism businesses are seeing a dramatic increase in their utility bills. But by following some simple guidelines, such as using ceiling fans, programmable thermostats and proper maintenance of your HVAC system you can reduce your energy bill while keeping guests comfortable. For a list of simple practices, visit [http://energy-conservation.org/documents/Waystomredussummercoolingcosts_000.pdf](http://energy-conservation.org/documents/Waystomredussummercoolingcosts_000.pdf) and [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=heat_cool.pr_hvac](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=heat_cool.pr_hvac). For more information on reducing your cooling bills, visit [http://www.p2pays.org/ref/26/25985.pdf](http://www.p2pays.org/ref/26/25985.pdf) (commercial-sized systems) and [http://www.ncsc.ncsu.edu/admin/include/_upload/media/docs/factsheets/Heating_Cooling_FACT_SHEET.pdf](http://www.ncsc.ncsu.edu/admin/include/_upload/media/docs/factsheets/Heating_Cooling_FACT_SHEET.pdf) (residential-sized systems). 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](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).
GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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.

GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
A bed and breakfast recently installed a new tankless water heater. The B&B owners were excited about the prospect of providing endless hot water to guests while reducing their rising energy bills. Unfortunately, after the new appliance was installed some rooms in the inn no longer had hot water. A Mexican restaurant found itself in a similar predicament when they installed energy efficient lighting that caused their tortilla chips to appear green in color. The lesson learned from these two stories is that, like with any changes, there are problems that can arise when installing energy saving appliances. It is important to research not only the products you are installing but also the installers themselves. For more information on energy saving appliances, visit www.energystar.gov. For a database of green building projects in N.C., visit www.ncgreenbuilding.org. A directory of renewable energy professionals in N.C. can be found at www.greenprofessionals.org. 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.

GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: 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%202012-08.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), The Green Plan for Hotels (www.p2pays.org/hospitality), and Event and Venue Recycling (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. 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.

52. (September 23, 2009) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: 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/need2.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@ncdner.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=5qgmLmrTa8Bg0dJYCu8Xng_3d_3d. For more information on implementing sustainable practices, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

53. (October 14, 2009) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: AS AUTUMN LEAVES FALL, BICYCLE WHEELS SPIN
One of the newest green travel trends is offering bicycles to tourists (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.

54. (October 21, 2009) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: 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), 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), 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). 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) to ABC Permit Holders (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.
55. (October 27, 2009) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: HAVING TROUBLE MAKING GREEN TRAVEL PLANS

According to a report by PhoCusWright (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), and Travelocity.com’s green directory (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. 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, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

56. (November 4, 2009) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: 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.

57. (November 10, 2009) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: COFFEE’S SECOND LIFE IN THE GARDEN

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.
58. (November 18, 2009) **N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: KEEPING YOUR ENERGY BILLS FROM GETTING TOO HOT**

Tourism professionals work hard to make sure guests stay as comfortable as possible no matter what the world outside might be like. But an inefficient HVAC system can lead to costly utility bills. A typical hotel annually spends 65¢ a square foot just on heating and cooling. Utility bills cut directly into profits but there are a number of things any tourism business can do to help reduce utility costs associated with heating and cooling. The most cost effective way to reduce energy bills is to regularly monitor thermostat settings. Guests can have varying tastes in temperature so it is important to make sure that thermostats are set back to normal upon their departure. Consolidating activity to one part of the property can also help reduce the amount of space you need to heat and cool. Also ensuring that all new in-room AC units are Energy Star certified ([www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=roomac.pr_room_ac](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=roomac.pr_room_ac)) can save as much as $55/unit. For more information on how you can reduce costs by being more energy efficient, 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.

59. (November 25, 2009) **N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: STAYING GREEN DURING THE HOLIDAYS**

For many tourism businesses, the winter holidays can be one of the busiest times of year and bring some of the biggest utility bills. But there are a number of simple practices that can help keep energy bills down and keep guests comfortable. Replacing holiday lights with energy efficient LEDs may still be too expensive ([www.hotelsmag.com/blog/1730000573/post/1510050751.html](http://www.hotelsmag.com/blog/1730000573/post/1510050751.html)), but using a timer and/or photosensor for existing decorative lighting can help make sure holiday lights are on only when guests will notice. Fireplaces can instantly make any room more attractive, but if not managed correctly they can also be a source of heat loss ([http://progress-energy.com/aboutenergy/learningctr/savingtips/fireplaces.asp](http://progress-energy.com/aboutenergy/learningctr/savingtips/fireplaces.asp)). And it is important to check that any programmable thermostats are correctly set to adjust for any changes in the number of customers or hours of operations. For more information on how you can reduce costs by being more energy efficient, 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.

60. (December 2, 2009) **N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: CERTIFIED GREEN**

According to a recent USA Today article ([www.usatoday.com/money/industries/travel/2009-11-09-greenhotels09_ST_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/travel/2009-11-09-greenhotels09_ST_N.htm)), many organizations are asking their employees to think green when they travel. But as many as one in three consumers are unsure how to verify green claims made by a business ([www.greenseal.org/resources/green_buying_research.cfm](http://www.greenseal.org/resources/green_buying_research.cfm)). To solve this problem, many tourism organizations have sought a sustainability certification to validate their green claims. However, choosing from the hundreds of available green travel certification programs can be confusing and overwhelming. When choosing a certification, it is important to verify the legitimacy of the program; for example, is it endorsed or recognized by a trusted travel organization such as AAA ([www.aaa.biz/Approved/eco.html](http://www.aaa.biz/Approved/eco.html)) or the U.S. Travel Association ([http://travellgreen.org/category_landing2.htm?select_category2_id=41](http://travellgreen.org/category_landing2.htm?select_category2_id=41))? It is also important that any certifying body be able to clearly explain what specific sustainable practices need to be implemented to become certified. For more information on sustainable tourism certification, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
61. (December 9, 2009) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND TOURISM
Many discussions about climate change and the travel and tourism industry address the impacts of a changing climate (visit www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/Climate-Weather-and-Tourism-Initiative.cfm for an in-depth examination of climate, weather and tourism). But due in part to growing public awareness of climate change (http://blog.ypartnership.com/?p=288) and possible government regulation of greenhouse gas emissions (www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/07/AR2009120701645.html), a number of tourism professionals are beginning to ask how climate change management might impact the travel industry (www.travelmole.com/stories/1139691.php?news_cat=&pagename=searchresult).
Although the costs of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions may come as one of the largest challenges facing the tourism industry, it also brings a number of opportunities, such as reduced operating costs through eco-efficiency measures, increased appeal to climate conscious travelers, and improved relations with regulatory government agencies. For best practice case studies of renewable energy in tourism, visit www.renewabletourism.com, or contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

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 instillation. 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.

63. (December 23, 2009) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: THREE EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY
Saving energy is an easy way to reduce operating costs while reducing your environmental impact. Vending machines are an easy place to find quick energy savings. By removing unnecessary lamps in vending machines, you can save an estimated $100/year (www.p2pays.org/energy/vending.pdf). Checking that HVAC thermostats are properly set and not impacted by direct sunlight or heat-producing appliances, such as coffee pots and space heaters, is another easy step to reduce energy costs. A third easy way to improve energy efficiency is by unplugging power adapters and electronics that continue to use energy when not in use or in standby mode. "Phantom power" is estimated to be 10-15 percent of commercial electricity use and can easily be avoided by using a power strip to switch-off electronics and adapters when not in use (www.epa.gov/stateply/documents/events/11feb_plugloads.pdf). For more tips on reducing energy use, visit www.sustainabletourism.org, or contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
64. (December 30, 2009). N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: THREE 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 dishwashing. 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. For more water saving tips, contact TomRhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

65. (January 6, 2010). N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: THREE 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. 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 TomRhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

66. (January 20, 2010). N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: RISING ENERGY COSTS AND TOURISM
Until recently, many tourism businesses have paid little attention to utility bills. Monthly energy bills were seen as a small but necessary cost of doing business. High bills were attributed to the level of luxury afforded to guests and assumptions that reducing utility costs would increase other costs such as labor. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, commercial electricity prices have risen 40 percent between 1999 and 2009. And with a renewed effort by the federal government to reduce greenhouse gases, we can expect traditional energy prices to continue to rise. Many managers argue that there is little they can do to reduce their energy bills but, according to Pacific Gas and Electric’s Food Service Technology Center, the commercial food service sector wastes $8 billion on inefficient cooking, holding and storage. Research has also found that energy-saving practices can lead to increased staff productivity and may increase guest experiences. For more information on energy conservation, visit www.renewabletourism.com. You can also learn more about energy and tourism at the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Renewable Energy in Tourism
webinar on Feb. 11. For more information on attending the webinar, contact Shannon Arnold at (252) 737-2148 or via SAA1202@ecu.edu.

67. (January 27, 2010). **N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: TURNING PENNIES INTO DOLLARS THROUGH ENERGY EFFICIENCY**
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. 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.

68. (February 3, 2010), **N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: RENEWABLE ENERGY IN TOURISM WEBINAR**
Over the last few years everyone has heard a lot about renewable energy. It’s been talked about on news shows, there have been state and federal funds allocated to it, and experts have discussed about its importance in developing a safer and more reliable energy future. But what does renewable energy mean to a tourism business owner or manager? Is it affordable? Where can you buy it? Do potential customers really care about it? And can it help reduce operating expenses? To answer these and many other questions, the Center for Sustainable Tourism, as part of its Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative, will be hosting a free webinar on Feb. 11 with guest experts Martha Gettys from NC GreenPower, Chris Metzler from GreenWise Business Consultants, and Jim Wood from Alternative Energy Concepts. For more information on attending the webinar, contact Shannon Arnold at (252) 737-2148 or via SAA1202@ecu.edu For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit [www.renewabletourism.com](http://www.renewabletourism.com), or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

69. February 11, 2010) **N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: CARBON NEUTRAL TOURISM**
Although only a small number of travelers choose to purchase carbon offsets when they travel, a number of tourism-related businesses have started taking steps to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The Coca-Cola Company has recently announced its goal of a zero carbon footprint for all its operations at the 2010 Olympic Games ([www.cocacola.ca/olympics_sustainability_plan.htm](http://www.cocacola.ca/olympics_sustainability_plan.htm)). And Coca-Cola is not alone in its goal; destinations such as Visit Scotland ([www.visitscotland.org/about_us/faqs/carbon_neutral.htm](http://www.visitscotland.org/about_us/faqs/carbon_neutral.htm)) and accommodations such as Paws Up Ranch ([www.pawsup.com/resort/ipreserve.php](http://www.pawsup.com/resort/ipreserve.php)) have also set a goal of zero net greenhouse gas emissions. Although it is still unclear if being carbon neutral attracts enough additional travelers to offset the additional costs, there is a growing sentiment across the industry that bad weather can ruin a vacation but bad climate can ruin a destination. For more information on how your tourism business can reduce its carbon footprint, visit [www.renewabletourism.com](http://www.renewabletourism.com), or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

70. (February 17, 2010) **N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: GETTING YOUR RECYCLING PROGRAM INTO SHAPE**

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*Center for Sustainable Tourism: Serving the Region, State and Nation*

*East Carolina University*

*[www.sustainabletourism.org](http://www.sustainabletourism.org)*
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.

71. (February 24, 2010) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: 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 polices 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 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.

72. (March 3, 2010) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: IS IT JUST ME OR ARE MY UTILITY BILLS A BIT HIGH
With cooler than average temperatures this winter a number of tourism businesses have been seeing higher than expected utility bills. Do you know if those higher bills are just due to cooler temperatures or are there other issues contributing to your rising bills? Is new staff using equipment efficiently? Do you have new air leaks? Are those energy saving light bulbs you just purchased really reducing your energy usage? Although most properties keep records of their utility bills because many factors impact your utility usage and costs it is important not only to keep track of how much your bills were but also what was your water, electricity, and natural gas usage in the context of number of customers or occupancy, weather, and equipment changes. It can also be helpful to compare your utility usage with industry standards to benchmark your utility usage (energy profiles for restaurants, hotels, and retail). For more information on benchmarking, visit www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=hospitality.bus_hospitality 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.

73. (March 10, 2010) N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: 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.