

**TOURISM DEVELOPMENT:
A SUGGESTED APPROACH
FOR THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM**

A Report to the System

**--Ways the CES can change its
Program priorities
Organizational structure and
External relationships
to meet the shifting needs and priorities
of society**

Prepared by:



**The National Extension
Travel and Tourism
Advisory Committee**

December 1993

Preface

A suggested approach for Cooperative Extension System tourism development programs for "the next millennium" follows. This statement provides possible roles and directions in tourism education for local, state and regional Extension programs in the foreseeable future.

This approach for Extension was developed by the National Extension Travel and Tourism Advisory Committee, whose purpose is to guide coordination of the strategic plan outlined at the conference, "Future Tourism Development: Programming in the Cooperative Extension Service for the Next Millennium," held in Milwaukee in the fall of 1992. The Advisory Committee formed from the Planning Committee for that conference is chaired by Sue Sadowske of Wisconsin. See Appendix B for a full listing of Advisory Committee members.

This suggested approach also encompasses ideas from the Tourism Design Team of the CES National Initiative, "Communities in Economic Transition," whose membership is also shown in Appendix B. Glenn Weaver, Missouri, is chairman of that group.

The last program statement on Extension involvement in tourism (and recreation) was issued in 1978: RECREATION AND TOURISM-- Challenges and Opportunities for Cooperative Extension and approved by the Community Resource Development and Public Affairs Subcommittee of the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy. Uel Blank, then a member of Minnesota Extension, was chairman of the Recreation and Tourism Task Force. Extension today could do worse than take up the challenges posed in that 15-year-old document. Excerpts from "Challenges and Opportunities" are accordingly contained in Appendix A.

Donald L. Nelson of Extension Service-U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (ES-USDA) is principal author of this paper and appreciated assistance from Sue Sadowske, Dave Marcouiller, Bill Norman and Bill Ryan, Wisconsin; Don Holecek and Phil Alexander, Michigan; Allan Worms, Kentucky and Ralph Otto, ES-USDA. Twenty other persons have reviewed this paper; their names appear in Appendix C.

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Travel and Tourism Today

In The World

Travel and tourism is a large industry. In fact, some say it is the world's **largest** industry. The Travel Industry World Yearbook for 1991 says that "Tourism spending worldwide, including both domestic and international travel, reached \$2.75 trillion in 1990, an increase of 5 percent over 1989 (revised). This is almost three times (what) the world spends for defense." A study reported in the Yearbook found that "travel and tourism is...a major contributor to global economic development," generating "More than \$2.5 trillion in gross output, which is 5.5 percent of the world GNP (Gross National Product), and was growing at a rate almost twice as fast as world GNP" (in 1989).

In the United States

About \$385 billion is spent by foreign and domestic travelers in the United States and in its affiliated territories **every year**, according to the U.S. Travel Data Center. More than 10 million people--one in 25 of us--travel in the United States **every day**. Nearly six million people are paid \$83 billion yearly to work within the Nation's travel and tourism (T&T) industry, with thousands of new jobs created every year. Over the past decade, T&T industry employment has grown 43 percent, more than twice the growth rate for all U.S. industries. In 1982, there were nearly 336,000 firms in the T&T industry, with 98 percent classified as small businesses.

Travel and tourism is America's third largest service industry and the number one business services export industry. About \$43 billion in travel tax dollars will be spent on road and building construction, school project support and other local, state and federal public service programs this year.

The interest in T&T in communities across the Nation is increasing. T&T is an industry deserving of special and renewed attention predicated on careful planning, development, marketing and continued good management.

Critical Issues

If the Cooperative Extension System is to deal effectively with tourism development--if it is to contribute to community and economic development and to support small business--it must deal with the following critical issues:

Basics

There is no agreed-upon **definition** of tourism, a fundamental problem. Nor are there consistent **data** on tourism impacts, which hinders tracking them over time.

Tourism has been viewed as a **frivolous activity** rather than as an industry having beneficial economic impacts.

In fact, some economists say that tourism isn't an industry at all, but only a loose collection of different **service** industries. Because tourism cannot be identified through specific "Standard Industrial Code" categories, there is not an agreed-upon definition of tourism and lack of consistent data means the "industry" has failed to achieve the recognition it deserves in the eyes of key decision makers.

Tourism and the Environment

As tourism continues to grow at a dramatic rate, there will inevitably be conflicts between tourist activity and the **environment**. This brings up the issue of **sustainable** tourism. Sustainable tourism development can be thought of as "meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future." Through informed planning, tourism development can proceed without undue threat to the environment. Indeed, the economic success of most tourism developments is dependent upon protecting the environment, as it is often a key element in attracting tourists to particular destinations.

Organizational Structure

The tourism industry lacks the infrastructure to adequately support and foster the growth of such a diverse and segmented industry. At the national level, the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration (USTTA) is the only Federal agency with legislative responsibility directly related to tourism. Its mission is quite narrow and its primary purpose is to promote the United States as a tourism destination area to foreign tourists. At the State level, the State offices of tourism also devote at least 80 percent of their efforts to **promotion**, with education

and research dividing the rest. Development gets little or only incidental support.

As an industry, the various components have their own associations, such as those for restaurants, hotels/motels, etc. Their primary focus is related to the problems and concerns of the services they provide. At the local level, most communities use volunteers on a tourism committee or organization to give leadership to the tourism interests of the area.

Public Awareness and Higher Education

As an evolving industry, tourism has not received the level of public support needed to adequately address its growing needs. Higher education is still formulating curricula in the field of tourism. A great deal of the educational work related to tourism and travel, broadly defined, comes out of the field of natural resources. Alternatively, most of the existing programs focus on single interest curriculum--like hotel/motel management, food and beverage management, travel agency management or generic curricula in marketing and business management. Job training and career counseling are also limited or nonexistent. This lack of public support and understanding further hampers development, as it limits access to well-trained individuals to fill leadership positions in the industry.

Research

Information about consumer or tourist behavior is essential for good management of a tourism business and for marketing the area. Unfortunately, accurate information is often difficult and expensive to acquire, especially for local chamber of commerce offices and small businesses. Tourism-related information is available at the national level through the U.S. Travel Data Center or the USTTA, but the information is not interpreted at a level useful to most local tourism organizations and, in some cases, the information is available at a cost prohibitive to local groups.

In addition to **market** information, information is also needed about the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism development in order for communities to understand the consequences of development options.

Demographics

Tourism is the largest employer in 13 States and three insular areas. It tends to be the big employer on the corners of the Nation (AK, HI, FL, ME, VT, NH) and the insular areas of Guam, the Virgin Islands and the Northern Marianas. All of these

States and territories, except Vermont, have **coastal** areas. Most also have **mountains**. The other seven States where tourism is the largest employer are in the Rocky Mountain area (AZ, CO, ID, NV, NM, UT and WY). The coast and mountains seem to be natural attractions for travelers. Population and tourism will continue to gravitate toward these coastal regions, generating both opportunities and challenges.

However, travel/tourism growth is important to many other States lacking coastal or mountain attractions also. Michigan, for instance, has neither mountains nor seacoast, but has more than 3,000 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, is among the leading states in boating, downhill ski resorts, campsites, registered snowmobiles and second homes; in Michigan, the bed and breakfast business has blossomed, as has historic tourism, charter boat fishing, trail use and so on.

Slow overall population growth, the "baby boomer" bubble and increasing life expectancy will combine to increase the proportion of **older people** in the Nation's population. Travel is a high priority for the senior market and they have the time and (usually) the financial resources to travel extensively. Destinations which orient their travel product to the needs of seniors will capture a larger share of this market segment and may eventually experience net in-migration driven by seniors relocating to their favorite vacation destination when they retire.

The Economics of Tourism

The **weak U.S. dollar** makes all U.S.-produced exports, including tourism, attractive in the international market place. So long as the dollar remains weak in international markets, the positive U.S. travel trade balance will grow. Foreign tourists tend to spend more time and money than do domestic tourists (**foreign visitors spend seven times more money than domestic travelers**; the majority of foreign visitors spend more than eight nights here).

Wealth and income is distributed unevenly across this country and this disparity is projected to grow in the future. Thus, marketing focused on the average-income traveler will likely appeal to a shrinking market segment.

The **debt** accumulated by individuals, corporations and the government is possibly the single most important factor in the tourism equation, since tourism is sensitive to shifts in prices and disposable income, although historically it has performed as a recession cushion.

Employment

The travel and tourism industry is most often perceived as an industry offering primarily **low wage** and **low skill** jobs. Thus, many question efforts to stimulate growth in tourism. Manufacturing jobs are regarded as superior, because the average paycheck is bigger, but the difference is smaller than most people realize. Also, there are nearly five times as many service-producing jobs as factory jobs and they often provide better working environs.

The inherent **seasonality** of the travel and tourism industry, e.g., peak demand in specific seasons, suggests that the industry will encounter labor shortages in some activity areas and locales, especially during peak periods. Travel and tourism will probably face rising labor costs and will need to develop new sources of labor supply. Since competition will limit ability to raise prices and/or reduce quality, the industry will also need to develop labor-saving strategies and effective training programs to keep costs low and quality high.

Communities

Many communities considering implementing a tourism development program cite examples of tourism development problems in other communities. If communities are to use tourism effectively as an economic development strategy, they may want to identify important local community and tourism development **values**:

- Basing tourism development on **authenticity** and a sense of place.
- Assessing the true **benefits and costs** of tourism.
- Using tourism as a **diversification** rather than a substitution strategy.
- Developing and delivering quality services.
- **Sharing the benefits** of tourism and developing local control.

New tourism can yield many economic benefits, including:

- A recession-resistant income source
- Economic growth
- Increased tax revenue
- A labor-intensive industry
- Employment opportunities
- Small business opportunities
- Less infrastructure needs than some other kinds of development options.
- Improved quality of life for the local citizenry

Yet, tourism can bring undesirable by-products:

- Traffic congestion
- Displacement of local residents and businesses
- Shops catering to visitors rather than to locals
- Resentment of the visitors
- Community service needs, such as police and fire protection, street lights and sewers
- Disruption of the local ecosystem

The New Tourisms

Agri-tourism; cultural, ethnic and historical tourism; eco-tourism; heritage tourism and all the other "New Tourisms" have distinctive issues associated with them. Collectively, they point to additional opportunities in tourism development.

Negative Factors

Among the possible "negatives" for the future of tourism, mentioned by Futurist Michael Marien at the recent Extension Conference, are:

- The possibility for a continuing and perhaps worsening, **economic downturn**
- A **consumption tax**
- **Environmental disaster**
- Worsening **transportation** systems
- **Communications** alternatives (as a substitute for travel)
- Tourism **oversupply**
- Host community **backlash**

Another issue is **safety** and **security**, whether at rest stops or at airports. This is especially a "negative" for an aging population.

The Need for Extension Education in Tourism Development

The tourism sector has a limited organizational structure with little or no educational research or technical assistance support for its many small businesses. Although CES has had some programming efforts in travel and tourism since the late '40s, these efforts can be characterized as lacking a central focus, being unevenly distributed among the States and offering only sporadic opportunities to share resources.

However, CES' involvement in tourism development education programs is substantial, although not at a level commensurate with the industry's economic importance and growing need for assistance. In the newsletter UPDATE, Tourism and Commercial Recreation, we read that people in Extension with at least an **interest** in this educational area are found in every State save one. The mailing list for this newsletter includes more than 250 people with Extension linkages. Despite severe fiscal restraints, in the fall of 1992, interest in tourism was further demonstrated when 78 people from 33 States attended the CES conference "Future Tourism Directions" referred to in the Preface.

Extension professionals are seeking ways to stay on the cutting edge of tourism development.

CES is being constantly called upon to deliver the kinds of educational programs which will help people make informed decisions about tourism investments, tourism's role in community economic development strategies and a host of other tourism management, planning and policy issues.

Most tourism businesses are classified as small businesses and, as such, often are unable or unwilling to give leadership to the larger context of a tourism industry. The few communities which have been able to surmount the many obstacles to developing effective tourism industry leadership have the most viable tourism industries. This demonstrates the importance of organizational structure as an issue, one that the CES has successfully addressed many times in other contexts.

Business Education and Technical Assistance

The major function of most tourism organizations has been **promotion**. While narrow, this focus has been beneficial, especially for established businesses. The effectiveness of these promotion efforts are rarely evaluated and, even when effective, still fail to address individual business needs for education and technical assistance in other areas of marketing, management and planning. The lack of education and technical assistance slows

growth, contributes to business failures and lessens the probability that a community/area will reach its potential.

The ability of the CES specialist to assist the industry is also constrained by the lack of research available on tourism. These are only **some** of the issues facing individuals, communities and businesses as they contemplate the question: "Is tourism for me (us)?" The educational opportunities are seemingly limitless.

The Tourism Design Team of the Communities in Economic Transition (CET) National Initiative (see Appendix B for members) analyzed the situation surrounding the tourism industry and concluded:

- Tourism does have the potential to become an even greater factor in the **social, cultural, and economic development** strategy for America.
- The potential of tourism as an economic development strategy would be enhanced if Extension would provide more **education** directed toward tourism development.
- The Extension Service has a strong **history** in tourism education and some of the national leaders in tourism development education should expand their efforts in order to enhance the economy.
- Tourism education and technical assistance directed towards **private enterprise development** can contribute to the expansion and retention of existing businesses and create new businesses, new jobs, income and profits and generally improve the economy of the area.

This publication spells out ways the CES can change its program priorities, organizational structure and external relationships to meet the shifting needs and priorities of society.

Objectives and Tasks for CES

The most notable outcome of the conference "Future Tourism Development: Programming in the Cooperative Extension Service for the Next Millennium," was the establishment of strategic actions in tourism and travel and the commitments made by conference participants to work collaboratively to realize their plans. These planned actions and related commitments are outlined here:

Action 1

To articulate the **education and research** roles of CES in travel and tourism to external and internal stake-holders. To establish tourism and travel as a **recognized, supported program** within the Cooperative Extension System. To develop **partnerships** for programming in tourism and travel.

Action 2

Establish **educational** initiatives in tourism and travel for clientele and for Extension faculty and staff.

Action 3

Establish a nationwide "**library**" of tourism and travel information, data and reports. Suggested name: Tourism Information Resource System (TIRS).

Action 4

Build a national **research** base and a comprehensive research agenda for travel and tourism. If the CES is to become more effective in its traditional role of disseminating research findings to communities and to individual needs, it is especially important that CES assign a higher priority to tourism development research.

Action 5

Hold another National Cooperative Extension **Workshop** on tourism and travel within the next two years.

People in Cooperative Extension are chairing National Extension Tourism Subcommittees or Task Forces and the groups are working on the following:

- Marketing Subcommittee, Allan Worms, Kentucky, Chair
- Research Task Force, Dave Sharpe, Montana and Eric Thunberg, Florida, Co-chairs

- Information Resource System Task Force, Phil Alexander, Michigan, Chair
- Training Task Force, Robert Townsend, Vermont, Chair
- Future National Extension Workshop Task Force, Margaret Moore, Louisiana, Chair

Priority Programs for Target Audiences

Present

An interpretation of the travel and tourism efforts reported by State Extension offices in a survey preceding the 1992 National Extension workshop showed the following programs in place in CES:

I. Programs designed to establish **foundations** for long-range development and management of a local/regional tourism industry, including processes and community resource development.

A. Getting tourism organized

1. Community awareness and education
2. Organizational development, i.e., boards and associations
3. Leadership training

B. Tourism planning and development

1. Community, county, regional and state tourism planning
 - a. Assessments
 - b. Analysis
 - c. Goal setting
 - d. Strategic planning
 - e. Evaluation
2. Tourism development
 - a. Market research and analysis
 - b. Strategy development
 - c. Feasibility analysis
 - d. Evaluation

C. Management of Tourism

1. Hospitality training
2. Building linkages and networks
3. Applied research
4. Strategic marketing planning

D. Evaluating the impacts of tourism

1. Economic
2. Social-cultural
3. Physical/environmental

- II. Programs designed to meet the immediate **short-term** objectives and topical issues as they arise. These usually have lasting value, but employee and leadership "turn-over" requires repeat training.
 - A. Tourism marketing and promotion (e.g., How to design a brochure)
 - B. Strategic planning
 - C. Marketing planning
 - D. Conflict resolution

- III. Programs designed to **help individuals and encourage business development**. Workshops and counseling are provided in two areas:
 - A. The **basics of the business**. What you should know about the business before you proceed.
 - 1. Business start-up
 - 2. Pricing for profit
 - 3. Financial management and planning
 - 4. How to get financing
 - 5. Personnel management
 - 6. Marketing

 - B. Business feasibility and investment analysis. Is it a viable option?

 - C. These programs are designed to address the unique aspects of different types of tourism operations, including:
 - 1. Bed and breakfasts
 - 2. Hotels, resorts and motels
 - 3. Restaurants
 - 4. Campgrounds
 - 5. Small retail stores
 - 6. Craft businesses
 - 7. Farm tours and vacations
 - 8. Fee hunting and fishing

- IV. Programs addressing emerging issues in travel and tourism:
 - A. Eco-tourism or nature-based tourism
 - B. Heritage tourism
 - C. Agricultural tourism, i.e., farm tours/vacations, etc.
 - D. Cultural tourism

Future

I. Base programs are the major educational efforts central to the mission of CES and common to most Extension units. They are ongoing priority efforts. Tourism development is part of the CES base program "Community Resource and Economic Development" (CR&ED) --one of seven base programs within the CES.

In general, CES can carry out the following tourism development efforts under its **base** program of **CR&ED**:

A. Establish a **national tourism policy** for the Extension Service, supporting tourism as an **economic development** tool.

B. Develop a **core program** with instructional materials as Extension's national program in tourism and articulate that program to all Federal, State and local agencies and to each State Extension Director.

C. Collaborate with **other agencies** and **private enterprises** to host State and multi-state **educational** programs for tourism development.

D. Develop and/or compile a series of **tourism education materials** for Extension personnel.

E. Encourage each State to provide, at a minimum, the **core program** in tourism development.

II. National initiatives are CES' commitment to respond to important societal problems of broad national concern with additional resources and significantly increase effort to achieve a major impact on national priorities. The national initiatives are current or emerging major issues arising out of one or more components of base programs. These national initiative are "in the spotlight" for a period of time.

Specifically, the Tourism Design team of the CET initiative recommends that the CES provide tourism development programs to respond to the **National Initiative** "Communities in Economic Transition"--one of eight CES initiatives at present--as follows:

A. **Public awareness education.** Designed to help community leaders understand the nature and potential of tourism as an economic development strategy, including the costs and benefits associated with tourism development.

B. **Assessment education and technical assistance.** Designed to help community/area leaders assess the potential of their community/area to develop tourism as a part of the economic development plan.

C. **Planning and development education.** Designed to help the citizenry, community planners and decision makers organize and develop a tourism plan that is appropriate to the interest and resources of their community.

D. **Marketing education.** Designed to help local leaders develop marketing strategies to attract tourists to their attractions and services, including product development and market research.

E. **Leadership and management education and technical assistance.** Designed to prepare individuals and community leaders to assume a leadership role in managing their tourism organization, the local tourism industry and the initiation, enhancement and expansion of private enterprise.

F. **Demonstration programs.** Designed to develop models for tourism development in planning, data collection and marketing.

Implementation Strategies

There are several approaches open to the CES in implementing its tourism strategy. CES cannot do it alone--it will form partnerships with other agencies, at the federal, state and local levels and with all the actors involved in the tourism sector.

The efforts outlined in the preceding section on **base programming** and **national initiatives** will be conducted to the extent and intensity possible within existing resources.

CES could re-allocate existing resources to tourism and travel programs. It can also work with its traditional research partner--the Agricultural Experiment Station--and with other partners in universities, i.e., planning and sociology departments, to expand research programs needed to effectively address tourism industry needs.

With expanded resources, CES could:

- Establish **expert teams**. CES could develop regional support teams to work with State Specialists, 1890 community development (CD) contacts, territory and commonwealth CD leaders, CES Indian Reservation agents, area agents and/or county level staff to provide support for the 2,600 counties under 50,000 in population experiencing economic transition. One of the targeted areas for assistance would be Rural Tourism Development.
- Place at least one **tourism specialist** in every State. This would initiate the program in 18 States and strengthen it in the others. States which already have tourism specialists could provide training and retraining to other States and would be able to add specialized positions to their staffs.
- Provide educational and technical assistance to businesses, local tourism groups and State governments in developing the capacity of an attraction to market, and provide services, to **international travelers**. Seminars could include: information on cultural differences, hospitality training and other special programs in international marketing and the "new tourisms"--eco-tourism, agri-tourism, and cultural, ethnic and heritage tourism.
- Finally, the quality of service the CES delivers to the tourism industry ultimately depends on the knowledge base its personnel possess. Simply reassigning and hiring new people to the tourism development task will not be enough; they must also have the education to be effective and to be seen as credible by the people they serve. Hence, existing personnel must undergo significant **retraining** and new hires must have the personalities and educational backgrounds required to deliver tourism development educational and technical assistance programming.

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APPENDIX

A. Excerpts from the publication RECREATION AND TOURISM, Challenges and Opportunities for Cooperative Extension, Recreation and Tourism Task Force, 1978:

The Situation in Brief

The demand for recreational goods, facilities, and services will continue to grow, but during the next 25 years it will be tempered by energy scarcity and rising prices.

Most of the growth and development in natural resource-based recreation will occur in rural America, especially areas within weekend commuting distance of large population centers.

In many rural communities recreation and tourism may become, or continue to be, a viable growth industry and provide opportunities for an increasing number of jobs for rural residents.

Conflicts in allocation of natural resources between recreation and other uses will increase.

The provision of tourist or "hospitality" services will continue to be a function of private enterprises: individual entrepreneurs.

Local leaders and governing officials need assistance in making informed decisions about recreation and tourism as a component of total community development. While protecting the community and its resources, these leaders and officials need to know the relationship of benefits for the indigenous populations.

Technical assistance to meet the demands for "hometown" recreation facilities and services for all citizens--young, old, low income, high income, advantaged, and disadvantaged--is needed. The demands from such a heterogeneous population may be quite different--sometimes compatible, and sometimes incompatible.

Energy supplies may be a factor adding pressures for the development of recreation services within the local community.

The challenge to the Cooperative Extension Service is to assist in establishing goals and priorities for a sound program to provide opportunities for all.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSION

.....
A National Workshop on Cooperative Extension's Role in Outdoor Recreation was held in 1967 at the University of Georgia. W.H. Bennett, director of the Utah Extension Service, made the following observation:

"With tremendous expansion in recreation comes opportunities, as well as problems...Extension will have the opportunity as well as the challenge to help individuals achieve self-fulfillment and find the rich, full life. Extension has done a good job in the past, but must do a better job in the future. Certainly no other education group in the country has a better team of resource people..."

R.P. Davison, director of the Vermont Extension Service, added:
"...For the Extension Service this means a whole new and expanding area of education and information...This discipline will become very important in Extension work in the future."

.....
Historically, Extension has channeled its efforts toward improving the quality of life for all Americans.

.....
If Extension is to respond to these issues, recreation and tourism programming need to become an integral part of Extension programs. Extension's commitment to recreation and tourism will be necessary.

Extension's programs should relate to the three client groups: Individuals and families as consumers, public and private suppliers, and community leaders.

(Note--Emphasis [**bold face** and italics] were retained from the original publication.)

B. Extension Committees

National Extension Travel and Tourism Advisory Committee

Philip Alexander, District Extension Tourism Agent, Michigan
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C. Reviewers of this Paper

The following persons reviewed this paper. Their suggestions were all good, though there was no clear pattern to them. Because of time and space limitations, not every suggestion was incorporated, but will be considered at a future date. Most said "great job," or words to that effect.

Their reviews are deeply appreciated by the National Extension Travel and Tourism Advisory Committee.

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Sally Carpenter, MI
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