



NATIONAL EXTENSION TOURISM NETWORK

The National Extension Tourism Network

Supporting Local Economies through Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

Our Mission

National Extension Tourism (NET) integrates research, education and outreach within Cooperative Extension and Sea Grant to support sustainable tourism, thus contributing to the long-term economic development, environmental stewardship, and socio-cultural well-being of communities and regions.

Background

Tourism and outdoor recreation make up a rapidly growing segment of the economy and offer rural and urban communities of all sizes an important strategy for growing and diversifying their economies and building economic resilience. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the tourism industry added \$764 billion to the U.S. economy in 2022, accounting for 2.97% of gross domestic product¹. However, communities engaged in tourism and outdoor recreation activities also face serious challenges, ranging from workforce issues to managing environmental impacts at popular destinations. Local leaders and policy makers need unbiased information and objective data about their local economies in order to make sound decisions about tourism policy, planning, and management issues.

ENGAGEMENT

NET engages faculty and students at Land and Sea Grant institutions, community members, and partners in collaborative priority setting and problem solving. NET shares applied research, special programs, or other tourism development and outdoor recreation technical expertise with key stakeholders and audiences.

LEADERSHIP

NET continually advocates for Extension's role in supporting tourism, agritourism, and outdoor recreation; creates opportunities for regional and national collaboration and shared priority setting; and responds to emerging issues.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NET provides knowledge and research-based educational opportunities for Extension, Sea Grant, and other key stakeholders such as land-owners, public officials, and industry leaders, through its conference, webinars, publications, and working groups.

1. Arcand, H., & Kern, P. (2024, April 14). US Travel and Tourism Satellite Account for 2018–2022. US Bureau of Economic Analysis. <https://bit.ly/4jvf7xz>.



Get Involved with NET

As a trusted source of research-based information, NET has been providing tourism-related education and programming to support informed community decision-making for more than 50 years.

As communities engaging in tourism and the industry itself build a more resilient and sustainable future, NET is well positioned to provide the expertise, research, and education to help them realize their goals.

Extension professionals working in this community placemaking space can benefit from the NET website, active working groups (such as Agritourism and Outdoor Recreation), annual quarterly webinars and a biennial conference, opportunities to submit work to the quarterly NET newsletter and awards opportunities.

To learn more, visit extensiontourism.net or contact net@extension.org.



Scenes from the 2023 NET conference in Milwaukee, WI.

What Does NET Provide?

- ⇒ Opportunities for networking and collaboration
- ⇒ Professional development opportunities
- ⇒ A platform for sharing research and outreach resources, success stories, and best practices
- ⇒ A forum for non-NET partners to learn about the role NET can play in tourism projects and programming

What Difference is NET Making?

NET members engage in community-based programming which supports goals including economic and workforce development; health and wellness; climate adaptation and resilience; and inclusiveness and accessibility. A wide variety of programs across the country provide communities and business owners with education and outreach in agritourism, nature-based and cultural tourism, placemaking, workforce education and training, and tourism marketing. These programs are led by Extension professionals at both Land and Sea-Grant Universities and bring together scientific researchers, community leaders, industry professionals, and business owners.



For examples of Land-Grant and Sea-Grant programs in all regions of the U.S., scan the QR code or visit: bit.ly/3Raf7qP



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- National Extension Tourism Design Team. Strategic Plan 2020-2025. June 2020. <https://bit.ly/3ccZVUL>.