



SUPPORTING LOCAL ECONOMIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & 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 wellbeing of communities and regions.

Background

Tourism and 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 industry added \$459.8 billion to the U.S. economy in 2019, accounting for 2.1% of gross domestic product. Meanwhile, 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 management, planning, and policy issues.

1 Engagement

NET is further engaging faculty and students at land grant universities, community members, and partners in collaborative priority setting and problem solving through shared knowledge.

2 Taking an Inventory

NET is inventorying and assessing existing Extension and Sea Grant tourism programs.

How is NET Responding?

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

3 Professional Development

Knowledge and research-based educational opportunities for Extension, Sea Grant, and other key stakeholders such as land-owners, public officials, and industry leaders.

4 Sharing

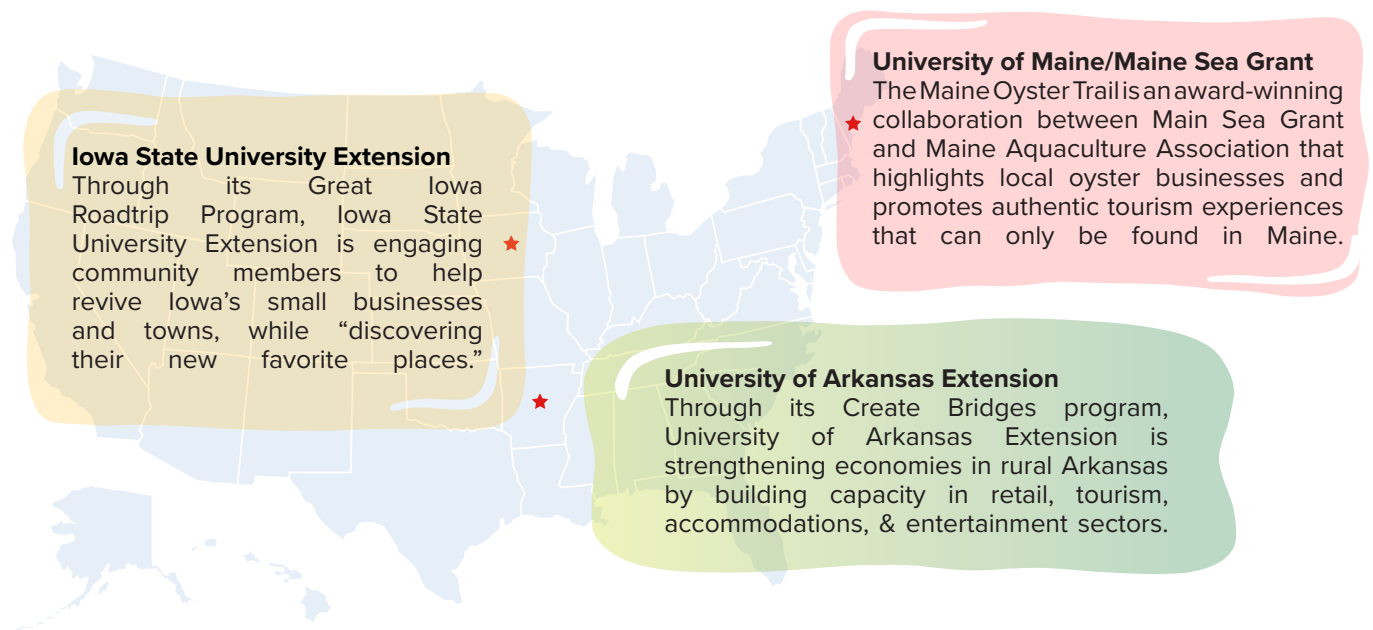
Sharing applied research, special programs, or other tourism development and outdoor recreation technical expertise with key stakeholders and audiences.

What Does NET Provide?



What Difference is NET Making?

NET Members engage in community-based programming which supports goals including economic and workforce development; health equity; climate change adaptation and resilience; and diversity, equity, inclusion, and improving access. A 2019 survey revealed that 163 programs are active in 37 states, providing 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.



Get Involved with NET

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

The information presented here was compiled by Kristen Devlin, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, and is adapted from:
• National Extension Tourism Design Team. Strategic Plan 2020-2025. June 2020.
• Arbogast, D., Eades, D., Goetz, S., & Pan, Y. (2022). Extension and Tourism: Previous Efforts, Current Trends, and the Future. The Journal of Extension, 60(2), Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.34068/joe.60.02.07>
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