UPCOMING WEBINAR

Rural Tourism in the North Central Region and Additional National Resources

Highlighting the tourism programs of:
- Michigan State University Extension’s Tourism Team
- University of Minnesota Tourism Center
- University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute
- National Extension Tourism Network

MAY 16, 2023 · 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL CENTER FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Michigan State University Extension’s Approach to Rural Tourism Development
Community, Food, & Environment Institute

• Community Food Systems
• Entrepreneurship
• Finance & Homeownership
• Government (& Tribal Nations)
• Land Use
• Leadership
• Natural Resource Management
• Tourism

C. Andrew Northrop, MA
Community Vitality and Sustainable Tourism Educator
Michigan State University Extension
(810) 989-6331, northro5@msu.edu
https://www.linkedin.com/in/canorthrop
Tourism Development Programs

CONTACT US:
Michigan State University Extension, 200 Grand River Avenue, Suite 102, Port Huron MI 48060
Andy Northrop, Extension Educator, 810-989-6935 northro5@anr.msu.edu

MSU EXTENSION TOURISM RESOURCES:
msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/tourism

TARGET AUDIENCE:
Residents, elected officials, business owners, economic development practitioners, planners and organizations

PROGRAM SUMMARY:
MSU Extension’s tourism team works statewide addressing community needs and interests in leveraging assets and resources for tourism development. A variety of programs exist to assist a community or region in becoming a destination or launch initiatives to strengthen existing tourism offerings. Programs are specifically designed to involve local leaders and stakeholders in a collaborative process for developing regional synergies and inclusiveness, exploring niche markets and/or capitalizing on the results of community assessments by first-time visitors. Ultimately, programs can form the basis for future development, spawn local leadership, and strengthen community vitality.

Goals of our tourism programs are to:

- Increase awareness of assets and opportunities.
- Increase knowledge of best practices, trends and changes.
- Develop new leadership roles, opportunities and action items.
- Foster new collaborations and plans among stakeholders to advance community-driven tourism.
Rural Tourism Assessment (RTA)

• New for 2023
  • Strengthen Small Town Rural Tourism
  • Leverages Local Knowledge & Stakeholder Input
  • Captures Innovations from First Time Visitors
  • Fosters County & Community Collaboration
Phase 1  Q2-2023
  • Tourism Asset ID Workshop
    • County and Community Stakeholder Driven

Phase 2  Q3-Q4 2023
  • First Impressions Tourism (FIT) assessment(s)
    • County and Community Focused

Phase 3 – Q1 2024
  • County Forum
    • Community Results
    • Strategic Planning / Sustainable Tourism Education
Phase 1 Objectives:

- **Bring stakeholders across county/communities into a collective asset identification process**
- **To provide leaders/stakeholders the opportunity to pre-select and prioritize their tourism assets**
- **To collect additional stakeholder input for the purpose of generating county visioning questions for First Impressions Tourism (FIT) assessment**
Phase 1:
Identifying Tourism Assets

What are attractions, events, business examples from your community?

- *Nature-based/Outdoor Recreation*
- *Historical/Cultural tourism*
- *Agritourism*
- *Random Assets*
RTA Phase 1 – Prioritizing Tourism Assets

- 2 Sticky Dots = 2 Votes Per Person
- Best asset in your community
- Best asset in your county
RTA Phase 1 – Prioritizing Tourism Assets

Agricultural Tourism
- Farmers Market
- DD Ranch (Triple D Ranch)
- Kirby Street Market (Local Source)
- Community Garden (George & Main St)
- Downtown Eats [Brewed Co.] (Grown-up HC Greenhouse/Rosco Floral/Greenhouse)
- Black Bear Money/Maple Syrup
- Garden Prairie Park
- Of course
- Halloween Pumpkin Patch
- Bison Ranch
- Farmers Market
- Quilt Block Trail (From Old 103)

Nature-based/Outdoor Recreation
- Hunting - State Land
- Fishing - Lake
- Wildlife - Lake
- Boating - Lake
- UTV Trails - Lower Trailhead
- LOST TRAIL - Lower Trailhead
- Upper Trailhead

Pleasant View & Old 27
- Golfing: 18 courses within 30 minutes
- Pickleball Court: S&I
- Disc Golf: S&I
- Fishing: Lake
- Lakefront Vacation Rental Homes
- Lakefront Recreation: Beach Camping: Campground
- Canoeing/Rowing Down N. Lake St. Robert Cogswell

TRIPLE D RANCH
- Quilt Block Trail
- Ausable Bridge Trail

Rosco Zoo
- Lighted Night Hopper Taxi on Higgins Lake
- MARL LAKE TRAILS: Lake canoe/kayak
- Cut River Launch
- Chippewa Nature Centers

Higgins Lakes Drive: Bike Run (Boat)
Ausable River (N. DT Romann)
Winter Fest
Objective 2 –

- To gather additional stakeholder input for the purpose of generating collective questions for First Impressions Tourism (FIT) assessment
- Encourages county identity and collaboration across small town tourism economies.
RTA Phase 1 – Collective Visioning Exercise

What is something you would like to know about your County from a (first-time) visitor perspective?
Phase 2:
• First Impressions Tourism (FIT) Assessments

A comprehensive community assessment conducted by unannounced visitors in a host community. Overall, FIT helps communities learn about their strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of first-time visitors.
FIT communities will:

- Learn about their assets and opportunities from first-time visitors.
- Strengthen an existing cohort of leaders and residents by providing them an opportunity to organize on the basis of valuable feedback about their community.
- Develop a list of action items for community improvement.
- Integrate action items into community plans.
- Take action on community improvements and strengthen their image.
- Improve community well-being and quality of life for residents and visitors.

The results of FIT can:

- Spawn local leadership.
- Strengthen community vitality.
- Form the basis for future development.
How Impressions of Communities are Formed

- First-Hand Experience: 76%
- Word of Mouth: 68%
- Internet Research: 62%
- Social Media: 44%
- Media Coverage: 27%
- Rankings: 25%
- Other: 1%

Your Tourism Shed – Tourism Assets

Primary

Secondary

Tertiary
A comprehensive community assessment conducted by unannounced visitors in a host community Overall, FIT helps communities learn about their strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of first-time visitors.

www.canr.msu.edu/tourism/programs/
Phases 3:
- Rural Tourism Assessment Forum

- Merges stakeholder prioritized assets from Phase 1 with first-time visitor experiences from Phase 2
- Draws parallels and distinctions between participating communities and county marketing, identities, and tourism development
- Provide strategic visioning and education around sustainable tourism development
Hypothetical Evolution of a Tourist Area

1. Discovery + Exploration
2. Involvement
3. Development
4. Consolidation
5. Stagnation
6a. Rejuvenation
6b. Reduced Growth
6c. Stabilization
6d. Decline
6e. Immediate Decline

Critical range of elements of consolidated capacity

Source: Butler (1980)

Tourism Area Life Cycle Volumes 1 and 2: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues (Butler, 2006)
Tourism Area Life Cycle Volumes 1 and 2: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues (Butler, 2006)
What has been Successful?
- Connections between beaches & downtown
- Maritime Museum / Stationary boat
- Leadership / Purpose
- Events / Planning
- Infrastructure / grant driven
- Built infrastructure / upgrades, electrical
- Vision
- Collaboration
- Cooperation
- Sustained property value since 2006

Photo: Northrop, 2020
Over-tourism

Challenges:
- Alienated local residents
- Degradation
- Overloaded infrastructure
- Damage to ecology
- Threats to culture & heritage
- Others?

Tactics for Addressing it:
- Smooth visitors overtime
- Spread visitors across sites
- Adjust pricing to balance supply and demand
- Regulate accommodation supply
- Limit access and activities (contentious)

Coping With Success - World Travel and Tourism Council (2017)
2022 Webinar Series: Critical Conversations in Michigan Tourism: Sustainability and Climate Change

**Topics Include:**

- Overview of climate change and the Great Lakes
- Impact of climate change on winter outdoor recreation
- Climate adaptation planning for local units of government
- Possible funding sources for climate adaptation

Scan the QR code below to view the recordings!
MSU Extension Tourism Programs - [www.canr.msu.edu/tourism/programs/](http://www.canr.msu.edu/tourism/programs/)

Andy Northrop, MA  
Community Vitality and Tourism Educator  
Michigan State University Extension  
(810) 989-6331, [northro5@msu.edu](mailto:northro5@msu.edu)  
[https://www.linkedin.com/in/canorthrop](https://www.linkedin.com/in/canorthrop)
Welcome to the National Extension Tourism website

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.

- [https://extensiontourism.net/](https://extensiontourism.net/)