



NETtra Tourism Conference Presentation Descriptions

Please note that the sessions and schedule are subject to change.

Check www.nettra.org/conference-program.html for updates and to view the full schedule.

** denotes presenting author(s)*

Wednesday, October 8th

General Session: Welcome Plenary

Tourism Across Scales: Getting Situated in Our Conference Region

Welcome to New Hampshire's Lakes Region, where tourism has been a key industry since the mid 1800s! In this panel, we'll get to know our conference region at different geographic levels. Through this "nested" look, we'll hear from tourism organization leaders about their respective missions and focuses, and give a critical look at research and data needs and opportunities.

Panelists:

- Michele Cota, Executive Director, Discover New England
- Michelle Cruz, Director, Director, NH Division of Travel and Tourism Development
- Amy Landers, Executive Director, Lakes Region Tourism Association
- Matty Leighton, Executive Director, Central NH Chamber of Commerce
- Sue Cagle, Extension Community and Economic Development Field Specialist, University of New Hampshire (*moderator*)

Breakout Session 1

Big, Brown, and RIGHT THERE!: An Analysis of Black Bear and Moose in New Hampshire Tourism

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Adam Keul*, Plymouth State University, Plymouth, NH

Short Abstract: The role of animals in nature tourism is generally addressed to a single species basis despite the overlaps of various ranges, habitats, and tourist engagements. This presentation will address the roles of black bear and moose collectively in the representation and experience of tourism in New Hampshire.

After-Dark Tourism: An Examination of Attitudes, Trends, and Revenue Potential

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Kristy Sumner*, Historic Scott County Jail, Huntsville, TN

Short Abstract: After-Dark Tourism is a multi-billion dollar industry. During her presentation, Dr. Sumner will discuss various aspects of After-Dark Tourism, summarize and examine the responses to her nationwide After-Dark Tourism survey, and demonstrate the positive financial impact that After-Dark Tourism can have on the preservation of historically significant locations.

National Resident Sentiment Towards Sporting Events

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Tammy Koerte*, Longwoods International, Columbus, Ohio

Short Abstract: Results from the first National Resident Sentiment Towards Sporting Events study will be shared, with a particular focus on the Northeast region. Discover insights that can help industry professionals leverage the benefits of sports tourism for their community and residents.

Community Entrepreneurship as a Catalyst for Outdoor Recreation and Sustainable Economic Ecosystems: Lessons from Franklin, New Hampshire

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Charles French*, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Dr. Guangzhou Chen*, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Dr. Dev Dutta, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Short Abstract: This presentation explores how community entrepreneurship revitalized Franklin, New Hampshire, by leveraging outdoor recreation for sustainable economic growth. Analyzing competing institutional logics, we examine how entrepreneurial-market and community priorities shape sustainable economic ecosystems. Findings offer insights

into balancing development with sustainability through collaborative, place-based initiatives.

Empowering Local Decision-Making Through Participatory Sustainable Tourism Indicators

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Daniel Eades*, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV

Dr. Douglas Arbogast*, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV

Dr. Luyi Han, Penn State University/Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, University Park, PA

Dr. Stephan Goetz, Penn State University/Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development University Park, PA

Short Abstract: This study presents a scalable framework for assessing rural tourism sustainability using secondary data indicators generated through a participatory action research approach. Co-developing indicators with local stakeholders enhances policy relevance, community engagement, and long-term monitoring. The approach offers a replicable model for sustainable tourism development across diverse contexts.

From Concept to Catalyst: Building a Regional DMO from the Ground Up in Rural New Hampshire

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Penelope Whitman*, Discover Sugar River Region, Sullivan County, NH

Short Abstract: Discover Sugar River Region is a new rural DMO built from scratch in Sullivan County, N.H. This session explores organizational development, creative funding, stakeholder engagement, and early momentum, offering real-world insights and a replicable model for place-based tourism development in low-resource settings.

NET Agritourism Working Group Roundtable

Presentation type: Workshop

Author(s):

Lindsey Pashow*, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Ithaca, NY

Dr. Lisa Chase*, University of Vermont Extension, Brattleboro, VT

Short Abstract: What is working well with your agritourism programming – and what are your major challenges? Join colleagues from the NET Agritourism Working Group for a roundtable discussion about supporting agritourism operations. During the session, we'll facilitate an interactive discussion on educational outreach, supporting agritourism stakeholders, and more. Come ready to share!

Outdoor Recreation Knowledge Exchange: Bridging Extension and Industry to Support Outdoor Recreation Economies

Presentation type: Roundtable

Author(s):

Hailey Sorg*, University of Wyoming Extension, Casper, Wyoming

Guinevere Nelson*, Colorado State University Extension, Castle Rock, CO

Short Abstract: The Outdoor Recreation Knowledge Exchange webinar series connects Extension professionals and industry leaders to address outdoor recreation's economic and environmental challenges. This session highlights the series' successes, Extension's evolving roles, and strategies for collaboration. Attendees will gain insights on fostering industry engagement, and supporting sustainable outdoor recreation economies.

Internships in the Tourism Space: A Roundtable Discussion About Industry Needs, Academic Preparedness, and Program Design

Presentation type: Roundtable

Author(s):

Sean McLaughlin*, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Short Abstract: This discussion is aimed at exploring the needs of regional Tourism providers and how these needs may be met through UNH's Recreation Management and Policy internship program. Details around internship requirements and opportunities will be discussed. A model internship program will be presented.

Breakout Session 2

Outdoor Recreation, Quality of Life, and Life Satisfaction: Findings from the 2024 North Central Region Household Survey

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Xinyi Qian*, University of Minnesota Tourism Center, St. Paul, MN

Dr. Zuzana Bednarik, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, West Lafayette, IN

Short Abstract: This project examines outdoor recreation, quality of life, and life satisfaction among population segments in the North Central Region. Data came from the 2024 North Central Region household survey. Planned work includes a series of structural equation models and a dashboard of state-level and regional findings.

New Hampshire's Workforce Toolkit for the Outdoor Lifestyle

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Tyler Ray*, Backyard Concept, Conway, NH

Janel Lawton*, NH Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry Development, Concord, NH

Ericka Canales, Backyard Concept, Conway, NH

Samantha Trombley, Backyard Concept Conway, NH

Short Abstract: New Hampshire's Workforce Toolkit for the Outdoor Lifestyle is designed to help businesses leverage the state's abundant outdoor recreation assets for workforce recruitment. By integrating these elements into an employee value proposition, companies can attract skilled workers that value outdoor recreation to help alleviate the Granite State's workforce shortage.

The Short- and Long-Term Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism and Hospitality Industry Workers

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Sunwoo Park*, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Dr. Lauren Duffy*, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Short Abstract: This study examines COVID-19's short- and long-term economic impact on tourism workers in South Korea. Using longitudinal panel data, we find that compared to the public sector, tourism workers experienced a 14% income loss and a 6% decline in hours worked. Gender-disaggregated analysis shows that women experienced greater relative losses.

Flocking to the Farm: Hatching Agritourism Opportunities for Veteran Farmers Through Incubation

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Kara Rutter*, Clemson University, Clemson, SC

Short Abstract: The Agritourism Incubator Program supports veteran-led farms in developing agritourism enterprises through networking, training, business planning, and branding. By integrating entrepreneurial and veteran pedagogical frameworks, the program fosters farm sustainability, economic resilience, and rural tourism development. This pilot in South Carolina serves as a model for future agritourism incubators nationwide.

Beyond the Barn Doors: Cultivating Creativity in Agritourism

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Ann Morgan Hawthorne*, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Dr. Carla Barbieri, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Dr. Whitney Knollenberg, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Short Abstract: The Creative Agritourism Rubric (CAR), composed of four dimensions, is being developed upon the Creative Placemaking and Creative Tourism frameworks. Agritourism providers and tourism and agricultural support agencies can use CAR to assess agritourism's levels of creativity, specifically sense of localness, authenticity, and co-creation, to maximize their distinctiveness and appeal.

Cultivating Collaborations: The impact of the Ag+Art Tour on Rural Communities in South Carolina

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Summer Chandler*, Clemson University, Clemson, SC

Dr. Lauren Duffy*, Penn State University, State College, PA

Will Culler, Clemson University, Clemson, SC

Short Abstract: Utilizing the Community Capitals Framework, this qualitative case study examines the impact of the South Carolina Ag+Art Tour, a collaborative extension program that brings together agritourism providers with local artists to create a unique experience for event participants. Findings suggest benefits include increases across the community capitals.

Resilient Destinations: Leveraging Our NETWORK

Presentation type: Roundtable

Author(s):

Ann Savage*, NC State University, Raleigh, NC

Dr. Natalie Chin, Wisconsin Sea Grant, Superior, WI

Short Abstract: Disasters on all scales are becoming a when, not if, for our communities, but how best to prepare can be overwhelming for destination leaders. Through a facilitated discussion, this session will allow participants to learn from one another, develop potential action items, and discuss ideas for supporting one another.

Research Study: Gathering Key Stakeholder Perspectives on Adaptation Strategies for Building Resilience

Presentation type: Roundtable

Author(s):

Dr. Austin Holland*, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, WI

Dr. Natalie Chin*, Wisconsin Sea Grant, Superior, WI

Short Abstract: Tourism and outdoor recreation communities in the United States are facing various challenges. Extension plays a key role in supporting these communities to adapt to these diverse challenges. This roundtable discussion aims to gather key stakeholder insights on best practices for developing adaptation strategies for tourism and outdoor recreation communities.

Calibrating the Compass: Extension's Role in Developing Utah's Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Jake Powell*, Utah State University, Logan, Utah

Dr. Jordan Smith, Utah State University, Logan, Utah

Short Abstract: Utah's first outdoor recreation strategic plan was developed by Utah State University Extension's Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism. This presentation details how Extension used this unique opportunity to apply its resources, skills, and connections to develop a data and stakeholder driven approach that guides Utah's outdoor recreation's future

Rural Tourism Growth in the New River Gorge Region: Challenges, Opportunities and Lessons Learned for Destination Management in Small Communities

Presentation type: Roundtable

Author(s):

Lauren Weatherford*, West Virginia University, Fayetteville, WV

Dr. Doug Arbogast*, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV

Daniel Eades*, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV

Ami Cook, West Virginia University Morgantown, WV

Short Abstract: The increase of tourism visitation to the West Virginia’s New River Gorge region as the country’s newest national park has significant impacts for the surrounding community. This presentation will discuss West Virginia University Extension's destination management research outcomes for rural environments with the experiences of local community stakeholders.

General Session: Keynote Panel

From Global to Local: The Impacts of Geopolitics and Current Affairs on Travel and Tourism

“Uncertainty” has been a common word in 2025 when discussing trade, foreign relations, and the US economy. How have travel and tourism been impacted, and what is the outlook for 2026? In this keynote panel, we’ll hear a variety of research-based perspectives on how destinations and attractions can utilize data to develop proactive strategies to thrive through uncertainty.

Panelists:

- Sindy Diab, Vice President for Custom Research, MMGY Travel Intelligence
- Scott Johnson, Co-Founder, XBorder Canada; CEO, Travel Market Insights Inc.
- Jason Meredith, Director of Research and Insights, New York City Tourism + Conventions
- Dr. Yang Yang, Professor and Department Chair, School of Sport, Tourism, and Hospitality Management, Temple University; Executive Director of the U.S.-Asia Center for Tourism and Hospitality Research
- Dr. Xinyi Qian, Tourism Center Director and State Specialist, University of Minnesota
(moderator)

Breakout Session 3

Beyond Price: Competing on Perceived Value in the Traveler’s Mind

Presentation type: Roundtable

Author(s):

*Sindy Diab**, MMGY

Description: In a post-pandemic world of rising travel costs and shifting traveler priorities, the perception of value for money has become more critical than ever in destination decision-making. Today’s travelers are more intentional, expecting higher returns—emotionally, experientially, and financially—on their travel investments. As a result, destinations are increasingly challenged to deliver compelling, differentiated value to remain competitive. This session will draw from MMGY’s ongoing monthly Performance Monitor (approx. 60,000 respondents per year) data to explore how travelers define and rate "value" across U.S. destinations—and how those perceptions influence overall satisfaction, likelihood to recommend, and future visitation. Using a robust segmentation framework, we’ll analyze value-related destination ratings by traveler type (e.g., resident vs. non-resident, first-time vs. repeat visitor, business vs. leisure, high-income vs. lower-income, and by vacation type). We’ll also examine the interplay between perceived value and other key experience drivers such as the variety of attractions, friendliness of locals, and quality of service. Attendees will walk away with data-backed insights into:

- How different traveler segments define and evaluate “value”
- What factors most strongly correlate with positive value perceptions
- Strategies destinations can adopt to enhance perceived value and justify travel investment

Sustainable Tourism Indicators Using Secondary Data: A Ten-Year Analysis of U.S. Recreation-Dependent Counties

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Luyi Han, Penn State University, State College, PA

Dr. Stephan Goetz, Penn State University, State College, PA

Daniel Eades*, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV

Dr. Doug Arbogast*, West Virginia University Morgantown, WV

Short Abstract: This study introduces an innovative approach to measuring tourism sustainability using readily available secondary data sources to analyze changes in seven key indicators across economic, social, and environmental dimensions between 2009 and 2019 in U.S. counties classified as recreation-dependent by the USDA Economic Research Service.

The Rural Tourism Assessment: Catalyzing Rural Tourism Through Insight and Community Collaboration

Presentation type: Presentation

Author(s):

Garrett Ziegler*, Michigan State University Extension, Grand Rapids, MI

Andy Northrop*, Michigan State University Extension, Port Huron, MI

Short Abstract: Michigan State University Extension’s Rural Tourism Assessment (RTA) empowers rural communities to unlock tourism potential through stakeholder engagement and first-time visitor feedback. This presentation highlights Roscommon County’s success using the RTA to enhance collaboration, outdoor recreation development, strategic planning, and economic outcomes—offering a replicable framework for rural tourism advancement.

A New Opportunity for Rural Tourism Leaders

Presentation type: Presentation

Author(s):

Abigail Kidder*, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Ann Savage*, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Dr. Douglas Arbogast*, West Virginia University Extension, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV

Mercedes Fraser, Blueprint Kentucky, Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, University of Kentucky Lexington, KY

Dr. Whitney Knollenberg, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Short Abstract: The Rural Tourism Institute’s program empowers leaders through education, skill-building, and networking to enable and practice sustainable destination management. The program, developed through multi-state collaboration and with the help of partner counties, covers topics like stewardship, marketing, and leadership and integrates local stakeholders to foster long-term tourism success.

Narratives of Work and Worth: Youth Career Planning, Cultural Messages, and the Tourism Economy in New Hampshire

Presentation type: Workshop

Author(s):

Dr. Jayson Seaman*, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Dr. Cindy Hartman*, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Elliot Ng*, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Short Abstract: This session explores how cultural narratives and material conditions shape rural youth career decisions, especially in tourism and recreation sectors. Presenting new research and engaging participants in collaborative reflection, we examine how migration, industry, and policy narratives affect workforce retention—and how alternative narratives might support different long-term employment pathways.

Empowering Agritourism Service Providers to Strengthen Agritourism Programs as a Farm Diversification Strategy

Presentation type: Roundtable

Author(s):

Dr. Doolarie Singh-Knights*, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV

Chadley Hollas*, Cultivating Tourism, Athens, Georgia

Lindsey Pashow*, Cornell University Extension, Plattsburgh, NY

Short Abstract: This session introduces a project creating a “National Holistic Agritourism Training Toolbox” and an Agritourism Community of Practice to empower agritourism service providers. The project addresses the urgent need for accessible resources and seeks attendee feedback and collaboration to enhance regional training effectiveness and on a new national agritourism curriculum.

Astrotourism Meets Agrotourism: A Roundtable Discussion to Integrate and Align Communities of Practice on Dark Sky Opportunities for Rural Destinations

Presentation type: Roundtable

Author(s):

Dr. Erin Carter*, University of Maine, Orono, ME

Dr. Jason Entsminger*, University of Maine, Orono, ME

Short Abstract: Explore how the awe of night skies and celestial bodies might build high-value tourism activities for agricultural enterprises. This interactive roundtable invites researchers, practitioners, and entrepreneurs to share insights, identify collaborators, and shape a community of practice integrating astrotourism and agrotourism as a tool for rural diversification and sustainable development.

Poster Session

Note: Poster Pop-Up participants will be announced separately.

The Brown & Gold Standard: Welcome to Excellence

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Hailey Sorg*, University of Wyoming Extension, Casper, WY

Joddee Jacobsen*, University of Wyoming Extension, Casper, WY

Short Abstract: The Brown & Gold Standard: Welcome to Excellence training program redefines hospitality by exceeding expectations through care, creativity, and kindness. By fostering meaningful connections and transformative experiences, it goes beyond traditional service, ensuring customer and client loyalty through a unique and memorable approach to hospitality.

Play, Place, and Purpose: Unpacking Agritourist Behavior Through Leisure and Place Attachment

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Kara Rutter*, Clemson University, Clemson, SC

Short Abstract: Agritourism operators often struggle with generic programming due to limited insight into visitor motivations. The Agritourist Motivation Typology (AMT) categorizes visitors based on place attachment and leisure engagement, offering a framework to design targeted experiences. This research advances agritourism marketing strategies while bridging theoretical insights with practical applications.

Assessment of the U.S. Agritourism Support Ecosystem: Exploring Results from a 2024 National Survey of Producers

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Dr. Claudia Schmidt*, Penn State, Penn State, University Park, PA

Dr. Jason Entsminger, Maine Business School and UMaine Cooperative Extension, Orono, ME

Short Abstract: Agritourism offers untapped potential for rural development. We present results from the 2024 National Agritourism Producer Survey, which identifies key barriers, including financial, infrastructural, and regulatory challenges. Recommendations include increasing financial support, improving regulations, fostering collaboration, and advocating policy reforms to strengthen agritourism networks to drive sustainable rural economic development.

Barn Raising: Elevating the Role of Historic Barns in Rural Tourism

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Dr. Jada Lindblom*, University of New Hampshire Extension, Durham, NH

Rebecca Levy*, Newport, NH

John Porter, University of New Hampshire Extension, Boscawen, NH

Beverly Thomas, New Hampshire Preservation Alliance Concord, NH

Short Abstract: This presentation covers the collaborative development process and recent launch of the NH Barn Trail, a tourist map and guide that aims to enhance public knowledge of the state's agricultural heritage, foster appreciation for historic preservation and adaptive reuse, and serve as a tool for rural economic and business development.

Curriculum to Build Entrepreneur Friendly Outdoor Recreation Communities in the Outdoor Recreation Sector

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Gwynn Stewart, Ohio State University Extension, Caldwell, Ohio

Nancy Bowen-Ellzey, Ohio State University Extension, Van Wert, OH

Myra Moss, Ohio State University Extension, Zanesville, OH

Kyle White, Ohio State University Extension Medina, OH

Dr. Ami Choi*, University of Minnesota Tourism Center, Minneapolis, MN

Neil Linscheid, University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality,

Minneapolis, MN

Short Abstract: The poster outlines a community entrepreneurship curriculum in the Outdoor Recreation sector. Focused on gateway and rural communities, it addresses the potential to thrive in this expanding industry. Funded by a North Central Regional Center for Rural Development grant, the curriculum prepares communities to explore the economic benefits and respond.

College Sports and Mental Health: Exploring the Relationship Between Mental Health and Academic Performance Among College Athletes

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Kudzayi Maumbe*, Penn State University, McKeesport, PA

Gideon Jones, PennState, McKeesport, PA

Short Abstract: This study sought to explore the extent of mental health issues among college athletes focusing on how it impacts athletes' academic performance. Results showed mixed results, overall low levels of depression, but much higher levels of both stress and anxiety. Stress levels tended to increase, while anxiety decreased with GPA.

The Impact of Servicescape on Agritourism Participation: The Mediating Role of Perceived Value and the Moderating Role of Parental Status and Environmental Consciousness

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Dr. Angie Im*, University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Dr. Kyle Woosnam, University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Vanessa Shonkwiler, University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Short Abstract: This study underscores the impact of the physical environment, social environment, and core attributes of agritourism on visitors' revisit intention. Perceived value mediates this relationship, with stronger effects among families. Family-friendly designs, green practices, and distinctive features of agritourism may encourage repeat visits, especially among environmentally conscious visitors.

Building Resilience in Wisconsin Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Industry

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Dr. Austin Holland*, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, WI

Dr. Natalie Chin*, Wisconsin Sea Grant, Superior, WI

Short Abstract: Wisconsin's tourism and outdoor recreation industry is facing various socio-economic and environmental challenges. Our extension work has been focused on better understanding how large-scale changes are impacting Wisconsin communities that are dependent on tourism and outdoor recreation to provide meaningful adaptation strategies.

What We Learned from the Hmong International Freedom Festival: A 2023-2024 Comparison

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Dr. Ami Choi*, University of Minnesota Tourism Center, St. Paul, MN

Brigid Tuck, University of Minnesota Extension, St. Paul, MN

Dr. Xinyi Qian, University of Minnesota Tourism Center, St. Paul, MN

Short Abstract: UMN Extension surveyed attendees and vendors at the 2023 and 2024 Hmong International Freedom Festival to assess/compare visitor experiences and economic impact. In 2024, first-time visitors and satisfaction increased. A modest 11% economic impact rise likely reflects shorter stays or spending shifts, highlighting the festival's cultural and economic value.

Cultivating Wellness: Tapping into Wellness Tourists as a Growing Market for Agritourism

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Dr. Claudia Gil Arroyo*, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Cape May Court House, New Jersey

Short Abstract: Mental health challenges have driven a surge in wellness tourism, now a \$1 trillion industry. Travelers seek rejuvenating, authentic experiences that support holistic wellbeing. Agritourism offers stress relief, healthy activities, and emotional benefits, aligning with wellness tourists' needs. Targeted marketing could position agritourism as a key wellness tourism destination.

A Proposed Research and Engagement Framework for Centering Tourism Development Decisions on Tourism Workforce Members

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Dr. Whitney Knollenberg*, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Short Abstract: Many tourism-dependent communities are inhospitable to the individuals who provide hospitality to visitors. This presentation offers a framework to guide tourism decision-makers in improving outcomes for the tourism workforce members who are vital to the sustainability of both the tourism industry and the communities it supports.

Exploring the Convergence Dynamics in the Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI)

Presentation type: Poster

Author(s):

Yecheng Cao, UMass Amherst, Amherst, MA

Short Abstract: We test σ - and β -convergence of the Travel & Tourism Development Index (2019–2024). Results show modest but significant catch-up: lower-income economies narrowed gaps with high-income peers, especially in ICT readiness, transport services, and labor-market resilience. Findings extend convergence theory to tourism readiness and refine tourism-led growth hypothesis.

Thursday, October 9th

Morning General Session

Group Travel Insights: What Can We All Learn from Current and Future Trends?

New England is host to numerous companies that have been longtime leaders in the group and educational travel space, each with a unique pulse on the emerging interests of different traveler demographic segments. Through examining both “tried and true” offerings and the creative ways they have had to adapt and reinvent, this panel will reflect upon recent travel and tourism trends and illuminate clues about future traveler interests and priorities.

Panelists:

- Steve August, Vice President of Marketing, Road Scholar
- Mike Oster, Director of Hiring and Programs, Putney Student Travel/ Smithsonian Student Travel/National Geographic Student Travel
- James Wrigley, Director of Sales and Occupancy, Appalachian Mountain Club
- Shay Bellas, CEO and Founder, NaviTour (*moderator*)

Breakout Session 4

Walking the Walk While Talking the Talk: The Effectiveness of Walking Workshops as a Community Development Assessment Tool

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Whitney Knollenberg*, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Ann Savage, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Ann Morgan Hawthorne, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Short Abstract: Learn how Cooperative Extension professionals can utilize Walking Workshops as a community development assessment tool. An example from NC State University’s partnership with a local commerce district illustrates the application of

Walking Workshops with university students and provides best practices for gathering rich data that can inform community development efforts.

WY Walks

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Hailey Sorg*, University of Wyoming Extension, Casper, WY

Joddee Jacobsen*, University of Wyoming Extension, Casper, WY

Sara Olsen*, University of Wyoming Extension, Gillette, WY

Short Abstract: WY Walks combines health, education, and community engagement through guided walking experiences led by expert volunteers. The program enhances well-being, fosters local tourism, and strengthens community connections. This presentation explores implementation strategies, volunteer engagement, and best practices for replicating similar initiatives, emphasizing their impact on health outcomes and economic growth.

Exchange Tourists: Enhancing Destination (Self-)Awareness through the Tourism First Impressions Program

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Jada Lindblom*, University of New Hampshire Extension, Durham, NH

Dr. Doug Arbogast*, West Virginia University Extension, Morgantown, WV

Dr. Charlie French*, University of New Hampshire Extension, Durham, NH

Rebecca Levy*, Newport, NH

Dr. Lisa Chase*, University of Vermont Extension, Burlington, VT

Short Abstract: Experience-based feedback from outsiders can help improve visitor experiences and enhance destination development efforts. This presentation focuses on the continued development and adaptation of “Tourism First Impressions,” a structured evaluation program that combines elements of secret shopping and familiarization trips to provide visitor perceptions data to destinations and tourism stakeholders.

Growing the Agritourism Industry in New York State Through a Multifaceted Approach

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Lindsey Pashow*, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Harvest NY, Ithaca, NY

Jarmila Haseler*, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Monroe, Rochester, NY

Molly McManus, Cornell Cooperative Extension - Broome County, Binghamton, NY
Laura Biasillo, Cornell Cooperative Extension Broome County Binghamton, NY

Short Abstract: Join us to learn about the resources, support, and technical assistance being provided to agritourism operations in New York State. This includes a monthly webinar series and fact sheets, in-person networking, agritourism operation tours, and statewide website. Learn how relationships were created with statewide tourism entities and other government agencies.

Visitors are Welcomed: Number of Visits and Profitability by Types of Direct Sales within Agritourism Operations in the U.S.

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Prem Bhandari*, University of Maryland Eastern Shore Extension, Princess Anne, Maryland

Dr. Erinn Tucker-Oluwole, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Princess Anne, Maryland

Dr. Lila Karki, University of Maryland Eastern Shore Extension, Princess Anne, Maryland

Dr. Kingsley Ejiogu, University of Maryland Eastern Shore Princess Anne, Maryland

Dr. Enrique N. Escobar, University of Maryland Eastern Shore Extension, Princess Anne, Maryland

Dr. Moses Kairo, University of Maryland Eastern Shore Extension, Princess Anne Maryland

Short Abstract: Data from a U.S. national survey of operators showed that direct sales through U-picks and farm stand/farm stores attracted significantly more visitors for agritourism operators, which yielded higher profitability. In contrast, operators reported farmers' markets attracted significantly fewer visits to the operation resulting in reduced profitability. Implications are discussed.

Agritourism in Transition: Exploring Change and Growth Across Montana's Rural Landscape

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Elena Bigart*, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana

Dr. Melissa Weddell, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana

Glenna Hartman, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana

Short Abstract: Over the past two decades, agritourism in Montana has transitioned from an informal activity to a recognized sector, mirroring global trends in local food systems

and rural lifestyles. Despite challenges, agritourism's economic and cultural influence continues to expand, with regional variations fostering unique niches across the state.

When Climate Meets Crowds: Outdoor Recreation Land Manager and Provider Responses to Climate and Social Change in Parks and Protected Areas

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Madeleine Smith*, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Dr. Michael Ferguson*, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Dr. Lauren Ferguson, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Dr. Shannon Rogers, University of New Hampshire Durham, NH

Dr. Dovev Levine, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Dr. Elizabeth Burakowski, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Dr. Alexandra Contosta, University of New Hampshire, Durham NH

Dr. Darrick Evensen, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland

Mark Gorman, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

Short Abstract: This study explores how climate change and increased visitation impact outdoor recreation providers preference for management strategies in New Hampshire. Using survey data and structural equation modeling, it reveals distinct management preferences for each stressor. Findings directly informed the 2024–2028 New Hampshire SCORP, supporting adaptive outdoor recreation planning statewide.

Exploring Water-Based Recreation Constraints Among Black/African American Minnesotans

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Ami Choi*, University of Minnesota Tourism Center, University of Minnesota Tourism Center, St. Paul, MN

Dr. Ingrid Schneider, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN

Zoe Barany, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN

Reier Erickson, University of Minnesota St. Paul, MN

Short Abstract: This study explores constraints perceived by African Americans in Minnesota in accessing water-based recreation on Lake Superior's North Shore. Interviews revealed multi-level constraints, highlighting the importance of family support, cultural connections to water, and recommended inclusive programs/practices to reflect Minnesota's evolving demographics.

New Hampshire's WILDLY RESPONSIBLE Safety & Sustainability Program

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Janel Lawton*, State of New Hampshire, Department of Business and Economic Affairs, Concord, NH

Michelle Cruz*, State of New Hampshire, Department of Business and Economic Affairs, Concord, NH

Short Abstract: The Wildly Responsible initiative promotes safe, inclusive, and sustainable outdoor recreation across New Hampshire. Through memorable messaging and seasonal outreach, the program empowers residents and visitors to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. This presentation explores its core principles, stakeholder collaboration, and opportunities to scale education and engagement statewide.

Mobile Workshops

Celebrating Rural Life: Agritourism and Heritage Tourism in New Hampshire

Approximate schedule: 11:30 am - 5:00 pm

Join historic barn and dairy farming expert John Porter and New Hampshire agritourism specialist Gail McWilliam Jellie on a tour of New Hampshire agriculture, past and present. The tour will first stop at Moulton Farm in Meredith, where participants will hear from owner and farmer John Moulton about how his business has adapted to serve visitors and locals over the years. Enjoy a whoopie pie from the on-site bakery or explore the corn maze. Next, the group will head to the historic village of Tamworth to visit the Remick County Doctor Museum and Farm to learn about historic preservation and the museum's emphasis on rural life. Lastly, participants can take a moment to wander the village to see other notable attractions such as Tamworth Distilling & Mercantile and the Barnstormer Theater.

Everything Worthwhile is Uphill: Evolving Landscapes of Outdoor Recreation (with Optional Mountain Biking)

Approximate schedule: 11:30 am - 6:00 pm

Participants will pile into Highland Mountain Bike Park's vans for an active afternoon in the communities of Northfield and Franklin. First, the group will fuel up with a pizza lunch at Highland Mountain Bike Park's lodge while learning about recreational visitor trends and business development from owner/founder Mark Hayes. Then, participants can choose to

do a "Find Your Ride" group intro lesson to downhill mountain biking, pick up a rental bike to explore the mountain and trails independently, or take it easy by exploring the park's grounds (such as the new summer camp facilities) or enjoying conversation at the pub. Next, the group will travel by van to Franklin, NH, to learn about Mill City Park's expanding downtown whitewater park development and how the organization aims to put Franklin on the map for kayaking, rafting, and more.

Ripe for Visitors: Creating Vibrant Downtowns and a Sense of Place

Approximate schedule: 11:45 am - 4:15 pm

The last few decades have brought a variety of changes to Meredith's historic lakeside village - including wine! This walking tour will meet with local organizational leaders and business owners to hear about how history, culture, and nature converge to create an immersive visitor environment. The group(s) will begin with lunch and a tour of Hermit Woods Winery's facilities with co-owner/founder Bob Manley. Participants will hear how personal interests in winemaking evolved into a year-round destination for local wine and music. After sampling some unique NH blends, the group will continue through Main Street to learn about Meredith's initiatives to highlight art and history. The wheelchair-accessible Laverack Nature Trail and lakeside Meredith Sculpture Walk provide examples of how towns can integrate natural and cultural visitor experiences.

Note: This tour is mobility device/scooter friendly and can be modified to meet the needs of participants. If any attendees need mobility accommodations, please contact the conference organizers.

Paddling Together: Lakes, Tourism, and Balancing Uses

Approximate schedule: 11:45 am - 4:30 pm

Visit another famous lake in New Hampshire's Lakes Region, Squam Lake, known for its conservation initiatives and for being the filming location of the 1981 film "On Golden Pond." The group will meet with staff from Squam Lakes Association to hear about how they create opportunities for visitor use and enjoyment while also helping protect the lake's special environment. Then, everyone will buddy up for a canoe outing to observe the lake's aquatic and recreational assets first-hand. This mobile workshop will be led by Amanda McQuaid, UNH Extension State Specialist and Professor of Water Quality and Ecotoxicology/Director of Lakes Lay Monitoring Program, and Shannon Rogers, UNH Extension State Specialist for Nature-Based Economic Development and Professor of Natural Resources & the Environment.

Friday, October 10th

Morning General Session

Making Happy Visitors: Insights from Resorts and Attractions

In this session, we'll use New Hampshire as a case study for analyzing visitation trends, managing seasonality, and fostering positive word of mouth and repeat visitation. We'll also pay special attention to the roles of collaboration and collective action in building tourism and hospitality industry resilience.

Panelists:

- Barbara Beckwith, General Manager, Mill Falls Resort Collection at the Lake
- Jessyca Keeler, President, Ski New Hampshire
- Charyl Reardon, President, White Mountains Attractions Association
- Dave Gerdes, Vice President Sales Marketing, The Happy Valley (PA) Adventure Bureau (*moderator*)

Breakout Session 5

Information Strategies to Support US Agritourism: Insights from a Nationwide Consumer Survey

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Dr. Claudia Schmidt*, Penn State University, University Park, PA

Dr. Carola Grebitus, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

Short Abstract: Our survey of 1,600 U.S. consumers provides insights for stakeholders in the agritourism sector to capitalize on the industry's growth potential. We found that visitors prioritize local products, unique experiences, and opportunities for relaxation, but they face barriers such as a lack of information, high costs, and accessibility issues.

Agritourism Operators' Perspectives on Major Challenges and Necessary Supports

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Claire Whitehouse*, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

Kacey LaBonte, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

Americo Vega-Labiosa, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Washington, DC

Annelise Straw, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Washington, DC
Dr. Lisa Chase, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

Short Abstract: What major challenges do agritourism operators face? What types of support do agritourism operators need, and how can NETtra attendees address those needs? This presentation answers those questions using findings from mixed methods research including interviews of diverse agritourism operations across the U.S. and two national surveys of agritourism operators.

Hosting a Statewide Agritourism Conference to Advance Agritourism Development

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Rachael Callahan*, University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources, Davis, CA
Dr. Doolarie Singh-Knights, West Virginia University Davis College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Morgantown, West Virginia

Short Abstract: Many stakeholders are critical to the success of agritourism. Convening stakeholders to learn from each other, understand roles, and identify common goals is critical for inspiring increased engagement and developing a shared vision for agritourism. Explore lessons and key takeaways from recent statewide agritourism conferences in California and West Virginia.

A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Medical Tourists' Preferences: A Case of Türkiye

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Jiahui Wang*, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA
Safak Cinar, Health Sciences University, Ankara, Ankara
Derya Sivuk, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Ankara, Ankara
Dr. Muzaffer Uysal, University of Massachusetts Amherst Amherst, MA

Short Abstract: This study examines the preferences of medical tourists in Türkiye across four cultural groups: the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Based on 357 survey responses collected from medical centers in Istanbul and Ankara, the findings are summarized in profiles for medical tourists.

Mindfulness in Travel Experiences: A Mixed-Methods Study Integrating Netnography and Survey Analysis

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Yifeng Liang*, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, MA

Dr. Muzzo Uysal, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, MA

Dr. Irem Onder, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, MA

Short Abstract: This mixed-methods study explores how travelers cultivate mindfulness by reducing digital engagement. Using netnography and a survey (N=412), it identifies key constructs of mindful travel and tests a conceptual model. Findings reveal mindfulness enhances emotional engagement, memory, and wellbeing, which offers insights into present-centered travel experiences in a hyperconnected world.

Forever Departing: Alienation and the Unfinished Journey of the Digital Nomad

Presentation type: Oral Presentation

Author(s):

Linlin Zhang, Arizona State University, Phoenix, Arizona

Dr. Deepak Chhabra, Arizona State University, Phoenix, Arizona

Short Abstract: This study interprets the drive of digital nomads' long-term travel through Lacanian alienation, offering a different perspective besides MacCannell's and existentialists' alienation models used in tourism studies.

Building a Strategic Roadmap for Outdoor Recreation: Perspectives from a Land-Grant University on Multi-stakeholder and Cross-sectoral Engagement

Presentation type: Roundtable

Author(s):

Dr. Jason Entsminger*, University of Maine, Orono, ME

Dr. Jens Kaus*, University of Maine, Orono, ME

Mikayla Reynolds*, University of Maine, Orono, ME

Short Abstract: This session explores outdoor recreation strategic planning process from the perspective of Land-Grant university partners, building off experiences in Maine. It shares lessons from a multi-stakeholder initiative and invites participants into dialogue on best practices, implementation, and the evolving role of higher education in cross-sector recreation and tourism development.

Extension's Role in the Outdoor Recreation Economy: A Collaborative Exploration of Opportunities for National Engagement.

Presentation type: Roundtable

Author(s):

Jake Powell*, Utah State University, Logan, UT
Dr. Doug Arbogast, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
Hailey Sorg, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming
Alec Dompka, University of California Davis Crescent City, CA
Aaron Wilcher, University of California Davis, Bishop, CA
Guinevere Nelson, Colorado State University, Castle Rock, CA
Gwynn Stewart Ohio State University, Nobel, OH

Short Abstract: Outdoor recreation significantly impacts U.S. landscapes, economies, and communities, contributing billions annually. Despite its importance, Extension lacks a strategic vision for this sector. This workshop will provide participants with an interactive, facilitated venue to collaboratively identify opportunities for Extension to more fully engage this emerging sector.

Closing Session

Effective Collaborations for Stronger Destinations

In this wrap-up session, we'll aim to synthesize the knowledge we've shared across organizations and backgrounds during this conference to consider the question, "what's next?" Hearing from attendees whose own work has bridged Extension, academia, and/or industry, we'll together highlight strategies for creating lasting and impactful partnerships that benefit destinations and their communities.

Panelists:

- Stephen Alessi, Associate Director, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development
- Whitney Knollenberg, Associate Professor, North Carolina State University
- Penelope Whitman, Executive Director, Discover Sugar River Region
- Tina Valdecanas, Principal and Co-Founder, Clarity of Place (*moderator*)