

# State of Sustainable Tourism in Minnesota: 2007

Ingrid E. Schneider, Ph.D.

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## Introduction & Purpose

Tourism is a significant industry in the world, U.S., & Minnesota. A variety of impacts occur as tourism develops: social, economic, environmental. In an effort to maximize positive impacts & mitigate negative impacts, global efforts have moved toward sustainable tourism.

Sustainable tourism ....meets the needs of present tourists & host regions while protecting & enhancing opportunities for the future... (World Tourism Organization). While a plethora of variations on this definition exist, most include 4 key elements & note that sustainable recreation/travel contributes to sustained

- 1) economic benefits at the local level
- 2) environmental & cultural protection
- 3) local community involvement & education
- 4) influence on visitor behavior & education

Sustainable tourism has been of increasing interest in Minnesota and beyond. However, little information on attitudes toward or actual sustainable practice implementation exists. Therefore, this project assessed the 'state of sustainable tourism in Minnesota' to inform program & product development. Specifically,

- 1) identify a baseline of practices,
- 2) identify needs for education & information,
- 3) identify attitudes about sustainable tourism, &
- 4) continue dialogue on sustainable tourism.

## Methods

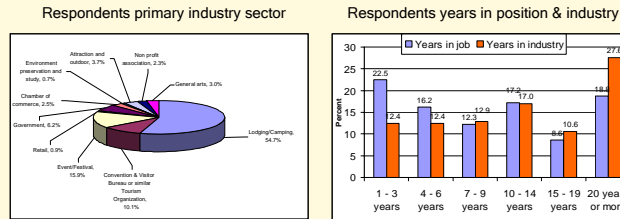
**Sample:** Lodging, CVBs, Festival/Events in Explore Minnesota Tourism's database (n=2547)

**Questionnaire:** perceived pros/cons of sustainable tourism, stage of implementation of sustainable practices, respondent descriptions; via electronic administration (Zoomerang)

**Response rate:** 16% (+/4%)

## Results: Respondents

Respondents represented a range of tourism industry sectors & experience levels, as well as geographic areas in MN.

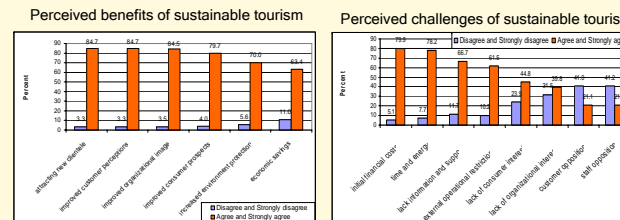


## Organization/business location in Minnesota by Explore Minnesota Tourism regions

North central/West	33.1%	Southern	23.7%
Northeast	25.3%	Metro	17.9%

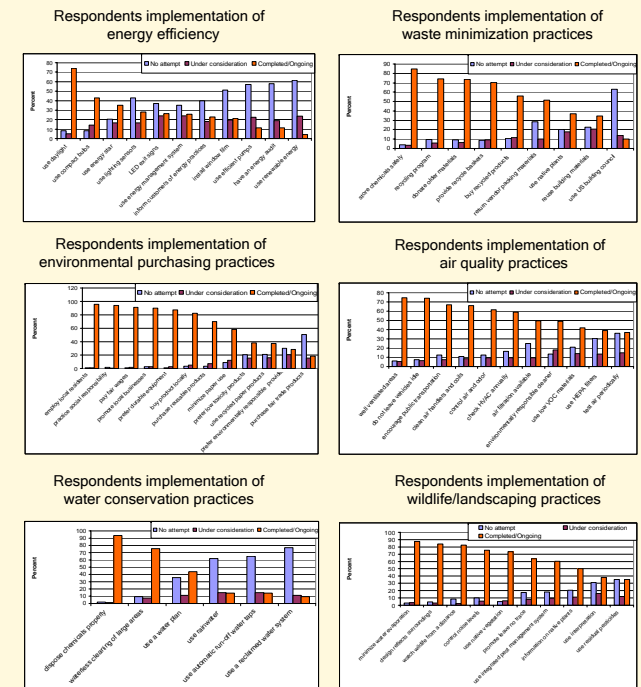
## Results: Challenges & Benefits of Sustainable Tourism

The majority of respondents perceive benefits to implementing sustainable tourism practices. Primary challenges to sustainable tourism practices focus on resources (money, time/energy, information), external & internal complications, & staff/consumer perceptions.



## Results: Sustainable tourism practices

Respondents indicated they participate in a variety of sustainable tourism practices related to waste minimization, environmental purchasing, air quality, & landscaping. However, significant opportunities exist in the areas of energy, water consumption, & consumer education.



## Implications:

Concurrence among respondents exists regarding the benefits of sustainable tourism, but perceived challenges are more varied. Misperceptions on market demand can & should be countered. Educational opportunities in a variety of areas will be addressed through the University & its partner organizations.