

OUR PROJECT: DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM FOR ALGER COUNTY, MICHIGAN



Dr. Scott Jordan (scjordan@nmu.edu)
& David Kronk (dkronk@nmu.edu)
Northern Michigan University

WHAT IS OVERTOURISM?

- **"Overtourism"**- Tourism that has moved beyond the limits of acceptable change in a destination due to quantity of visitors, resulting in degradation of the environment and infrastructure, diminished travel experience, wear and tear on built heritage, and/or negative impacts on residents.



WHAT IS ECOTOURISM?

- Ecotourism is defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that **conserves the environment**, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”.



**The International
Ecotourism
Society**

*Uniting Conservation, Communities
and Sustainable Travel*

PRINCIPLES OF ECOTOURISM

The travel experience should:

1. Support the conservation of natural areas and wildlife
2. Minimize air and water pollution as well as tourist waste
3. Offer safe and enriching or educational visitor experiences
4. Respect the cultural tradition of the host destination
5. Maintain and enhance the landscape so as to avoid physical or environmental degradation
6. Efficiently use scarce or non-renewable resources, and
7. Maximize opportunities for local prosperity for the host destination in the form of long-term economic viability for tourism, local management control, quality employment, local retention of visitor spending, and fair distribution of economic and social benefits.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM?



Sustainable: capable of being maintained at a steady level without damage to existing community, natural resources or economy.

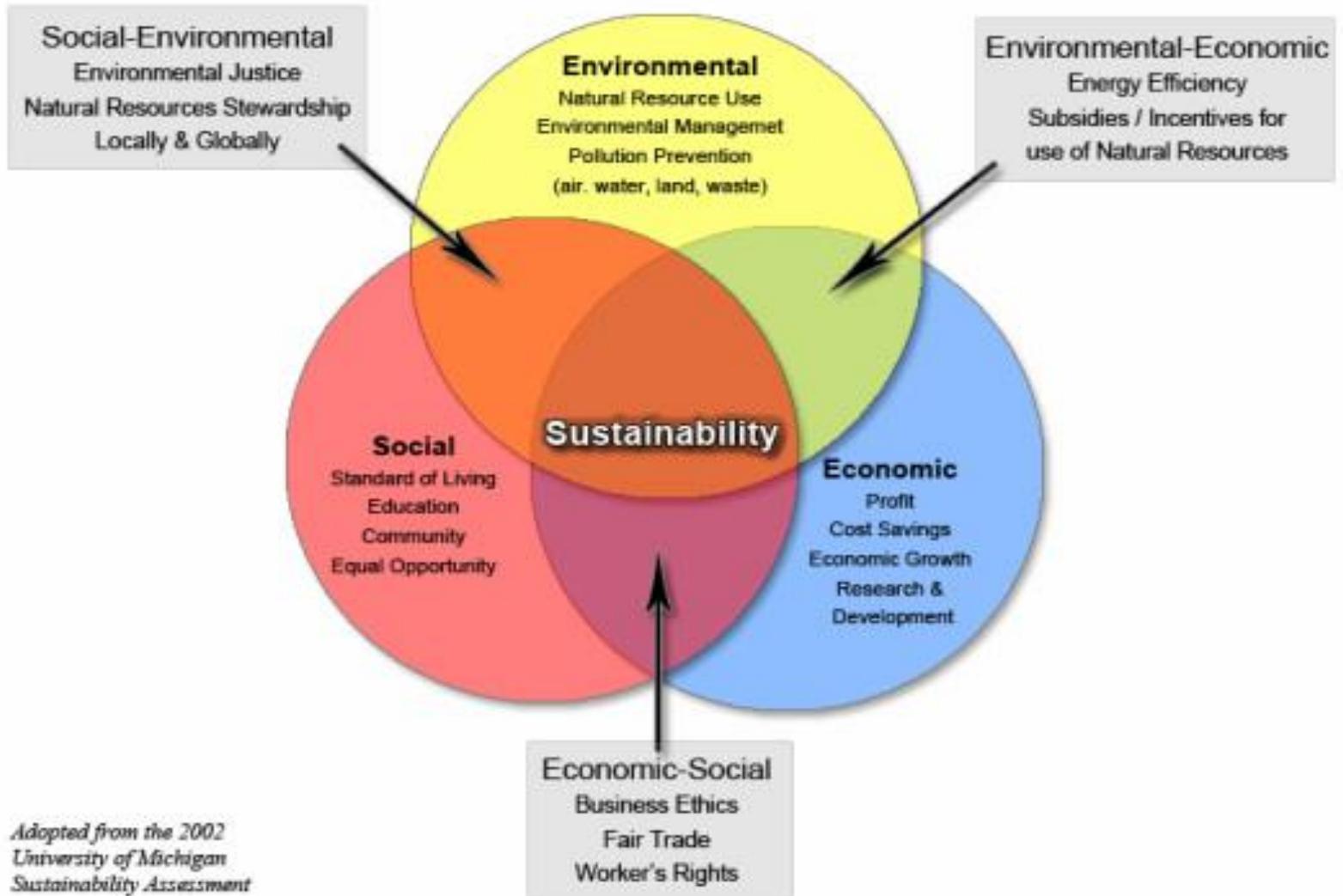
Ecotourism: a "niche market" within nature tourism and occurs when people travelling to see natural wonders or ecosystems *deliberately choose* to patronize certain businesses because of their sustainable business practices!

EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

- Use locally made products, food and workers
- Use sustainable alternative energy
- Conserve energy and water and recycle
- Use green cleaning products
- Pay employees living wages, provide training and benefits
- Provide opportunities for carbon offset of travel to your location
- A business contributes to the protection and well being of your community and natural resources
- Educate tourists and employees about how they can help protect natural and cultural attractions.



S.E.E.



*Adopted from the 2002
University of Michigan
Sustainability Assessment*

TRAVEL TRENDS

From The Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) Trends and Statistics 2018 report:

- **Consumer demand for responsible tourism continues to grow.**

From the Booking.com 2018 report on travel trends:

- **More than two-thirds (68%) of global travelers intend to stay in an eco-accommodation in 2018, reassuringly up from 65% in 2017 and 62% in 2016.**

According to GlobalData's Q4-2016 consumer survey:

- **35% of global travelers are interested to book eco-tourism holidays.**
This rate grows to 57%, when talking about Americans with a household income that exceeds \$150,000. per year.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

From The Booking.com report:

- **being impressed by natural sights during their own travels (60%),**
- **noticing a visible impact of tourism at the destinations they have visited (54%),**
- **seeing the positive effect that sustainable tourism can have on the local people (47%),**
- **and feeling guilty about the impact their vacation has had on the environment (32%).**

RECAP: WHY PURSUE SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM?

- Because people are looking for destinations and businesses that are taking steps to protect the environment, protect the community and its citizens and address global climate change through sustainable practices.

OUR PLAN FOR MUNISING

- To begin holding monthly public meetings to educate the citizens, businesses, governmental officials and entire community about Sustainable Ecotourism.

OUR PLAN FOR MUNISING, cont.

- First we personally met with city and county officials, business leaders, tribal community, and community organizations to explain the goals and objectives of the Sustainable Ecotourism Organization (SEO) for Alger County and answer questions. We also sent letters to all area businesses and organizations.

OUR GOAL for SEO:

To help Alger County protect the social, economic and environmental assets (SEE) in the midst of a tremendous increase in tourism.

OUR OBJECTIVE for SEO:

To achieve the above goal through helping the community learn about and implement sustainable practices.

Presentation at Falling Rock Café in Munising:

Solar Options for Homes and Businesses

(May 14, 2016)



- Interested in learning how installing a solar array on your home or business can save you money? Join us Saturday, May 14th, 3pm, at the Falling Rock Café in Munising for a presentation on the unique benefits of solar energy in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.
- UP residents are paying some of the highest electricity rates in the country, and solar energy offers a practical solution.

Coffee and Conversation at Munising School Library: Sustainable Tourism for Munising

(Tuesday, July 19, 2016 from 5:30 -7pm)



Discussion about what is
“sustainable tourism” and
what is the “sense of place”
we want to preserve in
Munising?

Presentation at Munising Public Library: **Solar Installations for Area Businesses and Homes**

(Sunday October 23, 2016 2-4 pm at the Munising Public Library)



Workshop at Roam Inn, Munising:

Discussing Munising's Tourism Future with an Eye Toward Sustainability and Placemaking

Friday, April 7, 2017



At this educational workshop, participants will learn about placemaking, Michigan tourism trends, and international ecotourism frameworks. Participants will also be engaged in discussions and visioning related to Munising's tourism and placemaking future.

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY | Extension

Sustainable
Ecotourism
Organization
for
Alger County



Comments from April 7 Workshop Regarding: "WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT MUNISING AND WORTH PRESERVING"?

- our way of life
- collaboration between people here
- quality of life
- friendships
- history
- Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
- Hiawatha National Forest
- Human connections to the natural environment
- beaches
- outdoor recreation opportunities
- views of Lake Superior, green forests surrounding the Bay
- night sky and skyline
- public access to beaches and forests
- small town atmosphere
- friendly atmosphere
- heritage
- small town connections
- economy
- no high rises
- solitude and quiet
- snow sports
- personal contacts
- the area culture
- indigenous people stories
- variety of natural sights
- clean – no trash
- people here know the land

Coffee and Conversation at Munising School Library: Recycling, Local Food & Protecting Our Area Resources

(Thursday, April 20, 2017 from 6-8pm)

3 Topics

1. Improving recycling in Munising
2. Increasing local food production
3. Protecting area natural resources from overuse



Curbside pick up recycling now offered in Alger County

MUNISING
NEWS
3/7/18



Ken Ohman (center) explains his recycling pick up proposal to the Alger SEO recycling committee Thursday, March 1, 2018.

by April Lark

North Country Disposal/Septic (NCD), a company out of Marquette, is now offering residential curbside recycling pick up to those in Alger County. Ken Ohman, owner of NCD, spoke to the recycling committee for the Alger County Sustainable Ecotourism Or-

come to Alger County every Monday to pick up recycling, and a bin would be provided to customers at a one-time cost of \$14. There is also a \$7 monthly fee for the service, per household, billed at \$21 every three months.

Ohman said with this rate "I'm not losing money, nor am I gaining

the ACR, and that as of Tuesday, March 13, the ACR will ask for a donation of \$0.25 per grocery bag size container of paper when it is dropped off at the trailer. This is because the ACR has had to pay \$200 per load that is shipped to the processing center in Escanaba.

Previously, the ACR worked with

SEO to create local food brochure with statewide group

MUNICIPAL
NEWS 5/16

by April Lark

At the Alger County Sustainable Ecotourism Organization (SEO) monthly meeting on Thursday, May 10, 2018, the primary focus was on creating a brochure to highlight the local farmers and vendors.

Alex Palzewicz from Taste the Local Difference (TLD) was present to help with planning for the project. TLD puts out a free magazine every year that highlights farmers and vendors across the northern lower peninsula and

Yooper, chef, and is TLD Local Food Coordinator for the U.P., where her main goal is to increase U.P. presence in TLD materials.

Any farm is listed for free in the guide, and on their website. For an additional fee, an organization can be highlighted on the maps included in the guide. Palzewicz said TLD's goal is that "by 2020, all food sales in Michigan will be 20% local."

She said that for Alger County, creating a brochure specific to the area is a

that has had to travel further.

For the brochure itself the group wanted to include: farms, breweries, restaurants, farmers markets, and specialty producers, such as those who roast coffee. Palzewicz suggested that the brochure could be a folding map style, so that people could plan out their own trips.

To fund the brochure Palzewicz proposed getting local businesses to be sponsors, and calling them "local food champions"

Program at Alger County Heritage Center: TOURISM IMPACTS ON ALGER COUNTY NATURAL AREAS

(Monday, August 27th, 2017, 9 am to 1pm)



- **Concerned about impacts of tourism on Alger County's natural areas?**
- **Want to share your ideas and learn proven methods on how to help visitors to our area be more like bigfoot.... And leave no trace?!**
- **Then attend this meeting presented by the leave no trace organization (Int.Org)**

THIS PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED BY THE SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM ORGANIZATION (SEO) FOR ALGER COUNTY. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: dkronk@nmu.edu



- The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the environment by teaching people to enjoy it responsibly. We accomplish this mission through education, research, partnerships and volunteerism. The Leave No Trace Center has delivered successful educational programs in the United States and internationally since 1994.

FUTURE ACTIONS

Continue monthly meetings:

- **January:** encouraging new sustainable business development in the area to supplement summer jobs
- **February:** unveiling of “Leave No Trace” Action Plan for the County.
- **March:** address area housing shortages
- **April:** hold a “Design Charette”: a short, collaborative meeting during which members of a group quickly collaborate and sketch designs to explore and share a broad diversity of design ideas.

FUTURE ACTIONS

- **May:** finish development of a local ecotourism rating system, questionnaire, evaluation system, marketing plan and website.
- **June:** implement an Central Upper Peninsula Ecotourism Rating System for businesses involved in outdoor recreation, food service and lodging. Also an on-line course through NMU for businesses on how to become more sustainable in their operations and help them understand their return on investment (ROI) for becoming more sustainable.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

- There are over 150 certification programs worldwide including those in Hawaii, Florida, Oregon and Alaska. Unfortunately most are just greenwashing.



OUR CERTIFICATION MODEL



The **Certification for Sustainable Tourism Program – CST** used in Costa Rica

EXAMPLE: CATEGORY 21. Room Conditioning (8 points)

21.1 The room has the necessary information and facilities so that the guest can recycle waste. 3 Point(s) YES NO N/A

21.2 The room has the information and facilities necessary for the client to save water. 1 Point(s) YES NO N/A

21.3 The room has the information and facilities necessary for the client to save energy. 1 Point(s) YES NO N/A

21.4 Specific delay programs are implemented for the replacement of towels, bed linen or other items. 3 Point(s) YES NO N/A



Happy business owners, employees, visitors, community and environment!

SUGGESTION FOR YOUR AREA

SEND A TEAM OF 4 -7 MEMBERS

TO THIS WORKSHOP:

“Balancing Nature and Commerce in Rural
Communities and Landscapes”

February 26-28, 2019 in Shepherdstown, WV

Offered by:



WHAT WILL BE COVERED?

- During this 3-day course, community-based teams will focus on the economics, community character, natural resources, and partnership-building skills necessary for creating sustainable communities. Teams will identify opportunities to differentiate their communities based upon their unique assets, have the opportunity to hear the latest trends in bringing alternative energy or transportation or sustainable agriculture practices to their rural communities, and develop specific action plans for implementation when they return home!
- **Contact Kendra Briechele at 703-908-5817.**
- **Application deadline is January 7th!**

HELD AT THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION TRAINING CENTER

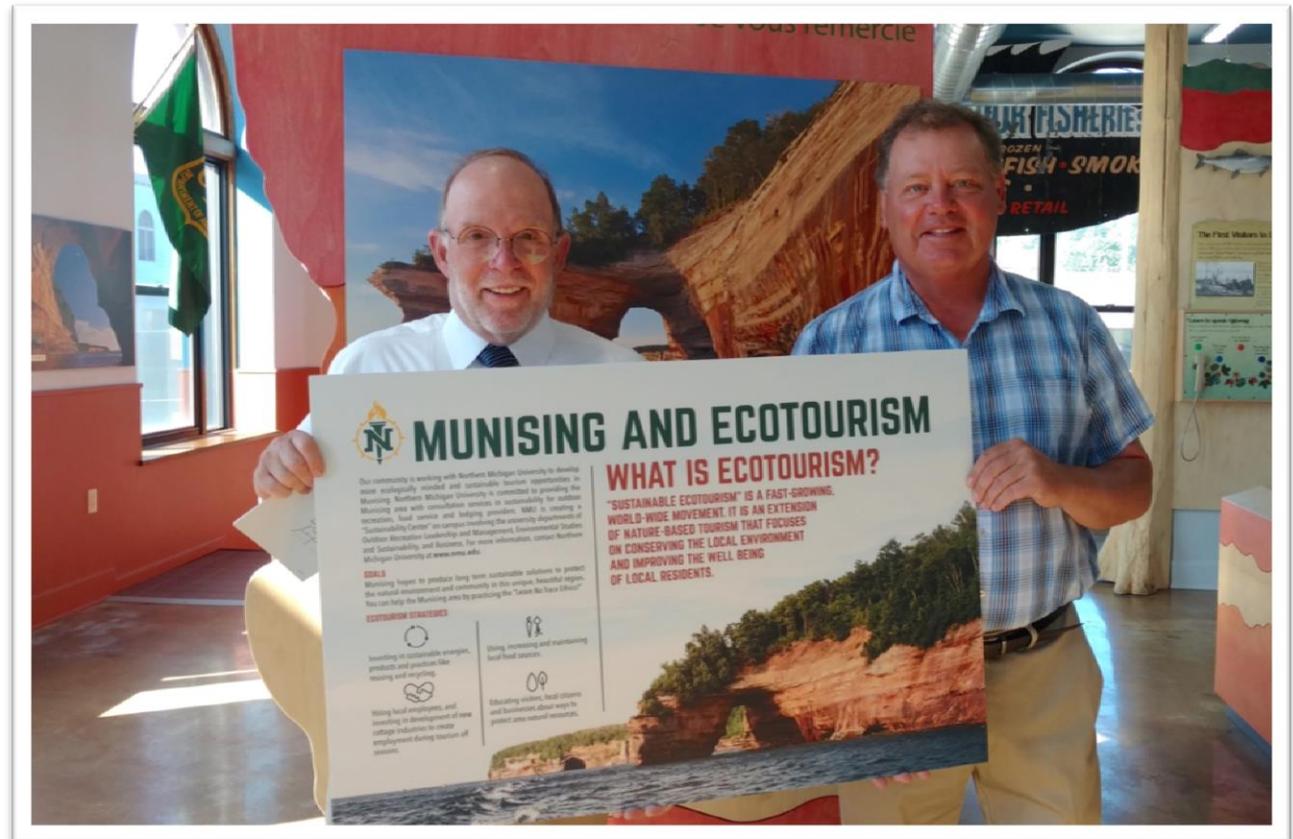


Contact: BALLE



- The Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, BALLE (pronounced “bahl-ee”), represents thousands of communities and conveners, entrepreneurs, investors and funders who are defying business as usual.
- Their mission is to create local economies that work for all.
- For over 15 years they have been imagining, incubating and refining new systems, and then moving beyond them. “Buy local” — once a radical rallying cry — is now mainstream. Sustainable food, green building and renewable energy were visionary tenets of their founding DNA, and today represent the fastest growing segments in their sectors.
- <https://bealocalist.org/>

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, THOUGHTS, IDEAS FROM YOU



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND
INVOLVEMENT!**

