

LEGISLATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: THE CASE OF THE NORTH
CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

By

Shannon Arnold

April, 2011

DIRECTOR OF THESIS: Derek Alderman, Paige P. Schneider

MAJOR DEPARTMENT: M.S. in Sustainable Tourism

The tourism industry is the second largest contributor to North Carolina's economy. The traditional thrust behind many national and state tourism policies has focused on the industry's employment potential and opportunities for economic growth. However, consumer demand is shifting toward a more sustainable approach to tourism that balances economic growth with environmental and social-cultural enhancement and equity. Given the growing pressure placed on legislators to address tourism development, and specifically sustainable tourism, there is a clear need to better understand legislators' perceptions of tourism and enhance communication between legislators and tourism practitioners.

By identifying the perceptions of elected leaders at the state level; destination marketers, advocates of sustainability, and consumers will have a better understanding of how to effectively communicate with, and lobby their local legislators. This study replicates and extends a previous study. Using a multi-method approach data were collected through a web-based survey, mail survey, and face-to-face interception; this study seeks to measure and analyze North Carolina legislators' knowledge of and attitudes towards the tourism industry and sustainable development within the industry.

Legislative Perceptions of Sustainable Tourism:
The Case of the North Carolina General Assembly

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Department of Research and Graduate Studies

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

M.S. in Sustainable Tourism

By:

Shannon Arnold

April, 2011

© Copyright Shannon Arnold 2011

Legislative Perceptions of Sustainable Tourism: The Case of North Carolina General Assembly

by

Shannon Arnold

APPROVED BY:

CO-CHAIR OF THESIS: _____
Derek Alderman, PhD

CO-CHAIR OF THESIS: _____
Paige P. Schneider, PhD

COMMITTEE MEMBER: _____
John Howard, PhD

DIRECTOR OF THE MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Joseph Fridgen, PhD

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Paul J. Gemperline, PhD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Derek Alderman, Paige P. Schneider, and John Howard for all the long hours that were spent leading, guiding, and editing this work. All three of you have families that I pulled you away from one way or another, so thank you to those family members for understanding. I would also like to thank Pat Long and the Center for Sustainable Tourism for taking interest in this topic and empowering me to construct a quality product. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for supporting me through this educational process.

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Purpose of Study.....	5
Objectives.....	5
Limitations.....	6
Delimitations.....	7
Organization of Thesis.....	7
Definition of Terms.....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review	
Introduction.....	9
Defining Sustainable Tourism.....	10
The Relationship Between Politics and Tourism.....	11
Planning in Tourism.....	12
Taxes and Tourism.....	13
Transport and Tourism.....	13
Government and Sustainable Tourism.....	16
Conclusion.....	17
Chapter 3: Data and Methodology	
Introduction.....	18
Design of the Study.....	18

Population and Sampling	19
Instrumentation and Distribution	20
Survey Development.....	21
Pretest.....	23
Collection.....	23
Conclusion	24

Chapter 4: Analysis and Results

Introduction.....	25
Screening of data.....	25
Profile of respondents	26
Overall general knowledge	28
Definition of Sustainable Tourism.....	35
Importance of tourism towards economy	39
Support or opposition to tourism in the legislature.....	43
Image of the industry	47
Analysis comparing political party and legislative body.....	49
Conclusion	54

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Recommendations, and Areas for Future Research

Introduction.....	55
Conclusions.....	55
Implementation	57
Recommendations.....	58
Final Comments	59

References and Appendices

References.....	61
Appendix A.....	65
Appendix B.....	66
Appendix C.....	71
Appendix D.....	72

LIST OF TABLES

1. Postulates in the role of transport in tourism development.....	15
2. Profile of Respondents.....	27
3. Definitions of sustainable tourism provided by survey respondents.....	36
4. Percentage of responses when asked about the importance of tourism.....	40
5. Pearson correlation to show level of importance.....	42
6. Support for tourism in legislature.....	44
7. Chi-square test results.....	46
8. Impacts of sustainability to the state – Political Party.....	50
9. Impacts of sustainability to the state – Legislative Body.....	53

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Dollar value of tourism to the state.....	30
2. Number of jobs generated in NC by tourism.....	32
3. National ranking in terms of tourists spending	34
4. Perception of the tourism industry.....	48

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In 2009, travel and tourism generated \$22.2 billion in total economic demand in North Carolina. This economic activity sustains 378,000 jobs. Furthermore, 8.6% of all wages and salaries in the state were directly or indirectly dependent on tourism. In 2009, \$9.9 billion in revenue was generated by tourism demand. In terms of employment, tourism sustains 88% of the air transport sector, 100% of the lodging sector, 31% of the recreation/entertainment sector, and 25% of the food and beverage sector. Including indirect and induced impacts, tourism in North Carolina generates \$2.6 billion in state and local taxes and \$2.7 billion in federal taxes.

According to the North Carolina Department of Commerce, domestic visitors to and within North Carolina spent \$16.9 billion in 2008, a 2.1% increase over 2007. Since 2000, tourism has grown by 36.2% (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2009). The industry is the second largest contributor to North Carolina's economy making it important to understand knowledge of and attitudes towards the tourism industry and the growing trend of sustainable development within the industry.

The traditional thrust behind many national and state tourism policies has been the focus on the industry's employment potential and opportunities for economic growth (Godfrey, 1998). Similar to many states, North Carolina has long pursued these tourism development goals. However, consumer demand is shifting toward a more sustainable approach to tourism that balances economic growth with environmental and social-cultural enhancement and equity. One-third of United States consumers are influenced by travel suppliers' environmental responsibility (Adams, 2009). Consumer support of environmentally-friendly

travel, even in an economic downturn, is reported at 48%. According to the U.S. Travel Industry, 55% of consumers visiting destinations say they want to protect the environment (Adams, 2009). Currently a range of research regarding tourism policy and sustainable tourism exists; however, the literature which investigates legislative perceptions of tourism policy and sustainable tourism is limited at best. In an attempt to fill this void, this study examined the perceptions that legislators in North Carolina's General Assembly hold about the tourism industry and the importance of sustainable tourism, updating and advancing a similar study (McGehee et al., 2006). By identifying the perceptions of elected leaders at the state level, destination marketers, advocates of sustainability, and consumers will have a better understanding of how to effectively communicate with and lobby their local legislators.

A striking feature of contemporary tourism is the sheer volume of collaborative initiatives between local authorities, government agencies, businesses, and host communities (Charlton & Essex, 1996). Development scholars believe that local organizations are an important and necessary component of social action in community development (McCool & Moisley, 2008.) One specific organization focused on community and state-wide tourism development is the Travel Industry Association of North Carolina (NCTIA). NCTIA is a membership organization comprised of local business owners and scholars that have a vested interest in the tourism industry. This association created an advocacy group for the purpose of promoting tourism development in the state.

The North Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition (NCTTC) monitors legislative study commissions between sessions, develops legislative initiatives on behalf of the industry, provides information to legislators, and serves as the voice of the industry during legislative sessions

(North Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition, 2006). In 2009, the legislative agenda for NCTTC supported:

- **Funding for tourism marketing and promotion:** the coalition will urges the General Assembly to continue and expand its critical investment in marketing and advertising North Carolina as a destination for business and pleasure travelers.
- **Local occupancy tax policy:** all new and revised occupancy taxes should be dedicated to the promotion of travel and tourism.
- **Consumer protections for ticket sales over the internet:** the coalition supports legislation that protects consumers by regulating the resale of concert and sporting event tickets over the Internet.
- **Existing school calendar legislation:** requiring schools to begin in late August – the traditional time for back-to-school. This legislation is particularly important for the tourism industry that is dependent on the summer vacationers (i.e. beach destinations).
- **Maintain and expand the Tourism Matching Grants program:** created by the general assembly to enhance economic growth through tourism promotion and marketing in rural and economically distressed areas of the state.
- **Reinstitute the Rural Tourism Grants Program:** re-establishment of funding to support tourism development programs in rural areas.
- **Sales tax refunds for Tourism Development Authorities:** adding tourism development authorities to the list of local public agencies exempt from State sales tax.
- **Protect North Carolina’s environment:** continue to support initiatives of the general assembly and the administration to find prompt and effective remedies for environmental concerns

In 2009, NCTTC opposed legislation geared towards:

- **Taxes targeted at the travel and tourism industry:** continue to oppose taxes, such as meals taxes and admissions taxes, that are targeted exclusively at the travel and tourism industry.
- **Delegation of taxing authorities:** legislation that delegates to local government the power to impose taxes on components of the travel and tourism industry without prior legislative authorization.
- **Public funding of lodging facilities that compete with the private sector:** the public sector should not fund the development of lodging facilities that compete with private sector hotels and lodging facilities (North Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition, 2009).

Previous legislation that has been brought to legislators' attention, along with publications and promotions from the tourism industry, will continue to affect policy makers' perceptions and knowledge of the industry. Legislators fuel the fiscal engine of state tourism promotions agencies. They often determine marketing budgets and staff allotments. Furthermore, legislators are charged with developing policies and legislation, which can significantly influence the tourism industry via taxation and infrastructure development (McGehee & Meng, 2006). Moreover, legislative support of sustainable tourism is especially important given the newness of these types of initiatives within the industry.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Given the growing pressure placed on legislators to address tourism development, and specifically sustainable tourism, there is a clear need to better understand legislators' perceptions of tourism and enhance communication between legislators and tourism practitioners. Using data collected through a survey that was administered by Internet, mail, and face-to-face (FtF)

means, this study measures and analyzes North Carolina General Assembly members' knowledge of, and attitudes towards the tourism industry and sustainable development within the industry. This project replicates and expands previous research in the area of politicians' perceptions of the tourism industry conducted by McGhee, Meng, & Tepanon (2006). Previous studies did not explore the knowledge and stance of legislators toward issues of sustainable tourism.

1.3 Purpose of Study

Community stakeholders play a significant role in the success or failure of a tourism industry. If local residents' perceptions or preferences do not support tourism development then such efforts are likely to be ineffective or even fail. Consequently, the development of goals and strategies for tourism initiatives include the participation of local residents in the decision-making process (McCool & Moisley, 2008.) Whether the communities possess the skills, organization, and resources to effectively negotiate with forces in the political realm determines the potential for community members to effectively articulate their needs during the strategic planning process (Horoehowski & Moisley, 1999). It is important for the industry to identify the gaps in knowledge and misperceptions of the tourism industry of North Carolina legislators' in order to identify areas of future education and to develop effective channels of communication between legislators and tourism developers. In response to these needs, this study is designed to identify prevailing perceptions among legislators and offer recommendations for more effective communication between the tourism industry and elected officials.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

- 1) Identify the level of knowledge of the General Assembly members with regards to tourism.
 - a. To what extent are General Assembly members able to accurately identify the benefits of tourism across the state?
 - b. To what extent do General Assembly members have a critical understanding of sustainable tourism?
- 2) Identify perceptions of tourism among legislators in the North Carolina General Assembly.
 - a. Determine if tourism is perceived as an important economic booster.
 - b. Compare perceived economic importance of tourism in the two political parties (Democratic and Republican) and the two legislative bodies (House and Senate).
- 3) Determine the level North Carolina legislators' support or opposition to sustainable tourism development.
 - a. Compare perceived importance of sustainable tourism by political party and legislative body.
 - b. Establish keywords and common themes in defining sustainable tourism.
 - c. Determine the legislators' incentive for supporting sustainability – economic, social, or environmental.
- 4) Offer recommendations for how to advance legislative knowledge and increase legislative support.

1.6 Limitations

The study was limited by the following factors: (1) a low response rate due to the poor timing of survey administration; surveys were distributed during an election year, preventing respondents from answering due to a busy schedule (2) due to the low response rate, the population was expanded to include staff members of the North Carolina General Assembly; (3) access to the World Wide Web may have influenced responses given in both the web-based and mail surveys; (4) certain counties have limited access to visitors and funding for economic development; therefore, respondents representing those counties have low awareness about the industry and may be reluctant to complete the survey.

1.7 Delimitations

The scope of this survey was delimited to elected officials in the North Carolina State Legislature, representing both the House of Representatives and State Senate in the year 2010. The census of state level elected officials does not include Federal Congressmen or Congresswomen that are also elected by local constituents to represent the state of North Carolina and does not include any General Assembly members from previous terms. The study also did not examine the perceptions of elected officials at the level of city and county government; officials at this level also influence tourism development.

1.8 Organization of Thesis

Chapter one introduced the study and the objectives that shape the thesis research. A summary of the current tourism industry and future trends in development has been provided. The statement of the problem reinforces the validity of this study and highlights the previous studies conducted by McGehee et al. (2006). Chapter two provides background literature that supports the rationale for the study. The background literature also demonstrates other areas of the industry that are affected by political decision making. Chapter three explains the

methodology strategy utilized in this study. It outlines the development of the questionnaire and the unforeseeable steps that were taken to increase the response rate. Chapter four is a summary of the data collection and coding process. After the data were coded and organized, analysis was conducted and results were summarized. Chapter five is a concluding chapter that restates the key findings from chapter four and supplies the reader with recommendations for future research.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Tourist: temporary visitors staying at least twenty-four hours in the country visited and the purpose of whose journey can be classified under one of the following headings: (a) leisure (recreation, holiday, health, study, religion, and sport), (b) business, family, mission, meeting (Leiper, 1977, p.393).

Tourism: “processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities, and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting and hosting of visitors” (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003, p.5-6).

Sustainable Tourism: management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (World Tourism Organization, 2004).

Lobbying: influencing or attempting to influence legislative or executive action through (1) direct communication or activities with designated individuals or their immediate families or (2) the development of goodwill “through communications or activities, including the building of relationships,” with designated individuals or their immediate families. A designated individual is a legislator, a legislative employee, or a public servant (National Conference of State Legislators, 2010).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Government is an important factor in the development, growth, and expansion of the domestic and international tourism industries. Hall (1994) identified five roles of government vital to the success of the tourism industry: coordination, planning, legislation and regulation, entrepreneurship, and stimulation. Hall argued that government needs to play a larger role in facilitating stakeholder involvement by balancing power among the people and/or businesses involved in tourism development (McGehee & Meng, 2006). Although many tourism academics and researchers recognize and value the perceptions of legislators with regard to the tourism industry; very little research has been conducted to examine this relationship. To this point, no research has been conducted that specifically addresses legislative perceptions of sustainable tourism.

Previous research in other fields related to tourism have examined the opinions of legislators, such topics include public policy (Dredge & Jenkins, 2003), federal airline policy (Abeyrante, 1995), environmental policy (Buckley, 2004; Cook, 1982; Hope & Klemm, 2001; Holden, 2008; McCool & Moisey, 2008), political economy (Mak and Moore, 1998; McGehee, 1990); planning (Ivars Baidal, 2004; Kerr, Barron, & Wood, 2001); national parks (Moore, 2002); and bed and breakfasts (Norman, 1987). The role of research in effecting industry action can be profound. For example, in response to the McGehee (1990) study the North Carolina tourism industry established the North Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition. The NCTTC is comprised of associations, businesses, industries, resorts, attractions, convention and visitors' bureaus, and other organizations throughout North Carolina. The coalition's main objectives are

to (1) adopt a unified approach and voice, (2) educate legislators to better understand the industry, (3) increase legislative support (McGehee et al., 2006). As the statewide tourism industry continues to recognize the importance of the role of government, it is important to also recognize the shift in the industry and keep legislators informed of new initiatives. The shift in consumer demand for a more environmentally responsible destination is creating a need that the tourism industry is slowly fulfilling. To recognize the shift and cater to consumer demands, it is important to define sustainable tourism.

2.2 Defining Sustainable Tourism

During the 1980's, the political arena began to see more emphasis placed on environmental concerns at a global scale. A significant response to these concerns was the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (The Earth Summit). *Agenda 21* arose from the Earth Summit; guiding professionals on the principles of sustainable development without establishing any legal confines. Participants in the summit identified travel and tourism as an important contributor to making a healthier planet (Berry, 1997). *Agenda 21* put sustainability on the global political agenda, but the lack of initiative taken by governments at national, regional, and local levels has led to travel and tourism becoming a concern for sustainable development (Lane, 2009). The Bruntland Report *Our Common Future* established one of the initial definitions of sustainable development, "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

In order to understand sustainable tourism, stakeholders must examine the interaction between environment and tourism. The growing demand for tourism is a reflection of changing economic and social conditions in home environments, as much as it is about the physical and

cultural characteristics of the landscapes to which tourists travel (Holden, 2008). The debate over defining sustainable tourism has expanded: the early focus on environmental issues has now broadened to include economic, social, and cultural issues as well as levels of power and equity in society (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Crick, 1989; Hall, 1991; Urry, 1990). The World Tourism Organization defined sustainable tourism as the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. Researchers assert that despite the acceptance of sustainable tourism as a desired alternative to more predatory models of development, a large gap exists between policy endorsement and policy implementation. Berry (1997) argued there is a lack of communication from the top of the hierarchy downwards, combined with little advice on how to translate the general principles of sustainable tourism into workable practice at local and regional levels. To reduce the gap between government endorsement and industry implementation, explanations of their relationship must be examined.

2.3 The Relationship between Politics and Tourism

The relationship between governments and the tourism industry has remained strong through the economic recession of 2007-2009. McGehee et al. (2006) summarize the relationship between government and tourism prior to the recession in their previous study. The realm of academic literature has not changed and no further studies have been conducted that specifically addresses political perceptions of the tourism industry. Given this paucity of academic research, industry-related reports and media articles are explored to establish the evolving relationship of government and tourism.

The relationship between politicians, appropriations, and tourism is explored in the following media articles. Lawmakers in the 2009 special session sliced the Indiana's annual contribution to the tourism department in half – from \$4.8 million to \$2.4 million. This budget cut from policy makers has forced the Indiana Office of Tourism Development to alter their marketing methods. New approaches to marketing the state as a tourism destination include social media outlets, discount hotel packages, and reduced costs for concert and sporting events (Olsen, 2010). In Pennsylvania, budget cuts have slashed 65 % of the state's funding to tourism promotion agencies across the commonwealth. In dollars, Pennsylvania's tourism budget of \$30 million decreased to an astonishing \$11 million to be dispersed among the state's 67 counties (Metz, 2010). According to the U.S. Travel Association, total visitor spending across the U.S. in 2009 was \$704.5 billion, down 9% from 2008; with an expected increase of 4.8 % in visitor spending as the industry remains cautiously optimistic (U.S. Travel Outlook, 2010).

As policy makers at the state level have made tough decisions to cut tourism budgets, a shining light for the industry was the national *Travel Promotion Act* that President Obama signed into law on March 3, 2010. This act seeks to recuperate the tourism industry but will require international visitors to pay a fee when entering U.S. soil. "The travel industry has been lobbying for the law for years, arguing that the United States' reputation as a destination has suffered due to stepped-up security in the post 9/11 era and that more inbound visits will provide a much need jolt to the sluggish economy" (Yu, 2010, p.1). Previous research has shown that politics and tourism have many other connections in addition to state marketing and promotion budgets.

2.4 Planning in Tourism

One of the many ways in which government, specifically political leaders, play a role in tourism development is through regulation of planning and zoning laws. City planners are

constantly making decisions which directly and indirectly affect the way the tourism industry operates, the attractiveness of state destinations, the convenience of tourists with regard to ease of stay, overall tourist experience, and the relationship between tourists and residents (Dredge & Moore, 1992). Positions and key decision makers in these city planning offices are selected by the legislature, therefore the power remains in the hands of these elected officials. Past research reports that local government has been recognized as being the most important authority in establishing tourism development policies (Bouquet & Winter, 1987; Pearce, 1989; Madrigal, 1993); it is at this level where the impacts of development--both positive and negative--are felt most acutely.

2.5 Taxes and Tourism

Secondly, government agencies and political leaders regulate state and federal tax revenues. The tourism industry directly benefits from occupancy taxes. In the U.S. approximately 46% of all funding for local tourism alliances stems from occupancy tax revenues (Palmer & Bejou, 1995). Occupancy tax rates are set by local governments and are subject to change at any time (North Carolina 2007-2008 County and Municipal Occupancy Tax and Meals Tax, 2008). The authority to establish an occupancy tax comes directly from the North Carolina General Assembly. This legislation also controls what persons or companies are empowered to collect the tax from guests, where the tax collections are directed and at what times of the year, and to whom they will be disbursed throughout the county (NC House Bill 532, 1985). For full text on occupancy tax legislation refer to Appendix C.

2.6 Transport and Tourism

Previous research shows that tourism development is closely linked with transportation. Transportation is a fundamental requirement for tourism to occur. It is the pivotal element which

connects the tourist with the destination, unifying the origin-destination elements and thereby is a dynamic element in the tourism system (Page, 1994). Kahn (1985) summarized the role of transport in tourism development in a number of postulates outlined in Table 1. Together, these postulates outline in a concise manner the relationship between transport and tourism (Prideaux, 1999). The relationship with government and transportation is summarized well in postulate number four. The funding and staffing positions that create or guide policy are all controlled by the North Carolina General Assembly.

Table 1. Postulates in the role of transport in tourism development

- One:** The evolution of tourism is greatly influenced by and is a function of the development of the means to travel.
- Two:** Tourism is a mass phenomenon as well as an individual activity which needs and calls for transport and other facilities suitable for each category.
- Three:** Transport facilities are an initial and integral need for tourism and operate both as an expanding as well as a delimiting factor for traffic flows; the quality of transport services offered also influences the type of tourist flow.
- Four:** The planned development, maintenance, and operation of transport infrastructure under a well conceived overall transport policy, to meet the present and future technology and demand requirements, is the key to the success of the transport system contributing to the growth of tourism.
- Five:** Transport prices influence elasticity of demand for traffic and diversification of price structure and competition has encouraged price reduction and qualitative improvements amongst modes of transport much to the benefit of tourism.
- Six:** The integration of domestic and international transport systems and parallel co-ordination with other countries contributes to the ease of tourism flow and growth of domestic and international tourism.
- Seven:** Transport technological developments would exercise a deep influence on the means and patterns of transportation in both developing and developed societies, with the result that a more efficient, faster and safer transport system, beneficial to the growth and expansion of tourism would emerge and evolve.
- Eight:** Accommodation, as an essential ingredient of tourism development and success, must maintain comparative growth to meet the increasing and diverse demands of tourism and transportation expansion.
- Nine:** The satisfactory development and equipping of terminal and en-route facilities the systematic improvement in infrastructure, the absorption and adoption of new technology and appropriate mass marketing in transport would have a pervasive impact in the continued growth of future world tourism.
-

Table 1. adapted from: Kahn, 1985

2.7 Government and Sustainable Tourism

When faced with an economic downturn, environmental costs are often overlooked or ignored by governmental and commercial actors. Ecological modernization theory can offer solutions to the environmental problems currently facing advanced industrial countries. It suggests that regulation can help solve environmental problems which at the same time making industry more competitive (Murphy & Gouldson, 1999).

The need for more government regulation in sustainability efforts is noted by Lane (2009). He argued that the tourism industry has no driver or imperative to reduce environmental costs. The industry has convinced government officials that self-regulation is sufficient but tourism leaders have made little effort in long term adjustments. Without involvement from local, state, and federal officials, the tourism industry will arguably continue unsound environmental practices (Lane, 2009). Discussions of sustainable tourism and the role of government planning have produced little action, leading Bramwell and Lane (2010) to conclude:

Effective management systems for sustainable tourism are, however, likely to require intervention and regulation by the state. In a review of self regulation for sustainable tourism, Williams and Montanari (1999, p.38) conclude that self regulation “by itself is not a sufficient approach.” Among the arguments for this is that self regulation is voluntary and the industry’s behavior can often revert to short-term self-interest. It may be insufficiently guided by concern for public welfare, and it can be undermined by fears about free riders (Bramwell, 1998). There is also the question of creation of a level playing field: without binding regulation,

some companies may gain competitive advantage by non-compliance with environmental standards. There may therefore be a requirement for “command and control” regulation of some kind, and that may include a need for government-led planning strategies and management initiatives (p.1).

In North Carolina, self regulating associations have been established. These associations promote and aid their members but exclude all other businesses not practicing environmental initiatives. An example of this type of association is the Green Plus Institute for Sustainable Development, which recently awarded the Durham Convention and Visitors Bureau with the Green Plus Certification. The downside to this type of association is it leaves out the businesses practicing social, cultural, and historical best practices. To date, there has not been a leader in the tourism industry in North Carolina that has established this type of association.

2.8 Conclusions

Industry and government officials recognize the importance of their relationship, but research that specifically addresses the tourism industry is very limited. Research in related fields has provided the foundation for this study. The role of government in tourism development goes beyond the obvious marketing and promotion budgets. Most aspects of government policy and planning directly influence tourism development (e.g., transportation, zoning/planning, tax revenues, health, and education). Researchers are continuing to address government’s role in tourism but the demand for more sustainable destinations needs to begin to appear in future research. Although extensive research has been made in order to define, operationalize and implement sustainable tourism practices, there are still inconsistencies and gaps.

CHAPTER 3: DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Assessing stakeholders' perceptions on sustainable tourism development is vital for establishing and developing tourism planning because their behavior or participation can greatly influence the destiny of the tourism industry (Hao & Long, 2009). Managing sustainable tourism interactions between the public sector, the private sector, and local residents can be very difficult and hard to achieve (Timur & Getz, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary for stakeholders to be aware of the level of knowledge and opinions that legislators hold regarding the current state of the tourism industry. The current study was focused on exploring North Carolina legislators' knowledge and perceptions of the tourism industry, including their opinion of and understanding of sustainable tourism.

3.2 Design of the Study

This research project is a non-experimental mixed methods exploratory study focused on determining North Carolina legislators' perception of the tourism industry. As suggested by McGehee et al. (2006), a combination of qualitative and quantitative data were obtained from respondents to identify opinions and perceptions of the tourism industry. Specifically, this methodology allows for: 1) descriptive account of data 2) inferential statistical analysis, and 3) content analysis. Such a synthesis allows for an in-depth analysis of legislators' attitudes towards tourism and sustainable development. Although structured methodologies (i.e., scales) are effective for measuring common and previously formed perceptions, unstructured methodology (i.e., open-ended questions) is useful in capturing the unique and varied opinions of how to gain legislative support. Thus, both types of questions were utilized in the current study.

An online survey was initially chosen as the most appropriate instrument to survey members of the North Carolina General Assembly as it allowed the researcher to reach subjects from varying locations. Cost-efficiency also contributed to the selection of a web-based survey. Administering the questionnaire online simplified data input and analysis as well as minimized error in data entry. Due to time constraints it was important to minimize the data analysis period. After the initial data gathering period, different methods of reaching potential respondents were explored due to lack of online responses. The total number of responses for the web-administered survey was 13. In the fall of 2010, the researcher mailed a questionnaire attached with a cover letter explaining the study purpose to all members of the North Carolina General Assembly (Dillman, 1978). A total of four respondents completed the mail survey, thus requiring the researcher to make individual appointments in person to encourage responses. The researcher took 50 copies of the survey and cover letter to the legislative offices in Raleigh and distributed to staff members. Due to the overall lack of responses from the multiple attempts to reach the population, legislative staff members were then encouraged to complete the survey on behalf of their representative. Staff members work closely with their legislator and constituency base on a daily basis, therefore it is appropriate to include staff member representation in the absence of a direct politician response.

3.3 Population and Sampling

To ensure equal political representation, every legislator in the North Carolina General Assembly (173) was selected for the census. This method provided a geographically comprehensive census of North Carolina legislators. Legislative email addresses and other logistical information on the North Carolina General Assembly were obtained through the Official Website of the North Carolina General Assembly (www.ncga.gov). The researcher

distributed a hyper-link to the aforementioned web-based survey to legislators in the North Carolina General Assembly. Mail surveys were distributed to the legislative office addresses to ensure that a staff member would receive the survey and re-direct the mail to the appropriate address when legislators were not in session. Legislators were assured that participation in the survey was voluntary to avoid any coercion or pressure.

3.4 Instrumentation and Distribution

Data were gathered using a web-based survey. Subjects received emails including an encouraging message, a description of the study purpose, instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, and a link to the survey page.

An electronic web address contained in the email message directed respondents to the web survey. The survey was created using Qualtrics survey design software provided by East Carolina University and hosted at the university server. Hosting at the '.edu' domain allowed the invitation email to pass some spam protection filters and ensure the survey was distributed by a credible source. According to Dillman (2001), respondents are likely to trust university-based surveys more than private or commercial surveys.

Following Dillman's (2000) recommendations, a respondent-friendly survey design was developed. It took into account some respondents' inability to receive and respond to web questionnaires with advanced programming features and therefore was kept as simple as possible without losing visual aesthetics. Animation and sound effects that required advanced programming were avoided. Dillman (2000) suggested that all surveys should be designed for their potential use in mixed-mode survey situations. Therefore, the survey on the perceptions of North Carolina legislators was developed so that it could be used as a paper-based questionnaire

if necessary. This decision proved to be a correct one since a paper-based version of the survey was pursued once the online version failed to deliver an adequate response rate.

Principles for designing web questionnaires (Dillman, 2000) were applied to the survey in this study. The survey began with a welcome screen that was motivational as well as instructions on further actions. The welcome screen allowed the legislator to see that s/he had accessed the survey page and explained how to proceed in order to complete the questionnaire. All questions were presented in a conventional format similar to the ones used in paper-based surveys and familiar to most legislators. Due to the small sample size, it was important to minimize missing data. Therefore, the feature of forced response was utilized, preventing a respondent from moving on to the next question without answering the current one on the screen.

3.5 Survey Development

The questionnaire was comprised of six sections: 1) general knowledge, 2) importance in economy, 3) support or opposition, 4) state investment, 5) industry image, 6) demographics. All sections, except section 2, incorporated both structured and unstructured methodologies. The questions were adjusted from the McGehee et al. (2006) study to increase the level of analysis from basic frequencies to inter-question relationships through ANOVA's and correlations.

The first section intended to measure legislators' factual knowledge of the basic statistics of tourism, including the economic value of tourism, estimated number of jobs generated, national ranking of the tourism industry, etc. Legislators were asked to choose their answer from a range of alternatives in a multiple choice format. The second section examined legislators' perceptions of the economic and employment importance of tourism, and what their fellow colleagues and constituents' thought about the importance

of tourism. Respondents marked their agreement on these issues with responses ranging from 1 = not at all important to 5 = very important. Legislators' perception of tourism wages and their attitude toward the priority of legislative support for tourism were also investigated (McGehee et al., 2006, p.688).

A section on demographics was also included to investigate the overall profile of respondents from the 2010 General Assembly. Respondents were asked to provide their gender, personal zip code, county in which a majority of their constituents reside, party affiliation, and legislative body.

Open elicitation.

Respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions originally developed by in the previous study, and then extended to include sustainable tourism. They elicited strengths and weaknesses of current lobby techniques used by the tourism industry. Respondents were asked to list distinctive or unique words that came to mind when asked about tourism. Additionally, respondents were requested to provide their definition of sustainable tourism in an attempt to capture false perceptions and identify common keywords. Thus, answers to open-ended questions provided another measure to identify legislators' knowledge and perceptions of the tourism industry. As suggested by the previous study, responses to the questions asked in each of these areas underwent content analysis. Common phrases, words, and concepts were identified, diagrammed and grouped into trends and patterns by the lead investigator (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This type of analysis will be used to uncover patterns in legislators' definition of sustainability.

Scale Items

Questions in this format were adjusted from McGehee's 4-point scale to a minimum of a 5-point scale. Use of ordinal variables such as 5-point Likert scales with interval techniques is the norm in contemporary social science (Garson, 2009). Questions ranged on a variety of different scales. Examples of questions provided in the questionnaire include:

1. Within the last year, how often have you heard or seen reports about North Carolina tourism?
(Check your answer)

Regularly Often Sometimes Rarely Never

2. How would you describe the wages typically associated with the tourism industry?
(Check your answer)

High wages Average wages
 Above average wages Below average Low wages

3. How important is tourism to the economy of the state?
(Check your answer)

Extremely Important Very Important Neither Important or Unimportant
 Very Unimportant Not at all Important

3.6 Pretest

The researcher pre-tested the survey on a sample of 20 faculty, staff, and students at East Carolina University (ECU) before distributing it to legislators. Faculty, staff, and students affiliated with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU received the web-based version of the questionnaire. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and to provide any relevant feedback on its quality. For example, faculty members offered feedback on the wording of the survey, whether it was difficult to read and comprehend, and if any questions were too complicated or ambiguous. The feedback was then incorporated into the survey prior to administering the final survey.

3.7 Collection

Data was collected over a 5 month period that was extended from the original 60 day period as suggested by Dillman (1978). Due to lack of responses a series of methods were used

to increase response rate. Online surveys, mail surveys, and in person appointments were all used to capture the final response rate ($N=34$), which means that 20 % of legislators responded. The data from all three collection strategies were combined in SPSS version 17.0.2 and analyzed. Given the small sample size, analysis was limited to frequencies, correlations, and χ^2 tests (McGehee et al., 2006). Results are separated into subsections in the next chapter for ease of interpretation and discussion.

3.8 Conclusion

As a replication of the previous study, the questionnaire and distribution techniques were replicated. The overall response rate ($N=34$, 20%) was comparable to the previous study but numerous measures were taken to overcome the challenges in data collection. Additional strategies were implemented to address the low response rate; these included a mail survey to all members of the general assembly, in person appointments with legislators, and opening the population to include legislative staff members. The questionnaire was comprised of open- and closed-ended questions that explored legislators overall perceptions of the tourism industry. This study focuses on increasing communication between the industry and its' stakeholders and incorporates sustainable development.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results are shown to meet the data analysis strategy explained earlier. The analysis strategy was formed from of the research objectives. The first objective is to identify the level of knowledge of General Assembly members with regards to tourism. The second objective is to identify perceptions of tourism among legislators in the North Carolina General Assembly. The third objective is to determine North Carolina General Assembly members' level of support or opposition to sustainable tourism development. The final objective is to use the findings as an interpretative base upon which to offer recommendations for how to advance legislative knowledge and support. These objectives are designed to facilitate more effective communication between the tourism industry and elected officials.

As previously stated, this study is a replication of a previous study with an extension into legislative opinions of sustainability. The previous study focused on lobbying techniques to enhance communication between the industry and elected officials. Survey questions were geared towards gauging legislators' general knowledge of sustainability and what impacts of sustainability are perceived as most important to them. Before running any analysis, the data were screened and the respondent profile was established.

4.1 Screening of the Data

Data cleaning techniques were used on the data prior to the analysis. The data were checked for accuracy, entry, missing values, and selected data were examined for outliers and redundancies as recommended by Olson & Delen (2008). Two data sets (online responses and paper responses) were merged into one to represent the population of respondents. Examination

of the missing data showed that 16 respondents did not complete any portion of the online survey, these respondents were eliminated and no analysis was conducted.

Respondents were asked to answer a series of both close- and open-ended questions that pertained to the legislators' factual knowledge of the basic statistics of tourism, the impact and value of the tourism industry, legislators' actions to support tourism, and their opinions of the strengths and weaknesses of the industry (McGehee et al., 2006). The responses to the close-ended questions were analyzed using SPSS version 17.0.2. Basic demographic questions were asked not to identify specific respondents, but to get an accurate profile of the respondent group.

4.3 Profile of Respondents

All members of the North Carolina General Assembly (N=170) were identified for the survey (McGehee et al., 2006). During the 2009-2010 legislative terms, the group of respondents was representative of the population in terms of House vs. Senate. However, the group of survey respondents was not representative of the population in terms of gender and political party (Table 2). No conclusion could be drawn as to why the survey respondents were not representative by gender and political party. However, not having an accurate representation of population can also mean that responses to survey questions are not representative of the majority of the North Carolina General Assembly. In Table 1 below, N = the number of responses to a particular question, lower responses are due to missing data.

Table 2. Profile of Respondents

	Respondents		State Legislator Population	
	N	%	N	%
Gender	30	88.2	170	100
Male	14	46.7	126	74.1
Female	16	53.3	44	25.9
Political party	29	85.3	170	100
Democrat	21	72.4	98	57.6
Republican	8	27.6	72	42.4
Senate/House	29	85.3	170	100
Senate	7	24.1	51	30
House	22	75.9	119	70
Paper/Online	34	100	170	100
Paper	21	61.8	51	30
Online	13	38.2	119	70

As shown on Table 2, 61.8% of the respondents completed the questionnaire and returned via mail survey, while 38.2% completed the online version of the questionnaire. The gender proportion of the respondents was balanced: male and female accounted for 46.7% and 53.3% respectively. The majority of respondents were members of the Democratic Party with 72.4%, compared to the Republican Party with more than one quarter (27.6%) of the total respondents. As reflective of the overall population, three-quarters (75.9%) of respondents were members of the House. Responses to questions regarding the geographical location of constituents and residence were not evenly distributed across the state. Interestingly, the distributions of respondents were concentrated in the piedmont region of NC (15), with 6 respondents from the coast, and 3 respondents from the mountain region. Based on the regional tourism model – mountain, piedmont, and coast – no analysis could be conducted.

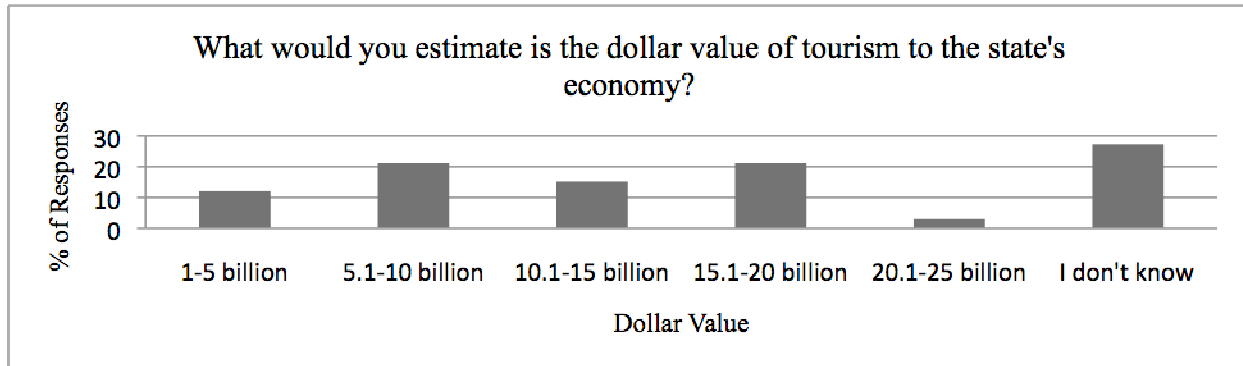
4.4 Overall General Knowledge

Each year the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development produces and publishes the North Carolina “Fast Facts” one-page flyer. This flyer can be found on their website www.nccommerce.com/tourism, in their weekly newsletter “Newslink”, and it is also distributed by hand to the NC General Assembly. The following charts were based on questions that related to the legislators’ general knowledge of the tourism industry. The correct answer to the three following questions can be found on the North Carolina Fast Facts flyer.

When asked the dollar value of tourism to the state’s economy, 27.3% of the sample responded “I don’t know”, while two separate answers accounted for 21.2% each (5.1-10 billion and 15.1 to 20 billion). Legislators reported that wages typically associated with the tourism industry are average and 24.4% of respondents estimated that tourism generates 300,001–350,000 jobs each year in the state. In terms of national ranking for visitor spending, 39.4% of

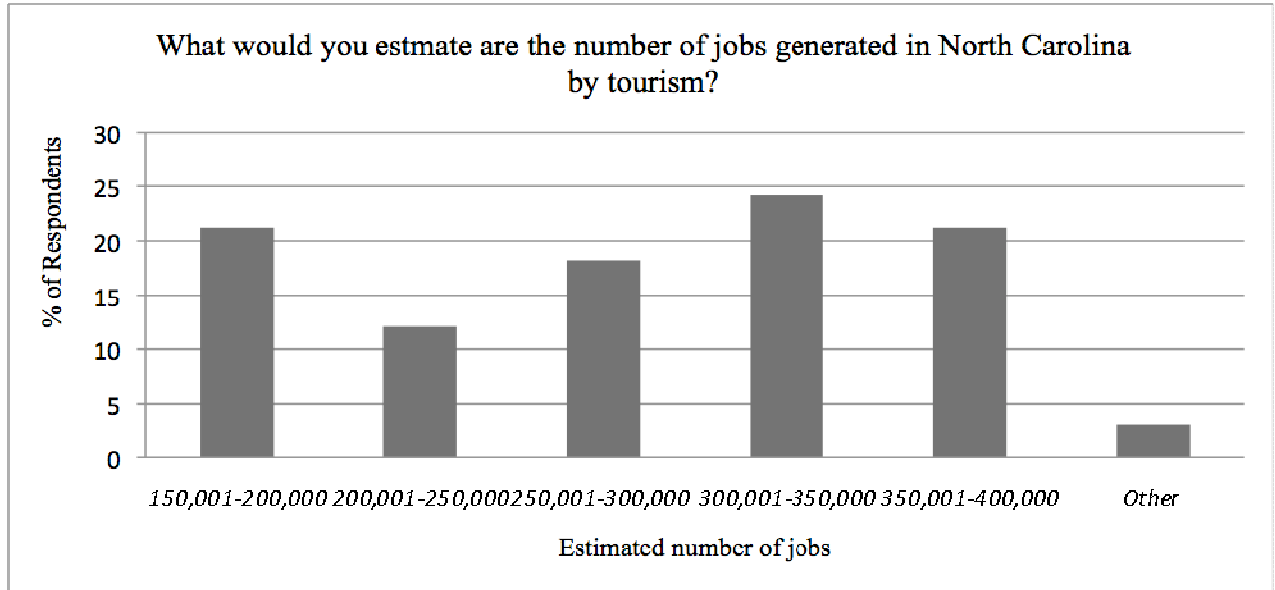
respondents felt that North Carolina falls among the top 6-10 states. A positive 84.4% of legislators agree with economists' calculations that tourism is one of the top five industries in North Carolina.

Figure 1. Dollar value of tourism to the state



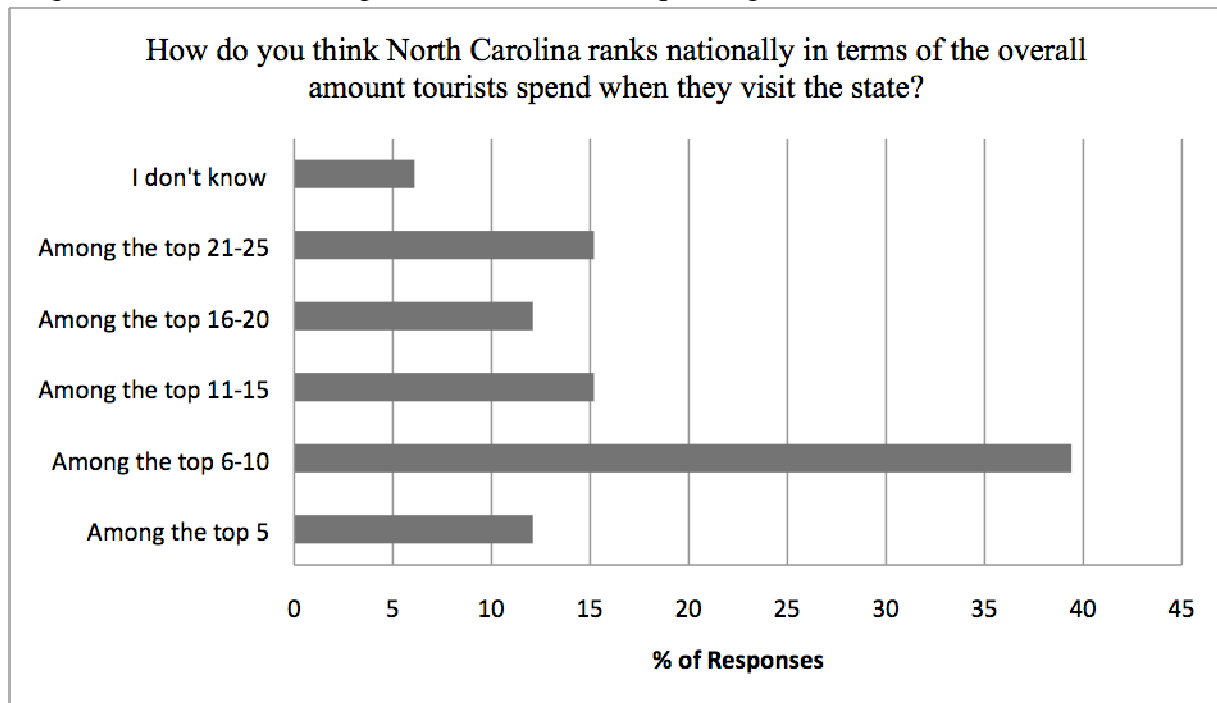
The respondents that answered \$15.1 – 20 billion (21.2%) were correct in their response. An astonishing (78.7%) of respondents did not answer the question correctly. Perhaps even more striking is the fact that a significant portion of respondents did not know the dollar value of tourism to the state's economy. In addition to not knowing the dollar value of tourism to North Carolina's economy, the majority of respondents that were incorrect underestimated the actual dollar value. It can be concluded that North Carolina General Assembly members are basing legislative agendas and state agency budgets on an underestimation of the overall contribution of the tourism industry. The actual dollar value of tourism in the state is \$15.8 billion for the fiscal year of 2009. Apart from economic value, job retention/creation is an important highlight for the tourism industry.

Figure 2. Number of jobs generated in NC by tourism



In the economic recession of 2009, domestic tourism expenditures directly supported 183,800 jobs for North Carolina residents (NC Fast Facts, 2009). Again, 21.2% of respondents answered correctly, while 78.7% of respondents answered incorrectly. The 78.7% of respondents that answered incorrectly overestimated the number of jobs generated by tourism in North Carolina. This overestimation could directly affect the responses in future sections regarding the importance of tourism as an employer in the state. Because there is no clear reason to account for an overestimation; the respondents might have been conditioned toward a positive answer due to social desirability. Meaning, the respondents noticed that tourism is important to the researcher, therefore the respondents answered in favor of tourism. It is important to note that in both previous questions; nearly 80% of legislators did not know the correct answer to a question that is provided to them on an annual basis. The next question involves national ranking and to what extent is the state tourism office is doing the most effective job of promoting basic economic facts about tourism.

Figure 3. National Ranking in terms of Tourists Spending



Nearly 40% of the respondents answered correctly when asked how North Carolina ranks nationally in terms of tourist dollars spent. Once again, a majority of respondents underestimated North Carolina's visitor expenditures. This underestimation can lead legislators to undervalue the tourism industry, therefore an elimination of funding or simple cuts in the budget are decided based on an inaccurate portrayal of the industries' benefits. This evaluation runs counter to the statement that was given above regarding the overestimation of jobs provided by the tourism industry.

When reviewing the previous responses, it is clear there is a lack of overall general knowledge in the general assembly. This lack of knowledge could be due to members of the general assembly disinterest in the tourism industry. A majority of respondents were unable to answer questions that demonstrate the impact of tourism to the state. All answers to the questions are provided by the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development.

4.5 Definition of Sustainable Tourism

To expand and enhance McGehee's et al. (2006) study, questions pertaining to legislators overall perception of sustainable development within the tourism industry were incorporated throughout the questionnaire. To capture a snapshot of the general knowledge legislators have, a question was developed regarding the definition of sustainability. Of the respondents that answered, a brief definition of what is sustainable tourism is listed below (Table 3).

Table 3. Definitions of Sustainable Tourism Provided by Survey Respondents

- A state that attracts tourists and NC does quite well
 - An area that attracts with multiple activities
 - An industry in which local people receive jobs
 - Beaches, Mountains, Zoo, etc.
 - Continued improvement in tourism.
 - Events or areas that keep people interested in returning or sharing with others.
 - Highlighting attractions that keep NC green and beautiful. We are fortunate to have many such attractions in our state. Some smaller farms, known as Agritourism businesses are growing in our state as well, combating losses of some of our small farms.
 - Historic, Nature, Affordable
 - Interesting or fun sights, safe and comfortable places to stay, easy access, affordable, and people have to be knowledgeable about what, where and when.
 - Minimize damage to the environment
 - Natural Attractions, Historic Buildings, Festivals, etc.
 - Sustainable tourism includes activities such as farm tours.
 - Sustainable Tourism makes me think of so-called ecotourism. Tourism activities that are not ecologically destructive and emphasize the natural beauty of an area
 - Sustainable tourism should be ongoing, publicized, educational, and affordable. Funds must be forthcoming
 - Tourism industry that takes care of itself without government incentives
 - Tourism that can be sustained over time, includes all regions, is environmentally friendly, provides economic recovery and that supports our social capital, e.g. appreciation and celebration of cultural heritage and elimination of poverty.
 - Tourism that happens year after year, no matter what. Not driven by a specific event.
 - Tourism that has repeat visitors by constantly providing additional or new things to appeal to visitors. Show them a great time and appreciate all visitors.
 - Tourism that has the ability to weather economic problems.
 - Tourism that takes advantage of the environment without harming it is key to sustainable tourism in my view. The best example of this right now is the newly opened NC History Center at Tryon Palace in New Bern
-

As stated previously, an expansion of the previous study incorporated sustainability in tourism development to cater to the evolving shift in consumer demand towards sustainable products. It is important to the tourism industry to identify legislative perceptions of sustainability in order to communicate an accurate message to elected officials. The definitions of sustainable tourism provided by survey respondents were categorized into themes, patterns, and keywords. Three emerging themes were identified by the researcher; these themes are 1) attractions/activities, 2) environment/natural resources, and 3) economically self-sustaining/economic viability.

The themes identified by the researcher are vital in pinpointing areas of concern in terms of legislative knowledge of sustainable tourism. The most common theme among the definitions provided was sustainable tourism = economically self-sustaining/economic viability. Eight of the twenty (40%) definitions included key words or phrases expressing economic components. This result is not surprising given the economic turmoil of the 2009-2010 legislative term. As tough decisions regarding budgets are made, legislators are relying on industries to support themselves and not resort to government support. Key words/phrases supporting this theme include “takes care of itself without government incentives” and “ability to weather economic problems.”

The second theme comprising another 40% of the definitions of sustainable tourism = attractions/activities. This theme is closely aligned with the broad scope of traditional tourism. In the broadest sense of the term traditional tourism, a destination provides attractions/activities to draw visitors to their specific location. This theme is also aligned with economic viability; as more visitors come to an area, more money is spent and in turn more jobs are created. However, the previous two themes leave out a major component of sustainability, the environment.

The third theme identified, and possibly the most important part to the previous two themes is the environment/natural resources theme. Without the environment and natural resources to support such unique attractions, the tourism industry in North Carolina would not be economically viable. Four out of twenty respondents (20%) mentioned minimizing, not harming, or listed aspects of the environment in their definition of sustainable tourism. An even more alarming discovery is that 80% of respondents did not mention the environment or any type of environmental protection as a component of economic viability or creating more attractions to draw in visitors. This statistic is disappointing due to the excitement the General Assembly has expressed later in this chapter with regards to investment in sustainable tourism development.

Respondents were very general in their definitions of sustainable tourism. Therefore, the researcher took a second approach to analyzing the responses into themed categories. The triple bottom line approach to sustainable tourism has been used as a model for developing other questions in the questionnaire. For this reason, the researcher categorized responses according to which impact of the triple bottom line the definition provided. The triple bottom line refers to a balance of economic, environmental, and social impacts of sustainability.

The most evident impact that respondents alluded to is the environment (40%). This majority was reported in various ways; ranging from a list of natural resources (i.e. “beaches, mountains, etc”) to full sentences about protection of the environment. The second theme relating to the triple bottom line model is the economic impact of sustainability. This theme accounted for 25% of the responses. These responses also ranged from tourism that is affordable to an industry that supports itself without government incentives. The third theme in the model of sustainable tourism is social impacts. One respondent (.05%) addressed the social impacts of tourism. The response was a positive social impact that addressed job creation for the local

population. Fortunately, one respondent (.05%) provided a definition that included all three impacts of sustainable tourism. This response did not appear to place any emphasis on one impact over the other, which indicates that the respondent valued a balance between the three impacts. Five responses (25%) were unable to be categorized into one of the three themes; therefore, they were deemed “other”.

When addressing the issues and benefits of sustainable tourism development, it is important for members of the General Assembly to have a well rounded knowledge base of the subject. The evidence from general definitions of sustainable tourism shows that legislators appear to have very little knowledge of the subject. From the results of both themed analyses of the definitions of sustainable tourism, the researcher can conclude that legislators are willing to support sustainable tourism without knowing the true definition of the term. This legislative body is supporting a buzzword without knowing all of the facts because it represents progress in the industry.

4.6 Importance of tourism towards the economy

The importance of tourism to the state’s economy is recognized by legislators as being “extremely important” (53.1), compared to 3.1 percent of legislators that reported the importance of tourism to their constituents as “not at all important.” The level of importance of tourism to different aspects of the state is shown below (Table 4).

Table 4. Percentage of responses when asked about the importance of tourism

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Not at all important
Importance of tourism to the state's economy...	53.1	40.6	6.3	n/a	n/a
Importance of tourism as an employer in the state...	24.2	66.7	9.1	n/a	n/a
Importance of tourism to other legislators...	6.1	66.7	21.2	n/a	n/a
Importance of tourism to legislator's constituents...	15.6	50.0	28.1	3.1	3.1

*n/a = no response

Although the responses to general knowledge were underwhelming, the General Assembly appears to have a positive outlook on the importance of tourism towards the state. Most respondents answered either “extremely important” or “very important” when surveyed (Table 4). Pearson’s correlation coefficients were generated to test the strength of the relationship between the importance of employment in the state and the level of importance to the overall economy. The variables were numerically categorized in the data as 1) extremely important 2) very important 3) neither important nor unimportant 4) very unimportant 5) not at all important.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation to show level of importance

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-tailed)
How important is tourism to the economy of the state?	1.53	.621	32	.600	.000
How important is tourism as an employer in the state?	1.85	.566	33		

Pearson's correlation of importance to the economy ($M=1.53$, $SD=.621$) and importance as an employer ($M=1.85$, $SD=.566$) is significant, $r(33) = .600$, $p = .000$. A positive correlation indicates that if the tourism industry provides jobs then it is also rated very highly on importance to the economy. General knowledge and perceived level of importance of tourism are important factors to consider when analyzing a legislators' support for or opposition to tourism-related legislation.

4.7 Support or opposition to tourism in the legislature

Table 6 shows the rating of support for tourism in the legislature during the next legislative session. The respondents were given a total of five possible responses, based on the Likert-scale, ranging from 1) High 2) Average 3) Below Average 4) Low 5) None. As shown in the table below, no respondents answered options 3-5. The rating of support for tourism in the next legislative session has numerous implications. First, it is important to note that even though respondents did not answer options 3-5, support in the legislature is not overwhelmingly high. Practitioners and lobbyists need to find ways to move the 19 respondents that answered "Average" to the "High" category. Second, based on results from the previous section (Importance of tourism towards the economy) it would appear that support for tourism should be higher. There is clearly a disparity in the perception of the importance of tourism being relatively high and the support of tourism ranking average. Even though North Carolina General Assembly members feel tourism is important, they are not willing to allocate more dollars to support tourism development.

Table 6. Support for tourism in legislature

	Frequency	%
High	10	34.5
Average	19	65.5

A chi-square was used to examine the relationship between constituents' requests for tourism legislation and sponsorship of legislation supporting tourism (Table 7).

Table 7. Chi-square test results

			Sponsored a bill to support tourism			df	x^2	Significance (2-sided)	Significance (1-sided)
			No	Yes	Total				
Constituents request for legislation in support of tourism efforts	No	Count	5	4	9	1	3.2	.099	.091
		Expected Count	3	6	9				
	Yes	Count	3	12	15				
		Expected Count	5	10	15				
	Total	Count	8	16	24				
		Expected Count	8.0	16.0	24.0				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.00.

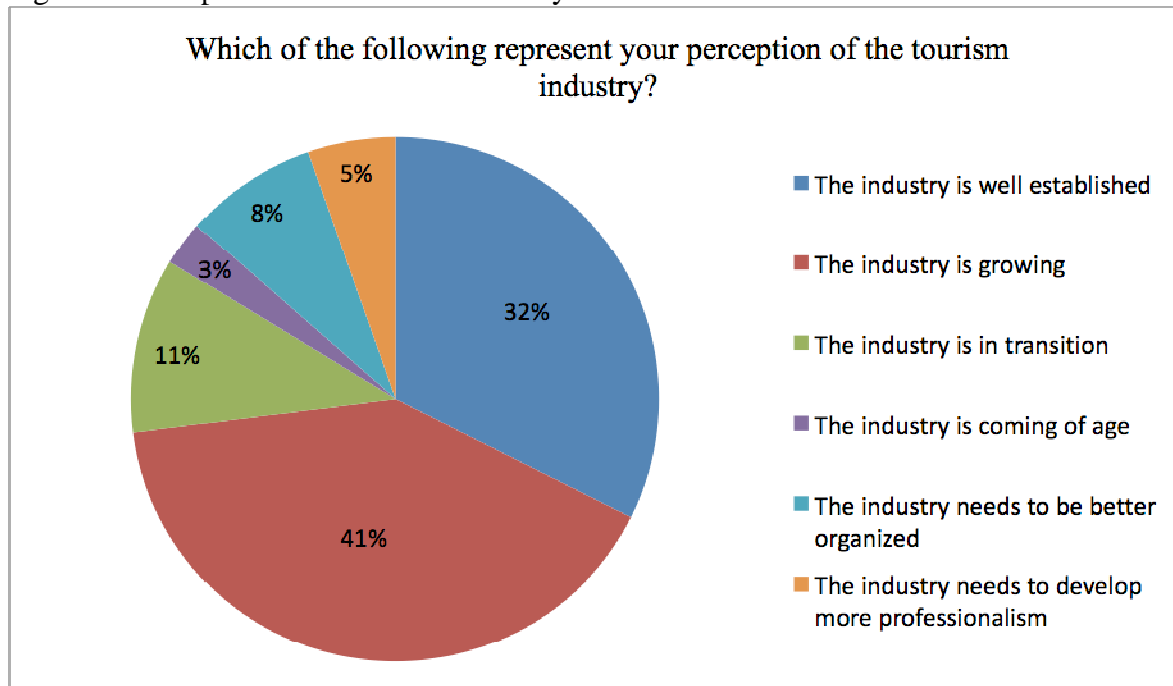
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

A significance of the relationship could not be determined because more than 20% of cells have an expected count less than 5. In response to Question 16, most of those surveyed (53.3 %) indicated that the efforts of the tourism industry to encourage legislative support have been successful. To better understand the results for support in the legislature, the researcher felt it necessary to capture legislators' perceptions of the industry and professionals working in the industry.

4.8 Image of the industry

McGehee's et al. (2006) study shows 41% of the 2003 population (n=34, 20%) responded that the tourism industry has a weaker professional image when compared to other industries. Negative perceptions of the tourism industry were found in McGehee's et al. (2006) 1990 and 2003 population. In 1990 and 2003, both groups of survey respondents agreed (23% in 1990, 38% in 2003) that the industry needs to be better organized. Of the current legislative survey, 46.4% of respondents indicated that they perceived the industry professionals to have a similar professional image when compared to other industries. Strong evidence of a positive image was found when the respondents were asked to represent their perception of the tourism industry (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Perception of the tourism industry



The tourism industry has made positive advancements in terms of image since McGehee's studies in 1990 and 2003. A direct comparison of questions regarding image are limited because of differing scales. Over the past seven years since the initial study was conducted, the tourism industry has significantly reduced the percentage of General Assembly members that feel the "industry needs to be better organized." The tourism industry is now perceived to be "well established" (32%) or "growing" (41%) among members of the 2009-2010 North Carolina General Assembly. This step toward a more positive image for the tourism industry can lead to more support from the General Assembly in future years.

4.9 Analysis Comparing Political Party and Legislative Body

Both political party groups were analyzed separately to compare results among differing platforms. Over half of those surveyed in both political parties (50% of Republicans and 52% of Democrats) reported that tourism is extremely important to the economy of the state. When the subject were given a choice of investing in sustainable tourism practices or traditional tourism practices, the majority (87.5 % of Republicans and 83.3% of Democrats) commented that they would prefer investments in sustainable tourism practices. If we now turn to Table 8, a representation of what impact of sustainability (following the triple bottom line approach) would be the most beneficial to state is shown.

Table 8. Impacts of Sustainability to the state – Political Party

	Republican	Democrat
	%	%
Economic	87.5	57.9
Environmental	12.5	26.3
Social	0.0	15.8

Results of survey respondents above were based off Question 19 asking, “What impact of sustainable tourism do you think provides the most benefit to the state?” This question was developed based on the triple bottom line approach of sustainability – economic, social, and environmental impacts. The Republican Party indicated they greater value in the economic impacts of sustainability; meaning a business should be able to operate normal hours in any type of economic atmosphere. The Democratic Party felt similarly, placed most emphasis on economic impacts, but also spread out among the other two categories of environment and social impacts. As the tourism industry continues to educate their legislators, it will be most beneficial to focus on the economic benefits of tourism.

Recognizing differences among legislative body is also a factor in effective communication. Similar to the analysis above, both legislative bodies were analyzed separately to determine differences among members of the North Carolina House of Representatives and the North Carolina Senate. When asked about the importance of tourism to the state’s economy more than half (59.1%) of the members of the North Carolina House of Representatives found tourism “extremely important” to the state’s economy. However, a mere 28.6% of North Carolina Senators found tourism to be “extremely important” to the state’s economy. A more interesting finding is members of the North Carolina Senate reported an equal 28.6% that tourism is “neither important nor unimportant” to the state’s economy. This underwhelming value of tourism in the North Carolina Senate could be due to a lack of general knowledge about the tourism industry in the state. These results also imply that members of the North Carolina House of Representatives are not communicating with North Carolina Senators, or this difference could be accounted for in the varying duties of each legislative body.

Both parties reported favorably to investments in sustainable tourism. Almost all of both legislative bodies (84.2% of House of Representatives, 85.7% of Senators) reported that they prefer investment in sustainable tourism development rather than traditional tourism development. Below (Table 9) represents responses, analyzed separately among legislative body, to the question regarding what impact of sustainable tourism provides the most benefit to the state.

Table 9. Impacts of Sustainability to the state – Legislative Body

	House of Representatives	Senators
	%	%
Economic	71.4	50.0
Environmental	19.0	33.3
Social	9.5	16.7

The results indicate that much more emphasis is placed on economic impacts, rather than a balanced triple bottom line approach. The least valued impact to members of the North Carolina General Assembly is the social impact. Social impacts of sustainability are undervalued in both political parties and between both legislative bodies. The low percentages in the value of environmental impacts can also be accounted for in legislative definitions of sustainable tourism. Once again, this leads the researcher to wonder, based on definitions of sustainable tourism provided in the previous section, what are legislators supporting exactly?

4.10 Conclusion

The importance of tourism has grown in a positive direction since the initial study conducted by McGehee in 1990. Overall legislators rate tourism as a high priority in the General Assembly and recognize tourism's economic benefits to the state. Perceptions among political party are fairly balanced and the respondent population reflects the population in the General Assembly. With the limited number of respondents (N=34, 20%), the more detailed analysis of this group was limited to frequencies, correlations, χ^2 tests, and keywords/theme analysis of open-ended questions.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher provides a summary of the study, general conclusions, and recommendations for future research. The summary of the study revisits the statement of the problem, an overview of sources and methodologies, and key findings are presented. General conclusions drawn from the findings are presented in the order they appeared in the Chapter Four. The implementation section indicates how this research should be implemented in a professional situation and an academic setting. Finally the recommendation section will highlight where future research should be directed.

5.2 Conclusions

This study provides insights into possible legislative support for sustainable tourism by analyzing the knowledge and opinions of members of the North Carolina General Assembly. It is important for the industry to identify the knowledge base, perceptions, and opinions of North Carolina legislators' to have an effective communication channel for gaining legislative support. This study replicates but also expands upon an earlier survey of North Carolina legislators conducted by McGehee et al. (2006) by examining legislators' opinions and perceptions of sustainable tourism.

Although many tourism academics and researchers recognize the value of measuring the perceptions of legislators with regard to the tourism industry; very little research has been conducted to examine the relationship between legislators and sustainable tourism development. To address this gap in the literature, a survey instrument was adapted from McGehee et al. (2006) and expanded to incorporate questions regarding sustainable tourism. The data were collected through web-based, mail, and face-to-face surveys. The overall response rate was

still limited (n=34, 20%), so analysis of the data was limited to frequencies, χ^2 , and correlations. Major findings include a lack of general knowledge, relatively high support for and overall positive image of tourism. Economic impacts of sustainable tourism are valued the most, and state money should be invested in sustainable tourism development.

The results and findings in Chapter 4 provide a more detailed description leading the researcher to the following conclusions. There is a lack of knowledge in the general assembly of general tourism statistics. An astonishing number of respondents were unable to answer the questions about tourism in North Carolina correctly. However, this lack of general knowledge did not affect legislators' level of support for the industry. The importance of tourism as - an employer, to other legislators, to legislators' constituents – all contribute to the overall importance to the state's economy. This level of importance to the state's economy reinforces the general assembly's support for tourism. Positive image also contributes to the overall support for the tourism industry. The tourism industry has appeared to improve their overall image since McGehee's et al. (2006) previous studies. With regards to sustainable tourism, economic benefits are valued the highest in the respondent pool. Democrats recognize the importance of contributing to all three sectors of the triple bottom line. Republicans did not see value in social impacts of sustainability. Both legislative bodies placed value in each of the impacts of sustainable tourism; however social impacts are still not valued as highly in the North Carolina General Assembly. A major finding in the knowledge base of legislators was shown in the definitions of sustainable tourism. Members of the North Carolina General Assembly reported they heavily support investment in sustainable tourism development, but lack the key terms in the definition of sustainable tourism. This should be concerning to practitioners and academics in the field of sustainable tourism because members of the General Assembly are supporting a

“buzzword” without knowing its true meaning. These conclusions will provide insight for future communication between the industry and legislators.

5.3 Recommendations

The previous study has set a precedent for practical application of this study. Results from McGehee’s et al. (2006) study produced the development of the North Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition in 1991. This group was formed to provide a unified voice to the tourism industry’s lobbying efforts. To aid in the efforts of many tourism businesses across the state practicing sustainability, these findings can be used to educate the NCTTC about the knowledge, perceptions, and opinions of the members of the North Carolina General Assembly. Another practical implementation of this research would be to develop an advocacy group specifically focused on sustainable tourism development. This group could be a special committee within the NCTTC or a separate entity with funding from the industry to encourage support for sustainable practices. Managerial staff can also apply the findings from this study to any strategic marketing or corporate social responsibility plans in the future.

The results of the data analysis provide insight as to how advocacy groups can best communicate with legislators. It is clear from the data that legislators place the most value on economic benefits to the state. Advocates for sustainability should concentrate their voice around the economic benefits that are contributed to implementing environmental or social technologies or strategies in their tourism destination. Although no questions were asked in the questionnaire about the best tactics to communicate, the challenges in increasing the response rate provided an insight into the most effective strategy for getting results. The research techniques displayed the most effective strategy for communication with members of the general assembly is through face to face contact.

Social networks play an important role in connecting with legislators and producing results. The tourism industry has “gatekeepers” that legislators will turn to in order to get information. These gatekeepers have established credibility within the industry and have made a point to build relationships with members of the General Assembly. When attempting to educate, persuade, or simply communicate with political officials, an important component in having an impact is working with the industry gatekeepers.

From an academic perspective, this study provided the challenges of using a single data collection strategy. These findings also provide a beginning to the task of filling a gap in literature with regards to legislative perceptions of sustainability within the tourism industry. With this initial stepping stone, the results of this study can be communicated by academics to tourism practitioners to enhance communication channels. This type of practical research can also encourage practitioners to use more research based decision-making. Recommendations for future research are provided in the following section.

5.4 Areas for Future Research

Future researchers can extend this study in a number of ways. First, conducting the study in all 50 states would enhance researchers and practitioners understanding of the national political stance on sustainable tourism development. Also, this technique would allow practitioners to learn about their competitors’ strengths and weaknesses to encourage more legislative focus.

Second, possible research could be done comparing campaign promises and the legislators resume of bills introduced or supported. This type of comparison would be particularly interesting to release in an election year to begin to track how campaign promises effect voter preferences.

Third, a longitudinal study similar to McGehee's et al. (2006) would be beneficial to the tourism industry to track progress over time. It would be possible to increase the response rate by conducting this study over a number of years. Members of the North Carolina General Assembly would become more familiar with the study if they saw it on an annual basis, possibly encouraging them to complete it without hesitation. This type of longitudinal study would be another research method that could be introduced into future studies.

Political changes in the North Carolina General Assembly happened in the 2011 election year. The former Democrat-dominated General Assembly is now predominantly Republican. It is possible that if the study were conducted now that findings would be significantly different with a Republican majority.

Another area for future research is a study that encompasses all levels of government – federal, state, and local- would provide a more thorough analysis of the perceptions of sustainable tourism. In this study, the importance of the industry and the level of education might vary. This would show the gaps in communication at multiple levels and provide evidence of where education should be focused.

Finally, using different methodologies such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and surveys would be beneficial to gain a better understanding of legislators' knowledge and opinions of sustainable tourism development.

5.5 Final Comments

The problem of the study was to address a gap in literature in understanding legislators' knowledge and opinions of sustainable tourism development. This research sought to enhance effective communication between elected officials and the tourism industry.

In closing, the researcher observed that legislators still have a lack of understanding of the overall impact of tourism to the state. However, they still rank tourism highly in terms of support and importance. A lack of responses with multiple attempts of contact limited the type of analysis conducted and thus affected the results. This study has the potential to be replicated and expanded in a number of ways, such as incorporating additional open ended questions, examining multiple states for comparison, and examining multiple levels of government, to better understand elected officials perceptions.

References

- Abeyrante, R. (1995). Proposals and guidelines for the carriage of elderly and disabled persons by air. *Journal of Travel Research* , 52-59.
- About the Coalition. (2006). North Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition. Retrieved March 10, 2010 from <http://www.ncttc.com/aboutus.htm>
- Adams, Chris (2009). Marketing to the “Green” Traveler (PowerPoint Slides). Retrieved January 5, 2010 from RETI Webinar online at: <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/RETI/Webinars.cfm>
- An Act to Authorize Dare County to Levy an Occupancy Tax. (1985). General Assembly of North Carolina House Bill 532 .
- Berry, S. (1997). Sustainable tourism: A regional perspective. *Tourism Management* , 433-440.
- Bouquet, M., & Winter, M. (1987). Introduction: Tourism politics and practice. In *Who From Their Labours Rest: Conflict and Practice in Rural Tourism* (pp. 1-8). Aldershot: Gower.
- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (1993). Sustainable tourism: An evolving global approach. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* , 1-5.
- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (2010). Editorial. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1-5.
- Buckley, R. (2004). Partnerships in ecotourism: Australian political frameworks. *International Journal of Travel Research* , 75-83.
- Charlton & Essex (1996). The involvement of district councils in tourism in England and Wales. *Geoforum*, 175–192.
- Cook, D. (1982). The fight to conserve California’s coast. *Geographical Magazine*, 623-29.
- Crick, M. (1989). Representations of international tourism in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Anthrolopology* , 307-344.
- Dillman D.A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method* (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Dredge, D., & Jenkins, J. (2003). Federal-state regulations and tourism public policy: New South Wales Australia. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 414-443.
- Dredge, D., & Moore, S. (1992). A methodology for the integration of tourism in town planning. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, 8-21.
- Garson (2009). Data Levels and Measurement. Retrieved on April 19, 2010 from <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/PA765/datalevl.htm>

- Getz, D., & Timur, S. (2008). A network perspective on managing stakeholders for sustainable urban tourism. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 445-461.
- Goals and Mission of NCTTC. (2009). North Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition. Retrieved March 10, 2010 from <http://www.ncttc.com/legislative-goals.htm>
- Godfrey, K.B. (1998). Attitudes towards 'sustainable tourism' in the UK: a view from local government. *Journal of Tourism Management*, 213-224.
- Goeldner, C. & Ritchie, J.R. (2003). *Tourism: Principles, practices, and philosophies*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Hall, C. (1991). *Introduction to tourism in Australia: Impacts, planning, and development*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.
- Hall, C. (1994). *Tourism and politics: Policy, power, and place*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.
- Hao, H., & Long, P. (2009). Measuring property owners' perceptions on sustainable tourism in a coastal resort community. *Unpublished whitepaper*, East Carolina University.
- Holden, A. (2008). *Environment and tourism* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Hope, C., & Klemm, M. (2001). Tourism in difficult areas revisited: The case of Bradford. *Tourism Management*, 629-635.
- Horoehowski, K., & Moisley, R.N. (1999). Local participation and attaining sustainable tourism: A comparative study of Honduran ecotourism development. In McCool, S.F. and Moisley, R.N. (Eds.), *Tourism, Recreation, and Sustainability*. (183-194). Cambridge: CAB International.
- Ivars Baidal, J. (2004). Tourism planning in Spain: Evolution and perspectives. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 313-333.
- Kahl, R. (1985). *Dynamics of tourism: A trilogy* (Vol.111). Transportation and Marketing, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Kerr, B., Barron, G., & Wood, C. (2001). Politics, policy, and regional tourism administration: A case examination of Scottish area tourist board funding. *Tourism Management*, 649-657.
- Lane, B. (2009). Thirty years of sustainable tourism: Drivers, progress, problems-and the future. In *Sustainable Tourism Futures: perspectives on systems, restructuring, and innovations* (pp. 20-31). New York: Routledge.
- Leiper, Neil (1979). The framework of tourism: Towards a definition of tourism, tourist, and the tourist industry. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 390-407.
- Lobbying (2010). National Conference on State Legislators. Retrieved on March 30, 2010 from <http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=15344>
- Madrigal, R. (1993). A tale of tourism in two cities. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 336-353.

- Mak, J., & Moore, J. (1998). Political economy of protecting unique recreational resources: Hanauma Bay, Hawaii. *Ambio* , 217-225.
- McCool, S., & Moisley, R. N. (2008). *Tourism, recreation, and sustainability: Linking culture and the environment* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: CAB International.
- McGehee, N. & Meng, F. (2006). The politics of perception: Legislative images of the tourism industry in Virginia and North Carolina. *Journal of Travel Research*.
- McGehee, N., Meng, F., & Tepanon, Y. (2006). Understanding legislators and their perceptions of the tourism industry: The case of North Carolina, USA, 1990 and 2003. *Tourism Management* .
- Metz, G. (2010, June 9). Tourism supporters: Stop the funding cuts. *The Delaware County Daily Times*.
- Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Moore, T. (2002). The parks are being loved to death and other frauds and deceits in recreation management. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 52-118.
- Murphy, J., & Gouldson, A. (2000). Environmental policy and industrial innovation: integrating environment and economy through ecological modernisation. *Geoforum*, 33-44.
- Norman, W. (1987). A descriptive profile of Michigan's bed and breakfast industry. Master's Thesis , Michigan State University.
- North Carolina 2007-2008 County and Municipal Occupany Tax and Meals Tax. (2008). Retrieved November 12, 2010 from North Carolina Department of Revenue: <http://www.dor.state.nc.us/taxes/sales/rates.html>
- Olsen, S. (2010, May 7). State tourism cuts alter marketing methods. *Indiana Buisness Journal*.
- Page, S. (1994). *Transport for tourism*. London: Routledge.
- Palmer, A., & Bejou, D. (1995). Tourism destination marketing alliances. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 616-629.
- Pearce, P. (1989). *Tourist development* (2nd ed.). London: Longman.
- Prideaux, B. (1999). The role of the transport system in destination development. *Tourism Managment*, 53-63.
- Sustainable Tourism (2004). World Tourism Organization. Retrieved on March 30, 2010 from <http://pub.unwto.org/WebRoot/Store/Shops/Infoshop/Products/.../1372-1.pdf>
- Travel and Tourism Fast Facts. (2009). North Carolina Department of Commerce. Retrieved on February 20, 2010 from <http://www.nccommerce.com/tourism>

- U.S. Travel Outlook. (2010, June 25). Retrieved August 22, 2010 from U.S. Travel Association:
<http://www.ustravel.org/about-us-travel>
- Urry, J. (1990). *The tourist gaze: Leisure and travel in contemporary societies*. London: Sage Publications.
- White, S. (2001). Nonprofit administrators' and state legislators' perceptions of effective state lobbying techniques. Unpublished dissertation, University of Alabama.
- World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Yu, R. (2010, 3 4). Obama signs new law to help promote U.S. tourism. *USA Today*.

APPENDIX A: *Consent Form*

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Research Study: Perceptions of Sustainable Tourism: North Carolina Legislators' Perceptions

Principal Investigator: Shannon Arnold

Institution: East Carolina University

Address: RW-208 Rivers Building, East Carolina University, Greenville NC 27858

Work Telephone #: (252)-560-7897

INTRODUCTION

You have been asked to participate in a study conducted by Shannon Arnold, graduate student at East Carolina University. In this survey we are interested in learning about your knowledge and opinions of the tourism industry and sustainable tourism in North Carolina. Specifically, this study is interested in learning about your perceptions to enhance better communication between the tourism industry and local legislators. You have been asked to provide responses to a mail survey that will last approximately 7-10 minutes. The information you provide will be strictly private and used only for these purposes.

INFORMED CONSENT

I have been asked to participate in a research study being carried out by Shannon Arnold. I understand the purpose of the research and that the potential risks to me are minimal. I understand that any information I provide will be kept private and confidential.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may stop at any time I choose. I may also choose not to answer specific questions without entirely stopping my participation. Should I at any time have any questions about this research; the investigator will be available to answer them. Also, if I have any questions about my rights in this research, I may contact the Chair of the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board at (252)-816-2914.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B: *Survey instrument*

**North Carolina 2010
Tourism Legislative Survey**

Instructions: In the past two decades sustainable tourism has become a topic of interest for the state of North Carolina. In this survey we are interested in learning about your knowledge and opinions of the tourism industry and sustainable tourism in NC. Answer each question as best as you can. Your participation in this study is voluntary and all responses will remain confidential. Your survey instrument has an identification number so that we can keep track of distribution. **At no time** will your name be released or associated with your responses.

1. Within the last year, how often have you heard or seen reports about North Carolina tourism? (Check your answer)

Regularly Often Sometimes Rarely Never

2. What would you estimate is the dollar value of tourism to the state's economy? (Check your answer)

1-5 billion 10.1-15 billion 20.1-25 billion
 5.1-10 billion 15.1-20 billion don't know

3. What would you estimate are the number of jobs generated in North Carolina by tourism? (Check your answer)

150,001-200,000 jobs 250,001-300,000 jobs 350,001-400,000 jobs
 200,001-250,000 jobs 300,001-350,000 jobs other _____

4. How would you describe the wages typically associated with the tourism industry? (Check your answer)

High wages Average wages
 Above average wages Below average Low wages

5. How do you think North Carolina ranks nationally in terms of the overall amount tourists spend when they visit the state? (Check your answer)

Among the top 5
 Among the top 6-10
 Among the top 11-15
 Among the top 16-20
 Among the top 21-25
 I don't know

6. Economists calculate that tourism is one of the top five industries in North Carolina. Do you agree with this estimation? (Check your answer)

Agree Disagree I don't know

7. Briefly describe your definition of sustainable tourism.

8. How important is tourism to the economy of the state? (Check your answer)
 Extremely Important Very Important Neither Important or Unimportant
 Very Unimportant Not at all Important

9. Compared to other industries, how important is tourism as an employer in the state? (Check your answer)
 Extremely Important Very Important Neither Important or Unimportant
 Very Unimportant Not at all Important

10. In your opinion, how important is tourism to other legislators? (Check your answer)
 Extremely Important Very Important Neither Important or Unimportant
 Very Unimportant Not at all Important

11. In general, how important do you think tourism is to your constituents? (Check your answer)
 Extremely Important Very Important Neither Important or Unimportant
 Very Unimportant Not at all Important

12. During the last year, have any of your constituents requested that you support tourism legislation or programs? (Check your answer)

Yes No Don't remember

If yes, what legislation or programs? _____

13. During your term of office, have you sponsored a bill, voted for a bill, or supported programs which have helped the tourism industry to develop? (Check your answer)

Yes No Don't remember Recently elected

If yes, what bill or programs did you support? _____

14. During your term of office, have you sponsored a bill, voted for a bill, or supported programs which have helped the tourism industry towards sustainable development? (Check your answer)

Yes No Don't remember Recently elected

If yes, what bill or programs did you support? _____

15. Many issues will be faced during the next session. Would you rate the support for tourism in the legislature as: (Check your answer)

High Average Below average Low None

16. What is your opinion of the success of the efforts of the tourism industry to encourage legislative support for the industry? (Check your answer)

Very Successful Successful Somewhat Successful Not very Successful Not at all Successful

17. The state provides \$13.8 million for tourism promotion through the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development. The tourism industry spends considerably more on promotion. Do you feel that:

- The state should commit more dollars to promotion
- The current level of tourism promotion funding by the state is adequate
- The state should commit fewer dollars to promotion
- Unsure about amount of funding, which should be committed by the state

18. Do you think it is more important for the state to invest money into sustainable tourism promotion than traditional tourism? (Check one answer)

- Yes
- No

19. What impact of sustainable tourism do you think provides the most benefit to the state? (Check one answer)

- Economic Impacts
- Environmental Impacts
- Social Impacts

20. A growing tourism industry can provide much needed tax revenue. Prioritize where you think any additional revenue generated should be invested.

Level of Investment

Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Economic development	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Education	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Environmental quality	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Health care	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Public safety	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

21. By the year 2020, what industries do you think will be the top FIVE revenue generators for the state? (Please list)

22. In terms of professional image, how would you rate the leaders of the North Carolina tourism industry as compared to the leaders of other industries? (Check your answer)

- Stronger professional image
- Similar professional image
- Not quite as strong professional image
- Much weaker professional image

23. What words or phrases would you use to describe the North Carolina tourism industry? (Write the words or phrases in the space provided)

24. Which of the following represent your perception of the tourism industry? (Check all that apply)

- The industry is well established
- The industry is growing
- The industry is in transition
- The industry is coming of age
- The industry needs to be better organized
- The industry needs to develop more professionalism
- Other (specify) _____

25. In your opinion, what are the strengths of the North Carolina Tourism Industry?

26. What are the weaknesses of the North Carolina Tourism Industry?

27. What should the industry do to increase support from legislators?

28. What should the industry avoid doing while attempting to increase support from legislators?

29. If you wanted to get information about the value, impact, or issues facing tourism in North Carolina, what person or persons would you contact and/or what agency, group, or association would you contact? (List person(s) and/or agency/association)

Person

Agency/Association

30. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

31. What is your political affiliation?

- Democrat
- Republican

32. What sector of the General Assembly do you serve?

- House
- Senate

33. What county do the majority of your constituents reside in?

34. What is the local zip code in which you reside?

Thank you very much for your time and comments – we appreciate it!
If you have any questions, please contact Shannon Arnold at arnolds04@students.ecu.edu

APPENDIX C: IRB Approval Letter



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office
11L-09 Brody Medical Sciences Building • 600 Moye Boulevard • Greenville, NC 27834
Office 252-744-2914 • Fax 252-744-2284 • www.ecu.edu/irb

Date: May 25, 2010

Principal Investigator: Shannon Arnold
Dept./Ctr./Institute: RW-208 Rivers Building
Mailstop or Address: ECU

RE: Exempt Certification *EX*
UMCIRB#: 10-0264
Funding Source: unfunded

Title: Perceptions of Sustainable Tourism: North Carolina Legislators' Perception

Dear Shannon:

On 5.24.10, the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) determined that your research meets ECU requirements and federal exemption criterion #2 which includes research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects and any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your Internal Processing Form and Protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The UMCIRB Office will hold your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit an Exemption Certification Request at least 30 days before the end of the five year period.

Sincerely,

Chairperson, University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board

Cc: Dr. Derek Alderman

APPENDIX D. *Legislation on Occupancy Tax Laws*
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1985 SESSION
CHAPTER 449
HOUSE BILL 532
AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE DARE COUNTY TO LEVY AN OCCUPANCY TAX.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. Occupancy Tax.

(a) Authorization and Scope. The Dare County Board of Commissioners may by resolution, after not less than 10 days' public notice and after a public hearing held pursuant thereto, levy a room occupancy tax of three percent (3%) of the gross receipts derived from the rental of the following in Dare County:

- (1) Any room, lodging, or similar accommodation subject to sales tax under G.S. 105-164.3(4); and
- (2) A campsite.

This tax does not apply to accommodations furnished by nonprofit charitable, educational, or religious organizations when furnished in furtherance of their nonprofit purpose.

This tax is in addition to any state or local sales tax.

(b) Collection. Every operator of a business subject to the tax levied under this act shall, on and after the effective date of the levy of the tax, collect the tax. This tax shall be collected as part of the charge for furnishing a taxable accommodation. The tax shall be stated and charged separately from the sales records, and shall be paid by the purchaser to the operator of the business as trustee for and on account of Dare County. The tax shall be added to the sales price and shall be passed on to the purchaser instead of being borne by the operator of the business. The Dare County Tax Collector shall design,

(c) print, and furnish to all appropriate businesses and persons in the county the necessary forms for filing returns and instructions to ensure the full collection of the tax. An operator of a business who collects the occupancy tax levied under this act may deduct from the amount remitted by him to the county a discount of three percent (3%) of the amount collected.

(d) Administration. The county shall administer a tax levied under this act. A tax levied under this act is due and payable to the county tax collector in monthly installments on or before the 15th day of the month following the month in which the tax accrues. Every person, firm, corporation, or association liable for the tax shall, on or before the 15th day of each month, prepare and render a return on a form prescribed by the county. The return shall state the total gross receipts derived in the preceding month from rentals and sales upon which the tax is levied. A return filed with the Dare County Tax Collector under this act is not a public record as defined by G.S. 132-1 and may not be disclosed except as required by law.

(e) Penalties. A person, firm, corporation, or association who fails or refuses to file the return required by this act shall pay a penalty of ten dollars (\$10.00) for each day's omission. In case of failure or refusal to file the return or pay the tax for a period of 30 days after the time required for filing the return or for paying the tax, there shall be an additional tax, as a penalty, of five percent (5%) of the tax due in addition to any other penalty, with an additional tax of five percent (5%) for each additional month or fraction thereof until the tax is paid.

Any person who willfully attempts in any manner to evade a tax imposed under this act or who willfully fails to pay the tax or make and file a return shall, in addition to all other

penalties provided by law, be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and imprisonment not to exceed six months.

(f) Use and Distribution of Tax Revenue. Dare County shall distribute two-thirds of the net proceeds of the tax, on a monthly basis, to the Towns of Kill Devil Hills, Kitty Hawk, Manteo, Nags Head, and Southern Shores in proportion to the amount of ad valorem taxes levied by each town for the preceding fiscal year. The county shall retain the remaining one-third of the net proceeds. Revenue distributed to a town or retained by the county under this subsection may be used only for tourist related purposes, including construction and maintenance of public facilities and buildings, garbage, refuse, and solid waste collection and disposal, police protection, and emergency services.

As used in this subsection, "net proceeds" means gross proceeds less the cost to the county of administering and collecting the tax.

(f) Repeal. A tax levied under this act may be repealed by a resolution adopted by the Dare County Board of Commissioners. Repeal of a tax levied under this act shall become effective on the first day of a month and may not become effective until the end of the fiscal year in which the repeal resolution was adopted. Repeal of a tax levied under this act does not affect a liability for a tax that attached before the effective date of the repeal, nor does it affect a right to a refund of a tax that accrued before the effective date of the repeal (NC General Assembly, House Bill H532, 1985).

