Sustainable Tourism Assessment for Small Communities

This project helps five small communities in the Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (RSDP) regions across Minnesota discover opportunities to develop their community’s assets for sustainable tourism.

Why? Expanding regional assets can attract more visitors or keep them longer in the region.

The project utilizes the Tourism Center’s Tourism Assessment Program (TAP) to provide:

- A community inventory for identifying and assessing local tourism assets
- Community visits and on-site consultation with a team of tourism experts
- A facilitated community meeting to solicit input from residents related to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for local tourism
- Community teams visit another community in the project
- Written reports for each community with analysis, observations, and recommendations to address identified opportunities in a sustainable manner, and
- Comprehensive evaluation of the program outcomes and impact using Ripple Effect Mapping and other evaluation strategies.

April – May 2013  Recruit communities.
June 2013  Community team training & project launch.
June – August 2013  Data collection
July – September 2013  Community teams visit another community in project.
August – October 2013  Tourism expert team visits communities.
October 2013 – February 2014  Reports drafted and presented to community
January – April 2014  Extension Educators facilitate action planning with each community.
April – December 2014  Communities implement action steps.
October 2014  Statewide Celebration

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This project is a collaboration of the University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, University of Minnesota Tourism Center, and University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality.