



2015 TRAVEL GUIDE | APRIL 2015



Green on the go

NC GreenTravel lists an enticing array of eco-friendly destinations

By Karen Olson House

Click on the photo to view a slideshow of eco-friendly destinations in North Carolina.

The term "green travel" can mean a lot of things—from choosing public transit to exploring a rainforest. While these certainly are green choices, travelers can add lodging, restaurants and attractions with green practices. And it makes sense. If you practice being green at your home, why not extend that to your travel choices?

North Carolinians are lucky in that the NC GreenTravel program has some of the most extensive choices as compared to other states' green programs, says Tom Rhodes, manager of NC GreenTravel. Green travel initiatives encourage sustainable tourism, environmental stewardship and economic growth.

But while some states simply emphasize green lodging, NC GreenTravel encompasses green credentialed restaurants, attractions, museums, parks, lodging (including vacation rentals), convention centers and festivals. Rhodes is working to add golf centers beginning in April 2015.

See a comprehensive list of destinations, search for GreenTravel at ncdenr.org.

How businesses can apply

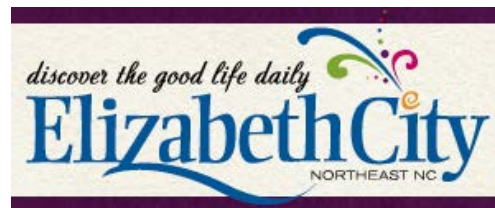
Being accredited helps a business extend its brand, and it doesn't cost anything for owners to apply or be recognized on the NC GreenTravel website.

The application's categories include waste reduction, materials recycled, energy management, water efficiency, grounds keeping, housekeeping and transportation. An example for transportation: providing bike racks for employees and customers.

To apply or learn more, visit portal.ncdenr.org/web/deao/ncgreentravel-recognition, call Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140 or email him at This email

Traveling in electric and hybrid cars
If you don't own one, it's possible to rent one. Avis, Enterprise and Alamo are among agencies that rent them in select cities. A search revealed you could rent an electric car in Raleigh or Charlotte from

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NC GreenTravel is a partnership of The N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service, The Center for Sustainability: Tourism, Natural Resources and the Built Environment at East Carolina University, Visit North Carolina, and **Waste Reduction Partners.**

Hertz, but the challenge is renting one in smaller locales. If an agency doesn't offer electric or hybrid cars, ask about fuel-saving cars (large and small). An alternative fueling stations locator map by state is at <http://ow.ly/JPaIP>



Lodging



On average, hotels buy more products weekly than 100 families purchase in a year. Each item has an environmental impact, so it's important for lodging facilities to incorporate environmentally sound practices.

For this category, some might picture a no-frills cabin, but NC GreenTravel lodging is a real mix. It includes chains like the Hampton Inn at Spring Lake and Baymont Inn in Jacksonville and B&B's such as

Cabins at White Sulphur Springs

Cape Hatteras Bed & Breakfast in Buxton and Big Mill B&B in Williamston. Inns include Meadowbrook Inn & Suites in Blowing Rock, The King's Daughters Inn in Durham and Beechtree Inn in Hertford. Resorts include Old Edwards Inn & Spa in Highlands and Umstead Hotel & Spa in Cary.

Located three miles from downtown Mount Airy, the **Cabins at White Sulphur Springs** sit on the site of a former summer hotel (circa 1910). Arriving, you see hammocks, the shimmering Ararat River, a horseshoe pit and an historic spring from which you can pump healthful mineral water.

In the cabins, you'll find high wooden ceilings, roomy bathrooms, 42-inch flat screen TVs, WiFi and premier sateen sheets. The hot water heaters are tankless and the HVAC units are split system units.

(336) 786-6769 or wsscabins.com

Things to do nearby

Listen to old-time music at the historic Earle Theatre, munch a ground-steak sandwich at The Speedy Chef, and go antiquing or golfing at Cross Creek (not to mention visiting Mount Airy's many famous landmarks like actor Andy Griffith's original homeplace).

(800) 948-0949 or visitmayberry.com



Attractions

NC GreenTravel's attractions list also runs a gamut, including Hungry Town Bike Tours in Beaufort, Roanoke Island Festival Park in Manteo, Jennette's Pier in Nags Head and Appalachian Mountain Brewery in Boone.



Grandfather Mountain Park in Linville was the first organization to join the NC GreenTravel initiative. Its fudge shop sports bamboo floors and roof solar panels that heat water and supply radiant heat.

Grandfather Mountain Park in Linville

Skylights there reduce the need for lights (efficient compact fluorescents), and rain barrels collect runoff that irrigates a garden.

Its Nature Museum sports two destratification fans in its cathedral ceilings, which move warm air down to cut energy use. Its grill serves hot sandwiches, soups and hot cocoa in 100 percent biodegradable plates, cups, saucers.

(800) 468-7325 or grandfather.com

Things to do nearby

They include exploring Linville Caverns, hiking to Linville Falls and shopping and eating BBQ at Old Hampton Store.

(828) 298-5330 or blueridgeheritage.com

Restaurants



Green-credentialed options include Native Kitchen & Social Pub in Swannanoa, Canyon's Restaurant in Blowing Rock, Casa Rustica in Boone, Ninth Street Bakery in Durham and Brewed Awakenings in Jacksonville.

If you think "green dining" means tasteless grub, think again. **The Pittsboro Roadhouse & General Store** serves tasty offerings like an arugula and smoked Gouda quiche, citrus chicken salad and

Lounge at the Pittsboro Roadhouse & General Store

slow-roasted boneless short ribs.

According to award-winning chef and owner Greg Lewis, The Roadhouse uses many foods from local manufacturing and farmers. Its used cooking oil is turned into biodiesel oil, and Lewis switched all lighting to LED. Tables, kitchen equipment and counters were repurposed from a closed restaurant, and the lounge's furniture was made in nearby Siler City.

Its gift shop sells greeting cards, pottery, jewelry, dish cloths, walking sticks and more. The products are mostly made in Chatham County. Definitely a community gathering place, The Roadhouse features regular live music, shag dancing and karaoke, depending on when you drop by.