



Prepared for New Hampshire  
Division of Travel of Tourism  
Development

## *Program helps to 'Leave it Better'*

Transylvania County (NC) Tourism, through its sustainability committee Transylvania Always, has launched a "Leave It Better" initiative earlier this month.

The campaign consists of multiple short videos, ads and posters that encourage those who visit Transylvania County's treasured woods and water to keep their footprint small and honor the natural beauty that surrounds them, according to a news release from Transylvania County Tourism.

First and foremost, the campaign focuses on the problem and challenges of litter. Each year, millions of pounds of garbage are left behind in America's forests, streams and rivers as visitors enjoy public lands.

The "Leave It Better" initiative is designed to educate and encourage people to take responsibility for protecting and preserving these fragile natural assets.

Source: [blueridgenow.com](http://blueridgenow.com)



Jessica Nuzzo/Bluefield Daily Telegraph

A family from Walnut Grove, N.C., rides the Hatfield-McCoy Trails recently in Mercer County.

## **'Great outdoors' might be a great idea**

Destinations with plenty of outdoor product are seeing an uptick in visitors, as states are in various stages of reopening their borders to visitors.

Research supports the concept of focusing marketing – traditional and on social media – on outdoor activities.

According to research by Strategic Marketing & Research Insights for a midwestern state DMO, nearly 8 in 10 consumers are more comfortable if they know that a destination has plenty of outdoor activities when they are planning to travel again.

Here are a few other examples.

### **West Virginia**

Despite the ongoing pandemic and growing COVID-19 case numbers, trailers hauling ATVs remain a common sight in southern West Virginia as people wanting a vacation opt for outdoor adventures.

When Gov. Jim Justice ordered the Hatfield-McCoy ATV Trail to close last March to help curb the pandemic, out-of-state tourists and their dollars stopped coming to southern West Virginia. The governor allowed the trails to reopen on May 21, and the response has been strong, according to Executive Director Jeffrey Lusk of the Hatfield-McCoy Trail Authority.

"We have had a really strong opening from May 21," Lusk said. "We've had a strong reopening because it's an outdoor activity."

People looking for a holiday have been avoiding areas experiencing "hotspots" or surges in COVID-19 cases, and they're not flying or taking cruises; instead, they are taking ATV vacations, Lusk stated.

"It's easy to social distance," Lusk said. "There's no forced interaction

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## 'Great Outdoors'

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with anyone except the folks you came with. It really does fit the bill for a social-distancing vacation. You really don't have to interact with anyone while you're here."

As of late July, attendance on the trail has been good.

The Mercer County Convention & Visitors Bureau turned off its ATV advertising when the Hatfield-McCoy Trail closed, but now the bureau is running an active digital campaign and inviting people to social distance while riding the trails, Executive Director Jamie Null said.

— *register-herald.com*

### Michigan

Things are beginning to look up for Holland's tourism industry.

"The good news is that we're starting to see visitors," said Linda Hart, interim director of the Holland Area Visitors Bureau. "Hotel occupancies are in the range we expected. In June 2019, our rate was 74 percent. We were forecasting 34 percent for this year."

"We came in a little higher than that," Hart said. "Of course, it's still substantially down from last year because of the pandemic, but it's nice to see people out and about."

In May, the bureau announced it had suffered a major funding decrease due to COVID-19. The organization receives its funding from local hotel room taxes.

According to Hart, outdoor activities have increased dramatically in popularity.



Tom and Nancy Lothamer of Grand Rapids, Mich., visited Windmill Island in May.

Holland Sentinel

Activity	Have done in the past year	Likely to do the rest of the summer/fall	Ratio Likely : Have Done
Golfing	13%	11%	84%
Scenic drive	57%	41%	72%
Hiking	32%	23%	72%
Road biking	13%	9%	68%
Fishing	22%	15%	67%
Mountain biking	5%	3%	67%
Boating	24%	16%	67%
Visiting quaint towns	32%	19%	58%
Fine dining	41%	24%	57%
Unique local dining	47%	25%	53%
Youth sports tournament	13%	7%	50%
Visiting bars or nightclubs	31%	15%	48%
Visiting a state/national park	42%	20%	48%
Visiting a spa	14%	5%	37%
Visiting historical sites	31%	11%	36%
Attending a festival or fair	36%	11%	30%
Visiting a museum	19%	5%	24%
Attending a concert	28%	4%	15%

SMARInsights research in a Midwestern market

**The ratio of likely participation to past participation highlights which activities are least influenced by the pandemic. These include outdoor activities that allow social distancing, like golfing, scenic drives, hiking, biking, fishing, and boating.**

"Anything in terms of biking or hiking or going to the beach," she said.

"People are starting to spend more time on self-guided walking tours. They want to explore downtown and the historical district. They're asking about the banner exhibit downtown. It's almost as if people are realizing that our downtown area is a canvas for public art."

"And the downtown dining where customers can sit outside? The weather has just been so

cooperative for that. That's been really helpful," she said.

Hart also noted a shift in where visitors are coming from.

"We're seeing more folks from the region," Hart said. "The day-trippers are now doing mini-getaways because Holland is close to home for them. They feel safe here. It has that small town feel. We're still seeing visitors from other regions, but it's more locals than before."

— *hollandsentinel.com*