

WEB SITE CONTENT REVIEW OF ECO-TOURISM AND
ECO-INFORMATION ON STATE SPONSORED WEB SITES

By

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Abstract

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This study investigated the use of Internet technology to disseminate tourist awareness of ecological and environmental issues in the U.S. The study investigated how official state tourism web sites provided information to potential tourists regarding environmental and ecological concerns, laws and eco-awareness within their respective state. The study assessed if individual states included ecological references or education in the web site, had direct or indirect links to other associated eco-web sites or links and the level to which this information appeared.

The study determined that most states had links to eco or environmental sites in the state or regionally. Some were managed by the state or sub agency while some states linked to national organizations. Most states presented only minimal information regarding eco-tourism and impact related issues to the potential tourist.

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Chapter One

The rapid development of tourism in the later half of the 20th century has led to many views of tourism and the effect of tourism on regions, communities and ecological places. In the past 20 years there has been an increasing awareness of eco-related issues regarding tourism and the impact of tourism behavior on the natural environment.

Since the early 80's tourism in general has flourished and communities and states have adopted widespread campaigns to encourage use of man made and natural resources throughout the United States. The impact of both marketing and tourist growth are becoming evident in all segments throughout the United States. Growth continues as industry supported by state agencies continues to pursue and advocate the development of tourism services for an increasing demand by the consumer.

Leading the Development

Leading the development and interest in eco-tourism is the tourist. In the United States early "eco" movements of the 60's and 70's generated an early interest in preservation. With the rapid growth of tourism and its known impacts, many people actively sought pristine or natural environments as their vacation/tourism destination.

Eco Systems Defined

The eco system is perhaps the most frequently referenced level of organization in our hierarchy and is used very loosely at times in popular culture. The notion of the ecosystem is most simply characterized as a major interacting system that includes both organisms and their non-living environment. Eco systems as they are often conceived by ecologists, usually include a collection of community types that interface in significant ways such as a stream community which runs through a forest community eventually

passing through a meadow community. Together they may be referred to as an eco system (Mercuro, 1997).

The key elements in any marketing system are the attitudes and thought processes of the two parties- buyers and sellers- in any exchange process or market transaction. Marketing have to use judgment in balancing between the conflicting needs of the parties in the exchange process, and to do so with imprecise knowledge about their tourists. The third element of marketing is distribution and communication, where the major part of marketing is spent (Middleton, 1994).

Ecological Systems Defined

Ecological Systems refers to the development and change of an ecosystem over time in the absence of disturbance or in an interval between disturbances. Ecological systems consist of innumerable components, which interact, in a seeming infinite number of ways. Many of these components are very tangible and are encountered in ordinary experience. Nearly all people recognize broad patterns in these systems. Yet, the very complex natures of these systems make interpretation of their patterns, as well as predictions about their course of change very difficult at times (Mercuro, 1997).

Every brook, pond, lake, stream, river, inland sea, estuary, swamp, bog, or ocean, each with its respective community, can be legitimately identified as an ecosystem. Aquatic and marine ecologists generally recognize numerous ecosystems, each marked with its own community. Each combination of distinctive habitat and corresponding community can be approached as an ecosystem, whether relatively open or relatively close (Howell, 1994).

Sustainable Management of these estuarine regions and their functions will result from an understanding of the important elements of their ecosystems and how to

minimize the impacts of activities on them. Research closely aligned to stakeholder priority issues will ensure outputs that will lead to effective planning and policy options for sustainable economic and environmental management (Ecosystem, 2001).

Eco Planning, for the long term, is in the developed nation's best interest to help developing countries adapt their own plans for the in ecosystem. Because only through Eco Planning can solutions be found to overcome a variety of problems include of poverty, overpopulation, migration, and ecosystem decline. This is very important as there is a classic dilemma the demand for authentic experience such as coral reefs, rain forests, wildlife and exotic culture, but the carrying capacity these attractive resource finite. (Cater and Lowman, 1994)

Government Policy Ecosystems

Government, Federal, State and Local have all adopted in some way policy that directly effects' the ownership, development and financial return on tourism development. In recent years more emphasis has been placed on the protection of national, state and regional ecological sites and environs. These emerging policy shifts are centered on a growing interest in "natural" centered tourism. The use of parks, natural preserves and similar are increasing each year. With the demand pressure by the tourist to use recreational vehicles and equipment in pristine areas, ecological environments are being changed in many ways. With increasing tourist demand in natural areas government in general needs to evaluate use patterns and then educate the tourist consumer regarding behavior in sensitive environments.

Key to this evaluation is the local understanding as to why ecosystems are critical to human survival and prosperity and tourism development.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the individual states presentation of ecological education and awareness in state funded and supported web sites related to tourism.

Objectives

1. To model the presentation of ecological issues in state managed web sites for the consumer.
2. To model the depth of search needed to locate, Eco related information.
3. To inventory the ecological concepts provided to potential tourists regarding tourist behavior within the state.
4. To create a standard model of information provided to consumers regarding ecological and environmental and related issues.

Limitations

This study is unique in that it attempted to take a snapshot of state sponsored web-sites during the summer of 2002. During the evaluation process it was determined that some web sites were in “update” mode and may contain materials this study sought to find but would not be included as it was added or modified after the research period. Thus the limitation imposed on this study is that web information is in a state of flux and changes rapidly without notice.

Terms

Ecological - of or relating to the science of ecology and of or having to do with the eco systems of living things or with the pattern of relations between living things and their ecosystem (Webster Dictionary, 1999).

Eco system - an ecological community considered together with the nonliving factors of its ecosystem as a unit, eco system is a broad with no size limitation (Webster Dictionary, 1999).

Eco Tourism - As Eco tourism grows in popularity, the number of companies that offer eco tours also grows. Lacking any regulation or even consensus on what constitutes Eco Tourism, operators can sell their product as an eco tour even if it does not meet the standards of the term as it is usually understood (Jafari, 2000).

Eco tourists - merely pave the way for mass tourist's people who demand the comforts of home while they visit remote areas. Eco tourists are those who travel to experience and enjoy natural wonders, touring, independently or through a regular travel agency (Jafari, 2000).

Ecology - is the scientific study of eco systems, which are generally defined as local units of nature; examples are ponds, prairies, and coral reefs. Eco systems consist of both biotic (living) and abiotic (nonliving) components. Included among the biotic components are plants, and animals. The abiotic components are the physical factors of the eco system (Allin and Mcclenaghan, 2000).

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

Around the world, ecotourism has been hailed as a panacea: a way to fund conservation and research, protect fragile and pristine ecosystems, benefit rural communities, promote development in poor countries, enhance ecological and cultural sensitivity, instill environmental awareness and a social conscience in the travel industry, and satisfy and educate the discriminating tourist (Honey, 1999).

By the early 1990's nearly every non-industrialized country was promoting ecotourism as part of its development strategy. Countries such as Costa Rica found tourism revenue exceeding banana and coffee. Australia created a 10-year eco-tourism strategy in 1994, while Brazil in 1997 allotted 200 million dollars for eco-tourism planning (Honey, 1999). Research indicates that by the late 90's the rise of ecotourism had coincided with the development of economic globalization, with the private sector leading eco-tourism development.

Early "eco" movements of the 60's and 70's generated an early interest in preservation of the environment. With the rapid growth both of tourism and its known impacts on the environment, many people actively sought pristine or natural environments as their vacation/tourism destination. During this time parks, natural areas, and areas that are undisturbed became increasingly popular. Also fostering the development and interest in eco-tourism is the tourist. In the United States it is estimated that a minimum of 30 million people belong to environmental organizations or express an interest in environmental protection. Others support limits on development and growth in all facets of the regional, national and world economy (Honey, 1999).

During the 80's eco-tourism became widely known by industry and the consumer alike. World organizations have come to understand the value of "eco" and governments and industry now plan ecological development for the tourist. However, awareness and planning issues continue to develop along with the eco-tourism movement. Honey in 1999 indicates that the term ecological has a common foundation but differs from place to place, region to region, country to country and government to government. Therefore ecological standards seem absent in the development of many ecological tourist products.

Key in the process of planning, designing, building and marketing is the process of defining "eco-tourism". According to the World Tourism Organization eco-tourism should include the following six key facets:

- Travel to natural destinations
- Minimal impact
- Environmental Awareness
- Direct Financial Benefits for Conservation
- Financial Benefits and Empowerment for Local Residents
- Respect for Local Culture

With these six elements another definition needs to be considered. Eco-tourism requires a more comprehensive approach to travel, one in which the tourist tries to respect, learn about, and benefit both the environment and local community they visit. Tourists therefore need to be sensitive to the regional environment and social climate of the host area. Researchers note that it will be a long-term challenge to find ways to maintain the intense rigor and qualities of ecotourism while enabling the industry to move from small individual projects to national, state and regional in scope. Many note that this can be done through education for industry and the consumer.

Throughout the realm of tourism development there are entrepreneurs marketing themselves as being involved in ecotourism. It seems that everyone who would use the name eco-tourism would be practicing the same low impact principles set forth by Honey (1999). However, travelers have had a difficult time finding genuine ecotourism projects and firms that truly embrace the eco-philosophy. Research has found that guidebooks, brochures, press reports and ecotourism awards are not truly accurate (Honey, 1999). Educated tourists find that after they actually get on site they discover the concepts of eco-tourism missing, lose trust in those marketing the destination products, while the uninformed tourist remains unaware of the concepts of eco-tourism and does not understand the missing Eco elements (Honey, 1999).

Ecotourism Planning

Ecotourism is a form of nature tourism in which conservation of the environment, biological diversity, wildlife and ecological systems, with emphasis placed on educating tourism about the environment and how to conserve it. In the United States, individual states have begun to fund eco-tourism with guidelines similar to the following (WTO, 1998).

- Apply strict conservation measure to the natural area to protect the flora, fauna and ecosystems and any existing archaeological or historic sites.
- Establish carrying capacity standards so that there are not over development of tourist's facilities or over-use of the environment by the tourists.
- Develop small-scale tourist facilities in environmentally suitable locations, with locally based design, local building materials, energy-saving devices, and proper disposal waste material. A visitor center with exhibits about the site and local conservation techniques should be developed.

- Prepare and distribute ecotourism codes of conduct for tourists and tour operators, and monitor application of these codes.
- Provide well-trained guides who provide accurate information to all tourists, educate tourists about biological issues, and conservation techniques, and observe good conservation measures during visits.
- Integrate local communities into all tourism.

The WTO states that eco-tourism should include existing communities in planning, conserve local cultural traditions, and identify how to bring benefits to the local communities. Also, ecotourism has a unique potential in local areas that offer ecologically interesting natural environments that are combined with settlements of local people. In the early years of eco-tourism development it was small in scale, but as it has grown technical assistance to the local community is now required to ensure proper eco-development and eco-management.

In the United States, each level of government plays an active role in the development of tourism. Typically national level of government provides the infrastructure and macro related planning which encourages and enables tourism development. The individual state plays a pivotal role in tourism development developing strategies and promotion efforts to enable the collective tourism industry. Also on the state and local level, superstructure development such as zoning, construction requirements, traffic volume and operating regulations centered on state law further structure the development of tourism.

Eco Planning and Carry Capacity

Eco-planning, in the long term, is centered on the management of pristine and natural spaces for long term use and continued reuse over time. Too many increase the

demand for authentic experiences of coral reefs, rain forests, wildlife and exotic culture is growing rapidly, but the carrying capacity of these fragile attractive resources is finite (Cater and Lowman, 1994). The importance of carrying capacity needs to be understood. Carrying capacity simply defined, is the maximum number of individuals of a space, place, or eco-system can maintain in the short and long run. Thus, if the carrying capacity is exceeded, the eco-system or region is less likely to suffer long-term damage and permanent changes to the original environment (Bell and Morse, 1999).

Government, Nature and Tourism

The primary role of nature in attracting tourists to specific destinations is basically understood by destination managers. However, the nature role is historically defined within tourism. Research finds that many rural and recreation areas, such as parks or protected areas, were established long ago as government developed national or state policy for land and water management. Examples such as the national parks, reserved public lands, coastal land and waterways became managed under public law. Free or limited access was guaranteed and for most part, and few tourists took interest in these areas until the last 20 years. With added demand pressures, the need for government intervention in rural, eco, and other forms of tourism is now essential to its long term success.

Government investment or interest in tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon and government involvement has been growing since the early 1980's (Bell and Morse, 1999). Awareness of the economic importance of ecotourism has enabled some state funding for its promotion. Many marketing efforts center on environmental imagery due to the economic potential eco-tourism offers each state. Many states and their tourism offices have formulated high tech, comprehensive media campaigns which increase

tourist awareness of parks, recreational areas, and any non-disturbed areas such as the Boundary Waters in Northern Minnesota (Butler, Hall and Jenkins, 1998).

With increased marketing of eco areas and regions in recent years, the economic, physical and social environments of unprotected and protected areas, parks, and rural places have undergone dramatic change. In many ways responsible tourism has been ignored in favor of economic tourism by many federal and state tourism offices.

Governmental, industrial and technical forces have impacted the emergence of distinct recreation and tourism patterns which seem to have adverse effects on protected land, parks and rural spaces. Demand pressures have increased (Butler, Hall & Jenkins, 1998).

Tourism Marketing

Two conditions must be met for marketing to be possible. First, there must be a person or company that desire to sell a product or service. Second, there must be potential buyers for this product or service. When both factors do exist, marketing is the total process or series of activities that brings the potential buyer of the product or service together with the product or service (Davidoff and Davidoff, 1994).

The key elements in any marketing system are the attitudes and thought processes of the two parties – buyers and sellers – in any exchange process or market transaction. Marketing managers have to use judgment in balancing between the conflicting needs of the parties in the exchange process, and to do so with imprecise knowledge about their tourists. The third element of marketing is distribution and communication, where the major part of marketing funds are spent (Middleton, 1994).

Davidoff and Davidoff (1994) note that in order for marketing to be effective it must be developed by both buyer and seller. Marketing is built upon the product-oriented and customer-oriented marketing concepts, relationship marketing adds recognition of the

strong, interactive relationships that develop between buyers and sellers of products and services. The stronger the relationship between a product or service provider and the customer, the more likely the customer will purchase from that provider-as long as the provider's product or service meets the customer's needs.

Tourism businesses, whether based in tourist-generating or destination areas, are primarily concerned with the short-term profitability and growth of their own business and not with the long term development of a well-balanced tourism industry in the destination. They therefore produce what sells and this means the destination adapting to their needs, not the other way around. As research has found, this can be seen in the quick use of "eco" in tourism branding yet seldom does the tourism experience approach anything that is correctly defined as eco-tourism (Ashworth and Goodell, 1990).

Tourism Marketing on the Internet

The World Wide Web allows an organization to create a library of materials anybody with a computer Internet connection can access. Research in 1995 finds that millions may read a marketing message weekly and that special care is required to create a Web site that will draw the desired marketing response (Sterne, 1995).

Key in the process of developing a web site is to have all the information regarding the image or product mapped out and ready to be designed into the HTML format. Research indicates that many early web sites were developed off what existed and was limited in content, information and usefulness for the traveling consumer. Also early web sites lacked the depth the consumer was seeking to answer questions about services demanded.

Sterne indicated in 1995 that by 2001, on-line, interactive web sites will allow more direct feedback from potential customers than ever before. The traditional 800# will

be replaced with the internet site that is far more dynamic than the former printed materials sent per request. Problems do persist with the movement to Internet marketing, especially for states marketing their tourism product. It cannot be assumed that everyone who chooses to travel to your state has access to a computer, and the ability to access online information. It has become commonplace to use the computer, but in some situations, state tourism offices still market to a vast population. Many states use the Internet as a complement to their standard marketing efforts with a view that it will replace printed materials in the future (Sterne, 1995).

Middleton (1994) notes that it is still too soon to be certain to what extent the Internet will dominate tourism marketing. The building of the relatively young internet, and access to mobile telephones and interactive television are the principal technological developments that are empowering customers and businesses alike to change the way that they conduct business. These technology changes are the central core of all marketing efforts by firms today.

As for the future, the internet is not just one distribution channel. It comprises a number of direct tech-pipelines designed to give potential customers convenient and user-friendly access to service and tourism products. Researchers indicate that there will be a marketing shakeout for market share among the leading search engines and increasingly among the services providing information on the web. The argument of truth in advertising still exists and more so with the new era of internet marketing (Middleton, 1994).

Marketing Eco-Tourism and Similar

Marketing in the new century is segmented along consumer demographic lines. This means that consumers are identified, defined and categorized by their age, income

and educational attainment. Services are then marketed to satisfy the segment of the market targeted. Marketing efforts to find the right person for the right product price have become more sophisticated as data becomes more available. In the past 10 years the internet has become the epicenter of relaying information to all consumer segments. It is also very useful for targeting specific groups such as those who would be interested in Eco-tourism or similar systems (Mercuro, 1997).

Eco system stability has several meanings depending on the perspective and context in which it has been used by various authors (Mercuro, 1997). The most straightforward definition is simply the lack of change within an ecosystem or the pattern of fluctuations within an ecosystem overtime. Other ecologists have used the pace and manner of eco system recovery following disturbance and /or the resistance of an eco system to change when disturbed as definitions of stability (Mercuro, 1997).

The response of an eco system to impact disturbance is dependent upon the type of physical disturbance. The type of disturbances that are linked to tourism tend to be less intense in nature but layer-lived such as air pollution, live stock grazing, trampling, soil erosion, or exposure to low- level radiation (Mercuro, 1997).

Examples of Eco-Tourism in the United States

The following examples are available in the United States and have the elements of eco-tourism. Some have the principles but do not fully offer the world concept of “Eco Tourism”.

“Voyageurs” Canoeing the Boundary Waters, Minnesota

Voyageurs National Park is the only national park without a road. If you want to get deep into this park, you need do so over water, either in liquid or frozen form.

Voyageurs is not open to motorized recreation, which means you will see snowmobiles

when the lake surfaces freezes in winter or boats in the summer (Voyageurs National Park, 2002).

International Wolf Center, Ely, Minnesota

On August 28, 1998, the Wolf Round table sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reached a consensus on several key points for the management of the wolf in Minnesota (Wolves, 1998).

In 2001 this facility won a national award for eco-tourism. The International Wolf Center sits in the heart of the Superior National Forest in Ely, Minnesota, gateway to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Your day or weekend adventure can include a trek into the forest to observe wild wolves in their natural habitat (What's Happening with Minnesota Wolves, 2002). One of the main function of the center is to educate tourists about wolves in their habitat. As a non-advocacy, non-profit organization dedicated to educating people about the wolf, the goal is to foster healthy public discussion grounded in fact and open to all perspectives. On this continually expanding site, tourists can learn about wolf biology and management, hear from wildlife professionals, and explore the spectrum of personal viewpoints regarding wolves (What's Happening with Minnesota Wolves, 2002).

National Parks: United States

Yellowstone National Park was protected as the world's first National Park in 1872. It is estimated that it has about 3 million tourists visit the park, each year. One-third of the U.S. population will visit Yellowstone during their lifetime (Yellowstone, 2002).

The Ecological foundations of Yellowstone cannot be disputed. Its unique Ecological diversity since their parks inception has been altered to enable tourism. These

clauses have made lasting impacts and continue to be impacted as more tourists choose to visit the park.

Yellowstone's landscape remains among the most geologically active lands on the planet, with steam-spewing geysers, gurgling fumaroles, and frequent earthquakes.

Yellowstone and the huge tracts of national-forest land that ring it comprise one of the world's last intact temperate ecosystems all its major species of plants and animals are still present. Yellowstone most famous sights-are the Old Faithful geyser, and Mammoth Hot Springs, the overwhelming size and hues of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone are the places most tourists stop to see (Yellowstone, 2002).

The Yosemite Fund, started in 1988, is the primary non-profit fundraising organization for Yosemite. The goal of The Yosemite Fund is to help keep Yosemite National Park's for future generations by providing private funding for projects in the park that government funds just can't cover Grants are given for managing wildlife, restoring habitat, repairing trails, providing new educational exhibits, and much more (Yosemite, 2002).

The National Park Service and Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group have taken steps to aid in the comeback of the peregrine falcon. Four nesting pairs with six young were counted in 1998 (Yosemite, 2002).

Some of the projects in Yosemite are: Black Oak Restoration, Restoring the Merced River, Endangered California Bighorn Sheep, Meadow Restoration, Maintaining the Trails, and Recycling in Yosemite (Yosemite, 2002).

Today there is increasing recognition of the importance of mountain ecosystems and how parks play a key role in eco-tourism planning, development and preservation. On a global level, they are the water towers of the earth.

Future Eco-Demand

The world's largest repositories of biological diversity can be found in mountains, yet Mountain areas are now very popular destinations for recreation and associated tourism. The importance of the cultural diversity and heritage found in the mountains cannot be measured in terms of mere economics. Yet, mountains are home for a disproportionate number of the world's poorest people. Mountains occupy about one-fourth of the world's land surface and are the basis of livelihood for 10% of the world's population. Crucial goods and services are provided by mountain areas to more than half the world's population. According to a report by the Secretary General of the UN to the 55th General Assembly on the Status of Preparations for the International Year of the Mountains, the ecological integrity and economic and social viability of mountain areas need to be ensured, both for the sake of mountain inhabitants and for those living in lowland areas and the soon-to-be-arriving tourists (International Year of the Mountains, 2002).

Government Policy Ecosystems

Understanding ecosystems becomes critical to human survival and the continuance of social prosperity. As awareness of ecosystem interactions at all levels increases demand is being placed on data and information. Government, in general, will need to set policy and create programs to allow the tourist to understand issues and the impact on an eco-site.

In summary, Chapter Two is the review of literature, describing how tourists can locate eco-systems in areas where they want to vacation. Most are concerned about preservation of the environment in these holiday destinations. Some protected ecosystems include Voyageurs National Park, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and the International Wolf Center (all in the state of Minnesota). Other highly recognized destinations for eco-

travel are Yellowstone National Park and Yosemite National Park but increasing demand on rural areas means that any locale that has an environment advertised for tourists use may need to be monitored and information disseminated to protect its long term use.

Chapter Three

Methods

This Study utilized a research method that identified a known resource to located web-sites for the fifty United States. The review the web-site content centered on the theme and objectives of the study.

State web sites were located on the American Map Corporation website (of Maspeth, NYC, 2002) at www.americanmap.com and Internet research. Each site was then evaluated using a standardized criterion addressing eco-systems and other issues pertaining to environmental management. Each site was evaluated using a standardized criterion addressing ecological, management of ecological, and other issues pertaining to environmental management.

All fifty states and their official web sites were investigated to discover the level of information available to site visitors regarding ecological awareness. Each site was evaluated to learn the level of placement within in individual state websites. The level the four identified issues as recorded in a chart format as the number of layers down is set to find the ecosystem variable on each website. Activities to participate in were also found, as well as educational awareness and awareness of the ecosystems.

Limitations

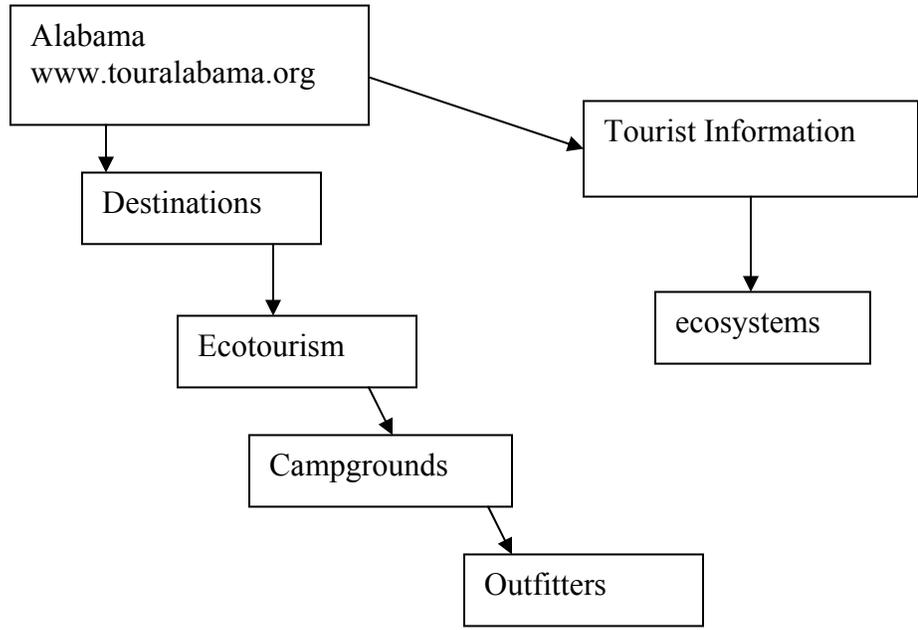
The method used in this study sought only to review official state sponsored web sites and did not review individual community, corporate or regional web-sites sponsored in part by local and state governments.

Chapter Four

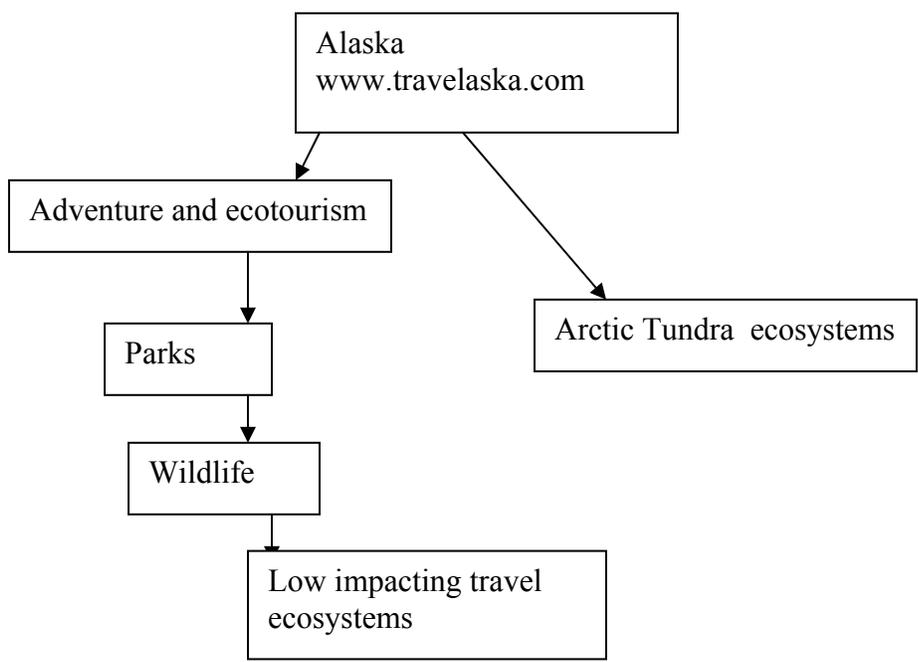
Results

This chapter will present the information gathered from web sites and discuss the data and information from individual state web-site research. Each state will be profiled in a schematic that shows the level that ecological and environmental information is found at the web site. The states are presented in alphabetic order.

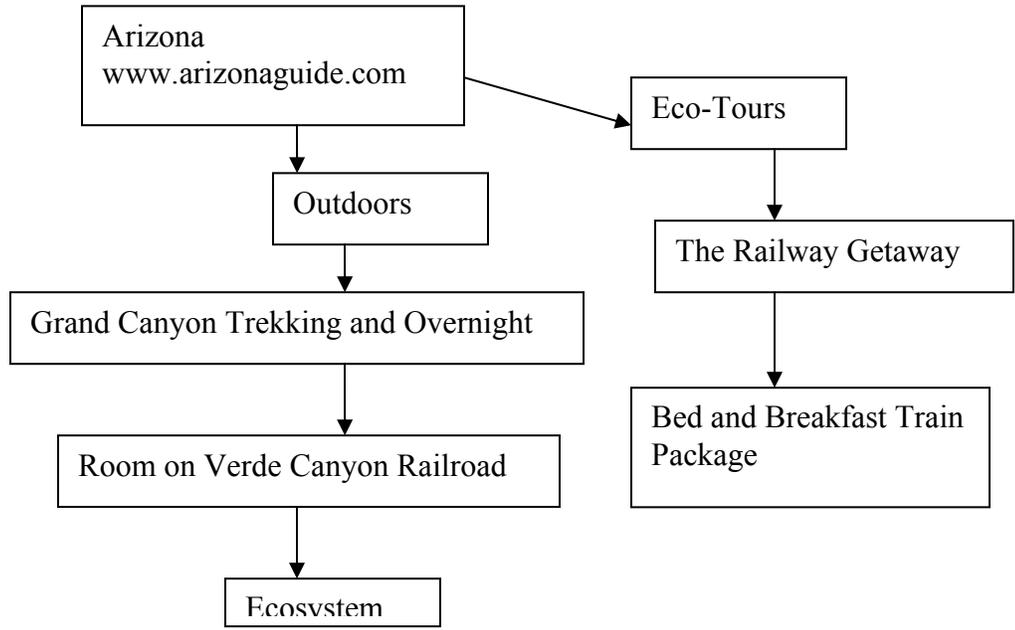
In the state of **Alabama** a variety of ecological environments can be found. The web site instructs potential visitors to visit the destinations its nature preserves, beaches and other ecosystems. Most information detailed was general in format yielding little information regarding ecological issues in the state. The site does encourage birdwatchers to visit the Alabama Coastal Riding Trail and details a variety of topical areas such as golf, tennis, fishing, hiking, camping, biking, boating .



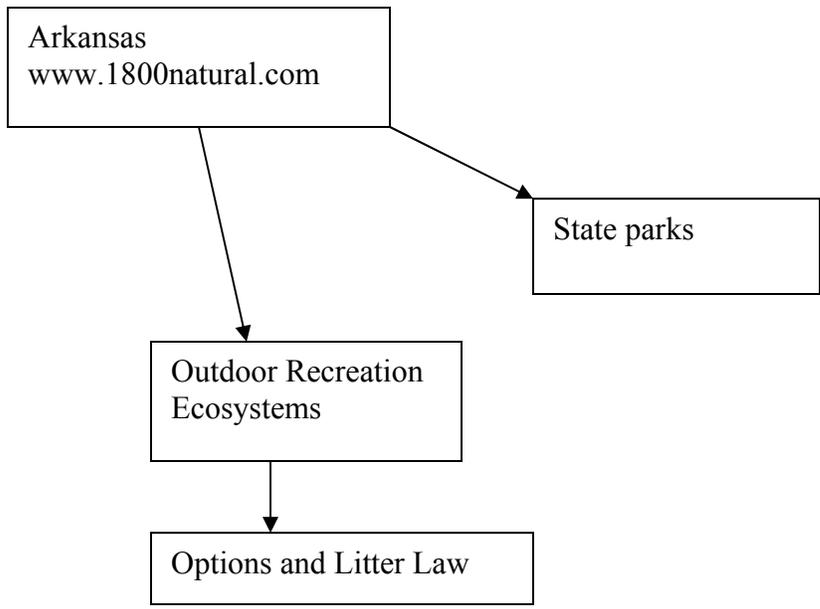
Alaska represents one of the largest ecosystems in the United States. Alaska, on the Arctic Tundra, is home to large predators, including gray wolves, brown bear, and golden eagles. These are important components as well as sensitive measures of ecosystem health. Tourists have access to all regions and can enjoy the mountains on the inland side, and the ocean on the other side. There is a variety of fauna and flora each in their own ecosystem. Alaska presents a number of tourist options and attempts to educate the tourist on eco and natural situations and issues found in the state.



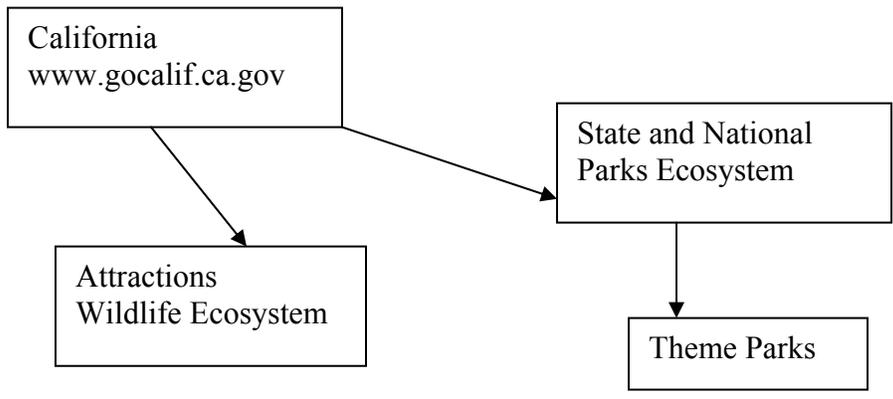
Arizona similar to Alaska is almost entirely remote but maintains extensive regions of pristine deserts. Arizona is a state in transition and has the fastest growing metropolitan city in the United States. The largest population groupings are found in Phoenix followed by Tucson and smaller communities. The state is basically uninhabited except for corridors along roads and highways. The state website presents considerable awareness and links to travel options for the state and demonstrates one link for Eco-Tours.



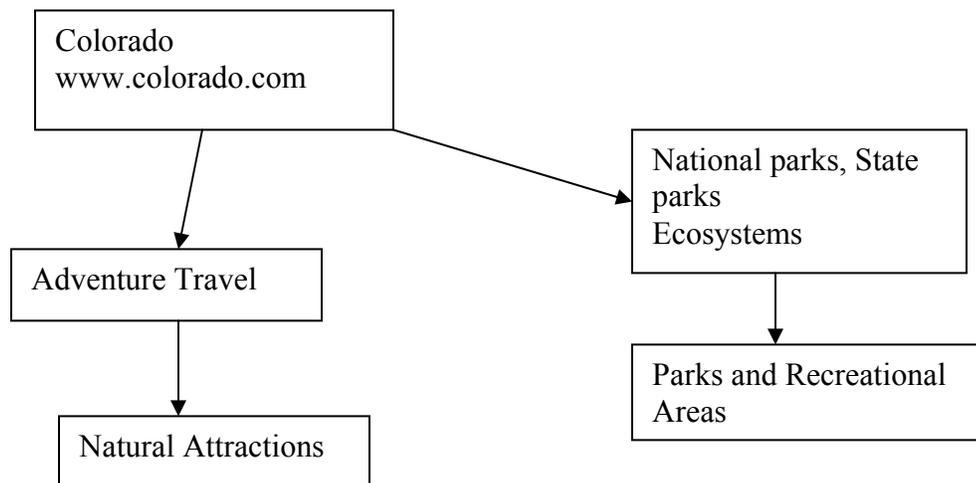
Arkansas indicates on their state web site that they are the “Natural State”. The web site provides ecological images and connects directly to the Arkansas State Parks web site providing information on tourist options. The official site also has a number of options to the number of connections as to outdoor recreation. Specific options for tourist use, such as bird watching, game and fish, hiking, camping, caving and even diamonds are common tourist destinations. There is one link that outlines the new litter law in the state.



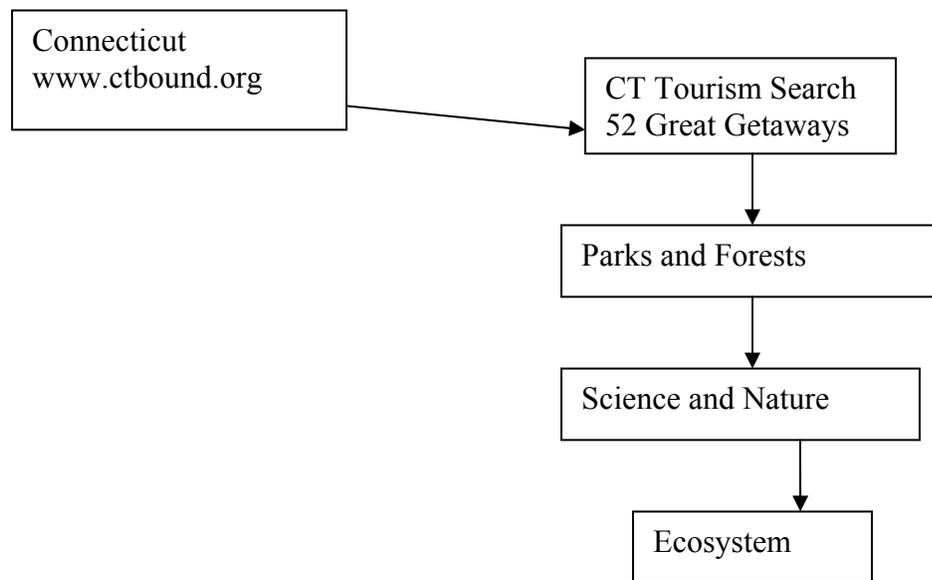
California provides the tourist with numerous options for eco-tourism. The state has unique mountain ranges, deserts, access to the pacific-ocean, lakes and woods, ponds and estuaries besides national and state parks. The state site present's options for the tourist but in many ways fails to introduce concepts to enable a stronger understanding by the consumer of California eco-environments. The growing population within the state and the attractiveness and growing demand for outdoor recreation may impact fragile environments.



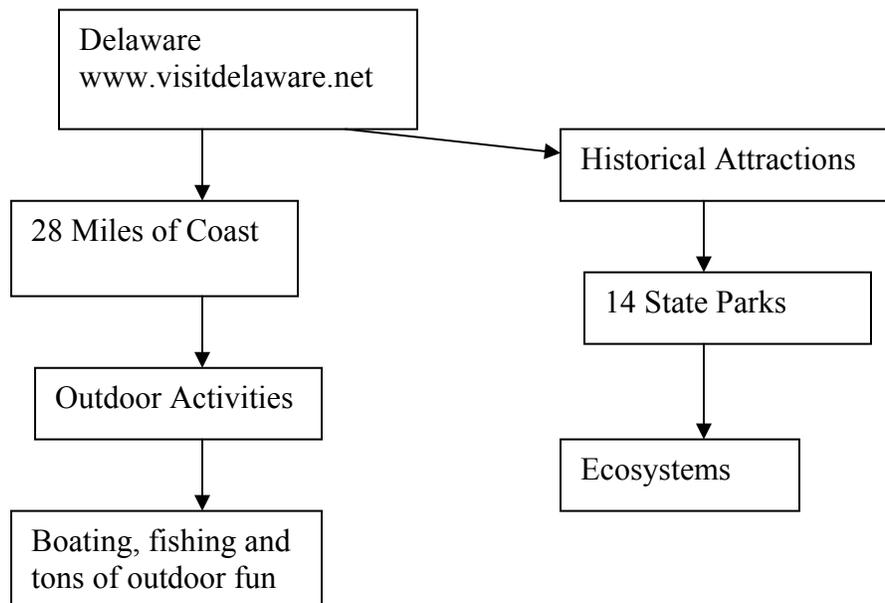
Colorado is considered to have a special ecosystem and is attracting many tourists. State law and its governing bodies actively protects its natural areas, mountains, parks and plains. The web site demonstrates the need to conserve and protect natural spaces for future use and informs the tourist of consumable options while educating the tourist.



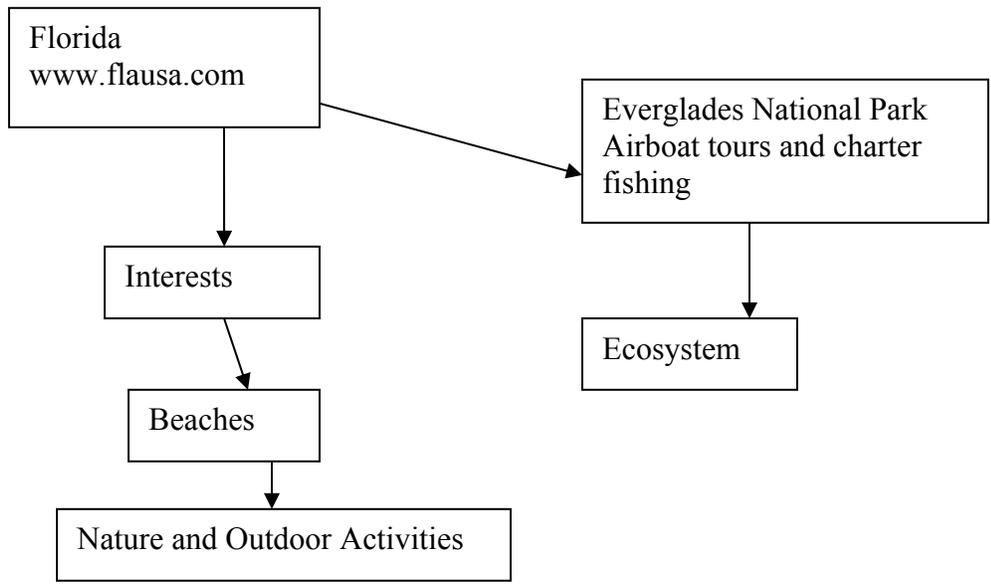
The site for **Connecticut** has 52 getaways or pages designed for those interested in destinations in Connecticut as a tourism option and all are listed by season. One option is based on the sharks, or ocean ecosystem. The web site presents a number of education and program guides to the site visitor. This corresponds to the state inventory of national parks and other public lands for the tourist to visit as ecosystems. Most web site information is centered on access to the beach areas of the state and some rural areas.



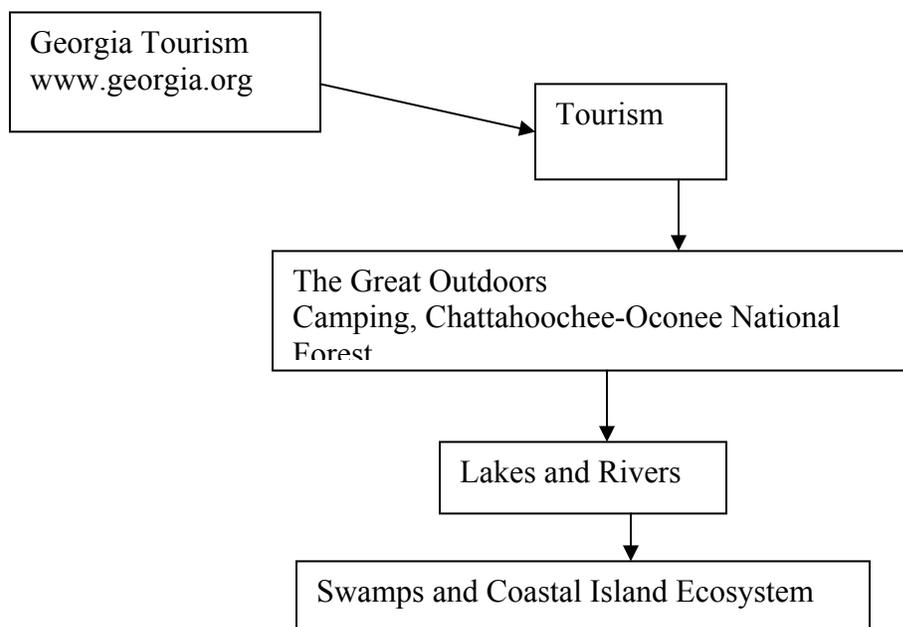
The web site for **Delaware** address the states forested ecosystems, support its wildlife and demonstrates that it needs to maintain the diversity of Delaware's rivers, streams, and wetlands. In review of the state it seems that citizens of this state hope to provide future generations with healthy populations of plants, animals, and a diverse array of native ecosystems. Its lands and waters provide rich and productive habitat for a myriad of songbirds, waterfowl, fish, reptiles, amphibians, and native plants. Action needs to be taken to preserve these ecosystems. Outdoor activities include canoeing, fishing, golfng, biking, hiking, bird watching, horseback riding and hunting.



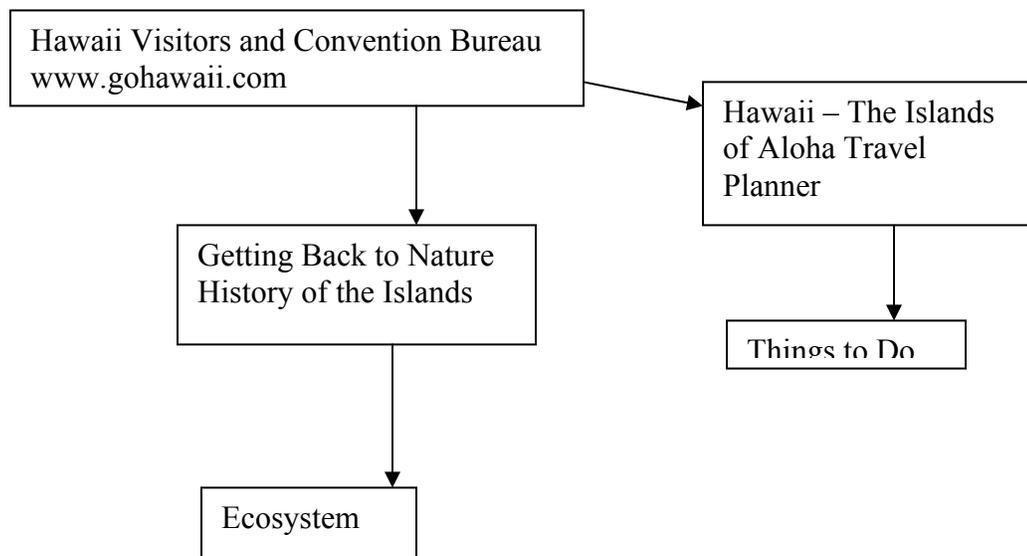
Florida is considered on the top tourist destinations in the United States. With increasing development and tourist demand the impact on the local ecological environment needs to be addressed. Key areas that need to be addressed are water, estuary, parks the Everglades, flora and fauna, water mammals and sea life. The impact of man on the state is measured and realized each day. The Florida Tourist seems to be uniformed on the issues. The current web site demonstrates the attractiveness of the state and diversity of touristic options. Little is provided on the impact of tourism and how the tourist can help protect the natural environments.



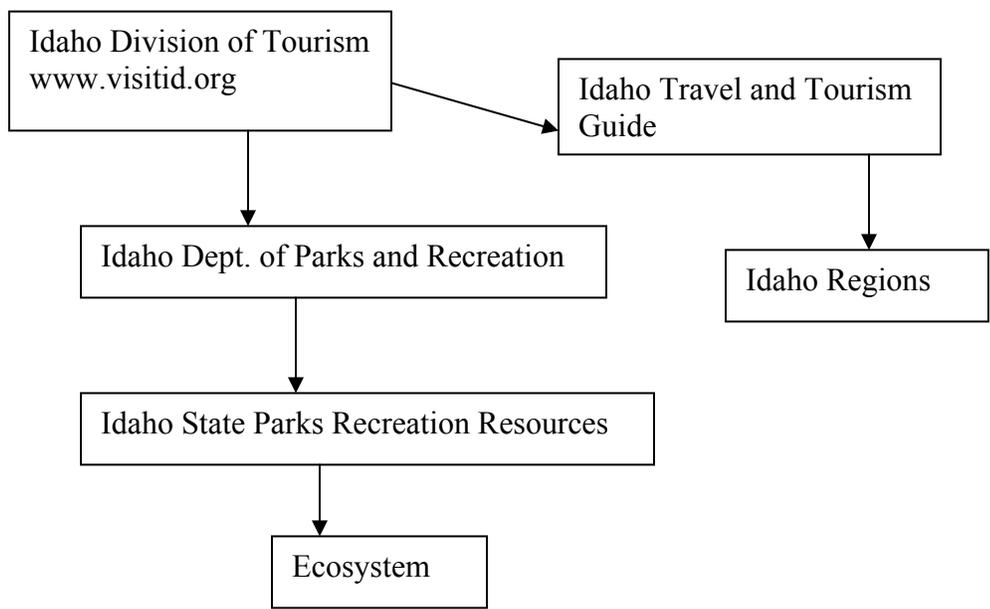
Georgia is rural but maintains key eco features such as the Okefenokee Swamp and the coastal islands. Each region is unique regarding their ecosystem and sustainable needs. Georgia's large national forests like the Chattahoochee-Oconee offering tourists hiking, miles of streams and rivers and numerous options to interact with the environment. The vast Okefenokee Swamp is covered in peat deposits so unstable that a hard stomp can cause surrounding trees to tremble and sway. Gray's Reef, one of the largest in the Southeast, is home to thousands of local endangered species, including the threatened Loggerhead sea turtle. This state goal is to preserve these areas to link parks, preserves and buffer zones to sustain ecosystems and preserve regions over the long term.



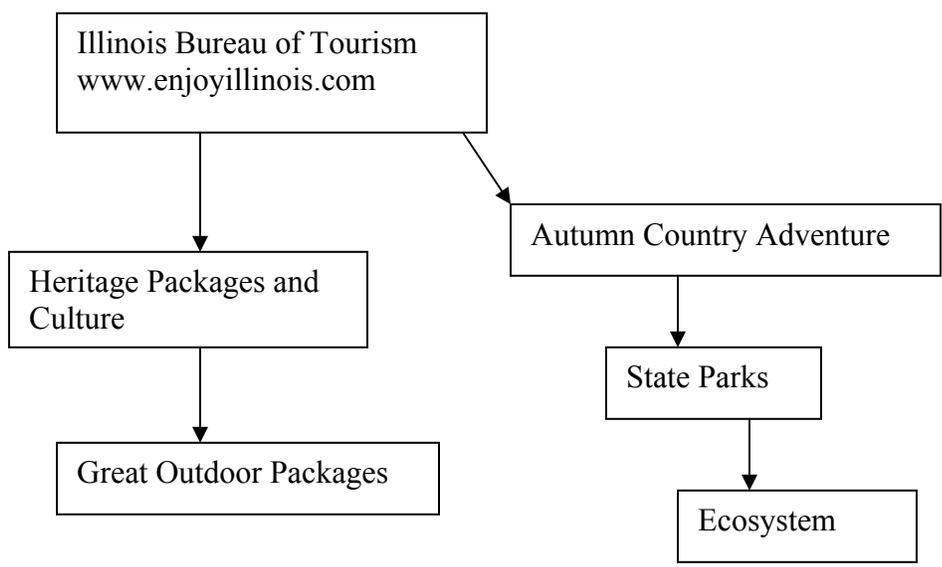
The **Hawaiian Islands** by themselves are special ecosystems. Each island is unique to itself and its evolution is recent considering mainland destinations. The diversity of the environment and increasing demand by tourists on each island has placed local environments at risk. Flora and fauna are placed at risk as development takes away needed land to enable sustainability. The attractiveness of the Hawaii is demonstrated in the official website and demonstrates some concern over eco-related issues within the state. For most part the tourist is unaware of the fragile nature of the islands and the impact of their presence in rural or pristine areas.



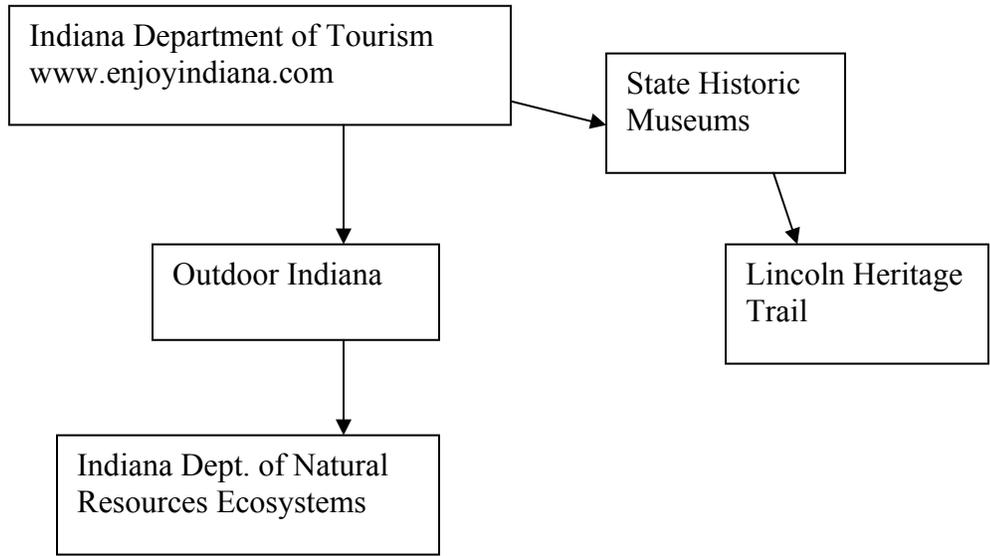
Idaho known best for its “Famous Potatoes” maintains an extensive ecosystems that consist of mountains, lakes, and arid lands, prairies and, the largest growth of Ponderosa pine in the United States. This state presents travel options for the tourist and demonstrates through its park and recreation sites ecosystem issues and concerns. Idaho state has a well-defined view regarding ecosystems and attempts to present this information to the potential tourist.



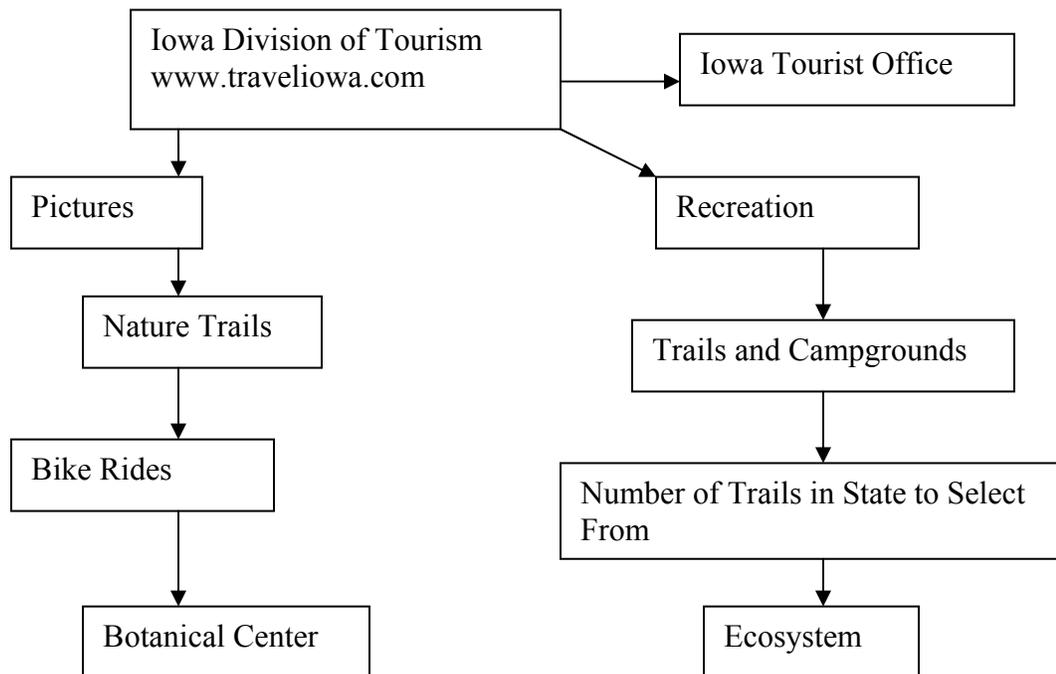
Named the Prairie State, **Illinois** provides many opportunities of different types of access to local ecosystems. Illinois has an Eco-watch network to oversee various rivers in the state. Other groups include: Forest Watch, Prairie Watch, and Urban Watch. To become a member or a “ Citizen Scientist”, you can volunteer while you are on vacation with the Illinois Eco-Watch Network. The purpose is to promote awareness and get children to become active in conservation. Illinois has five major ecosystems: prairie, wetlands, forests, rivers, streams, and lakes.



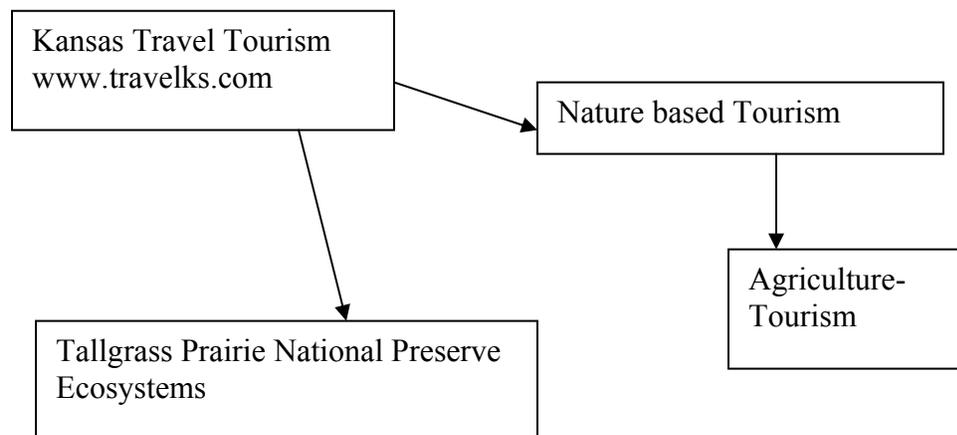
Indiana situated between Ohio and Illinois is unique in topographical features unknown to most travelers. From the sand dunes on Lake Michigan to the springs found at French Lick, the state maintains an array of ecological attractions. Currently the state has designed a play for research on its ecosystems with a plan to share findings and process with children and tourists. The terrestrial Eco-system research initiative defines what it believes are the main research questions and policy issues for the state.



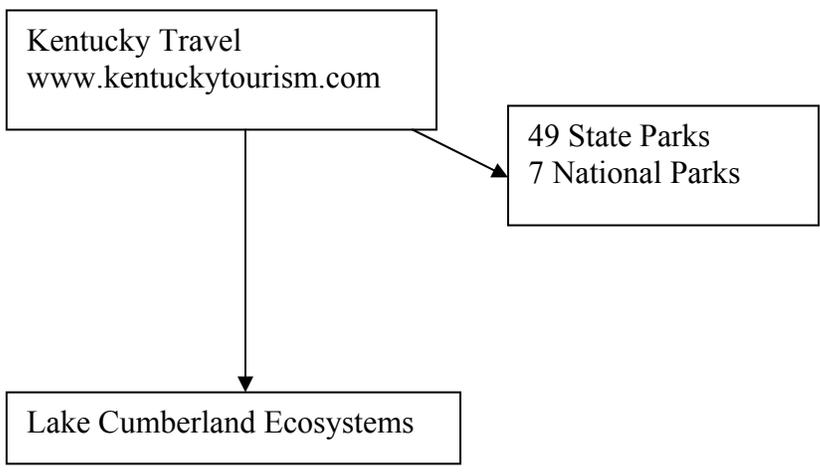
Iowa geographically placed in the center of the United States offers topographical features and formations for the tourist. The state known for its corn production also has a wide array of ecological features formed from the ice age. These areas found in western Iowa comprise a landform, culture and ecosystem that is unique in the world, made of pure loess. The web site presents to the tourism a variety of outdoor options for consumption and offers some information regarding ecological management.



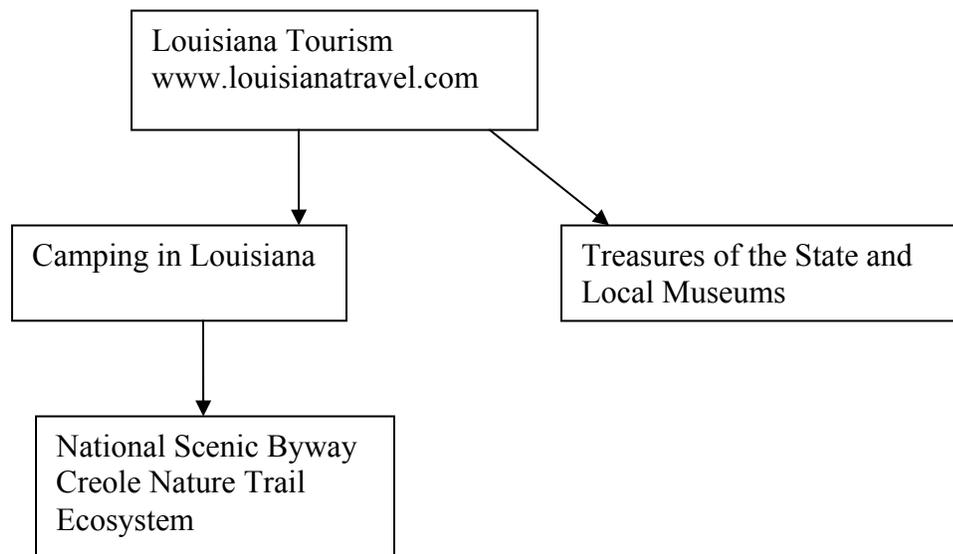
The tall grass prairies of **Kansas** are the historical and key Eco-feature for the state. The importance of the prairies would eventually be developed by the National Park System for the protection of this very special environment. This Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is a recent addition and was created in 1996. This was created for the present tourist and future tourist's travel destination. View some of the most unspoiled and diverse ecosystems in the country.



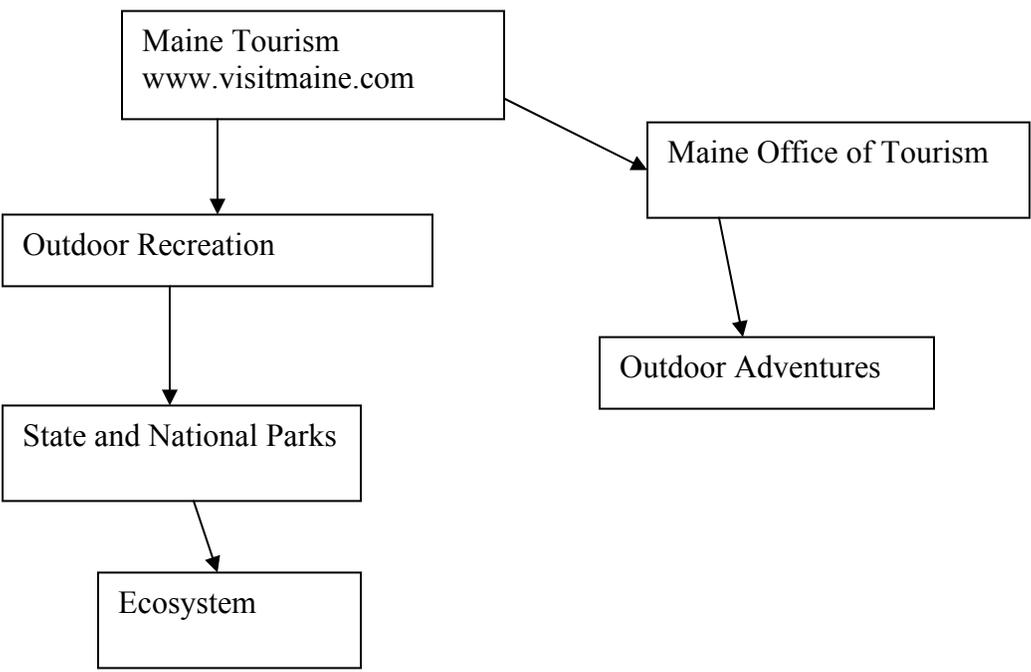
Kentucky maintains a diverse ecosystem for the tourist and tourism development. The state has mountains, plains and is very diverse in its flora and fauna. The state is very attractive from a tourism perspective offering potential visitors a cultural heritage, environment, and entertainment unique to the region. It is noted Kentucky has signed an agreement to restore the ecosystem and shore of the banks of the Cumberland River and Lake Cumberland. The project will stabilize portions of eroded stream bank, reestablish and protect the riparian buffer, and restore suitable macro-invertebrate substrate to reduce adverse impacts to aquatic resources caused by erosion. The web site offers viewers some exposure to ecological concerns and issues in the state.



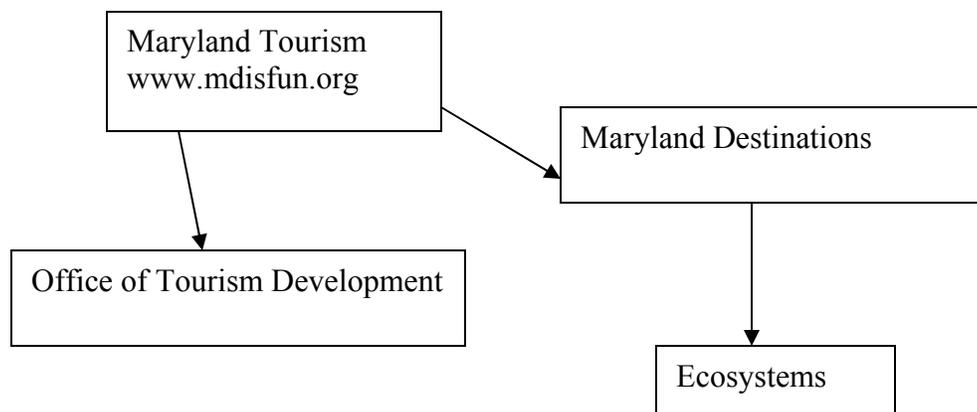
Louisiana is a southern state positioned along the Mississippi River and the gulf coast, offering a number of ecological options for the tourist. Scientists have noted that the wetlands of Louisiana are highly vulnerable to climatic changes and overuse by industry. The state has created the Wetland Creation/Restoration project of the Louisiana Coastal Areas. Also the state has established the Louisiana – Ecosystem Restoration: Barrier Island Restoration and Marsh Creation and River Diversion projects. The state has taken an active role in the redevelopment and sustainability issues surrounding its natural environment. The web site alludes to these concepts but does not disclose Eco-issues for the potential tourist.



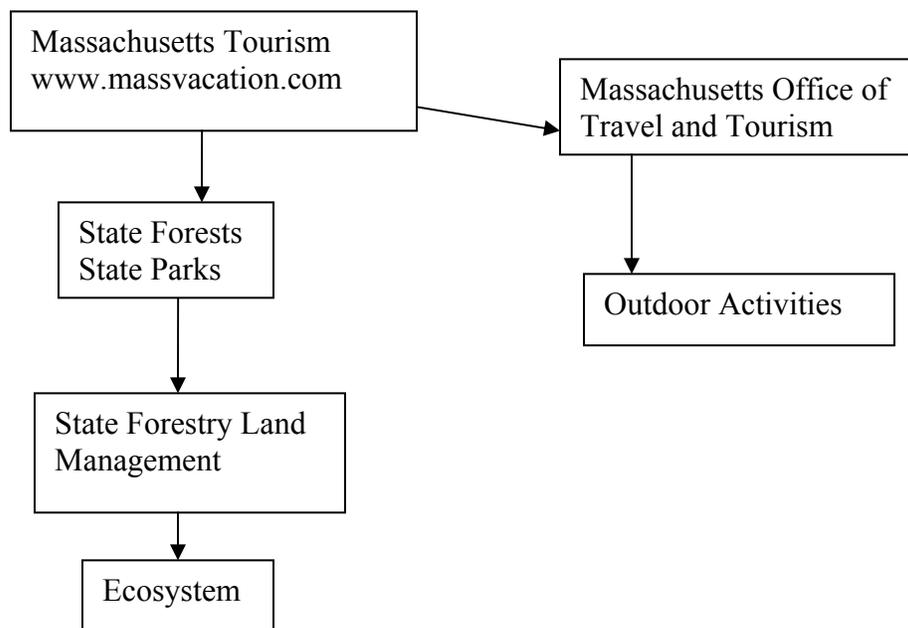
Maine is highly active and very dedicated to the protection, conservation, and enhancement of the state's ecosystems through promotion of individual understanding and awareness. The diverse nature of the state allows the tourist to be introduced to a variety of ecological habitats from ocean and inland waters to mountains and plains. The state introduces concepts in its web site to potential tourists.



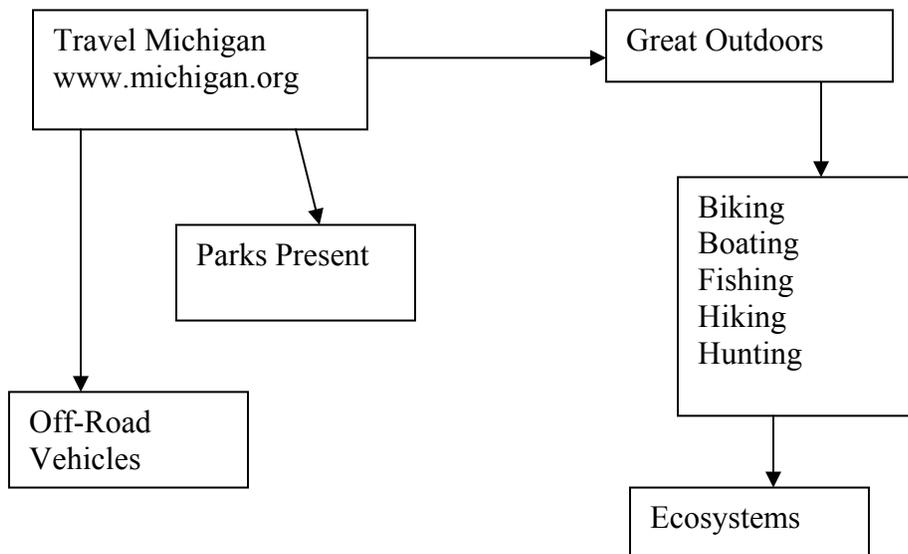
The State of **Maryland** has its own unique array of tourist and Eco-related features. From its western mountains, estuaries, Atlantic Ocean beaches and inland flat lands it has a vast assortment of outdoor activities, unique attractions and historical landmarks. There are oysters, crab, striped bass, and many other species that adapted to its estuarine environment. This is a thriving ecosystem where fresh and salt water intermingle, and where inflow from the sprawling 64,000-square-mile watershed provides abundant nutrients. The work of the Office of Tourism Development is guided and supported by hospitality leadership under the appointed board of executives representing lodging, retail, transportation, food service and attractions are members of Maryland's General Assembly, which is involved in ecosystems for the state. The web site presents a number of concepts to the potential tourist to the state.



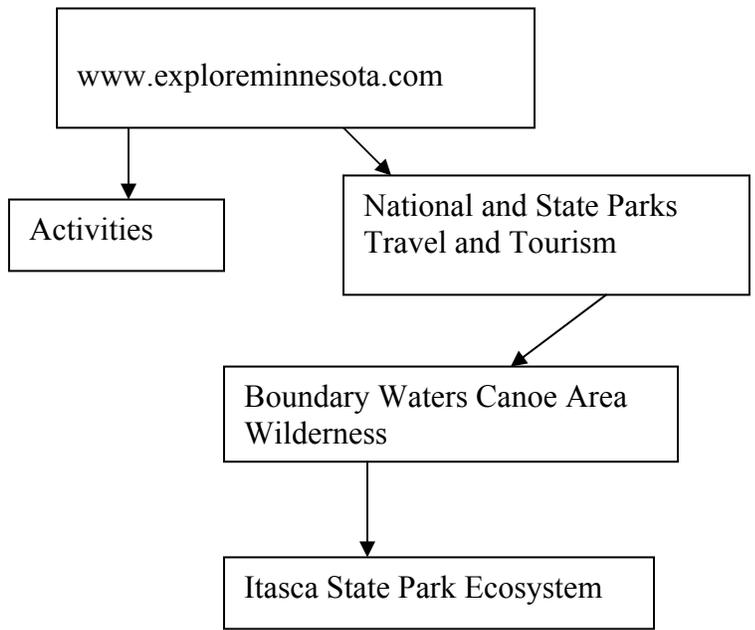
The **Massachusetts** ecosystem features outdoor activities, with beaches, skiing, biking, hiking, golfing, fishing, water sports, adventure trips, and camping in state forests and parks. If a potential tourist selects “View Massachusetts Forests and Parks: A Guide to Recreation”, the reader will find that this is an official Forest and Parks publication. They will then realize that the State Forestry Land Management division, conducts timber management and sales on state lands; road, bridge, and boundary maintenance; fire hazard mitigation; threatened and endangered species habitat restoration; and continuous forest inventory and analysis to support ecosystem planning. The web site demonstrates some linkages for the tourist but does not present specifics to help the tourist understand the Eco and travel related issues within the state.



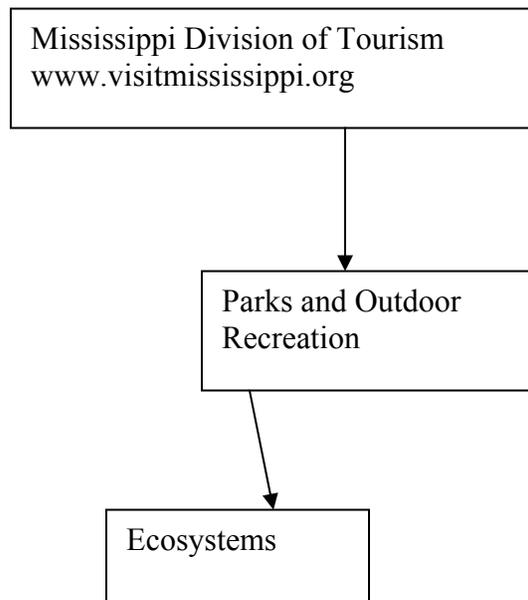
Michigan is centered on the great lakes of the midwest. The state's unique position maintains a variety of wetlands and riverside ecosystems, fresh water and forests; and is in all just part of the state. The state of Michigan features 3,200 miles of shoreline, 11,000 inland lakes, 5,600 miles of snowmobile trails and four national parks. Research indicates that the state of Michigan has already lost more than half of its wetlands and riverside ecosystems. The state presents some information regarding information Eco-tourism issues for the tourist but with such a unique position seems to have omitted a variety of concepts that would allow the consumer to better understand the Michigan travel environment.



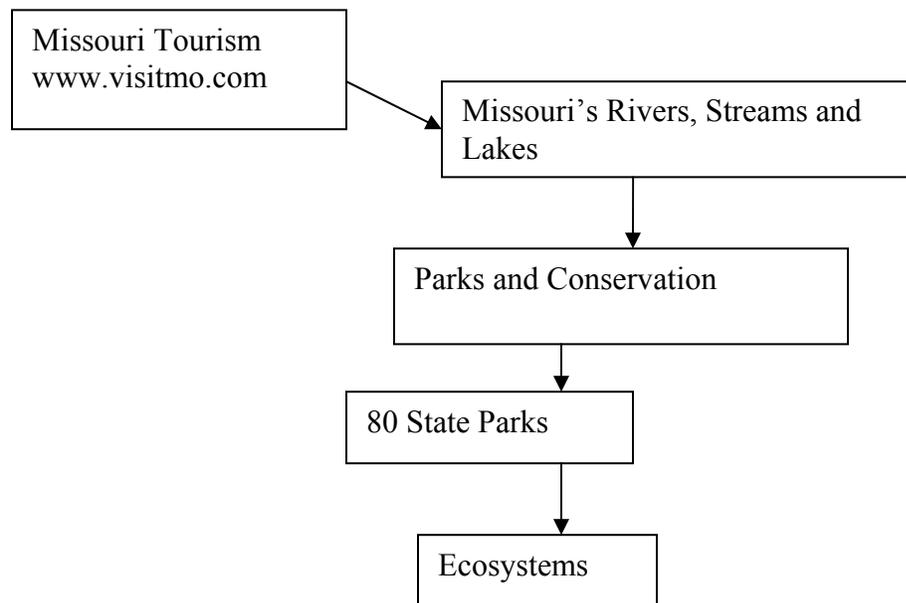
Minnesota is known for its 10,000 lakes and also maintains a variety of other Eco-related areas. The state has actively pursued tourism development in all regions. The state has the oldest state park system in the country with the establishment of Itasca State Park on April 20, 1891. Centers have been developed to educate the tourist and park user about ecological issues and management. However, the web site for the state does not demonstrate those concepts to the user viewing the web site.



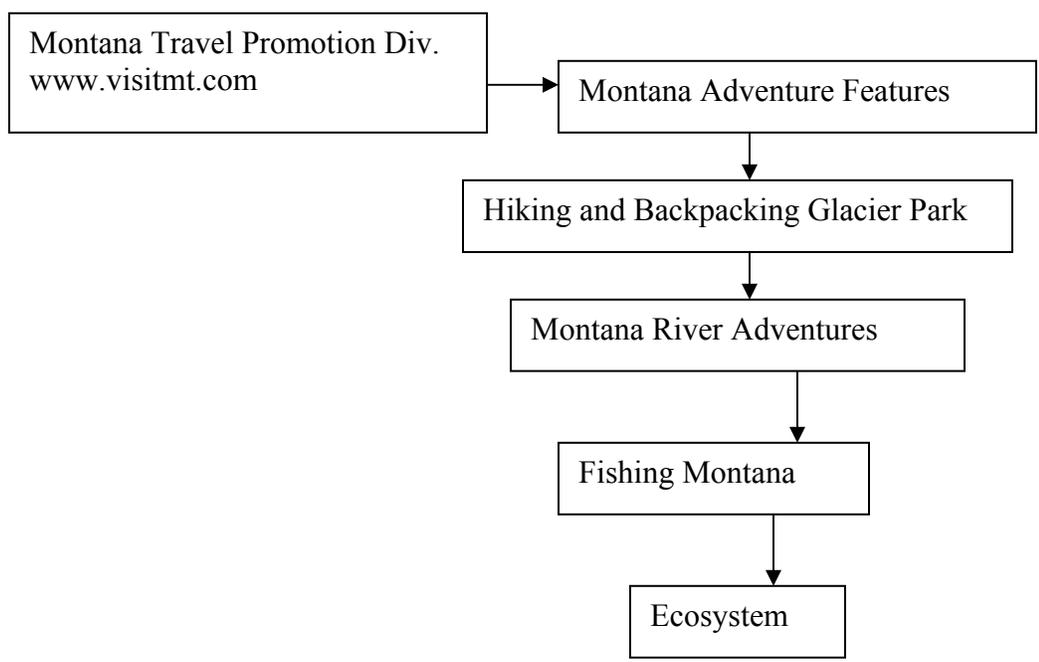
In **Mississippi**, Eco-habitats are associated with either the coastal plain or the Mississippi Delta or along the forests and waterways found throughout the state. About 55% of the land area of Mississippi is covered with forests, including bottomland hardwoods, pine woods, and oak-hickory forests. Land along the Mississippi River has changed the ecosystem of the terrestrial land and animals. Tourism to the state is lower than most states actively pursuing tourism development. With lower tourist number the potential impact on rural areas or Eco-regions is less. In comparison to other states, little is presented in the way of Eco-information for the potential tourist.



Missouri maintains a vast region known as the Ozark Forest. It is one of the most comprehensive ecosystems and combined recreation areas in the United States. There are 80 state parks and 1.5 million acres of national forest land within the state with access directed toward hiking trails, campgrounds, and sports activities that accommodate all kinds of outdoor enthusiasts. The web site introduces the state and its tourist product but only alludes to Eco-issues in its park and natural environment sections.



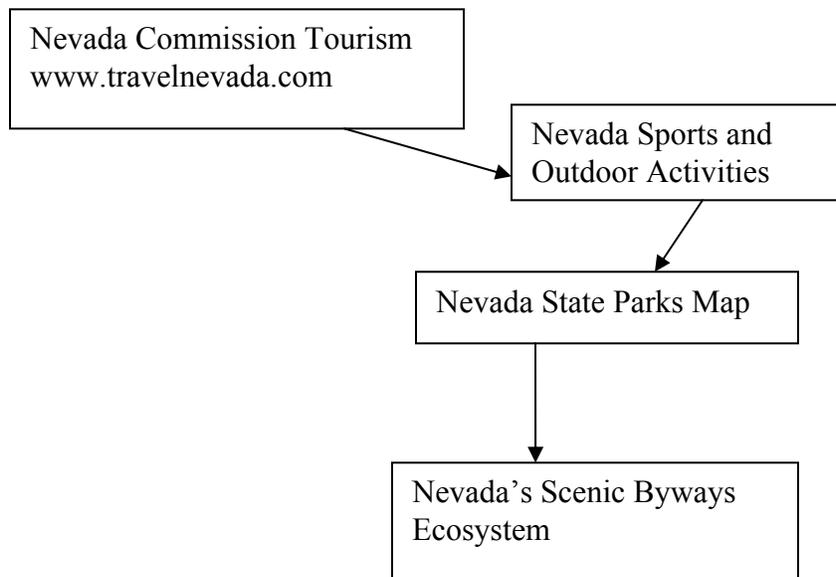
Montana has three major ecosystems, which are made up of mountains, lakes and rivers. The state also has the unique topographical feature of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, and the Salmon-Selway Ecosystem. The tourist has a number of options to select from and all interact within the unique environment. The web sites offers the potential tourist information about the state's vast natural environment but has only limited concepts regarding Eco-related issues and concerns for the tourists.



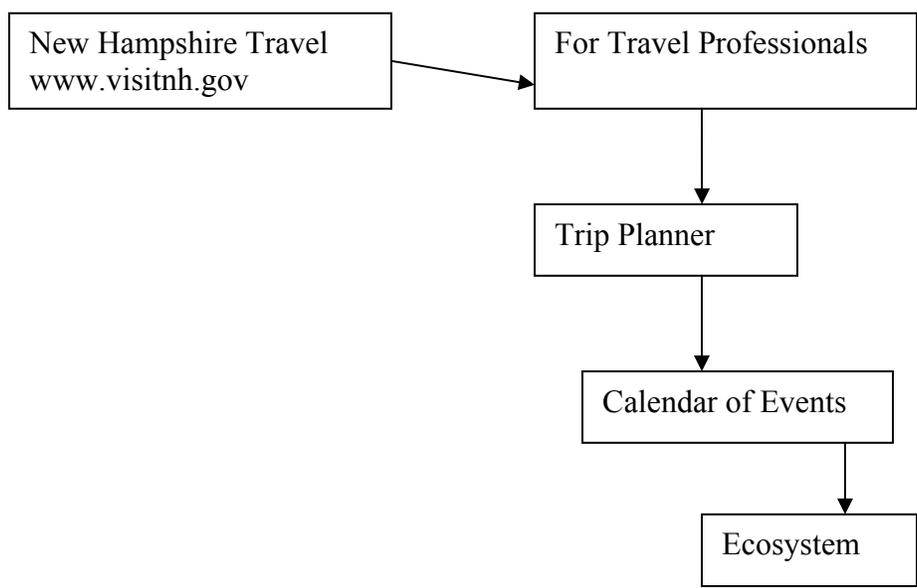
The state tourism website for **Nebraska** indicates an animal and environmental awareness through the State Department of Parks and Recreation. The State sponsored tourism site had no information regarding eco education for the tourist. On the Parks linked site some information was provided regarding state policy and conservation issues. The links were outside the department website and at the fourth level of potential information.



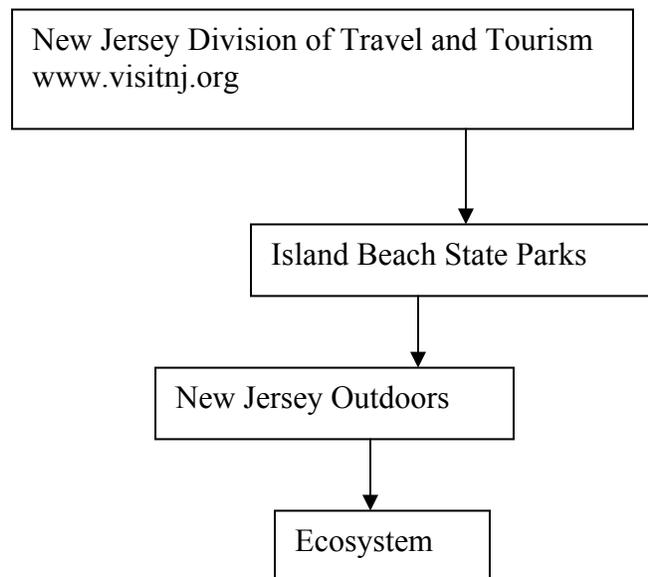
The state of **Nevada** is basically arid and undeveloped except for small towns and two key tourist centers in the north and south. Some forests still remain in the north near California but the state is primarily desert and dry. The changes in the Nevada environment tend to be natural rather than man made. Few tourists venture too far into the hinterland of the state. The state does demonstrate on its web site outdoor activities but does not present the Eco-related issues found in dry desert regions.



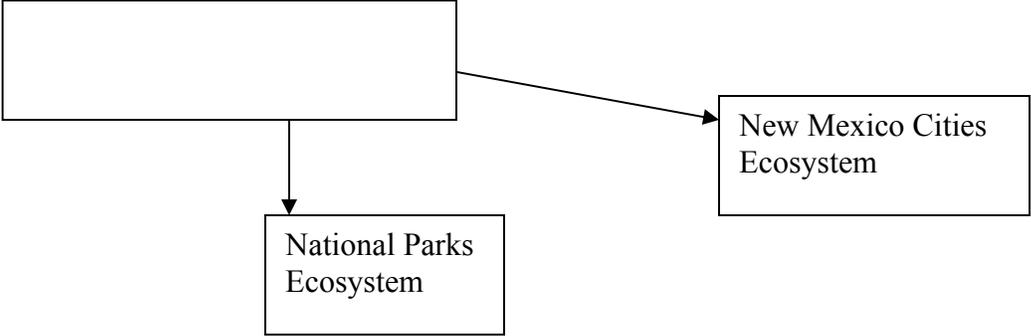
New Hampshire like its neighbors, Vermont and Maine, has taken the position of helping people to understand their unique ecosystems. With a small and fragile environment the state has taken on the position of assessment and restoration of degraded ecosystems. The objective of ecosystem restoration is to restore and maintain the physical, chemical, and biological conditions necessary to allow a natural and native ecosystem to function and evolve over time. The ecosystem restoration has been with wetland and salt marsh restoration, as well as pine barren restoration.



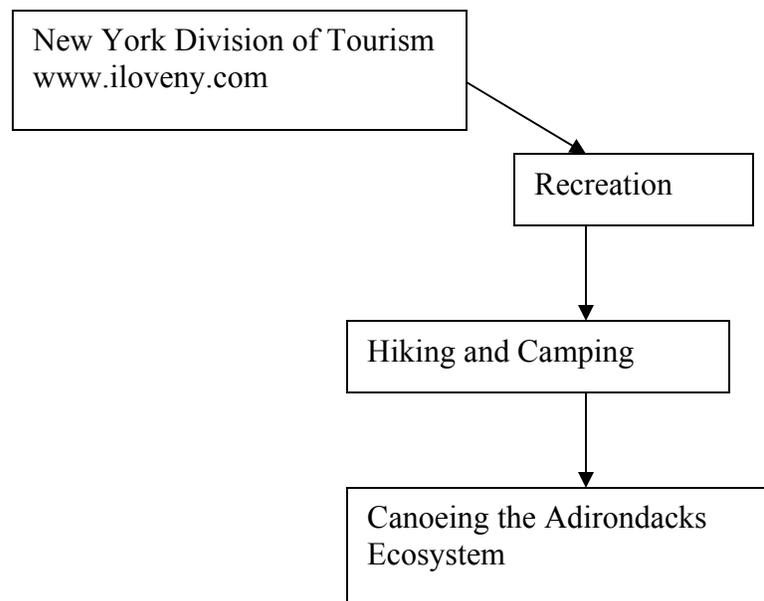
New Jersey is a densely populated state that has some unique environmental features. From the Atlantic Ocean, Hudson River to the Delaware Water Gap the foundations of a diverse Eco-system exists. The water-centered regions of the state have some of the highest population clusters while the western highlands region could be considered less populated and full of micro ecosystems. For the tourist, New Jersey's great outdoors offers exciting ecosystems vacations for the whole family. The state has millions of acres of open space that can satisfy every outdoor interest, including birding, hiking, kayaking, and camping. The web site presents little information regarding the Eco-side of tourism and issues surrounding its use. This seems to be a critical omission considering the state's location to the largest population centers on the east coast.



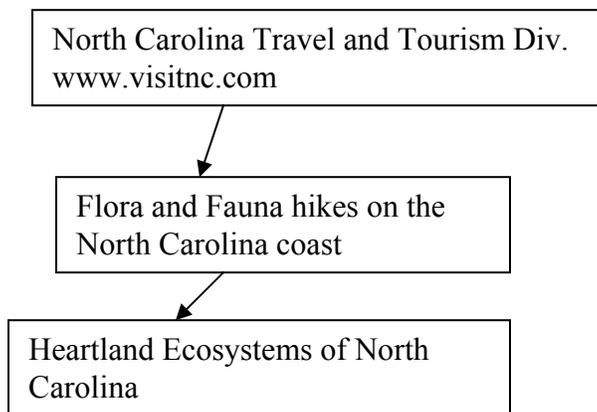
The Website for **New Mexico's** Department of Tourism demonstrated little regarding eco-related issues for the potential tourist. The e-links that do allude to some eco issues are linked to the cities of New Mexico and the National Park websites. But these do not go beyond simple references. Eco- education is not apparent in the links. Ground water is the principal source of water for public, industrial, and agricultural use in New Mexico. The reservoirs on the larger perennial rivers, including the Rio Grande, Pecos, and San Juan rivers, provide storage to reduce the variation in stream flow and severity of floods.



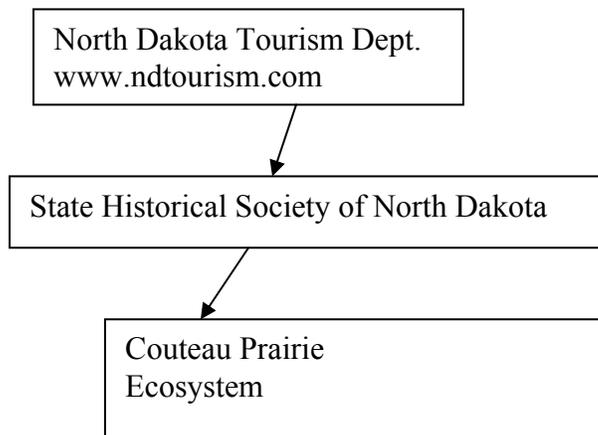
A variety of ecotourism adventures are available in **New York** State. From the densely populated New York city and its surrounding regions, to Fire Island a short distance from New York City to the Catskill mountains, finger lakes, lake Erie and upstate rural areas and lakes. The state maintains a diverse Eco-related tourist base for potential consumers. The web site presents only a marketing overview of the options available for the tourist and does not disclose Eco-related concepts to the potential tourist.



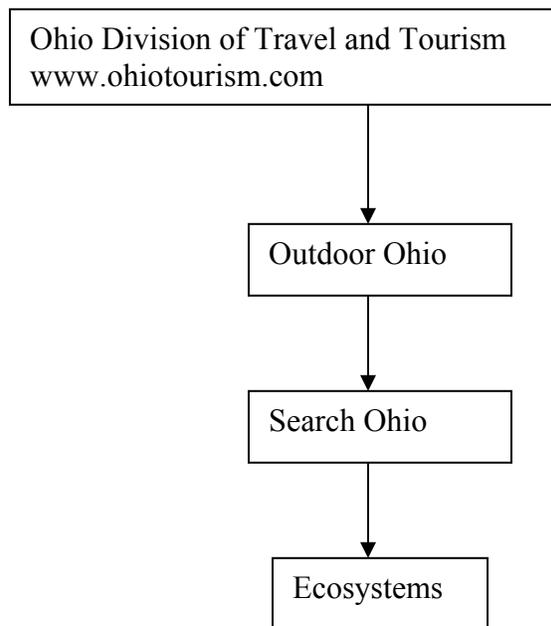
Tourism to **North Carolina** has increased in the past 20 years. The state indicated that some coastal and identified flora and fauna are potentially threatened by the demand for natural environments. Some concerns listed are impacts on bald eagles, red-cockaded woodpeckers, otters, raccoons, alligators, and mink. Other impacts can be found in the forest ecosystems where various woodland types are in danger of extinction, due to development of industries. The state web site indicates to the tourist options for Eco-travel but does not demonstrate the issues to the potential tourist in an informative web page or site.



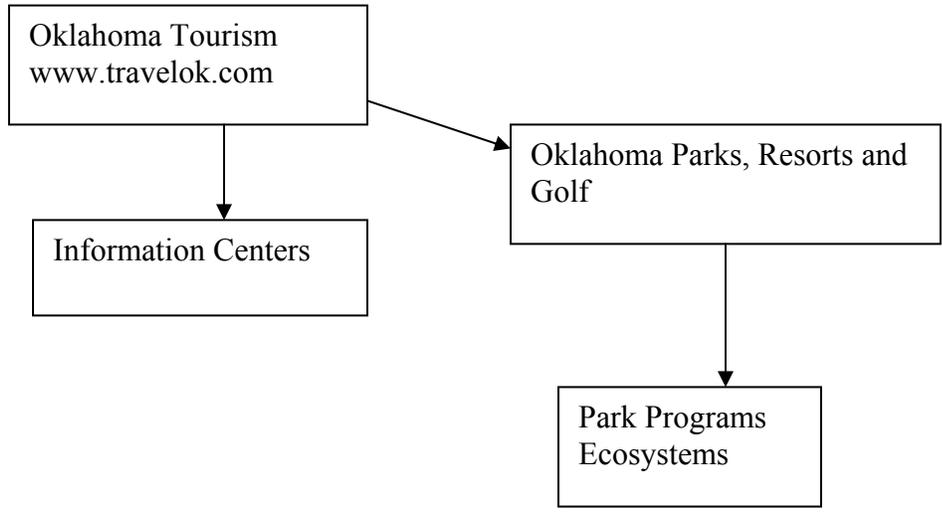
North Dakota like its neighbors maintains an extensive array of prairie land for the visitor. Within the state there is Heritage Center which houses the official State Museum, State Archives, a research library, auditorium, and facilities for historic preservation, archeology, education, publications, administration, and supervision of state-owned historical sites. Along with an active preservation focus the state maintain the 6.08 million-acre Coteau Prairie, which is an area for migratory birds in North America in addition to the western placed International Peace Garden Park. The web site directs potential tourist to the links that have some information regarding Eco-tourism but essentially requires the tourist to have an understanding of Eco-concepts.



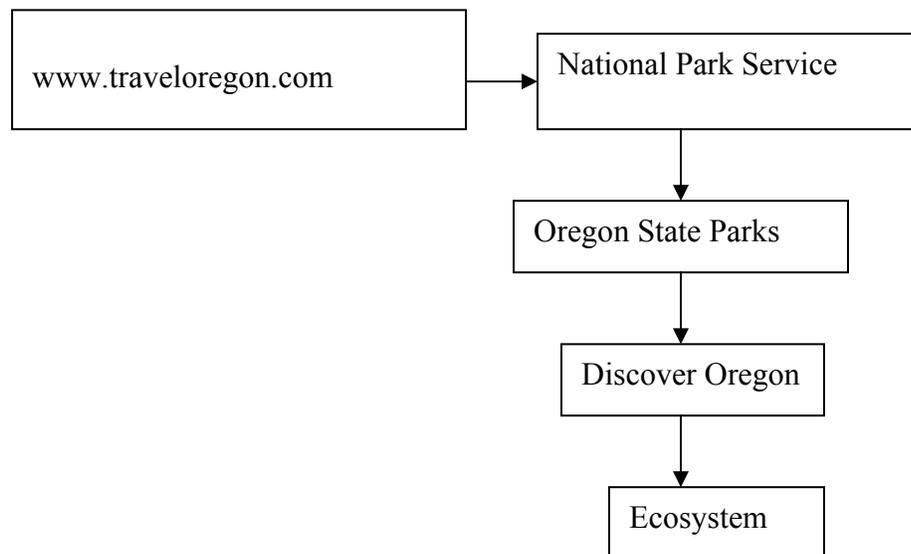
Ohio maintains a geological position between the eastern seaboard and watershed to the west. The state is active in creating mechanism to protect it environment and in 1990 established an effort was launched to help preserve Lake Erie's natural resources, protect the quality of waters and ecosystems and promote economic development of the region. This state has done clean up of many of its water systems most notably in Cleveland. The state has developed research efforts to develop the technical ability to improve and rejuvenate damaged ecosystems, such as the coastal waterways.



The Information Center in **Oklahoma** has information on the economic and ecosystems as the importance of the Oklahoma travel and tourism industry. There are 12 Oklahoma Welcome Center, located at major points of entry across the state. This river has a number of ecosystems in Oklahoma which call for attention to the rivers and their ecosystems to help the variety of fish habitat that are impacted by humans on the fish. Dams built for flood control have blocked fish species from arriving at their spawning grounds. The work will restore and protect the fish such as paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, pallid sturgeon, and alligators. The web site has some information regarding Eco-tourism and education for the traveler.



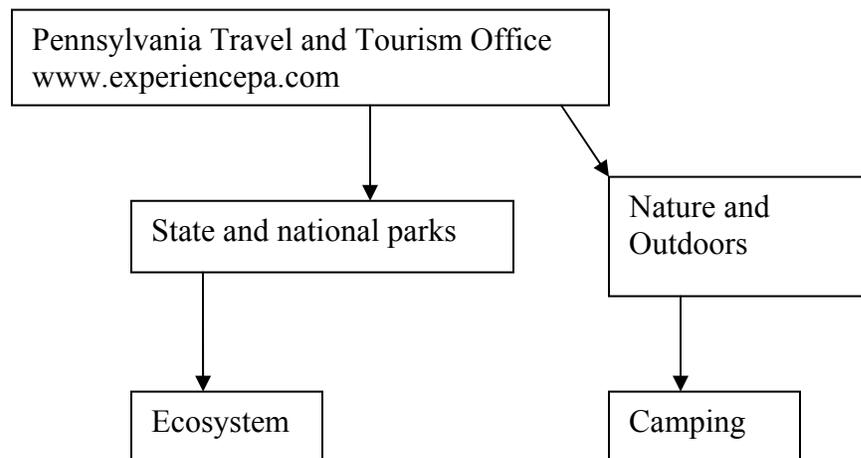
In **Oregon**, the state provides numerous Eco-friendly environments. The state features many ecosystems, such as mountains, ocean, and prairie lands. With more than nine climate zones and seven different regions, the terrain, flora and fauna vary greatly throughout the state. The state has gone to extreme lengths to protect its environment establishing laws to manage access and development. The web site offers only a glimpse of the Eco-diversity found in the state and relies on those visiting to know and understand the facts regarding their visit to Eco-related sites and ecosystems.



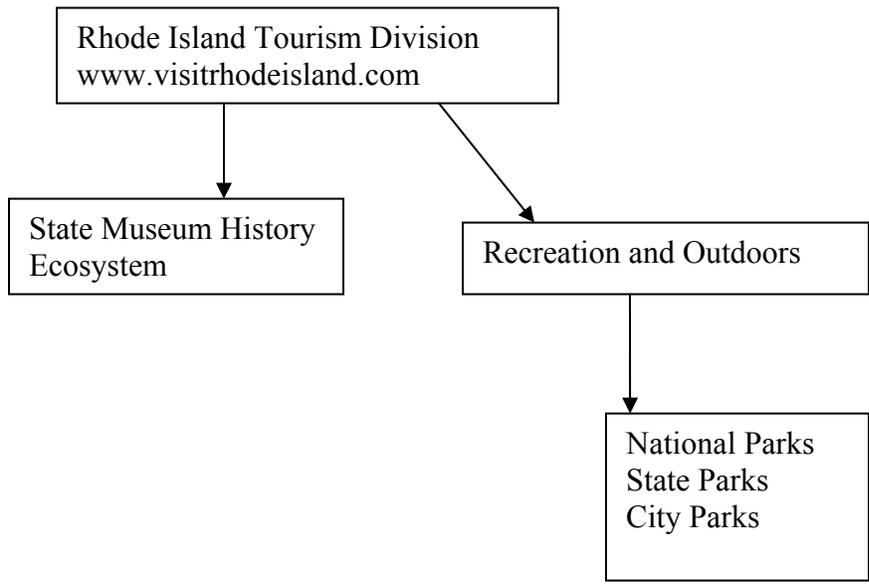
The state of **Pennsylvania** has 17 million acres of forest land which covers 59% of the state. The ecosystems consist of forests, woodland, wetlands, peat land and riparian habitats. There are two major forest types: oak/hickory and northern hardwoods.

Pennsylvania has hundreds of campgrounds and 116 state parks which make the state an ideal destination for camping. In the state parks there are over 7,000 family campsites, nearly 30,000 picnic tables, 56 major recreational lakes and over 1,000 miles of trails.

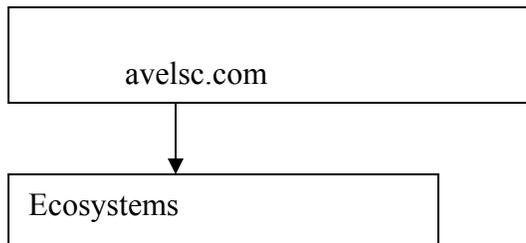
The web site promotes access while not presenting much more than basic concepts regarding Eco-tourism and its impact on ecosystems.



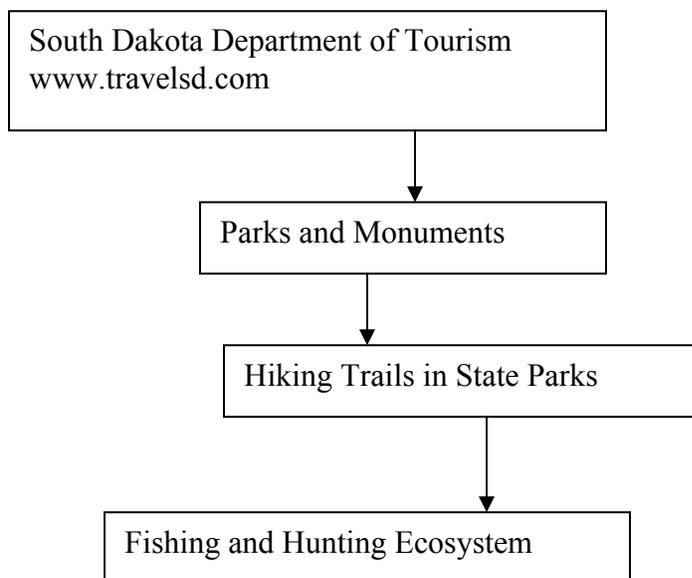
The state of **Rhode Island**, small by comparison to other states, has just as many Eco-related activities for the tourist. It has beaches, biking, camping, fishing, golfing, hiking, hunting, parks and water sports for tourists to use. The states location near Boston and New York also enable access by a large tourist generating populations. With such a limited land resource and Eco-environments it can be said that outdoor recreation has an impact on the Rhode Island ecosystem. The web site presents only information regarding the state and does not inform the traveler of its Eco-sensitive or managed environments.



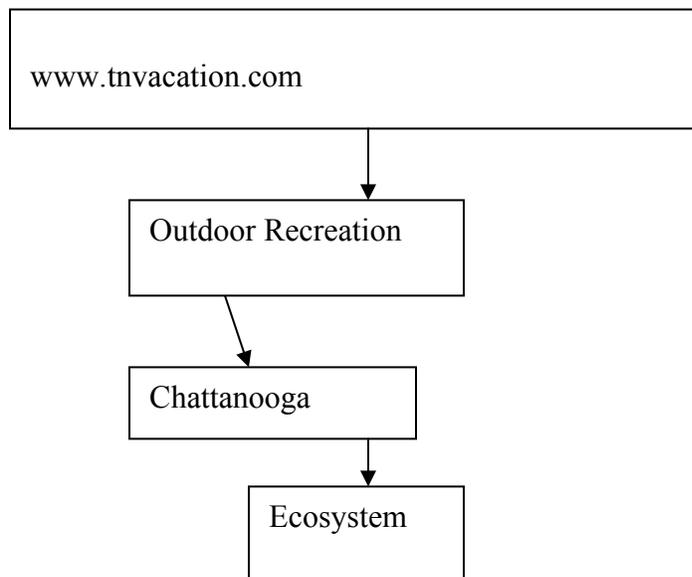
South Carolina has a variety of ecosystems created by setting aside the land for state parks. It is one of the southeast region's premier sites for viewing the rapidly diminishing longleaf pine/wiregrass ecosystem. This unique ecosystem, shaped by thousands of years of natural fires that burned through every two to four years, has been reduced to fewer than two million acres, representing a 97 percent decline in this important ecosystem. The state park service manages and protects more than 80,000 acres of South Carolina's natural and cultural resources, which range from deep mountain wilderness and old-growth forests, to plantation homes, battlefields, waterfronts and wetlands, where each has their own ecosystems. The web site presents information on services but little on the Eco-related topics that may govern the state natural spaces.



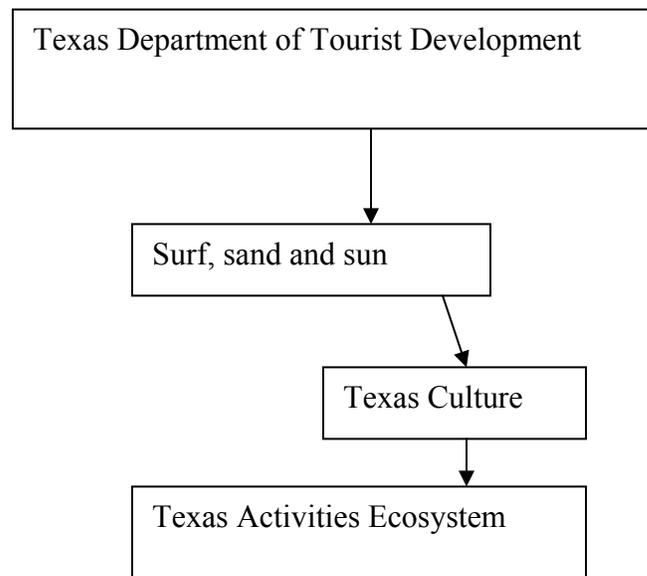
In the state of **South Dakota** there are prairie or grassland ecosystems dominated by grasses, with plants and animals that have evolved together in a mutually dependent relationship. There are six different types of prairie ecosystems in the state. These include the tallgrass prairie, mixed grass prairie, shortgrass prairie, desert grasslands, intermountain grasslands, and the California annual grasslands. Three prairie types are found in South Dakota: these are the tallgrass prairie, mixed grass prairie, and the shortgrass prairie. The state of South Dakota has a prairie dog ecosystem. The prairie dog towns provide for a unique ecosystem which also has food, shelter, and foraging areas for many small rodents and many birds. There are also black-footed ferret, swift fox, and insects. An ecosystem is an interconnected community of living things, including humans, and the physical environment within which they interact. The ecosystem approach integrates ecological protection and restoration with human needs to strengthen the essential connection between economies and ecosystems.



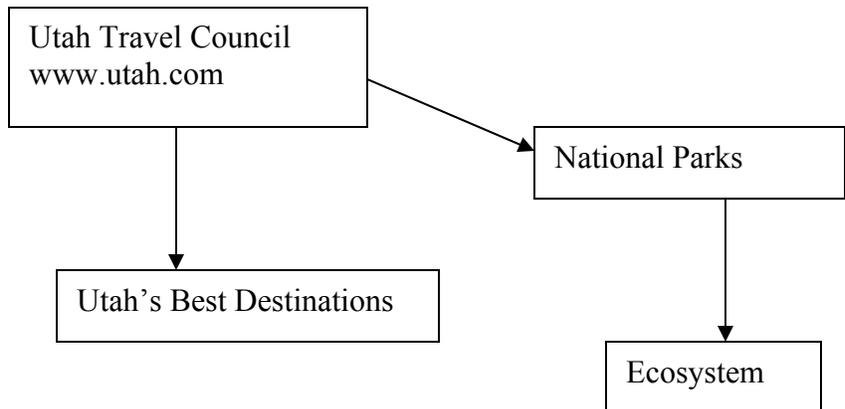
Tennessee is considered by most people to be a rural and pristine environment. Southeast Tennessee has the most diversified flora and the most diverse aquatic ecosystem and fisheries in the United States. Outdoor recreation activities in Tennessee include hunting, fishing, whitewater rafting, camping and hiking. Also included are heritage trails with history, music, arts and crafts in all parts of the state. The state indicates that it has about fifteen thousand miles of rivers with a supporting and substantial forested ecosystem. The official web site demonstrates the activities that the state has to offer but does present a little information regarding Eco-tourism and its sustainability.



The state of **Texas** has many types of ecosystems that present themselves in many forms, such as tropical coral reefs and mangrove areas to the deserts, hills, and mountain regions. These ecosystems are often highly complex and are affected by tourists on vacation by overuse or unlimited access. The state is a complex tourist environment and offer a wide array of ecological and environmental options yet only a brief overview of ecological issues and topics were presented in the web site.

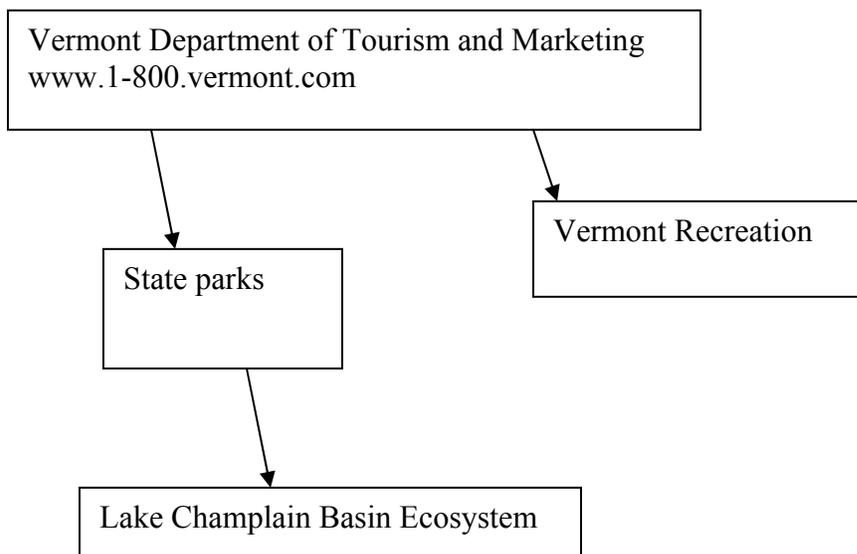


Utah is another western state that is basically uninhabited except for a cluster of smaller cities and towns. The state maintains a variety of National Parks with wilderness that in many ways are the essential tourist products for the state. Key Eco-tourism based features include Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon, Arches National Park, Canyon Lands National Park and Capitol Reef National Park. Each has wilderness ecosystems that are unique, fully accessible, and important to the state's tourism industry. Ecosystem awareness for the tourist was presented through links via the national park presentation.

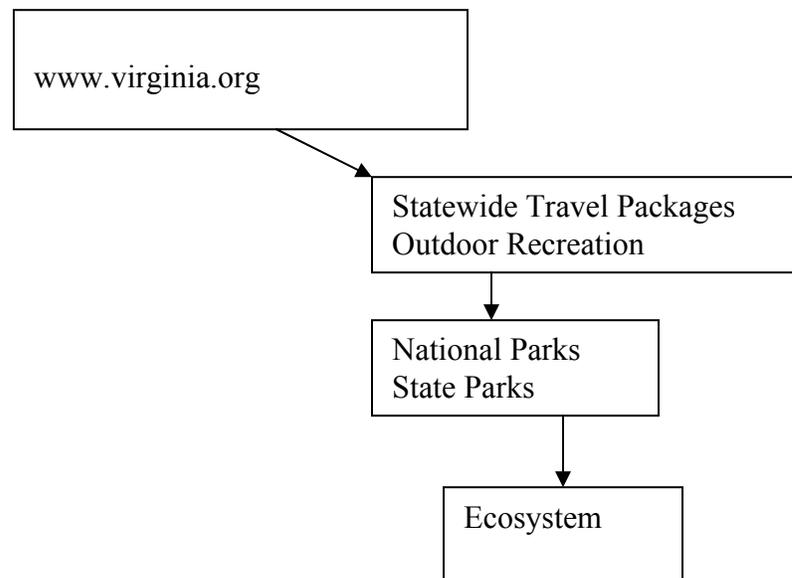


The state of **Vermont** has a unique and diverse ecological environment. The Lake Champlain Basin has a diversity of many kinds of plants, animals, and natural communities. The physical environment and the living organisms comprise a lake ecosystem. The continuing health of Lake Champlain ecosystem will have a large impact on the region's economy and Vermonters' use and enjoyment of the ecosystems around Lake Champlain are to protect the habitats of fish, wildlife and plants. The state also maintains 52 state parks which offer camping.

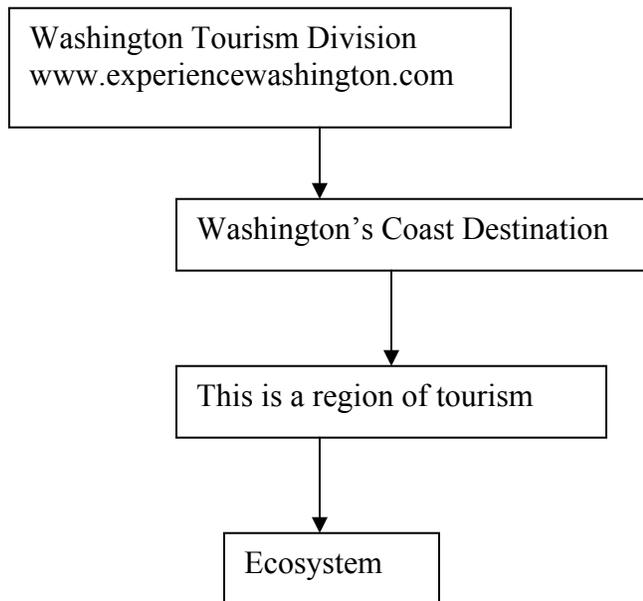
The small size of the state and the high demand for this tourist product places Vermont at risk in maintaining its Eco-tourism base for long term use. Concern over the states tourism product and impact is presented but a wider detailed presentation to the potential consumer is absent in the current web site.



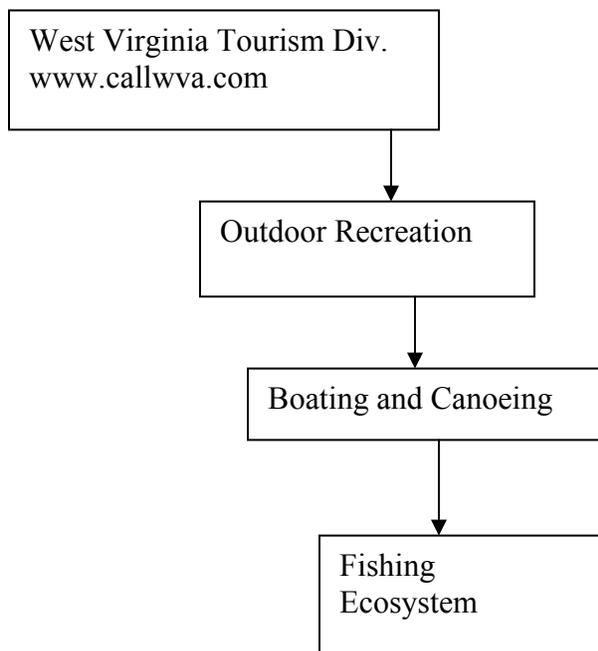
Nature based tourism is the fastest growing sector of the tourism industry in **Virginia**. This includes traveling to pristine destinations to view natural areas and scenery, as well as historical and cultural attractions. The state recognizes its Eco-type of tourism as important, considers it soft travel and views it as a way to protect and enhance natural ecosystems. The state indicates that tourists visit its national and state parks in all seasons. Cumberland Gap National Park maintains 50 miles of trails in 20,000 acres of wilderness ecosystem, Holiday Lake that offers a scenic 150-acre lake amid rolling hills. Information regarding Eco travel in the state is presented after the outdoors and parks information.



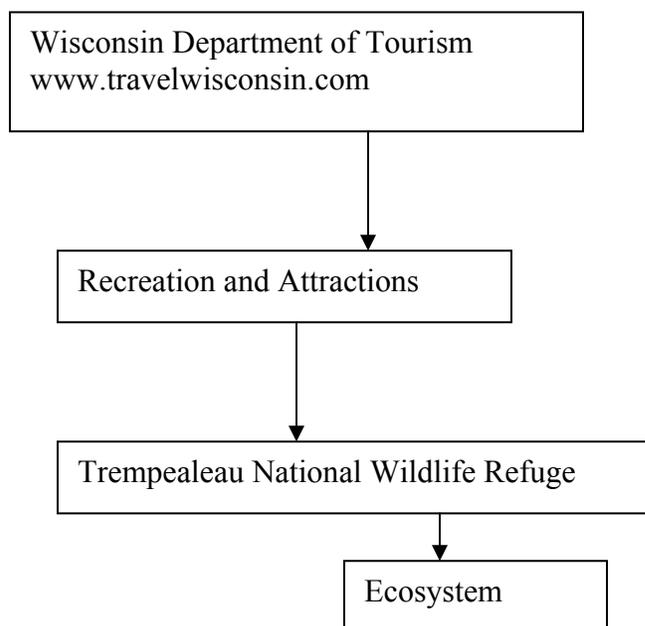
Wildlife research and management efforts in **Washington** State are directed at improving our knowledge and understanding of wildlife ecosystems. This state maintains a number of key tourist features such as islands, mountains, rivers, ocean access parks and special topographical features such as volcano's and national parks. The state demonstrates a vast list of tourist options and presents some foundations regarding ecology and the tourist interaction. Washington with its increasing tourist demand nationally and internationally, in the very near future, will need to provide more about the pristine and limited access tourist destinations for sustainability issues.



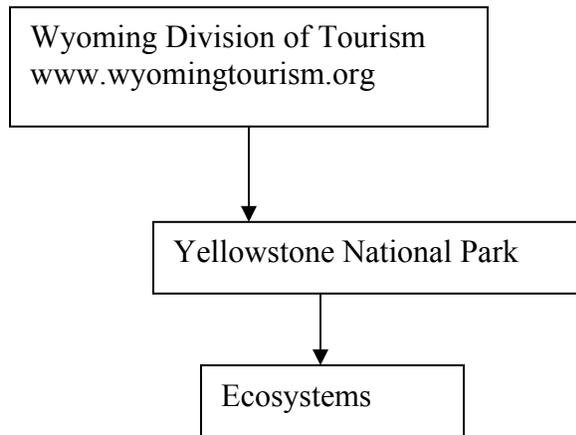
The web site for **West Virginia** presents Eco-tourism projects that capitalize on the rich forestry heritage of mountain communities in this region. It will also provide the public some educational foundations regarding historical and contemporary efforts to maintain healthy forest ecosystems. The state of West Virginia is 97 percent forested, and much of this cover is in high-elevation areas. The headwaters of a few river systems, support populations of beaver and cold-water fish, such as native trout, and are found in the forests. The state has witnessed a rapid growth in tourists with an increasing interest in the rural areas. The site offers the visitor basic options on the state and little information on Eco-related information.



Wisconsin has witnessed an exceptional growth in tourism since 1996. Travel expenditures in 1996 were \$6.7 billion and are listed at \$11.38 billion for 2001 by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. The impact of the growth may be seen in the state parks, nature trails, and hiking paths that provide a variety of spectacular ecosystems all year-round. The state maintains an exceptional array of eco-systems and should consider how to maintain those by using them. With access to a variety of natural environments there may be an impact on the diverse ecosystems that support a variety of wildlife within the state. The Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge has 5,600 acres with nature trails and a five-mile driving tour, an area for bird watching and access points to ecosystems and includes access to the Mississippi River. The state web site has the following links in its web site regarding ecological issues and content:



In the state of **Wyoming**, the Yellowstone ecosystem is widely used by tourists in hopes of seeing: grizzly bear, grey wolf, lynx, bald eagles, elk, moose, wolverine, and the cutthroat trout. The state of Wyoming has natural ecosystems, urban populations, industry, and other uses within the ecosystems of the variety of mountains, rivers, lakes, and prairie ecosystems for the tourist. Tourism growth in the past 10 years indicates there will be increased pressure on the natural environments. The web site demonstrates the attributes of the tourist services available but does not detail the important Eco-related issues found in the state.



The results of this study found in this chapter modeled the levels and content found on individual web sites for the fifty United States. In review of the individual sites each site did present in some way ecological or environmental issues surrounding use or awareness for the tourist. Most sites only presented one or two topical themes regarding ecology or located eco-systems.

Chapter Five

The primary purpose of this study was to review the content regarding eco-tourism as presented by official web sites for the fifty United States. The results of this study indicate that state tourism marketing has taken on elements of eco and ecological information within state sponsored web sites. The following tables demonstrate the level the information is found within a given web site and the type of content and location of the information.

Number of LayersDown	States	Web Site Tourism	Activities	Ecosystems	Education	Outside
2	Alabama	X	X	X		X
2	Alaska	X	X	X		X
2	Arizona	X		X	X	
2	Arkansas	X	X	X		X
2	California	X	X	X	X	X
2	Colorado	X	X	X		
2	Connecticut	X	X	X	X	
2	Delaware	X		X		X
2	Florida	X		X	X	X
3	Georgia	X	X	X	X	X
2	Hawaii	X		X	X	
2	Idaho	X	X	X		X
5	Illinois	X	X	X		X
2	Indiana	X		X	X	
3	Iowa	X		X	X	X
2	Kansas	X	X	X	X	
2	Kentucky	X		X	X	
3	Louisiana	X	X	X	X	
4	Maine	X	X	X	X	
3	Maryland	X	X	X	X	X
3	Massachusetts	X		X	X	X

Number of LayersDown	States	Web Site Tourism	Activities	Ecosystems	Education	Outside
2	Michigan	X		X	X	X
4	Minnesota	X	X	X		X
3	Mississippi	X		X	X	
3	Missouri	X		X	X	X
4	Montana	X	X	X		X
3	Nebraska	X		X	X	
4	Nevada	X	X	X	X	
3	New Hampshire	X	X	X	X	X
4	New Jersey	X		X	X	X
2	New Mexico	X		X	X	
2	New York	X	X	X		X
3	North Carolina	X		X		X
3	North Dakota	X		X	X	X
4	Ohio	X	X	X	X	X
3	Oklahoma	X		X	X	X
2	Oregon	X	X	X	X	
4	Pennsylvania	X		X	X	X
3	Rhode Island	X	X	X		X
2	South Carolina	X		X		X
4	South Dakota	X	X	X	X	
4	Tennessee	X	X	X	X	X
3	Texas	X		X	X	X
2	Utah	X		X	X	X
3	Vermont	X	X	X	X	X
3	Virginia	X		X	X	X
4	Washington	X		X	X	
2	West Virginia	X		X	X	X
3	Wisconsin	X	X	X		X
3	Wyoming	X		X	X	X

The 50 states of the United States currently maintain travel and tourism related websites for marketing and information purposes.

For this study it was assumed that each state has eco-related issues and a potential conflict directly with tourism development. It was assumed that each knows the risk of tourism development in ecological fragile areas. The study also used the following definition as a focal point for web site review.

Eco-tourism by definition is the responsible travel to natural areas that safeguards the integrity of the ecosystem and produces economic benefits for the local community that can encourage conservation.

In review of the fifty web sites, the 50 states all have some type of ecosystems, which they demonstrate in some visual or textual way. Some were listed as destinations and some were listed as activities. Few states demonstrated a full presentation of ecological issues regarding tourism and thus fail to educate the returning and potential new consumer of touristic services. In a broad analysis of sites eco was listed as an activity by 25 states, direct presentation of eco concepts in varying degrees by all 50 states while eco education was presented by 35 states. A common theme was that all eco-related activities were considered outside or outdoors by 35 states.

Objectives

1. To model the presentation of ecological issues in state managed websites for the consumer.

The fifty states have many issues of the eco-systems to travel to their destinations. The web sites provide good information for those concerned about eco-systems and vacation destinations. From the fifty states, there are educational activities to learn in the eco-system destination. The states are stated in the number of layers down column that the following states are presented in the education column in the web sites. There are Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming.

2. To model the depth of search needed to locate eco-related information.

The fifty states have adequate information on the web sites to locate eco-related issues. The depth examined pertained to states that are listed as being 3, 4, or 5 layers down as demonstrated earlier in this chapter. The states seem to present most data in the category of “outside”. Most states have sites that quickly lead one to outside activities. The following states have outside places to be their destinations. The outside column states are Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

3. To inventory the ecological concepts provided to potential tourists regarding tourist behavior within the state.

Web sites for all fifty states were examined to model the location of eco-tourist locations and concepts. The states model this information in web pages about beaches, parks, mountains, and rivers at each location. The states that rated the highest in information were; Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

4. To create a standard model of information provided to consumers regarding ecological and environmental and related issues.

The fifty states have known and unknown ecological issues. Most states have the information indirectly presented in Outdoors or Activities. Some states have presented environmental issues and eco-tourism as individual web pages or links to similar sites. Key in the process of locating this information is the depth in which it is found within the site. Most all of the eco data or information was deeply layered into the web sit. The states that demonstrated this information tended to present the data at the 3rd, 4th or 5th page layer in the web site. The following states presented their eco related data at that in he states of: Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Summary Analysis and Recommendations

The ecosystems are distinctive places, fragile in their own right yet in demand by the tourist. The demand for outdoor activities by the future generations places many ecological environs at risk. The state by its charge as a governing identity must assume the role of protector of the environment for future use and preservation. With the rapid growth of tourism and increasing demand for outdoor activities the tourist of the 21st century will be making significant impacts on fragile environments.

The analysis of the data does find that 30 states indicate in some way they are trying to educate the tourist and presents options to inform the consumer about the regions they choose to visit. It will be important in the very near future to address sustainability issues and tourism. States need to review and adopt conservation plans and study individual ecosystems addressing decline, ecological consequences of loss and degradation, and current and potential threats to each state ecosystem.

The new world of marketing on the Internet is a new challenge for all products including those involved with destination tourism. The states play a key role in providing the potential consumer an awareness of the issues regarding their use. This does not say a state cannot promote tourism, but needs to encourage a responsible use of fragile tourist environments. The internet seems to have quickly evolved as the medium of choice for the travel industry and if effectively designed by planners, and be used to promote and educate the tourist about travel options and travel issues regarding ecological impacts before their arrival.

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<http://outdoors.myareaguide.com/Yosemite/preservation.html>

Appendix

State Travel and Tourism Offices is a list of e-mail addresses

Alabama www.touralabama.org
Alaska www.travelaska.com
Arizona www.arizonaguide.com
Arkansas www.1800natural.com
California www.gocalif.ca.gov
Colorado www.colorado.com
Connecticut www.ctbound.org
Delaware www.visitdelaware.net
Florida www.flausa.com
Georgia www.georgia.org
Hawaii www.gohawaii.com
Idaho www.visitid.org
Illinois www.enjoyillinois.com
Indiana www.enjoyindiana.com
Iowa www.traveliowa.com
Kansas www.travelks.com
Kentucky www.kentuckytourism.com
Louisiana www.louisianatravel.com
Maine www.visitmaine.com
Maryland www.mdisfun.org
Massachusetts www.massvacation.com
Michigan www.michigan.org
Minnesota www.exploreminnesota.com
Mississippi www.visitmississippi.org
Missouri www.visitmo.com
Montana www.visitmt.com
Nebraska www.visitnebraska.org
Nevada www.travelnevada.org
New Hampshire www.visitnh.gov
New Jersey www.nj.org
New Mexico www.newmexico.org
New York www.iloveny.com
North Carolina www.visitnc.com
North Dakota www.ndtourism.com
Ohio www.ohiotourism.com
Oklahoma www.travelok.com
Oregon www.traveloregon.com
Pennsylvania www.experiencepa.com
Rhode Island www.visitrhodeisland.com
South Carolina www.travelsc.com
South Dakota www.travelsd.com
Tennessee www.tnvacation.com
Texas www.traveltex.com

Utah www.utah.com
Vermont www.1-800.vermont.com
Virginia www.virginia.org
Washington www.experiencewashington.com
West Virginia www.callwva.com
Wisconsin www.travelwisconsin.com
Wyoming www.wyomingtourism.org