

PREFERENCES OF TOURISTS AND LOCALS
TOWARD ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON THE
STANDING ROCK SIOUX INDIAN RESERVATION

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ABSTRACT

Tuscherer, Sheldon Ray, M.S., Program of Natural Resources Management, College of Graduate and Interdisciplinary Studies, North Dakota State University, December 2006. Preferences of Tourists and Locals Toward Ecotourism Development on the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation. Major Professor: Dr. Robert Hearne.

Studies have shown that ecotourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the tourism market. To date, there has been very little systematic research focused on the general topic of ecotourism development on Indian reservations. This study researches possible ecotourism alternatives on the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation (SRSIR) in North Dakota. Choice experiments were employed to analyze the preferences of reservation residents and those of cultural tourists. Reservation tourism personnel and local investors will benefit from the information this study provides.

Data for this research were collected through a series of field surveying campaigns. Surveying was conducted on the SRSIR as well as off reservation sites in the surrounding area. All respondents were adults and included a random sample of reservation residents and tourists who demonstrated an interest in cultural and/or nature-based tourism experiences.

Results of this study demonstrate an overwhelmingly positive attitude by all populations toward ecotourism development. Local residents and powwow tourists proved to be insensitive to price, contradicting economic theory. Non-powwow tourists proved to be sensitive to price.