



Items of Interest

Recap of the Southern Region Extension Outdoor Recreation Listening Session

Ann Savage from NC State University representing the [National Extension Tourism and their Outdoor Recreation Working Group \(NEORWG\)](#) partnered with the Southern Rural Development Center and Extension partners from Texas A&M University and Mississippi State University to host a Southern Region Outdoor Recreation Listening session. The virtual session took place on Monday, February 18 with 21 participants and was designed to understand how to build capacity for outdoor recreation work within Extension.

Discussion topics and summary points include the following:

- Opportunities for outdoor recreation in Extension efforts in three key areas: health, environment and opportunities for new or expanded engagement.
- Challenges for Extension to do this work stemmed from four main sources: institutional, ability to access outdoors, landowner education needs and public education needs.
- Actions Extension could take to support capacity in outdoor recreation work intersect with opportunities both within Extension and in partnership with other outside organizations and entities.

The group discussion ended with visioning accomplishments hoped for in a year from now. Some of the ideas that came up had to do with building relationships with national, state and local parks associations, developing case studies that can help Extension professionals see what outdoor recreation programs entail, and the need for entrepreneur support as these are essential to outdoor recreation communities. The planning team looks forward to meeting again to work on next steps. If you would like more information related to this session, please email Ann Savage at aesavage@ncsu.edu.

[Access this and other articles highlighting the Southern region from the National Extension Tourism Network's newsletter.](#)

Webinars:

Upcoming INRPHA Webinar:

Associations between Behavior-Opportunity Gaps and Dementia Risk: Leveraging Data from a Large Longitudinal Study of Aging

**Friday, May 9, 2025
at 12 noon - 1 pm (Central)**

Presenter: Olivia E. Atherton, PhD, Department of Psychology, University of California Riverside

Register to receive the Zoom Link:

<https://msstateextension.zoom.us/joining/register/tsLhcXEATtiDvNIQ0p1jPQ>

For accommodations, please contact John Green at jjg8@msstate.edu or 662-325-0595.

Atherton's research was funded in part by the Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging (NIA grant R24-AG065159) and is currently funded by an R21 from the National Institute on Aging (R21AG088948).

This webinar is being offered by the Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging (NIA grant 1R24AG089064-01).

Rural Population Research Network (RPRN) Webinar Recap

On February 25th, the [North Central Regional Center for Rural Development](#) and the [Southern Rural Development Center](#) presented the webinar “Future Directions for Rural Population Research to Inform Extension: Findings from Listening Sessions”. [Access the recording, slides, and the RPRN Listening Session Report.](#)

During this webinar, [Rural Population Research Network \(RPRN\)](#) researchers involved with the project shared findings from the listening sessions and how these insights are being used to inform future research and Extension endeavors. (RPRN is the USDA supported multi-state project W5001.)



Presenters:

John J. Green, Director, Southern Rural Development Center; Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Mississippi State University

Katherine Curtis, Director, Center for Demography and Ecology; Professor and Demographic Specialist, Community & Environmental Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Kristina Brant, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, & Education, Pennsylvania State University

Sreedhar Upendram, Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural & Resource Economics, University of Tennessee

Paige Kelly, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, & Education, Pennsylvania State University

Southern Rural Development Center Repository: Readership Snapshot Update

In February 2025, the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) Repository collection had a total of 198 full-text downloads from 26 different institutions in 14 different countries.

The repository is hosted on Mississippi State University Library’s platform, Scholars Junction, which allows users to explore published content from the SRDC and its partners. [View the SRDC's repository.](#)

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Stay informed with posts on Southern Rural Development Center staff, programs, and webinars.

Follow, share, and engage as the SRDC seeks to strengthen the capacity of the region's 30 land-grant institutions to address critical contemporary rural development issues impacting the well-being of people and communities in the rural South.

Facebook: @Southern Rural Development Center, **LinkedIn:** @southern-rural-development-center, **X (formerly Twitter):** @so_dev_center, and **YouTube:** Southern Rural Development Center

Staff Spotlight

Estefanía Ramirios, Farmworker Health & Safety Educator, North Carolina State Extension

Meet Estefanía Ramirios, Farmworker Health & Safety Educator, a passionate educator who has left a significant mark on the Farmworker Program and the agriculture community. With a deep dedication to improving the living and working conditions of farmworkers, Estefanía provides educational opportunities and resources to farmers, farm labor contractors, farmworkers, and their families on issues associated with health and work safety (pesticide safety, weather protection, and other occupational hazards) as well as overall farmworker family well-being. With innovative and dynamic educational techniques that address both technical learning skills and personal development needs, her focus is also to provide essential knowledge for health management and family well-being. Thanks to her commitment and her ability to connect with farming communities, Estefanía has decisively contributed to empowering workers, promoting positive change in their lives and in their communities.



“Estefanía has played a vital role in strengthening and expanding the Extension Farmworkers Health and Safety Program. In a short time, she learned about the farm work community by building relationships with groups such as farmworkers, farmers, farm labor contractors, and community and organization partners. During this process, she observes, questions, reflects, searches for options, and engages others to identify needs and opportunities to implement the program better and positively impact the lives of those involved. Seeing Estefanía in action giving training is an excellent opportunity to experience the importance of our Program and work in Extension!” Cintia Aguilar, NC State Extension Latino Program Manager.

Job Opportunities

Extension Program Associate-Economic Analyst, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture

The [University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture](https://uasys.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/UASYS/details/Program-Associate---Economic-Analysis_R0058437) seeks to hire an Extension Program Associate-Economic Analysis. This position is responsible for collecting, organizing, analyzing, and presenting social and economic data to assess economic value, impacts, and opportunities in Arkansas and other regions. To learn more or apply, visit https://uasys.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/UASYS/details/Program-Associate---Economic-Analysis_R0058437.

Current Job Opportunities at the Community and Economic Development Unit of Prairie View A&M University Extension

The [Community and Economic Development Department \(CED\) at Prairie View A&M University](#) in Texas is dedicated to supporting limited resource families and individuals in achieving a higher standard of living through various means, such as small business development, youth entrepreneurship, community program involvement, home ownership, government assistance programs, non-profit assistance, and workforce development. Our team of professionals is ready to offer consultation and technical assistance to entrepreneurs and community organizations who wish to start or expand their operations.

CED Extension Agent positions are still currently available. To learn more about the available positions [visit the Prairie View A&M University job postings web page](#).

Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

2025 Public Issues Leadership Development Conference (PILD)

In-Person: April 6-9, 2025, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia

Save the date and the location of the 2025 PILD Conference.

[REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE](#)

2025 National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Conference

In-Person: June 9-12, 2025, The Embassy Suites, Charleston, West Virginia

Join the West Virginia State University Extension Service and West Virginia Extension Service in Charleston for the 2025 NACDEP Conference: Country Roads, Connecting the Farm to the Country.

[REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE](#)

2025 Community Development Society (CDS) Conference

In-Person: July 6-9, 2025, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York

The conference theme is *Innovative Pathways to Thriving Communities: People, Technology, and Place-based Collaboration*.

[REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE](#)

2025 Rural Sociological Society (RSS) Annual Meeting

In-Person: July 30 – August 2, 2025, Hilton Salt Lake City Center, Salt Lake City, Utah

Theme: *Nourishing the Future of Rural Sociology: Using Sociological Insights and Interventions to Secure Our Legacy*.

[VIEW ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION](#)

2025 NETtra Conference

In-person: October 7-10, 2025, Mill Falls at the Lake Resort, Meredith, New Hampshire

Tourism is all about making connections – between people, places, cultures, and time. The 2025 NETtra Conference will connect two organizations comprised of tourism researchers, educators, and practitioners in a first-time collaboration between the [Northeast Chapter of the Travel and Tourism Research Association](#) (NETTRA) and the [National Extension Tourism \(NET\) Network](#), hosted by the University of New Hampshire.

Abstracts are now being accepted through April 18, 2025. [Access the call for papers](#).

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

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