



# Sustainability Survey Analysis

2023

ROOST

# Project background and methodology

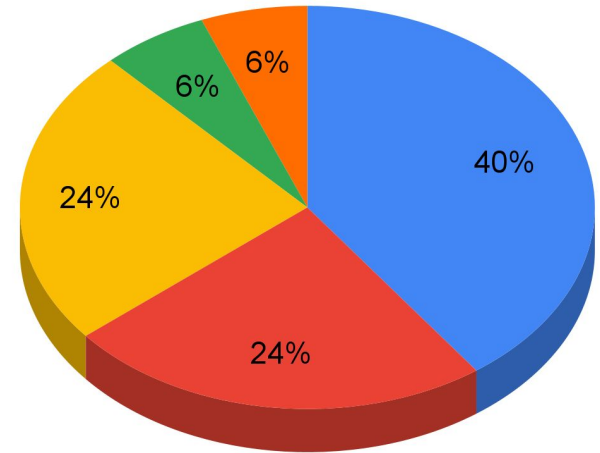
- The Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST) has long worked toward the sustainability of its tourism assets. In 2023, ROOST employed a survey to a sampling of those who inquired about travel to the region during the year and indicated that sustainability was at least somewhat important when planning a trip. The purpose of this survey was to ascertain visitor and potential visitor opinions and perceptions about sustainability relative to travel decisions.
- Over 1,500 (1,521) visitors and potential visitors responded to this survey. This shows a substantial growth from the prior year's 991 respondents. A majority (63%) of respondents reported that they are New York state residents, with thirty-one percent (31%) from central and western New York, and twenty-four percent (24%) from the Capital District north. Nine percent (9%) of respondents reported from downstate or the New York City region.
- Twelve percent (12%) of these respondents are from the northeast U.S. outside of New York state. Six percent (6%) of these respondents are from the southern U.S. and mid-western U.S. Ten percent (10%) report from Canada (5% each Quebec and Ontario) and three percent (3%) from the western U.S.
- These areas of residence figures are reasonably close to those provided by ROOST's comprehensive visitor survey which measures demographics, visit preferences, visit expenditures, and other details of regional and county visitors. A slightly higher proportion of visitors from outside of the northeastern U.S. and from Canada responded to this survey (by about 5% more in each group).

# Importance of sustainability in planning a trip

## Perceived Importance of Sustainability to Travel Decision

- Survey respondents were asked how important sustainability factors are when they plan a trip. A strong majority (64%) of this group state that sustainability is at least a moderate consideration.
- Of note, more than about one in four (24%) state that this is a “very important” consideration.

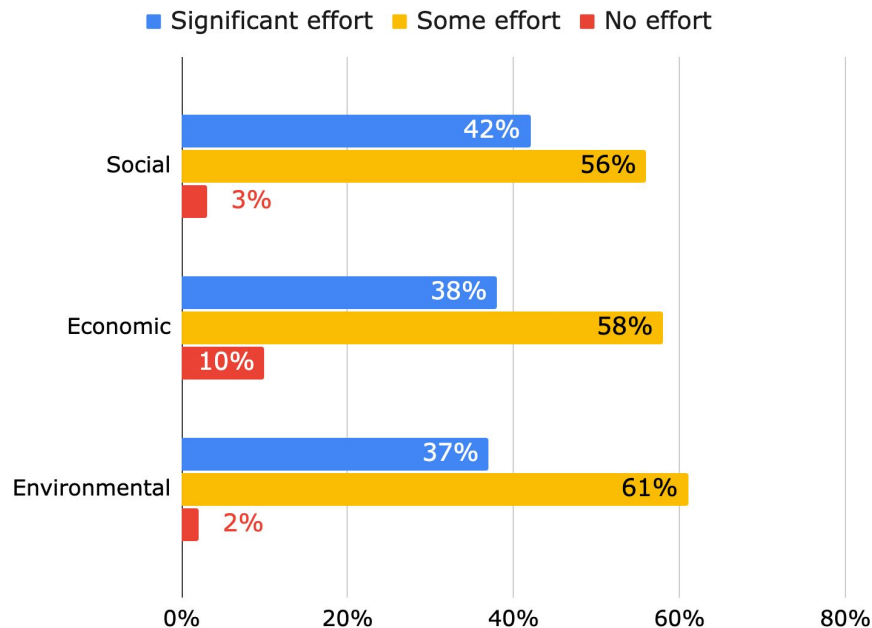
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree



# Perceived sustainability of the Adirondacks as a destination

- The survey asked respondents the level of effort that they perceived in the region as a travel destination in three different categories: socially, economically, and environmentally.
- The environmental aspect of sustainability shows strongest perception, followed by economic, and then social.

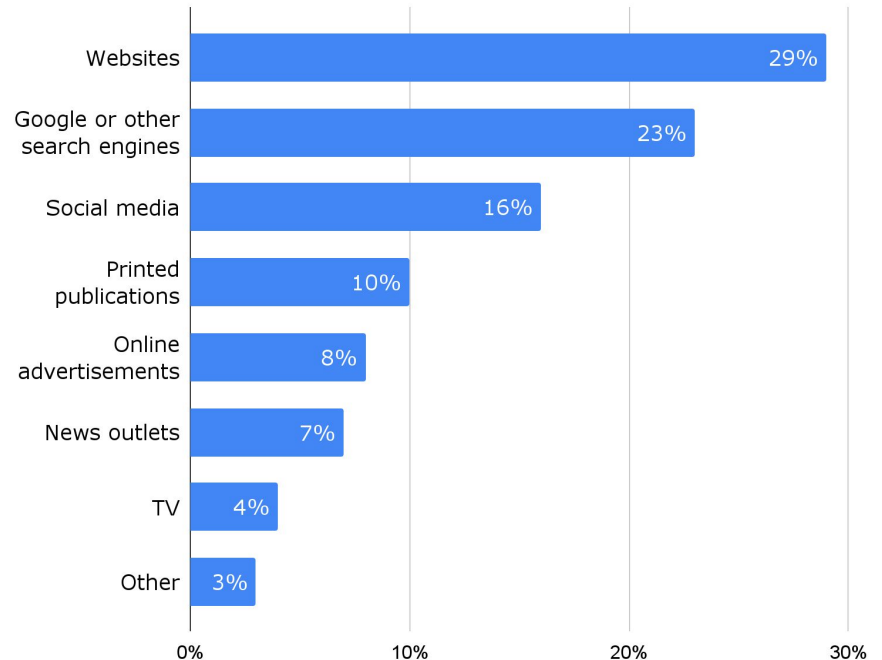
## Perceived efforts for sustainability



# Travel information

- The survey asked visitors and potential visitors where they typically find their information about the sustainability of a destination, permitting as many responses as applicable.

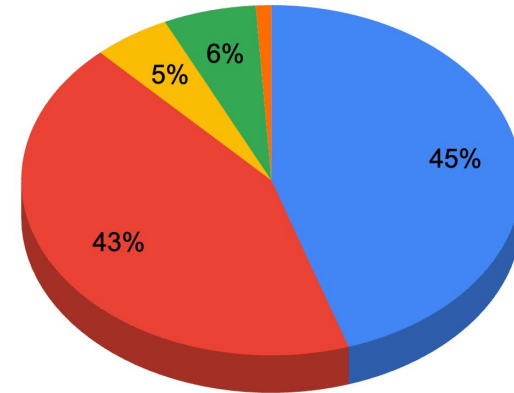
Sites for Sustainability Research



# Influence of sustainability practices

- The survey asked how often a company's sustainability practices influenced the respondent's decision to purchase from them.
- More than ninety percent (93%) of respondents indicate that sustainability at least "sometimes" affects purchase decisions. Half of respondents indicate that this is a factor of consideration at least "often".

Frequency of influence of company's sustainability on purchases



# Impacts on traveling decisions by possible sustainability factors/actions

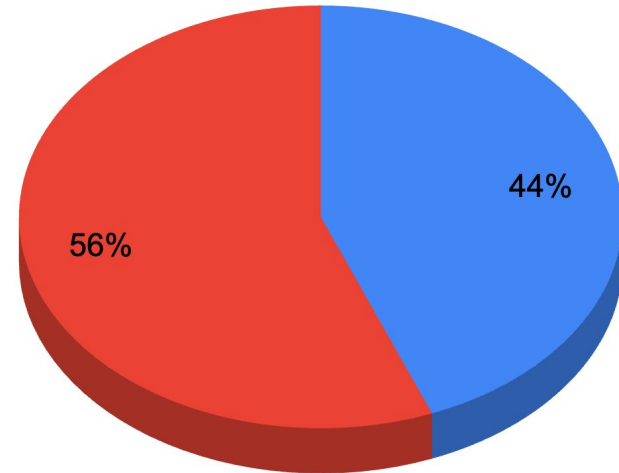
- The survey asked respondents to check from a list of sustainability practices that they “looked for” when planning a vacation destination. Respondents were allowed to select as many that applied.
- Practices with a response rate higher than fifteen percent (15%) are represented here.

Sustainable Practice	% Respondents
Restaurants in the region buy from local suppliers	82%
Businesses in the region support the local economy	76%
Businesses sell local artisan products and services	73%
Funds generated by tourism used for improving the local community	66%
Businesses in the area founded by residents	58%
An effort to reduce single use plastics	58%
Restaurants focusing on reducing food waste	56%
Businesses in the region give back to the community through work with local charities	56%
Choosing road trips over airlines and cruises	52%
Public transportation to popular attractions	50%
Plans to manage hiking traffic and limit impacts on trails	50%
Businesses using renewable sources of energy	50%
Filtered refill stations for reusable water bottles-	47%
Businesses donate to local nonprofits	40%
Lodging and restaurants partnering with local compost producers (salt concentrations)	39%
Bicycles rentals available as a means of transportation	32%
The ability to donate money to support environmental efforts in the region	32%

# Ease of finding information on sustainability

- Respondents were asked if it is “easy” or “difficult” to find information about the sustainability of a travel destination. A slight majority of respondents (56%) stated that it is “difficult” to find information, with the balance (44%) finding it “easy”.
- This shifted in response just slightly from the prior year when fifty-eight percent (58%) remarked that finding this information was difficult.

● Easy  
● Difficult





# Conclusion

- While sustainability has been a focus within ROOST for many years, this is the second year that a survey was conducted to gauge information specific to visitor perceptions regarding sustainability. The data provides interesting indications of priorities.
- Many guests are looking for “green” experiences. Green hotels, resorts, and experiences capture the growing interest in wellness tourism, which is a strengthening niche across the industry. Many corporations, governments, and associations prefer or require a component of “green” meetings. This makes earning a sustainability certification a valuable differentiator that unlocks business opportunities. The Adirondack region is extremely well poised to utilize sustainable practices as a marketing tool to individual and group markets moving forward.
- Travel experts emphasize that sustainability is a growing concern expressed by an increasing proportion of visitors. This baseline data is useful in moving forward with a better understanding of visitor preferences and to monitor and concentrate on specific areas of interest in future years.