

Break Out Session Topic #1

The Big Picture...Shaping Policy and Visioning

Present: Karen Carper, Monica Miller, Susan Pierce, Mark Payne, Cheryl Hartley, Jane Dittman, and Jeremy Morris, Jessica Williams

Question: How do we shape the program to send the message?

Karen_ Cultural heritage tourism is like a tree with many branches. All of the linkages create one big thing= cultural heritage tourism.

3 Needs: Education, Coordination of Efforts, and Communication

- Education: There is a need for public education of cultural heritage tourism. We need to send the message that cultural heritage tourism is a unified effort. We need to educate and inform our legislators. Mark_ People that are involved need to educate folks that they are part of the larger picture.
- Coordination of efforts: We need to create a peer network. Examples were a blog and or online calendar of events for various agencies to be informed of others engagements, meetings, conferences, etc. We need to develop and expand our peer network.
- Communication: We need to spread the word to those in influential positions such as legislators. Fairs and festivals are a great way to welcome legislators into the communities which enhances communication and provides an opportunity to show what each unique community is doing to develop the cultural heritage tourism product.

We need to establish a permanent program within the state for cultural heritage tourism.

Karen_ We've been running on private income, it's going to run out. We need to figure out what works and what doesn't. Susan_ WV is considering developing a state historic preservation caucus. This will in turn lead to more money for preservation within the state.

Jeremy_ WV needs 'power brokers' to secure funding. We need a champion within the state legislature to advocate our message of cultural heritage tourism and historic preservation.

Monica_ We need to check on getting on the agenda of the next legislature interim meeting where we can present our message and ideas.

The Steering Committee_ we need to know who is involved and have a contact list.

Where do we go from here? Everyone agreed that meeting face to face is best.

Break Out Session Topic #2

Historic Downtown and Small Towns

Present: Bill Woodrum (Extension), Marsha Geyer (Main Street), ME Gamble (SBDO), Jeanne Muir (MSABB), Maura Arline, Megan Neely, Mike Gioulis, Facilitator: Elizabeth Damewood Gaucher

Everyone concurred that, at present, there are many diverse and disparate groups statewide gnawing on pieces of this issue, but that some focus point for those efforts is desperately needed.

The group supports the mission statement of this break out group (above), and talked about what other states are doing. Agreed that geographic proximity to WV is not necessarily a good indicator of what we can/should be doing. Vermont was discussed as a good example of a rural state with low population that is doing interesting work in this area. Brief discussion that the 150th of the Civil War is coming up, and that WV is uniquely positioned to draw heritage tourist during this period. Betty Carver is apparently the point person on this work.

There is real interest in piecing together staff resources at the state level to fund a position that will be on point for this issue area. ME Gamble noted she believes there are already good inroads and trust between key offices that may allow this to happen. "Likeability" and organizational skills represent about 55% of the qualifications this person would need to be successful. Marketing via tourism, SBDO, CVBs is needed.

Ideas to explore include: Corporate underwriting for the work, including BrickStreet, Chesapeake, and Toyota; a year-long, heavily promoted series of 1/2 day town hall trainings/workshops; some of this might be best accomplished via online opportunity through the Main Street website. A 3 year plan would be the targeted outcome.

Next Steps:

This group needs PAWV to nudge them in a couple of weeks about setting up a conference call or online chat about exactly what they want to do between now and November 5-7 in Glade Springs (Tourism Conference). This is when all groups from the meeting on September 5 will reconvene for a progress report and continued dialogue.



- **Break Out Session Topic #3**

WV Products/Developing Business Opportunities

Present: Martha Ballman, Jeff Samples, Pam Curry, Connie McColley, Terry Stone, Sheila Cestarić

Information was shared about the Vision Shared, Access to Market committee dedicated to helping artists, crafters, producers and businesses to market successfully and sustainably. Pam Curry is the chair; she talked about the Made Right Here campaign to encourage local people to support local business. Since this committee consists of all volunteers and this task would require many hours and much manpower; it was thought that state involvement would be appropriate. Committee reps, Pam and Cheryl Hartley plan to meet with Dept of Commerce Secretary Kelley Goes to discuss involvement by the state in this project.

Next Steps: When Pam and Cheryl meet with Secretary Goes, they will let her know about the renewed interest in Cultural Heritage Development. The Advisory Panel membership shows that there are many individuals and agencies that recognize the value in our culture. We also think it is a good time to capitalize on our unique identity as "A state born from a nation torn". Surrounding states are preparing for the sesquicentennial of the Civil War and we need to begin planning as well. Tourism just announced their intention to underwrite the initial phase of the Civil War trail that will locate and interpret important sites.

Terradon Communications was awarded the contract for the restructuring of the internet interface for the Dept of Commerce, which includes: WV Development Office, WV Div of Natural Resources, WV Div of Forestry, WV Div of Labor, WV Div of Tourism, Geological and Economic Survey, Miner's Health, Safety & Training and WorkforceWV. The new site will help present a unified view of WV to the world and help create a unified system for action. This will help attract business and help businesses find the information they need. There was discussion of whether this site under the Dept of Commerce could be utilized by small businesses and independent artist/producers. It was thought that using this site for linking and coordinating existing sites could be very beneficial. The site could be a gateway or a hub. There was discussion of the models where many small sellers are represented under one big site such as Ebay and Amazon. However, planning from the top down may not be as effective for internet sites as planning from the grassroots up. There are grassroots sites that are tremendously popular such as MySpace and YouTube. Artists in the group affirmed that e-commerce is an important part their business but it is also important to have their own sites to tell their story and give their location. Having an interactive map was thought to be an important component. It was also discussed that many local business need training to be able to better utilize this type of retail option. WV has outstanding models for showcasing our local talent in Tamarack and MountainMade; maybe it is time to have an outstanding and inclusive cyber-site as well.

Next Steps. Jeff volunteered to talk with the Ryan Wheeler, who is doing the work at Terradon to develop the site and Kim Harbour who is directing the work for Dept of Commerce. He will ask them to consider setting up a meeting with Advisory Panel members to talk about the possibility of including retail options for artists, producers and small businesses within the site.

Break Out Session Topic #4

Building Thematic WV Cultural Heritage Destinations

Present: Pamela Erb, Dave Lomardo, Jenny Fertig, Justin Gaull, Susan Williams, Ashley Bennett, Rachel Booth, Karen Allen, Facilitator: Phyllis Baxter

What do people mean by the word product?

- Tourism product is intangible
- Buying an experience
- Heritage tourists spend more money
- If you have a little community with a museum that isn't open or no one can find it, you don't have a product
 - No one will travel a long distance to see one museum, however linking local products to each other creates a destination

What we have already...

- Byways and Backways
 - Can byways be a model for other programs?
 - What are byways and backways
 - Funded by the Division of Highways
 - Are grassroots driven
 - How does a byway happen?
 - Local level nomination

- State investigation
- Implementation Plan
 - 5 Intrinsic qualities are considered
 - Good to have resources “confined” to a theme or story rather than listing every asset
 - Funding can be used for materials, interpretation, improved access, signage, waysides, ect.
 - Paves way for TEA grants

Defining Culture

- Crafts, music, interact of land and landscapes
- Stops at extreme sports

Heritage Areas

Regional effort that focuses on a theme – often industrial

WV has two nationally designated areas –

National Coal Heritage Area

Wheeling National Heritage Area

Ad hoc or developing areas –

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area – seeking national designation

Frontiers to Mountaineers – not very active now

- Money available at national level but no state program
- Do we want some kind of heritage area program?

Thematic Trails: network of sites that all relate to one theme

- No set route
- Networked by theme
- Can be statewide
- Civil War Task Force as a model
- Stakeholders/involvement
- PAWV & SHPO have worked on Preserve America grant application
 - Historic theaters
 - CCC / New Deal
 - Railroads
 - Connect historic railroad sites with excursion trains already being marketed
 - Many communities have train days, depots, local RR history
 - Hinton, Huntinton, Mullens, Thurman – NPS as partner, Grafton,
 - WVRR Museum being developed in Elkins, Cass
 - Connect to Cumberland, Roanoke transportation museum
 - Who would participate?
 - Local communities (Mullins, Hinton, Grafton, Martinsburg)
 - Retirees, families
 - Current railroaders
 - Extension
 - Taskforce – connecting the dots
 - State agencies
 - NPS
 - Byway Organizations

- A need to educate people about what else is going on in the state.
- Packaging: tourists will stay longer if they were aware of alternative activities

Next steps

Railroad group – Ashley, Rachael, Karen, Justin, Jenny & her staff, other interested sites

Phyllis will work on rewriting grant application with email help from group

Discussed possibility of regional tours or meets to share stories and sites in different areas

Work on projects by email

Meet again as group at next Advisory Panel meeting