

GROWTH RINGS

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area Newsletter



Vol 2 No 1

Working towards non-profit status

Since our last stakeholders meeting the Organization & Sustainability Task Group has been working towards incorporation of a non-profit AFHA organization.

There are several purposes for forming a non-profit organization now:

- To build stakeholder control of the long-term direction of the AFHA.
- To have an entity that can apply for and accept grants and recognition on behalf of AFHA.
- To provide a significant overlap of transition between the current grant project, and the long-term self-sufficient organization. While the WVU project team is still responsible over the remaining 3 years for administering the grant, we want to work towards increasing stakeholder responsibility for the project leading to full control by the non-profit at the end of the grant term.

The structure the group is suggesting is for the non-profit is to have a large "Governing Council" made up of one representative from each county, plus representatives from various "interest groups" such as forestry/forest management; environmental/outdoor recreation; historical; and tourism/business. The aim is to have a group that is balanced both geographically and in terms of the various interests and points-of-view active among AFHA stakeholders. This Council will set broad policy for the organization, meeting probably once or twice a year. (Continued on page 2)

Forest Industry Educational Programs Survey

One idea that has been forwarded by stakeholders in the AFHA project at several meetings has been to include certain forest industry manufacturing facilities as potential "tourist destinations". Unclear, however, is the number and availability of educational tours and outreach programs offered by forest industry throughout the AFHA project area.

To answer these questions, Steve Selin and Dave McGill are conducting a survey of forest industry facilities throughout West Virginia. The survey will have two major sections, one dealing with on-site tours and programs, and the second will seek information about a company's community outreach programs. (Cont. page 2)

So, what is a "NATIONAL" Heritage Area

A "National Heritage Area" is a place designated by the United States Congress, where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in the areas. Continued use of the National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their significance.

Why do communities benefit from designation as a "heritage area"?

Heritage conservation efforts are grounded in a community's pride in its history and traditions, and its interest in seeing them retained along with the evidence of them as projected by generations of activity on the landscape.

Preserving the integrity of the cultural landscape and local stories means that future generations of the community will be able to understand and define who they are, where they come from, and what ties them to their home.

Heritage areas thus offer the potential to ensure key educational and inspirational opportunities in perpetuity, without compromising traditional local control over, and use of, the landscape

Why do some communities get to be National Heritage Areas?

The designation of a "National Heritage Area" is recognition of a region or community's efforts to identify its natural and cultural resources which define its sense of place, and its stories. Designation recognizes nationally distinctive landscapes, and the role of these distinctive landscapes in defining the collective American cultural landscape. Designation as a "National Heritage Area" also provides important recognition of local community-based efforts to preserve this distinctive character.

The above are excerpts from the NPS Heritage Area website (03/05/03)

To learn more visit: www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/

Service Learning Project Supports AFHA Pilot Communities

A WVU Service Learning grant of \$9600 was acquired by WVU Division of Forestry's Dr. Jingxin Wang and AFHA project team members Dave McGill and Steve Selin. The service learning grant is supporting students from Dr. Wang's "Computer Applications" class to visit AFHA pilot communities (Webster Springs, Elkins, and Oakland, MD) and to develop webpages that feature assets of these towns.

A central objective of the project is to give students experience in serving clients as they link their webpages to the theme of forest heritage. Already the students—accompanied by McGill—have made their pilot community visits. Community hosts included Brenda Pritt and Jim Hammonds (Elkins), Mike Hall, Geary Weir and Randy White (Webster Springs) and Mike Mullan (Oakland).

While visiting each of the pilot communities, the students learned about history, culture, and development efforts and photographed key community assets. In the remainder of the spring semester, they will use this information and photographs in the development of their webpage projects and will continue to contact their community hosts for feedback on their progress. Eventually we hope to link these community webpages to the AFHA webpage created and maintained by AFHA intern Joel Newbraugh.

AFHA has input into National Heritage Area Research Agenda

On November 20, 2002, two AFHA staff members, Steve Selin and Angela Gernert, were invited to Washington, D.C. to participate in a one day workshop to develop a research agenda for national heritage areas. While the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area is not nationally designated yet, this designation will be discussed at the April stakeholder's meeting. The meeting was organized by the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In order for the heritage area movement to receive national attention and receive financial support, it is important to systematically document the economic, social, and community impacts the movement is having. The group brainstormed about the criteria and indicators needed to implement a monitoring system nationwide. We obviously advocated for AFHA to be included in these monitoring systems and that we be involved in the decision-making process. Brenda Barrett, the National Park Service Heritage Area Coordinator and Mike Wilson, of the Northern Forest Heritage initiative spoke at the meeting and will be keynote speakers at our April Stakeholder's meeting. Come on out and meet them! For a complete report on the workshop, go to the NPS Heritage Area website at: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/>

Non-profit continued

In addition, a smaller Working Board of about 15 will oversee the actual work of the organization. The Board will be selected from the Council, including the organization officers. This group will probably meet quarterly to monthly.

At the April stakeholders meeting we will take a formal vote whether we wish to incorporate a non-profit AFHA organization at this time. We will also elect an interim board to start the organization, and review the suggested bylaws that will be available at that time. Anyone who is interested in reviewing the bylaws draft in advance, contact Phyllis Baxter <phyllisb@meer.net> and I'll send them to you. (Organization TG & Steering Comm members will get them automatically.)

Pilot Community Report

Webster Springs—The community task group has been meeting on a monthly basis. Most of their work has focused on developing ideas for short-term projects and preparing for the Spring Stakeholders meeting. They will conclude their asset mapping experience by Mid-March.

Elkins—Elkins/Randolph Committee has been busy preparing for its first shot at mapping assets, March 8. The group has begun work on some projects that might be completed this summer, and is looking at some longer-term projects as well.

Oakland—The Oakland group has not met for a while, but did have some initial asset mapping completed in November. Project staff will be meeting with other heritage initiative in Garrett County later this month.

Spring events in the Pilot Communities

Webster Wildwater Weekend River Festival, April 5 & 6

Contact: wca@WebsterWV.com

Elkins—International Ramp Cook-off & Festival April 26th

Contact: 800 422 3304

Webster County Nature Tour, May 2, 3 & 4

Contact: 304-847-5286

Webster Woodchopping Festival, May 17 through 25

Contact: 304 847-7666

Educational Survey continued

Selin and McGill expect to find a good deal of educational programs out there in the state, and are looking forward to finding out how these programs are promoted and what groups make up industry's key audiences. The importance of these tours is well recognized by the industry. According to McGill, "When people see a log sawn into a board, or a board planed, shaped, and fit into a fine piece of furniture, they seem to get a renewed appreciation for the natural resources that are necessary to sustain our lives and lifestyles."

Joel Newbraugh, AFHA intern has been providing logistical support for the survey. Currently, the survey (in the form of a questionnaire) is in the review process with several of our industry stakeholders going through it to make sure it is easy to understand and appropriate for the targeted firms.

THE APPALACHIAN FOREST HERITAGE AREA



Stakeholders Meeting

April 10 & 11

Camp Caesar
Cowen, WV



Thursday April 10th

- 1:00-3:00 pm Effective Meetings Training w/
George Constantz
- 3:30-5:30pm Tour out to the Big Sycamore and
Back Fork of Elk River
- 6:30-7:30 pm Dinner at Camp Caesar
- 7:30 pm Reception

Reception

Artisan Demonstrations --
wood crafting by Steven Fisher
basket making with Rose Ann Cowger & Kelly McCourt
white oak basketry by Allen Miller
handmade wooden kitchen utensils by Martha McCourt
handmade lotions & soap by Cindy Miller
handmade beeswax soap & chapstick from Kelly Clutter
bark basket making with John Bell
pottery by Larry Riffle

Story-Telling by area residents
Stella Riffle

Along with several other residents and poets

Poster Presentations from Regional Groups
**Any stakeholder organization or group is encouraged
to bring a poster, display, or presentation about your
attractions or the work you are doing that relates to the
AFHA**

Friday April 11th

- 8:00-9:00 am Breakfast
- 9:00-10:30 am Reports from Task Groups and Pilot
Communities
- 10:30-11:30 am National Heritage Area Program—
Brenda Barrett, NPS
- 11:30am-12:00 Demonstration by local woodchoppers
Break time
- 11:45-12:30 pm Lunch
- 12:30 – 1:15 Northern Forest Center—
Mike Wilson
- 1:15—1:30 pm Afternoon Break
- 1:30-3:00 pm Some decision-making and next steps
- 3:00-3:30pm Wrap Up

Topics of Discussion for Friday's meeting:

Forming a non-profit organization
Introduction of Mini-Grants
Choosing concepts for Logos

Lodging (4-H camp-style lodging) will be available at Camp Caesar for \$10.50, those needing lodging please **RSVP** with Jeremy Morris no later the **April 5th** jeremy.morris@mail.wvu.edu 293-2941 ext 2456
Other lodging options include the Mineral Springs Motel--Webster Springs and the Brass Teapot B & B--Cowen

Meals will be prepared by the Camp Caesar Kitchen and provided by AFHA funds
Those attending the stakeholder meeting are asked to please **RSVP** by **April 5th** with Jeremy, so we can keep an accurate count for meals.

This agenda can also be found at our website: <http://www.ahc.caf.wvu.edu/heritage/>

Directions to Camp Caesar—From I-79 take exit 57 (Beckley/Summersville) and proceed south on US 19 to the Birch River exit. Turn left onto Rt. 82 (Widen/Dille Rd) and follow 15 miles to intersection with Rt. 20. At intersection turn left onto Rt. 20 North and go thru the town of Cowen, staying on Rt. 20. Camp Caesar is about 3-4 miles past Cowen and will be located on the left side of the road.

Come **GROW** with
the
**Appalachian For-
est Heritage
Area in 2003**

**Effective Meetings workshop
With Dr. George Constantz
Camp Caesar**

On April 10th Dr. George Constantz will lead a training session in organizing and running effective meetings. This is a **great opportunity for task group and committee leaders**, as well as anyone who leads meetings in your own community. The session is **open to anyone interested**; the program is set to begin at 1:00 pm at Camp Caesar. Those interested in attending are encouraged to RSVP→
Jeremy.morris@mail.wvu.edu

Guest Speakers for Stakeholder's Meeting

Brenda Barrett,

National Heritage Area Coordinator, National Park Service

Brenda will provide an overview of the **National Heritage Area Program** and the process for **seeking national designation** as a Heritage Area. In her role with the Park Service she works with ad-hoc Heritage Areas across the United States and should provide our stakeholders with a **diversity of experiences** from those initiatives. Prior to this position, she was Director of the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation program and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for over 20 years. www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/

Mike Wilson, *Program Director, Northern Forest Center*

Mike will make a presentation on the topic of *Place-Based Development in the Northern Forest*, which will discuss the **geography of place in the Northern Forest**, the Northern Forest Center's mission and niche in the region and present **case studies of on-going place-based development** in the region with **emphasis on tourism, forest industry and community development**. Mike Wilson has worked as a community organizer in Maine and the Northern Forest for more than ten years. Mike was the Center's lead staff on *Northern Forest Wealth Index* project – facilitating the steering committee process and serving as principle researcher and author of the report. He is now working with regional partners to build on the *Wealth Index* framework to develop a vision and strategy for establishing the **Northern Forest as a model sustainable region**. www.northernforest.org

Visit our website at www.ahc.caf.wvu.edu/heritage/

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area

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