

Potomac Highlands Creative Economy Team Meeting

December 1, 2022

10 am

Zoom

Meeting called by:	Ben Duvall-Irwin	Type of meeting:	Informal Discussion
Facilitator:		Notetaker:	Maria
Timekeeper:			

Attendees: Ben Duvall-Irwin, Logan Smith, Phyllis Baxter, Robert Burnes, Greg Greenwalt, Michele Moure-Reeves, Cara Rose, Alex Fiegel, Ashley Rotruck, Bob Johnson, Cheryl Wolfe, Cindy, Carol Woody, Jessica Waldo, Joel Miltonberger, Mike Jones, Sam Felton, Sarah Miller, Jessica Waldo, Lindsay Kazarick, Eric Thompson, Jonathan Bellingham, Maria Bray

Meeting notes

Discussion:

Thursday, December 1st at 10 am (ZOOM)

Agenda:

- Welcome! Introductions
- Eastern updates - Robert Burns
 - Free Monthly Marketing Training Videos: [Free Marketing Trainings - Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College](#)
 - Reschedule Hospitality Training: “Serving in Style: The Art of Remarkable Dining Room Service” with Debra Frank, Dec 12th at the Ponderosa in Moorefield. Additional Trainings March 13 and April 17.
 - Lodging Panel: “Winter in Almost Heaven: Making the most of the upcoming ski season” with Joe Stevens, WV Ski Areas Association Tom Wagner, Winterplace Ski Resort. Today, Dec 1st at Noon, REGISTER AT bit.ly/skiszpanel
 - Land Ownership 101 on Dec 6 with a follow-up of Dec 8th
 - Agricultural training with Farm Fellows in January: link to program and classes <https://easternwv.edu/ag-innovation/>
 - 2023 Agritourism Summit SAVE THE DATE: Wednesday, March 15th at the Misty Mountain Event Barn
- AFNHA updates - Phyllis Baxter
 - The Management Plan was completed and submitted and is being reviewed by the National Park Service. We are moving forward with implementing a lot of the things the plan suggested. One project is the launch of an interpretation committee to work on interpretation and tourism projects. If anyone is interested in participating, please send an email to phyllisb@afnha.org The Interpretation committee will be looking at a variety of projects and the first meeting should be in the next couple of weeks, the tentative date is Dec 14 at 11 am (confirmed).

- o America 250 - collecting stories from across the Heritage area. Not just the founding of America and Revolutionary war sites/stories, but will also focus on all Americans especially the underrepresented and untold stories.
 - o Gateway sites - we would like to look at establishing gateway sites, and partner sites across the area that includes information and interpretation about the NHA. We are thinking about some portable exhibits or pull-up banners at multiple sites across the area, likely CVB visitors' centers and/or attractions.
 - o Establishing tourism site criteria - if we are going to promote a site, put it on the website and use our logo we want to make sure that they meet minimum criteria so that visitors will have a positive experience.
 - o We are still accepting survey responses for the outcomes of these meetings. If you have participated in any of these meetings, please complete the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YSFJLJT> The information is needed for the grant reporting.
 - o We are still recruiting for some of our AmeriCorps positions <https://www.appalachianforestnha.org/positions> Please spread the word as some of these positions are related to tourism, museums, and several CVBs.
 - o The Tourism Summit date and location are not yet set. We welcome your input and suggestions. With the expanded region we are considering new locations. The current thought is to have the annual stakeholders meeting in the spring then Summit in the summer. We are thinking of holding one in the south and one in the north of the area.
- Guest Speaker
 - o Carol Woody - Executive Director - Challenged Athletes of WV a non-profit 501(c)3 headquartered at Snowshoe Mountain. Primarily the service provided is adaptive ski at Snowshoe and Canaan Valley. The age of the participants ranges from 4 years old to 98 years old - all ages and all types of disabilities. Supported by many volunteers from diverse backgrounds and are always looking for more. On the horizon, they are branching out to offer a yearlong program for outdoor recreation programming. Currently fundraising to purchase four adaptive mountain bikes called SYMGO that cost approximately \$13K each. If we can purchase four, we can become a training location. This program draws visitors from other areas who are interested in outdoor recreation and benefit from places (lodging and dining, etc) that are accessible including trails, trailheads, rivers, museums... We should consider accessibility in all tourism development.
- Attendee Discussion / Extended Networking –
 - o What events are planned?
 - o What are some of the challenges and successes?
 - o Saturday - Jack Frost at White Grass 41st Annual Jack Frost Celebration Season opener sharing your gifts of food, canned donations to local food bank, fund raiser, music, and the burning around 9 pm.
 - o Hardy County - Just completed accreditation application. Applied for a grant for a Mountain Bike program at Lost River State Park and looking for alternative funding. This will be a universally designed and built mountain Bike trail that will provide access for adaptive mountain bikes and is in the early stages. The Town of Moorefield is doing its first full-scale holiday event with a parade, food trucks, and an ice ring on Dec 9.

- o Barbour County - Handicapped accessibility is a big piece of everything. A lot of effort went into downtown revitalization in Philippi and Belington. One of the challenges was that they had dilapidated historic structures which were not handicap accessible. One approach is to remove the building but that leaves you with vacant lots and you lose the historic sense of the district and could lose the historic designation. Getting older buildings back online is important. Adaland open house on Sat. From 10-4 The Golden Rule will be hosting AmeriCorps related events. Christmas stroll will be 12/2.
 - o Workforce WV - Hospitality and tourism has been struggling to rebound since Covid. Workforce has a monthly statewide virtual job fair. If you need help participating and/or posting your opportunities, please contact Joel Miltenberger Region 7 Business Services Representative 681-271-2052 joel.e.miltenberger@wv.gov
 - o Capon Springs - Spas are reopening on Saturday and will stay open until April as the weather permits.
 - o Mineral County - Jack Rollins (one of the writers of Frosty the Snowman) is from Keyser. They are building up this theme and the Parks department is hosting a Frosty week activity and it was combined with the Heritage trail events. There is a cocoa crawl with both Alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocoa. Frosty will read the story to children after the parade.
 - o Randolph County - Elkins is now Elfkens and there are many related activities. The parade is Friday night. Beverly is having their Christmas event on Saturday.
- Save The Date! The next meeting is **January 26, 2023**, at 10 AM on Zoom.

Followup:

AFNHA will hold our inaugural meeting of our Interpretation Committee on Wed, Dec 14, 11 am, on zoom

While this committee (or subgroups from it) will be working on a number of topics, this first meeting is to discuss an overview of the topics, and how we will follow up with each. The agenda will include:

- selection of proposed story ideas for the National Heritage Area under-represented storytelling project (feel free to email me suggestions ahead of the meeting)
- initial discussion of Appalachian Forest America250 program, and identify next steps
- initial discussion of Appalachian Forest Discovery Center primary exhibit refresh, and identify next steps
- initial discussion of identifying AFNHA gateway visitor centers and attractions and AFNHA orientation at those centers
- how to approach encouraging best practices and criteria to build quality experience

Please contact Phyllis & Sarah if you would like to join the conversation.

Phyllis Baxter, Executive Director <phyllisb@afnha.org> Sarah Miller, Museum AmeriCorps member <discovery@afnha.org>

From the chat:

Robert Burns To Everyone: Email: Robert.burns@easternwv.edu

Free Monthly Marketing Training Videos:

<https://easternwv.edu/advancement-innovation/economic-development/marketing-trainings/>

Lodging Panel: "Winter in Almost Heaven: Making the most of the upcoming ski season" with Joe Stevens, WV Ski Areas Association Tom Wagner, Winterplace Ski Resort. Today, Dec 1st at Noon, REGISTER AT bit.ly/skiszpanel

Agricultural trainings with Farm Fellows in January: link to program and classes

<https://easternwv.edu/ag-innovation/>

Hospitality Trainings, Please RSVP at least one week prior to the event by using the contact information below.

Serving in Style.

workforceED@easternwv.edu

304-434-8000 ext. 9253

Ben - AFNHA To Everyone: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YSFJLJT>

Eric Thompson ~ AccessOnTheGo.org / HandiCraftAdaptive.com To Everyone:

FYI, the free Tools, Resources, Guidance, etc. for assisting in implementing Community Accessibility Improvements, I spoke about at the Sept. conference is now on our website

<https://www.accessonthego.org/Resources-Projects>

See our... Accessible Rivers, Parks, Forests, Trails, and Communities! Project

(ARPFTC) project with partners NPS-RTCA, NWVCIL, WVU-CED, WVATS, HOH, WV Rivers Coalition, and many more...

ARPFTC is a project with the NPS-RTCA Technical Assistance Grant

Collecting data identifying and mapping (ADA/ABA compliant) Accessible Infrastructure, Assisting People With Disabilities (PWDS) have greater opportunities to discover existing Accessible Infrastructure / Opportunities

(locations, facilities, programs, and features) within the community, Improving quality of life, building more sustainable and livable communities, and enabling people of all ages to more easily recreate and enjoy outdoor spaces

Adventure Sports Institute at Garrett College and Frostburg's outdoor sports education programs incorporate adaptive into their curriculum

Learn Adaptive climbing from Paradox Sports

Phyllis Baxter - AFNHA To Everyone:

Let me know if you are interested in the AFNHA Interpretation Committee (America250, AFNHA gateways, etc. planning). Email phyllisb@afnha.org to get on that list. The committee will bring the discussion back to this group in future months.

Joel Miltenberger To Everyone: Joel Miltenberger Region 7 Business Services Representative
681-271-2052 joel.e.miltenberger@wv.gov

Eric Thompson ~ AccessOnTheGo.org / HandiCraftAdaptive.com To Everyone:

tinyurl.com/AccessOnTheGo-FreeResources

see Accessible Canoe and Kayak Launches www.river-management.org/prepare-to-launch
www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBuSJX0vOac guide for creating water trails

Michele Moure-Reeves To Everyone: Visithardy@gmail.com

Lindsay Kazarick To Everyone: Mountain State Maple Days registration is open:
<https://wvmspa.org/maple-days-entry-form-2/>

National Maple Syrup Day is December 17 more information can be found at www.maple.wvmspa.org

Mike Jones (WV Rivers - Public Lands) To Everyone: Best wishes to everyone for the holidays!

Phyllis Baxter - AFNHA To Everyone (article that Bob mentioned):

https://wvexplorer.com/2022/11/26/frosty-the-snowman-west-virginia-most-famous-winter-character/?es_id=e17ac235f9

Ashley Rotruck To Everyone: Happy holidays everyone!

See attached flyers from Eastern about upcoming training sessions

Save The Date! The next meeting is **January 26, 2023**, at 10 AM on Zoom.

Featured speaker will be Eric Thompson with AccessOnTheGo