

Asset-based Opportunity: Natural Resources

The lush landscape, pristine valleys and regal mountains define this region and make it unique. For years, the region has seen these formations as barriers to progress. With asset-based economic development, these natural features can become a source of opportunity – through harvesting, recreation, new agricultural products and other market-driven uses.

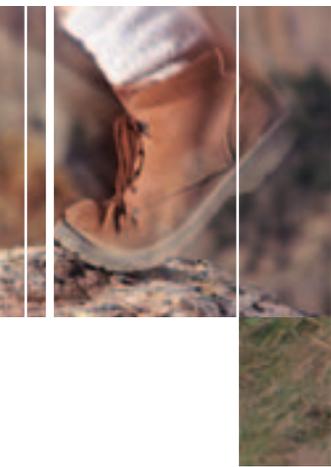
The popularity of nature-based activities is growing. In the last 20 years, the number of Americans 12 and older participating in some form

of outdoor recreation has grown from 188 million to 229 million, an 18% increase per year.¹ As more visitors seek out whitewater rafting excursions, mountain biking and nature trails, bird watching sites, leaf peeping routes, scenic drives and cross-country skiing, Appalachia can provide a range of experiences from leisurely excursions to hard-core adventure.

For example, hiking is one of the nation's most popular recreational activities. In 2002, over 73 million Americans hiked. The region is fortunate to have the Appalachian Trail winding along its spine and providing an international platform for nature-based economic development. According to the American Hiking Society, well-managed trails running through communities can foster substantial, economic opportunity through business development and tourism:

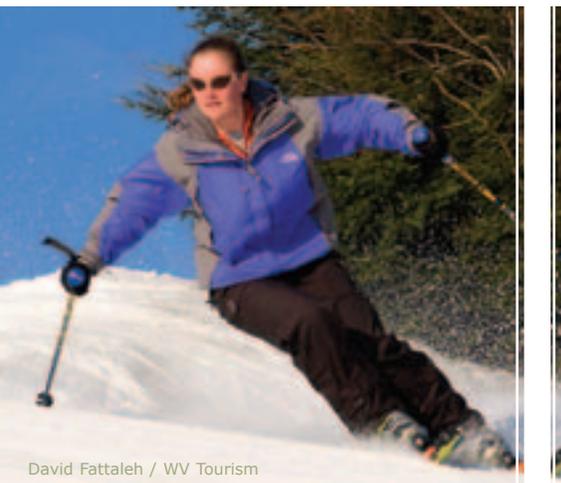
\$14 million a year. One study recorded more than 350,000 visitor trips on the trail each year with users spending \$12.01 to \$15.33 per person, per trip.²

Recreation is just one economic development strategy for natural assets. Growing niche agricultural crops, refining timber production and revitalizing waterways are a few of the ways entrepreneurs and communities are expanding economic opportunities with natural resources in Appalachia.



"Forests are like natural capital that pay daily dividends in clean water, flood protection, opportunities for outdoor recreation and more. The Forest Service has a role in promoting the sustainable management of all forests in the US, both public and private."

-- Sally Collins, US Forest Service Associate Chief, presentation to Outdoor Writers Association of America, June 2004



David Fattaleh / WV Tourism

- Damascus, Virginia has over 30 businesses in operation, and local leaders credit the Virginia Creeper Trail going through the town with the economic overhaul.
- The Great Allegheny Passage is the longest multi-purpose trail in the east with 100 continuous miles of trail open between McKeesport and Meyersdale Pennsylvania and 20 miles scattered throughout the Pittsburgh area. The trail's direct economic impact exceeds



Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association © 2004

1. US Forest Service, 2004

2. American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, 1998

“Selling” the Farm

Farmers and bankers don't always agree. Yet both contribute to the livelihood – and connectivity – of a community. Local farmers in Broome County, New York want to keep their agricultural heritage healthy and productive. Bankers and businesses in Binghamton want cash registers to ring. And with its abundance of livestock and vegetable farms and orchards, the county is attracting a lot of outside interest in the form of professionals who chose to trade in urban dwellings and telecommute, change careers entirely or explore the countryside. The area's conundrum is to provide a win-win solution for all.

Leaders decided to focus on ways to increase farm sales. In February 2004, the county launched the **Agritourism Marketing and Education Initiative**.

A major objective of the Initiative is to educate and build a bridge

“We provide the local media with good news about agriculture. When people read positive articles, it has a big impact. Residents who didn't even

know these places existed – and were driving two hours to Pennsylvania or the Finger Lakes region for similar sites – now learn about the same experiences offered in their own backyard,” said

Krys Cail, program manager.

“We are looking at job



Components of the Agritourism Marketing & Education Initiative include:

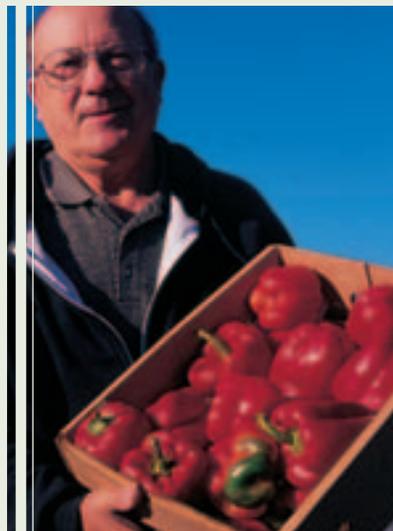
- Six educational workshops covering all aspects of business and marketing.
- Technical assistance to develop business plans, make good decisions about land use and provide individual advice related to specific needs or ideas.
- Hospitality training and signage evaluations.
- Increased marketing for new and established businesses.
- Regional *Agritourism Brochure* designed to get people off the major highways (I-81, I-86 and I-88) and onto scenic routes, following different itineraries that include agricultural destinations and wind through rural farm country.
- A series of specific guides focusing on *Farmers Markets*, *Meat Direct Farms*, and *Forest Products* (in production.)

Getting people excited about the county's crops will hopefully realize the goal of increased sales, at farms and other local businesses including restaurants, hotels and retail shops. In the past three months, almost 20,000 copies of the regional brochure have been distributed. The response has been very positive and local officials indicate that visitation has increased, even during the wettest summer in memory.

For additional information about the Agritourism Initiative call Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County at 607-772-8953

between the Chamber of Commerce and the agricultural community. Bringing traditional businesses, new landowners and the agricultural community together is often a challenge. Local communication is vital to form alliances and encourage support for farming. New marketing materials are one vehicle for fostering communication.

creation, and working hard at developing accurate ways of counting the impact. Our economic development success, though, doesn't depend on getting one 200-job employer. By allowing and encouraging this level of micro enterprise, we are supporting several small companies that could grow that large,” said Cail.



Meet me at the Junction

By train, by boat, by foot, by buggy or bike, travelers have journeyed to and through Cumberland, Maryland for more than 200 years. At the hub of several thoroughfares, this town is:

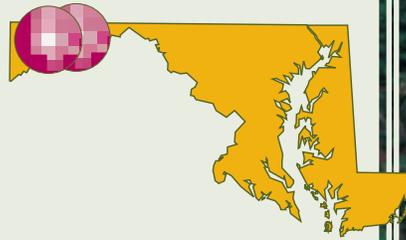
- the western terminus of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal
- on the Allegheny Highlands Trail, a hiking/biking path
- midway between Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC.

As transportation needs changed, however, so did downtown. The canal was no longer used for cargo. Retail moved away. Buildings were abandoned and decline set in. Things changed in the 1990s, though. Interstate 68 was completed and the town launched a pedestrian and bike-friendly downtown revitalization program. Cumberland relied on its diverse transportation past to make it hip again, with hiking and cycling paths in harmony with retail and restaurants.

Downtown development from April 1998 to November 2002 includes:

- 32 net new businesses created
- 12 businesses expanded
- \$19,170,000 in public and private investment
- Increase in occupancy rate of almost 50% (prior to Main Street program: 35%; now, 85%)
- More employment in downtown now than in 1950s.

The Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority leveraged strong public-private partnerships among national, state and local agencies – including the Appalachian Regional Commission and the C & O Canal National Historic Park – to renovate the Western Maryland Railway Station, built in 1913.



Last year, Phase I of Canal Place opened adjacent to the depot with nine retail shops. The complex helped spur preservation of more than 100 historic structures and revitalize downtown Cumberland— which includes Canal Place and Town Centre— into a vibrant shopping, dining, recreation and entertainment area for residents and visitors. Future plans include private redevelopment of Footer’s Dye Works Building and rewatering of the western terminus of the C & O Canal.

For more information on Cumberland’s downtown redevelopment, contact the Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority at 301-724-3655 or www.canalplace.org



Training for Adventure

Recreation is big business in western Maryland and throughout Appalachia. In McHenry, 60 miles west of Cumberland, Garrett College is investing in adventure sports as a job generator through its Adventure Sports Institute (ASI). The program, founded in 1992, “develops professionals in the field of adventure recreation through academics, field studies and practical experiences.” ASI educates and credentials highly skilled competent professionals. It also enhances opportunities for the general public to engage in adventure recreation.

The region first considered the potential for growing adventure recreation when it hosted the 1989 Whitewater World Championships in Allegany and Garrett Counties. Three years later, Garrett College organized the Olympic Team Trials in Whitewater Canoe and Kayak. Local officials recognized that the area’s “distinctive four-season climate and a diverse geology” make it a natural for adventure recreation.

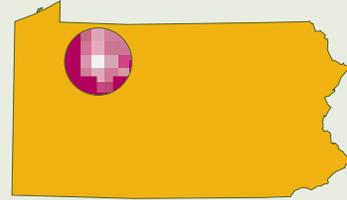
In addition to its educational offerings, ASI also engages in a number of community projects including trail repair, river clean ups, and improving public access to local rivers. A new International Adventure Sports Center is planned in McHenry to accommodate future programs.

For more information about the Adventure Sports Institute contact Garrett College at www.garrettcollege.edu/adventure

Eco-friendly Kane Hardwood: A Certified Success

Look closely at “Tonight Show” host Jay Leno’s desk and you’ll see something special. It’s one of the certified wood products made by Pennsylvania-based Kane Hardwoods,

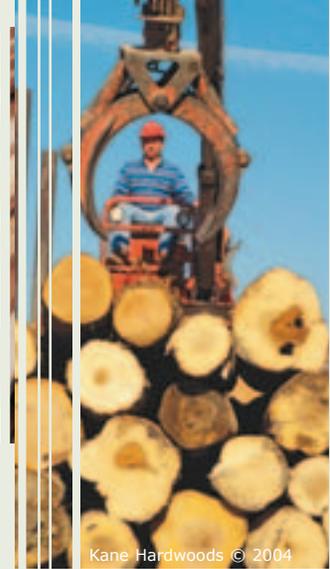
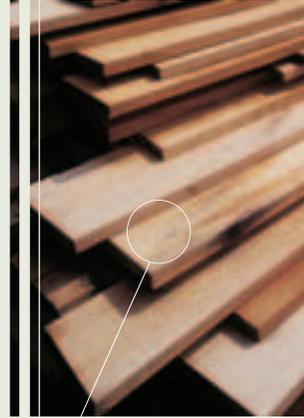
- Through careful planning, the harvests actually increase the quantity and quality of future yields by concentrating on regeneration.
- They balance the business needs with the ecosystem’s health by carefully locating logging roads to protect water quality.
- Enough wood debris is left to enrich the soil of the forest floor.



Kane Hardwoods © 2004



Kane Hardwoods © 2004



Kane Hardwoods © 2004

a division of Collins Pine Company. This family-owned business has been operating for 150 years with the philosophy that good stewardship pays big dividends. Why? According to Connie Grenz, General Manager, “Taking care of what nature produces allows us to provide quality, renewable products for our great, great grandchildren.”

Kane Hardwood manages the 126,000-acre Collins Pennsylvania Forest. The land, which received Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) forest management certification from Scientific Certification Systems in 1994, sits in the center of one of the finest black cherry hardwood forests in the world, the Allegheny Mountains.

Kane Hardwood currently produces about 14 million board feet per year, and includes a pre-dryer, dry kiln, solar kiln, planing mill and dimension plant. The company employs 120 people including nine professional foresters who believe in sustainable practices and environmental sensitivity:

They also purchase timber from other sources – the Allegheny National Forest, Pennsylvania State Game Lands, State Forest Lands and private lands in the area – to accommodate production needs rather than overuse their own lands.

Approximately 93% of their products are sold in the U.S. and the rest is exported. Kane’s customers include a wide range of manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers. 30% of their product is purchased by secondary manufacturers to be made into FSC certified products, such as the panels used to build “The Wall” at the San Francisco International Airport.

As the largest sawmill employer in McKean County and second largest private landowner in Pennsylvania,

Kane Hardwood has been widely recognized and acclaimed for its civic and environmental practices:

- The company has set aside 100 acres of timberland and is working with the Fish and Game Commission to enhance habitat for ducks and other waterfowl.
- They are taking more land out of production to provide undisturbed corridors for songbirds and have set up no-harvest zones along 43.5 miles of streams.
- Kane provides year-round free public access for recreational activities.
- The company manages Project Learning Tree activities with local elementary schools.
- Kane also conducts a state of the art conversion facility to maximize yield from the forest resources.

For more information on Kane Hardwood visit www.CollinsWood.com