Central Appalachia Food Heritage project

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Growing the Appalachian Food Economy
What kind of local economies?

- What do we want to sustain?
- What do we want to regenerate?
- What do we want to cultivate?
The loss of the Commons

Naoma resident Betty Ross explains the changes brought on since the onset of mountaintop removal, stating that “you're not allowed on the mountain. You can't go pick berries like you used to, like on Montcoal Mountain; or gather poke-greens. And one of our sons was married on the mountain. And there are times that I just want to just drive up there and look but you're not allowed. They're gated off.”[4]
What are the traditions of communities around food?
What are common themes in communities across central Appalachia?
How can local economies be fostered through food heritage?
Celebrating food heritage to grow an abundant future

- Reweaving the community quilt, the community fabric
- Gathering around food – celebrating with food
CAFH Project Background

- Working with local and regional partners, the Central Appalachia Food Heritage project is a new, collaborative effort that helps to build knowledge about the foodways of central Appalachia, and cultivate opportunities for building community vibrancy and thriving local economies.

- Being built with many local partners throughout the region of Southwest Virginia, West Virginia, eastern Kentucky, eastern Ohio, and eastern Tennessee.

- Builds on two other projects and several conversations
  - Clinch River Valley Initiative in Southwest Virginia
  - Virginia Food Heritage project
Clinch River Valley Initiative – Working like a Watershed
- Vision
- Five goals and active action groups
- Action planning and project implementation
Focus on five key areas of food heritage

• Identify at-risk, threatened and endangered place-based heritage foods, seeds, and animal breeds unique to central Appalachia;

• Identify and map heritage food and agricultural sites, such as mills and granaries, canneries, butcheries and cideries;

• Identify heritage food production areas, such as areas where specific crops were traditionally grown;

• Record and collect personal stories and memories of culturally significant food and agriculture practices; and

• Help foster opportunities to celebrate food heritage in central Appalachia including potential food heritage trails, marketing opportunities, and developing regional networks of support for building community vibrancy and thriving local economies.
Partners include

- Southern Foodways Alliance
- Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation
- Skyhouse Films
- The Farm 2U Collaborative
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Agee Films
- Other economic development, nonprofit and community groups throughout central Appalachia
- We welcome your input and participation in the effort!
CAFH Next Steps

- Connecting with communities and other regional groups around food heritage and local food systems
  - Including 4:30 today, Windsor Room A

- Recording stories in Southwest Virginia around heritage corn

- Gathering stories and in southern West Virginia around gardens and preserving food

- Collecting stories throughout central Appalachia with local partners

- Developing opportunities around connecting food heritage to economic development and community celebration throughout the region.
Building Local Economies and Communities

- Food Heritage Trails
- Buy Local Appalachia (Fair Trade Appalachia example)
- Restaurants that focus on Heritage Foods
- Heritage Seeds and Breeds
- Interactive oral history maps
- Seeds swaps, sales, stories
- Value added products
- Other ideas and examples

Entrepreneurship Blueprint example

Define regional entrepreneurship priorities
Outline a plan to fill gaps in the existing system
Leverage existing programs and expertise
Demonstrate vision and collaboration
Serve as a keystone for external funding
Emphasize place-based assets
Economic Development

How Food with a Story Can Drive Economic Development

Heritage tourism has become a multibillion-dollar industry in the U.S. as travelers seek out historic and cultural sites. Culinary tourism is an integral slice of this trend. Heritage travelers want to immerse themselves in the culture of the community and to experience and interact not only with vintage architecture but also with community activities and the lives of the people through stories, photos, and artifacts. And they especially want local food experiences.

Despite their aversion to risks, tourists still want their excursions to be memorable and not to be the product of public relations and marketing campaigns; they want unique, authentic, and interactive experiences.

Who Are Cultural Heritage Tourists?

They tend to

- be more educated and affluent,
- spend 1.46 time more per trip, and
- stay 1.4 times longer compared to other travelers, and

In addition, they are 1.33 times more likely to stay at a hotel or bed and breakfast.

The economic benefits of cultural heritage tourism are
Dreaming New Mexico

Dreaming the Future Can Create the Future

www.dreamingnewmexico.org
Central Appalachia Food Heritage

Building knowledge about heritage place-based foods to create future opportunities for economic development and community-building throughout Central Appalachia

Central Appalachia Food Heritage Project

The Central Appalachia Food Heritage project (CAFH), working with local and regional partners, is a collaborative, community-based effort that helps to build knowledge about the foodways of central Appalachia, and cultivate opportunities to build community vibrancy and thriving local economies. The CAFH project is a new effort, and the goals and activities are evolving with input from project partners. We welcome your ideas, participation, and suggestions as this project develops – please see below for our contact information.

Seeking input
Developing partnerships
Project will continue to grow and change with community involvement
CAFH – ways to connect

- Please let us know if you would like to join the effort, have ideas or resources to contribute, or would like additional information by contacting us at appfoodheritage@gmail.com or 434-982-6464

- CAFH website: www.appfoodheritage.com

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