



2021 Appalachian Teaching Project Projects & Participants

Alfred State College, Alfred, NY

Leveraging Historic Transportation Networks to Promote Downtown Redevelopment and Heritage Tourism: A Vision for Sustainability and Growth in Allegany County, New York

Alfred State College partnered with the towns of Amity, Belfast, and Hume in Allegany County, New York to complete an inclusive *Community Visualization Study*. Allegany County is one of the poorest counties in New York State, home to a number of small communities with limited resources and part-time governments. This study will help stakeholders envision potential strategies for asset-based development, revitalizing and connecting downtown districts into vibrant public realms focused on leveraging historic transportation networks to promote heritage tourism in New York's Southern Tier and the larger Appalachian region. Thirty-six fourth-year architecture students, working in small groups, applied their education in architecture, historic preservation, and urban design to the challenges facing these towns/villages located along the historic NYS Route 19 corridor. At the conclusion of the semester, students, as part of this project, presented the *Community Visualization Study* to each of the community partners.

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

Building Market Channels for Local Food in the North Carolina High Country

Appalachian State University collaborated with Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture (BRWIA), a small non-profit in Boone, to support local economic development by building an equitable, sustainable local food system. The Covid-19 pandemic exposed key vulnerabilities in the US food system, and the systemic issues of waste and want require innovative thinking. Local food systems can build community resilience through expanding market channels that keep more food and food dollars in rural and food-producing regions. One promising new model to increase local food access recently emerged from the pandemic: funding emergency food boxes that provide hunger relief for families in need by purchasing produce from local farmers in the same region. This project supported the viability of this new market channel by pairing students from Appalachian State University with BRWIA staff to expand and market emergency food box programs in 2021. Students will learn about the importance of local food as a vehicle for economic development in the High Country.

Auburn University, Auburn, AL

Leadership Shorter: Developing Leaders of All Ages for a “Town on the Move”

Auburn University students and faculty continued their multi-year partnership with the Town of Shorter in Macon County, Alabama. Projects over the past two years have included research and action related to restoration of a historic African American cemetery and an interpretive space for local historic/cultural events of National Focus. With the help of the community partner, this year Auburn students focused on leadership development of students at D.C. Wolfe Elementary School

through the town's afterschool program. Covid-19 concerns caused the school to implement distance learning on the planned day of weekly visits, so Auburn students revised their original plan to include interviews with local leaders and development of posters to convey leadership lessons at the school; research and action related to the leadership and education philosophy of the school's namesake Deborah Cannon Wolfe; an interactive exhibit of historic photos from the Library of Congress on the first school in the community; experiential sessions on nonviolence and leadership with Auburn University visiting professor and civil rights icon Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr.; and more. Through this project, students in this class assisted the town in the development of future leaders, participating in a process that honored local knowledge, addressed local challenges, and enhanced the town's relationship with a neighboring land-grant, research university.

East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN

RISE Erwin: Unicoi County's Rise Toward Sustainable Economic Development

East Tennessee State University continued its multi-year partnership with RISE Erwin, a local community development group, to promote economic development projects in Erwin, Tennessee. In year two, this project focused on building upon the previous (2020-2021) project. Students engaged in economic development by collaborating to organize, promote, and stage a community movie event in support of the campaign to purchase the historic Capitol Theater in the town. Students also worked with RISE Erwin to create a "Southern Potteries Heritage Trail" event for the 105th anniversary of the well-known Southern Potteries factory, which operated in Erwin from 1916-1957. Through their work, students gained first-hand experience of the process of cultural heritage event planning and the community organizing necessary to gain community buy-in for a successful event and for the long-term sustainability of a non-profit organization. Students solicited participants to create, sponsor, and display the Southern Potteries "dinner plates" throughout the county and conducted oral histories in support of historical markers for the Heritage Trail.

Fairmont State University, Fairmont, WV

The Historic Woodlawn Cemetery: Sustainability through Heritage Tourism

Students at the Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center at Fairmont State University collaborated with the Board of Trustees for the Woodlawn Cemetery and the Marion County Convention and Visitors Bureau to plan for, design, and produce informational materials about the historic cemetery (signs, walking-tour brochures, website content, and audio/video stories). These materials were produced to help educate people about local history, allow visitors to explore the cemetery and the local community, and to support the local economy by enticing visitors to the region. Through the process of creating this material and working with local community leaders, students gained hands-on, "real world" experiences in heritage tourism and asset-based development. The type of cultural work with which they were engaged strengthened their research, leadership and problem-solving skills. Through this project, students had the opportunity to learn from local professionals and community leaders with expertise in areas such as public history, local research, technical writing and audiovisual design. This project, most importantly, supported the preservation efforts, the interpretive work, and the promotional endeavors relating to the historic Woodlawn Cemetery, a regional cultural asset.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA

COVID in Rural America: Community Vulnerability and Resiliency in Indiana County, PA

Indiana University of Pennsylvania students collaborated with the Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Task Force to study the impact of COVID on the economic stability of Indiana County. The Indiana County Sustainable Task Force was organized in 2017 by the County Commissioners of Indiana County. One of the overall aims of the Task Force is to coordinate with other economic development efforts to build a resilient and diversified local economy. This year's

partnership between IUP and the Task Force allowed anthropologists with expertise in medical and environmental anthropology to guide students in designing and conducting original research on rural resiliency and vulnerability in the Northern Appalachian community. The Rural Resiliency and Vulnerability (RRVP) is a multi-method approach building upon previous research from the 2020-2021 ATP grant cycle, which engaged qualitative data collection to better understand the landscape of the COVID pandemic. Select students from Dr. Adams's Medical Anthropology and Dr. Poole's Applied Anthropology courses utilized the anthropological methods of ethnographic interviews and participant observation to better understand the nature of Indiana County's response to the COVID pandemic in our country.

Morehead State University, Morehead, KY

Building Entrepreneurial Capacity for the Future with Today's Students

Morehead State students, as part of a Business Plan Development course, partnered with Hazard High School to develop a model of building entrepreneurial capacity for today's students. This model is intended to support community economic development in order to help build a sustainable future and close the socioeconomic gap between Appalachia and the rest of the nation. In this project, students created a "How to Guide" to better enable high school students who would like to go into business for themselves. The entrepreneurial guide created in their course provides high school students with a detailed plan that looks at the community's business needs and offers resources and ideas to establish rapport with local business leaders. This guide could potentially serve as a guide in other rural Appalachian counties. As part of the project, students spent time researching the ARC and the economic challenges of those living in Appalachian counties. Students shared their findings with Hazard High School students and engaged in dialogue about the realities of life in Appalachia. The high school students then created a business plan model for the Hazard/Perry County community and college students likewise created business plans for new viable businesses.

Ohio University, Athens, OH

From Whence We Came to Where We Will Go: Sharing the Stories of Immigration, Economic Opportunity, and Sustainability in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds

Ohio University students collaborated with the Little Cities of Black Diamonds (LCBD) Council, to develop, document, and evaluate community stories connected to the LCBD 2021 Theme: "From Whence We Came," which aims to focus on the history and current contributions of immigration to the region. The students' work built upon their 2020 ATP project that provided data collection, analysis of social media content, and program evaluation that greatly contributed to the LCBD efforts to foster community development and regional tourism. Little Cities of Black Diamonds is made up of 56 towns built during the coal boom of the late 1800s and was organized over 25 years ago to identify community assets and then use them as a guide for sustainable community development. This year the partnership focused on developing and documenting community stories of immigration with the intent of utilizing the stories to promote community development and tourism. Students created a social media campaign designed to highlight the history of immigration in various LCBD communities. Their secondary task was working with LCBD Council members to plan and carry out a "story swap" about immigration with LCBD community members, and to digitally archive and make collected material accessible online in order to promote heritage tourism in the region. Lastly, students completed a program evaluation of the LCBD Day/Fest through online and in-person surveys in order to provide valuable data for future planning and grant funding opportunities.

Radford University, Radford, VA

Expanding Commerce and Opportunity in Eastern Montgomery County

Radford University students helped the Eastmont Community Foundation establish an online version of its Eastmont Thrift Store and assisted with the operation of fundraising events and documentation of the organization's history. Eastmont Community Foundation is a nearly all-volunteer organization that began more than 15 years ago with the vision of turning empty buildings into opportunity for the people and communities of Eastern Montgomery County, Virginia. ATP students helped the Foundation form and implement plans to improve the thrift store's marketing and online presence in order to increase income from the operation. Students also had the opportunity to participate in the organization's efforts to improve the operation and events at the Oldtown Fields athletic complex. As part of this endeavor, students collected oral histories with individuals instrumental in the creation of the organization to document their successes and help other communities learn from their effort. Students engaged with their community in numerous ways and worked to determine how to approach and accomplish the goals that were set forward. The collaboration also gave students the opportunity to present to their community partner and learn how to effectively define and share the planning and execution of a large community project.

University of Northern Alabama, Florence, AL

Realizing the Potential of the Tennessee River: Building a Sustainable Recreation Economy in Northwest Alabama

Students at the University of Northern Alabama collaborated with Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area to explore the untapped potential of the Tennessee River in the areas of recreational tourism and economic growth, primarily looking at Lawrence and Limestone County. The Tennessee River, long recognized as one of Northern Alabama's greatest natural assets, has always played a role in the economies and settlement of its surrounding communities. Students in this project identified and created proposals that leveraged valuable natural and cultural resources for economic growth in a responsible and environmentally ethical manner. Students began the semester looking at the Tennessee River's historical, cultural, and economic history to provide a foundation for their proposals. In the second phase of the course, students learned about the ways in which traditional approaches to economic development differ from asset-based approaches that are especially important to economically disadvantaged rural communities. In the latter half of the semester students worked in groups and were introduced to the Strategic Doing Methodology, which helped them to identify assets that can be used to move projects forward. At the conclusion of the semester, the student teams pitched their ideas in an Idea Audition to leaders from Limestone and Lawrence counties, the greater university community, and directors from the Singing River Trail and the Tennessee RiverLine. The winning idea will be presented as part of the final poster project and the ATP Conference Presentation.

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

Realizing Regional Resilience: Appalachian Bridges to the Future

University of Pittsburgh students, alongside an interdisciplinary team of faculty, collaborated with the Fayette County Cultural Trust (FCCT) to develop a pilot platform for community-engaged research and pedagogy about how to sustain and enhance the economic development of rural and small urban spaces in the Southwest Pennsylvania region. This interdisciplinary platform brings together a wide range of students and research skills to evaluate how to address the consequences of the rural brain drain in the post-COVID 19 era. At the start of this long-term partnership, students worked with the FCCT to identify the cultural, artistic, historic, and natural assets that are most appropriate for engaged research at this time. Through the partnership, students will have the opportunity to help FCCT in on-going established efforts to curb the brain drain and to help identify

new approaches and possibilities. As part of this project students constructed a Scope of Work and presented their findings to community partners. In addition, throughout the course students were asked to critically reflect on their experiences through prompts on a public blog. The desired outcome of this collaboration is for the team to serve as a valuable resource for their community partner and for the two to continue working towards building a more resilient future for the region.

University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, Bradford, PA

Quintuple Mountain Recreational Trail Project: To Enhance Trail Access and Amenities for the Community of Bradford, PA

University of Pittsburgh at Bradford students collaborated with community partners on the Quintuple Mountain Recreational Trail Project to: quantitatively assess trail conditions, organize trail construction and maintenance activities, and identify cultural and historic sites along the trail. Students surveyed elements of the ecological state of the forest and utilized GIS software to create maps showing trail conditions, ecological information, and cultural assets on the 200+-acre parcel of forested land between the campus and downtown Bradford, Pennsylvania. At the doorstep of the Allegheny National Forest, Bradford is in a prime location to transition to an economy built on hospitality and ecotourism but it presently lacks well-defined trail access linking the college and the National Forest. Students built upon the GIS maps and trail route work completed in the 2020-2021 Appalachian Teaching Project grant cycle to begin development of the trail infrastructure and to begin assessing trail features that promote engagement with community partners and community learning about the ecology and sustainability of the area. As part of this year's project, students held group orientation and planning sessions, organized volunteer trail work sessions, and information to GIS Maps. They also held meetings with community partners to begin developing grant-funding requests and promotional activities, and to gather important historical and cultural information.

University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Knoxville, TN

Charge-up Appalachia: Strategies to improve Electric Vehicles along Tennessee's ADHS Corridors

Students from the University of Tennessee developed a plan for locating electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in Appalachian counties in support of a new initiative by the State of Tennessee and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to help communities install fast chargers every fifty miles along the state's interstates and major highways. The class worked with several distressed or at-risk counties along two highway corridors. Students in this project developed and distributed a brief needs assessment survey to determine local needs, identify potential charger sites, and measure local awareness and attitudes related to EVs and EV adoption issues. Secondly, students consulted with UT media relations to develop a media plan for the project, including a robust social media element. Students then worked with experts and EV users to develop criteria for placement of both fast charges and level 2 chargers. Next, students conducted an environmental scan of existing infrastructure to identify potential locations. Students then identified local stakeholders and conducted field research in the communities along the corridor(s). Finally, students created the final EV infrastructure plan and shared it with project partners and local stakeholders. This project has many potential benefits for the communities and the region, including economic development, expanding critical infrastructure, increasing access to outdoor recreation, historical sites, and other tourism venues, and reducing air pollution and protecting environmental resources.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA

Policy Recommendations for Supporting Recovery from Substance Use Disorder in Virginia

Virginia Tech students reviewed research recommendations from two previous Appalachian Teaching Project courses and sought additional input from community partners to assess policy recommendations for the promotion of recovery from substance use disorder in Virginia. Students participated in a "You Write the Bill" workshop hosted by Delegate Sam Rasoul or his staff and

drafted two to four pieces of Virginia General Assembly legislation. Likely areas of focus included: stigma reduction, telehealth services, broadband infrastructure, transportation and recovery housing, naloxone distribution, harm reduction, mobile syringe exchange, safe injection sites, and police-mental health worker partnerships. Students were introduced to substance use disorder (SUD) and recovery by community partner Bently Wood, a peer recovery specialist at New River Valley Community Services (NRVCS), which implements evidence-based programs and services for persons in recovery. Mr. Wood provided an overall context of SUD recovery services offered in the NRV and provide students with sensitivity training. After completion of background research, students consulted additional experts on SUD legislation and the legislative process. Students gained competency in and sensitivity to substance use disorder recovery resources and needs. The projected positive impact on the community includes greater community awareness of recovery needs and reduced stigma for persons in recovery. Furthermore, students may contribute to educating public officials regarding policies with the potential to support people in recovery.

Young Harris College, Young Harris, GA

An Interpretive Trail to Highlight the Natural and Cultural Significance of Cupid Falls

Young Harris College students collaborated with the City of Young Harris to design an interpretive trail incorporating place-based and culturally relevant artwork and signage for Cupid Falls Park. Appalachia provides abundant opportunities for travel and recreation and is primed for promoting eco-tourism and public use of natural spaces as a component of economic sustainability. Parks and green spaces also offer opportunities for the public to engage with the distinctive natural and human history of the region. This project capitalized on an ongoing initiative by the city to develop infrastructure for the park to facilitate safe use and to highlight cultural and natural assets. Students from several different disciplines and courses, including Biology, Outdoor Leadership, and Art collaborated on the project. Students carried out surveys of biological diversity in the park, surveys of tree diversity, designed interpretive components for the natural and cultural landscapes, and designed and constructed artwork and displays. Students consulted with city leaders to plan, design, and install interpretive pieces in the park to align with the town's vision for the space. The project provides a more memorable, informative, and educational experience for park users, while providing students the opportunity to build leadership skills and observe how local government works.