

**“Documenting Community Traditions:
Sustainable Agriculture in Northeast Tennessee”**

East Tennessee State University

Dr. Roberta Herrin

Director, Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

East Tennessee State University

Johnson City, TN 37614

423-439-7997

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Dr. Tess Lloyd

Associate Professor

Department of Literature and Language

East Tennessee State University

Johnson City, TN 37614

423-4399-6677

lloydt@etsu.edu

Final Report Narrative

Name of Project: “Documenting Community Traditions: Sustainable Agriculture in Northeast Tennessee.” Grant Period: January 1, 2010 – June 30, 2010
Grantee Name: ETSU Project Director: Tess Lloyd

Description of Project:

East Tennessee State University’s 2010 Appalachian Teaching Project course was APST/SOAA 5690, Documenting Community Traditions, taught by Dr. Tess Lloyd and Dr. John Lewis. Five graduate students were enrolled in this class. The central focus of the project was to document residents of Unicoi County engaged in sustainable agriculture or living on family farms so that the county can use that documentation in sustainable economic development initiatives. The community partner is the Town of Unicoi. The project goals are to promote sustainable agriculture and to preserve Unicoi’s farming heritage. By bolstering sustainable agriculture, Unicoi County will increase job opportunities and per capita income and be better prepared to compete in the global economy. Students will learn how to work with a local community and how to use a cultural survey as a tool in community development.

Activities:

After meeting with their community partners and receiving training in fieldwork methodology and ethics, students conducted fifteen one-hour, tape-recorded interviews with residents of Unicoi County involved in agriculture. These interviews will be shared with Unicoi County leaders and deposited in the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University. Students gave a presentation and poster at the ATP conference in Washington on December 4, 2010. They gave a presentation and poster to the local community leaders and farmers on December 9, 2010.

Project Outcomes:

Students learned how to work with a community partner, conduct fieldwork (including interviews), analyze the data gathered in fieldwork, and use fieldwork projects to enhance sustainable economic development projects. They also developed skills in collaborative work and leadership as they prepared their presentation and poster.

Problems Encountered:

The students were not able to locate as many retired, older farmers to interview as they had hoped.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

The Town and County of Unicoi have a firm commitment to promoting sustainable development, including sustainable agriculture, agritourism, and cultural tourism. ETSU’s

DCT class will continue working with community leaders to interview county residents engaged in agriculture.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Students discovered that there is an interest in local agriculture and agritourism in Unicoi County, and that Unicoi farmers believe that diversification is key to that development. The interest in the subject warrants continuing work on the part of ETSU's Documenting Community Traditions students, since their interviews not only gauge current interest but also provide a vital resource for future heritage preservation endeavors. To expand the pool of interviewees, we recommend meeting with community members this summer.

Attachments:

None.