“Trail Central” Capacity Analysis: Enhancing Geotourism in Northwestern Pennsylvania

Applied Anthropology:
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Partnerships
“Geotourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.”
-National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations

Trail Central
is a planned series of interconnected trails, parks, national forest, and water access points, linking people to the natural and cultural treasures of the
Allegheny National Forest, the Kinzua Bridge State Park, Pennsylvania and the Allegany State Park in New York.
In McKean County, visitors spent $113.6 million in 2009.

Nature based recreation is the #1 reason people visit our area.

Tourism already directly supports 758 jobs in McKean County.
Scenic driving and hiking are the most popular visitor activities in the County.
Goal is to help communities take advantage of the economic opportunity that walks or rides into town.
Research Methods

• Coordinate Town Hall meetings to gauge public interest, identify opportunities and challenges to geotourism.
• Design and distribute questionnaires.
• Develop communication between local trail groups, local governments, and business interests.
• Survey other successful trail towns in Appalachia.
Study Areas and Response

- Town Halls: Bradford, Mt. Jewett, Kane, Smethport, Warren PA.
- Turn-out of approximately 150 people over four meetings.
- 93 questionnaires collected.

Kane, PA meeting
Bradford

- Population: 8,308
- Unemployment: 8.8%
- Poverty Rate: 20.7%
- Receive Public Assistance: 4%

Crook Farms

Zippo Museum

Marilia Reservoir

Brad Penn Oil Museum
Population: 1,551
Poverty Rate: 8%
Unemployment: 8.8%
• Population: 3,723
• Poverty Rate: 13%
• Unemployment: 8.8%
• Population: 10,457
• Poverty Rate: 10.7%
• Unemployment: 7.4%
Recognized Historic Resources

- Historic Downtown: 37%
- Timber Heritage: 31%
- Architecture: 27%
- Museums: 16%
- Farms: 16%
- Oil-related Sites: 37%
- Historic Businesses: 25%
“The people of Damascus were very supportive because they knew that this type of development would bring an economic boost and allow new businesses...to form in the town creating jobs”-Susan Lay, Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce

“Community support for the trails gradually built itself because the town now thrives on the tourist population.”-Sam, Assistant Manager at Quincey’s Pizza
“The most important aspect of developing a trail town is to know your customer; Frostburg makes sure that we understand the importance of visitors and customers… the visitors are what helps make this town so successful.” -John Kirby, City Administrator
Next Steps

- Mapping Existing and Proposed Trails
- Trail Apps and Kiosks
- Public Awareness and Education
- Networking Tools Among Social Groups
- Establishing Asset Inventories