

“One Vision/ Many Voices: Envisioning Our Future by Valuing Our Past”

(Sub-Contract Grantee Name/Authorized Signatory/Address/Phone)

(This is not the same person as the ATP faculty director.)

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Final Report Narrative

Name of Project: One Vision Many Voices: Envisioning Our Future by Valuing Our Past

Grant Period: August, 2012 – May 31, 2013

Grantee Name: Frostburg State University Project Director: Dr. Kara Rogers Thomas

Description of Project:

The *Appalachian Independent*, www.appindie.org, an online citizen journalist news source for western Maryland, received a grant from the Maryland Humanities Council funding the project, One Vision/Many Voices. The project was intended to inspire and facilitate informed dialogue among citizens of Mountain Maryland around the question, “How do we embrace what we value in our community while moving towards a healthier, more sustainable future?” Through a series of community events the project gathered a collection of ‘Community Voices’ through the documentation of discussions and the crafting of quilt squares for a community quilt. In all endeavors, participants were encouraged to address, a.) what they love most about their home and b.) what their vision is for the future of their community. The project culminated in the composition and performance of an original song, inspired by the content of quilt squares and community discussions and the crafting of a community quilt. Digital documentation of each event has been shared online through the *Appalachian Independent*. In Fall 2012, FSU students enrolled in Sociology 350: Folklore in Appalachia, and in Spring 2013 FSU students enrolled in Sociology of the Environment partnered with the *AppIndie* to carry out this work. In close collaboration with AppIndie Project Director Mike Snyder, students were charged with planning programming, overseeing the crafting of community quilt squares and facilitating community events and visioning sessions.

Activities:

In Fall 2012 students enrolled in “Folklore in Appalachia” assisted in the production of the following events:

Sat, October 6th: Home Ground Festival with Roy Brown – Now in its second year, this event features the work of Home Ground, an organization launched through the Nature Conservancy. Based in Allegany County, Maryland, Home Ground brings people together to enjoy the outdoors, and to appreciate the vital role of nature in our lives and communities. The event, held at Rocky Gap State Park, was attended by about 200 people, despite unseasonably chilly weather. Folklore students were responsible for overseeing the construction of community quilt squares and setting up and hosting a talk on Archeology and Appalachian Prehistory by Roy Brown, of the Western Maryland Archeology Association.

Sun, October 7th: Bicycle Workshop + Community Trail Ride – The AppIndie and FSU Folklore students partnered with Doug “Hutch” Hutchins, owner of The Trail Connection bike shop, to provide a workshop on bike maintenance. Although a group ride was initially

planned, stormy weather dissuaded participants from completing that ride. Trail Connection employees and patrons did contribute several quilt squares to the community quilt, however.

Wed, October 10th: Coal Talk and Music From the Mines (with Amy Fabbri and Kara Rogers Thomas). This program was held at the Georges Creek Library in Lonaconing, MD. Drawing from the “Coal Talk” collection documented in the 1990s by the Western Maryland Public Library System, the program wove together historical images and local oral histories with performances of mining ballads by Frostburg-based ballad singer, Amy Fabbri Lough. Attended by more than thirty enthusiastic participants, the ensuing discussion was riveting, providing rich material regarding community history. FSU students assisted in the production, oversaw the construction of quilt squares, and documented the discussion.

Sat, October 13th: It's All Uphill to Oakland! The Saga of the B&O's '17 mile grade' with Pat Stakem. This program was held at Garrett College in McHenry, MD, as part of Garrett County’s annual Autumn Glory Festival. Featuring train enthusiast and historian Pat Stakem, the program highlighted the construction of the B&O’s 17 mile grade in Garrett County. FSU students facilitated and documented the event and discussion.

Mon, October 22nd: An Echo in the Hills: Poetry Palooza and Slam Competition and Performance with Allan Wolf. Hosted by Frostburg’s Mountain City Traditional Arts, a shop and venue which operates as a program of Frostburg State University, more than sixty-five people came out for this event, with nearly a dozen competing in the Poetry Slam. Poet and Slam Master Alan Wolf of Asheville, NC performed several of his original performance poetry pieces and acted as the official slam master. FSU Folklore students served as slam judges, encouraged and oversaw the construction of quilt squares, and one even participated in the slam. Participating poets were required to incorporate subject matter pertinent to Appalachia and addressing the One Vision, Many Voices theme, “How do we embrace what we value in our community while moving towards a healthier, more sustainable future?”

In Spring 2013, FSU students enrolled in “Sociology of the Environment,” continued the efforts begun by Folklore students, planning and facilitating a Film Series on Sustainability in collaboration with the *AppIndie*’s “One Vision, Many Voices,” project.

Mon, February 11th: FILM NIGHT: *Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time* –The first film in the series was done in partnership with the *AppIndie* and the Home Ground organization. Held in the theatre at Allegany College of Maryland, in Cumberland, MD, the screening was attended by more than 150 people, including both community residents as well as ACM students. After the screening, attendees were invited to stay for a post film discussion tying the themes back to the Appalachian region. Those present divided into two groups to discuss and respond. FSU students were responsible for encouraging attendees to craft quilt squares and documenting the post film discussion.

Mon, February 25th: FILM NIGHT: *Home* –also held in the theatre of the Allegany College of Maryland, this screening was attended by an audience of more than 125. FSU Assistant Professor of Sports and Recreation, Natalia Buta, and Green Ridge Forest Manager Mark Beals

served as the event's post-film discussants. FSU students were responsible for facilitating this event. They chose and invited the discussants, formulated discussion questions, and documented the event in addition to overseeing the production of quilt squares.

Mon, March 4th: FILM NIGHT: *Dirt!, The Movie* – held in the Compton Science Center on the campus of Frostburg State University, the event was attended by more than 60 community members and FSU students. Discussion panelists included Francis “Bud” Precht, FSU Associate Professor of Geography, and Ben Yoder, owner of Savage Farm Community Supported Agriculture. FSU students were responsible for planning this event. They chose and invited the discussants, formulated discussion questions, facilitated the post viewing discussion, and documented the event in addition to overseeing the production of quilt squares.

Mon, March 11th: FILM NIGHT: Getting to the Point, 5 short films- held in the Compton Science Center on the campus of Frostburg State University and attended by more than 50 people, the final segment in the film series focused entirely on Appalachian themed short films tackling issues of Fracking, Green Burials, Agriculture and the Internet, and Alternative Energy and Sustainability. From a starting point of more than 20 possible films, FSU students selected the films to be screened, chose and invited the discussants, formulated discussion questions, facilitated the post viewing discussion, and documented the event in addition to overseeing the production of quilt squares. Discussants included Dawn and Tim Custer of Goodness Grows CSA and Paul Roberts, with CitizenShale, a local organization committed to responsible research and safe natural gas drilling practices, which at this point supports a moratorium on fracking in western Maryland.

Each program described was advertised via posters and through the AppIndie and Cumberland Times Newspaper and open to the public-free of charge.

In early March the folk duo Magpie worked with students from Beall Elementary School in Frostburg, Maryland to create a community folk song inspired by the project's efforts. The elementary school students were joined by a number of area residents to give the song writing process a multi-generational flare. Although FSU students were unable to participate in this portion of the project due to scheduling conflicts, the quilt pieces they helped develop and the documentation from the various programs they assisted in planning and hosting were used as the foundation for the song's thematic content.

On April 17th, Magpie and the student and community group performed the song, “Wherever Rivers Flow,” as part of Magpie’s Performance capping off Frostburg State University’s “Focus Frostburg,” a day-long event in FSU’s Lane Student Center featuring multiple programs and workshops with sustainability themes. FSU-ATP student participants displayed their project poster and sections of the community quilt as part of that endeavor. The free event was well advertised in the region and open to the public.

Information on the overall *One Vision, Many Voices Project* is available online at
<http://www.onevisionmanyvoices.org/>

Publicity and follow up feature stories are available on www.appindie.org. Some highlights include:

VIDEOS

Music from the Mines: <http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/3050-music-from-the-mines-and-coal-talk-engages-audience-in-lonaconing>

Home Ground: <http://www.appindie.org/index.php/our-blue-earth/89-our-blue-earth/3043-one-vision-home-ground-celebrate-mountain-life-at-rocky-gap>

Echo in the Hills Poetry Palooza and Slam: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUjKYzte868>

It's All Up Hill to Oakland: <http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/3056-its-all-up-hill-to-oakland-with-pat-stakem>

PRESS

<http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/3207-magpie-a-beall-elementary-students-take-to-the-stage>

<http://www.appindie.org/index.php/our-blue-earth/89-our-blue-earth/3147-community-responds-to-home>

<http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/3137-first-in-appindie-film-series-draws-large-crowd>

PROMOTIONAL PRESS

<http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/3037-one-vision-many-voices-a-series-of-events-and-community-art>

<http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/3057-poetry-slam-bring-out-your-rhythm-and-rhyme>

<http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/3189-magpie-to-perform-community-song-during-earth-week>

<http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/3158-fracking-dying-green-sustainable-farming-featured-in-short-films-screening>

Project Outcomes:

Presentation and Poster Presentation at the annual gathering of ATP participants in Washington, DC- December

Poster Presentation at the Appalachian Studies Association's Annual Meeting, Boone, NC - March

Poster Presentation and Concert at Frostburg State University, Focus Frostburg Events- April

Community Quilt featuring more than 200 quilt squares

5 public programs in Fall

4 public programs as part of the Spring Film Series

4 short films

1 original song with video forthcoming

Problems Encountered:

Because the first of the programs was scheduled for September, students in "Folklore and Appalachia" had to hit the ground running with little time to prepare. Although they met with the project director twice before the first event, there were issues and trouble-shooting that occurred on site. For the most part, however, the programs went smoothly in the Fall. Our most challenging task was encouraging project participants to move past a discussion of regional history or their frustrations with current environmental and/or economic conditions to engage in a discussion envisioning future possibilities enabling the region to achieve sustainability goals. In early Spring, students in "Sociology of the Environment" encountered several snow days, creating some scheduling issues with planning for the film series and requiring considerable adjustment to the course's syllabus.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

The entire project was developed as a way to increase readership and generate content for the *Appalachian Independent*. In that regard, the project has been successful. Because of their participation in this project, FSU students are much more aware of the online resource, and the AppIndie readership has increased.

The project will continue this Fall. Currently, a Frostburg-based quilting group is completing the community quilt. The completed project will be featured on September 21 as part of Frostburg State University's annual Appalachian Festival. That event will also include a screening of the "Wherever Rivers Flow," Community Song Video.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Overall, the project was incredibly successful in identifying regional values—particularly those focusing on the local environment; but was less successful in moving the discussion to the next step—brainstorming creative solutions to those issues.

I learn something every year I participate in this project. This year, I've discovered that I need to be less flexible in allowing students to select their own area of interest for participation. While I had several students participate in the Home Ground Festival, Music of the Mines, and the Poetry Slam, I had only two students available for the Bike Maintenance Workshop and It's All Uphill to Oakland. Realizing my error, I was able to balance the numbers much better for the Spring Film Series, which had roughly equal student representation throughout.

Also, because the project involved students from the Fall and Spring, in retrospect I should have scheduled a few planning sessions for students to come together to put the final touches on the poster presentation. While the students who attended the Appalachian Studies Association meeting were able to work collaboratively, I believe all students involved in the project would have benefitted from a few collaborative sessions.

Attachments (in PDF format):

Please find attached, PowerPoint Presentation by FSU Students—featuring a collection of images from each Fall event; promotional flyer for the One Vision, Many Voices Project. For more materials, please click on the links included in the above narrative.