

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

East Tennessee State University

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Final Report Narrative

Name of Project: "Documenting Community Traditions: Sustainable Agriculture in Northeast Tennessee." Grant Period: January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012
Grantee Name: ETSU Project Director: Tess Lloyd

Description of Project:

East Tennessee State University's 2011 Appalachian Teaching Project course was APST/SOAA 5690, Documenting Community Traditions, taught by Dr. Tess Lloyd and Dr. John Lewis. Six graduate students were enrolled in this class. The central focus of the project was twofold: (1) 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; and (2) to use that documentation to prepare a local food brochure that the county could use to promote its farm products. 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 thirteen 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. Then, students prepared a local food brochure, which they gave to the Town of Unicoi. Students gave a presentation and poster at the ATP conference in Washington on December 2, 2011. They gave a presentation and poster to the local community leaders and farmers on December 5, 2011.

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. They learned how to design a marketing brochure.

Problems Encountered:

No significant problems were encountered.

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. The Town of Unicoi is using this brochure to market its local food this summer.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Students discovered that the Town of Unicoi's interest in promoting local agriculture remains very high. The town is in the process of building a community kitchen, which indicates its commitment to local products. 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 and attending the County of Unicoi Farmers Market.

Attachments:

None.