



Blue Ridge Heritage, Inc.

Rocky Knob Sustainable Tourism Centerpiece Project

**Blue Ridge Parkway
Floyd County, Va.
Patrick County, Va.**



The Birth of an Idea

- Rep. Rick Boucher and the Rocky Knob Project
- Economic development in Floyd & Patrick counties, and region
- Rocky Knob Advisory Committee
- Federal & state funding
- Birth of Blue Ridge Heritage, Inc.





Virginia Tech & Clemson University Market Study



Scenario recommendations
based upon resources & market research

- Community asset and resource inventory
- Community and stakeholder input
- Survey of current visitors
- Land use suitability and tourism scenario development
- Survey of potential visitors
- Economic impact analysis of recommended scenarios

Land Use Suitability and Tourism Scenario Development

Results of Community Asset/Resource Inventory Parts I & II, and the survey of current visitors directed development of seven tourism scenario concepts:

- Regional Sustainability Scenario
- Regional Sustainable Artisan School Scenario
- Biodiversity Conservation Network Scenario
- Water Conservation and Recreation Network Scenario
- Oak Savannah Restoration and Woodland Bison Reintroduction Scenario
- Regional Heritage and Nature Tourism Scenario
- Agri-tourism Scenario



Tourism Development Scenario 1

Mountain Life Visitor Center and Nature Trail

- Mountain Heritage Visitor Center and Nature Trail concept combines a visitor center with associated adjacent new trails, along with a series of self-guided travel routes that wander throughout both counties. The intent of this scenario is to reveal the wonders of the counties to local residents and visitors alike.



Tourism Development Scenario 2

Farm Life Visitor Center and Trail

- The Farm Life Visitor Center and Trail reinforces the historic and cultural agricultural traditions in the counties by establishing an agri-tourism network with a central farm hub of a “slow food” restaurant and interactive farm.



“A Century Of Change”

- Visitor center and gateway to the counties
- Tell the story of the 20th century “Century of Change”
- Visitor center with exhibits, walking trails, etc.
- Orientation for self-guided tours of counties



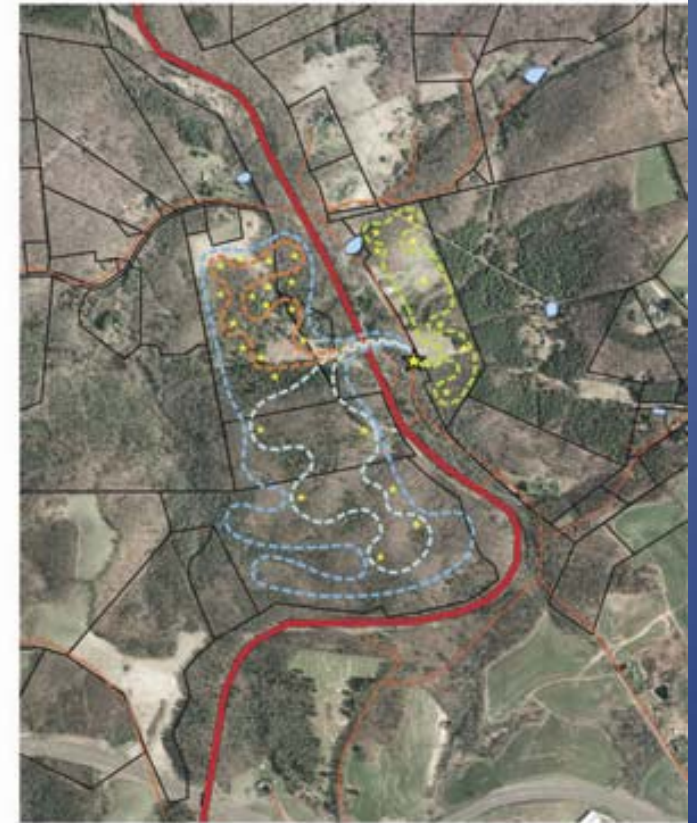
Program

- Place-based programs focusing on 20th century, including agricultural history
- Emphasis upon authentic experiences
- Include opportunities for local and regional schools, as well as tourists
- Model sustainability in programs & facilities



TRAIL NETWORK
SUITABILITY

One of our primary objectives for our proposed network of cultural and historical routes was to encourage visitors to get off of the Blue Ridge Parkway, into Floyd and Patrick Counties, exploring all the local charms that these communities have to offer. The concept of an un-automated, convenient trail network quickly emerged, with the intent of attracting the attention of visitors along the Parkway and providing a gateway to the system of routes throughout the adjacent counties. In order to determine the suitability for our desired trail network, we developed a series of parameters, the first being proximity to Mabry Mill. Mabry Mill serves as a location that is immediately accessible to drivers on the Blue Ridge Parkway and hosts an existing reputation as a lovely rest area along the Parkway. This location additionally serves as a convenient access point for many of our routes that were developed through a separate suitability analysis. Additionally, a proximity to the Parkway itself was important in order to maximize a consolidated, convenient experience. Also, in an effort to be as minimally invasive as possible to the residents of this area, we placed a focus in our suitability on privately-owned parcels, in order to not depend upon the sale or donation of private property. In addition to these parameters, we also considered the slope of the region with the hope of providing an experience suitable to visitors of all ages. Through this suitability analysis, we learned that Mabry Mill was an ideal location for each of our objectives.



DISCOVER

Floyd & Patrick Co

GPS Navigation and Kiosk System

Discover Floyd and Patrick Co. kiosks can be placed at about any location. The Kiosk will sell visitors about the routes in the area and offer the GPS units. These units will be housed in "lockers" that can be opened by the swipe of a credit card. The units can then be turned in at any location with another swipe of the credit card. If users do not return the GSP unit within 14 days their credit card will be charged.

Locations that the Kiosks can be placed:

- Mabey Mill
- Fairy Stone Park
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Patrick County Visitors Center
- Floyd County Store
- Chateau Morisette
- Meadows of Dan
- and many others...

The GPS units are specific to Floyd and Patrick County and are tailored to show the routes. Upon first turning on the unit it will put you through a few prompts informing you on how to use the system. The next screen is where you will choose the route you would like to travel on. The unit will give you directions to the next destination along the route. When you are driving around the unit will show you different key attractions in proximity to your location. These attractions are on and off the predefined routes. A user can create their own route by choosing different attractions. At any time a user can touch the information button then touch one of the icons on the unit to key a dialog box and learn more about the feature. Restaurants, Gas stations, and Accommodations are hidden until you touch the icon at the bottom then they will pop up on the screen showing you the locations closest to you.



DISCOVER

Floyd & Patrick Co.

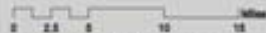
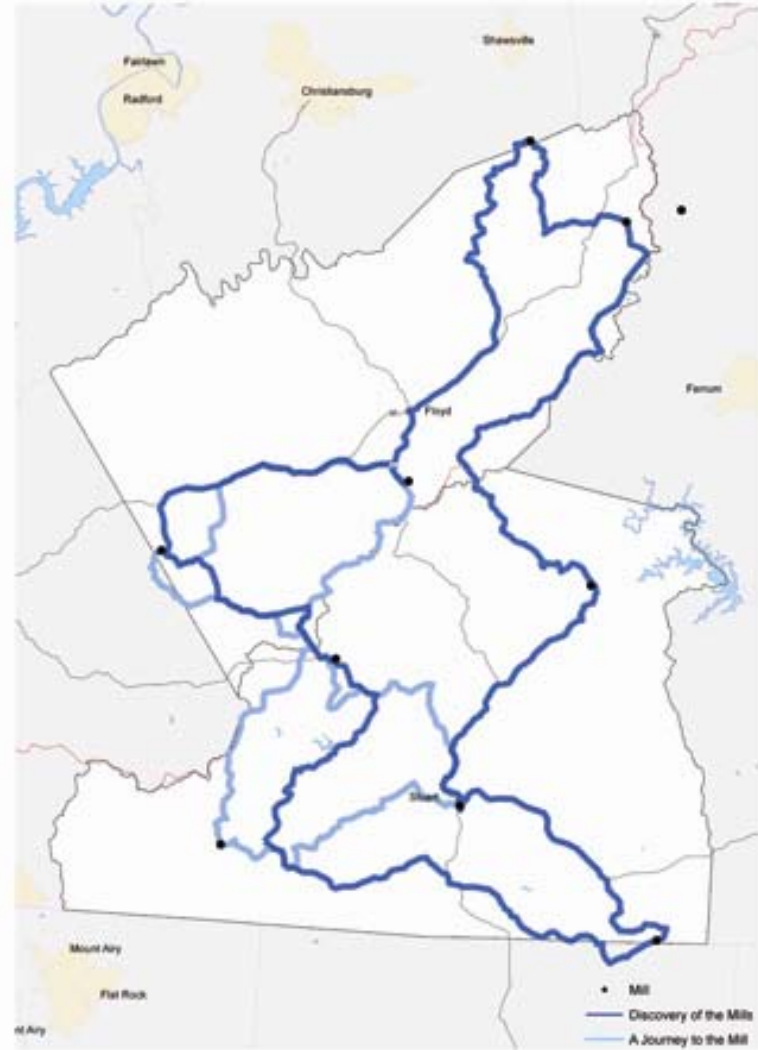
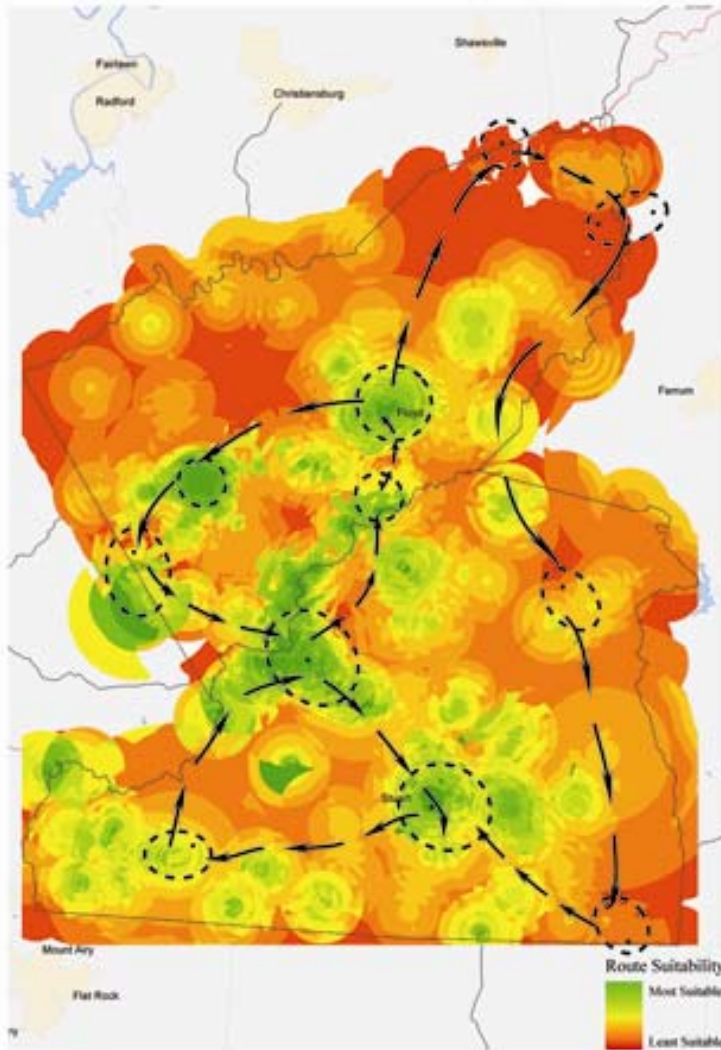
MILL ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

The main goal was to exemplify and increase the accessibility of the various nodes throughout Floyd and Patrick Counties. In order to achieve this goal the routes were designed using heavily traveled and lightly traveled roads to allow visitors to experience the counties through a wide variety of situations. The parameters that were established for all the suitability analysis to develop county routes were relative to connectivity between existing structures of the same function and the interactions of those structures with structures of varying function. For each suitability analysis the sites were buffered using 1/4 mi, 1/2 mi, 1 mi, 1 1/2 mi, and 2 mi to rank the proximity of the nodes. This buffer system was not only placed upon the structures we were analyzing but also upon the counties' restaurants and gas stations because these are seen as essential items for visitors while discovering the two counties. The closeness to bike and walking trails were also ranked in order to allow pedestrians to experience the counties on a smaller scale. The bike and walking trails were weighted in different classes of 100', 200', 400', 800' and 1600'. With the connection to pedestrian accessibility through the bike and walking trails mining sites, distilleries, Native American and archeological sites were buffered on the same parameters. With these initial variables being weighted after different sums the development of single purpose suitability maps took in various factors for each individual node.

MILL Routes

Discovery of the Mills - Used all the existing mill structures within Floyd and Patrick Counties.

A Journey to the Mill - Used existing mill structures within a 50 mile driving distance of each other.



Phased Development

- Mountain Heritage Center (“Century of Change”)
- Authentic 1930s demonstration farm in future
- Phase within each as funds allow



Challenges and Limitations for both Scenarios

- Water resources
- Political and cultural sensitivities
- Center staffing
- Long-term facility maintenance and improvements
- Appropriateness of scale
- Risk management
- Funding Sources

