

FARM2U
COLLABORATIVE™

MINING FOR GOLD: CAPITALIZING ON YOUR LOCAL TREASURES

A GUIDE TO COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND ENGAGEMENT



ABOUT THE COVER

On the cover counterclockwise: Apple grinding at Heritage Farm Museum and Village outside of Huntington, West Virginia; Tyler County, West Virginia quilting; and two examples of folk crafts at the John C. Campbell Folk School of Traditional Craft, Music and Dance, North Carolina.

Photos by C. Hoke and Trifecta Productions

The FARM2U Collaborative™
1511 Pennsylvania Avenue
Charleston, West Virginia 25302
Phone: (304) 610-3180
Fax: (304) 342-0311

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Playground at Heritage Farm Museum and Village, Huntington, West Virginia

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Abingdon, Virginia Farmers Market
Country Roads Cook-Off™

Photo by Nick Alotsio

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Mining for Gold!* This guide has been developed to help you bring tourism dollars into your community by preserving your local culture and sharing your community's heritage. It will lead you and your community step-by-step through the asset mapping process and enable you to chart strategies for attracting tourists.

Mining for Gold is about capitalizing on the vast resources that are right in your own backyard, waiting to be discovered. These riches are enormous. They are found in your community's residents both past and present, and in former and existing business and industrial pursuits. There is wealth in your community's social traditions such as holidays, festivals, celebrations, music, stories, organizations, and events. Local foods, recipes and cooking styles also hold interest for tourists. Your community's geography, agriculture, and architecture likewise represent a storehouse of treasures.

Mining for Gold is also about the necessity of building a team. Before you can effectively identify and capitalize on your community's assets, you must mobilize people and build your team. This work cannot be done alone. A coach cannot win a game alone, yet a team cannot win a game without being coached. This guide will help you pull together a group of other community members that are interested in building on local strengths. Not only will they work together to accomplish tasks, they are essential in spreading the word to others in the community, addressing concerns and promoting your community beyond its borders.

The strategies outlined in this guide offer a process that can be personalized to meet the needs of your unique community. It is designed to help you gather with others and think together about how to share and promote your community and its assets.

Sample tools and tips are provided. Several Web links are available for those seeking further information.

Mining for Gold is meant to be used and shared. Print it, mark it up, and dog ear the pages as needed. Best wishes in creating your community's good fortune!

Mining for Gold is about capitalizing on the vast resources that are right in your own backyard, waiting to be discovered.

GATHERING A TEAM



Photo by Raj Pongsugree

Developing a team has just as much to do with creating the right working environment as it does assembling the right group of people. First we'll take a look at getting the 'right' people, and then we'll examine how to create a safe and productive environment for action.

Choosing the right people for your team.

To help you identify your team, begin by making a list of people that you know are active in the community. Include:

- People from different age groups, neighborhoods, and walks-of-life.
- People who are trusted members of the community.
- People who show up at local events like the Farmers' Market or community concerts
- People who volunteer at the elementary, middle and high schools in your community or do after-school programs, or music, theater or art productions

You may have heard it said that the busiest people are always the ones that show up to do more. This is true and while you may not be able to recruit all of them for this work, they are the ones that will know others that are likely to be interested and want to become engaged. You are looking for people who love their community and enjoy doing positive things to make it a better place.

Moving a project from a dream to a reality takes people with a variety of interests and skills. You will need people that like to think, talk, write, and plan as well as those who enjoy the hands-on work of collecting or building something. Make sure your team has diversity of thought and style. A team of all dreamers will never stop discussing things, while a team of all doers will run in circles without knowing where their piece fits with the big picture.

Personal characteristics you may wish to look for in team members include:

- a positive, can-do attitude
- the ability to work well with others
- good listening skills

- a willingness to share ideas, try new things, and invest personal time and energy
- trustworthiness
- a reputation for following through on commitments

People who strongly believe that people have the power to create their own destiny will be a great asset to your team.

Once you have identified a potential team of about 15 people, you are ready to go. There is nothing magical about the number 15. When you have verbal commitments from 15 people you will most likely end up with a committed team of 8-10 people. Of that original 15, there will be those who never attend even one meeting, those who have situations that prevent them from continuing once they start, and a couple who will lose interest or decide to pursue a related project that will build on what your group has started. If your team is too small you run the risk of not having enough person-power to complete a project. If the team is too large it becomes more complex, time-consuming, and challenging to coordinate.

Create an environment that helps you work together.

Meeting planning, location, and facilitation are all essential elements for creating a safe, productive and successful environment for your team.

Planning a meeting must be done well in advance of the actual meeting. It includes

- setting expected meeting results
- developing the agenda
- reviewing ground rules
- deciding how decisions will be made

Identifying what you want to accomplish in each meeting and listing those results on an agenda will help the group stay focused. *(See the sample agenda on this page)*

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SAMPLE AGENDA

Team Meeting 1

1:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Agenda

Expected Results:

- Team members start getting to know each other as the Smith County team
- There is understanding of the overall project; its purpose, products and time commitment
- Smith County’s Heritage Asset Map is started.
- The summer meeting schedule (months, dates and times) is set.
- Start ‘mining for gold’ (finding your local treasures; people, stories, recipes, artifacts, etc.)

1:00 Welcome, Review of Agenda, Ground Rules and Decision-Making Process, Introductions

1:45 What is This All About? Understanding the Project

2:00 Developing Smith County’s Heritage Asset Map

3:00 Mining for Gold – Identifying Your Local Treasures

3:30 Setting the Summer Meeting Schedule

3:45 Next Steps and Check Out

4:00 Adjourn

SAMPLE GROUND RULES

- Speak genuinely.
- Listen carefully.
- Challenge one another's ideas with respect.
- Leave your hat at the door. We are all equally important to this team.
- Have fun!

Ground rules help create a 'level playing field' so that all team members participate as equals regardless of other positions they may hold in the community.

Pay attention to the place where you hold your meeting. Is there enough parking? Is the room large enough to comfortably seat everyone so they can see and hear each other? Is there table space to allow participants to take notes if they wish? Is there a place for food and drinks to be served? Serving refreshments promotes positive social interaction. Take time to invest in a few healthy snacks and watch productivity increase and relationships grow.

Schedule the meeting for a time when most of those who have expressed an interest will be able to attend. Consider holding the meetings right after work or on a Saturday morning. Avoid scheduling the meeting during peak hours for business, family, and routine community events. Explore how you might piggy-back on existing activities to make it easier for people to attend. If you have invited participants who are parents of young children, consider organizing supervised activities for the children in an adjacent room. A local childcare provider may volunteer a few hours of their time or a human development course instructor at the high school may be willing to supervise students needing community service hours to meet their requirements.

Always use ground rules at the beginning of every meeting. Ground rules help group members know what to expect of themselves and their team members. Ground rules help create a 'level playing field' so that all team members participate as equals regardless of other positions they may hold in the community. Keep the rules simple and few. Place them on a flipchart pad in a prominent place in the room. Have the group amend and approve them using their chosen decision making process in the first meeting. Post and review the agreed-upon ground rules at every meeting. New members will easily be able to join the work and understand the group's expectations.

An agreed-upon process for making decisions is essential to a highly productive group. This should be discussed and settled in the first meeting. While Robert's Rules of Order, a formal decision making process that involves discussion, motions and a vote taken so that the majority decision prevails, has value, consensus decision making may well work better for this purpose. With origins in the Quaker tradition, it can be carried out using 'thumbs'.

CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING WITH THUMBS

- **Thumbs up** – I am enthusiastically in favor of this decision. If I were making it alone, this is what I'd do.
- **Thumbs to the side** – I can live with the decision and will support it. It is consistent with our values and goals as a group. I will not speak poorly of this decision when I leave this room.
- **Thumbs down** – This decision is in direct conflict with what this group stands for. It is incumbent upon me to describe to the group what the conflict is and to offer a constructive option for avoiding the conflict and moving toward a common solution. Thumbs down blocks the group from moving forward with the decision as it is currently described and sends the group back to the drawing board.

Begin every meeting with a review of the approved ground rules and decision making process. Provide a quick overview of past work and review the decisions made at the last meeting. As a rule, 'stand on the decisions made in previous meetings'. When a team adds new members once work has begun, there can be a tendency for new members to take the group back to revisit decisions that have already been made. In order to honor the work of the team, it is important to explain to new members clearly what has been decided and to then move forward and engage them in the next set of decisions that build on past work.

Each meeting requires a facilitator. Meeting facilitation makes it easier for meeting participants to achieve the desired meeting outcomes. A good facilitator plans the agenda and activities for maximum results. The facilitator helps group members stay focused on the task at hand, be respectful of one another, have fun together, and get their work done. You may wish to engage an outside facilitator who does not have a stake in the meetings' outcomes. Is there someone in your community not currently engaged in this team that is seen as fair and neutral? It might serve the team well to ask such a person to serve as the team's facilitator. Facilitation is both an art and science that requires cultivation. Facilitation resources that include useful ideas can be found in the text box.



FACILITATION RESOURCES

<http://www.facilitate.com/support/facilitator-toolkit/meeting-design-tips.html>

<http://ideafacilitators.wordpress.com/tips-for-effective-facilitation/>

YOUR VISION AND MISSION



A vision and mission set the tone and direction for your group's work. These statements clearly and briefly communicate where you intend to arrive because of your work (vision) and how your work is defined (mission). A vision is an end destination. A mission describes what the group will do to reach the vision. Neither should be more than one sentence long. A rule of thumb is that they should fit on a T-shirt and be easily understood by passers-by.

There are a number of resources that can be used to assist your team in developing its vision and mission statements. Professional facilitators can provide useful support for this work. Remember to keep the development process simple, quick and interactive. There is nothing worse than asking a large group to wordsmith a vision or mission statement. The large group should provide concepts and general language. A small subgroup of two or three can take the ideas and develop draft statements between meetings. Then the larger group can approve the final draft.

If your group is meeting for the first time, the vision and mission statement might not be the best first exercise. Instead, have the group map the community's assets first, then the purpose of developing a vision and mission will be more clear.

VISION vs MISSION

- Vision:** An enduring community celebration of our culinary heritage; fun for locals and visitors.
- Mission:** Our team will organize local groups and individuals to create dishes and share favorite recipes at local festivals and events to emphasize local foods and heritage.

RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1086.aspx
http://www.help4nonprofits.com/NP_Bd_MissionVisionValues_Art.htm

MAPPING ASSETS

Asset mapping is a physical exercise. It is an interactive way to search for, acknowledge, and document the vast resources that exist in your community. The riches are enormous and the results of an asset mapping exercise will astound you and your neighbors.

Your team can develop an asset map by participating in a fun activity that requires only a few materials and willing participants. The result of this asset mapping exercise is a chart of the community's resources. This section outlines some tips for building an understanding of assets, conducting the mapping activity, and identifying ways to use the map to begin a community project.

THE CONCEPT OF ASSETS

Assets take many forms. A community's assets are the unique aspects of your community that have value to others and can be monetized. Even such small enterprises as a corn maze or 'Pick Your Own' fruit or vegetable venture are ways of attracting people to your community.

Social assets can be found in your community's residents both past and current, in famous visitors and recreational pastimes.

Cultural assets include community traditions such as holidays, festivals, celebrations, music, stories, organizations, and events. Local foods, recipes and cooking styles as well as clothing, religion, education and art are also cultural assets.

Economic assets are present in things such as former and existing business and industrial enterprises both large and small. Inventions and inventors are also economic assets in your community. Think about the way people made money and secured needed goods and services in your community's history. Does bartering have a place in your community's past? Is it used currently?

Assets of place are the distinctive and unique geographic features present in your community. The terrain, the weather, naturally occurring plants and animals as well as the crops that

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Unless you take the time to sit down, concentrate on identifying your community's assets, and make the actual list it is easy to overlook or take for granted what is right under your nose.

were grown in the past and those that are farmed today can be significant assets. Creeks, streams, mountains, ancient and/or rare trees or other plant life are assets.

Built assets include building architecture, bridges, roadways, old structures; such as barns, one room schools, statues and other art are valuable components of the built environment. Special places in your community such as parks, cemeteries, marinas, fishing ponds, diners, churches, theaters, concert halls, and ball fields are assets.

WHY DEVELOP AN ASSET MAP?

It may seem strange to ask your group to develop a list of your community assets, because as community residents, you may feel like they are fairly obvious. But developing an asset map is a little like listing all the resources that you have for the bank when you want to get a mortgage to buy a house. In order to get the most out of what you have going for you and to best utilize what you already have, you need to fully understand what is there. Unless you take the time to sit down, concentrate on identifying your community's assets and then make the actual list, it is easy to overlook or take for granted what is right under your nose.

Asset mapping is also an exercise in learning how to 'walk in someone else's shoes'. Imagine that you have invited friends or relatives from the city that have never been to your state. Now, what would you want them to see and experience? What would give them a real sense of the place? What would they most likely never have seen or experienced before? What do you think they would tell their neighbors about when they got home? Think about your community's equivalent of the Carter Family Fold in Hilton, Virginia; the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) lakes in East Tennessee; or fresco paintings in small, rural churches in Glendale Springs, North Carolina.

Imagine that you were taking visitors to eat in your community for the first time. What foods would be new to them? Think about your community's equivalent to Hot Browns in Kentucky, Pepperoni Rolls in West Virginia and Sweet Tea across the south. Every community has features that set it apart from the rest. Asset mapping is about stepping back and seeing your community as if for the first time and then making a list of everything that inspires and excites you.

Jean Haskell, co-editor of *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* says, Categories of cultural traditions are the things people **make** (tools, buildings, art, craft), things people **do** (preserve food, celebrate harvest, play music), things people **say**, (stories, riddles, sayings, songs, place-names, jokes), things people **know** (how to season a cast iron skillet, how to identify a good trout stream), and things people **believe** (when to plant certain crops for success, how to prevent bad luck, what makes a good neighbor). Identifying these traditions and the people in the community who best practice them gives a firm foundation for a cultural conservation plan. A key to an exceptionally rich plan is not to overlook the less tangible cultural elements such as the categories of “knowing” and “believing” and learning to see beyond what is taken for granted every day in the community and begin to see the familiar as special. The very process of thinking about these community assets can make families, neighbors, and the whole community have a stronger sense of place, of cultural awareness, and of pride.”

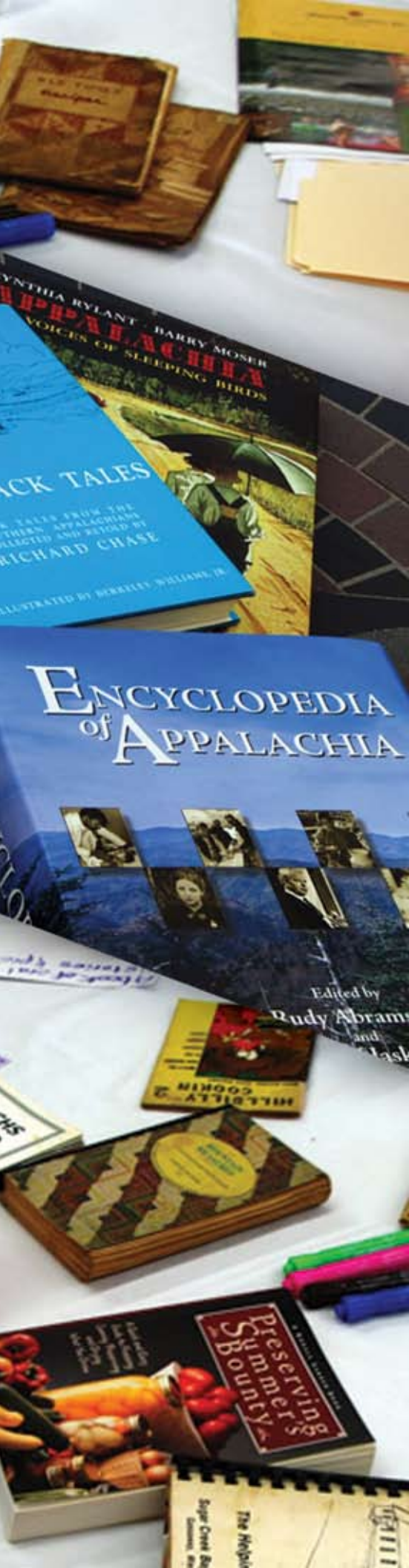
Haskell is asking us to look beyond what is obvious, to explore our community in a way that identifies the things that set us apart. Delving deeply into what makes us tick and how we connect with the earth and each other is unique because the terrain which our ancestors settled and the regions from which they came shaped us. Those roots still anchor our communities. Dig. Find that which held those before you and holds you still in place today. Find the roots of your community – the roots that still hold you in place today.

CREATING YOUR COMMUNITY ASSET MAP

After you have gathered your team and developed your team’s first meeting agenda, you’re ready to collect the needed materials for your meeting. You’ll need several sheets of large paper (flipchart, butcher or bulletin board) and some Mr. Sketch® markers (Available in 12 packs with a variety of scented, non-toxic colors that are vibrant and won’t bleed through. Stray marks won’t stain clothing or surfaces. Remove the yellow and light pink markers as they are highlights and won’t show up on completed maps.). A box with 32 or more crayons will work nicely as well. It is really important to have a map of your area (county, city, neighborhood, etc.). Even if it is roughly drawn, a map allows the group to understand the area that is being targeted for an examination of its assets and helps participants get a bird’s eye view of the community.

ASSETT MAPPING EXERCISE

1. Conduct introductory exercise
2. Break into small groups of 3-4 people
3. Distribute paper and markers
4. Have groups draw the geographic boundary
5. Have each small group begin talking, drawing and writing the things they believe to be assets – there are no ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answers (45 min.)
6. Ask the small groups to present their maps to the large group
7. Discuss group observations, the maps’ commonalities and differences, and possible assets on which to build initial mining expeditions.



Develop or select an introductory exercise that gets folks thinking about what an asset is and what it means in relation to your unique region. In Appalachia, a useful tool is the children's book, *A is for Appalachia*, written by Linda Hager Pack and illustrated by Pat Banks.

Consider opening with a handout and brief discussion of what an asset is. Feel free to use the text in this section of the guide to define an asset and provide examples. Then, begin a discussion about local assets in relation to the larger cultural region of which your community is a part. In Appalachia, you may choose to read the introduction on page 4 and show the map on page 5 of the book *A is for Appalachia*. Pass the book to a willing participant and have them open the book at random and read the text that goes with the letter of the alphabet. For example, D is for dulcimer, K is for knife. Continue until 3 to 5 participants have read a letter of the alphabet and its description in the book.

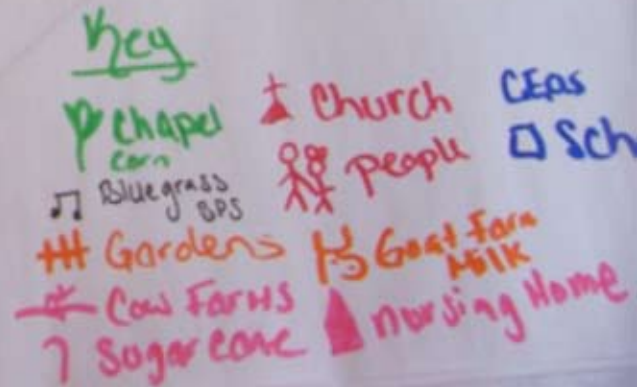
Next have a brief discussion with the group about what ideas the book gave them about assets in the local area. Remind the group to identify all the different types of assets that are present in their community. Refer them back to their handout or make a list of the different types of assets on flipchart paper and hang it on the wall for all to use as a reference.

The larger team should then be broken into smaller groups of 3-4 people. A group of this size will allow everyone to participate in the actual drawing, writing and conversation involved in asset mapping. Each small group will need a sheet of large paper and a box of markers or crayons. Encourage them to draw an outline of the group's chosen geographic area (county, city, neighborhood, etc.) and begin to discuss and document its assets. Encourage each group to create a legend for their map. Legends make it easier to include more information on the asset map and for others to understand the work of the group. You will notice the legend in the bottom right corner of the sample asset map.

Once the groups have completed their work, ask them to take turns sharing their maps with one another. Have the large group discuss their general observations about the mapping process and the maps' commonalities and differences. Ask the participants to share their thoughts about which assets they would like to use for their initial "mining expedition" – identifying and planning a special project that will build on local assets.



Webster
Berggoon
Fest.



Special People & Organizations
 John Ferguson - music
 Gene Flinn - song book
 Mike Swanson - instrumental
 Ken Kennell - historian (Apprentice)
 Leandra of 2011 - Shakespeare
 Members of White Castle - Shakespeare
 from Cultural Outreach - Shakespeare
 and Mission - students - Shakespeare
 and Grafting - Shakespeare - students
 Camp Smith - Helen Tompkins -
 Dean - Shakespeare, Jr.

Braxton County, West Virginia Asset Map - May 2010



Mining Strategies



Once local asset maps have been completed, your team will want to get to the business of collecting assets that are meant to be shared (stories, photographs, sayings, artifacts, etc.) Locating these assets takes forethought. These strategies are presented for the consideration of the local team. Build on them. Shape them. Make them work for your community.

The following mining strategies are offered as a way to get your team started. It is important to remember that your team is filled with experts about your community. They are familiar with other experts who know still more. Your team is a web of connections. Encourage them to use what they know. Send the team of miners out to see what can be found. Consider starting your mining expedition with the following:

- **Oral History (people)** – Talk to people at senior centers and supported living facilities, area churches, clubs and organizations. Are there famous people connected to your community? What were they engaged in doing? Where did they spend their time?
- **Photographs** – Look at the library, city hall, long established businesses and civic organizations, schools and churches – closets, attics and cupboards everywhere. Contact high school class reunion organizers.
- **Video, Film and other Recordings** – Visit radio and television stations, schools, clubs and civic organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

The artifacts, photographs, and historical items that you collect should be preserved, shared and monetized. The useful guide *Cultural Heritage: Preserving, Sharing, Fundraising*, developed by the Farm2U Collaborative, includes:

- Step-by-step tips for creating your own heritage souvenirs such as books, T-shirts, mugs, calendars and postcards
- Tips for collecting and preserving heritage items
- Design tips and techniques
- Strategies for marketing your cultural heritage products
- A list of vendors and other helpful resources

The guide is free to communities and available for download at www.farm2u.org.

- **Books and Artifacts** – Think about chests of drawers, your own and your neighbors’. Is there a historical society or museum in your community? Can you find cookbooks and bibles with handwritten notes inside them?

When the foraging and collecting is completed, ask your miners to bring in the treasures that they have found. Consider holding a ‘sharing event’. Select a location with good lighting, comfortable seating and large tables that will allow treasures to be spread out for viewing. Play some music. Serve coffee, punch and snacks (at a table away from the artifacts). This kind of event will generate enthusiasm and help the group get a sense of where it may want to begin promoting the community.

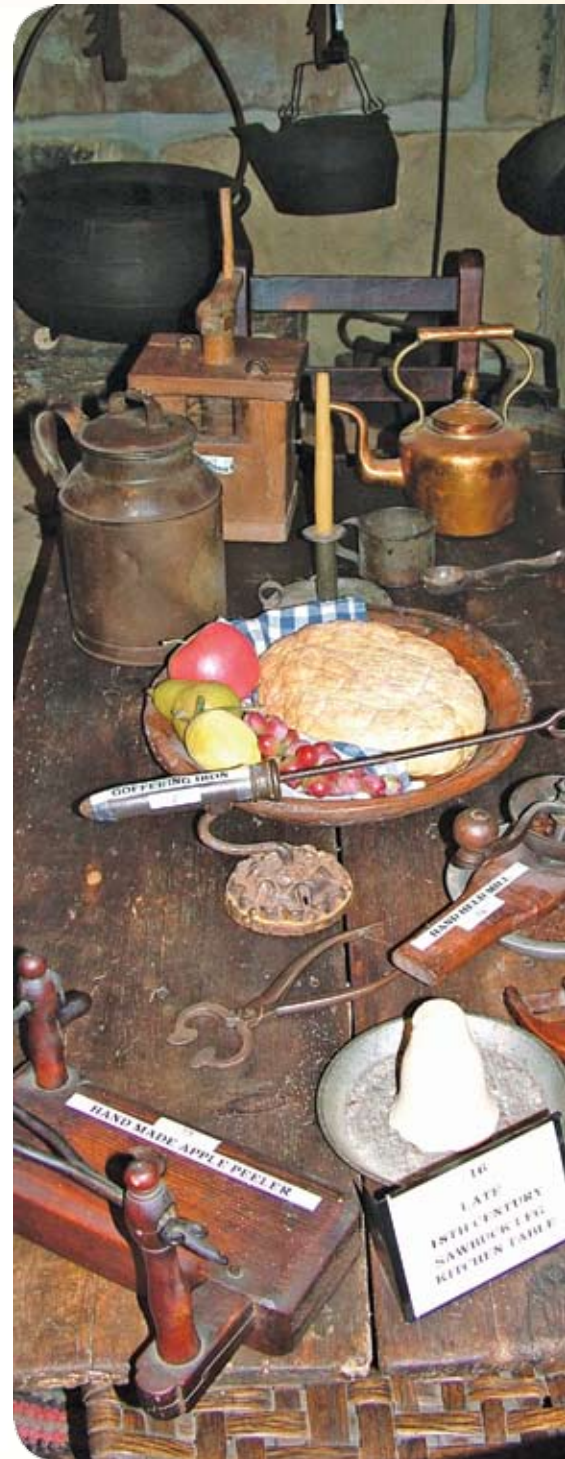
PROTECTING AND SHARING YOUR ASSETS

As you go about the work of collecting community assets, you certainly want to protect the treasures that you and your team have mined. Think about how documents, film, and photographs will be stored and used. Consider quality, care, and legal requirements related to the sharing and display of artifacts. Engage someone that is skilled in preserving and honoring materials and their donors. Conduct research online. Helpful tips for collecting and preserving heritage items can be found on pages 19 and 20 of the guide *Cultural Heritage: Preserving, Sharing, Fundraising* available on the Farm2 U Collaborative website at <http://farm2u.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/BK5CRAFT-Book2011WEB.pdf>.

Once your team has decided what community assets to feature, look into the Our Town application for use on mobile phones. Today’s tourists want on-the-spot guidance for their adventures. This app allows you to post information for use by independent travelers to explore your community with their own virtual tour guide. For more information on the app check the FARM2U Collaborative’s website at <http://farm2u.org/farm2u-initiatives/our-town/>.

USING YOUR ASSET MAPS TO BEGIN A COMMUNITY PROJECT

At this point, you can use your asset maps as a springboard for your group to brainstorm some small projects that will begin to build on an existing asset or group of assets in the community. For example, there may be members of your team that serve on the board that sponsors an existing fair, festival or other local event. The sponsoring organization may be interested in partnering with your team to expand on its work through any number of activities designed to increase awareness and attendance. Examples include: adding a cooking competition among aspiring hometown chefs using local foods and traditional recipes with a



healthy twist to an existing festival; adding a local musician to play at the established farmers' market might be a good way to get new attention. Is there an interest in the group for developing a heritage book that features stories and photographs of the community's early beginnings and growth through the years? The heritage book could then be sold to promote the community and help fund additional projects in the future. The possibilities are endless and as unique as your community.

Where is your group's momentum and interest? What is popular with tourists and potential funders and is respectful of the area's culture? What is already happening in your community that could be expanded? Where will a project be most visible, take the least amount of start-up effort and likely be a success that could grow with more involvement overtime? These are the questions that the group should ask and discuss

You are about to embark on a significant journey, for your community and for yourself. The gold you will discover on your mining expedition will enhance the quality of life for everyone, by providing financial support to local business and organizations, excavating important lessons for successful living from the past, and by giving the community a road map for a prosperous future. In the process, you will have the opportunity to connect with your neighbors and utilize your skills and talents to their full potential. Enjoy the journey!



Photo by Nick Alotsio

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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And of course, our Advisory Committee of community developers – visit the website at farm2u.org/resource-center/advisory for a complete list of committee members. These materials could not have been created without their assistance.

Allen Arnold, Director
Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia®





*Bringing tools and resources
to build your community.*

The Hub has four core goals:

- Catalyze community development in West Virginia.
- Act as a liaison to strengthen relationships.
- Build community development capacity.
- Develop increased resources for community development efforts, and more effectively connect communities to those resources.

The Hub pursues these goals by:

- Engaging communities in an intentional, aligned, and continuous system of community development,
- Linking them with the Network of resources and technical assistance they need to succeed, and
- Connecting them with one another to share best practices, to reinforce, and to celebrate one another's community development efforts.

West Virginia Community Development HUB
301 Water Street
Stonewood, WV 26301-4648
Phone: (304) 566-7332
Kent Spellman, Executive Director
k.spellman@wvhub.org.



The FARM2U Collaborative™ is a nonprofit organization and Resource Center. Formally organized as the Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia®, the Collaborative promotes and builds systems for advancing culinary, cultural, and agri-tourism.

In addition to this Cultural Heritage and Community Development Toolkit, other related initiatives include

- Places to Dine in West Virginia—A web-based nomination process allows the public across the state to designate their
 - Favorite unique, fun, and often out-of-the-way eateries, as well as
 - Destination spots for dining memories.
- Country Roads Cook-Off™ - A cook-off for non-professionals that parallels the Cast Iron Cook-Off® for professional chefs. The goal of both is to identify a “New Appalachian Cuisine”® that uses local ingredients, reinvents traditional recipes, and promotes sound nutrition.
- Heritage Story and Photo Exploration - A range of partnerships and initiatives, such as the Future Farmers of America’s Heritage Contest, provide avenues for unearthing the rich array of folk artifacts, stories, and photos about food customs of rural life in earlier eras that can be promoted as tourist attractions.
- www.wvfarm2u.org - this website connects
 - the public to farmers markets, roadside stands, and “pick-your-own” farms, and
 - chefs to farms for premium local ingredients for their menus.

The FARM2U Collaborative™
1511 Pennsylvania Avenue
Charleston, West Virginia 25302
Phone: (304) 610-3180
Fax: (304) 342-0311