

Cultural Resources Work Group Meeting Notes

DATE	February 13, 2012
PURPOSE	First Interim Meeting: discussion topics included vision, issues, opportunities, review of steering committee and Chair nomination process
FROM	Erica Anderson
ATTENDEES	Rob Bell, Elizabeth Brazas, Jeff Futch, Jan Lawrence, Annie McDonald, Stephanie Moore, Gwynne Rukenbrod

Overview of GroWNC Project provided by Carrie Runser-Turner

Defining a Vision for the Region (developed collaboratively by the Natural & Cultural Resources Groups)

Groups of 3 shared key elements of their vision in small groups and then with the broader group. Folks introduced themselves to the group as a part of this exercise. Major themes were teased to organize the ideas put forth and set the framework for future discussions. Both the flip chart notes and the individual sticky notes that people wrote on were used to develop the following list.

Key Elements of the Vision include:

A. The region is nationally recognized for its creative placemaking, unique historical resources, and craft heritage and the creative economy is embraced as cornerstone for the region.

- Craft still a huge economic driver for WNC
- WNC is the national “cradle for craft”
- WNC is the national model for cultural tourism
- WNC is national model for creative placemaking
- Numerous cultural and heritage attractions throughout WNC
- Thriving arts in all WNC (music, literacy, visual, performing)
- Creative economy attracts public and private investment
- Vibrant cultural arts districts throughout the 5 counties
- Regional state history museum
- Nation coming to WNC to access research and artistic practice in craft
- Preservation of the materials, processes, and histories of craft traditions
- Widespread/ broader understanding of and appreciation for historic resources
- Strong preservation culture



- Increased local opportunities and financial incentives (tax abatement, revolving funds, etc.) for restoration and rehabilitation of historic resources

B. The region's farm and forest lands are managed sustainably, providing the basis for a healthy local food system, economic prosperity for landowners, and an intact cultural landscape.

- A healthy local food system where farmers can make a living farming and local food is accessible to all
- Continued loss of farmland – age of current farmers w/o as many young to replace; farm labor issues. Why produce if can't harvest
- Farmland protected and local foods abound
- Farm and forest land preserved at current levels
- Access to local food that's affordable
- Farmers have a living wage and make profits, enabling them to keep farming
- Barns restored and protected
- Strong ag and forest lands, feeding local food and resource markets
- Locally generated energy
- Sustainable forestry operations and forest management
- More forest materials staying in the region
- Sustainable forestry abounds in the region
- Rolling, productive farmland with preserved barns and pastoral landscapes

C. The region's natural areas are fully appreciated and sensitive ecological blocks of land are protected and managed to maintain and enhance the region's biodiversity, water resources, and scenic viewsheds.

- Expansion of protected park and forest lands
- Protected national treasures
- Incredible visibility – can see distant mountain ranges
- A population appreciative of our natural resources and programs in place to ensure wise use
- Blue Ridge Parkway view shed protected
- Resurgence in a connection to the outdoors
- Green spaces
- Appreciation of natural world and commitment to care for it
- Permanent protection of the most sensitive ecological blocks of land, including high elevation habitats, riparian corridors, expansion of existing networks of protected lands, and water resources
- Water quality maintained and improved
- Larger river walks along major rivers



- Detention basins look more like community ponds instead of holes in the ground w/ a fence
- Sparkling clear waters with plenty of plump trout
- Mountain ridge/steep slope preservation

D. Communities across the region are actively working to balance responsible growth and development with natural and cultural resource protection.

- Balance of needs
- We're recognized as a region that "got it right" – growth and prosperity without compromising our natural and cultural resources
- Balanced plan in place for growth and preservation
- Environmentally sensitive development
- Forward thinking and planning with tolerance for nature and economic diversity
- Mitigation efforts underway

E. Smart growth and responsible land use help to foster vibrant communities.

- Diverse, strong local communities and towns
- Mixed uses and live/work areas
- Urban sprawl under control
- Vibrant towns and cities with good job opportunities
- Traffic manageable
- Walkable communities
- Flying cars the norm
- Small towns in WNC are thriving (while populations remain small)
- Stable, steady growth
- Smart growth ideas used – conservation development and clean energy
- Redevelopment of River front property
- Responsible land use with eye toward agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, development
- More people, more industry, tightened resources, less regional independence
- Increased adaptive reuse of existing built infrastructure
- Steep slope development under control
- The greenest building is one that is already built
- Continued growth and development along US25 / I 26 between Weaverville, Asheville, Hendersonville
- Happy citizens
- Bike lanes and transit accessible to all areas
- More multi-family housing

F. The region recognizes the importance of maintaining interconnectivity across the landscape through protecting and managing corridors for biodiversity, recreation, and vegetative buffers.

- A connected landscape that promotes biodiversity
- Greenways preserved and expanded, establishing links between communities which provide alternative transportation paths and protect and educate people about riparian areas
- Connecting pathways and greenways
- Preservation of trophy trees and vegetative buffers between roads and development

G. Communities across the region are resilient, adapting to climate change and taking measures to prepare for natural disasters.

- Climate change adaptation and response in progress and included in planning efforts and policies
- Responsive development
- Disaster resistant communities (i.e., flood)
- Prepared for natural disasters via effective communication systems in place
- No steep slope development without proper protection

H. There is a collaborative spirit of working together across the region.

- Working together across the Region
- Different groups talk to each other and listen

Identifying Cultural Resource Issues across the Region

At this point, the natural and cultural resources groups split into 2 groups and had separate discussions of issues and opportunities. Our discussion was framed as a brainstorm recognizing that the compiled lists will be revisited in future meetings. Topics were grouped in an attempt to organize ideas and set the framework for future discussions.

Key issues identified include:

A. Lack of funding

- Funding (Public investment decreasing)
- I.D. sustainable investments in arts/culture
- Cultural organizations struggling as there are more players competing for funding

B. Lack of identification of issues/agreement

- a new 'normal' needs to be redefined by new cultures blending with old
- There are new, emerging cultural entities in the region, in part based on a shift in demographics

C. Lack of common language and goals across entities in the region

- Groups don't speak the same language
- Need to define terms and speak with a consistent language
- Lack of communication across counties
- I.D. what success looks like in our region

D. Lack of collaboration among all types of arts and cultural entities

- I.D. overlapping areas – arts, land use, trans, etc.
- Collate all data sources – cultural resources map
- Website – collect info and out of stovepipes
- Organizations myopic – need to create partnerships
- Streamline services
- Need to prioritize time
- Add more native WNC folks to discussion

E. Lack of appreciation for cultural resources and historic structures

- Preserve cultural heritage – while plan for change
- Need to focus public attention on why resources are important
- Deepening level of awareness and kinds of audiences that are reached
- Recognize the built environment as well as people – cultures – skills

F. Lack of education about and promotion of cultural resources for careers, economy, and intrinsic to basic regional values

- Preserve and I.D. the vast cultural assets and uses – sustainability of these resources
- Need to know how to balance preservation and adaptation (i.e. growth and development)
- Brain drain – youth leaving the area

Identifying Opportunities for Addressing Regional Issues

Key opportunities identified include:

A. Educate the public about the value of cultural resources

- Demonstrate economic impact of cultural resources

B. Work across sectors and geographies to collaborate, develop relationships

- Promote “quality” development –recession may change development concerns as folks need jobs and the area’s historic neighborhoods, farmland, and mountain heritage could be lost

C. Better articulate the interconnectivity between economic development and cultural resources

- Illustrate economic impacts of arts, mountain traditions, historic structures
- Conduct a 'reality check' with the Chambers of Commerce – prior to the GroWNC Reality Check to determine current level of understanding for cultural resources

D. Encourage development of a common language to promote cultural resources

- Define terms and speak with a consistent language

Discussion about Steering Committee Representation and Chairs for the Working Group

The Natural and Cultural Resources Workgroups came back together to briefly review the primary tasks associated with the Working Group Chair and Steering Committee Representative for each group.

- Rob Bell volunteered to be the Chair of the Cultural Resources Group
- Steve Macleod is considering the Chair position for the Natural Resources Group
- Lang Hornthal is considering putting his name in the hat for the Steering Committee representative for the Natural Resources Work Group
- Group is reviewing the responsibilities associated with the Project Chair and Steering Committee Representative roles and we will revisit at the next meeting.

Meeting Dates:

March Project Team Meetings:

- Cultural Resources – March 14 from 3-5pm at LOS
- Natural Resources – March 13 from 1-3pm at LOS

Interim Meetings during the week of Feb. 27 for both groups will be set using a doodle poll via email.