

# **Farm Heritage and Community Park: Conceptual Plans and Ideas**



**Mary B. LaLone, Compiler/Director**

**Research Team:  
Jessica L. Baciu  
Nicole L. Danhauser  
Dixine Darist  
Tabitha L. Griffith  
Kristin K. Howell  
Darby A. Kirby  
Tracey S. McDonald  
Sarah M. Mihelarakis  
Beth A. Smit  
Reva K. Spence  
Steve R. Storer  
Jeremy James Zukas**

**Department of Sociology & Anthropology  
Radford University  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	3
<b>1. THE NEW RIVER VALLEY FARM HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY PARK PROJECT</b> <i>By Mary B. LaLone</i>	4
<b>2. CONCEPTUAL PARK PLANS</b> <i>By Jessica L. Baciu, Tabitha L. Griffith, Kristin K. Howell, and Sarah M. Mihelarakis</i>	11
<b>3. INTERPRETING THE NEW RIVER VALLEY FARMING WAY OF LIFE – PAST AND PRESENT</b> <i>By Tracey S. McDonald, Steve R. Storer, and Jeremy James Zukas</i>	27
<b>4. POTENTIAL PARK USES AND PARTICIPATION</b> <i>By Darby A. Kirby, Beth A. Smit, and Nicole Danhauser</i>	37
<b>5. NEW RIVER VALLEY FARM HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY PARK – EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES</b> <i>By Reva K. Spence and Dixine Darist</i>	50
<b>REFERENCES CITED</b>	60
<b>APPENDICES</b>	62

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**Mary B. LaLone**  
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## Chapter 1

### The New River Valley Farm Heritage and Community Park Project

By Mary B. LaLone

Farming is a strong and rich part of the New River Valley's culture, both past and present. One has only to drive through the countryside to see the contribution that farming makes toward defining the character of the New River Valley (NRV). In a recent oral history study, we found that people are interested in being sure that future generations have ways to learn about the region's farming heritage. Also, as Montgomery County is aware of through its comprehensive planning process, people are also interested in finding ways to conserve family farming so that it co-exists with development in the region.

The goal of this research team was to develop a conceptual plan for a community park that would serve the farming districts of Montgomery County and would contain possibilities for honoring and educating about the NRV's farm heritage, while at the same time making a contribution to the conservation effort by offering a site where NRV farmers might gain some value-added marketing opportunities. This report presents a set of conceptual plans and ideas for a Farm Heritage and Community Park. The goals of the park are:

- to provide a community park for family and community entertainment and light recreation that honors the region's strong farming heritage through its theme;
- that provides opportunities for educating New River Valley schoolchildren and residents about the NRV's farm history and about agricultural practices, both past and present, through signs and exhibits, school-related activities, and possibly a small museum and/or working farm (to develop in a later phase of the park);
- that provides a setting for community-based agricultural events throughout the year ranging from 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) shows to Virginia Farm Bureau events – to name a few of many possibilities;
- that provides a setting for community entertainment, festivals, and heritage events ranging from farm heritage demonstrations (farm practices and crafts) to country and Appalachian musical entertainment;
- that provides a meeting place for local civic and community groups – from youth groups to senior groups to special-interest groups (and many others described in Chapter 4);
- that contributes to farm conservation by providing a Farmer's Market site and other opportunities for local farmers and farm-related craftspeople to acquire value-added marketing possibilities (through festivals and other possibilities explored in this report).

## **Background for the Farm Park Planning Project**

The development of this farm park planning project came about as a next logical step following the “New River Valley Farming Oral History Project” which was conducted throughout the year of 2002. The oral history project was carried out by Mary LaLone’s Radford University Anthropology classes in cooperation with the Montgomery County branch of the Virginia Farm Bureau. Over the year 2002, we conducted 30 oral history interviews in which 33 men and 22 women discussed vibrant memories of the region’s rich farm life since the 1930s, talked about changes in farming over the past seven decades, and discussed their efforts to conserve the farming way of life today in the New River Valley. These were compiled and published in a book, Appalachian Farming Life: Memories and Perspectives on Farming in Virginia’s New River Valley (LaLone et al. 2003). We mention the book here for two reasons:

1. it will be widely available to the public (through Brightside Press) and we expect it to draw increased attention to the NRV’s extremely strong farming culture, both past and present, setting a timely stage for developing a park that celebrates the region’s farming;
2. it was through the interviews that we discovered peoples’ strong feelings about preserving the farming heritage and equally strong feelings about maintaining and conserving family farming today in the NRV.

As we collected the oral histories, some people also expressed the feeling that we need a farming heritage park in the NRV. They pointed out that farming is as important to our region as mining, and that the farming heritage needs honoring in a way similar to the way the Coal Mining Heritage Park honors the mining heritage. People began giving us interesting suggestions for a public park that might combine farming heritage education with spaces for holding community-based agricultural events and meetings, and also could be combined with light recreational and nature activities.

This provided an interesting educational opportunity for my Spring 2003 Applied Anthropology class to carry out a park planning project that we hope will be of value to the NRV. Applied Anthropology is the branch of anthropology that takes anthropologists’ methods for studying human behavior and puts them “to use,” often in projects involving public planning (termed anthro-planning) and policy-making. This Applied Anthropology class is the same class that used the NRV coal mining oral history interviews as a basis for heritage park planning, along with park planning research, and developed a consulting report in 2000 with recommendations for Montgomery County’s Coal Mining Heritage Park (LaLone et al. 1997 and 2000). More recently, this same class developed and wrote a set of heritage park recommendations for Radford University’s Selu Conservancy in 2001 (LaLone et al. 2001). So we have established a pretty good track record in developing ideas for heritage park planning.

The Spring 2003 research team put the NRV farm oral history knowledge to work, along with extensive research on park planning, to develop the set of conceptual plans and ideas for a Farm Heritage and Community Park presented here.

## Project Methodology

The class project was organized to carry the student research team through the full process of an Applied Anthropology consulting project within the 15-week semester.

The project started with an orientation stage designed to give the student participants a “sense of problem,” orienting them to New River Valley farming and to park planning considerations. Robert “Bob” D. Holland, II, and his wife, Charlotte Holland, invited us to their Lazy H Farm in Montgomery County. There the research team got an orientation to farming life, and we discussed some possible interests and issues involved in developing a farm heritage park for the region. Michael Morris, Director of Montgomery County’s Parks and Recreation office, visited the class on the Radford University campus. His visit was intended to set the scope of the project from a Montgomery County park planning frame of reference, and to guide the class on how to begin their park planning research. The orientation period also involved reading written materials including the New River Valley farm oral history study, the park planning document prepared by Michael Morris entitled Montgomery County Parks and Recreation 2020 Vision – A Clear Glimpse of the Future (2003), and a classic book on park planning by George Fogg entitled Park Planning Guidelines (1990). In addition, the class was reading about the history, directions, and scope of applied anthropology from their textbook, Applied Anthropology (Gwynne 2003).

The orientation was followed by the research stage in which the team engaged in more in-depth “fact-finding.” The team broke into four groups to delve into research on four topics:

1. The layout and plan for the farm heritage park; principal researchers: Jessica L. Baci, Tabitha L. Griffith, Kristin K. Howell, and Sarah M. Mihelarakis.
2. Farm heritage interpretation possibilities for the park; principal researchers: Tracey S. McDonald, Steve R. Storer, Jeremy James Zukas, and Jaime Iacobellis.
3. Potential park uses and participants; principal researchers: Nicole L. Danhauser, Darby A. Kirby, and Beth A. Smit.
4. Educational possibilities for the park; principal researchers: Dixine Darist, Reva K. Spence, and Garrett Smythe.

Our fact-finding involved searching out multiple types of information sources including literature and internet sources, visual models, and knowledgeable resource people from the community. As part of the research, individual team members made field visits to view some of the farm-based history museums in Virginia including the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, the Loudoun Farm Heritage Museum in Leesburg, and Frying Pan Park in Herndon. One team member even traveled to North Carolina to study the Blue Ridge Farm Museum at Warren-Wilson College near Asheville. Through the visits they were able to gain visual examples of the many components involved in farm history park design. The site visits helped the research team see the overall, holistic design of heritage park sites and the planned flow patterns that guide visitors through the park experience. They also studied the park designs developed by previous classes for Montgomery County’s Coal Mining Heritage Park and for the heritage center at the Selu Conservancy.

Much of our research was conducted using the internet. We studied the layouts of a number of farm heritage parks and county fairgrounds across the United States in order

to see how they were organized and to apply the best of those designs to our park plan. We also studied internet sites describing agricultural tourism, called agri-tourism, across the United States for ideas that might be applied to develop activities for the park. One of the best resources describing how agricultural regions can develop agri-tourism is produced by the Small Farm Center at the University of California (2003), part of which has been included in Appendix A of this report for the reader to investigate.

Resource people from outside the university lent their knowledge and suggestions to the research team. Kitty Brennan, a retired teacher from the Riner district, visited with the class to discuss possible community user groups and needs that could be served by the park. She also provided guidance to the team members who were researching educational activities. Charlotte Holland, with the Virginia Farm Bureau, gave the team suggestions about the range of possible New River Valley agricultural groups that might make use of corral and show facilities at the park. Agricultural extension agents Tom Covey and Lisa Miller provided a great deal of information about potential park uses by regional agricultural groups. Jim and Janice Politis talked to the research team about the possibilities of including small-scale vendors into the park plan in order to assist local farmers and generate income to support a museum and working farm. Bob Holland, President of the Board for the Montgomery County Farm Bureau, shared his own visions for farm education through a working heritage farm similar, but on a much smaller scale, to the farm museum at Staunton. Similarly, during the earlier oral history project Floyd Childress had shared ideas for a farm museum, and he suggested the idea of including a Farmer's Market so that local farmers could gain a value-added venue for selling their produce. Although we also mailed out a survey form, with Farm Bureau assistance, we found response was minimal. We suspect that, in large part, this was due to the fact that the response required mailing and that it was sent during the middle of a very hard winter. Instead, we found that the better research tool was to conduct one-to-one interviews with key informants, such as the people mentioned above, in which we could talk directly with people about potential activities and participants for the park (see Chapter 4 for more discussion).

Around the ninth week of the semester, the research team shifted into the analysis and presentation stages of the project. We held a series of in-class brainstorming sessions in which team members shared their research ideas and jointly contributed toward the development of the conceptual plans for the farm park. Sarah M. Mihelarakis drew a set of conceptual maps for the two variant park models that we are proposing. We want to thank Michael Sutherland, from Montgomery County's Planning and Inspections office, for working with the team to prepare two additional maps depicting our conceptual plans. The final step for our class consulting team involved preparing the written recommendations presented in this report. Team members were responsible for writing the chapters corresponding to their principle areas of research, but the chapters in this report also reflect the collaborative ideas developed by the team as a whole.

### **Development of the Conceptual Plans and Ideas**

At the time of this project, the Montgomery County Parks and Recreation office had incorporated the possibility of a farm heritage park into its "2020 vision plan" (Morris 2003), but no specific piece of land had been identified as a possible site. The

Radford University research team's charge was to develop a conceptual plan and set of working ideas for the park. In planning, whenever something is labeled "conceptual" it is understood to mean an abstract or hypothetical plan. The term conceptual should signify to all our readers that this is the first step in formulating some recommendations for a park plan. Our research team has prepared this consulting report proposing a conceptual plan for two variant models for a possible Farm Heritage and Community Park.

One model is for a Farm Heritage and Community Park that could be operated much like other Montgomery County parks. This model takes the visitor from the parking lot to a park orientation center which serves as the park's focal point – here the visitor can gain an orientation to the region's farming history and the park's layout through exhibits, maps, and pamphlets, and can use basic amenities such as restrooms and water fountains. The park plan contains a barn and corral area in which agricultural events can take place, a Farmer's Market site, a picnic and playground area for family entertainment, a stage area for festivals and music events, plus a series of trails for recreational activities with opportunities for heritage and wildlife education at trailside signs and exhibits. Chapter 2 contains a fuller description and a conceptual map of this model, which we sometimes refer to as the basic model. In developing this conceptual plan, we consulted with Michael Morris of Montgomery County's Parks and Recreation office to come up with a model that operated with similar facilities and maintenance as other county parks. The basic plan for this Farm Heritage and Community Park is modeled somewhat on the county's Coal Mining Heritage Park, with the addition of a barn-corral area for agricultural shows and demonstrations, and the addition of an orientation building with a community room similar to the Golden Age Club at McCoy Park.

We recommend that the focus of the New River Valley Farm Heritage and Community Park be on interpreting the region's farming way of life both past and present as it has developed and changed from the 1930s through to present-day farming. There are many reasons for recommending this focus. In this way the farm park will have a unique niche in the region, and can develop cooperative arrangements with other farm museums in southwest Virginia that focus on earlier time periods (for example, Selu focuses specifically on the 1930s decade while other farm museums within driving distance all focus on even earlier time periods). There is a wealth of oral history and living knowledge to tap into for resources. In addition, the park would bridge the New River Valley's interests in both heritage education and conservation of today's family farming. The park can educate residents about farming, showing the connections from the past to the present, while demonstrating that farming remains important today by providing a site for community-based agricultural events and a Farmer's Market.

The second model is an "expanded" model – it expands on basically the same physical layout, but the key difference is that it would provide additional possibilities for local farm families to benefit by doing some low-key agri-tourism activities that, in turn, would help fund and support expanded heritage education and festival possibilities for the park. The term "agri-tourism" is being used for a wide variety of ways in which farmers, and regions, can attract additional income from farm products and activities. We want to point out that this is not the same as "tourism" in general – it can be done in



very low-key, small-scale forms such as the way we are proposing here, by providing a site where farmers can sell products and crafts related to the farm heritage theme.

In the expanded model, in addition to the orientation center, there would be a larger multiple-purpose building that would house a farm heritage museum area, a community meeting area, space for indoor demonstrations and events, restrooms, and it also would have spaces that could be rented by vendors where they could sell farm-related products, crafts, and foods. The addition of spaces rented to farm-related vendors provides added benefits both for the park and for local farmers. The major benefits for the park are 1) that it would generate additional funding that could be used to support heritage exhibits and education activities, and 2) the vendors would bring regular human supervision to the park – someone to open and close the building regularly, take responsibility for keeping it looking neat, and whose presence may give it some additional security. One question our researchers pondered was: how could we support some of the heritage museum and working farm ideas that some of our interviewees desired, but which would require a staff person(s) to coordinate. The answer is provided in this expanded model – the additional income generated through renting spaces to vendors could be used to hire supplemental staff dedicated to the farm park whose job description could cover a number of needed functions: a person who could organize, coordinate, and promote park festivals and events (coordinating the park and vendor activities/demonstrations in a joint effort focused around the farm heritage theme), run the museum, and possibly expand it into a working farm by caring for some farm animals on site (like a petting zoo). The addition of space for vendors to sell farm produce and farm-related crafts (like canned goods and quilts) would provide a service to the farming community by providing a venue where they might gain some value-added benefits. Eventually, there might be the possibility of adding an old farmhouse or replicated farmhouse to the park, in which case the museum could move from the multipurpose building into its own facility.

Start-up funding for this expanded model might be possible by developing a public/private partnership. We believe that start-up funding may also be available by tapping into grant funds for agri-tourism. Through our research on the internet, we discovered that there is growing concern about helping rural farming across North America, and consequently there is grant support for “agri-tourism” as a way to conserve farming in rural areas (see the Appendices). Also, Radford University and/or Virginia Tech’s Small Business Centers might be approached for assistance. Our internet search showed that good ideas are being generating nationwide for small-scale agri-tourism and many of these ideas, such as holding farm-related festivals/demonstrations and value-added sales opportunities, are things easily adapted to the park (in some ways, they are simply expanded versions of the summer festival events that might occur in the basic park model) – we discuss some possibilities in this report and also have included a set of Appendices that provides more information.

For this expanded model, location is important. It should be located on or near one of the well-trafficked roads, for example near Interstate 81, Route 8, or Route 460, with signs along the roads clearly directing visitors to the park. This would draw in some visitors who might be driving past the region admiring the beautiful farm landscape, who could stop and learn more about the farm heritage, spend some money in the county on farm products, and then be on the road again – in other words, very low-

key agri-tourism that generates money for park funding via vendor rents, and spreads the richly-deserved reputation of the New River Valley as the key farm region of southwest Virginia. Chapter 2 contains greater description and a conceptual map of this expanded model for the park.

### **Organization of the Report**

The following chapters present the research team's ideas and recommendations for a Farm Heritage and Community Park. Chapter 2 presents the conceptual plans for the two variant park models in much greater detail. Some possibilities for farm heritage interpretation at the park are explored in Chapter 3. We have included a mock-up of a park pamphlet that could be used to orient the visitor to the farm park. Since visitors like to walk away with tangible products, and pamphlets also would serve to publicize the park's activities, we recommend developing a number of different pamphlets and educational packets for the park geared to different age groups and interests. Chapter 4 focuses on identifying the wide range of potential uses and participants that would be served by the park. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to suggest the range of constituents that would be served by the park. Chapter 5 concludes our report with an examination of some potential educational activities and school learning experiences that could be offered by the park. The focus is on teaching present and future generations about the role that agriculture plays in their lives. As Chapter 5 demonstrates, the Farm Heritage and Community Park has great potential for offering a vast range of educational opportunities for residents of the New River Valley.

## Chapter 2

### Conceptual Park Plans

**By Jessica L. Baciu, Tabitha L. Griffith, Kristin K. Howell,  
and Sarah M. Mihelarakis**

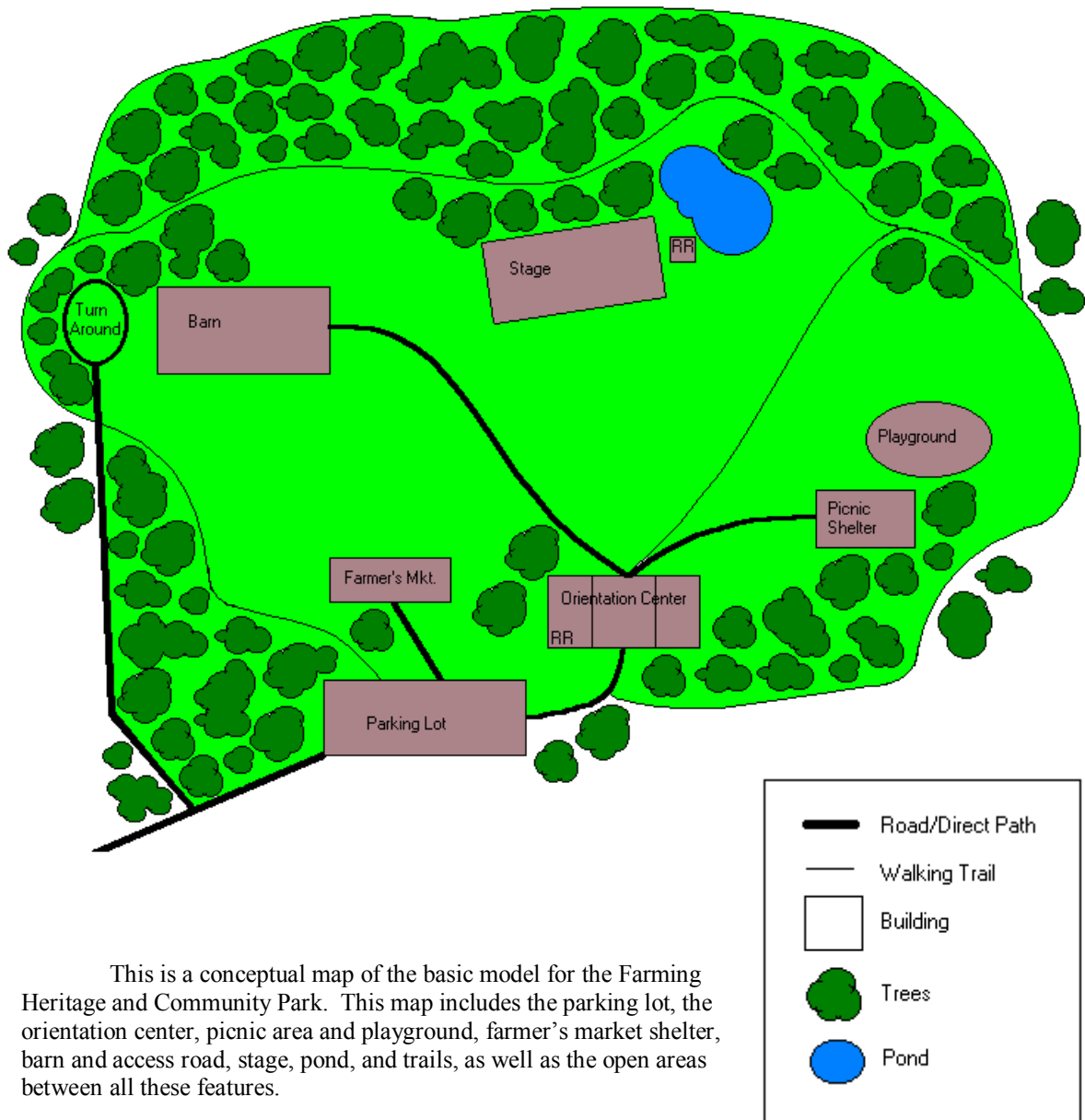
This chapter presents ideas for a park design and phasing recommendations for the Montgomery County Farm Heritage and Community Park. As of now, Montgomery County does not own any specific land designated for such a project. This chapter gives a few options on how to go about creating a multi-use park keeping in mind two very important components: community and farming heritage

In the process of planning for a farm heritage park, our consulting team broke the design into two fundamental halves. These halves consist of the basic plan, which contains only the basic needs for a well-functioning heritage park and the extended plan, which embellishes on the basics and creates the ability to house a wider range of activities in the park.

#### **The Basic Park Model and Amenities**

The first model that we propose is a one for a community park that is shaped around a farm heritage theme. We have developed the conceptual design for a park that could be run in a similar manner to other existing Montgomery County parks, especially the Coal Mining Heritage Park. It would have basic amenities for family and recreational visitors and could be maintained on a relatively low cost budget. It would contain a visitor orientation center where people could be oriented to the park and the region's farm heritage. The conceptual plan contains features that provide focal points for family and community entertainment include a picnic area and playground, a stage, recreational and wilderness trails, a farmer's market area, and a barn and agricultural events area. The following description explains the various components of the basic Farm Heritage and Community Park model. A conceptual map of the park model, keyed to this description, appears on the next page.

# Farm Heritage and Community Park



This is a conceptual map of the basic model for the Farming Heritage and Community Park. This map includes the parking lot, the orientation center, picnic area and playground, farmer's market shelter, barn and access road, stage, pond, and trails, as well as the open areas between all these features.

Parking:

The first necessity of any park is a parking lot. The parking lot should be centrally located along the edge of the park. By doing so, it creates direct access to the main areas of the park. The parking lot should be built in an area where easy expansion can happen. Areas surrounded by trees, uneven terrain, or bodies of water do not support expansion. If a lot is not meeting the demands of the people who visit, it can easily be expanded in order to create ample parking.

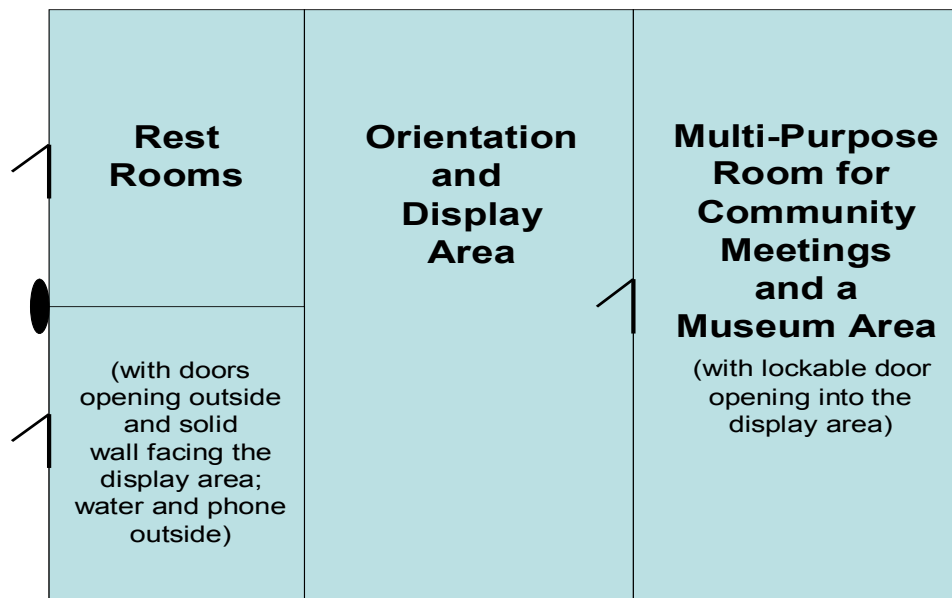
The parking spaces for the basic plan must include handicap parking and large spaces that can accommodate busses, particularly school busses, as well as trailers. The lot should also include such things as trees and trashcans. The trees should not be overwhelming or encompass the lot, but there should be enough to provide shade for the vehicles and visitors on sunny days. Trees also help to hide the parking lot from view, whether from the road or from the park. Hiding the vehicles from view helps to create a more natural atmosphere. It removes the present-day reminders adding to the historical and heritage atmosphere of the entire park.

Park Entrance:

From the parking lot, there should be an obvious entrance to the park. All the sidewalks should lead there. The sidewalks must be wide enough to accommodate people both coming into and leaving the park. Typical entrances consist of a funnel-shape in which the lot is the top of the funnel and the entrance is the bottom. This calls attention of the visitor and draws them into the park. However, the funnel should not narrow down so much that it becomes uninviting or difficult to traverse in large groups.

Orientation Center:

The entrance would lead directly to the orientation center. The orientation center for the basic model should consist of three pieces: restrooms, an information area, and a lockable room.



Restrooms should be attached to the orientation center, because they are most commonly the first thing visitors think of when entering a park. It is also ideal for school groups to start off at the restrooms for obvious reasons. The restrooms need to be handicap accessible as well as contain baby-changing stations. Baby-changing stations are essential in both the male and female restrooms. Baby-changing stations are ideal and welcoming to those with infants in that the parents don't have to go back to their vehicles. It also alleviates the possibility of parents using the picnic tables as a means of diaper changes. There also needs to be a minimum of two stalls in each restroom, but should probably contain more. This isn't as important on the average day, but if there are special events or festivals at the park, only one or two stalls will not be able to handle all the carrying capacity of the park.

The information center should be a breezeway between the restrooms and the community room. The openness of the breezeway makes it more inviting to those entering the park for the first time. The provided information should inform the visitors about the park they are in as well as points of interest in the area. The easiest way to do this is to put the information in pamphlets. These pamphlets must include a map of the park, events happening in the park, and descriptions of points of interest within the park. Since this is a farming heritage park, there should also be pamphlets on the history of farming in the area, as well as what types of farming are still used in the area. This will be further discussed in Chapter 3. There should also be pamphlets or packets on the educational value of the park and ways to incorporate the park into the classroom education. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

The pamphlets can easily be set up at table level along the two walls (the wall behind the restrooms and the wall for the community room). Simple plastic pamphlet holders can be used to organize the pamphlets as well as prevent them from becoming jumbled and unsightly. Above the tables with the pamphlets could be simple displays about farming. These displays could be enlarged photographs of farming or the area along with plaques that tell of their importance. This would be the visitor's first sight of the farming heritage.

The third piece of the orientation center is a lockable, multipurpose room. This means a room that can be locked from the outside to prevent unauthorized use but the room is open so it can be used in multiple fashions. While funding for the basic plan may not include a community room the idea of one is still very desirable. The uses could include but are not limited to: a community center for meetings for community groups, dances, demonstrations, or other heritage park events. The room could stay locked until a group or person needed use of the room. The group could get the key from a designated person in the community or from a government office. The users and uses of this room are further discussed in Chapter 4. Part of this room could serve as a mini museum. Displays would be set up along the walls in addition to larger displays which need to be locked up when there is no one around to monitor them. Farming heritage and displays are discussed further in Chapter 3.

In addition to these three essentials, the orientation center should also contain public pay phones as well as possible emergency phones and a map of the area. There should also be a water fountain or a vending machine or two.

### Picnic Area:

Somewhere near the orientation center should be a picnic area. The picnic area should include both a covered section as well as open picnic tables. The shelter should cover picnic tables in order to protect the visitors from the weather and the sun. Around the perimeter of the shelter there could be barbecue pits for visitors to cook their own food at the park. Close to the shelter should be extra, uncovered tables for those who want to sit under the sun. Some of these extra tables should be placed under trees for natural shade.

Having a picnic area is ideal for any park. This invites visitors to stay for long periods of time to enjoy the scenery and atmosphere that the park has to offer. Picnic areas also make available a spot where visitors can rest and discuss their experiences and thoughts of the park with others.

### Playground:

The picnic area should be located near a playground and a large open area. This allows the parents a place to sit while they watch their children run around and play. The playground should go along with the general theme of the park: farm heritage. Items like replica wooden tractors, a barn style jungle gym, and anything made out of really large tires, would work well. Used, ground-up tires also work well as the ground covering under the playground. When a child falls, they don't cut like wood chips and are softer because they are made of rubber.

### Farmer's Market:

Located on the opposite side of the orientation center from the picnic area should be a place for the farmer's market. The area for the market should be on a flat surface and should contain a shelter, which can simply consist of a roof. This is to protect the sellers from inclement weather. Tables could also be provided or built into the shelter. The farmer's market area should also be near the parking lot. This is ideal because the farmers will have to transport their products from their vehicle to the shelter and their tables. This would also make the market one of the first and last things the visitors see, making the visitors more likely to purchase products. Having a designated area for a farmer's market is a good way to give back to the community in which the heritage park is located. Vendors would come from the community and would have a place to sell their products back into the community.

The market shelter should have some open area around it. This way, on nice days the vendors can move into the sunshine if they so chose. Or, if there is some kind of event or festival at the park, there is room for extra vendors. The open area around the farmer's market should be between the market shelter and the heritage barn. This allows for an overlap of festival events and festival/farmer's market vendors. By creating this overlap, the community vendors have an increased chance of marketing to new customers.

### Barn:

The heritage park should also include a barn. The purpose of the barn is to allow for visitors to see first hand what different farm livestock are like. The barn should be large enough to accommodate several types of livestock throughout the year. The stalls

should be able to accommodate a range of livestock from pigs to sheep to cattle. In this basic plan, the livestock would not be permanent residents of the park, but could be brought in for special events and festivals.

The barn should be relatively open to provide good air circulation. If possible, electricity should be run to the barn and lighting should be added as well as large fans to provide more air circulation. Water hook-up is mandatory because it will be needed not only for the animals to drink but also to facilitate cleaning of the barn.

#### Access Road:

In order to accommodate the entrance and exit of the trailers that haul the livestock, an access road should be built. The access road should come from the road leading to the parking lot and not the parking lot itself. This will alleviate some of the traffic during events in which the access would be used. At the end of the access road there should be a large turn-around section so the trailers do not have to be backed up, something that can be difficult in such large vehicles. Along the access road, there could be a separate parking lot so that the large trailers do not take up valuable visitor parking. The access road should also be concealed from general view by trees. This will add to the farming atmosphere by hiding unsightly roads and trailers. The access road should be marked accordingly to preventing visitors from getting lost by accidentally taking that road without realizing it.

#### Stage:

Located within this heritage park should be a stage for music and various forms of community entertainment. At a minimum, this stage must have electricity and a roof to shelter the entertainers. Some extra features could include a storage room to one side of the stage, which can be locked, and an enclosed area for performers to prepare for their show. The stage does not need seating if it is placed in front of a large grassy area where music fans can set up their own seating to watch the show. Ideally, the grassy area should be sloped down towards the stage for easier viewing, but it is not necessary. Trees should surround the backside of the stage. This will not only create a pleasant backdrop to the performance but helps eliminate noise which would radiate out the back and keep the music focuses towards the viewers. The stage should probably have another set of restrooms located near it. This prevents listeners from having to leave the music to use the bathroom as well as puts another set on the opposite side of the park from the initial bathrooms in the orientation center.

The stage is in the basic plan because it is fundamental to the heritage theme of the park. The stage would stay with the farm heritage theme in that it would host talent of an Appalachian sound. This area is saturated with local talent that needs a place to play. Not only can the stage be used in typical fashion for concerts, but also would create a place for local rallies or special speakers. It could also host festival events like talent shows, clogging, or large demonstrations. Having the stage area opens the park to an even larger variety of groups, especially during festivals. A stage can provide the visitors with an extended view of the heritage culture.



### Open Areas:

As mentioned previously, there needs to be multiple open areas. These are essential if the park is to be developed further. The open area around the playground is not only used by children who need to expend energy but also if the playground is to be built on and expanded. The open area in front of the barn can be used in a multitude of ways. It could be used for animal demonstrations involving animals such as sheep shearing, milking cows, or shoeing horses, as well as demonstrations on farming heritage such as making apple butter and quilting. The area can also be used for the set up of a simple petting zoo as well as extra space for vendors during festivals. This open area connects to the area around the farmer's market adding to the market and introducing new customers to the regular vendors. The last major open area is that around the stage. As stated, this would be for lawn seating during any concert or presentation done on the stage.

Allowing for any open area to be used for multiple purposes is a great asset to the heritage park. Any activity that the visitors can participate in or observe allow for them to be a part of the heritage park experience.

### Pond:

It would be nice if the park contained a pond. This would add to the farm heritage park theme and feeling of the park since ponds are vital features of the farm landscape. The pond would also attract ducks, which are a favorite among children. The pond should have a few trees surrounding it. This creates a shady spot for a picnic with a picturesque view. Trees also provide shade to the animals that live in and frequent the pond. The pond also creates another area of interest for the visitors who can enjoy an easy stroll around the park and past the pond.

### Trails:

Every park should contain trails, and this park is no exception. The basic plan for trails consists of loops around the park. The multiple loops allow the visitor to choose the distance of their walk. The loops also let the visitor see new sights along their entire walk instead of reaching a destination and turning around and seeing the same sights over. Along these trails should be a scenic view, including a view of the pond as well as wooded areas.

There should also be benches placed in different areas along the trails for visitors to rest, eat a picnic lunch, or take photographs. Benches also provide opportunities for the visitors to sit and watch the wildlife. Wildlife watching is a big interest in the New River Valley and will be further discussed in Chapter 4. Also along the trails would be multiple forms of information about farming heritage. The basic plan consists of a time-line along the trails. This and other forms of presenting farming heritage are discussed in Chapter 4.

These trails should be able to accommodate large groups of people as well as being handicap accessible. The trails will also have separate focuses. The smallest trail would be a low-impact walking trail. This trail will appeal to the older people of the community as well as to those who wish to have a leisurely stroll about the park.

The next trail would be slightly longer with a few dips and hills, allowing for the visitors to have a slight bit not difficult a challenge while walking the trail. This trail will

also have the history outline of farming heritage on it. This trail will take people around a good bit of the park allowing them to see the different sites that the park has to offer.

The final trail of the basic plan would be the longest, and the one with the highest impact. This trail is for serious hikers who enjoy a challenge when they go out to walk. This trail would include steeper hills and valleys in addition to some obstacles. These obstacles include, but are not limited to, allowing tree roots to grow along the trail. Having these different trails allows for each visitor to decide which distance they wish to walk along with the concentration of the walk.

#### Trash Cans:

Other important aspects of a park include trashcans, multiple benches, trees, and underground electrical wiring. Trash cans need to be located in any area where people might be located for a period of time. Specifically, there needs to be trashcans in the parking lot, the orientation center, around the picnic shelter, and the farmer's market. Trash cans are most essential in the parking lot and around the picnic shelter. There have to be trashcans in these areas because people will be in these areas while they accumulate items they no longer need. Trash cans should also be placed along the trail, probably near the benches to help prevent littering on an area that is meant to be beautiful.

#### Benches:

Benches should be placed all over the park, but not the point where they get distracting. As previously stated there should be benches along the trail. Benches should also be placed in areas near the farmer's market shelter, around the pond, and near the orientation center. These are areas where people are most likely to want to sit down and use a table. Along with benches there needs to be some level of trees to shade the visitors sitting at the benches from the sun.

#### Trees:

Trees also need to be located in many places around the park. They can be used to provide a scenic view for the visitors. They also can be used to create a visual barrier from the road to provide park visitors with more sense of privacy. Specifically, this is essential around each trail. Trees are the view from the trail and provide natural elements to the view from the trail, such as wildlife. Trees also prevent visitors from seeing unsightly things like the road or backs of buildings while on their walk through the park. Specifically, native plants should be used to create a more natural looking environment and to attract native animals.

Trees are good sound barriers, both to prevent noise from the park from getting to the surrounding area as well as to prevent outside noise from entering the park. Trees are also a great, natural way to prevent erosion and runoff during the rainy season. This is especially important in areas that contain hills and valleys.

#### Underground Wiring and Water:

The last thing that applies to all areas of the park is the importance of underground wiring and water systems. This helps to preserve the importance of the heritage theme by allowing visitors to maintain a feeling of being in a different time when electricity was not always available. Underground wiring adds to the openness of

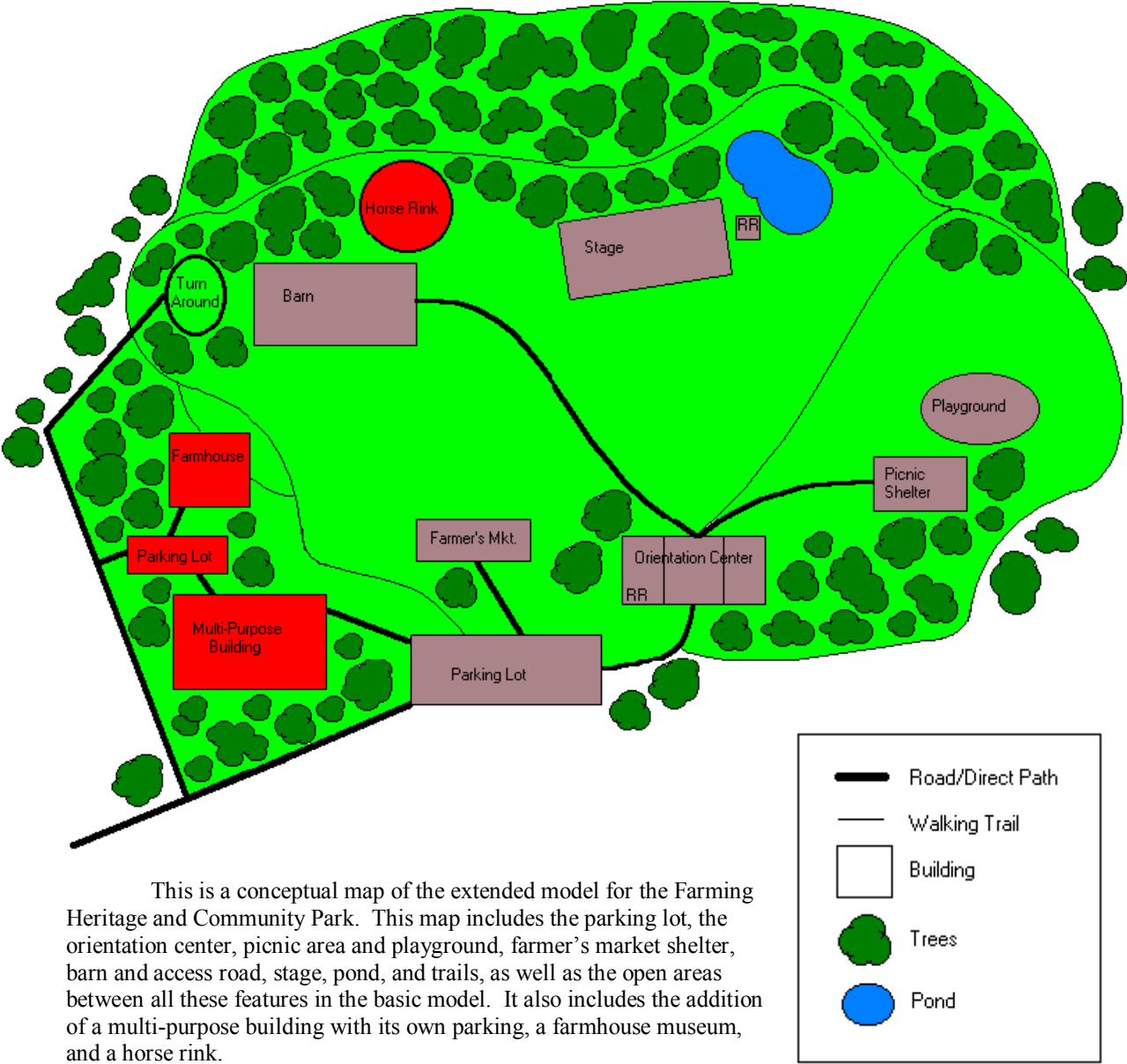
the open areas. With underground wiring there is also less of a chance for constant maintenance due to the way in which the wiring is originally set up.

Proper water systems are also a very important part of a park. These systems are needed to run efficient bathrooms, water fountains, and water that will be hooked up to the barn. Without these important utilities a park cannot function.

### **The Expanded Model**

The second model that we propose is a conceptually designed expanded model of the previously described basic model. The expanded model contains all the features of the basic model as well as a larger multi-purpose building with a community meeting area, areas for animal events, and expanded heritage exhibits and museum area. It is made up of phases in which the park can be expanded to meet the growing wants and needs of the area. This includes providing benefits for the area's farming community by incorporating possibilities for community members to engage in some low-key agri-tourism activities at the park. It is also done over a span of several years. The following explains the various components of the expanded Farm Heritage and Community Park model. A conceptual map of the extended park model, keyed to this description, appears on the next page.

# Farm Heritage and Community Park – Expanded Model



This is a conceptual map of the extended model for the Farming Heritage and Community Park. This map includes the parking lot, the orientation center, picnic area and playground, farmer's market shelter, barn and access road, stage, pond, and trails, as well as the open areas between all these features in the basic model. It also includes the addition of a multi-purpose building with its own parking, a farmhouse museum, and a horse rink.

### Orientation Center:

In the expanded model, the visitor center will still contain displays and park information, restrooms, vending machines, and water fountains.

### Multi-Purpose Building:

The expanded model would include a larger multi-purpose building that would house a number of components. Such components would include: a vendor area, expanded heritage exhibits and museum area, community meeting area, space for indoor heritage/festival events, a cannery, and possibly an indoor horse ring and farm animal event area.

### Cannery:

Some farm families have voiced concern that the last cannery in the county, currently at the Riner schools, might be closed eventually. Should the school decide it no longer wishes to maintain the cannery, it could be moved to become a major feature of the park's multipurpose building. The cannery could continue to operate for the benefit of county families, while being a park attraction fitting the farm heritage theme especially during fall canning season. In fact, some families might be encouraged to can up some of their extra produce to be displayed and sold at a cannery shop in the park building, generating some value-added benefits for some New River Valley farm families through this facility. If this were to occur, the multi-purpose building might even be called "The Cannery."

### Museum:

Another room within the multi-purpose building would be a museum. The expanded model makes it possible to develop a farm heritage museum. This would house various displays pertaining to the farming heritage theme. Items which could be included within a museum are further discussed in Chapter 3.

Alternatively, if Montgomery County purchases property with an already existing farmhouse it could be used as a working museum. Each room would contain various aspects of farming life in the New River Valley. This is also discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

### Vending Area:

The presence of some farming/heritage related vendors, including: their physical presence, the rent that they would pay, and their willingness to do farming/heritage based demonstrations during events, would allow for the expanded model to be implemented. This is more apt to happen if a public/private partnership is established. The vendors would provide security for the exhibits in this building and would be capable of opening and closing it.

### Working Farm:

A working farm as a part of the expanded farm heritage museum would be capable of housing animals on a full time basis, such as animals that would be in a petting zoo. The area in front of the barn would be extended for this model, to include horse

rings and corrals. In the basic model, visitors must complete self-guided tours. On the other hand, in the extended model, visitors would have human and animal interaction as they participate in demonstrations presented by farmers.

The rent that the vendors would pay for their space could go towards paying the salary of a park staff person. This person would be in charge of organizing and coordinating events/festivals for the park, opening and closing the park, doing some maintenance for the park, care for the exhibits/museum, do heritage interpretation activities, and tend to the animals for a small working farm.

#### Other Elements of the Park:

The expanded model is also conceptually designed to provide some benefits for the county's farm community by incorporating possibilities for community members to engage in some low-key agri-tourism activities at the park. If this model were implemented, a number of things would be allowed to happen. These include: giving visitors a more direct interaction between the visitor and farming heritage through talking to vendors and farmers. A visitor would get a hands-on learning experience about the possibilities of farming life. It would also provide the community with a means of distributing their goods and services. This helps to support the county in maintaining farming in the New River Valley. The county then gains revenue by supporting the local farmers.

#### **Suggested Phasing of the Heritage Park**

The conceptual plan presents a model for a basic model as well as an expanded model. Neither model will be able to be developed and finished overnight. It is more feasible to plan for the park to be established in a series of phases or steps. Some aspects or features will be able to develop, while other features may require more extensive fund raising and grant writing, and others may come to follow joint county-community efforts. In order for this plan to be more down to earth and realistic, we have provided a set of recommendations for the developmental phasing process for the Farm Heritage Park. The price estimates below are based on the cost of previous park construction for Montgomery County Parks and Recreation.

#### Phase 1:

Phase one of the park development should include:

- Selecting and purchasing a piece of property. Naturally, if the property includes buildings such as a farmhouse, a barn, etc., fewer buildings will have to be built later on. Also, if the property is hilly, phase one will have to include bulldozing to flatten areas that would host the parking lot and picnic/playground areas. The suggested amount of land to purchase ranges from 35-60 acres.
- After acquiring land for the park, a parking lot and trails should be set in place. Roughly, a 100 X 100 square foot parking lot will cost \$60,000. Trail building costs are yet to be determined.
- A picnic and playground area must be established next. A picnic shelter that can seat 200 people costs approximately \$30,000. The same price is expected to cover the playground. Note: Old tires (shredded) are great for playground floor.

- The visitor orientation center and restrooms are an important aspect to include in the first phase as well. A visitor orientation center with attached restrooms is estimated to be \$70,000. Basically the visitor center would resemble a picnic shelter with two walls to enable a kiosk-effect, with restrooms on one side and a community multipurpose room on the other side (See discussion above).

#### Phase 2:

After the basics are established, the second phase can begin. This second phase is critical in really showing off the heritage aspect of the farm park.

- A permanent farmer's market shelter will be built. It should ideally be about three times the size of a typical shelter, thus giving an estimate of about \$100,000 in cost.
- After the farmer's market is established, the stage should be built. A simple stage with a roof including electricity costs about \$30,000.
- Next, if not already included with the purchased property, a barn should be implemented. The barn should be fairly large to host a number of events (as mentioned previously). The cost for the barn has yet to be determined, however, one could assume that it would be more than the \$100,000 spent on the farmer's market.

#### Phase 3:

This is the final phase for the expanded model of the heritage park plan.

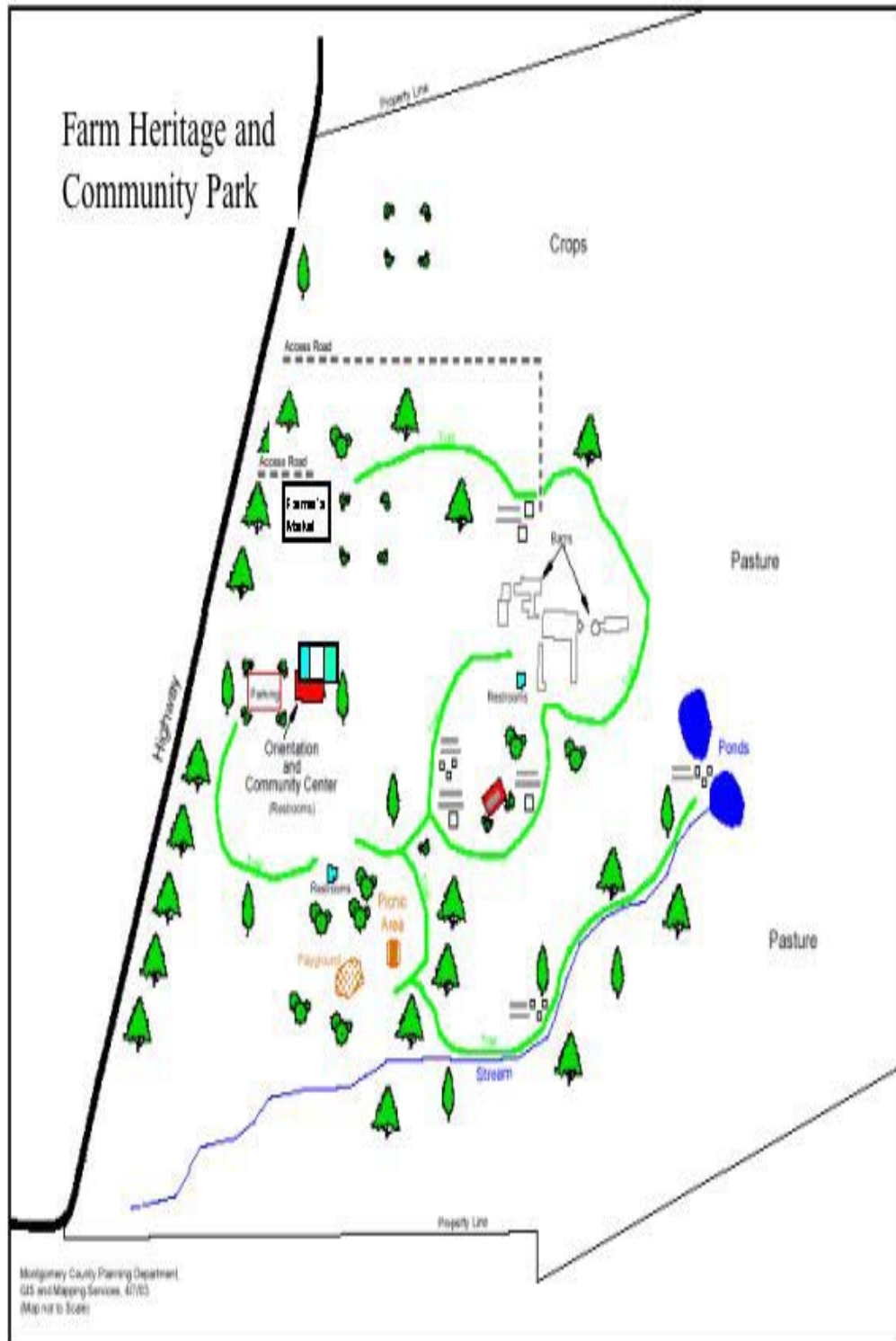
- A large multipurpose building needs to be constructed to house spaces for vendors and crafters, a heritage museum, indoor events, and possibly the cannery.
- A farmhouse that would house a separate museum. The farmhouse could possibly already exist on the site or a farmhouse could be moved from another site.
- Expansion of riding rings and other outdoor exhibition areas.

### **Conclusion**

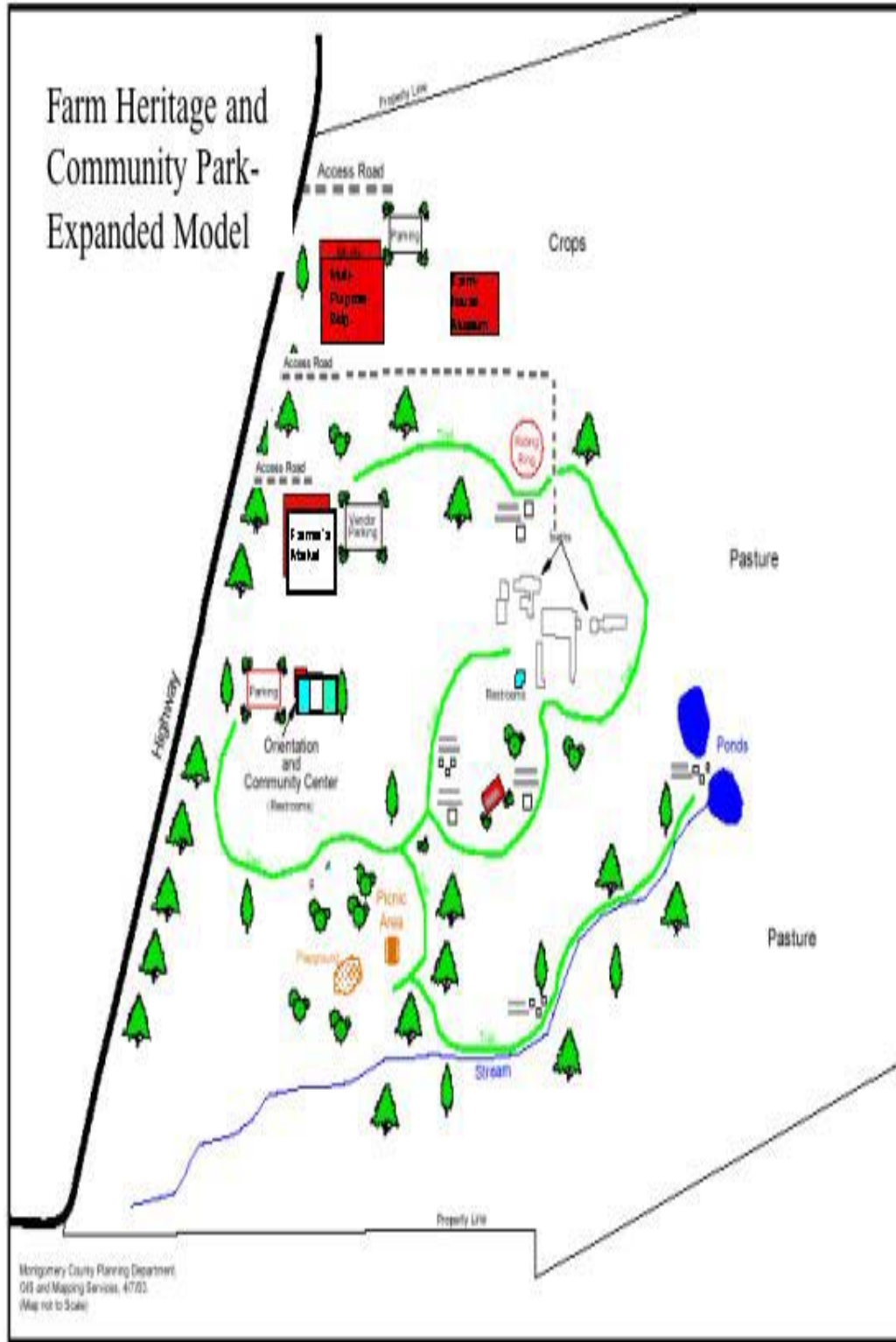
Presented in this chapter were two models for the Montgomery County Farm Heritage and Community Park. The first of which was the basic model. This presented the basic requirements for a well-functioning heritage park. These include the parking lot, the orientation center, picnic and playground areas, a stage, farmer's market area, barn, and trails. The extended plan adds to these elements to cater to a wider range of activities within the park. The addition of a larger orientation center, a multi-purpose building, and a working farm creates a reciprocal relationship between the community farmers and the county. This is all done with two very important components in mind: community and farm heritage.

A set of slightly more detailed conceptual maps  
of the Farm Heritage and Community Park models  
drawn by Michael Sutherland (Montgomery County Planning)  
in consultation with the Applied Anthropology research team  
follow on the next two pages.





# Farm Heritage and Community Park- Expanded Model



Montgomery County Planning Department  
GIS and Mapping Services, 4703  
(Map not to Scale)

## **Chapter 3**

### **Interpreting the New River Valley Farming Way of Life – Past and Present**

**By Tracey S. McDonald, Steve R. Storer,  
and Jeremy James Zukas**

Farming has been a main source of income and a way of life for many who live in the New River Valley, as well as Appalachia. Unfortunately county farmland has been thinning out slowly in recent years, as large-scale agriculture and suburban development displace many small-scale family farms. We hope that a farming heritage park for the region will help to preserve the local farming history, while also educating the public to create awareness and knowledge about continuing farm operations in the New River Valley today.

Many people are unaware of the techniques and skills it takes to maintain a farm. Farming methods and technology have been evolving since the 1800s, through revolutionary break-throughs in tools, chemicals, and tilling, as well as enormous changes in the social landscape of Appalachia in general and the New River Valley in particular. A farming heritage park provides a place to celebrate the New River Valley's farming heritage and way of life. We envision a farming heritage park that would present this history through maps, pictures, and displays. For example, some displays would compare and contrast the different time periods of farming homes, technology, and lifestyles, while other will be aimed at enlightening the non-farming community about the farming heritage. We picture the displays as acting to educate the public about the old time and more current farming techniques, such as plowing and planting methods, and hopefully make them aware of what farming was like in the early 1900s, how it has changed, and how it is practiced today. A majority of the public doesn't realize that farming requires one to be a chemist, mechanic, veterinarian, biologist, and a horticulturalist all at once. We hope that through this public education, we can crush the typical stereotypes of Appalachian farming, and teach people about the enormous quantity of knowledge these farmers must have in order to keep their farms running successfully.

One of the technological factors we would like to present is the evolution of the tractor. The tractor's evolution, which is quite extensive, would be displayed in a timeline at the orientation center, showing the different parts and the technological advances that have taken place. Pictures or models would be used to show the different designs of the tractor throughout history. We feel that a timeline including the history of farming is a must because it will give the community a broad view of the heritage. A timeline placed in the visitor's center would be the first thing the public would see, giving them a good idea of what to expect from the park. The timeline should be very simple, divulging only a little bit of information because the interior of the park is going to be the main educational factor. We envision the timeline as acting somewhat as the index to the park,

allowing people to identify what appeals to them and then immediately be able to seek it out. This timeline idea would be a part of the park from the beginning and as the park grows, it could be extended to include actual models of tractors. This could be done with the inclusion of an equipment shed that would require practically zero maintenance. It would be filled with examples of equipment through the years, presumably donated by the community, and it would provide visitors with hands-on experience and knowledge as to how the work on a New River Valley farm has changed over time. Most of the information that would be present in relation to the equipment shed, would be provided by the actual donating farmer, who would hopefully know certain things like, the make and model, the time that the specific piece of equipment was produced, the estimated price of the equipment then and now, as well as the specific farm task that it was created to do. Having the visitors see the equipment, would help them to understand the amount of labor involved with farming tasks, and it would also show them how much technology has changed over time. The equipment shed would also need almost no security, simply because it would be rather difficult to move large pieces of machinery.



Example of a tractor exhibit that would have an interpretive sign next to it describing the specifics of this particular piece of equipment.

Signs should also be prevalent around the park in some simple order. Signs are a perfect opportunity to provide information on many different subjects such as planting methods, seasonal farming activities, farm animal information, and technology in general. Furthermore, since trails will be incorporated throughout the entire park, the signs could be placed alongside the benches that will be located periodically along the trails, and people can read them and learn some aspect of the farmers' life, while resting from their hike. Moreover, signs are relatively inexpensive and could therefore be incorporated in the basic model and expanded on as the park grows.



Example of a sign from Explore Park in Roanoke, Virginia

The park's size (small or large) will give different possibilities to what educational aspects are included in the park. The expanded model could incorporate educational demonstrations, such as a reenactment of "A Day on the Farm" by using local volunteers to take on the roles of the farming family and have them do demonstrations on things like sheep shearing, cow milking, chemical use, equipment maintenance, and the many different planting methods used by farmers, just to name a few things. As far as the basic model is concerned, these activities could still be done, just not as frequently. There could be annual or biannual festivals, where farmers could come out and participate in these demonstrations. During these occasional demos, we could take photographs and notes which would then be compiled into brochures or more signage, so that visitors would still get a feel for "A Day on the Farm" throughout the rest of the year.

Whether the basic or expanded model is adopted, we would encourage the use of the park several times a year to hold festivals that would celebrate the farm family heritage and also educate the non-farming community. There could be traditional Appalachian music, clogging, crafts, storytelling, quilting displays (where local quilters could also sell their wares), wool spinning expos, and also tables for local artisans to set up and sell their artwork.



Example of quilts for sale at Tamarack, West Virginia

We also envision Appalachian food as being in abundance, and we could even include hands on activities in this arena i.e., learning how to make apple butter, homemade bread, preserves, and how to can fresh vegetables, as well as encourage the sharing of traditional Appalachian recipes.

These festivals should be centered on the main farming interests for the specific times of year. For example, in the fall we could have an apple, pumpkin, or a harvest theme, and the winter could have a holiday theme, which would also provide a great opportunity for the local vendors to market their goods, seeing as the holiday season promotes so much shopping. The springtime themes could be centered on berries, or the beginning of gardening season, while summer festivals could include wine tasting, or really any number of things, seeing as there are numerous fresh farm products in abundance during this season, from tomatoes, squash, and peppers to potatoes, carrots, or corn. Moreover, food products don't necessarily have to be the main center of attention; the theme could be centered on animals, such as horses, sheep, cows, chickens, or buffalo, for example. The possibilities are literally endless.

It is also important to point out that by charging a small admission fee for these festivals, income would be generated for the park in a way that would have virtually no negative impact on the environment or the community. In fact, it would help to bring the community together and reinforce the regional solidarity as well as encourage a positive camaraderie between visitors from all walks of life.

For the expanded model, we could even have an actual farmhouse constructed to act as a museum. Each room would hold displays of what went on in that space. For example, the kitchen could have an old-fashioned butter churner and a sign next to it describing how butter was made from the milk and the occasional interpreter who would actually demonstrate the process. We could also include a display showing the different food preservation techniques such as canning, freezing, salt curing, etc (again, with occasional interpreters to demonstrate). Perhaps, eventually even a real cannery could be constructed to allow the community to get involved.

Another room of the farmhouse could be used as a kind of gallery to display traditional Appalachian crafts and artwork, and local artisans could demonstrate their methods and also sell their work, if so desired. For example, a craftsperson displays spoon making at Tamarack in West Virginia in the picture below:



This would not only benefit the local people economically, but it also acts as a way of showing the general public some of the Appalachian art heritage. Having a farmhouse to act as the museum would be ideal, since it would allow visitors to gain a more authentic feel for the way farmers live.

The basic model could depict these activities through signage in the visitor's center or in brochures that could be distributed to visitors. We could also have displays in a section of the visitor's center to show off traditional artwork (if the farmhouse never becomes feasible), such as quilts, paintings, or Appalachian musical instruments, like the mandolin, banjo, fiddle, dulcimer, etc.



This is a quilt exhibit on the walls at Tamarack, West Virginia. This type of exhibit could be put on the walls in locked building situations – using either park model, in the locked room of the orientation center in the basic model, or along all the walls in the large multipurpose building in the expanded model.

These displays would have accompanying descriptions to give the history of the work or instruments. So, again, if the farmhouse idea does not come to fruition, a section of the multi-purpose building could certainly be set aside to function as the museum.

Another aspect of their heritage that we feel should be included in the park is that of their self-sufficient lifestyle. This came to be over the years, because each individual New River Valley farm family had to combine a multitude of varying livelihood strategies in order to make ends meet. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, farms in the New River Valley were basically run mainly by members of the nuclear family, usually the Father and Mother, with assistance from any children that they had. The

environmental conditions of the New River Valley also played a major role in shaping the way farming was and is practiced here in the New River Valley. The layout of the land, being hilly and such, means that cash crop production is not optimized, the end result being that most farms in the New River Valley specialize in animal production, either beef cattle, dairy cattle, or sheep. This does not mean that they did not grow any crops; fields are used to grow the feed for the animals. Usually the family would have a small garden, in which they would grow vegetables to be served on the dinner table. During harvest time, small farm families would receive help from their extended family for activities such as, baling hay, preserving food, or picking berries.

Early farmers in the New River Valley took special care to ensure that they did not waste anything; much like the Native Americans, they were extremely scrupulous in making sure that everything had a use, and nothing was wasted. For example, if there were any table scraps left over, they would feed them to the pigs; most families would keep one pig for this purpose alone, sort of like a garbage disposal. In addition to raising animals, and crops, New River Valley farmers are extremely resilient, in the face of adversity, for example a flood or drought, New River Valley farmers show a high level of cooperation with local neighbors on all sorts of issues.

Most of the farms in the NRV were passed down through generations of family, and being the case as it is, this would mean that exact knowledge specific to a certain farm, or local ecosystem, was passed directly from those doing the farming of previous generations, to their offspring, who would be doing the farming in the future. This concept of self-sufficiency is a very important aspect of farming life here in the New River Valley; the farmers themselves like to think that if something bad were to happen to the rest of the world, they would somehow come out alright, due mainly to their self-sufficient lifestyle.

As far as the application of this concept of self-sufficiency goes, we think that the best way to show it to the public is to actually have a working farm. We realize that this is not feasible unless there is enough staff to actually do the farm work and enough money to cover expenses. Therefore, this would be part of the expanded model. First of all, it would be necessary to have a small crop field. This field could be used for a multitude of purposes; functionally, it would serve as the food source for any livestock that would be present on the working farm model. Educationally, people who visit the farm would be able to see how the farmers grow crops, how they harvest them, and how they store them for the animals to eat throughout the winter. The crop fields would also be of use in designing the trail system for the park. Walking trails of various intensity levels could encircle the fields allowing people to walk around and possibly between them. Livestock on the working farm would presumably be kept in some type of barn or stable structure, where people could walk through and actually touch the animals, almost like a petting zoo. Educationally, having animals on the site would be of great benefit, the public would be able to see all that is involved with raising livestock, including the birth of new animals, as well as all the practical purposes of having animals. Furthermore, they will see up close and personal, where their food comes from. A small sign that would explain to the reader the exact purpose and place each animal occupies, would accompany each stall containing animals. These are all possibilities for the expanded model.



For the basic model, the idea of self-sufficiency will have as the main focus, exhibits, signage, and other displays for the public to view in the multi-purpose building or the farmhouse. It is important to point out however that historical heritage representation depicting a sense of self-sufficiency is much harder to grasp when you are not looking at the actual self-sufficient unit right in front of you. Nevertheless, every project must start somewhere; we presume that the basic model is where this park will begin and hopefully will be eventually expanded to include an actual working farm.

The basic model would also include a small covered area (either a kiosk somewhere in the park or in one of the shelters), where visitors would be able to read brief descriptions of what farming life was like in the past, and how it is today in the New River Valley. This indoor area could also have displays where visitors could press a button, and hear some farming specific sound byte regarding things like, economics, lifestyle, technology, or how farming has changed over the years. Since audio tapes of interviews with local farmers already exist (from the oral history project), there is certainly the possibility to use them as the basis for these sound bytes. This idea of combining visual displays, with informative audible stations, could also be applied to the system of trails throughout the park.

The basic park model will no doubt include some aspects specifically related to the self-sufficient lifestyle. It has been made clear that the farmers consider this to be one of the most important aspects of their way of life. The expanded park model, with the working farm, would most definitely be favored by the actual farmers, simply because it would convey the concept of self-reliance much more effectively than the basic model, but if we start with the basics, the park could be expanded slowly over time so that it might eventually become a working farm. By incorporating the celebration of farming heritage into the park we not only provide the opportunity to educate people about the lifestyle, but moreover, it will allow us the chance to dispel myths surrounding farmers and food production, as well as to clarify what farming is really about and how important it is for the livelihood of all people, from all walks of life. More importantly, it provides an excellent chance to preserve the farming heritage of the New River Valley.

A sample Farm Heritage and Community Park pamphlet prepared by Jeremy James Zukas appears on the following two pages. The two pages would be printed back-to-back and folded so that the map appears in the inside the of pamphlet.



- The environmental conditions of the New River Valley also played a major role in shaping the way farming was and is practiced here in the New River Valley. The layout of the land, being hilly and such, means that cash crop production is not optimized, the end result being that most farms in the New River Valley specialize in animal production, either beef cattle, dairy cattle, or sheep.
- Over the years individual New River Valley farm families had to combine a multitude of varying livelihood strategies in order to make ends meet, primarily because of larger-scaled farmers. Families would survive together as a whole unit.
- Most of the farms in the NRV were passed down through generations of family.

- Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, farms in the New River Valley were basically run by members of the nuclear family, usually the father and mother, with assistance from any children that they had.
- Farming has been a main source of income and a way of life for many who live in the New River Valley, as well as Appalachia.
- Farming methods and technology have been evolving since the beginning, through revolutionary breakthrough in tools, chemicals, and tilling, as well as enormous changes in the social landscape of Appalachia and the New River Valley.



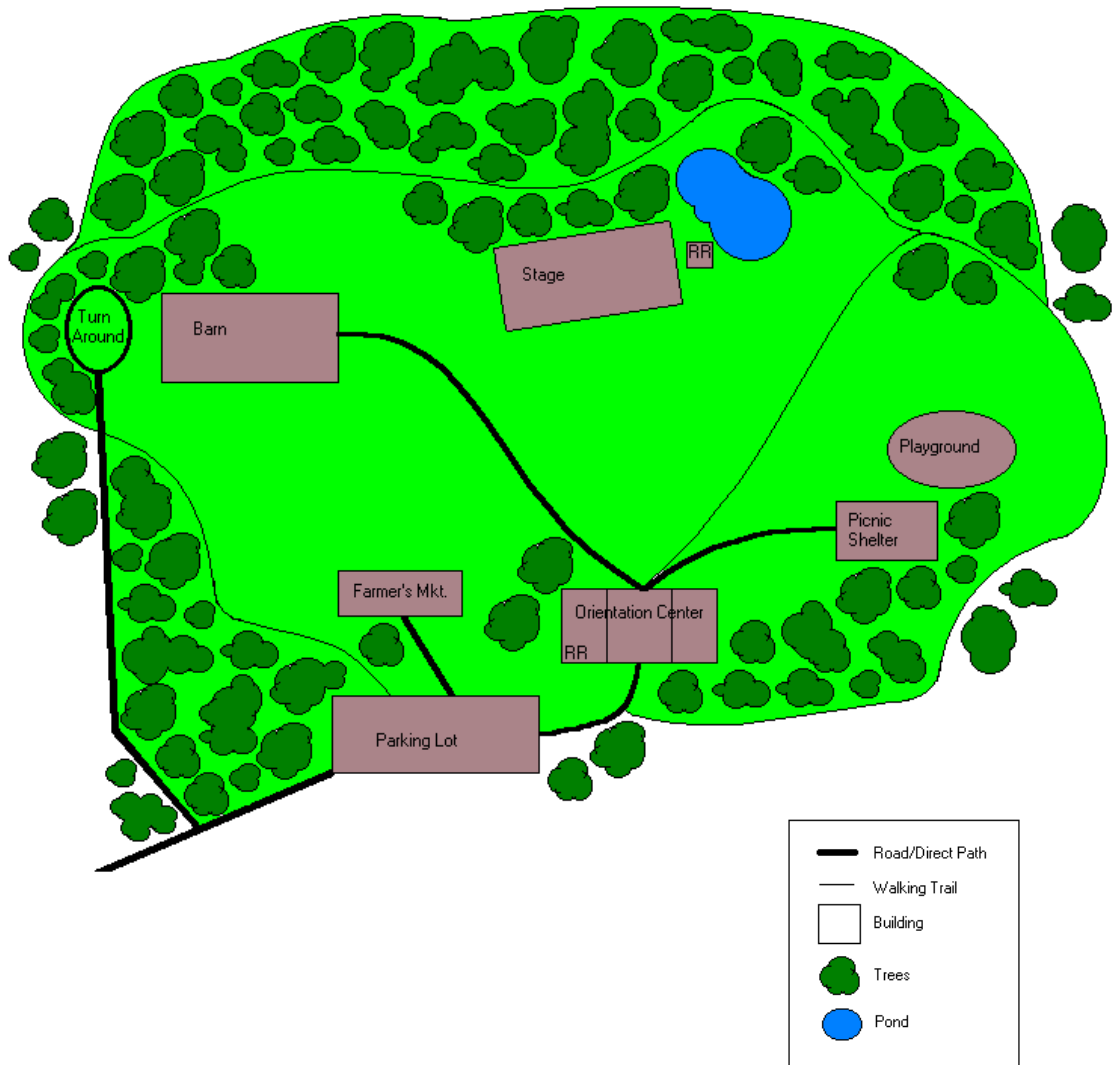
## Farm Heritage And Community Park



- Farming requires one to be a chemist, mechanic, veterinarian, biologist, and a horticulturalist all at once.

[Inside of brochure has a park map to orient the visitor.]

## Farm Heritage and Community Park



## Chapter 4

### Potential Park Uses and Participation

**By Darby A. Kirby, Beth A. Smit, and Nicole L. Danhauser**

An agricultural and farm heritage park would benefit the public of the New River Valley area and provide opportunities for many people, as you will see in the following chapter. Preserving rural agricultural land and Appalachian heritage is one of the main issues in the New River Valley area, and this would be one of the Farm Park's main goals. The small farm families in the area have to compete against the larger corporations and this park would provide a great outlet for direct self-sufficiency. The creation of an agricultural heritage park with a Farmer's Market, festivals, and other opportunities would allow local farmers a place to hold agricultural demonstrations and market their products. Agri-tourism involvement can be managed and operated on either low-scale or higher level budgets. It all depends on what the community wants to incorporate into the park. The Farm Park would allow for the enhancement of agri-tourism and commerce for the New River Valley area with added-value agriculture as well as a connection with cultural lifestyles of the New River Valley area. The intent of the park is to promote the image of agriculture in the area and to provide a long-term preservation of the conditions concerning agriculture. Listed below are multiple ways that a Farming Heritage and Community Park can be utilized.

#### Potential Participants

- 4-H/FFA groups
- Farm Families
- Church Members
- School Groups
- Community Groups
- Boyscouts/Girlscouts
- Student Internships
- Senior Citizens (A.A.R.P.)
- Families with Kids
- Tourists

#### Potential Uses

- Volunteer Experiences
- Agricultural/Horticultural Displays
- Community Center
- Wildlife Watching
- Agricultural Tours
- Game/Nature Displays

- Farming and Exotic Animal Displays (petting zoos)
- Working Dog Trials
- Barn Dances
- Cannery Demonstrations
- Cooking Classes
- Wine Tasting (local winery)
- Wagon/Sleigh Rides
- Bee Farming Demonstrations
- Aquaculture
- Craftsmen
- Blacksmith Demonstrations
- Horseback Riding Recreation
- Farm Festivals
- Farmer's Market
- Community Gardening Projects
- Auctions
- Music Festivals (Bluegrass)
- Picnic/Playground Areas
- Trails for Recreation
- Event Competitions
- Ropes Course
- Agricultural Sign Identification Program

### **Incorporating Agri-Tourism Into The Farm Park**

Agri-tourism is the concept of successfully attracting a diverse consumer base by offering the public something of agricultural value as well as providing income for the small family farmers (Cornell Cooperative Extension 2003). It links travel with agricultural experiences. Agri-tourism might wrongly be associated with large scale tourism because the term "tourism" is linked to the word agriculture. But agri-tourism has a completely different objective than tourism in general. Agri-tourism provides opportunities within rural agricultural regions that work with and for the preservation and awareness of agriculture. It is a way to incorporate agriculture so that the public can become more informed of what is offered as well as provide an extra source of income for farming families. Agri-tourism deals with marketing consumer products in a different way that can reflect the individuality of farming families in a certain area/region. It is the exposure of agriculture and what the daily lifestyles entail. It is the notion of inspiring a greater appreciation for the work involved in food and material production. Agri-tourism is aimed at reinforcing community relations and building the bridge between the rural and urban citizens in an area. Agri-tourism can offer an experience for those that are unfamiliar with farming lifestyles by educating all ages on how farmers operate. A farming events park would have minimal negative impact and would contribute to agricultural responsiveness and improve community and outside relations.

Two major factors that distinguish agri-tourism are the market and the product. For small farmers the market are customers that want to learn more about the lifestyles, heritage, methods of farming operation, as well as be able to visually see how farming is

administered. The product of agri-tourism is actually selling the experience as well as the goods. Agri-tourism, like tourism, is dependent upon many interrelated parts all working together holistically to deliver a product. Community supported agriculture reflects an innovative and resourceful strategy to connect local farmers with local as well as out-of-town consumers. If farmers in the area expand the farm business to include agricultural opportunities then agri-tourism becomes an alternative mechanism for providing financial stability (Cornell University, 2003).

Some key points to keep in mind about agri-tourism is that agri-tourism is a subset of a larger industry called rural tourism that includes farmers markets, non-profit tours, and other leisure events that attract visitors to the countryside in order to get a taste of rural living. Agri-tourism can take the forms of outdoor recreation, entertainment, educational experiences, hospitality, and income for producers.

Other states have engaged in agri-tourism and have been very successful in stimulating agriculture awareness and benefiting the agricultural producers of the area/region. Small farm operations have been developed to attract agricultural awareness to an area. Since the agricultural sector is just as important in enhancing trade many states have become involved with how to add 'value' to our agricultural products. Adding value to agriculture allows growers, marketers, and community representatives to formulate visions, develop strategies for promoting their products, and develop agri-tourism enterprises in their area (University of California). Currently agriculture producers in the area raise bison, goats, emus, and ostrich, cows, sheep, swine, free-range chicken and turkeys, and farm-raised fish. These producers would be able to develop a cooperative market that could provide income for them as well as educational, recreational, and consumer opportunities for the general community and outsiders.



Example of preserved goods sold by vendors for value-added income (at Tamarack, West Virginia)

## **Potential Participants**

### 4-H/FFA Groups

4-H/FFA groups in the New River Valley area could use the park for their individual as well as group projects. 4-H which stands for Head, Hands, Heart, & Health, is a cooperation of the Virginia State Extension Center. 4-H members can range from ages five to eighteen and can engage in hands-on projects such as animals, wildlife & forestry, plant & soil science, livestock judging, cooking, homemaking, and family & consumer sciences. 4-H programs use experimental learning opportunities to teach the latest research-based subject matter knowledge and to develop effective citizenship, leadership, and other life skills. Fieldtrips to the park would provide the different 4-H and FFA groups an opportunity to work on wildlife mapping, forestry judging, animal workshops/clinics, homemaking, food processing, gardening, etc. if the park is feasible to incorporate these events. 4-H members could also benefit from the establishment of a Farmer's market on the farm park site. This could be a place for 4-Hers to market their products along with other farmers in the area. FFA is another major agriculture affiliated chapter that is composed of middle and high school students that plan on becoming Future Farmers of America. FFA in the school system offers educational opportunities on woodworking, mechanics, and agricultural business. The FFA leader is usually the agriculture advisor at the school and is very knowledgeable about agricultural related processes. The FFA chapters in the New River Valley area could use the farm park to complete their projects and learn more about agriculture in the New River Valley area. Since members of FFA chapters are looking to pursue careers in agriculture, they may even consider volunteering at the farm park. This would be an excellent place for both organizations to participate in to enhance their education on farming methods and lifestyles in the NRV area.

### Farm Families

Farm families are going to be the backbone of the park and their assistance and guidance is essential to the success of the farming park. The Young Farmer's Association has recently developed in the Montgomery County area and this could be an opportunity for them to assist and help organize the park. Incorporating farmer's knowledge and anthro-planning could provide for a top-quality farming park. Farmers in the area want to preserve agriculture and pass the knowledge down to younger generations. A farming park could preserve not only farming heritage but Appalachian culture and New River Valley heritage as well (see Chapter 3 for more information). A farmer's market would be an excellent establishment in the park for the purpose of farmers to market value-added products. There are many farmers in the area that specialize in different agricultural productions. Some include buffalo, u-pick operations (strawberry, blueberry, pumpkin, tree farming, etc.), beef, dairy, grass farmers, fruit orchards, and many others. The farming park would be an opportunity for all these farming members to come together to market their products as a means of agri-tourism.

### Church Groups

Church groups could benefit from the park because it could serve as a public place for special events, community service, and meetings. Church groups could take up



many community aspects of the park. They could help with the garden maintenance, the displays, as well as the overall ground maintenance.

### School Groups

School groups can benefit from having this park because of the educational purposes that it could serve (see Chapter 5 for more information). This park could educate students on the heritage of farming in their community and other activities that take place as well. This could also bring in profit for the park because there could be a small admission fee for school groups to tour the park. Also, the students and teachers could purchase items from the Farmer's Market. It is important that the younger generations become more aware of agriculture and heritage in the area.

### Community Groups

Civic organizations in the area could use the Farm Park as a meeting and event place. Since there is a lack of places for groups to meet, the Farm Park could serve as a host site. The farm park could be a host site for many different groups in the community and also serve as a relaxation area where people could have picnics and enjoy the farm park.

### Boyscouts/Girlscouts

This group in the community could highly benefit from this park. They can perform many of their activities at this park like hiking, have meetings in the community center, do crafts on the picnic tables, and complete community service projects. This would be a nice place for the groups to meet (Boyscouts/Girlscouts, 2003).

### Student Internships

Having the community perform internships for this park is an easy and more affordable way to keep it looking clean. Students from primary as well as secondary schools may be able to participate in some type of internship within the context of the farm park. Interns could help with maintenance by keeping trails in tact and picking up trash that might accumulate in the park. Clubs and other organizations that are affiliated with colleges and schools might be able to obtain internship that pertain to agriculture and assist in the parks development and maintenance.

### Senior Citizens (A.A.R.P.)

The A.A.R.P. is a nonprofit organization in all states for people 50 and older. It assists members with all different issues of everyday life through multiple offices and a website. Their slogan is "Age is just a number and life is what you make it." Therefore, members would probably get a great deal of use out of the park. Uses would include: walking trails, picnicking, sitting at the pond and at other visually pleasant sites, taking grandchildren to play on the playground, and to look at all the different heritage displays. Of course, senior citizens who are not members of this organization would also get the same uses out of the park (A.A.R.P., 2003).

### Families with Kids

Some of the primary users of the park would be families with kids. Due to large open outdoor spaces, families can bring their children to the park for recreation as well as an educational experience. Playgrounds will also be offered as a recreational activity for younger children. There is also a lot to offer the adults in the group as well. So, it is not like going to a regular park to let your children play, it is going to an educational place where your children as well as you can learn and play in a safe environment.

### Tourists

People that are traveling from out of town will be able to use this park to learn more about the culture of the area. The farmer's market will be a place that people can take away Appalachian culture and provide income for the farmers. If there is land that is easily accessible from Interstate 81, then this would be an excellent tourist stop.

## **Potential Uses**

### Volunteer Experiences

Volunteering could be incorporated into both the basic and expanded models of the park. Organizations in the community could complete community service requirements by cleaning the park. Also, students, people of the community, or people who have community service hours could volunteer themselves to help out with events or maintaining any needs of the park. Any group or individual could volunteer their time and dedication into ensuring the success of the farm park.

### Agriculture/Horticulture Displays

The park could include educational displays of agriculture/horticulture farming throughout the park. People could learn the heritage of farming and horticulture by reading these informative displays. This use of signs would be expressed in both park models. If feasible, items such as equipment, tools, etc. could be donated to the park by farmers in the community so that there would be a visual display of agricultural heritage.

### Community Center

One of the most important and essential necessities that should be incorporated into both models of the park is a community center. There has been an expressed concern for the lack of meeting locations for groups and organizations in the New River Valley area. For example, church members, clubs, senior citizens, FFA, 4-H, and many other organizations could benefit from having a community center. A small building would be ideal for this type of meeting place (see Chapter 2 for more information). A community center would be a place for organizations to have meetings, host events, and use for leisure. The Farm Bureau, Friends of Riner, and other groups/organizations could use this sight to host conventions and conferences. A community center would be beneficial to everyone who uses the park, and could be used for multi-purposes.

### Wildlife Watching

People who have an interest in wildlife could use the park to observe the natural wildlife in the community. There are many nature groups in the area including biology classes, 4-H members, and forestry groups that could use the park to observe natural wildlife. This observation area could be provided in the basic and expanded models.

### Agricultural Tours

The agricultural tours could be in both the basic and expanded models. For the basic model there could be signs placed throughout the park with educational facts about farming heritage. This could be a self-guided tour that would have signs to guide visitors throughout the park. The expanded model could have both signs and live animals that could educate the visitors; this could be possible during special event dates. Information guides could be incorporated into some of the special event days that have livestock and/or farming displays.

### Game/Nature Displays

These displays would exist in the both the basic and expanded model. In the basic model there could be nonliving exhibits that could educate the visitor through informative display models. The displays could visually educate people about the game/nature that is native to the New River Valley area. A possibility is to display some of the game that is local to the New River Valley area and certain aspects in nature that are more prominent in this area.

### Farming & Exotic Animal Displays (petting zoos)

The animal display would be present in the expanded model of the park. It could possibly be an event that takes place once a week. Having these animals at the park would require some type of closed in area with shelter and an on-sight water supply. This could interest the local schools in bringing their students on field trips to educate them on the types of animals that are raised and marketed on farm. This could also educate the public on how farmers tend to their animals. Families and their children could also be interested in this aspect of the park. If the park contains an area for animals as suggested on the expanded model, exotic animals could be displayed as well as the agricultural livestock. Exotic animals such as emus and buffalo are also providing farmers in the New River Valley area with alternative incomes. If available, these animals would be an educational experience for the public to learn what types of products these animals can yield.

### Working Dog Trials

If people in the area have working dogs that they use on their farms then there would be a possibility for special event demonstrations. This could demonstrate how working dogs can assist farmers in performing a task that usually deals with livestock. There would need to be around 10-20 acres of semi-open land for this event so this idea would be included in the expanded model.

### Barn Dances

This idea of barn dances would be in the expanded model. A stage would be needed for this event along with an electrical outlet and a place for people to sit to view the performances. Many people in the community could participate such as local cloggers and square dancers that could demonstrate their heritage in the Appalachian culture.

### Cannery Demonstrations

The concept of canning could be demonstrated at the park on special event dates and/or weekend events. Members of the community can show how canning is performed and allow hands-on experience for children as well. This is an event that would be held during the summer because of the surplus of vegetables from gardens. Canning classes could possibly be offered for those who would like to learn how to can their summer vegetables. This could also allow the community to sell their product for income at the Farmer's Market, which would be an added-value outlet. This demonstration does not need a big space, although it does need electricity and would be best in an enclosed area that could provide some type of stovetop heating system. Local gardeners in the area would most likely hold this demonstration.

### Cooking Classes

The park could also offer cooking classes for community members to take part in. They can be taught how to prepare certain foods and exchange recipes with other members of the community. The Appalachian culture has many food preparations as well as meals that are native to the heritage. Cooking classes could add a "taste" of Appalachian culture into the meals of anyone who is interested in participating in these classes.

### Wine Tasting (local winery)

This idea is for the expanded model due to the certain restrictions that go along with wine tasting. Local wineries could greatly benefit from selling their product at a park that is highly used by the community. There could be a designated area for the different wine of Appalachia. The local wines could possibly be sold at the Farmer's Market and this would provide an additional retail outlet for wineries.

### Wagon/Sleigh Rides

This could bring in the younger generations to the park and utilize it during the winter months. This would be recreation for families with kids. The wagon rides could require a small fee, which would produce an income for the park. Sleigh rides would be available during the winter season, which would bring in business during the off-season. Volunteers would be need for this position as a way to maintain safety in the park during this time. This would be an idea for the expanded model.

### Bee Farming Demonstrations

Bee farming is an agricultural addition that could be incorporated into the basic and/or expanded model. Bee Farmers could arrange educational and informative demonstrations that would produce value-added income for them as well. The honey as

well as other by products could be collected during demonstrations and later sold at the farmer's market. This would provide an informative experience for farm park 'users' as well as profit for the farmers.

### Aquaculture

Aquaculture is another agricultural process that many people may be unfamiliar with. It is the method of growing products such as produce, plants, and even fish, by means of water. Farmers in the area that are affiliated with hydroponic growing could demonstrate the process and explain the benefits of aquaculture. Another suggestion is demonstrating how-to-build and maintain water gardens.

### Craftsmen

There is an abundant supply of talented artisans and craftsmen in the New River Valley area. The farm park could be a prospective display area for craftsmen to demonstrate their skills to the public. It would also provide a retail source for craftsmen to vend their products in order to provide additional income for themselves. Woodworking, pottery, basketry, and other craftsmen could market their products as "unique" to the area of Appalachian culture. These vendors could sell their products as something to remind the public of the farm park.

Another organization that could benefit as a 'user' for the farming park would be quilting, spinning, and sewing groups in the New River Valley area. Clothing was another self-sufficient product that farming wives would partake in. Demonstrations could educate the public on how these aspects tie into the heritage of farming families from the past. The organizations can then sell their products there at the farming park or in other areas of the New River Valley.



Sample of a display of basketry (at Tamarack, West Virginia)



Example of quilts and other crafts sold by local vendors (at Tamarack, West Virginia)

### Blacksmith Demonstrations

Blacksmith demonstrations would be another instructive exhibition that farriers in the area could perform. This idea would again tie into both a basic model as well as an expanded model for the farm park. This could also be displayed as a permanent exhibit without live horses just by setting up an exhibit that informs people on the evolution of the blacksmith.

### Horseback Riding Recreation

The Appalachian region has an abundant amount of equestrian riders that are always looking for new places to ride. Including horseback riding in the park could assist equestrians by providing new areas for shows, demonstrations, and leisure. The 4-H groups in the area include horse projects that many youth are involved in. Providing a ring could supply a new place for 4-H members to show their horses. Horses could also be used for Blacksmith demonstrations on special event days. A horseback-riding ring would be possible in the expanded model of the farm park.

### Farm Festivals

On certain days designated by the park coordinators, festivals would be held to the theme of our heritage park. Such fairs could include animal displays, demonstrations of different crafts, competitions, and many other agricultural characteristics. This would most likely be used in the expanded model of the farm park. Someone would probably have to be hired to coordinate events, vendors may have to be called, and a large piece of clear land with possibly some sort of shelter must be available. A good amount of time and planning would need to go into this event but it could provide a great source of income for the farm park.

### Farmer's Market

A Farmer's Market would be a great way for people to meet the native people of the area. On certain designated days, most likely weekends, locals can set up booths to sell their wares. What is sold at the Farmer's Market would be from the local producers of the New River Valley area. This would benefit the farm and gardening families as well as the park visitors because it would incorporate the value-added approach to agriculture. This could take place in both a basic and an expanded model. The basic model would contain more of a temporary set up such as folding tables set up by the vendors. In the expanded model, a permanent structure could be set up that could host vendors during the summer months (see Chapter 2 for more information).

### Community Gardening Projects

Gardens and Nursery Farms would be an essential addition to an agricultural heritage park. Gardens are to agriculture like a dictionary is to English; it's the basis of the foundation. Having a garden(s) on the farm park sight would provide an excellent way for the public to see how they are maintained from start to finish. Some other suggestions may include organic gardens and herb beds. Gardens were once a means of self-sufficiency for farmers and it would be educational to show people just how farmers were able to live off their own home grown produce. A value-added incentive would be for gardeners to sell the harvest that they produce there in the Farmer's Market.

Gardening would be a good thing to include in at least two ways. The first would be for appearance reasons. If we could get someone to possibly volunteer to plant flowers and shrubs and maintain them, this would definitely lend a nicer look to the park. The second way would be to actually grow a garden. Included in this could be native plants to the area that farmers grow. There are many groups in the area that could be approached to volunteer their time to the maintenance of the garden. A garden would support farming heritage and give visitors the idea of what it is like to actually garden. This would be a great incentive and beneficial for everyone. Gardening could be used in either the basic or expanded models. In the expanded model, it is possible that the garden could become a larger project, and possibly include the u-pick aspect, which would allow the public to pick their own produce.

### Auctions

In order to hold auctions we would first need some sort of stage, and a decent sized place in front where the audience could sit. Also, we would need to find an auctioneer, and people willing to auction off their goods. We could hold these a few times a year. People could auction things that could include animals, farm equipment, and homemade crafts. It would be a good idea to try to keep what is auctioned within the theme of the heritage park. This would only be possible within the expanded version of the park. There would be a great deal of coordination, and also a stage is definitely required (see Chapter 2 for more information). However, although it may be a lot of work, it would also be a profitable event for the park, and may lure people who may not come otherwise.

### Music Festivals (Bluegrass)

Bluegrass music is popular in the Appalachian region as well as the native Appalachian music that is created by many locals in the New River Valley area. There are local bands that are willing to play wherever they can, and the park would be a great opportunity for the community to get together to enjoy the music of the area. We could hold concerts of this nature, and also incorporate other entertainment with them such as the Radford University Cloggers. Also, on off days we could use bluegrass music as background music for the Farmer's Market. This would lend to the Appalachian flavor of the park. The concerts would have to be done in an expanded model with a stage and a large viewing area. However, in both models we could use the background music for everyday events.

### Picnic Areas/ Playgrounds

Picnic areas are a must in parks. However, the types of picnic areas can differ. There should contain a main picnic ground equipped with tables, overhead covering, bathrooms, trash disposal, and possibly even small charcoal grills. A playground is vital for families that will be visiting the park with younger children. The picnic/playground area should be placed off to the side of the main displays and events of the park but still within overall view of the park. This way parents can enjoy the elements of the park while simultaneously watching their children play. The picnic area and playground would fit into the theme of the Appalachian heritage. For example, perhaps making the picnic tables out of whole logs instead of split wood. Also, use as many natural colors and resources from the area as possible such as stone and wood. Having playground activities that pertain to livestock animals or farming equipment could be developed for the children. Both the picnic area and the playground would be possible and should be included in either model.

### Trails for Recreation

Different trails would be ideal to include in this type of park. Horseback riding, bicycling, walking, running, and roller-skating are a few things that can be done on trails. We may need to make a couple different trails to accommodate all these things. Also as many as possible should be made handicapped accessible according to the ADA guidelines as possible. The one exception to this may be the horseback-riding trail. Along these trails we could include signs telling different facts about heritage, maybe even including timelines. They should all be made with a circular route leading to different attractions within the park. All of these are very possible in both models as long as we obtain an adequate sized piece of land.

### Event Competitions

Different types of farming competitions such as homemaking, baking, canning, cooking, livestock and grain/hay judging, 4-H and FFA events, etc. could be held here. Local people could compete in these competitions and help to show local interests and attitudes toward certain things. This would probably only be possible in the expanded model. In order to hold competitions the park would have to coordinate competitors, judges, audience, and a place to hold them. A stage would also be necessary, as well as



some sort of prizes or ribbons for the winners. This would be a great resource area for groups such as the 4-H and FFA to host competitions within their disciplines.

### Ropes Course

This a type of obstacle course that would probably be placed along the walking trails. It would be off to the side so that anyone who was there to exercise or just wants to try it out can use it. This would be very easy to incorporate into both the basic and expanded models of the park. In addition ropes with wood would blend into the theme of the park and the natural surroundings very well.

### Agricultural Sign Identification Program

This is simply adding signs in front of agricultural displays to educate the visitor about what the elements and nature of the displays they are viewing. There could also be signs put up around trails, and other areas of the park. Also, if there is gardening there would be signs labeling the crops. These signs would be used as a means to assist in self-guided tours. The signs could show our logo for the farming park and be an educational assistance to every feature of the park.

## Chapter 5

### New River Valley Farm Heritage and Community Park – Educational Opportunities

By Reva K. Spence and Dixine Darist

The educational goals of the New River Valley Farm Heritage and Community Park is to assist the youth of today's world realize the vital role agriculture plays in their lives. The Park's aim is to bridge the gap between simply picking up everyday products "at the store" and having the knowledge of the product's agricultural origin – whether it's farm produce or livestock.

School children will be encouraged through their teachers to visit the Park for hands-on demonstrations and planned programs that will address their appropriate grade level SOLs. Educational value is also available to retired adults by their volunteer participation with the tours and workshops. Below are some examples of what subject areas could be addressed through the museum.

#### **Pre-Visit Activities Related to the Educational Tours**

Several books about farms can be read to the class or individually depending on the reading level prior to a visit to the Park such as:

#### **Juvenile Books:**

A Farm by Aurelius Battaglia

On the Farm by Richard Scarry

The Animals of Farmer Jones by Leah Gale

Pelle's New Suit by Elsa Beskow

Farmer Boy by Laura Ingalls Wilder

The Yearling by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

Maury had a Little Lamb by Janette Oke

A Place to Claim as Home by Patricia Willis

This Little Pig by Janette Oke

The Hayloft by Lisa Westberg Peters

We Love the Dirt by Tony Johnston

Richard Scarry's Farmer Patrick Pig by Richard Scarry

The Barn by Avi

Angles in the Dust by Margot Theis Raven

Anna on the Farm by Mary Downing Hahn

Cows in the Parlor: A Visit to a Dairy Farm by Cynthia McFarland

### **Adult Books:**

Successful Small-Scale Farming: An Organic Approach by Karl Schwenke

Farming Today Yesterday's Way by Cheryl Walsh

The One-Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming by Masanobu Fukuoka

Backyard Market Gardening: The Entrepreneur's Guide to Selling What you Grow by Andrew W. Lee

Small-Scale Grain Raising by Gene Logsdon

Portrait of a Farm Family by Raymond Bial

### **Educational Programs Centered on SOLs**

Children need to be educated as to where food comes from and the percentage of farmers in the United States as compared to the Riner area. Riner is the biggest farming community in Montgomery County.

Many subjects can correlate to Virginia Standards of Learning. These can be addressed in the classroom and during workshops and tours. Some SOLs that can be addressed are as follows:

#### **Math**

K.2 and 1.1 – count number of trees, products, buildings, and animals.

K.16, K.17 and 1.18 – graph types of ice cream, fruit, animals and vegetables students like best.

#### **Science**

K.6, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 2.4 and 2.8 – life processes of plants and animals

3.7 – soil components

3.8, 3.10 and 4.4 – plant and life cycles

4.8 – natural resources

#### **English**

K.8, 1.7, 1.11, 2.5 and 2.8 – comprehension skills

1.12, 2.9 and 3.8 – writing activities may be used

#### **Social Studies**

K.6, k.7, 1.7, 2.7, 2.9, 3.7, 3.8 and LVS.10 – economics including human, natural and capital resources, scarcity, specialization, and global economy

Below is an example of a specific subject and how it can relate to Virginia's Standard of Learning:

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade SOLs Science 4.2; English 4.1, 4.2, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9**

Steps are given in the production of corn up to the point that it is prepared for the family's consumption as an example of how to address a 4<sup>th</sup> grade SOL. Corn grown the traditional way (**bold** print denotes tools and labor involved):

- a. Traditionally, the family garden was used to grow corn for the family's consumption. A **hand-held plow** attached to a **horse or oxen** was used by the **father** to break up the soil in early Spring. Rows were laid out with about two feet between rows.
- b. Corn seeds were saved from the previous year's harvest and the **father or mother** would drop about three seeds per hill into each plot and cover it with dirt with a **hoe**. There would be approximately one foot between each plot. The size of the family would determine how many rows would be devoted to corn. Not only would they eat the corn during the summer months, the **mother** would can most of it in quart jars.
- c. Throughout the growing season a member of the family, probably a **child** would have the responsibility of **hoeing** out the weeds in the garden. This would have to be done many times throughout the summer months until the corn was ready to be harvested. If bugs or worms were eating the corn, a **child** would hand pick them off. If it were a dry season, a **child** or the **mother** would haul **buckets** of water from a well or a nearby stream to water the corn.
- d. The corn was mature when the stalks were about six feet tall and the tassels were no longer green, but dry and brown. The kernels would be large and golden yellow. The corncobs were picked off by **hand** probably as a **family** effort – one cob at a time.
- e. The father, using a **corn shucker**, would strip the shucks off the corncobs. The **children and mother** most likely shucked by hand. The corn was gathered in **bushel baskets** and taken to the kitchen to be further cleaned by the **mother and children**. Using **water** and scrubbing by **hand** cleaned off remaining tassels.
- f. If you wanted corn "off" the cob, the **mother** would have to cut the corn off the ear with a **sharp knife** into a **bowl**. It would probably take a couple dozen ears for a "mess" for the family's dinner meal. If they wanted corn on the cob, several ears would be put in a **large pot** filled with hot water and placed on top of a **woodstove** and cooked for a couple of hours. Salt purchased from a local store would be added for flavor as well as home-churned butter.

#### **Upper Level Educational Subjects**

Virginia/U.S. History: Major political and economic development in Appalachia and how farming was the major occupation in the area could be addressed.

- How farming was affected during major events such as WWI, WWII, the Great Depression, Cold War, and Post Cold War times.
- Apply geographical skills and reference sources to understand how the relationships between farmers and their environments have changed over the course of time.
- How European colonization impacted farming in Appalachia.
- How the values and institutions of European economic life helped to shape farming in America.

Government: Programs would pertain to students interested in government and foreign affairs in connection with farming.

- Understand the emerging role of the U.S. farming in world affairs, key events, and laws.
- Understand the differences between large and small-scale farming.
- Understanding of the federal system and how it helps large and small-scale farmers.

Agribusiness/Marketing:

- Learn strategic management and economic issues of the agricultural industry.
- Problem Solving.
- Mathematical Skills.
- Farm Management.
- Agriculture business management.

Chemistry: This subject area would illustrate to students that farmers are also chemists. All chemistry workshops would have a local farmer assisting the museum educator. Students would learn:

- How farmers create their own fertilizers and soils.
- How farmers create their own pesticides.
- Proper application of pesticides and other chemicals used
- Health and Safety.

Soils and Fertilizers: Students would get to learn the physical, chemical, and biological properties that determine the suitability of soil for crop production. Students would learn what soil is made out of, i.e. mixture of minerals, water, and air. It also contains organic matter, such as dead leaves and grass. It is generally a combination of clay, silt, and sand, with the majority of its nutrients in the top layer, ranging from six to ten inches deep. Students would get to learn what chemicals farmers use in their fertilizers and how they are mixed together. This workshop would be done in a lab, and the students would get to attempt to make their own fertilizer and take it home with them.

**Pest Management:** Students would learn to identify and classify life cycles of economically important insects that are found on the farm. The students would get to look at the different types of pests and learn about pest control methods.

**Organic Farming:** Students would learn the difference of standard farming and organic farming. Students would learn the advantages and disadvantages to being an organic farmer, and get to bring home organic vegetables to try.

**Chemical Application:** Students would learn the proper application of pesticides and other chemicals that farmers use. Students would learn environmental issues and potential problems that come with applying chemicals to soil. Students would learn the different health and safety precautions that come with chemical application.

**Biology:** Programs would include workshops of the veterinary skills of farmers, how farmers take care of their animals, genetic manipulation of plants and animals, and learn to solve irrigation and drainage problems. A local farmer would assist all biology workshops:

- Students would analyze the responses of the animals to the environment.
- Human health issues of working on a farm.
- How viruses affect plants and animals.
- Water chemistry and how it impacts the life process.
- How genetic variation, reproductive strategies, and environmental pressures impact the survival of plants and animals.
- Genetic variation and mutation and the emergence of new species

### **Non-Academic Subject Areas**

**Farming and Food:** Students get an inside view of the work involved in planting, harvesting, storing and eating food on a historic farm. Interpreters emphasize planning and preservation in the food ways programs, and encourages student involvement. This program is recommended for all age levels.

**Daily Life:** Concentrates on the daily lives and work of the historic farm families, and changes seasonally, allowing students an in-depth view of each family's life during different seasons. The focus is enjoyable for all age groups and is especially well suited to groups composed of a wide range of ages and to first time visitors.

**Tools:** Students observe and try their hands at using historic farm and household tools. Historic uses and modern evolution of tools are stressed, and staff regularly allow students to help in cooking, gardening, and field-work. This program is suitable for all ages.

**Animals and Farm Chores:** This program is for pre-school up to 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Students will get to meet and in some cases pet the farm animals at the museum. Students will learn

why animals are raised on the farm and the chores children and farmers have to do in order to raise these animals.

Family and Social Customs: Students learn about the roles played by everyone in a family in a time period long ago. Children's and adult's roles in the family are examined, as well as some family, social folklore, and tradition. This program is for k-2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

### **Outreach Programs for High School Students**

These are special programs for school groups who would like to broaden and enhance the Park field trip experience. The Park would offer a variety of programs for different areas of the high school curriculum that are SOL compatible. The programs would last an hour to an hour and half and take place in the Park itself and/or outside in the field. The programs would require a minimum of 15 children and a maximum of 65. The Park is limited in the number of enhanced programs offered per day and are offered on a first come first serve basis. All programs would be accompanied by a tour of the Park in relation to what they are studying. There will be a fee for the tour of the Park and any of the programs.

At any point in the year teachers could schedule to have a certain time of the farm to perform experiments to apply farming into their daily lessons. The teacher would need to call two weeks in advance to secure a time and place where they want to teach. There would be a small fee for the use of the facilities. Any student participating in a science fair can use the facilities to assist in their project. There would not be a fee for students participating in the science fairs, instead the student would be asked to volunteer on the farm for five hours a week for as long as they intend to use the park's resources.

### **How Can the Local Colleges Benefit from the Park?**

Local colleges such as Radford University, Virginia Tech, and New River Community College can help in designing workshops for the museum. Departments of all areas can provide students with internships and volunteer opportunities in all areas. The major internship possibly is for the student to take the area of study that they are focusing on, and come up with an hour-long workshop that they could do for elementary middle, or high school students. They would require to do present the workshop to the museum staff, and a certain amount of workshops during the semester. At the end of the semester the student would be required to present their workshop at the undergraduate forum.

Other internships could include students doing tours for the museum. Tour guides would be required to spend 10 hours a week doing tours for the museum. Other internships could involve curating within the museum and collecting oral histories from farmers in surrounding areas of Montgomery County. All internships would be presented at the undergraduate forum.

## **Educational Tours**

The Farmstead Tour: Costumed staff will enrich groups visiting the Park by providing guided tour of the site.

The Cornbread Tour: Small groups of youngsters have the option of enhancing their visit to the Farm Park with the hands-on Cornbread Tour. As part of their farm visit, the children will work with costumed volunteers as they mix batter and bake cornbread in an open-hearth Dutch oven. While the bread bakes, the youngster's use an old-time churn to turn cream into butter.



The Jack Tales Tour: Features the exploits of a clever mountain boy and some of America's oldest folktales. Suggested text is American Folk Tales and Songs by Richard Chase.

Day on the Farm: Visitors are immersed in the dress, work, and pleasures associated with life on an early 20<sup>th</sup> century farm. Participants work together to cook a meal, bake breads, and prepare desserts with the use of old-time recipes. A regional cookbook will be used as a reference. Depending upon staff and season, other activities may include spinning, weaving, blacksmithing, toy making, broom making, needlework, and livestock care.

## **Educational Workshops**

Animal Breeding and Genetics: This workshop would either be done in a classroom but preferably out in the field. Students would learn the principles of genetics related to improvement of domestic farm animals, estimation of breeding values, and genetic correlations. Students would learn how genetic manipulation of animals help in livestock reproduction, and improvement of meat, dairy, and crop production.

Coming to America: This workshop would address who the early settlers were and why they came to America and to the mountains of Virginia. The program would look at the backgrounds of the people in the community whose ancestors came to America in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and when they came to the Riner area. The Park manager would use artifacts to show the changing life of the people involved in the migration and immigration process. Also shown would be the types of decisions these immigrants had to make about whether or not to come to America and the pros and cons of each.

Riner Oral History Project: This would be a video of the collection of the oral histories in Riner, Virginia. It would show pictures of farms that are presently in Riner as well as past farms that are not longer in operation or cease to exist. Quotes from the audio



recordings will have been done previously and put with the farmers and farms, which belong to them. Other local communities would be invited to share their local history as well.

Agriculture in Virginia: Students would learn about farming in Virginia and how it has changed over the years. They would look at statistical information, such as agriculture is Virginia's largest industry and forms the basis for a number of related enterprises, including food and fiber production, processing, distribution, and marketing. About 20 out of every 100 jobs are held in agriculture. In Virginia, agriculture spans a wide spectrum of activities, from the traditional raising of field crops, vegetables, livestock, and nursery products, to the breeding of commercial horses, the bottling of premium wines, and the growing of fish, or aquaculture. Agriculture has changed dramatically in the past 200 years. When the country was first settled, most people were farmers and grew their own food. But a fundamental change occurred when farm machines when tractors were invented. Farmers could then produce more crops in less time using fewer laborers and could grow more food than they could eat. Agriculture is still changing. Biotechnology is leading us to improved plants and animals. As this technology advances, it will be possible to use plants and animals for specific purposes, such as the production of medicines, and improved genes will render crops that rely less upon chemicals and fertilizers. Like other caretakers of the land, farmers have a keen interest in maintaining healthy soil and water resources through careful stewardship.

Agriculture Today: This program would show how agriculture in Virginia compares to other states. Agriculture remains Virginia's largest industry. There are approximately 47,000 farms in Virginia, averaging 181 acres. (To qualify as a Virginia farm, \$1,000 of farm income must be produced.) Compared to other states, particularly those in the Midwest, Virginia has small farms. In some places in the eastern part of the state farm size is increasing, while in other areas it is on the decline. In addition to traditional production methods, farmers are utilizing modern techniques, such as nutrient management and integrated pest management, to maximize production while minimizing their use of fertilizer and pesticides. Some farmers are using organic production methods in response to increased demand for organically grown food. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is working to determine a uniform definition of food that is organically grown. Regardless of the production method used-traditional, modern, or organic-each has costs and benefits.

Farmer as a Veterinarian: This workshop will be done on the field and a local farmer would assist the Park manager. Students would learn about human-animal interactions, and the responsibility that farmers have to animals. Students would understand the fundamentals of disease process and animal healthcare. The farmer would emphasize disease prevention and control, and the treatment of disease.

Farming During the Great Depression: This workshop would help students understand the role of local farmers during the Great Depression. Park manager would show how American farmers in general and Riner farmers in particular fed all of Europe. Farmers increased production and land use to get as much profit as possible. They stopped

rotating crops and focused only on the crops most needed and profitable. When one crop is grown in one area year after year, that land gets drained of the nutrients the specific plant needs. Crop rotation was previously used to keep nutrients in the soil. No crop rotation, while profitable to the farmer during the war, abused the land. A common feeling of apathy worsened the agricultural depression for the farmers by the Republican Presidents of the twenties. Calvin Coolidge said, "Farmers have never made money. I don't believe we can do much about it," and Herbert Hoover's idea of "rugged individualism" allowed the country to believe that farmers should be able to help themselves.

Feeds and Feeding: A local farmer would explain the principles and practices of livestock feeding. Students would understand nutrient requirements and ration formulation.

International Agriculture and Trade: Students would learn the impact of international trade and the effects of international development on Appalachia. Students would learn what countries farmers currently export meat and dairy products to and the problems that arise in exporting their products.



Rural and Regional Development Policy: Students would look at public policy and programs in rural America. There would be an emphasis on the different types of social programs that help small-scale farmers. They will learn the impact of property taxes, regional growth, and development of the Riner area.

Tractor Displays: Display of tractors used over the years. Discussion of how technology has changed from the early plow to the modern tractor. Students would get to see each tractor and learn how they were used. Tractor manufacturers would be invited to display their modern machinery and farmers would be asked to loan the Park their outdated machinery.

Virginia's Geographic Regions: Students would learn how close farming is to their homes. They would learn where the Blue Ridge Mountains are in relation to where they are from. In the southern part of this region, the land is very hilly and rocky. This land is used primarily for pasture. Many farmers raise beef cattle, dairy cows, horses, and sheep. Moving northerly, the land becomes flatter and conducive to other livestock and crops, such as apple and peach orchards.

What Farmers Do When the Water Dries Up: A local farmer is preferred to assist in this workshop but not required. Drought is a huge problem among farmers, and how they deal with water during these times is very important. This workshop would give students an idea of the principles that farmers apply to water shortages. Students would learn about water management and water conservation.

Wood Shop/Technology Project: Students from woodshop classes or technology classes can help to create and build structures for the park. They can design possible farmhouses, barns, and stalls for the animals.

## **Summary**

As can be seen, many subject areas can be addressed by the use of educational programs at the Park. All age levels will benefit from the educational opportunities of the New River Valley Farm Heritage and Community Park. This chapter listed suggestions that can be molded to fit a particular interest group and specific subjects. With assistance from teachers from the elementary, middle and high school, extension agents, retired persons, farm bureau, extension homemakers, volunteer students, and other interested groups many benefits will be afforded by all educational levels as well as all age groups.

The Riner Community was heavily emphasized in this chapter due to their being the largest area farming community in the Montgomery area. However, any community in Montgomery County could adapt the educational opportunities of the Farm Heritage and Community Park.

Structured community groups will also benefit from the many opportunities of the New River Valley Farm Heritage and Community Park. Groups such as 4-H/FFA, senior citizens such as the AARP, school groups, boy scouts/girl scouts, youth sport recreation groups, church groups, and University student interns just to mention a few.

The opportunity to incorporate agri-tourism in the New River Valley will provide a positive effect on the community because it would raise agricultural awareness for the small farmers. A Farmer's Market will not only add to the revenue of area farmers but also provide fresh produce to the community at large. Entertainment in the form of music, outdoor recreation such as walking trails, and simple camaraderie among friends and neighbors will provide assets to the community that cannot be measured. The Appalachian area in general and specifically the New River Valley communities will benefit in these and many more ways. A five-year plan will enable the community to incorporate even more opportunities.

Other benefits of the New River Valley Farm Heritage and Community Park are the preservation of local farming history. Displays of this history through the use of brochures, maps, pictures, and on-site interpreters can enhance the visitor's awareness of this heritage. Also of benefit would be to dispel stereotypes of the typical farmer. Farmers will be depicted at the site as hard-working, dedicated, loving individuals who farm because of their talent and love of their work. The Park will reflect this scenario.

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## Appendix A

### Agri-tourism Internet Web Sites

Agricultural tourism, or agri-tourism, has become a community and regional effort in many of the farming regions of the United States, Canada, and Britain. There are many interesting internet web sites that provide discussion and examples of what is being done in agri-tourism. Many of these things are low-key ventures and many of the sites contain ideas that could easily be applied to the Farm Heritage and Community Park proposed in this report.

The best advice is to go to the internet and do a search on “Google” for the term “agri-tourism.” This will lead to hundreds of good web sites. The research team’s favorite site was the one offered by the Small Farm Center in California. It provides a wealth of information, ideas, and links. We have included a few pages from the Small Farm Center’s web site in this Appendix, but an examination of the full web site is worth while.

A sample of web sites is provided in the list below.

Small Farm Center, University of California

<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/agritour.html>

This is an excellent source of information on agri-tourism. It has lists of definitions, fact-sheets, publications, etc.

<http://danr.ucop.edu/news/July-Dec1999/agritourism.html>

<http://newfarm.osu.edu/agritourism/agritourismhomepage.html>

<http://www.state.de.us/deptagri/agritour/>

[http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/800/888\\_3.html](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/800/888_3.html)

<http://www.tourism.umn.edu/zAgTour.html>

## **Appendix B**

### **Some Possible Funding Sources**

The following is a list of foundations and various groups that might provide additional funding for the Farm Heritage and Community Park Project.

- Barn Again Program is a program developed to provide counties and groups who wish to develop a heritage park with the funding to renovate barns for heritage park purposes. More information can be found at:  
<http://www.agriculture.com/ba/financial-help.html>
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provides areas with grants yearly for expansion and improvement projects. More information can be found at:  
<http://www.hud.gov/progdsc/cdbgent.cfm>
- Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) is a government run program that helps communities who want to start heritage programs; they offer products, services, and funding programs. More information can be found at:  
<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/>