

inventorying

identifying resources

The phrase “Know thyself” takes on a whole new meaning when a community is thinking of inviting the world to its door. What do you have that others want to experience? How do you find out? What do you want to share with those people from away, and what do you want to hold on to as residents? How do you know if the businesses, attractions, and the cultural heritage resources in your area are ready for visitors? How do you find out? Where do you begin?

Perhaps the best place to start is to understand the goals of the cultural heritage tourism initiative, and decide if they are inline with your vision of growth and economic development. Whether you are a community planning group or a volunteer based organization, you need to know if you can align yourselves with the following **statewide objectives:**

- To increase the enjoyment of Vermont’s cultural heritage resources.
- To significantly strengthen, support, and protect those resources.
- To increase the impact of our cultural heritage throughout the state.
- To increase the impact of cultural heritage on the state tourism industry.

- To raise community awareness of its resources.
- To provide a perspective on the character of everyday Vermont life.
- To present Vermont’s cultural heritage to visitors through memorable activities that educate and entertain without compromising the integrity of the location/site.
- To fully integrate cultural heritage issues into the economic development planning of the state.

The first step in accomplishing the above tasks, is to identify your resources.

guidelines for identifying resources

It cannot be said often enough, that cultural heritage resources contribute to a unique sense of place, and help define a particular locality or region. What then, do you have? The following list offers some examples of what might constitute a cultural heritage resource.

- Archeological sites
- Art and craft studios
- Barns
- Battlefields
- Birthplaces of significant individuals or events
- Bridges
- Cemeteries
- Churches
- Colleges, Universities, Schools
- Downtowns
- Farms
- Galleries
- Heritage trails
- Historic districts/markers
- Historic landscape/views
- Historic structures and settlements
- Individuals
- Industrial and/or commercial buildings
- Mills
- Museums
- National Historic Landmarks
- Neighborhoods
- Parks
- Performing Arts
- Public gardens
- Public sites (post offices, libraries, town halls, etc.)
- Quarries
- Scenic and historic highways
- State or National Register listed properties
- Villages

Cultural heritage events can also be a community asset, and may include:

- Art shows
- Auctions
- Community suppers
- Community celebrations (Old Home Days, etc.)
- Fairs
- Festivals
- Historic reenactment
- House and garden tours
- Open studio events
- Openings and exhibitions
- Performances (music, theater, dance, etc.)

You might also want to think of your community in terms of its historical context, and see if that brings to mind any other assets you would not have otherwise recognized. The following themes, identified by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, may help:

- Native/pre-history
- Contact/early settlement
- Agriculture
- Historic Architecture
- Culture
- Government
- Transportation
- Industry and Commerce
- Tourism
- War and Peace

developing inventories

Once you have identified those entities in your community that constitute a cultural heritage resource, you can document them. Creating an inventory of what is available will accomplish several tasks. First and foremost, the process will help raise awareness of your assets. Decisions on what you want to offer the general public can be made based on that information. Knowing where the weaknesses are can also be helpful. For example, are there adequate public restrooms? What about places to eat, sleep and shop? Do the publications that already exist in your region list the appropriate resources? It is important to catalog not just the cultural heritage resources, but to recognize all of those places that give your community its special character. It is also imperative that a mechanism for identifying sacred places within the community—those sites not to be shared with the outside world—is part of the process from the very beginning.

There are several ways to develop a good inventory. An assessment team can be created. Local individuals, under predetermined leadership, can collect information on all the divergent components of the community. The two major questions to be addressed at this juncture are “Who will be in charge/take responsibility for this monumental effort?” and “What groups should members of that team be working with to complete the inventory?” Some possibilities are: Regional Marketing Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, University of Vermont Extension, business groups, craft organizations, arts organizations, historical societies, tourism groups, or agricultural groups. Other potential stakeholders might include: museums, galleries, regional planners, merchant associations, tour operators, community organizations, etc.



Ethan Allen Homestead, Burlington, courtesy of the Ethan Allen Homestead Museum.

sustainable tourism inventory list

The following list, and the questions contained therein, were developed by the Vermont Arts Council (www.vermontartscouncil.org) in 1997 to assist communities as they begin to inventory and assess resources related to sustainable tourism. It has been slightly modified, as the cultural heritage component has been previously addressed.

hospitality industry

PLACES TO SLEEP

Bed & Breakfasts
Campgrounds
Group Meeting Sites
Rental Properties
Farm Guests
Hostels
Hotels
Lodges/Inns
Motels
RV Spaces

PLACES TO EAT

Fast Food
Coffee Houses/Shops
Fine Dining Establishments
Pubs/Bars
Diners
Family Restaurants

PLACES TO SHOP

Antique Stores
Bakeries
Bookstores (esp. those offering works by local authors)
Camera Stores or Stores offering Camera Supplies
Clothing Establishments/Outlets
Drug Stores
Fitness Centers
General Stores
Grocery Stores
Places to buy product of local artists/craftspeople/musicians
Specialty Stores
Sporting Goods (including rentals)

community involvement

Is there a way of keeping the community aware of cultural heritage tourism initiatives? Do residents know as much as visitors do about the resources and unique aspects you are trying to promote?

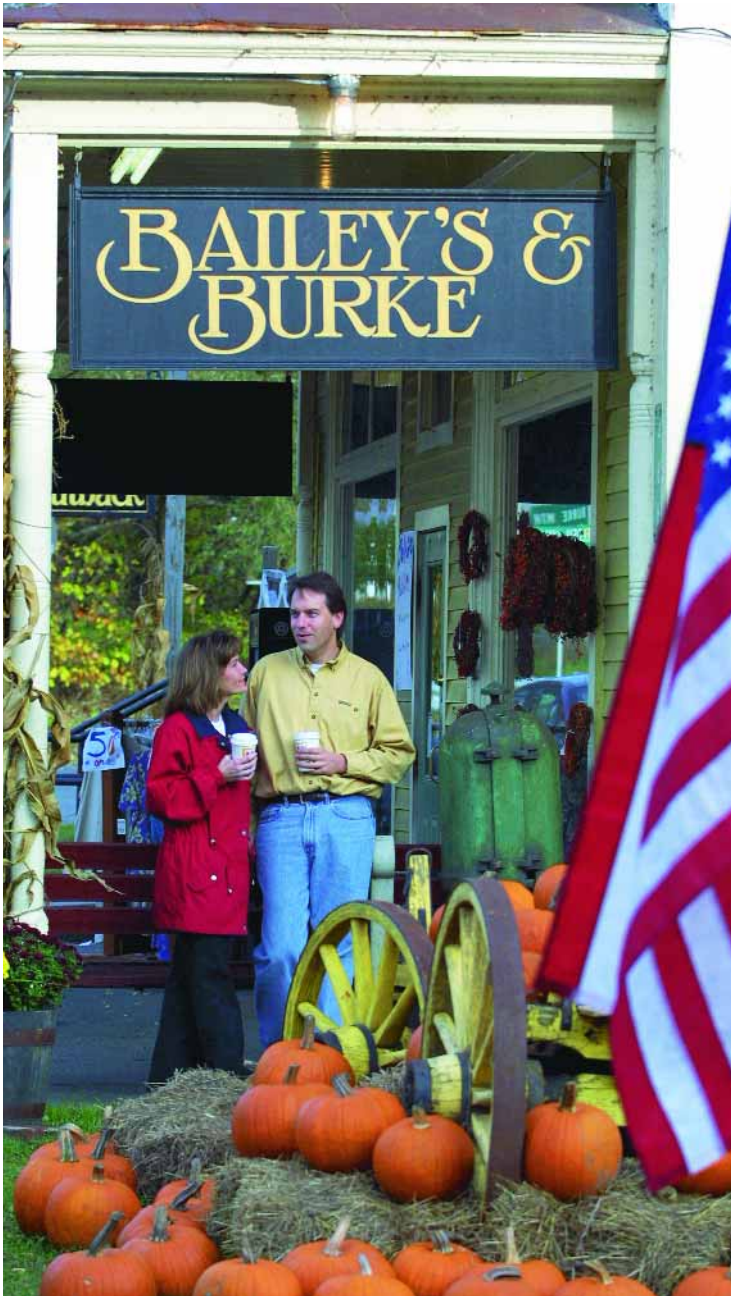
WHAT SOME COMMUNITIES HAVE DONE

- Community Education Series—lectures, newspaper articles, radio commentaries, talk shows, speakers bureau, etc?
- “First Impressions” Programs—consider general appearance, convenience for the visitor
- Front Desk Resource Notebooks
- Local Open Houses
- Support from Town or City Government

marketing and public relations

What currently exists for marketing/public relations? Who is responsible for it? Where can resources be pooled? What markets are being reached? Is there a research component built in to track effectiveness?

Brochures	Videos/Slide Shows
Calendars	Trade Shows
Direct Mail	TV
Print	Websites
Maps	Word of mouth
Posters and Signs	Press Releases
Radio	Events
Referrals	



East Burke, courtesy of the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, photo by Dennis Curran.

infrastructure

CONSIDER GENERAL APPEARANCE,
CONVENIENCE FOR VISITOR, ETC.

- Welcome Centers
- Public Restrooms
- Public Telephones (cellular reception)
- Kiosks
- Benches
- Picnic Areas
- Park/Town Green
- Visitor Parking (and is it adequate?)
- Signage/Wayfinding
- Banks (ATM)
- Foreign Exchange Capacity
- Foreign Language Interpreters
- Gas Station/Auto Repair
- Emergency Services
- Public Transportation (within your community and as a means to reach your community)
- Laundromats
- Post Offices/Mailing Centers
- Step on Guides

resources

DO ANY OF THESE EXIST FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?

Driving Tours	Media/Press
Walking Tours	Publications
Internet Home Page	Recreational Maps
800#	People visitors can meet
Artists/Performers	



a jump start

One quick way of getting a handle on how an inventory can work, and on enjoying the benefits of having a list of assets you want to share, is by engaging in this simple exercise. Give yourself no more than ten minutes to answer the following questions.

CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM BRAINSTORMING

Identify for visitors, within 20 miles of your home base:

- Historic Inns and restaurants
- Museums and galleries open to the public
- Other places of cultural/historic interest
- Appealing Village and Town Centers
- Themes, or periods of local importance
- Local incidents, or local figures whose stories are of particular interest
- Events/entertainment/festivals
- Craftspeople/artists/musicians
- Guidebooks and historic resources available to the visitor

Finished? Save your answers. We will put them to good use shortly

Simon Pearce Glassworks, Quechee, courtesy of the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, photo by Dennis Curran.

resources

Vermont Arts Council. *Sustainable Tourism Inventory List*. 1997.
Cultural Heritage Tourism Standards and Guidelines. 2000, revised 6/2003.