Northeast Kingdom
Caledonia, Essex and Orleans Counties

CREATIVE ZONE SNAPSHOT

About the Zone

Creative Sector

Creative Jobs

Creative Segments

CREATIVE ZONE IN DEPTH

Claims to Fame

Segment Size & Growth

Employment Types

#1 growth in extended proprietorships or part-time creative entrepreneurs

#1 growth in specialty foods & performing arts

#1 zone for design jobs

NEMBAFest mountain bike festival in the Northeast Kingdom. Photo: Catamount Arts

CreateVT Action Plan  |  AUGUST 2021
CREATIVE ZONE ASSESSMENT

Strengths

- Strong culture, network and systems for collaboration
- Strong ties between local food clusters, recreation economy and creative sector
- Culture of resilience and independence
- Highest rate of growth statewide in Performing Arts (40%) and Specialty Foods (147%)
- Strong cross-sector collaboration and regional planning work, including Tri-Sector Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan
- Strong brand and economy around farm and forest industries, literary arts, and performances
- History of collaboration across borders, with New Hampshire and Canada
- Priority for funding and support through federal economic development designations and programs

Challenges

- Decline in Visual Arts & Fine Crafts jobs, Culture & Heritage, and Design (the largest segment, with a 12% decline from 2010-2018)
- Lowest income and education rates (and highest poverty rates) in the state
- Region is remote and disconnected from the rest of Vermont and from population centers

Needs

- Short-term relief funding and support and long-term investment funds for the creative economy
- Increasing winter activities and economic attractions
- Revitalizing and developing co-working, maker, performance and production spaces to increase collaboration, communication and cross-pollination within creative sector
- General regional economic development and livability, including affordable housing, childcare, education and workforce training, and broadband accessibility
- Expanding services and business development resources to micro-enterprises and self-employed
- Increasing connections between creative, outdoor recreation, and farm/food sectors

Plans, Programs & Studies

- NEK Recovery Action Plan (2020)
- Building on a Legacy of Creativity: Understanding and Expanding the Creative Economy of the Northeast Kingdom (2018)
- NVEDD Economic Development Strategy (2016)

CREATIVE ZONE FUTURE

Key Support Organizations

- Burklyn Arts Council
- Center for an Agricultural Economy
- Northeast Kingdom Collaborative
- Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- Northern Vermont University—Lyndon
- Sterling College

Current Priorities *(From CreateVT ZoneJam notes)*

- Increasing and building connections within the zone
- COVID-19 recovery and support

Key Activities

- Programs: Creative sector study (2018)