

Renovation and Upgrade of Visitor Facilities along the Virginia Route 311 Corridor

Craig County, Virginia
TIGER II Grant Proposal
July, 2010

I. Overview of Project¹

Route 311 is the north-south route through Craig County and an integral tourism corridor between the Roanoke Valley in Virginia and the Greenbrier Valley in West Virginia. The corridor provides direct access to the Jefferson National Forest, the George Washington National Forest, and a host of tourism sites in Giles County, Virginia and Monroe County, West Virginia. With the opening of the casino and expanded facilities at the Greenbrier Resort,

The Virginia Route 311 Visitor Facilities Renovation and Upgrade project is designed to create a visitor-oriented scenic corridor through Craig County and encourage the expansion of the local tourism economy. Given the relatively small, sparse population (15 people per square mile) in Craig County, the development of new small businesses is dependent on the influx of visitors from neighboring areas, most notably the Roanoke and New River Valleys. Increased visitor rates means an increase in both direct spending and indirect fiscal benefits, most notably through the sales tax. In addition, increased visitor rates represent a boom for farms with agri-tourism operations, which result in substantially higher farm incomes and the increased likelihood that agriculture will remain a thriving, family-based concern.

The project has three distinct elements: 1) Overlooks, Turnouts and Waysides (Sites 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 13); 2) Day Trip and Overnight Destinations (Sites 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, and 12); and 3) Tourism Kiosk Initiative (all sites, with the exception of 3 which includes a visitor's center). Each element contributes to the re-establishment of Route 311 as visitor-based scenic corridor, one that provides tourists, whether local, regional, or out of state, with a unique tourism experience.

1. Overlooks, Turnouts, and Waysides (Sites 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 13)

Driving through Craig County, one would be hard pressed not to notice the magnificent views from Pott's and Peter's Mountains. Unfortunately, the facilities discourage travelers from stopping and enjoying the scenery. First developed in the 1930s, the waysides and overlooks in Craig County have fallen into disrepair. The roadside facilities were originally bordered by 24 inch high stone walls, with stone seating caps that invited visitors to stop, perhaps eat lunch, take pictures, and simply enjoy the view. Now the walls are crumbling, buried by covered by vegetation and trash and in many places the walls have all but disappeared, carried off for use in stone fireplaces. The pavement, where it still exists, is crumbling as well or has been replaced by deeply rutted graveled drives. In addition, there is a safety issue. Travelers avoid taking Route 311 because of the perception that road is not safe. Well tended turnouts increase the perception of safety. Nothing in the roadside facilities invites visitors to stop or to explore Craig County. The air of neglect at many of the facilities in the Route 311 Corridor discourages rather than encourages local tourism, precisely because they are the most visible of facilities.

Expanding the tourism industry and encouraging private enterprise depends on creating an inviting sense of place. Neglected facilities, like broken windows in neighborhoods, have exactly the opposite effect. By upgrading the waysides and overlooks, utilizing the same or similar design features prevalent along the Blue Ridge

¹ Supporting Documents are available online at [Craig County TIGER II Grant Supporting Materials](#).

Parkway, the Route 311 corridor, potentially, can become the primary tourism route between two significant tourism destinations: the Roanoke Valley in Virginia and the Greenbrier Valley in West Virginia. As the local tourism industry expands and matures, Craig County, like points along the Parkway, may become a primary destination as well.

2. Day Trip and Overnight Destinations (Sites 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, and 12)

Whether they are day trip or overnight facilities, the expert trails leading to McAfee's knob and Dragon's Tooth or the novice nature trails at Broad Creek or Steel Bridge, upgrading the destination facilities is key to expanding tourism in Craig County. Each destination has a multiplier effect and significantly contributes to the growth and development of the tourism economy in Craig County. New small businesses, which characterize the majority of tourism-related enterprises, can access start-up funds and operating capital only if they can show that there is sufficient traffic to justify the investment. To a lesser degree, the same is true for farms with agri-tourism features. In order to generate the required traffic levels to make small businesses viable, Craig County needs “day” and “extended-stay” destinations. The National Forests provide these destinations, but like other facilities along the Rt. 311 Corridor, they have suffered from benign neglect. Upgrading the facilities and creating visual continuity between the “destination facilities” and the “roadside facilities” helps to create a “visitor experience” that will encourage multiple use by the broader regional population.

A visitor may decide to spend time exploring the wetland exhibits and walking the nature trail. The adventure may last a few minutes or a few hours, but the chances are, they are going to spend money in the area. They will purchase drinks and picnic supplies from local stores, stay over night in one of the local bed and breakfasts, purchase souvenirs and local crafts, or eat at a local restaurant. All of their decisions generate funds for the citizens of Craig County and tax revenues for the local coffers. One need only look at the success of Paint Bank for evidence of the generation of tourism dollars from linked tourism assets. Expanding the number of destinations in Craig County means that restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and small retail outlets are likely to see growth in both immediate and future income. Tourism dollars mean local jobs, not only in the direct industries, but also in the ancillary businesses as well.

The proposal includes the redevelopment of six key destinations: 1) Appalachian Trail; 2) Dragon's Tooth Trail Head; 3) Pott's Mountain Shooting Range; 4) Horseshoe Trail Head, trail extension, and Shawvers Run Wilderness Area Access Site; 5) Steel Bridge Day Use Area; and 6) Steel Bridge Campground (Fee for Use).

3. The Visitor Kiosk Initiative

The visitors kiosk initiative is the heart of the Virginia Route 311 Corridor restoration project. The kiosks are a collaborative project between Craig County, the Craig County Tourism Commission, the business and arts communities in Craig County, the Craig County Historical Society, Craig County citizens, the U. S. Forest Service..

Each location will include a three-panel Information kiosk. The kiosks are designed to provide a roadside museum for Craig County: the left panel for natural history and environmental information and the right panel for local history. The center panel will be

used by Craig County to promote local points of interest, including company specific information and a local visitors flyer and map.

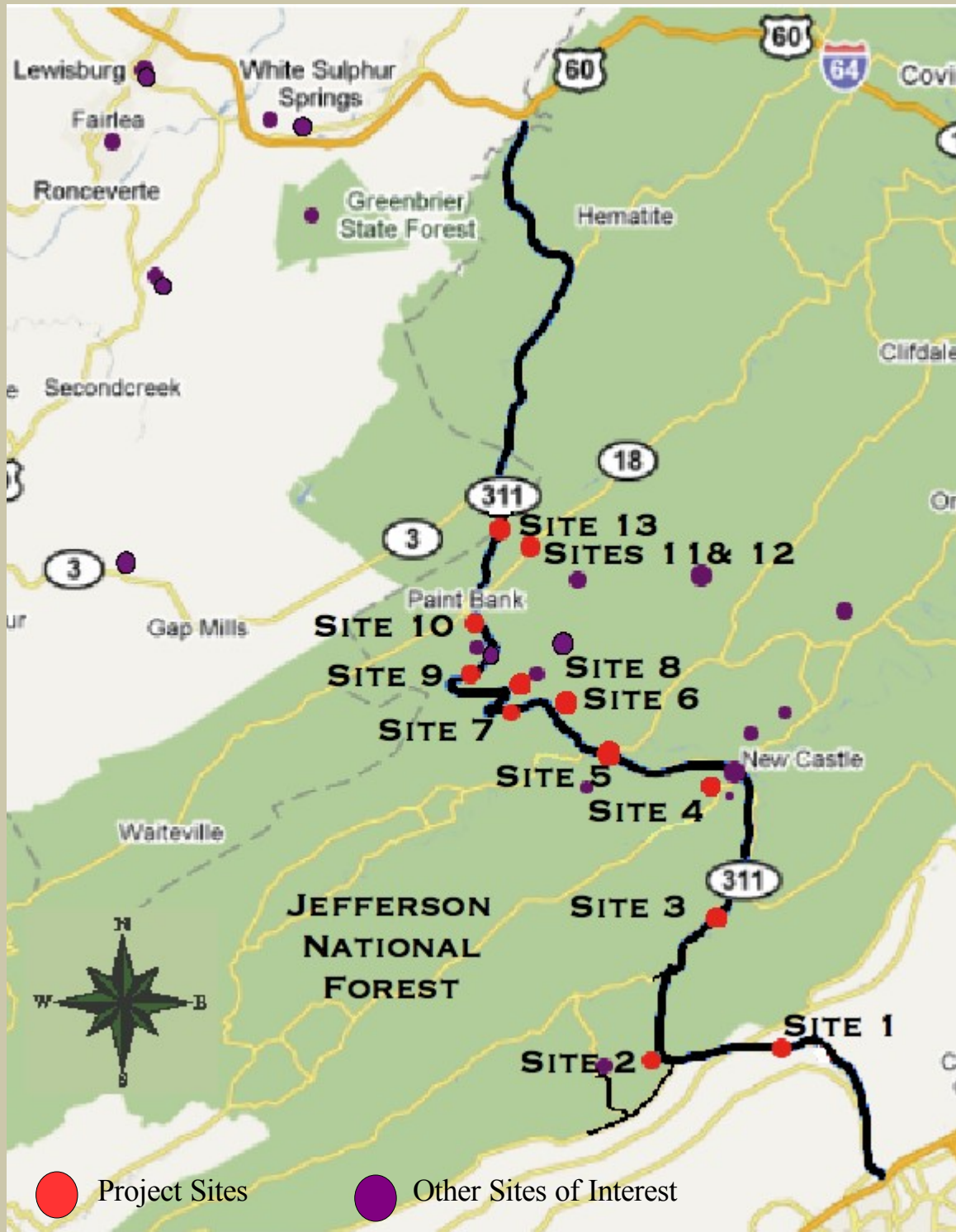
The Kiosks are meant as a starting point in expanding tourism development in Craig County, by promoting agri-tourism, adventure tourism, and historical tourism while encouraging “pass through” visitors to either stop on their way to Roanoke or Greenbrier County, West Virginia and to return on a later trip. It should be noted that the three-panel kiosks have, in fact, six panels if the reverse side of the sign is utilized. The design of the kiosks was chosen because they provide an interpretive, museum element to the scenic byway experience for visitors to Craig County.

Each kiosk will provide information on a different aspect of Craig County's history and natural resources. For example, the kiosk at Paint Bank could include the history of iron and iron mining in Craig County and environs, information on birds common to the area, and literature about sites of local and regional interest, including the new facilities at Glen Alton, in Giles County, and Steel Bridge Day Use Area, northeast of Paint Bank, and private enterprises, such as Pott's Creek Outfitters and Hollow Hills Farm. The kiosks provide local businesses, especially those in adventure-tourism, with direct contact with potential customers.

Once the kiosks are in place, Craig County will work with local farmers and with the US Department of Agriculture to further develop Agri-tourism opportunities, including the development of a wine industry and farm-based bed and breakfasts.



Location of Project Sites: Route 311 Road Side Visitor Facilities



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II. Project Justification

Planning Basis for the Virginia Route 311 Redevelopment Project.

The restoration and redevelopment of the 311 travel facilities and public destinations is supported both by the Craig County Comprehensive Plan and the Roanoke Valley - Alleghany Regional Commission's Regional Economic Strategy, developed by the 5th District Planning Commission and the Regional Alliance.

Craig County Comprehensive Plan: The Craig County Comprehensive Plan² clearly supports projects such as the renovation and upgrade of traveler facilities along the Route 311 corridor, recognizing that the improvements along the corridor will lead to further economic development, strengthen of the agricultural base in Craig County, improve working relations with the U.S. Forest Service, and provide a broader range of recreational and cultural opportunities.

Economic issues dominate the county's comprehensive plan, and the expansion of the tourism sector is a key element, evidenced not only in the economic development section of the goals and objectives, but also in the County's inclusion of a separate tourism and recreation section and their detailed overview of the cultural and natural assets in Craig County. In the economic assessment, included in the introduction to the plan, the county notes that:

Rural communities need compatible economic development and growth guided in ways that will protect and enhance the community's special resources. Craig County has experienced difficulties over the past decade with economic development but is beginning to see an upswing. The County's largest employer, Halmode Apparel, discontinued their operations in Craig County in 1998. Some positive economic developments have happened since then to include the relocation and expansion of Mick or Mack Grocery, opening of Dollar World in New Castle, *development of a number of cottage industries throughout the County*, and the restoration of downtown New Castle business district through the Community Development Block Grant received from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. *Tourism and recreation-based businesses, such as trout ponds, guided horseback trail rides, overnight accommodations, and other similar businesses are also increasing in the County.* [emphasis added.] (21-22)³

A quick scan of the list of major employers in Craig County indicates that the majority of employers, aside from government sector organizations, have fewer than 50 employees, and only four companies had between 20 and 49 employees. Two of the four companies were part of the visitor-based industry: Wilderness Adventures at Eagle Landing and Wilderness Leadership Alliance. In 1999, tourism accounted for 57 jobs and resulted in expenditures of \$2,465,504.00;

2. The [comprehensive plan](#), adopted in 2002, places a strong emphasis on economic development, most notably in terms of tourism, recreation, and agriculture as a driving forces for economic expansion.(Economy, objective #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, and #8; Natural Resources, objective #5 and #7; Agriculture #2 and #3; Recreation & Tourism: #1, #5, #6, #7, #8, and #11); Built Resources, #5 and #6; Transportation, #1).

3 Economic information is included in chapter 5 of the Craig County Comprehensive Plan

by 2008, the number of jobs had decreased to 47 (17.5% decrease in full time employment), but the amount of expenditures rose to \$3,458,634.00, a 40.3% increase in travel-related expenditures. The 2008 numbers do not reflect the growth in indirect employment generated by the expansion of the tourism industry, including increased employment and economic growth in the agricultural sector generated by the expansion of the local market for agricultural goods.

Of the eight objectives included under the Economic Goal for Craig County, four are clearly connected to the expansion of the tourism industry:

2. *Recreation and Tourism represents a significant economic development potential for the County. Facilities to accommodate dispersed recreation and tourism activities should be encouraged to locate at appropriate sites within the County. [emphasis added]*
3. The County, working with the Craig County Tourism Commission, state and federal agencies should explore development of the old C&O railbed from New Castle to Eagle Rock into a multi-use trail facility.
4. *The County should continue its participation in the Commonwealth of Virginia's Scenic Byway Program, in order to attract tourism traffic and spending to the County. [emphasis added]*
5. Development of overnight and weekly accommodations should be encouraged throughout the County in the form of bed & breakfasts, inns, hotels/motels, lodges, and cabins/cottages. Without more overnight accommodations, it will be difficult to effectively tap the tourism market. (50)

In addition, Craig County included a separate recreation and tourism goal, apart from the Economic Development goal, in the comprehensive plan and identified eleven specific objectives, three of which support the renovation and redevelopment of the route 311 corridor:

Goal: To improve the economy of Craig County, provide local job opportunities, and improve the quality of life in Craig County through tourism development and use of our recreational resources.

1. Encourage better marketing and servicing of established recreational activities, such as hunting and fishing to improve the income of local businesses and the County government.
5. The County should continue its participation in the Commonwealth of Virginia's Scenic Byway Program, in order to attract tourism traffic and spending to the County.
11. Development of a visitors' center with restroom facilities and community bulletin board should be pursued by local organizations to include the County.

The emphasis on the Scenic Byway Program in the comprehensive plan (Economy, Objective #4; Recreation & Tourism, Objective #5) and the emphasis on visitor related facilities, including the development of a visitor's center (Recreation and Tourism, Objective #11), suggests that the visual aesthetics and the visitor's experience is important to the development of the tourism economy in Craig County.

The sticking point for development in Craig County, however, is the overall quality of the Route 311 corridor. Virginia Route 311 has been identified as a hinderance to development in

Craig County. In the the section of the plan addressing existing transportation issues, the County observed that “one of the largest stumbling blocks to economic development in Craig County is its isolation from neighboring communities, the nearby urban areas, and Interstate 81” created in large part by nature of Route 311, which is characterized as a relatively narrow “two-lane highway winding through mountainous and rolling terrain.” (42) In accordance with the County's comprehensive plan, there have been some improvements to Route 311, including its ongoing designation as a scenic byway. Despite the emphasis on scenic byways in the Craig County Comprehensive Plan, the very facilities which contribute to the scenic nature of a corridor and provide visitors with direct access to visual amenities of Craig County have been neglected and too often left to deteriorate.

Regional Economic Strategy . Over the past decade, the Roanoke and New River Valleys have pursued an economic development approach base on the creation of a Knowledge Economy. While many of the jurisdictions in the two planning districts have reaped the rewards from the shift, Craig County continues to struggle. Physically isolated from the mainstream of the region and from the primary transportation corridors, Craig County is not the ideal location for many of the growth industries identified in the regional plan. However, like the New River Valley's Floyd County, which shares similar demographics and natural resources, Craig County has much to contribute to the development of the broader region and provides essential recreational opportunities unavailable in the far more urban Roanoke Valley.

The Regional Alliance and the 5th District Planning District Commission, in the Regional Economic Strategy noted the "lack of lifestyle amenities for knowledge workers" in their assessment of available resources in the Roanoke Valley and concluded that this lack of amenities "negatively affects attraction and retention" of knowledge based businesses and younger knowledge workers. The authors of the Regional Economic Strategy suggested that "packaging and promoting outdoor and cultural amenities" would help "promote [the development of] lifestyle amenities for knowledge workers while preserving the environment and quality of life." The resulting strategies would help "attract and retain knowledge-oriented enterprises and people by using natural resources and quality of life as assets to be marketed while developing amenities that attract/retain knowledge-oriented enterprises and people.”

Craig County has the resources to provide first-rate outdoor recreation and agri- and eco-tourism opportunities for residents in the broader region. The county is dominated by the Jefferson and George Washington National Forests, and the Virginia Route 311 Corridor represents the most direct route from the Roanoke Valley. As the redevelopment of Paint Bank illustrates, the expansion of agri- and eco-tourism opportunities along the 311 Corridor will result in expanded economic opportunity in Craig County, while providing the amenities necessary for developing a knowledge-based economy in both the Roanoke and New River Valleys.

Federal Highway Administration: The development of scenic byways and corridors is clearly in-line with the interests of the Federal Highway Administration. In 2009, the Federal Highway Administration awarded just shy of \$41 million in funds for the development and upgrade of scenic byways, including projects for interpretive signage and kiosks, the construction of waysides and overlooks, visitors centers, and the development of local destinations.⁴ As Federal

⁴ The full list of projects is available from the Federal Highway Administration and is included in a [press release published on October 9, 2009](#).

Highway administrator Victor Mendez noted in his remarks about the expenditures, "I join Secretary LaHood in his commitment to protecting and promoting roads that are American icons... We're proud to help tell each road's unique story." According to the Federal Highway Administration, are "roads designated either locally or nationally as having outstanding scenic, historic, cultural, natural, recreational and archaeological qualities." ([October 9, 2009 Press Release, Federal Highway Administration](#)).

According to the Craig County Comprehensive Plan, three roads in Craig County have been designated as Virginia Byways: Route 311, Route 42, and Route 615. In addition, the Virginia Outdoors Plan has recommended the inclusion of Route 606 in the list of scenic byways, and the U.S. Forest Service is working with the states of Virginia and West Virginia to develop the "Whistle Stop Byway" (Rt. 600) which will extend from Glen Alton, in Giles County, Virginia to Paint Bank, in Craig County, Virginia. In addition, portions of Rt 311, Rt 42, Rt 600, and Rt. 18 (the road passing Steel Bridge Day Use Area and Steel Bridge Campground) are part of the Iron Ore Loop of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. The expansion of the Scenic Byway system in Craig County clearly has significant support at both the local, state, and federal levels, yet part of the system is crumbling due to neglect.

The Broken Window Theory and the 311 Corridor's Current Conditions

In the March, 1982 edition of *The Atlantic Monthly*, James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling posited in an article titled "Broken Windows," that site neglect leads to increased deterioration and a disordered environment. The greater the deterioration, the greater the likelihood that people will avoid the area. As the authors pointed out:

Untended property becomes fair game for people out for fun or plunder, and even for people who ordinarily would not dream of doing such things and who probably consider themselves law-abiding...vandalism can occur anywhere once communal barriers -- the sense of mutual regard and the obligations of civility -- are lowered by actions that seem to signal that "no one cares."...it is not inevitable that serious crime will flourish or violent attacks on strangers will occur. But many residents will think that crime, especially violent crime, is on the rise, and they will modify their behavior accordingly.

Well-maintained facilities increase the likelihood that people will visit or interact with the area. Such is the case with the Route 311 corridor.

In the 1930s, prison labor was used to create much of the 311 corridor, specifically those sections over Peter's and Pott's Mountain's. In addition to building the roads, the prison crews build waysides and overlooks on both mountains. The waysides and overlooks were bordered by stone walls, sidewalks, and curbing, built from local limestone, similar to the facilities along the Blue Ridge Parkway, which was constructed during the same time. The waysides provided travelers with access to the magnificent views along the 311 corridor and offered a respite from driving on a winding road. It is unclear when the sites were last maintained nor is it clear which agency, if any, claimed responsibility for maintenance. The existing overlooks and waysides along the 311 corridor have been unmaintained for nearly 50 years and the lack of maintenance has led to a lack of use of the corridor by outside visitors.

In much the same way as residents learn to avoid the certain neighborhoods, regional residents have learned to avoid Route 311, despite the wealth of opportunities available.

Given that the majority of existing sites were developed using stone, the facilities had relatively long lifespans, but even the most solid of structures left unmaintained will crumble. The lack of maintenance is, perhaps, not surprising. In the intervening decades, as transportation priorities shifted from the smaller “Blue Highways” to the four-lane arterial routes like Virginia Route 220 and Interstate-81, the smaller, older, and less efficient roads were shifted to the bottom of the maintenance list. Roadside amenities, especially in low population areas, took a backseat to more pressing concerns. The same is true for U.S. Forest Service facilities. While all three of the primary facilities are in moderately good conditions, the USFS maintained wayside on Pott's Mountain is in similar shape to the other facilities of the same type.

The upgrade of highway related facilities and the designation of highways as scenic byways has a significant impact on the creation of local entrepreneurial opportunities in the tourism sector. Paint Bank, Virginia is a case in point.

Redevelopment of Paint Bank: A Case Study.

Paint Bank, Virginia, a small crossroads community, is located in the Pott's Creek Valley, at the intersection of Rt. 600 and Rt 311 and the intersection of Rt. 18 and Rt. 311. Once a thriving iron mining community, Paint Bank fell into disrepair after the Iron Mines closed and the American chestnut blight wiped out the valley's primary cash crop.

In 1995, John and Nancy Mulheren, the owners of the Hollow Hills Farm, which specializes in breeding and marketing American buffalo, expanded their operations. Over the past fifteen years, they have rehabilitated the local railroad depot, a two-story general store, and an old mill, and in the process have created five additional businesses, employing 30 people during the peak season and 20 people year-round. According to the manager, Mikell Ellison, The Paint Bank General Store had 200,000 cash register sales in the past year, and the adjoining restaurant, The Swinging Bridge, served 60,000 meals. The majority of their customers come from the Roanoke and New River Valleys. While relatively isolated, located at the northern end of the Route 311 corridor in Craig County, their business has thrived and continues to grow. The facilities at Paint Bank, including the Depot Inn, a bed and breakfast, the Swinging Bridge Restaurant, the Paint Bank General Store, Tingler's Mill, and Pott's Creek Outfitters provide the range of outdoor and cultural experiences necessary for expanding the knowledge economy in the Roanoke and New River Valleys.

The development of the Hollow Hills Farm provided not only additional local full-time jobs for agricultural labor, it resulted in a rapid rise in the rate of pay for farm labor. The US Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Census supports her assertions. In 1997, farm hands made an average annual wage of \$14,500; by 2007, the annual salary had climbed to \$20,400, a 40.69% increase in wages and the number of full-time workers had increased 150% despite the overall downturn in the economy.

In addition, the development of the Hollow Hills Farm and the opening of the tourism facilities at Paint Bank have signaled a significant resurgence in agriculture and agri-tourism in Craig County. In 2002, prior to the development of the Huffman House at Creekside Farm, a bed and breakfast located on a working farm, and the facilities at Paint Bank, the average income for farms with net gains was \$9,637. In 2007, the average income climbed to \$37,761 per year. The rapid rise in the average income for farms with net gains can be directly attributed to the increase in agri-tourism and eco-tourism in the region and the expansion of tourism hubs, like Paint Bank, which provide additional markets for locally produced agricultural products.

IV. Project Elements and Budget:

Site 1: Appalachian Trail Crossing and Parking Safety Improvements atop Catawba Mountain



Sub-Project Description:

- NEPA Review (environmental consulting firm)
- Construct Catawba Mountain pedestrian bridge to provide safe passage for hikers over Virginia Route 311 . The bridge would replace the current at-grade crossing on the Appalachian Trail.
- Resurface with eco-pavers the existing 65 space parking lot and add granite curb for each space.
- Construct stone walls and landscape site.
- Construct a three panel information kiosk.
 - Panel 1: Appalachian Trail Information
 - Panel 2: Local Visitor Information (Virginia Highlands Tourism)
 - Panel 3: Local History Information.

Sub-Project Justification: Crossing Virginia Route 311 has posed a safety risk for many years, primarily due to the lack of sight distance, the rate of speed, and the increased level of vehicular traffic. While residential growth in the Catawba area has grown over the past 20 years, the population expansion in the Town of Blacksburg and in surrounding areas of Montgomery County to the west have increased the use pattern on Route 311. Between 1990 and 2009, traffic levels increased 61%, yet Appalachian Trail users continue to traverse Route 311 at grade. In addition, the parking area is on the west side of Rt. 311 and one of the trail's most visited sites overlooking the Roanoke Valley, McAfee's Knob, is on the east side of the route, requiring visitors, including those with children, to cross Route 311 on foot. The addition of a foot bridge across 311 will provide safer access and encourage greater usage of the trail facilities in the Roanoke Valley and surrounding areas, as well as providing a safer route for thru-users.

Sub-Project Budget (Site 1)

Surfacing and Wheel Stops for existing 65 spot parking area.....	126,000.00
Appalachian Trail Bridge Crossing & Approach Ramps.....	1,600,000.00
Informational Kiosk.....	22,000.00
Eco pavers & granite curb.....	115,000.00
Patio & picnic table.....	17,000.00
sign plan.....	8,000.00
project coordination.....	120,000.00
Total.....	2,008,000.00

Sub-Project Partners: Virginia Department of Transportation, National Park Service, US Forest Service, Engineering Firm, Craig County Tourism, Roanoke AT Club, AT Conservancy.

Site 2: Dragon’s Tooth Trailhead and USDA Entry Portal



Sub-Project Description:

- NEPA Review (Environmental Consulting Firm)
- Construct a new entrance and bridge and remove existing entrance; restore the slope where the current entrance exists;
- Resurface with eco-pavers the existing 45 space parking lot and add granite curb for each space.; Install 200' stone seat wall and landscaping;
- Construct a Dragon's Tooth Day Use Sign at the Rt. 311 entrance to improve signage;
- Add a stone patio with a two table picnic area above the parking area; and
- Construct a three-panel information kiosk:
 - Panel 1: US Forest Service Information (Natural History)
 - Panel 2: Local Visitor Information (Virginia Highlands Tourism; Craig County Tourism)
 - Panel 3: Local History Panel (Catawba History; Craig County Historical Society)

Sub-Project Justification: While the US Forest Service recently added a restroom to the site, the drive connecting the parking area to Virginia Route 311 is steep and prone to erosion and washboarding. In addition, the slope of the drive precludes use by some vehicles. The project would replace the existing drive with a more accessible drive paralleling the main parking facility. A small bridge is necessary for crossing a intermittent drainage area. The parking lot improvements provide visual continuity with the other sites included in the project, while mitigating potential runoff and increasing site accessibility for visitors with mobility impairments.

Sub-Project Budget

Removal of Old Drive and Slope Restoration.....	45,000.00
Entrance Drive Bridge and Entrance Drive.....	850,000.00
Eco-paving & granite curb, existing 40 space parking area.....	87,000.00
Addition of 200’ L.F. Stone Seat Walls and Landscaping.....	104,000.00
Informational Kiosk and Dragon's Tooth Marker.....	24,500.00
Patio & Picnic Area (2 tables).....	17,000.00
Total.....	1,127,500.00

Sub-Project Partners: U.S. Forest Service, Craig County Tourism, Craig County Historical Society

Site 3: Broad Run/ Craig Creek Wayside Park& Welcome Center

Sub-Project Description:

- NEPA Review (Environmental Consulting Firm)
- Purchase and mitigation of existing an old gas station and adjoining property at the confluence of Broad Run and Craig's Creek.
- Rehabilitation of existing log structure for use as a welcome and wetland/nature education center
- Construction of interpretive trail;
- Repave of existing parking lot utilizing eco-pavers and granite curbs.
- Construction of 4 to 6 table picnic area,
- Construction of stone seat wall.

Sub-Project Justification: The development of a new wayside park will provide travelers with needed services, including restroom facilities, will provide Craig County with a much needed welcome center and community park adjacent to Route 311. The Broad Run Trading Post is an unutilized and deteriorating property that currently poses an environmental hazard due to underground fuel tanks. Trash from the business is scattered around the existing property. Both the trash and the fuel tanks pose a risk to the surface and ground water quality at the confluence of Broad Run and Craig's Creek. In addition, the rehabilitation of the property will encourage the rehabilitation of surrounding properties and add to the scenic quality of southern Craig County. The removal of the existing parking lot surface and resurfacing utilizing eco-pavers will help mitigate run-off. The inclusion of the stone walls and granite curbs will provide visual continuity with the project.

Sub-Project Budget:

Purchase of Broad Run Trading Post Property.....	1,000,000.00
Brownfield Mitigation.....	120,000.00
Onsite Welcome and Nature Interpretive Center (rehabilitation of existing building).....	400,000.00
Parking Lot with Eco-Pavers.....	85,000.00
Interpretive Trail (Wetlands).....	100,000.00
Stone seat wall.....	104,000.00
Picnic Area, 4 to 6 tables.....	34,000.00
Total.....	1,843,000.00

Sub-Project Partners: Craig County, Craig County Tourism, Craig County Historical Society, Craig County High School, U.S. Forest Service (consulting), Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Virginia Department of Wildlife and Inland Fisheries.

Site 4: Craig Creek Valley Overlook (Route 42)

Sub-Project Description:

- Categorical Exclusion form
- Remaining restoration of existing overlook,
- Milling, grading, and surfacing of overlook
- Restoration of Existing patio, curbing and single table site
- Construction of three-panel information kiosk
 - Panel 1: Craig County Natural History (Craig County Historical Society & Craig County High School)
 - Panel 2: Local Visitor Information (Craig County Tourism)
 - Panel 3: Craig County History (Craig County Historical Society)



Sub-Project Justification: The Craig Creek Valley Overlook on Route 42, just west of the junction of Rt. 42 and Rt. 311 was partially reconstructed by Craig County and the local Boy Scouts, working with a Master Stonemason. The overlooks provide a place for drivers to stop, rest, and stretch, as well as enjoy the view. Of the three existing overlooks and one existing wayside in Craig County, the site on Rt. 42, due to the efforts of the Boy Scouts and Craig County, is in significantly better condition than the other three sites. Currently, the stone seat wall has been rebuilt; however pavement, sidewalk, curbing, and small picnic patio have been left untouched, as has the landscaped island. The proposed work completes the rehabilitation of the site. Craig County is proposing to work with the industrial arts program through Craig County High School and a master carpenter to construct the information kiosk.

Sub-Project Budget:

Milling, Grading, and Surfacing of Overlook.....	18,000.00
Restoration of Patio, Curbing, and Table Site.....	12,000.00
Informational Kiosk.....	22,000.00
Total.....	52,000.00

Sub-Project Partners: Craig County, Craig County Tourism, Craig County Historical Society, Craig County High School, Craig County Chapter of Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs.

Site 5: John's Creek Wayside

Sub-Project Description:

- NEPA Review (VDoT)
- Redevelopment of parking area
- Construction of a patio and picnic area
- Construction of stone seat wall
- Construction of small fishing platform

- Landscape slope
- Construct three-panel information kiosk
 - Panel 1: Local Natural History (USFS)
 - Panel 2: Local Visitor Information (Craig County Tourism)
 - Panel 3: Local History (Craig County Historical Society)



Sub-Project Justification. The John's Creek Wayside is adaptive reuse of an abandoned roadway left over after the construction of a new bridge across John's Creek on the west side of Rt. 311. Currently, the site is being used as a fishing access point. The parking portion of the site is in reasonably good condition. A stone patio and picnic area will provide visitors with fishing access to John's Creek without having to trespass on private property. Landscaping, created in partnership with the Craig County Chapter of the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs and local landscape firms, will help mitigate any run-off from the site. The stone wall flanking the fishing platform and patio area will replace the existing metal bar and will provide visual continuity.

Sub-Project Cost.

Parking Area.....	6,500.00
Patio, Curbing, and Table Site.....	12,000.00
Stone Seat Wall.....	12,000.00
3-Panel Information Kiosk.....	22,000.00
Fishing Platform.....	24,500.00
Landscaping.....	6,000.00
Total.....	83,000.00

Sub-Project Partners: Virginia Department of Transportation, Craig County, Craig County Tourism, Craig County Historical Society, Craig County Chapter of the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, and Craig County High School.

Site 6: Pott's Slope Shooting Range:

Sub-Project Description:

- Categorical Exclusion Form
- Resurface road and parking facility and re-stripe
- Rehabilitate information kiosk and replace plexiglass cover
- Add new signage at Rt. 311 entrance

Sub-Project Justification. Hunting represents, historically, one of the significant adventure-tourism attractions in Craig County, and the Pott's Slope Shooting Range is heavily used in the weeks leading up to and during hunting season. In addition, the Pott's Mountain Shooting Range, while not well known outside of the hunting community, provides an excellent location for target shooters in the Roanoke Valley because of the range's relatively close proximity. The pavement

is clearly showing signs of stress and wear and needs to be upgraded. A panel-kiosk, providing users with information about hunting in Craig County and the National Forests already exists, but the plexiglass covers are scratched and make reading the information difficult.

Sub-Project Budget

Add new signage (stone base) on Route 311.....	5,000.00
Rehabilitation of Sign, New Plexiglass.....	1,200.00
Resurface of Entrance Road and Parking and add markings.....	250,000.00
Total.....	256,200.00

Sub-Project Partners: U.S. Forest Service.

Site 7: Pott’s Mountain East CCC Era Overlook

Sub Project Description:

- Categorical exclusion form
- Restoration of 600' stone seat walls
- Construction of overlook Platform
- Milling, grading, and surfacing of overlook loop road
- Restoration of patio, granite curbing, and picnic area
- Landscaping
- Three-panel Visitor Information Kiosk
 - Panel 1: Natural History/ Environmental Information (USFS)
 - Panel 2: Local Visitor Information (Craig County Tourism)
 - Panel 3: Local History (Craig County Historical Society)

Sub Project: Justification: The Pott's Mountain East Overlook is one of the “broken windows” along the Rt. 311 Corridor. The stone wall has all but disappeared, leaving large gaps. Stones have been removed as souvenirs or as building material by others. Trash and beer bottles litter the ground. An old, concrete picnic table sits at an angle in the center island and the grown up weeds suggest that no one stops, despite the magnificent view, for a picnic or to spend time. Sites like the Pott's Mountain Overlook provide stark evidence of why regional travelers choose the longer route along 220 than the more direct Rt 311 and consider Rt. 311 a dangerous road. The physical evidence suggests otherwise, but like neighborhoods with dilapidated structures, uncared for highways, like neighborhoods, are perceived as dangerous, even if they are not. The renovated site, with significant landscaping, will do much to change the perception of the area.

Sub Project: Budget

Restoration of 600 L.F. Stone Walls.....	150,000.00
Construction of Stone Overlook Platform.....	96,000.00
Milling, Grading and Surfacing of Overlook Loop.....	58,600.00
Restoration of Patio, curb, and Picnic Area.....	45,000.00
Three-Panel Visitor Informational Kiosk.....	22,000.00
Landscaping.....	6,500.00
Total.....	378,100.00

Sub Project Partners: Craig County, Craig County Tourism, Craig County Historical Society; Craig County Chapter of the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs; Craig County High School, U.S. Forest Service, Virginia Department of Transportation (permits).

Site 8: Horseshoe Trail Parking Area & Shawvers Run Wilderness Area:

Sub-Project Description:

- Categorical Exclusion Form
- Construction of 10 space gravel parking area and entrance drive.
- Construction of patio, curbing, and two table picnic site.
- Construction of 30 linear foot stone seat wall.
- Extension of Horseshoe Trail from current location to the top of Pott's Mountain
- Three-Panel Information Kiosk
 - Panel 1: Natural History/ Wilderness Area Information (USFS)
 - Panel 2: Local Tourism Information (Craig County Tourism)
 - Panel 3: Local History (Craig County Historical Society)

Sub-Project Justification: At present, the Horseshoe Trail trailhead is located at a hairpin turn on the east side of Pott's Mountain and the parking area for the trail is located inside the hairpin turn. At one time, the trailhead facility provided a small picnic area, as well as access to the trail; however, the Virginia Department of Transportation determined that the location of the parking facility created a hazard and has not maintained the wayside. The development of a new wayside at the top of Pott's Mountain, on the site of a former commercial establishment long since torn down, and the mile and a half extension of Horseshoe Trail from the existing trailhead to the new wayside will increase both safety and the potential use rates of an existing trail facility. In addition, the wayside will provide an entrance into the Shawver's Run Wilderness Area, although the actual trailhead is approximately three miles east of the intersection on Pott's Mountain Road. Unlike the Appalachian Trail crossing further south, the level of traffic does not warrant more than appropriate signage for the Horseshoe Trail crossing.

Sub-Project Budget

Parking Lot and Entrance Drive.....	54,500.00
Patio, Curbing, and Table Site.....	15,200.00
Stone Seat Wall.....	12,000.00
Reconstruction/ and Extension of Horseshoe Trail.....	105,000.00
Three-Panel Visitor Information Kiosk.....	22,000.00
Total.....	208,700.00

Sub-Project Partners: U.S. Forest Service, Craig County, Craig County Historical Society, Craig County High School.

Site 9 Pott’s Mountain West CCC Era Overlook



Sub-Project Description

- Categorical Exclusion Form
- Restoration of 120 L.F. Stone Walls
- Milling, grading, and surfacing of overlook
- Restoration of patio, curbing, and table site
- Landscaping and view corridor restoration
- Construction of a three-panel informational kiosk
 - Panel 1: Local Natural/Environmental Information (USFS)
 - Panel 2: Local Tourism Information (Craig County Tourism)
 - Panel 3: Local History (Craig County Historical Society)

Sub-Project Justification. The Pott's Mountain East Overlook is in moderate condition. While it does not have the same level of deterioration as the overlook on Peter's Mountain, the facilities are overgrown or buried, sections of the stone seat wall have long since disappeared, and overall the site looks neglected. Route 311 over both Pott's and Peter's Mountains is curvy and provides a challenge for even the best of mountain drivers. Overlooks and waysides, in addition to promoting an appreciation for the area by providing direct access to scenic views, also provide drivers with safe places to pull off the main road in order to rest and stretch. On winding roads, this is especially important, given the lack of safe places to pull off the main highway. The information kiosk provides visitors with information about the locale, so they can put the scenic view in a larger context both environmentally and historically.

Sub-Project Justification

Restoration of 120 L.F. Stone Walls.....	30,000.00
Milling, Grading, and Surfacing of Overlook.....	18,000.00
Restoration of Patio, Curbing, and Table Site.....	12,000.00
Three-Panel Visitor Information Kiosk.....	22,000.00
Landscaping and View Corridor Restoration.....	4,000.00
Total.....	86,000.00

Sub-Project Partners Craig County, Craig County Tourism, Craig County Historical Society, Craig County High School, Craig County Chapter of the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, Virginia Department of Transportation, and U.S. Forest Service.

Site 10: Paint Bank Visitor Information Kiosk



Sub-Project Description:

- Categorical Exclusion Form
- Construction of 10 linear foot stone seat wall
- Construction of patio and curbing
- Construction of Three-Panel Visitor Information Kiosk

- Panel 1: Local Nature Information (Scenic By-way; Virginia Birding & Wildlife Trail, Glen Alton) (USFS)
- Panel 2: Local Visitor Information (Paint Bank Community, Craig County Tourism)
- Panel 3: Local Historical Information (History of Paint Bank): (Paint Bank Community, Craig County Historical Society).

Sub-Project Justification: Paint Bank is the tourism success story in Craig County, in large part because the private efforts of Nancy B. and John Mulheren. Located at the junctions of Rt. 311 and Rt. 600 and Rt .311 and Rt. 18 in the Pott's Creek Valley, Paint Bank is an essential crossroads for visitors entering Craig County, as well as a vital part of Craig County history. The addition of the three-panel kiosk, patio, curbing, and stone seat wall provides visual continuity to the entire project and provides visitors with access to information about the broader region, including the facilities at Steel Bridge, Glen Alton Historic Site, the trailheads for both the Alleghany and the Appalachian Trails the West Virginia portion of Pott's Valley, the Iron Ore Loop of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, and the Whistle Stop Scenic Byway. Expansion of the local tourism industry will lead to the further preservation of historic structures in Paint Bank.

Sub-Project Budget

Stone Seat Wall, 10 L.F.....	2,500.00
Patio and curbing.....	8,500.00
Paint Bank Information Kiosk.....	22,000.00
Total.....	33,000.00

Sub-Project Partners: Craig County, Paint Bank Community, Craig County Historical Society, Craig County High School, Virginia Department of Transportation, U.S Forest Service.

Site 11 Steel Bridge Day Use Area

Sub-Project Description:

- NEPA Review (U.S. Forest Service)
- Upgrade of existing entrance and parking area
- Reconstruction of 8' width steel bridge on old bridge site across Pott's Creek.
- Redevelopment of loop trail
- Construction of a vault Toilet
- Development of Picnic Area and construction of a 6-10 table pavilion.
- Construction of a three-panel visitor information kiosk



Sub-Project Justification. After the removal of the original bridge for safety reasons, the south side of Pott's Creek at Steel Bridge has been inaccessible to the public, including fishermen. The same is true for the trail system and the primitive campground. Restoration of the day use area will decrease the visitor impact on the Steel Bridge Campground and allow the Forest Service to shift the Campground from free to a hosted fee-for-use facility, while providing sports fishermen, white-water canoeists, and other visitors direct access to Pott's Creek and the recreational opportunities.

Sub-Project Budget

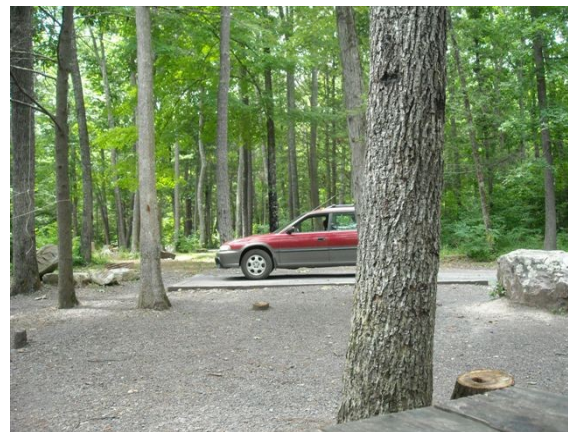
Entrance and parking area.....	37,800.00
8' width steel bridge on old bridge site.....	350,000.00
Redevelopment of loop trail as self guided nature tour.....	128,300.00
Visitor Information Kiosk.....	22,000.00
1 Vault Toilet.....	36,000.00
Picnic Area (6-10 table pavilion).....	225,000.00
Total.....	799,100.00

Sub-Project Partners: U.S. Forest Service, Craig County, and Craig County Tourism.

Site 12 Steel Bridge Campground

Sub-Project Description

- NEPA Reviews (U.S. Forest Service)
- Convert Steel Bridge Campground from a free facility to a hosted fee-for-use facility.
- Improve and upgrade the entrance
- Stabilize and landscaping the stream bank
- Upgrade of existing campsites
- Construct two Vault Toilets
- Pave the road to minimize impact on Pott's Creek



Sub-Project Justification. The upgrade of the Steel Bridge Campground will allow the U.S. Forest Service to shift the facility from free to fee-for-use, mitigating past use problems which can and have had an impact on campground users and on the environment. Due to the presence of the James River Spiny Mussel in Pott's Creek, paving the road through the campground, upgrading the campsites, installing vault toilets, and stabilizing the stream bank will lower the impact of sediment runoff from the campground and adjacent facilities and maintain stream quality.

Sub-Project Budget

Entrance Drive Improvements.....	52,400.00
Stream Bank Stabilization and Landscaping.....	22,400.00
Upgrade of existing campsites.....	162,500.00
2Vault Toilets.....	72,000.00
Hard Surface Road.....	278,300.00
Total:.....	587,300.00

Project Partners: U.S. Forest Service, Craig County.

Site 13 Peter's Mountain West CCC Era Overlook



Sub-Project Description:

- Restoration of 120 L.F. Stone Walls
- Milling, Grading, and Surfacing of Overlook
- Restoration of Patio, Curbing, and Table Site
- Landscaping and View Corridor Restoration
- Visitor Informational Kiosk
 - Panel 1: Craig County, Virginia (Craig County Tourism)
 - Panel 2: Local Tourism Information (Craig County Tourism; Monroe County Tourism)
 - Panel 3: Monroe County, West Virginia (Monroe County Tourism)

Sub-Project Justification: The Peter's Mountain overlook is divided by the Virginia/ West Virginia border. Due to its location, the overlook has not been maintained on either side of the border, and is covered in trash and debris. The stone walls have crumbled, with only short sections obscured by overgrowth providing any evidence that the site is an official pullover. The only evidence of official use is the two-sided historic highway marker in the island separating the overlook drive and the main highway. The deterioration at this site is far greater than the other sites in Craig County, yet the site is the entry point not only for Craig County, but also for Virginia. Given the importance of waysides, overlooks, and turnouts in mountainous areas, the site should be one of the first to be completed.

Sub-Project Budget:

Restoration of 120 L.F. Stone Walls, with access gate.....	120,000.00
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Milling, Grading, and Surfacing of Overlook.....	36,000.00
Restoration of Patio, Curbing, and Table Site.....	12,000.00
Informational Kiosk.....	22,000.00
Landscaping and View Corridor Restoration.....	27,000.00
Total.....	217,000.00

Sub-Project Partners. Craig County, Monroe County, Craig County Historical Society, Craig County High School, Craig County Chapter of the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs,

Miscellaneous Comprehensive Items

Miscellaneous Comprehensive Items: Description

Graphics Package: The panels for the kiosks will be designed using a infuse acrylic method which holds up well to vandalism and weather. Panels are 4 square feet each and run \$275.00 per panel for production costs. On average, there are 16 panels per kiosk.

Planning, Consultant Fees, and Project Management. The costs assume that the full project will take a minimum of two years and potentially three. Project management costs will run roughly \$100,000.00 per year. This figure does not include engineering, management, and review costs or the cost of an environmental firm to complete the required NEPA reviews.

Engineering, Management, and Review Costs. Three of the sites will require significant engineering costs: Site 1, Site 2, and Site 11. Two of the sites will require lesser costs, but will still require engineering services: Site 7 and Site 3.

NEPA: Rather than doing each of the thirteen sites separately, the project proposes hiring an outside environmental analysis firm to complete the NEPA reviews for all of the sites that are classified as categorically excluded, as excluded by the U.S. Forest Service and the Virginia Department of Transportation, primarily the existing overlooks and waysides. Construction will start first on the sites with categorical exemptions while the environmental engineers evaluate the remaining sties.

Miscellaneous Comprehensive Items Budget

Graphics Package for 10 Kiosks and Associated 311 Brochure.....	81,000.00
Replacement Exhibits (2 sets each site).....	88,000.00
Planning, Consultants Fees, and Project Management.....	267,000.00
Engineering, Management, and Review Costs.....	350,860.00
NEPA Review Costs (all sites).....	350,000.00
Total.....	1,136,860.00

TOTAL IMPROVEMENTS.....\$8,815,760.00

V. Project Partners

Primary Project Partners

1. Craig County, Virginia Government. (Lead Agency)

- Provide project management and oversight;
- Institute and manage rfp process for contractors and consultants, where applicable;
- Coordinate with other applicable agencies and organizations;
- Work with engineering & design firm on design standards for waysides, overlooks, and
- Work with local contractors on projects, where applicable;
- Oversee NEPA Review, where applicable; and
- Maintain project records and reports.

2. United States Forest Service.

- Oversee projects on U.S. Forest Service lands, in partnership with Craig County, including applicable NEPA reviews (Sites 2, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12)
- Assist Craig County and the Craig County Tourism Commission on the design of the visitor information kiosks and visitor's center (Site 3)
- Work with local contractors on projects, where applicable.
- Work with engineering firm, the Virginia Department of Transportation, the National Park Service, and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy on the Catawba site (Site 1)

3. Virginia Department of Transportation

- Oversee VDOT project: John's Creek Wayside (Site 5)
- Assist with design standards for overlooks, waysides, and turnouts.

Secondary Project Partners.

1. **Craig County Tourism Commission:** Work with the U.S. Forest Service and the Craig County Historical Society to design visitor information kiosks and Craig County Route 311 tourism map and brochure. (Sites 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,13).
2. **Craig County Historical Society:** Work with U.S. Forest and the Craig County Tourism Commission to design visitor information kiosks. (Sites 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,13).
3. **Monroe County (West Virginia).** Work with Craig County Tourism Commission on visitor information kiosk on West Virginia/Virginia line (Site 13)
4. **Craig County High School.** Work with master builders to construct visitor information kiosks and master stonemasons to construct stone seat walls at each of the overlooks and waysides (possible apprenticeship program). (Sites 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,13).
5. **Craig County Chapter of the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs.** Construction of gardens at each of the waysides and overlooks.(Sites 3,4,5,7,8,9,13).
6. **Paint Bank Community.** Work with Craig County Tourism Commission, U.S. Forest Service, and Craig County Historical Society on Paint Bank Kiosk and site (Site 10).
7. **Appalachian Trail Conservancy.** Work with U.S. Forest Service, Virginia Department of Transportation, Roanoke AT Club, and consultants on AT Trailhead. (Site 1).
8. **Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.** Consulting on brownfield restoration (Site 3)
9. **Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.** Consulting on brownfield restoration (Site 3)