

Tourism Strategic Plan

Officially Adopted by:
Carroll County Board of Supervisors
##-##-####



Contents

Background	1
Background – Development of this Plan.....	1
Background – Acknowledgments.....	1
Background – Past Tourism Efforts.....	2
Situational Analysis.....	5
Situational Analysis – S.W.O.T.....	8
Tourism Mission, Vision & Goals.....	10
Mission Statement.....	10
Vision Statement.....	10
Visioning/Planning.....	10
Participant Quote Excerpts.....	10
Tourism Goals, Objectives, Measures, Targets, & Initiatives/Tasks.....	11
Conclusion.....	16
Appendix.....	i
Performance Measures – Quick Reference Summary.....	ii
Terms & Definitions.....	iii



Background

Background – Development of this Plan

While Carroll County's tourism program consists of applicable staffing, an operating state-certified visitor's center, and a robust marketing effort, the program is in its infancy. For that reason, the Carroll County Tourism Advisory Committee and staff determined that a five-year strategic plan will help guide progress. The assistance of Randall Rose of the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) was secured to facilitate the strategic planning sessions and develop this first tourism plan for Carroll County.

Strategic planning sessions were held on October 15th, November 5th, and December 10th 2008 at the Blue Ridge Plateau Visitors Center. The final draft was reviewed by the Tourism Advisory Board on February 26, 2009. The content of this document is a result of the discussion during those planning sessions.

Background – Acknowledgments

The following members of the Tourism Advisory Committee and tourism staff of Carroll County participated in the planning sessions. Appreciation is expressed to each individual for their time and dedication to the promotion and development of tourism as a viable economic development effort in Carroll County:

Donnie Turner – Director of Tourism, Carroll County

Amanda Bourne – Assistant Director of Tourism, Carroll County

Don Foster – Carroll County Tourism Advisory Committee, Blue Ridge Host, Inc President

Bobby Patterson - Carroll County Tourism Advisory Committee

Willard Gayheart – Carroll County Tourism Advisory Committee

Hughes Burton – Carroll County Tourism Advisory Committee

Randall Rose, Tourism Development Specialist with the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), facilitated the strategic planning process and drafted this document with the assistance and input of the previously listed stakeholders.



Portions of the overall planning process in general are based on a model developed by:
Zelos Inc., PO Box 1300, Midlothian, VA 23113, 877-889-3567, www.zelosinc.com, info@zelosinc.com

Background – Past Tourism Efforts

The economic impact of tourism in Carroll County has steadily increased in recent years, from \$41,442,233 in estimated expenditures in 2003, to an estimated \$ 54,076,055 in 2007 (according to the Virginia Tourism Corporation – www.vatc.org). The significant growth is attributed to past measures taken by county officials to support tourism development efforts. The following milestones attributed to that growth: (See Table below)

County of Carroll

Meals and Transient Occupancy Tax

Prepared by the CC Treasurer's Office

<u>FY 2007</u>	<u>Lodging Tax</u>	<u>Interstate Lodging Tax</u>	<u>Meals Tax</u>	<u>Interstate Meals Tax</u>
Jul-06	3,541.60	31,086.94	11,113.59	33,541.92
Aug-06	10,028.42	33,730.78	11,325.42	29,126.82
Sep-06	5,362.11	19,270.30	10,592.63	26,498.80
Oct-06	6,636.41	37,548.55	10,733.19	24,974.22
Nov-06	3,418.83	20,532.05	8,836.47	24,360.19
Dec-06	2,638.70	11,354.03	9,867.45	31,314.21
Jan-07	1,820.22	14,211.01	6,408.63	19,195.68
Feb-07	1,977.38	12,594.25	7,241.71	19,096.42
Mar-07	3,982.52	28,474.60	8,642.25	25,223.03
Apr-07	4,481.62	29,207.07	9,917.58	27,855.56
May-07	5,135.51	28,114.99	11,095.69	27,234.92
Jun-07	6,665.96	31,356.50	11,202.62	31,453.64
<u>FY 2008</u>				
Jul-07	7,853.06	29,291.16	12,169.66	33,343.09
Aug-07	9,531.52	40,573.79	11,325.89	32,088.88
Sep-07	5,388.05	27,085.96	12,722.32	28,497.17
Oct-07	6,772.74	37,850.84	11,243.22	26,105.63
Nov-07	3,320.10	13,153.48	7,712.62	25,445.50
Dec-07	2,746.51			

		18,315.42	6,690.88	29,996.09
Jan-08	1,787.73	17,788.14	5,635.35	19,200.27
Feb-08	1,839.00	10,529.44	6,244.96	23,504.62
Mar-08	3,629.98	28,318.22	7,177.50	25,221.14
Apr-08	4,105.83	25,347.64	8,115.34	22,170.59
May-08	5,514.70	27,888.41	9,628.46	31,407.89
Jun-08	6,374.68	28,033.78	9,015.54	32,586.05

FY 2009

Jul-08	7,692.83	33,161.62	10,220.89	33,806.58
Aug-08	9,718.71	39,994.05	11,223.85	31,491.12
Sep-08	4,583.19	18,859.34	9,151.00	28,238.13
Oct-08	6,402.45	34,905.12	10,109.94	28,082.67
Nov-08	3,099.10	14,235.47	7,532.55	29,164.67
Dec-08	2,116.66	22,858.23	6,225.74	25,920.39
Jan-09	1,149.46	11,086.97	5,501.12	20,938.95
Feb-09	2,370.46	13,782.34	4,270.08	19,149.21

October 2004 -Office of Tourism and an applicable budget were established
 -First Director of Tourism hired

April 2005 -Occupancy tax increased from 2% - 5% (with increase income
 dedicated to tourism)

Background – Tourism Policy / Organization Structure

The Carroll County Office of Tourism currently has a staff of two full-time and three part-time employees. The Director of Tourism and Visitor Center Manager are full time positions, while the Travel Counselor positions are part-time. The Tourism Director reports to the County Administrator. The Visitor Center Manager reports to the Tourism Director and the part-time employees report to Visitor Center Manager. There are two seasonal part time positions from April 1st through September 30th at the Crooked Creek Fee Fishing Concessions. All seasonal workers report to the Director and Manager. The current Tourism Director, Donnie Turner was hired November 1st 2005. The current Visitor Center Manager was hired December 15th 2005. The Visitor Center became a state certified local/regional visitor center on March 1st 2008.

The Tourism Office received guidance from the Tourism Advisory Board. The Board Members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors, one from each of the five different districts in Carroll

County. The Board meets at least quarterly to discuss and provide input regarding all tourism efforts.

The operating policies and procedures used by the Tourism Office are the same as the overall Policies and Procedures Manual used by all Carroll County employees.

Background – Marketing Analysis & Promotion Strategies

At the time of the development of this plan, Carroll County's tourism marketing and advertising efforts included the following:

Advertising

- Local radio and local newspapers for upcoming events, co-sponsoring events, news releases etc.
- Promotional brochure – distributed at state welcome centers, local/regional visitors centers
- Virginia Travel Guide
- Web & Internet Marketing

Marketing Partners/Memberships

- The Blue Ridge Travel Association
- The Blue Ridge Parkway Association
- The Blue Ridge Host, Inc
- The Galax Carroll Grayson Chamber and The Carroll Chamber
- The Town of Hillsville
- Cascade Highlands
- The Crooked Road
- Round the Mountain
- The Shenandoah Travel Association
- The Virginia Parks Recreation and Tourism Society
- The Virginia Horse Council
- The New River Round Table
- Southeast Tourism Society
- The Blue Ridge Parkway Directory
- Virginia Association of Convention Center Bureaus (VACVB)
- Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- Virginia State Parks
- City of Galax

Other Marketing Efforts

- Operation of state certified local/regional visitor center "The Blue Ridge Plateau Regional Visitor Center".
- Blue Ridge Host Visitor Center



Situational Analysis

As an important component of the planning process, discussion participants conducted a Situational Analysis of tourism to help determine the goals and objectives of this plan. The process included the determination of current tourism assets, target customers, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Situational Analysis – Premier Tourism Assets

Following is a list of the determined premier assets for Carroll County, which are the assets that are most likely to be featured in advertising and promotion. A complete inventory of all tourism assets in Carroll County will be completed separately and will be available as a supplement to this plan.

Local

- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Golf Courses
- Agri-tourism Venues
- Scenery (Blue Ridge Mountains, Pastoral Countryside, Scenery, Serenity)
- Blue Ridge Music Center / Other Music Venues
- New River/New River Trail
- Crooked Creek Wildlife Management Area
- Carroll County Courthouse (Historic Building, Tragedy Story)
- Sydna Allen Home
- Carter House

- Crooked Road
- Hiking Trails
- Culture/Lifestyle “America’s Front Porch”
- Wineries
- Carroll County Historical Museum
- The Devil’s Den Nature Preserve
- Crooked Creek Equine/Recreational Trail
- Southwest Virginia Mountain Warbler Trails
- The Devil’s Den Nature Preserve

Regional

- Appalachian Trail
- Fairy Stone State Park
- Sports Venues (Virginia Tech, NASCAR, Tournaments, etc.)
- Rex Theatre
- Buffalo Mountain
- Mount Rogers
- Virginia Highlands Trail
- Mount Airy (Mayberry-Andy Griffith)
- Wineries (Chateau Morrisette, West Wind, Davis Valley)
- Equestrian Trails
- Grayson Highlands State Park
- Hungry Mother State Park
- Hanging Rock State Park
- Primland Resort



Situational Analysis – Tourism Infrastructure

Motel/Hotel	Rooms	Occupancy Percentage
Interstate 77 - Exit14		
Red Carpet Inn	40	65%
Best Western	48	60%
Comfort Inn	54	60%
Fairfield Inn	78	55%
Hampton Inn	86	65%
Holiday Inn Express	81	60%
Knob Hill Motel	19	65%
Super 8	68	50%
Total Rooms at Exit	464	
Interstate 77 - Exit 8		
Country View	25	40%
Days Inn	60	60%
Lakeview	22	50%
Mountain Top	22	50%
Total Number of Rooms	129	

There are also 30-plus Bed and Breakfast, Inns, Cottages, and Cabins that offer a wide variety of amenities for a total of more than 600 rooms.

Carroll County also offers many RV and campgrounds experiences ranging from very basic camping to exclusive RV resorts.

Carroll County has a wide array of dining options offering anything from franchise dining opportunities to unique locally owned dining experiences.

Situational Analysis - Target Customers/Tourists

Following is a list of determined general and specific customer/tourist segments determined as potential target markets for future advertising and marketing of Carroll County as a tourism destination.

While these groups were determined as potential markets by reference of available tourism assets, in-depth research of each potential market should be done to determine the feasible segments of tourist markets to engage based on marketing and advertising capacity:

By Geography:

- Snow Birds (Canadians/Northern Market)
- North Carolina (Piedmont, Triad, Charlotte)
- Columbia, SC
- Ohio and Midwest Cities
- Pennsylvania
- Florida
- 2-3 Hour Drive From Urban Areas
- International Market (Culture Connection – Scotch-Irish Music)
- Greenville & Spartanburg (Upstate South Carolina)

By Type:

- Motorcycle Riders
- Cyclist
- History Buffs
- Golfers
- Music/Music Heritage Enthusiasts
- Real Estate Searchers
- Farm Experience Market (Corn Maze, Orchard Pickers)
- Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts
- Day Trippers
- Equestrian Enthusiasts
- Urban/City Dwellers
- Baby Boomers, Families
- Those Seeking a Cooler Vacation Environment
- Generation X



Situational Analysis - SWOT

The discussion and identification of SWOT - S (Strengths) W (Weaknesses) O (Opportunities) and T (Threats) was used as a key method in developing this tourism strategic plan for Carroll County. For the most part, Strengths and Weaknesses are internal factors, while Opportunities and Threats are external factors. Goals, Objectives, Targets, Measures, and Initiatives were all determined afterwards, after careful consideration of the SWOT analysis:

Strengths

- Strong Support From Local Government
- Cooperation From Regional Tourism Partners
- Lodging Tax
- Visitor Center
- Hospitality Training Program
- Unique, Friendly, Talented Citizens
- Trails
- Clear Streams
- Unique Music
- Good Tourism Infrastructure (Interstate, Hotels, etc.)
- Building Tourism Network
- Internal Resources
- Restructuring of Tourism Policy

Weaknesses

- General Public's Perception of Tourism (Not Seeing Tourism as Economic Development)
- Lack of Communication with Industry Partners
- Limited Budget
- Lack of Tourism Policy
- Need to Educate Tourism Venue Staff
- Liquor-by-the-Drink needed to Secure Needed Tourism Assets
- Weak Grey Infrastructure Network (Water/Sewer)
- Some Cultural Resistant to Change
- Limited Dining Opportunities
- Limited Entertainment (e.g. Theatre)

Opportunities

- Recreational Complex
- Controlled Growth
- Theatres
- Additional Restaurants
- Geographic Location / Location to Large Populations
- Interstate I-77
- Cultural Resources - Promotion of History, Culture, Arts, Music
- Natural Resources/Attractions – Water, Streams, etc.
- Weather/Climate - Four Seasons
- Promotion of the Court House Tragedy
- Potential Development of Agricultural Center Complex
- Tourism Job Creation, Development, Education

- Tourism Planning

Threats

- Real Estate Sales (Over Development)
- Geographic Distance Between Area Attractions
- Wildlife/Plant Life Diseases
- Negative Impact on Stream and Water Quality.
- Negative Impacts of Industrial Development on Natural/Tourism Assets
- Changes in Local Government (In Regards to Tourism Support)
- Economy / Lower State and Local Travel Revenue
- Lack of Land-Use Management
- Fuel Prices
- Poor Weather Conditions (i.e. Fog, Rain, Snow)
- National Security Threats



Tourism Mission, Vision & Goal

Mission Statement

The Tourism *Mission Statement* for Carroll County is:

To promote and develop tourism in Carroll County while preserving its natural resources. Ensuring and preserving a high quality of life, by including community involvement, economic development, and meeting the needs of our visitors through regional and corporate partnerships.

Vision Statement

The Tourism *Vision Statement* for Carroll County is:

To be a premier world-class destination known for our nationally recognized natural scenic beauty, recreational, agricultural, and cultural/heritage assets. Because of our superior hospitality and opportunities for a unique experience, our tourism development efforts, and our expansion of entrepreneurship opportunities, tourism will be a positive economic asset.



Visioning/Planning

Participant Quote Excerpts:

- Whether you are looking for high adventure, or outdoor experience, or just a relaxing laid back way of life, remembering simpler times, Carroll County has it all
- Asheville, NC, Grand Old Opry Hotel in Nashville, TN (comparative examples)
- America's Front Porch, Cool Climate Golf Destination, Center of the Crooked Road
- Tourism Industry/Staff Ambassadors for the region (everyone cooperatively working to represent tourism in an appropriate way)
- Tourism infrastructure to support Carroll County as a premier tourism destination (infrastructure to draw visitors year round)
- Home grown, homemade, and down to Earth; premier destination for agriculture and recreation of all types
- Recreational Facility (World Class); Meeting Center/Facility

Tourism Goals, Objectives, Measures, Targets, & Initiatives/Tasks

Following are the identified tourism strategic plan goals, objectives and related implementation measures, targets, and initiatives/tasks, as identified by the planning participants. Utilization of the identified measures and targets, and completion of the listed initiatives and tasks, will result in significant progress toward each tourism goal and objective.

Goal 1 - Further enhance our marketing efforts

Objective 1: Develop and enhance our research based advertising and marketing efforts through brand establishment, niche market identification - utilizing coop opportunities locally

Targets & Measures 1:

- (1A) Development of Brand - March 2010 (County Staff)
- (1B) Identification and prioritization of niches - August 2010 (County Staff)
- (1C) Re-evaluate niche segment of marketing plan – Annually (County Staff & Cascade Highlands)
- (1D) Identify research based target markets – December 2011 (County Staff & Cascade Highlands)
- (1E) Increase participation in research based tourism industry trade shows - to six by December 2012 (County Staff)
- (1F) Implement researched based mechanisms
 - Business website statistical information - December 2010, then annually afterwards (Don Foster)
 - Determine current magazine advertising research mechanisms – December 2009 (County Staff)
 - Implement internal advertising/marketing magazine research mechanisms (including consideration of conversion study) – December 2013 (County Staff)

Initiatives & Tasks 1:

- (1A) Completed
- (1B) Will work with Cascade Highlands two state tourism group to hire a private firm to identify niche marketing strategies.
- (1C) Plan annual meeting with Economic Development, Virginia Tourism Corporation and Regional Partners. Follow research patterns information from Virginia Tourism Corporation, Southeast Tourism Society and Cascade Highlands.
- (1D) Will work with Cascade Highlands two state tourism group to hire a private firm to identify niche marketing strategies.
- (1E) Create a schedule for local chambers, Carroll County staff and Galax Tourism to cover travel shows. Use Shenandoah Valley Travel Association and Virginia Tourism Corporation for Co-Op opportunities. Ensure that the Carroll County brochure's is in all partners' possession for shows. (including Carroll's prime venues, Olde Mill Clubs, Blue Ridge Parkway, etc.,)

- (1F) Allocate funds appropriately to ensure the best use of each dollar by partnering with Cascade Highlands, The Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Rocky Knob Group, et al for the best possible data from research studies.

Goal 2 Promote and enhance Homegrown Experiences

Objective 2: Need to establish and coordinate partnerships (e.g. Virginia Cooperative Extension, small communities, etc.) to help identify, increase awareness, and promote current assets and homegrown experiences (i.e. simpler way of life, front porch experience)

Targets & Measures 2:

- (2A) Establish agri-tourism networking – October 2010 and quarterly meetings afterwards (County Staff & Cooperative Extension Agents and Staff)
- (2B) Examine complimentary marketing/promotional efforts (meet with Wanda Urbanska, Frank Levering, Old Mill marketing representatives) – June 2010 (Don Foster & Hughes Burton)
- (2C) Coordinated efforts by inner communities (Cana, Fancy Gap, Hillsville, Galax, Woodlawn, etc.) of overall marketing effort. Enhance participation in the county-wide calendar – June 2013 (County Staff & Tourism Advisory Committee)

Initiatives & Tasks 2:

- (2A) Have semi-annual meetings with the local Virginia Cooperative Extension Office and the Southwest Virginia's Farmers market staff to assist with coordination and communications with existing and potential agri-tourism partners. Attend meeting group and or club meeting related to agriculture and agri-tourism.
- (2B) Coordinate a regional marketing group. Attend other localities Tourism Advisory Board meeting to discuss joint efforts.
- (2C) Encourage members of the community to attend Tourism Advisory Board meetings to coordinate activities, share schedules and become involved with the growing tourism industry.

Goal 3 Capitalize on Recreation

Objective 3: Identify and increase awareness of recreation needs for the community, and the feasibility to create facilities (private versus public venture) to enhance tourism through various events (i.e. sporting events, fairs, festivals, etc.)

Targets & Measures 3:

- (3A) Submit recommendations regarding Carroll County Parks & Recreation proposal – October 2010 (Tourism Advisory Committee)
- (3B) Meet with economic development representatives and other experts, gather applicable data, and determine potential facilities for consideration – December 2010 (Donnie Turner)
- (3C) Potential feasibility study – December 2012 (County Staff & Cascade Highlands)
- (3D) Funding source identification and recommendations– December 2013 (County Staff)

Initiatives & Tasks 3:

(3A-3D) Attend Recreation committee meetings, coordinate joint meetings of the two committees. Encourage communication between public and private recreational groups.

Goal 4 Expand awareness of the positive impact of Tourism

Objective 4: Need for a pro-tourism concerted PR effort (local, state and national outreach) utilizing and distributing a variety of applicable research data

Targets & Measures 4:

- (4A) Ambassador Hospitality training – possible state certified program – June 2011 (County Staff, Wytheville Community College and Virginia Tourism Corporation)
- (4B) Establish relationships/liason with lodging industry – four total relationships by December 2010, six total relationships by June 2011 (County Staff)
- (4C) Increase awareness of the positive economic impact of tourism among public officials by presentations at public meetings – six public meetings per year and ongoing (Tourism Advisory Committee & Elected Officials)
- (4D) Utilize local writers for submission of articles on a national level – six per year, starting June 2010 (Tourism Advisory Committee)
- (4E) Continuing Education (front porch, homegrown experiences, simple life)
 - Webpage, Webinar, Newsletter – October 2010 (County Staff)
 - Meeting – End of 2010 and annually afterwards (County Staff)

Initiatives & Tasks 4:

- (4A) Utilize Crossroads Institute, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Community College and regional partners to create a tourism certification program.
- (4B) Use the Carroll County brochure and Carroll County Tourism web-site with affiliated partner links to demonstrate and encourage relationships to be built amongst the tourism related business within the region. Share marketing data with our local lodging industry executives.
- (4C) Encourage civic groups to invite us to present tourism related information at their meetings.
- (4D) Invite writers to Tourism Advisory board meetings.
- (4E) Create a social marketing network including tourism staff, advisory board members and tourism ambassadors.

Goal 5 Strengthen Tourism Related Partnerships

Objective 5: Enhance communications through various media (i.e. websites, newsletters, calendars, etc.) while encouraging and strengthening positive regional affiliations

Targets & Measures 5:

- (5A) Create quarterly e-newsletter and distribution database – First newsletter by May 2009, 5000 e-mail contacts by December 2013 (County Staff)
- (5B) Evaluate current and potential partnership opportunities, to capitalize on most optimum opportunities - June 2011 (County Staff & Tourism Advisory Committee)
- (5C) Utilize local writers for submission of articles on a regional level – six per year, starting June 2011 (County Staff & Tourism Advisory Committee)
- (5D) Support effort to make Cascade Highlands brand nationally and internationally known as a tourism destination – December 2013 (County Staff & Cascade Highlands Board of Directors)

Initiatives & Tasks:

- (5A) Update Constant Contact with all e-mail leads on-going basis.
- (5B) Collect information and evaluate current and potential partnership opportunities.
- (5C) Invite writers to Tourism Advisory board meetings.
- (5D) Invite Cascade Highlands staff and board to meetings, introduce and share positive impact to local tourism industry partners.

Goal 6 Increase Funding

Objective 6: Build case for funding by identifying and prioritizing all opportunities, and emphasizing the derivative benefits of tourism in general

Targets & Measures 6

- (6A) Gather applicable data – December 2010 (County Staff)
- (6B) Share with local officials and businesses – available for potential businesses - January 2011 (County Staff & Tourism Advisory Committee)
- (6C) Create, support and promote events (i.e. fairs, festivals, sporting events, Blue Ridge Parkway Anniversary, Anniversary of the 2012 Courthouse Tragedy, etc.) - March 2010 (County Staff)
- (6D) Preserve current tourism lodging tax for Carroll County in event of annexation – ongoing (County Staff & Tourism Advisory Committee)
- (6E) Potential attraction tax - December 2013 (County Staff and Tourism Advisory Committee)

Initiatives & Tasks 6:

- (6A) Continue Collecting potential funding opportunity information for both private and public sector. On going communication with Carroll County and Crossroads Institute grant writers and development personnel.

- (6B) Create and maintain a list of potential tourism related business's opportunities and communicate with economic development.
- (6C) Encourage members of the community to attend Tourism Advisory Board meetings to coordinate activities, share schedules and become involved with the growing tourism industry.
- (6D) Communicate the importance of lodging tax to The Town of Hillsville and Carroll County officials on a regular basis.
- (6E) Express the potential opportunities this could have for Carroll County's future.

Goal 7 Broaden Tourism Infrastructure/Amenities

Objective 7: Assessment of current infrastructure/amenities (i.e. meeting facilities, dining, etc.) and identify priorities based on a cost versus return basis

Targets & Measures 7:

- (7A) Identify specific data sources and gather overall infrastructure needs data – December 2012 (County Staff)
- (7B) Identify job and business opportunities to bring in new businesses for economic development – Current through December 2013 (County Staff)
- (7C) Water/Sewer at all county interstate exits – December 2012 (County Staff)
- (7D) Broadband access to all potential sites – December 2013 (County Staff)
- (7E) Relay potential business opportunities to entrepreneurs – December 2013 (County Staff)

Initiatives & Tasks:

- (7A) Update on-going tourism infrastructure files.
- (7B) Create and maintain a list of potential tourism related business's opportunities and communicate with economic development.
- (7C) Assist Public Service Authority in identifying funding sources. Be a solid front when meeting with The Appalachian Regional Commission, Rural Development of the 9th District, Department of Housing and Community Development et al.
- (7D) Communicate with Wired Road staff.
- (7E) Create and maintain a list of potential tourism related business's opportunities and communicate with economic development.

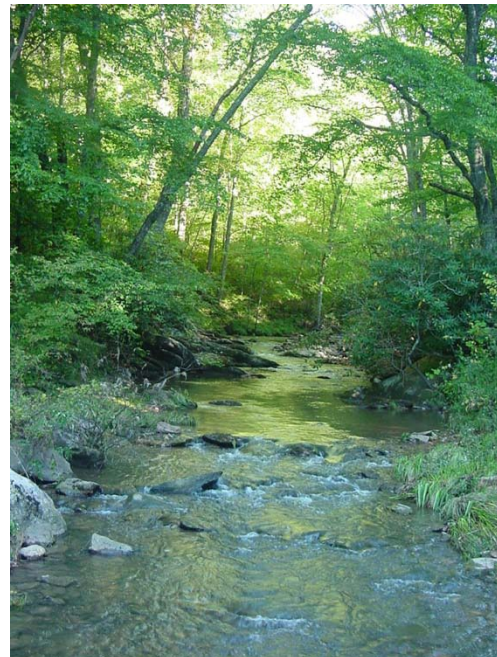
Conclusion

Carroll County recognizes the significance of tourism through its resulting positive economic impact and contributions to the quality of life for area residents. The significant steps taken by County representatives to support tourism and the milestones met prior to the development of this tourism strategic plan serves as evidence of that recognition. This first tourism strategic plan for Carroll County is intended to build upon those initial accomplishments during the next five years.

Officials, staff, and tourism industry representatives from Carroll County will have to take a leadership role in overseeing implementation of this plan. Additional assistance and input from various town officials, tourism organizations, businesses, civic groups, other interested citizens, and the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, will be required as well.

The targets and measures of this plan were determined during the planning process, and will serve as reference for performance evaluation. To encourage progress toward the established targets, this plan should be reviewed by the locality officials and the Tourism Advisory Committee on a monthly basis (from the date of formal adoption of this plan). Upon each review, any adjustments that need to be made to this plan can be discussed. Once a majority of the targets have been met, a new or updated plan may be developed.

Using this five-year plan as guidance, Carroll County is expected to make significant progress toward the development and promotion of tourism. It is imperative that the plan be referenced consistently as any new tourism related discussions occur and as all applicable decisions are made. While new ideas and recommendations should be considered in the future, officials should reference this plan and determine if implementing any new ideas and recommendations is feasible and in accordance with this plan. This document will also serve as a reference piece for tourism entrepreneurs and businesses that are considering locating within Carroll County and should be available for distribution at local economic development offices and other appropriate distribution sites.



Appendix

Performance Measures

Quick Reference Chronological Summary

On-Going	(6D)	Preserve current tourism lodging tax for Carroll County in event of annexation (County Staff & Tourism Advisory Committee)
Bi-Monthly	(4C)	Increase awareness of the positive economic impact of tourism among public officials by presentations at public meetings – six public meetings per year and ongoing (Tourism Advisory Committee)
Annually	(1C)	Reevaluate niche segment of marketing plan (County Staff)
October, 2010	(3A)	Submit recommendations regarding Carroll County Parks & Recreation proposal (Tourism Advisory Committee)
March, 2010	(1A)	Development of Brand (County Staff)
May, 2010	(5A)	Create quarterly e-newsletter and distribution database – First newsletter by March 2009, 5000 e-mail contacts by December 2013 (County Staff)
Oct. 2010	(2A)	Establish agri-tourism networking – April 2009 and quarterly meetings afterwards (County Staff)
Dec. 2010	(1B)	Identification and prioritization of niches (County Staff)
Jun. 2010	(2B)	Examine complimentary marketing/promotional efforts (meet with Wanda Urbanska, Frank Levering, Old Mill marketing representatives) (Don Foster & Hughes Burton)
Jun. 2010	(4D)	Utilize local writers for submission of articles on a national level – six per year, starting June 2009 (Tourism Advisory Committee)
Dec. 2010	(1F)	Business website statistical information - December 2009, then annually afterwards ((Don Foster)
Dec. 2010	(1F)	Determine current magazine advertising research mechanisms (County Staff)
Dec. 2010	(4E)	Continuing Education (front porch, homegrown experiences, simple life) Meeting – End of 2009 and annually afterwards (County Staff)
Jan. 2010	(6C)	Create, support and promote events (i.e. fairs, festivals, sporting events, Blue Ridge Parkway Anniversary, etc.) (County Staff)
Jun. 2010	(5B)	Evaluate current and potential partnership opportunities, to capitalize on most optimum opportunities (County Staff & Tourism Advisory Committee)
Jun. 2010	(5C)	Utilize local writers for submission of articles on a regional level – six per year, starting June 2010 (County Staff & Tourism Advisory Committee)
Oct. 2010	(4E)	Continuing Education (front porch, homegrown experiences, simple life) Webpage, Webinar, Newsletter (County Staff)
Dec. 2010	(1D)	Identify research based target markets (County Staff)

Dec. 2010	(3B)	Meet with economic development representatives and other experts, gather applicable data, and determine potential facilities for consideration (Donnie Turner)
Dec. 2010	(4B)	Establish relationships/liaison with lodging industry – four total relationships by December 2010, six total relationships by June 2011 (County Staff)
Dec. 2010	(6A)	Gather applicable data (County Staff)
Jun. 2011	(4A)	Ambassador Hospitality training – possible state certified program (County Staff)
Jun. 2011	(4B)	Establish relationships/liaison with lodging industry – four total relationships by December 2010, six total relationships by June 2011 (County Staff)
Jan. 2011	(6B)	Share with local officials and businesses – available for potential businesses (County Staff & Tourism Advisory Committee)
Dec. 2012	(1E)	Increase participation in research based tourism industry trade shows – to six by December 2012 (County Staff)
Dec. 2012	(3C)	Potential feasibility study (County Staff)
Dec 2012	(7A)	Identify specific data sources and gather overall infrastructure needs data (County Staff)
Dec. 2012	(7C)	Water/Sewer at all county interstate exits (County Staff)
Jun. 2013	(2C)	Coordinated efforts by inner communities (Cana, Fancy Gap, Hillsville, Galax, Woodlawn, etc.) of overall marketing effort (County Staff & Tourism Advisory Committee)
Dec. 2013	(1F)	Implement internal advertising/marketing magazine research mechanisms (including consideration of conversion study) (County Staff)
Dec. 2013	(3D)	Funding source identification and recommendations (County Staff)
Dec. 2013	(5A)	Create quarterly e-newsletter and distribution database – First newsletter by March 2009, 5000 e-mail contacts by December 2013 (County Staff)
Dec. 2013	(5D)	Support effort to make Cascade Highlands brand nationally and internationally known as a tourism destination (County Staff & Cascade Highlands Board of Directors)
Dec. 2013	(6E)	Potential attraction tax (County Staff and Tourism Advisory Committee)
Dec. 2013	(7B)	Identify job and business opportunities to bring in new businesses for economic development – Current through December 2013 (County Staff)
Dec. 2013	(7D)	Broadband access to all potential sites (County Staff)
Dec. 2013	(7E)	Relay potential business opportunities to entrepreneurs (County Staff)

Terms & Definitions

Goals: Broad statement of measurable outcomes to be achieved on behalf of customers

Initiatives/Tasks: Specific programs, strategies, and activities that will help you meet your performance targets

Measures: Meaningful indicators that assess progress towards accomplishment of goals and objectives

Mission Statement: Statement of purpose; fundamental reason for the tourism effort existence

Objective: Statements of what you must do well or barriers that you must overcome to achieve a specific goal

Opportunities: Factors or situations that exist beyond your organization that may have a favorable effect on it

Strengths: Resources or capabilities that can be used to accomplish your mission

Target: The numerical value of the performance measure you hope to achieve

Target Customers/Tourists: Any person, group, or organization that is believed to have an interest in utilizing your tourism related product(s) and/or service(s)

Threats: Factors or situations that exist beyond your organization that can negatively affect it

Tourism Assets: Any tourism related product, attraction, site, or event that is of interest to target customers/tourists

Vision Statement: A word picture of the future that the organization/tourism effort intends ultimately to become or to influence

Weaknesses: Deficiencies in resources or capabilities that hinder your ability to be successful