

From Monroe Tourism Advisory

11/16/06

The Monroe Tourism Advisory was formed in February of 2005. Its goal is to meet quarterly. Its function is to set direction for the tourism program in Monroe County.

Members of the advisory are:

- Representatives of three tourism-related businesses
 - Representative of the Monroe County Commission
 - Representative of the towns of Union, Alderson and Peterstown
 - Representative of Moncove Lake State Park
 - Representative of George Washington and Jefferson National Forest
 - Representative of Monroe Historic Society
 - Representative of Alderson Main Street
 - Representative of Union Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Representative of Friends of THE Second Creek
 - Representative of Monroe County Farm Bureau
 - Representative of Monroe Arts Alliance
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MONROE COUNTY ASSETS WITH THE POTENTIAL TO DRAW TOURISTS

HISTORY

Names of interesting things which happened in the county's past. These may be "significant" events like a Civil War battle or items of primarily local interest like a ghost story. The aspects of an area's might include: industrial, agricultural, cultural, geological, military, social, settlement patterns, connection to famous people etc. History may be from different periods like the depression, the 60's, pre-Columbus, prehistoric, etc. How did the county begin? What major changes has it gone through? What is there that an outsider might be interested to learn about?

County –

James Monroe, fifth president of the United States presided over a period of time known as the "era of good feeling," because of the lack of fractional quarrels. Monroe County, which was formed in 1799, honors Monroe, but for his contributions before he became president.

Towns –

Peterstown – Named for Christian Peters who helped establish the town along the banks of Rich Creek in 1803.

Union Historic District – First settled in 1774 by James Alexander and established as the county seat in 1799. The historic district is composed of residences, commercial structures, county governmental buildings, two large cemeteries, and the land of part of three historic farms. Walking tour of National Register historic district exhibits several antebellum homes and churches. (NRHP)

Alderson Historic District – Along the banks of the Greenbrier River, Alderson offers a variety of quaint shops, restaurants, and historic architecture. Platted by George Alderson after 1872, there were 60 houses and 400 people by 1877. The arrival of the C& O Railroad did much to shape the town. This district also extends across the river into

Greenbrier County, but the Monroe County side contains the historic commercial business district. (NRHP)

Areas –

Pickaway Rural Historic District – This grouping of 20 farms clustered near the village of Pickaway has a broad selection of buildings dating from the log homes of the 1790s to turn of the century housing. (NRHP)

Lynnside Historic District (Sweet Springs Vicinity) – This district receives its name from the traditional name of the Lewis family house. The large red brick Greek Revival mansion is 1 ½ stories on a raised masonry foundation. It was constructed in 1845 by William Lynn Lewis. The area contains several distinctive out buildings, two wooden timber bridges and a small pond. (NRHP)

Mann-Miller Springfield/Hunter Springs Historical Area – This project, sponsored by the Greenville Ruritan, is planning a historical marker, pavilion, maps and information detailing an area of middle Indian Creek Valley where pioneers settled.

Mineral Spring Resorts –

Red Sulphur – Aside from the village itself, nothing remains of the old spa except for the stone spring enclosure.

Salt Sulphur Springs Historic District – The complex of buildings and spring sites commonly called the Old Salt Sulphur Springs Resort, of “Old Salt,” survives as one of the largest native stone pre-Civil War groupings in West Virginia. Remaining stone buildings include a wing of the hotel, the bath house, spring house, church, and general store. All are in fairly good shape. Many 19th century clientele came to take the “cure,” as the spring waters were commonly believed to possess medicinal benefits. Some notable visitors to the area were: President Van Buren, Governor John Floyd of Virginia, and Jerome N. Bonaparte, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte. (NRHP)

Old Sweet Springs – The first hotel was erected on the site in 1792, making the resort one of the area’s earliest. The brick hotel, cottages, and bathhouse which remain date from the 1830’s. The claim persists that Thomas Jefferson was employed to create the design for the resort complex. District Court proceedings for the counties of Greenbrier, Kanawha, Monroe (after 1799), Botetourt, and Montgomery were held here from 1796 until 1807. (NRHP)

Military Structures or Events –

Cook’s Fort – A marker notes the location of a wooden stockade which reportedly enclosed an area of roughly 1.5 acres. 300 settlers took refuge there in 1778. Nothing remains of the structure itself.

Wood’s Fort – A small stockade fort, and one of several fortifications which were erected in the county prior to the American Revolution. Nothing remains at the location now.

Confederate Soldiers of Monroe County Monument, Union – Plot was donated to the Daughters of the Confederacy in the late 1890’s by a descendant of Hugh Caperton, a congressman from 1813 to 1815. The monument was dedicated in September of 1901.

Grist Mills –

Cook’s Mill (currently called the Old Mill) – Erected in 1857 on the site of the original mill dating to the late 1700’s. Much restoration has been done by the mill’s owners. Not currently open to the public. (NRHP)

McClung's Mill – Moved to its present site in the early 1900's from Craig County, Virginia. The mill was used almost continuously for the grinding of grain through the late 1960's. Not currently open to the public.

Reed's Mill – Located on Second Creek near the Greenbrier County line, portions of the old gristmill building date back to the late 1700's. The mill remains open and functions commercially during limited hours. At one time, there existed 22 grist mills, 4 woolen mills, one powder mill, and many saw and planing mills along Second Creek. (NRHP)

Nickell Homestead and Mill – This Federal farmhouse is estimated to have been built in 1794. Although the family members were primarily farmers, they also operated a grist mill along Second Creek from 1814 to 1949, supplying both Monroe and nearby Greenbrier Counties. (NRHP)

Covered Bridges –

Indian Creek Covered Bridge – Route 219 was built along the course of the old Indian path known as the Seneca Trail, or alternately, The Warrior's Path. The covered bridge was built along the course of the old road in 1898. Present day 219 doesn't vary too greatly from the course of the path used by tribes of the Iroquois Nation. (NRHP)

Laurel Creek Covered Bridge – Built in 1911, this bridge is still in use on Laurel Creek Road, between Lillydale and Greenville, the bridge has the distinction of being the smallest remaining covered bridge in the state of WV. (NRHP)

Churches –

Rehoboth Church, Union – Reported to be the oldest church building in the Virginias, west of the Shenandoah Valley. The small log structure was erected c. 1785. The building remains, though now covered by a protective shed room. Rehobeth's rough-hewn sturdiness and simplicity of style reflect the frontier atmosphere in which the church was built. In 1960, by the action of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, Rehobeth Church was designated one of ten Methodist Shrines in America. A museum is also operated on the site. (NRHP)

First Baptist Church, Union – This 1845 structure is owned and maintained by the Monroe County Historical Society.

Ames-Clair Hall, Union – A restored 1857 African-American church, owned and maintained by the MCHS. Currently used for concerts and community gatherings.

St. John's Catholic Chapel, Sweet Springs – Oldest continuously used Catholic Church in WV, having been erected before 1859 and maybe as early as 1839. It was erected by slave labor and is extremely unique in its construction, particularly the last row of brick before the roof line.

St. Michael's, Salt Sulphur Springs

Marvin Chapel, Willow Bend – Founded about 1869 by Southern sympathizers who broke away from the near-by Dropping Lick Methodist congregation. Currently used as studio by private owner.

Mount Pleasant Presbyterian, Sinks Grove

Trinity Methodist, Pickaway

New Lebanon Associate Reformed Presbyterian, Pickaway – Founded in 1770, the church was the only organized ARP church in WV until another one opened in Fairlea in 1938.

Broad Run Baptist Church--Established in 1853 by some of the counties earliest settlers. (More detailed information can be obtained from Shirley Hancock, the unofficial historian of the church.)

Homes –

Wallace Estill Sr. House – The Estill House is actually two units. The earlier section, is of rubble stone construction and the later is a two-bay clapboard portion, with its own exterior end chimney of stone. The house was built in 1773. (NRHP)

McNeer House (Hope Manor), Salt Sulphur Springs – This frame 2 ½ story Colonial Revival house was built in 1919 by Lewis Caperton McNeer. A notable feature of this house is the unusually large entrance hall that has often been used as a small ballroom. (NRHP)

Spring Valley Farm (Richard Dickson Farm) – Began as a two-story log cabin built by John Knox in the late 1700s. After its purchase in 1834, Richard Dickson extensively enlarged the structure between 1837 and 1841 into a two-story, vernacular, frame house. There are many distinctive farm buildings and structures surrounding the house. The Dickson family, who have farmed this property since 1835, have been among the first to use new and improved farming methods, thereby serving as a model for other farms in Monroe County. (NRHP)

Brigadier General John Echols House – The house in Union was built by John W. Lanus, who owned the property between 1845 and 1848. The Echols family owned the house between 1848 and 1865. The foundation is constructed of native blue limestone and the walls are of handmade brick made in a nearby brick kiln. (NRHP)

Byrnside-Beirne-Johnson House (Willowbrook) – This house stands prominently on a bluff overlooking the Byrnside Branch of Indian Creek. The home incorporates many different eras of Monroe County history. Built as a fortified log house by pioneer James Byrnside in 1770, the structure evolved into a dog-trot style dwelling after an addition in the early 1800's. In the years prior to the Civil War, the house was remodeled in the Gothic Revival style with board and batten siding and a two-story front porch. (NRHP)

Clarence Campbell House (Hillcrest) p This house, constructed between 1907 and 1909, is a large, wood frame 1 ½ story Queen Anne style farmhouse. (NRHP)

William Gaston Caperton, Jr. House (Wyndridge) – This Greek Revival residence was built by William Gaston Caperton, Jr., in 1872. The woodwork is native black walnut cut from the property. There are several adjacent buildings on this property which include two-story 18th century log structures and a late 19th century carriage shed. (NRHP)

Elmwood (Hugh Caperton House) – Hugh Caperton, II, built his two-story c. 1835 Classical Revival style home with hand-made bricks and timber from his land. (NRHP)

Andrew Beirne House (Walnut Grove) - This rambling two-story dwelling evolved over a period of fifty years. The original two-story log house, now enclosed within the north-south wing, was constructed c. 1783 by Michael Erskine, Jr., an early settler. (NRHP)

Maple Lawn, Rich Creek Valley –

Sunset Hill, Flat Mountain Road –

Train Stations -

Alderson Depot – Historic C & O depot (circa 1910) of board and batten construction. Railroad memorabilia and welcome center.

Persons/Families –

Andrew S. Rowan, the Spanish-American war hero who was immortalized in Elbert Hubbard's "A Message to Garcia," called Monroe County home.

Brigadier General John Echols – John Echols was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute and married the daughter of Hugh Caperton. By 1860, Echols had won distinction as a lawyer, orator, and statesman. He was president and director of the Virginia Branch Bank in Union, and was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. He organized the Monroe Guards and served in the Confederate Army in the Stonewall Brigade and eventually attained the rank of Brigadier General. Interested in railroads, Echols induced C.P. Huntington to ride horseback with him over a proposed route, which may have influenced the construction of the C& O Railroad to Huntington, West Virginia. The family moved to Staunton, Virginia in 1865 where they lived until his death in 1896.

Hugh Caperton, II – Served as a Virginia state Legislator and as a Representative to the United States Congress from 1813 to 1815.

Andrew Bierne – A prominent local businessman and politician whose service to the community included building the local grist mill, working on three turnpike commissions, and serving as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates and twice as a United States Congressman.

Jones Family, In 1928, in the town of Peterstown, West Virginia, a father and son set up a game of horseshoes in a vacant lot. It was a game of horseshoes which they will never forget-for during the course of that game they accidentally discovered the "Punch Jones," a thirty-four-carat (34.46-carat) diamond. This family also set the world's record for consecutive male births-- 17 kids--and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt hosted Grover Jones Family Day at the 1939 New York World's Fair.

Joseph Swope; Monroe County's first settler came to Wolfcreek in 1752. Son Michael born 1755 was the first white child born in Monroe County. (and maybe southern West Virginia). Another son Joseph was seized in 1756 by the Shawnee Indians and held captive for 9 years. Swope served in the colonial wars and his sons Joseph, John and Michael served in the American Revolution. Son Joseph is buried in a Wolf Creek cemetery.

Museums and Other Historic Sites –

Monroe County Museum, Union - This headquarters of the Monroe County Historical Society is located in an 1820 brick building which was once the law office of Allen Taylor Caperton, who served as a Senator to the Confederacy and, after the Amnesty Act of 1872, became a Senator to the United States. This building also serves as a depository for the society's archives and provides a seasonal Visitor's Information Center.

Clark-Wiesman House and Owen Neel Houses, Union – Adjacent to the Monroe County Museum, these reconstructed log houses are furnished in period furnishings entirely from Monroe County.

Pickaway School – Site of 1st 4-H Club in West Virginia.

Alderson Bridge – Graceful concrete bridge was erected in 1915. When the bridge was threatened by demolition in 1977, the bridge was preserved through local efforts and was converted to pedestrian use. (NRHP)

RECREATION

List of recreational activities that are or could be done in the area. This could include hunting, fishing, mushroom picking, ginsenging, motor sports, hiking, caving or storytelling etc. Also any recreational features or infrastructure like trails (biking, riding, walking etc.), lakes, dams, rivers, fishing areas, parks, campgrounds etc.

Parks or Management Areas –

Shanklin's Ferry – Location of the old ferry crossing of the New River. Now a part of the Bluestone Wildlife Management Area.

Moncove Lake State Park – The park, in a remote section of the county formerly known as Devil's Hollow, offers fishing, boating, camping, hiking, and picnicking in a serene, peaceful setting.

Conserved Lands –

Slaty Mountain Preserve – Owned by The Nature Conservancy, a national organization which attempts to preserve wild lands world-wide. Area is comprised of a dry hardwood and pine woodland including a globally rare shale barren community. Open year-round for hiking and nature study.

Hiking Trails -

Allegheny Trail – Originating from the Appalachian Trail near Pine Swamp Ridge, this trail follows the crest of Peters Mountain northeastward, beyond Sweet Springs. When completed, the footpath will extend northward through West Virginia, and into Pennsylvania.

Sugar Camp Farm – A part of the Jefferson National Forest, the Groundhog Trail which originates from the farm provides access to the Appalachian Trail. Plans are in the works for a picnic shelter and interpretive trail here.

Appalachian Trail – The famous Maine-to-Georgia footpath follows the crest of Peters Mountain above the farm, making Monroe County one of only two counties in West Virginia which can claim a portion of the Appalachian Trail.

Hunting and Fishing –

Second Creek Fly Fishing – Catch and release fly fishing in an isolated setting, along a little-used country road. Managed by WV Department of Natural Resources.

Potts Creek and South Fork of Potts Creek, Waiteville – Stocked with trout once each month February through May.

Moncove Lake, Gap Mills – 144 acre impoundment provides a warm water fishery for largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish.

Zenith Fee Fishing, Zenith – Customers can angle for citation trout or catfish.

Brewer's Trout Farm, Zenith -

Mountain Meadow, Greenville – Upland bird and trophy whitetail deer hunting preserve situated on 400 acres of beautiful rolling mountain meadows and hardwood forests.

Special attention has been paid to handicapped accessibility with accessible tree stands and rooms in the lodge.

Stoney Brook Plantation – Hunting and fishing in a fabulous, 18,000 acre private setting. Hunts available for deer, wild turkey, ducks, and various upland game birds. Fishing enthusiasts may try their skill on Brook, Brown, and Rainbow Trout, and Small and Largemouth Bass. Lodging and meals available on the premises.

Golfing –

Fountain Springs Golf Course – A recently completed and highly acclaimed 18 hole course, complete with driving range and well appointed clubhouse.

Rock Climbing –

Bozoo Rocks - Bluestone State Park along Mary Ingels trail beside the New River.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

List of the significant physical characteristics of the county and surrounding area - mountains, forests, rivers, swamps, old industrial sites, rock quarries, mines, farms, geographic or physical landmarks etc. What activities one might one do in relationship to these things – explore, learn about, look at or interact with in some other way.

Caves –

Salt peter Caves – Saltpeter was mined from these caverns for the manufacture of gunpowder during the previous century. Wagon ruts are still visible in the dry, undisturbed cave floor. Tours may be available on a limited basis.

Scott Hollow Cave – Recently discovered and still under exploration. Contains a fairly sizeable underground stream known as the Mystic River. Guided primitive cave tours of this extensive system offered.

Divide –

Great Eastern Divide – Monroe is the only WV county which straddles the eastern divide. Rain falling in Sweet Springs Valley east of the divide will eventually empty into the Chesapeake Bay by way of the James River. Rain falling west of the divide finds it's way to the Greenbrier and New Rivers and will reach the Gulf of Mexico through the courses of the Kanawha, Ohio, and Mississippi. Although Peters Mountain still looms high over the valley at the location of the divide, the valley floor here is in excess of 2600 feet above sea level.

SCENERY AND THINGS TO SEE

List of the beautiful scenery in the area. Some possibilities include fall foliage, forests, mountains, a snowy meadow, a vast desert, rock formations, cave interiors etc. There may also be interesting things to see that aren't natural or even beautiful like large industrial projects (dams, strip mines etc.), environmental damage, industries at work (steelmaking, stone quarry etc.).

Vistas –

Hanging Rock Observatory – Situated atop Peters Mountain, the site was once manned as a fire observation post of the Jefferson National Forest. Now used by hawk watchers to observe migrations in the autumn, the vantage point rests at an elevation of 3,812 feet,

nearly 2,000 feet above the valley floors below. The lookout offers an outstanding panorama of Monroe County, and on clear days, can extend well into Mercer, Summers, and Greenbrier counties in West Virginia, and Allegheny, Craig, Roanoke, and Giles counties in Virginia. The observatory is reached via a 40 minute walk along the Allegheny Trail from the mountaintop parking lot along Monroe County 15.

ADVENTURES

List of adventures someone entering your county could go on – climbing a mountain, cross country skiing, exploring an old (or operational) mine, exploring a cave, coon hunting, frog gigging, panning for gold, rafting down a river, touring an old cemetery at night, sleeping in a haunted house etc.

Old Roadways –

Salt Sulphur Turnpike – The old turnpike came into being in the years between 1835 and 1860 as a stagecoach road which connected Christiansburg and the resorts in Montgomery County, Virginia, with Salt Sulphur Springs. (The Mountain Lake Hotel, which was featured in the film *Dirty Dancing*, originally developed as a stagecoach stop along this route.) The present condition of the Peters Mountain section of this old road is probably not that different than it was in the days when it was traveled by stage. Road is presently suitable for high-clearance 4-wheel drive vehicles, hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

Country Roads –

Farm Heritage Road – A West Virginia Scenic Byway (part of the National Scenic Byway System), this road offers a picture of life in rural, agricultural communities which in many ways, retains the character imparted upon it by previous generations. The route encompasses three distinct geographical settings: the quaint winding course of Indian Creek; the gently rolling plateaus of karst farmland; and finally, the picturesque Sweet Spring Valley, nestled alongside the lofty ridge of Peters Mountain in the Appalachian Ridge and Valley region. The push of industry and commercialism has largely by-passed the area, therefore, many old homes, farms, and public buildings remain from throughout the county's 200 year history. Two lane paved road.

Mountain's Shadow Trail – A West Virginia Scenic Backway, this road carries on the same theme and general character as the Farm Heritage Road, though in a slightly more rugged fashion. The farms carved out of these mountain valleys reflect the handiwork of settlers who, by choice or economic necessity, created an existence for themselves in somewhat isolated areas. The variety of the backway is bound together by the tangible presence of Peters Mountain, the 40 mile ridge of which is undoubtedly the county's most notable geographic feature. Although wildlife is abundant throughout the area, it is perhaps even more easily seen along these less traveled roads. One lane paved and narrow gravel.

Wolf Creek Backway – This road winds into karst topography with 18th century settlements -- Wolf Creek, Pickaway and Sinks Grove -- and great farm scenery.

Neff Orchard Road – Cattle and sheep farms and a modern working orchard. A place to rest your eyes wherever you look. Investigate branch roads: Morre Road and Rogers' Mill??? Road where there is catch and release stocked trout fishing on Second Creek.

Bozoo Road – Scenic, rolling farmland en route to the Shanklin's Ferry Wildlife Management Area. Two lane paved, one lane paved, and gravel.

Orchard Road and Hans Creek Road – Rural farmland, and the picturesque valley of Hans Creek. One lane paved roads.

Wayside to Lillydale – This road winds around the southern end of Swope’s Knobs offering nice views back toward Greenville. Route passes through the Laurel Creek covered bridge and to the community of Lillydale. One lane paved, and narrow gravel.

Greenville to Lillydale – Another option for seeing the Laurel Creek Covered Bridge. One lane paved roads.

Pyne’s Mountain Road – There are very few homes along this road, but it is a lovely woodland drive, particularly in autumn. After crossing the mountain, return to Union on Willow Bend Road, passing by scenic, open farmland. Narrow gravel and one and two lane paved.

The Knobs – This road offers spectacular views to the north and east as you descend the mountain toward Sinks Grove. Once off the mountain, the route offers a chance to admire the farmland around Pickaway, a WV Rural Historic District. Or, the longer loop may be taken, which passes by Morgan Orchard and the gravel road descending to the Second Creek Fly Fishing area. Steep one land paved, reasonable\y wide gravel, normal one lane paved, and two lane paved.

Gates Road – This drive offers nice views of the range of Little Mountain and the lofty ridge of Peters Mountain beyond. One lane paved, gravel, and two lane paved.

Hillsdale – Attractive rolling farm country. Nice views of the Pickaway plains and Swopes Knobs.

Cove Creek Road – An interesting, and fairly short trip through a secluded valley. One lane paved.

Potts Valley – This road crosses Peters Mountain; passing by the parking lot for the Allegheny Trail and the Hanging Rock Observatory, then descends into Potts Valley. Views are extensive to the north and south on either side of the mountaintop, particularly after foliage has been shed in the fall. One lane paved and two lane paved.

Turkey Creek Road – The route is mostly wooded as it passes through the range of Little Mountain, then the countryside opens up a bit as one enters the rolling hill country near Willow Bend and Union. The stream crossed twice by the road is the upper portion of Turkey Creek; one of the few streams in the state where native Rainbow Trout are known to spawn. Road is narrow gravel, and one and two lane paved.

ATMOSPHERE

What is the atmosphere of the area like? How is the atmosphere different than other places? Contrast it to a place like New York City or Japan. Are there things that people from those areas would find interesting or different or a refreshing change?

The inhabitants of this farming county in the southeastern corner of West Virginia have been living in harmony with the land since the late 1700’s. The practice of agriculture was the driving force in the early days of Monroe County’s economy, and remains a significant part of the lives of many Monroe Countians to this day.

When asked what sets Monroe County apart and makes it unique, residents listed:

- 1) Beautiful
- 2) Quaint
- 3) Historic

- 4) Artistic
- 5) Friendly
- 6) Rural
- 7) Agricultural

Organizations working to preserve and protect the working landscapes and viewsheds –

Indian Creek Conservancy
 Indian Creek Watershed Association
 Monroe County Farmland Protection Board
 Nature Conservancy

EVENTS

List of fairs, festivals and other events or activities in the area. Most of the time in rural areas these events tend to be community activities that basically draw residents from within a 50 mile radius. Do any of these events have the potential to be developed to the point of drawing people from outside the area (i.e. would someone drive over 50 miles to attend)? This category could also include things like plays, outdoor dramas, historical reenactments, festivals, flea markets, hunting and fishing shows, musical events, dances, races, concerts, sporting events or just watching the fall foliage.

Fairs and Festivals –

Farmer's Day, Union – First weekend of June. Dance and games Friday night; Grand Parade, horse show, and entertainment on Saturday.

Fourth of July, Alderson – Parade, live entertainment, impressive fireworks display.

Autumn Harvest Festival, Willow Bend – Last full weekend in September. Exhibition of local arts, crafts, produce, canning, flowers, and farm crops. Live entertainment. Demonstrations of antique farming techniques and machinery.

Union Christmas Parade: First Friday in December.

Various Musical and Art Shows sponsored by Monroe Arts Alliance.

TALENTS

List of talents of people in the county (musical, storytelling, lying, crafts, carving, artistic, theatrical, etc.)

Musicians and thespians
 Bill Whipple

SKILLS

List of the skills of residents in the county (woodworking, furniture building, carpentry, metal work, mechanical etc.)

Craftspersons

Mark Soukup, Chairmaker, Gap Mills - Mark has filled orders for Monticello, Poplar Forest, and other museums and private collections.

Joe Chasnoff, Woodworker, Zenith

Allen Ritzman, Woodworker, Zenith

Nancy White's log cabin on US 219N, Union. Spinning, weaving, painting and potting.

PROXIMITY

Is the county within 100 miles of any other tourism or recreational draw? Is the county near any main tourist routes?

Greenbrier County – County seat of Lewisburg is full of quaint shops, fine restaurants, cultural attractions and historic architecture with some structures dating to the late 1700's. The Midland Trail, another of West Virginia's Scenic Byways crosses Greenbrier County west to east and leads to the world famous Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs; one of the few of the areas old mineral springs resorts which still functions as a resort today. Two commercial cave tours operate in the county. Organ Cave and Lost World Caverns offer lighten tours on pathways constructed for easy walking. Camping is available at the Greenbrier River Campground, along Route 63 near Alderson. The Greenbrier River Trail, built on an old C&O rail bed, shows off some of the state's best scenery as it travels 77 miles north from Caldwell to Cass in Pocahontas County.

Summers County – Route 12 between Alderson and Hinton offers several points of interest. The Pence Springs Hotel has been restored to its former grandeur and provides lodging and dining opportunities. The small railroad town of Talcott is home to the John Henry Memorial, a monument to the "steel drivin' man" of American railway folklore. The Graham House, a restored Colonial era log house is worth a visit. The city of Hinton, another railroad town, lies at the junction of the Greenbrier and New Rivers and is the entrance to the New River Gorge National River. Rafting tours can be booked here. Nearby, Bluestone Dam and Bluestone Lake offer boating and fishing opportunities. Pipestem Resort was recently voter the "reader's favorite" state park in *Southern Living Magazine*. Camping, hiking, hunting, and picnic and canoe launch areas are provided in the Bluestone Wildlife Management area. Just over the Monroe County line, in Forest Hill, Wakerobin Gallery showcases a local potter's work.

Mercer County – Contains the two sizable towns of Princeton and Bluefield. The East River Mountain Lookoff, along old route 52 south of Bluefield, provides a nice vantage point. Another of West Virginia's Scenic Byways, the Coal Heritage Trail, begins in Bluefield and winds its way through coal mining country and toward the city of Beckley. The town of Bramwell, along the Coal Heritage Trail, is noted for the opulent homes built here by coal barons near the turn of the century. It remains a quaint, peaceful town, and is interesting to visit.

Craig County – Perhaps more similar to Monroe than any of her other neighbors. The Route 311 Virginia Scenic Byway joins the Farm Heritage Road at the state line on the top of Peters Mountain, and leads the traveler through some very scenic countryside to the county seat of New Castle, and onward to the city of Roanoke. Route 42, between New Castle and Newport is a very scenic country drive. Hollow Hill Farm, home of the largest bison herd in Virginia is located near the village of Paint Bank. Paint Bank is the home of The Paint Bank General Store and The Depot Lodge Bed and Breakfast, offering warmhearted hospitality in a restored historic train depot.

Giles County – The Narrows of the New River, in Giles County, is just a couple of miles from the western end of the Farm Heritage Road in Peterstown. The towns of Narrows and Pearisburg are both interesting places to visit. Giles County contains a wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities, including the Cascades, the White Rocks Campground, the Appalachian Trail, and the Mountain Lake Wilderness Area. Mountain Lake Hotel, a stone lodge situated on the shore of a serene natural high mountain lake, is the site where the movie Dirty Dancing was filmed.

Allegheny County – The Humpback Bridge, near Covington; a covered bridge rather unique for being built on an arched platform, spans Dunlap Creek along the course of old Route 60. Earlhurst Logg Cabbin Inn, rooms available in a re-constructed log lodge, lies just east of Sweet Springs on 311 north. Douthat State Park lies to the east of Covington, and to the north, US 220 provides a scenic drive toward the Homestead in Bath County. The Homestead, like the Greenbrier, still functions as an opulent mineral springs resort.

ARCHITECTURE

List of any interesting architecture or buildings in the area. This could be an old church, a still operating soda fountain, a “Mail Pouch” barn, a string of coal camp houses, a railroad round house, a closed industrial complex like a foundry, or just pick out ten houses that represent the architecture of each decade of the 20th Century. A structure doesn’t have to be historically significant to be of interest. Sometimes a place that is an eyesore to the locals might be an eclectic attraction to an outsider.

THINGS TO LEARN

Some interesting things a person could learn, in or about the area – flora and fauna of the area; the industrial, agricultural, military, geological or cultural history of the area; what was the place like 50 or 100 or 1000 years ago; famous residents; infamous residents. Are there artisans who could teach people a craft or skill (pottery, spinning, quilting, carving, calligraphy etc.)? Are there older citizens who could teach people what life was like 50 years ago? Are there farmers or industrial workers who could teach people what it was like to do their jobs or what life was like for people doing their jobs 50 years ago?

Environmental -

Institute for Earth Education – International organization, home-based in Greenville. The group promotes education on living with the earth. Academics, orientation, camping. Worldwide focus and presence. Visitors by appointment.

Agricultural -

Morgan Orchard – Commercial orchard., “Pick Your Own” fruit or select orchard-picked fruit in the farm market. They grow 40 varieties of apples; peaches; plums; black, red, and purple raspberries; thornless blackberries; pumpkins; vegetables in season; baked goods; jams; and sauces. Tours and fruit growing advice available with advance notice. Open June through November.

Cinderella Pumpkin Farm – Pumpkins, Halloween supplies and decorations, and fall displays. Homemade baked goods and preserves. Great family entertainment and views of Indian Creek Valley. Open September and October.

McCormick’s Corn Maze – Open for the first time in the fall of 2004. A family can get some good exercise, enjoy a fall day, laugh as a family and learn about agriculture in a corn-fusing field of cornstalks towering high above their heads.

Wolf Creek Winery – A farm winery that raises and processes the grapes on a family farm. Planting of the wine grapes (French Hybrids: Seyval, Vidal, Chambourcin and Foch) started in 1991. Also bottle fruit wines in cooperation with Morgan Orchard. Tasting room on premises looks out over the fields and the grape vines.

Bob Pond Blueberry Farm, Peterstown – Pick Your Own seasonal berries.

SHOPPING

Shopping experiences in the county? Are there any unique items or shopping experiences that a person could find? These might include such things as milk straight from a cow, home canned vegetables, home cooking, quality handcrafts, area souvenirs, home grown tomatoes, area delicacies, area oddities etc. Shopping experiences might include purchasing vegetables from the person who grew them, shopping in an old general store or in a store that hasn't changed much in 50 years, watching an artisan make the item you are going to purchase, being able to have input into the design of an item you are going to purchase etc.

Old Fashioned General Stores

Emma Jean's General Store, Wayside – Authentic 1800s general store selling antiques and groceries.

Crafts, Artisans, Specialty Stores

Wolf Creek Winery, Wolf Creek - See listing under THINGS TO LEARN.

Alderson's Store – A rare and beautiful example of vintage Art Deco architecture and interior design. Distinctive fashions, unique gifts, and Alderson area souvenirs. Family operated since the late 1800's.

Quilt Essentials, Peterstown – Quilts, quilting work and supplies, silks and accessories, handmade baskets and rugs.

Creekside Natural Foods, Greenville – Natural foods and Monroe County Crafts.

Double J Store, Back Creek Road near Greenville – A gift and souvenir shop with a restaurant.

Union Outfitters, Union – Hunting, fishing, and outdoor gear.

Valley Springs Furniture, Gap Mills – Solid oak and cherry tables, crafted in a family-run woodworking shop. Visitors welcome.

Cheese and More Store, Gap Mills – Cheeses, dried fruit, specialty foods, area novelties.

Kitchen Creek Bakery, Gap Mills – Features baked goods.

Valley Springs Country Gift Shop – Hand made furniture – ready made and to order – and gifts.

Morgan Orchard, Sinks Grove – Apples, peaches, plums, berries, seasonal produce and selected cooked and preserved products. See listing under THINGS TO LEARN.

Antiques

Riverbend Auction House, Alderson – Dealing in antiques and collectibles.

LODGING

List of lodging facilities.

Country Resorts/Cottages/Lodges:

Creekside Resort, Greenville – Vacation homes and cottages on 200 secluded acres. Hike or bike the mountain trails, fish Indian Creek, enjoy the private swimming pool and a

relaxing massage. Lodgings are completely furnished with equipped kitchens and most have Jacuzzi, fireplace, or woodstove. Meal plans and get-away packages available as well as conference and wedding facilities.

Salt Sulphur Springs Guest House, Salt Sulphur Springs – Located in a portion of the old 1820's hotel. Elegant period décor. Great atmosphere for history buffs.

High Meadow Farm Lodge, Wolf Creek – Accommodations in lodges built of hand-hewn white oak logs by some of the area's earliest settlers. Situated on its own private road, the location offers privacy yet provides spectacular panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and the Wolf Creek Valley.

Larew Cottage, Hans Creek – A 1920's fully remodeled bungalow-style house. Very private.

Mountain Shadow Cabin – Early 1800's hand-hewn log cabin, located at the foot of Peters Mountain, in an ideal location from those seeking rest and relaxation, mountain views, or walks in the woods. Located on the Mountain Shadow Backway, just a "stones throw" away from the Allegheny and Appalachian Trail.

Bed & Breakfast:

Camping:

Jefferson National Forest - Monroe County contains 18,000 acres of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, most of which is open to primitive camping.

Moncove Lake – See listing under RECREATION.

RESTAURANTS

List of restaurants. Is there a restaurant with food so good you could turn dining there into an event by adding music or drama to the experience?

Gourmet -

Moxie Café, Union – Set in quaint old store building, the Moxie offers upscale lunch and dinner menus. Owner was formerly a chef in the Adirondacks and at the world-famous Greenbrier Hotel. His talent reflects his experience.

Country Cooking -

Hometown Restaurant, Peterstown

Corner Dairy Bar, Ballard

Kalico Kitchen, Union

Taste of Monroe, Union

Betty's Korner Kafe, Pickaway

Shale Bank Diner, Lindsie

Fountain Springs Clubhouse, Peterstown

Double J Store, Back Creek Road near Greenville

OTHER ASSETS

Other assets that could be built upon.

Psalm 23 Camp – Non-denominational Christian camp operated in conjunction with a sheep farm (i.e. Psalm 23). Located in a beautiful open valley near the source of Second Creek. Visitors welcome.

Sweet Springs Valley Water Company – Repeat champion at national and international water tasting competitions, the bottling plant lies near the spring's source at the foot of Peters Mountain.

Yoder's Country Kettle – Home-made jams and jellies. Plant tours available with prior notice.

Enhance Massage and Bodywork, Peterstown – Fitness center, massage and body works, hair salon, nail technician, juice bar and exercise classes.

Closed or discontinued, as of July 9, 2007:

Trout House Lodge – Former location of the Mercer Angler's Club; a private trout hatchery. Offers catch and pay fishing, a restaurant, and hiking.

Moncove Lake Summer Festival – Third weekend of June. Parade, antique car show, games and contests.

Peterstown Horse Show – Typically the third weekend in July.

Sydneys, Union – Gift items including SunnyBrook hand-poured scented candles, gourmet teas and accessories, specialty foods and kitchen gadgets, antiques, collectibles, and fine art by local artists.

Llama Lady, Union

Wine Goblet & Spirits, Union – Gifts and an assortment of wines and liquors. Wolf Creek wines.

Wolf Creek Gallery, Alderson – Gifts for any occasion.

Americana Homestead, Sweet Springs – In-home artisans specialize in reproducing primitive early American painted furniture with a mixture of antiques and accessories.

North Street Antiques, Union – Several local dealers offer an extensive selection of antique and vintage furniture. There is also crystal and collectible glass, pottery, rugs, decorative art, and estate jewelry.

Lillydale Cottage, Salt Sulphur – Cozy and romantic "country getaway." Easily accessible from US 219.

The Trout House Restaurant, Rich Creek Valley – Specializes in trout raised adjacent to the restaurant in freshwater ponds.

Monroe Dining, Alderson

Confetti's Cocktail Lounge, Union – Cocktail lounge, sports bar, café, meeting place. Nightly drink and appetizer specials. Unique mural of local folks.

TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE GOALS

PROGRESS ON MONROE COUNTY TOURISM PRIORITIES

As set by Tourism Advisory Group on February 9, 2005

TOP PRIORITIES

Web site	Liability/ legalities	Bus tours	Theme tours	Targeted advertising campaign	Music & arts festival	Open historic homes
<p>Develop a good web site – one that is highlighted and linked with other sites.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>•Web site went on line in February of 2006. Is easy to manage and has received rave reviews for appearance and ease of use.</p> <p>•Lodging and Realtor sheets for e-mail requests.</p>	<p>Pursue research. e.g., the liability of crossing private property with hiking or biking trails or having tourists occasionally stay overnight in a private residence.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>•Public meeting held.</p>	<p>Develop & Promote Bus Tours. e.g. cemeteries and old churches, or covered bridges, or backway & byway roads.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>•Working with John Luckton Agency to bring bus tours into county. Looking to fall of '07.</p> <p>•\$2500 Hollowell grant received for publicity for bus tours.</p>	<p>Develop & Promote themed tours of about 7 hours duration</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>Target our advertising to magazines or tour groups. Develop an advertising campaign. Update By-ways brochure.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>•Active advertising committee.</p> <p>•Have focused on "free" publicity – articles in Blue Ridge Country, Gbr. Valley Quarterly, Beckly Post Herald, book by author Leonard Adkins. County ad in fall Gbr. Valley Quarterly.</p> <p>•By-ways brochure updated.</p>	<p>Develop an annual music or arts festival</p> <p>-----</p> <p>•Serve on Board of Directors of Monroe Arts Alliance. Group has sponsored art classes and musical performances.</p> <p>•Ziegler's at Old Mill in Greenville hope to host summer art fairs.</p>	<p>Open historic homes for one night of housing</p> <p>-----</p>

SECONDARY PRIORITIES

Promote agri-tourism	Promote environmental tourism	Identify additional recreation	Package deals	Create "National Park for Disabled"	Historic and cultural tourism	Promote restaurants	Network
Identify farms that could open to tours ----- ♦Morgan Orchard, Wolf Creek Winery, Spangler's Greenhouse and Organic Farm, Almost Heaven Farm, Breezy Acres, Cinderella Pumpkin Farm, Byrnside Branch Farm, Reed's Mill Hendrick's	Identify birding spots. -----	For example: tours of Potts Creek (Glen Alton White Rocks area) or hiking and biking trails on abandoned roads ----- ♦Trails Group working to designate biking/hiking/horseback riding trails. ♦Working with Jefferson National Forest to designate rail trail on old rail bed. Three miles out and back.	Create and Promote -----		Develop tours of historic homes & places. Develop a condensed version of Monroe County history -----		Form ties with adjoining towns and counties in Virginia and WV -----

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

◆ Placement of large brochure rack in Monroe County Historic Society Museum, Distribution of small brochure racks throughout county.

◆ \$2000 LED Grant from Budget Digest to place kiosks at county gateways.

◆ As a member of the CRED Community Leadership Team, Graves participated in the development of thirty leadership training curriculums with packaged power point presentations. She was the co-developer of the "Leadership Styles and Roles" piece and editor of "Five Keys to Effective Volunteer Program Development – An Overview."

Two of the curriculums and were piloted with the Monroe County Health Center Board of Trustees.

◆ Engaged in inspection and introspection through Recruitable Communities/First Impressions (May & June

2005)/Community Design Team (June 2006) /Dr. Deng's Graduate Students (October 2006) programs.

❖ Philosophy –

The development of tourism in rural communities while maintaining their rural character and country atmosphere can be a challenge. Though rural authenticity is valued by both rural residents and visitors, tourism development can transform rural areas physically and socially in ways that reduce the very asset appeal on which tourism is dependent. Thus, tourism development should consider its potential negative impacts on rural society and environment and strategies should be followed to minimize the impact.

"A Union of the Past and the Future", Community Design Team, p. 4

❖ Tips -

- ♦ Tap into visitor stream traveling through to other destinations or traveling close-by.
- ♦ Or figure ways to grow their experience while they're here.

- ♦Keep efforts small.
- ❖Suggestions –
 - ♦Rather than advertising Monroe County alone, put the county on travel itineraries and in promotional tourism packages (perhaps through the WV Division of Tourism)
 - Web site could have suggestions for day trips (motor bikes, autos, and bicycles) with downloadable maps.
 - ♦Visitor information
 - Rather than staffing a center; find a small, centrally located, highly visible place where information can be shown and brochures can be displayed.
 - ♦Target youth
 - Young tourists make relatively modest demands on overnight housing.
 - Establishment of a campground is less likely to affect the rural environment and atmosphere than construction of large motels or hotels.
 - ♦Farm tourism
 - Attract visitors to stay on farms; participate in farm activities.
 - ♦Events and Festivals
 - Explore one or two new events.
 - ♦Develop towns as gateway communities
 - Visitors from Kentucky, Virginia, and North Carolina who enter the state may use the town as a staging point to other points or attractions.
 - ♦Serve travel needs of the disabled (accessible tourism)
 - Study the possibility of developing facilities that cater to the needs of the disabled. Would increase demand for medical services in the county which would benefit tourists and permanent residents alike.
 - ♦Enhance downtowns as shopping areas
 - Present an enticing enough collection of businesses for travelers to stop and get out of the car.
 - ♦Keep downtowns clean.
 - Cleanliness is not only important because it creates the impression of prosperity, but also creates the impression of safety.
 - ♦Business ownership succession and cooperation
 - If downtown retail businesses are not already working together on marketing, events, etc., it is recommended that they form an association to begin to do so.
 - ♦Seek funds for tourism development

STATUS OF RURAL AMERICA:

America's rural communities face an uncertain future – these communities struggle to maintain their vitality and sense of identity. Over the past 50 years, many rural communities seem to have lost their purpose. There are fewer, larger and more specialized farms. Rural populations are declining, and the demand from local markets is declining.

These realizations have exacerbated the economic decay of many rural communities as industry hunting became a preoccupation of many small town councils and chambers of commerce. Jobs – any kind, at any cost – seemed to be a primary objective from some declining rural communities.

The challenge of rural economic development is to create places where workers can be developed, and productive, where they will want to stay and become part of the community.

Rural communities can no longer depend on agriculture as the primary engine of rural economic development. Development linked to other local resources will protect the physical and social environments of the community and enhance quality of life.

Quality of life is the product of relationships among people and between people and their environments. The linkage of rural community development with varied local resources will be increasingly important.

Home to a fifth of our nation's people, rural areas once were dominated by farming, but today rural residents who are not engaged in farming outnumber those who are by more than 10 to one. Yet, rural people have been and continue to be the keepers of natural amenities and national treasures. They safeguard a unique part of American culture, traditions, and history.

Increasingly, rural communities seek ways to diversity, to replace and supplement traditional incomes. Tourism is one appealing way. The economy of rural communities has begun to rely increasingly on small businesses and individual entrepreneurs who cultivate a demand for unique niche products and services. In fact, the USDA reports that tourism, home-based businesses, and small-scale retailing are the leading areas of interest among rural communities.

Society has once again reached a point of returning to matters of the human spirit, to more traditional cultural and historical values. Small towns and communities can prosper by promoting this spirit and promoting special products and services not otherwise available. The historic character of a small town or community can be used to promote community identity and spark economic recovery.

Rural tourism is alive on secondary roads that lead us through small towns, communities, and the countryside. Travelers learn and experience along the way by enjoying local museums, historic sites, cuisine, architecture, landscape, heritage crafts, and customs.

Demographic trends of rural communities, as well as demographic trends of potential changes in rural communities, become increasingly important to the concept of rural tourism. Overall trends due to demographic, economic, and cultural changes include the aging of U.S. population, shrinking size of households, increasing urbanization, the increased number of two-paycheck households, and an increasing interest in the environment.

These trends certainly impact rural tourism. There is also a perceived attitude that urban dwellers have fewer children, have both parents working outside the home, and are interested in the environment. The rural countryside offers them opportunities to experience the interesting and different rural culture and an agrarian environment.

In addition to taking shorter vacations rather than longer vacations, people are showing a growing interest in vacations involving action and involvement, hands-on, and experience-driven activities. These changes have led to the growth of the new rural tourism market, including ecological, cultural, heritage, and agricultural tourism.

Can rural communities compete in the tourism industry? Lane (1994) questioned how rural tourism could effectively compete with urban or resort-based tourism that is relatively concentrated, professionally managed, and increasingly operated in international markets. But despite their small settlements, weak infrastructure, small establishments, local ownership, few visitors, and amateur management, rural tourism can compete. This assumption is based on these facts: capital investments are lower for simple commodity production, smaller part-time tourist operators can provide fixed capital needs of enterprise at lower cost, and family labor can be utilized. Rural tourism also has potential for environmentally friendly and cultural-sensitive offerings. Family businesses may offer niche tourist products and create new opportunities not captured by large-scale tourism ventures. They also can share cultural attributes. It may even be easier to develop new tourism ventures in relatively undeveloped tourist destinations than to revitalize traditional tourist resorts. Most importantly, rural tourism must be community driven. For tourism development is not free. It requires resources and commitment.