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EXTENSION EFFORTS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE "NEW WEST" THE CASE OF UTAH

Steven W. Burr*

ABSTRACT:

Utah State University's Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism (IORT) has the mission of improving our understanding of the relationships between outdoor recreation and tourism, natural resources management, community economic vitality, and quality of life, accomplished through the program functions of research, Extension, and teaching. Working as an Extension Specialist in outdoor recreation and tourism, I have had the opportunity to present on a variety of outdoor recreation and natural resources-based tourism related topics, assess the current situation of outdoor recreation and tourism development, and identify a multitude of related needs in the state of Utah. An IORT Advisory Board, with approximately fifteen members representing a variety of stakeholder groups, endorses and supports the mission of the Institute and helps facilitate statewide collaboration and cooperation among professionals and other stakeholders working in outdoor recreation and tourism. Together, we have identified a number of issues and challenges, including needs for research to demonstrate the socio-economic value of public lands, educating the public about non-traditional uses of natural resources and the role of tourism as true economic development, effectively utilizing technology and information resources, developing tourism resources for communities, and hospitality training and program development for meeting visitor expectations. This presentation will review IORT's development and accomplishments in these areas and in the process share with participants the context and challenges of Extension work in outdoor recreation and tourism development in the "New West", using efforts in Utah as a case study.

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EXTENSION PLANTS SEEDS OF LEADERSHIP - PENDLETON COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

Patricia Dawson* and Alice Voluntad

ABSTRACT:

The Pendleton Community Garden Project is more than just planting seeds. It is about planting ideas, growing skills, nurturing leadership and self-esteem in participants. Extension FCD, 4-H and Agriculture faculty provided leadership in bringing together 22 local agencies to work with at-risk youth and senior residents. Thirty-five at-risk youth and over 100 senior citizens and community volunteers turned a vacant lot into a community garden that supplies fresh produce to local food banks and needy families. Both, seniors and youth benefit from this inter-generational partnership. Youth develop skills in leadership, teamwork, community service, nutrition and horticulture. Youth also gain respect for the senior community and learn that working together toward a common goal results in feeling proud of what you've accomplished. One youth participant wrote, "I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to be part of the community. Not only did I learn a lot about plants, but I also learned how to give something back to the community." Senior citizens volunteer as mentors with the at-risk youth. Through their concerted efforts, over 3,000 pounds of fresh produce is donated annually to senior shut-ins and families in need. Master Gardeners provide Horticulture information to participants while Extension faculty instruct leadership and nutrition lessons. The mayor and county commissioners support Extension's efforts with this project, which is in the third year of operation. This session will share curriculum, promotional material, grant samples and the IRB evaluation tool used for the Pendleton Community Garden program.

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AGRICULTURE NETWORK INFORMATION CENTER (AgNIC): A REGIONAL
COLLABORATION TO BUILD A PORTAL FOR RANGELANDS AND NATURAL
RESOURCES INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT:

The Agriculture Network Information Center (AgNIC) is an alliance of land-grant universities, the National Agricultural Library, and other organizations who are working together to provide Internet access to authoritative agriculture-related information. A key feature of AgNIC is its commitment to multidirectional collaborations. One of these collaborations, the Western Rangelands Partnership, involves extension specialists and librarians from thirteen Western Land-Grant universities as well as the Society for Range Management, the Noble Foundation in Oklahoma, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. This initiative emerged from the previous Managing Rangelands AgNIC web site created over a six-year period by an interdisciplinary team at the University of Arizona. The main goal for the partnership is to unite and integrate various land-grant university rangelands and natural resources Web activities through a regional portal. Each state retains its own identity and unique rangeland-related Web presence while being part of a broader effort to apply innovative technologies channeling users to evaluated, value-added information and tools on rangeland resources. The resulting Website and prototype portal, <<http://rangelandswest.org>>, provides entry to a variety of rangeland management and policy issues topics, as well as links to individual state sites. This poster will highlight the development of the Partnership, the portal, and the various interconnected Websites.

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DEVELOPING FOREST HERITAGE FROM GRASSROOTS' LESSONS EMERGING
FROM A WEST VIRGINIA-MARYLAND HERITAGE TOURISM INITIATIVE

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ABSTRACT:

The densely forested mountains of West Virginia and western Maryland have provided humans with critical natural resources, inspiration, and recreation. These forests are within a day's drive of some of the nation's most densely populated areas. This location presents both threats from urbanization and opportunities from economic benefits through enhanced tourism. The Appalachian Forest Heritage Area (AFHA) is a regional effort to integrate central Appalachian forest history, culture, natural history and ecology, and forestry management and industrial production, into a multi-state heritage tourism initiative to promote rural economic development. Initially supported by a 4-year grant from USDA to West Virginia University (WVU) divisions of Forestry and Extension, the project is based on building and sustaining stakeholder partnerships in the region. The goal is to create a sustainable Heritage Area based on the unified theme of Forest Heritage. Existing and potential forest-based assets such as historic sites, artisans, manufacturing firms, and working forests are being developed into a cohesive network of forest heritage tourist destinations that provide high-quality forest-related retail products, programs, interpretive and educational experiences, events, and visitor services. To implement this program in regional communities, six task groups are developing parts of a comprehensive plan covering asset mapping, interpretation and product development, business and infrastructure development, networking, communications, organization and sustainability, and marketing. This presentation will discuss (1) project accomplishments in three regional communities; (2) challenges that have arise; (3) stakeholder opinions of the participatory planning process; and (4) stakeholder motivations to participate in this regional heritage tourism initiative.

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