

**Clay County  
Heritage Development  
Initiative  
Produced for the Blue Ridge  
National Heritage Area**

**Completed in Partnership with:  
AdvantageWest  
NC Department of Commerce  
Partnership for the Future  
Smoky Mountain Host  
Western Carolina University**

**2008 Update**

# Clay County Heritage Tourism Development Plan

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1. Brief Summary including...
  - a. Clay History Highlights
  - b. Planning process description
2. Summary of initiatives included in plan
3. One-page action plans for each item listed in part 2

### ATTACHMENTS:

4. Roster of Clay Co Heritage Team
5. List of Heritage Ideas that have come out of each brainstorming session (history of the process)
6. Inventory report of heritage sites organized into the following thematic areas:
  - a. Cherokee
  - b. Scots-Irish
  - c. Music
  - d. Craft
  - e. Agriculture
  - f. Natural Sites and/or Historic Structures
7. Any previous county strategic plans that incorporate heritage tourism initiatives - Handmade Plan and current CCCRA planning document to show how this particular plan fits and does not duplicate existing county activity

## **Clay County Overview and Planning Summary**

Clay County boasts spectacularly glorious views, forested slopes and small hillside farms. The county seat is Hayesville, named for George W. Hayes, the legislator that formed Clay County from neighboring Cherokee County in 1861. Much of the county is covered by national forests and the population remains relatively small. The county's chief landmarks are the Clay County Courthouse at the town square in Hayesville and Lake Chatuge.

Citizens of Clay County embraced the heritage planning process and this document is a testament to a number of committed individuals with a strong sense of the importance of retaining Clay County's unique characteristics. This document draws on and extends the good work of the CCCRA (Clay County Communities Revitalization Association) who annually update a plan of action dedicated to serving Clay County communities. Recent successes of the CCCRA include the restoration of the Clay County Courthouse and a revitalization of the town square.

The overarching objectives in Clay County's heritage development plan are the conservation and celebration of the County's rich natural resources – which in time will necessitate county-wide dialogue regarding growth and development issues. Residents are fond of the natural resources and glorious views and do not want growth and development to destroy these primary assets. Growth issues in Clay County are a sensitive subject and many community leaders are unwilling to take a firm position regarding how Clay County's growth and future development are managed.

A core team of community leaders representing the Chamber, CCCRA, CARG and others organized the content presented on the following pages. Community input was gathered during two half-day, heritage-planning workshops with representatives from various community agencies and interested community volunteers. In addition, the heritage planning team participated in the annual Clay County Expo where they collected feedback from a broad representation of the community. Feedback from the workshops and survey were invaluable in assessing Clay County's priorities and challenges when considering the important steps required for retaining Clay County's heritage and unique characteristics.

## CLAY COUNTY PROJECT SUMMARY CHART

<b>Initiative Name</b>	<b>Estimated Costs</b>
Community Appearance Commission	To be determined
Expand Mountain Valley Farmer's Market	\$2,500
Interior Restoration of Historic Clay County Courthouse	\$1,500,000
Jack Rabbit Biking & Hiking Trail	\$150,000
Re-establishment of the "Tusquittee Pioneer Village"	To be determined
Revitalize Peacock Playhouse	\$15,000 – \$20,000
Spike Buck Indian Mound Preservation & Trail	\$130,880
The Nelson Heritage Park	\$635,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,433,380- \$2,438,380</b>

## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area CLAY COUNTY PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Community Appearance Commission
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	The community appearance commission is an advisory commission appointed by county commissioners and given the responsibility to study the visual problems in the community, make plans, and carry out programs that will enhance and improve the visual quality and aesthetic characteristics of the community.
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<b>Goal:</b>	Work with local government to insure growth and development do not detract from community's unique character and natural assets
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Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
David Goldhagen/Citizens for Responsible Growth		1.5 years

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organize CARG</li> <li>2. Ongoing communication with county commissioners</li> <li>3. Establish Appearance Commission</li> <li>4. Ongoing public relations to create positive public image</li> <li>5. Undertake first project – Trash Management Program</li> </ol>		

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	
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<b>Status:</b>	
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area CLAY COUNTY PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Expand Mountain Valley Farmer's Market
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	<p>Local farmers annually gather on the Town Square in Hayesville on Saturday mornings during the summer. The Hayesville market is a true Farmer's Market, meaning sales opportunities are available only to local producers/farmers; no re-sellers are allowed. True farmers' markets have advantages for both farmers and consumers – allowing only local produce assures the farmer is no subject to unfair competition and consumers will not be subject to poor quality food.</p> <p>The Mountain Valley Farmers' Market plans to participate in more proactive marketing strategies in order to insure market growth and continuation, as well as success for participating farmers.</p>
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<b>Goal:</b>	<p>To have greater attendance at and participation in weekly market, that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provides a destination for visitors to the area</li> <li>- supports small farmers by providing a marketplace for fresh produce and value added products</li> <li>- provides local residents and visitors with quality produce and products</li> </ul>
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<b>Person/Organization Responsible:</b>	<b>Cost to Implement:</b>	<b>Estimated Time to Complete:</b>
Mountain Valley Farmers Market Colleen Burson	2500	Annually

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Host large annual opening celebration complete with locally cooked food and local music</li> <li>7. Place newspaper ads in area publications</li> <li>8. Create and distribute banners to strategic locations</li> <li>9. Place flyers for potential participants at other area markets</li> <li>10. Create and distribute poster/flyers to strategic locations</li> <li>11. Submit listing information for free local calendars</li> </ol>		

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Interior Restoration of Historic Clay County Courthouse
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	To restore the courthouse to its original condition, add elevators and central heating & air.
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<b>Goal:</b>	Create a Welcome Center & Retail gallery space downstairs, and turn upstairs into visual arts center with music concert space and courtroom drama theater, and also provide Clay County a community room for public use.
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Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
CCCRA/Clay County Historical & Arts Council	1.5 million	2-3 years

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
1. We need a structural engineering assessment.	Funds	CCCRA

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	
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<b>Status:</b>	The County still uses the courthouse, but is expected to vacate within 18 months. We currently have a blueprint for an elevator and 7 pages of CAD for interior of building plus the attic. The CAD was provided by Jeff Scott with the NC Division of Community assistance.
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area CLAY COUNTY PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Jack Rabbit Biking & Hiking Trail
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	15 mile trail developed for hiking and biking with facilities and interpretation throughout trail
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<b>Goal:</b>	Create a multi-use course in Clay County for local residents, traveling public and competitions
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Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
Trail Association with partners: CCCRA US Forest Service Southern App. Biking Association	150,000	3 years

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
12. Complete environmental and archaeological impact studies (underway) 13. Fundraising (ongoing) 14. USFS approval of Trail layout 15. Begin construction in fall of 2004 16.		

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	
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<b>Status:</b>	
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Re-establishment of the “Tusquittee Pioneer Village”
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	The village was established in 1993 from natives of Clay County, Garnett & Kathleen Nelson. The Nelson’s along with many local volunteers resurrected authentic mountain village where visitors could “take a step back in time” and visit buildings and artifacts that date back to the mid 1800’s. Many of the buildings were built by the slaves before the Civil War. The first phase of this project will consist of moving the old farmhouse, church, post office, blacksmith barn, and the outhouse, onto the Historical & Arts property just off from historic downtown Hayesville.
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<b>Goal:</b>	Educate visitors of all ages of the rich history of the mountain pioneers. The Village will show the music, agriculture, and the natural resources of the early mountain pioneers. Stories of the good and hard times will show the strength of our ancestors. The new village will be called “Nelson Pioneer Village” in honor of its founders, Garnet & Kathleen Nelson. This new village will be a working pioneer village with fully dressed characters telling the stories, and performing the music of the Mountain Pioneers.
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Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
Clay County Community Revitalization Association (CCCRA) will be the fiscal partner, and the Clay County Historical & Arts Council will be the physical project partner, and the Pioneer Village Committee consisting of representatives from the Nelson Family, CCCRA, Historical & Arts, and the community will be the decision makers for this project.	To be determined.	12 months

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who’s Responsible:
1. Planning stages	Receive Bids on site prep, moving, & insurance, etc.	Pioneer Village Committee
2. Actual resurrection of village	Coordinate volunteers & program	Pioneer Village

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	Final decision on all bids. Set & implement moving of buildings. Grand Opening for “Nelson Pioneer Village”.
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<b>Status:</b>	Currently receiving bids
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area CLAY COUNTY PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Revitalize Peacock Playhouse
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	<p>In partnership with the Licklog Players, the Clay County Historical and Arts Council will initiate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a marketing campaign</li> <li>- facility improvements, and</li> <li>- concert series</li> </ul>
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<b>Goal:</b>	To bring locals and traveling public together around the arts in Clay County.
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<b>Person/Organization Responsible:</b>	<b>Cost to Implement:</b>	<b>Estimated Time to Complete:</b>
Board of Clay County Historical and Arts Council	15,000 – 20,000	1.5 years

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
17. Summer of 2005 inaugurate bi-monthly concert series with sold out performances 18. Gather cost estimates for facility improvements, marquee, brochure printing, etc. 19. Research potential funders 20.		

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	
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<b>Status:</b>	
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Spike Buck Indian Mound Preservation & Trail
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<b>Project Narrative:</b>	Currently the Spikebuck Mound Preservation and Trail will be the only earthen trail in Clay County. The project will include such components as an outdoor classroom demonstration site, tables, benches, a bridge to span Town Creek to the Spikebuck Mound, interpretive signage, plantings of herbs and berries, Cherokee curriculum educational material for all three Clay County Schools. Presently there are few remaining Cherokee earth mounds accessible to the public.
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<b>Goal:</b>	The Cherokee residents will not only get the benefit of daily exercise, but will know that their culture and heritage are being displayed along this trail. We expect the outcome will be a positive link between the Cherokee people and Clay County community who live in the area, and those who are not of the Cherokee heritage will walk the same path and learn of the history of the Cherokee Nation.
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<b>Person/Organization Responsible:</b>	<b>Cost to Implement:</b>	<b>Estimated Time to Complete:</b>
Communities In Schools of Clay County, Inc.	\$130,880.00	12 months

<b>Action Items:</b>	<b>Resources Required:</b>	<b>Who's Responsible:</b>
May 2005 – Advertise for contracting bids in local newspapers. June – Advertise for local volunteers. July and August - Build pavilion. September and October - Install security and live feed cameras. November - Site prep and graveling of trail. December and January – Contact EBC to assist with the research of the Cherokee language for the signs. February - Have signs made. March - Erect signs and plantings of herbs and plants. November – Have community dedication of the Spikebuck Mound Preservation and Trail.	Multiple agency cooperation and community volunteer groups will provide hands on labor. We will use the agencies as they are needed to train and help us supervise our Construction Technology students with school and community volunteers.	A preservation and trail committee has been formed and consists of representatives from local, state, and federal agencies, Clay County Schools, community groups, and parents who have been involved in the planning and promoting of this project.

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	1) Community and local Cherokee residents utilizing the trail. 2) Accurate Cherokee historical information provided at the Spikebuck Mound Preservation and Trail with the Eastern Band approval of information. 3) Surveys of teachers to gain feedback from the additional support of intricate and supplemental materials for the purpose of enhancing social science curriculum.
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<b>Status:</b>	Plan is being implemented at this time.
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## Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

Initiative Title:	The Nelson Heritage Park
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Project Narrative:	<p>The Nelson Heritage Park is a cultural heritage tourism destination which is located in downtown Hayesville, North Carolina. The project consists of the relocation and renovation of period buildings along with antique items, to a location adjacent to the Clay County museum. These buildings, which have been donated by a local family, will be divided into two destinations within the park; a farm homestead which will display buildings such as a corncrib, outhouse and a smokehouse, and a village which will display public buildings such as a post office, schoolhouse and general store.</p> <p>Also included in the Nelson Heritage Park will be a Native American section where a Cherokee winter house and a Cherokee summer house will be displayed. These buildings will represent construction techniques prior to European settlement in the region. This exhibit will strengthen the current Cherokee exhibits within the museum and will help to bridge a connection between the indoor and outdoor exhibits. Included in the Cherokee exhibit will be a series of murals mounted on an existing retaining wall. The murals will be the backdrop to the park and will reveal an artist's depiction of Cherokee patterns and artifacts.</p> <p>At the base of the park will be a small visitor's center to orient the guests and provide educational support for children. Maps and information about the park and all other Clay County tourist attractions and parks will be available as well. There will be public restroom facilities, indoor exhibition space, office and archive space, classroom/meeting space and additional storage space for any overflow from the museum.</p>
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Goal:	The mission of the project is to preserve, educate, and experience life in Western North Carolina prior to the turn of the century while creating an economic attraction to pull local tourism resources into the downtown.
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Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
-Clay County Historical and Arts Council	\$635,000	2011
-Clay County Communities Revitalization Association		

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
<p><b>1. Project Initiated_ 2006</b>  Conversations began involving the Clay County Historical and Arts Council and the Nelson Family to create a heritage cultural tourism site using the farm outbuildings owned by the Nelsons. The Nelson sisters agreed to donate the buildings and the Historical and Arts Council purchased property to serve as the new site adjacent to the current "Old Jail" museum located in downtown Hayesville. A steering committee was formed to commence the physical efforts for the project. The mission of the project was established.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Human interest and organizational skills</li> <li>-0.86 acres of property</li> <li>-12 farm outbuildings</li> <li>-Small collection of antiques</li> </ul>	<p>The Nelson Family  Clay County H&amp;A</p>
<p><b>2. Project Expansion_ 2006-2007</b>  CCCRA involvement, Handmade-In-America involvement, Design Corps involvement. These groups brought more volunteers and talent to the project. CCCRA became the fiscal agent for locally raised funds and provided grant writing capabilities. Handmade-In-America provided grant funds and other resources. Design Corps provided the technical aspects and the architect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Grant writers</li> <li>-volunteer hours</li> <li>- architectural intern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-CCCRA</li> <li>-Design Corps</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Fellowship Research_ 09.2007 - 10.2007</b>  An investigation was executed. Through local historical research, studies of pioneer routines, construction and other techniques and personal interviews with knowledgeable citizens, a general understanding of the pioneer way of life was established. Although learning is always on-going, this research took place in the initial months of the fellow's involvement. Included in the research was a survey and questionnaire distributed to all parties involved to determine a scope as well as a concrete and unified vision for the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-literary resources</li> <li>-interviews</li> <li>-site visits</li> <li>-research materials</li> </ul>	<p>Design Corp Fellow</p>
<p><b>4. Masterplan and Schematic Design_ 10.2007 – present</b>  The masterplan, including the Cherokee component, the 'Homestead' exhibit, the 'Main Street' exhibit, the parking lot and visitors' center with all floorplans and elevations and the Horace Auberry urban green space was completed by Bryan Bell and Ella Scheuer of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Rags, cleaning products</li> <li>- storage unit</li> <li>- volunteer labor</li> </ul>	<p>Design Corp Fellow</p>

<p>Design Corps. Periodic project management meetings keep the various entities informed and allows for continual input and feedback. Intermittent public presentations and newspaper updates engage the broader audience. Simultaneously during this time, the steering committee in collaboration with the Nelson family has begun to empty the outbuildings of furniture and artifacts, cleaning, restoring and creating an inventory while moving them to a storage unit which was donated to the Historical and Arts Council.</p>	<p>- trucks</p>	
<p><b>5. Initial Budget Review_ 05.2008</b> The initial construction estimate was made by Tighe White, general contractor who is actively involved with the Steering Committee. His estimate is the basis for the figures used to calculate this request.</p>	<p>-skilled professional volunteer</p>	
<p><b>6. Construction Drawing Prepared_ Summer 2008</b> Documents suitable for competitive bidding will be completed with final changes based on input from structural engineers, civil engineers and architects. Site maintenance including tree clearing, weed killing and lawn care has been upheld by volunteers.</p>	<p>Weed killer Bush-hogging</p>	<p>land surveyor: Roy Tucker  land surveyor: Sam Sprinkle</p>
<p><b>7. Bidding Advertised_ 08.2008</b> Public advertisement will ensure that a competitive and fair bid from a professional general contractor will benefit the value of the community resources.</p>		<p>Civil engineer: Dean Haney, Asheville, NC</p>
<p><b>8. Property Gifted_ 09.2008</b> 0.94 acres of property including a portion of Towns Creek located adjacent to current land is gifted to the Historical and Arts Council.</p>		<p>Structural engineer: David Remy *skilled professional volunteer hours  Appraiser:</p>
<p><b>9. General Contractor Selected_ 09.2008</b> The General Contractor will be selected based on the best value bid and meeting bidding application criteria such as proper insurance and previous experience.</p>		<p>Clay County Progress</p>
<p><b>10. Phase One- Site Work_ 09.2008</b> The objective for the first physical phase, or Phase One, is site preparation. Because the site</p>		<p>Caroline Auberry Auberry Holdings Inc.</p>

has a moderately sloped incline, excavation and fill will be necessary to ready the land for the outbuildings and for pedestrian circulation. Concrete fill has been donated by the Town of Hayesville to be used behind a proposed retaining wall. Environmental protection considerations for the earthwork will be implemented particularly around the creek to avoid pollution. Sedimentation control, erosion and drainage have become an ecological hazard recently in Clay County and the Nelson Heritage Park will help set a precedent of proper land use. An attractive green space will help to draw visitors, so consulting with landscaping experts as well as collaboration with the Master Gardeners will help to make an aesthetically pleasing, harmonious space for recreation and leisure. Also within the scope of site preparation is the paving of sidewalks and a small parking lot with fifteen spaces. Most of the site preparation is hoped to be completed within 2008. As earthwork and landscaping is finished in certain zones of the site, buildings, and in particular a barn, can begin to be placed within the park and then sidewalks can be built around them. Aspects of site preparation such as the parking lot, which will connect directly to the visitor's center, may be the last of Phase One to be completed.

**11. Phase Two Part One: Building Renovation and Relocation\_ late 2008**

These buildings, which have been donated by the Nelson family, will be divided into two destinations within the park; a farm homestead and a village. The buildings must be labeled, dismantled, fumigated to protect the wood against insects and then relocated. Most buildings will need new foundations, new roofs and new structural elements. Additionally, space has been made on the park site for outbuildings yet to be acquired such as a large barn which will be used to house the farm implement display. These structures may either be built from scratch or purchased.

**12. Phase Two Part Two: Cherokee Winter House and Summer House\_ January 2009**

Town of Hayesville  
Master Gardeners

The Nelson Family  
Building movers

<p>A Cherokee winter house and summer house will be constructed along with other Cherokee village elements. They are designed present and interpret a reconstructed pre-contact (early 16<sup>th</sup> century) Cherokee town for public education purposes. This is based on input from the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation and other resources.</p> <p><b>13. Phase Three- New Construction_ 2009</b> This includes the visitor's center construction. There will be public restroom facilities, indoor exhibition space, office and archive space, classroom/meeting space and additional storage space for any overflow from the museum.</p>		<p>Eastern band of the Cherokee Nation</p> <p>Brett H. Riggs, Ph.D. Research laboratories of Archeology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</p>
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<p>Performance Measures:</p>	<p>Since the Heritage Park Project is a long term effort, we are using a combination of participatory and process evaluation techniques. We evaluate each step or phase of the project and use the participatory approach with our steering committee members. By having the evaluation carried out by local stakeholders rather than an outsider, it draws on local resources and capacities, recognizes the wisdom and knowledge of participants, and ensures the community members and other stake-holders are a part of the decision-making process. Our data gathering tools have included questionnaires/surveys for the vision and scope of the project, organizational and community meetings, and discussions with our town and county elected officials. The site preparation is a practical necessity to take place before real construction can begin. The main form of evaluation will be to see that it gets completed in a cost-effective and timely manor. At the end of each phase and at the year's end, we re-evaluate our processes and adjust our approaches where necessary. Ultimate success will be measured by the physical product on the park property but equally important, by the community at large. The schools and local businesses will prosper as well as a new local sense of pride and understanding of the region. Evaluating the outputs at critical points is a necessary step to ensure we are meeting our economic development goals. By recording and evaluating the number and types of services, activities and people served by the program, we can determine our success, even before the project is completed.</p> <p>At the end, we will conduct an impact assessment of the total long-range results, both positive and negative.</p>
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	Continuous efforts to re-evaluate the outcomes as part of the planning, action and reflection will be implemented through a logic model approach to measure outputs and outcomes.
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Status:	We have currently completely through #7 of the action items.
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**Blue Ridge National Heritage Area  
Strategic Planning Tools**

**CLAY COUNTY HERITAGE COUNCIL**

	<u><b>Name</b></u>	<u><b>Affiliation</b></u>	<u><b>Contact Information</b></u>
1.	Debbie Jackson	Director Clay Co. Chamber of Commerce	
2.	Rob Tiger	Clay County Native Owner, Tiger's on the Square	
3.	David Goldhagen	Glass Artist Goldhagen Studios	
4.	Mary Janis	Mountain MicroEnterprise Fund Clay County Resident	
5.	Margie Weathers	Clay County Communities Revitalization Association (CCCRA)	

Additional participating organizations:  
Clay County Historical & Arts Council  
LickLog Players  
John C. Campbell Folk School  
Clay County Library (correct name?)  
Smoky Mountain Sentinel  
Mountain Valley Farmer's Market  
Southern Appalachian Biking Association  
Community Development Clubs