

R5DC LEARNING JOURNEY

Visit to Northeast Kingdom: New Hampshire & Vermont

2019



REGION FIVE
Development Commission

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Overview

R5DC Staff reflects on Northeast Kingdom Learning Journey in VT & NH

R5DC staff traveled to Vermont and New Hampshire in September 2019 to participate in the Northeast Kingdom Learning Journey. This Learning Journey was centered on Creative Economy, Energy & Human Powered Recreation. These are notes gathered from the team to give a recap for internal purposes and not intended to be a formal report. This Learning Journey was funded by external grant investments..



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R5DC Staff Questions to Determine Demand, Inclusivity & Engagement

- How did this need arise? Who determined demand?
- Public, Private, Non-Profit & Philanthropic entities involved? How?
- Unusual partners/input? engage from diverse communities, or other cultures? How?
- Was there engagement of creative thinkers? Were artists engaged? How?
- Where were the "concerned citizens", "opposers"?
- How was the community involved? How were folks invited to participate?

Additional resources can be found at regionfive.org/learning-journey



Creative Economy

A creative economy is based on people's use of their creative imagination to increase an idea's value.

Demand, Inclusivity & Engagement

Two Rivers Board funded a study to determine demand and the arts Council helped fund the study with artist participation. Areas were determined by community members and titled as "Zones" (similar to our art council regions). Two Rivers served as the backbone org to coordinate and facilitate meetings. Together the zones created a Creative Network and did community engagement through meetings to complete assessments. The Network connected to farmers on climate issues and as result of the outreach more traditional Eco Dev are now "coming along". Various art engaged activities were held where community input added value to the study such as, Art festivals and a concert series over the summer, Barn quilting tour with quilting workshops, Art Walks,

Community Pot lucks in town hall and more.

It was clear to the R5DC team that extensive outreach transpired to determine demand of the creative economy value chain effort. Private, public, non-profit and philanthropic community members gave input to the study. Engaging artists to solicit community input is an effective way to engage culture bears who had a better chance to engage diverse community members. The New England Creative Economy effort did not experience opposers to the effort, possibly due to the regions culture of engagement practice. Helpful to pay employees/ community members to participate in important conversations around community need if possible.

Analysis Based on WealthWorks Capitals



Individual

Many new skills have been gained by business owners, residents and local units of government within the Northeast Kingdom creative economy.

Because of the Chelsea Art Collective the region engages in more arts events – barn quilts, concert series, story tellers, arts festival, arts walk, helping to change the perspective of the arts. One of their art shows rotates every 2 months and community pot lucks allows senior farmers to meet together with new farmers to share knowledge.

Healing arts/safe art organization focuses on art as a key to healing. Healing Arts changed leadership structure to

more circular and the local Arts council prove it's just as important to show legislators about the creative network as it is the traditional community development.

The Creative network community – meet every few months, very active, 6 community events. Complete surveys that lead to networking, feedback, and collecting info for future events to be able to plan successful projects. They use community space – hyper local and free.

Locally, the RDC were slightly ambivalent but are now supportive. There's now more of a focus on quality of life which happens to also include art and food. There is an emphasis on Farm to School – with particular focus on Local and as a financial capacity builder – connecting to all farmers of all stripes, supportive, shift with young people and diversify the ag economy.



Intellectual

New forms of doing the work emerged and sparks of innovation or creativity were clear in the Northeast Kingdom creative economy value chain.

Common area outside-used for flea market/farmers market, it's bringing people together – people are more open and friendly with each other because of the work they are doing. Art space is booked out 2 years for people waiting to showcase their pieces.

There is "big table" breakfast held where people sitting together, some have the same thing every day, we were told a story of one gentleman whose wife passed away and he was at the breakfast the next morning because he didn't have anywhere else to go. Becomes a community in itself.

The non-certified art therapy is extremely creative. Using art as venue for healing from all kinds of trauma. Fiber arts, yoga, painting, natural/organic/not prescribed methods. Attempting to change the stigma of those suffering from mental health issues. Community members share "hey, they are doing it – and they are benefitting from the experience without specifically identifying why they are there, so can I".

Key is keeping the door open as people come from 45 minutes away and organizations like SafeArt are trying to become more "mobile."

By completing surveys at the community events they were able to plan for future projects that community members as well as committee members wanted to see. The community spaces are to encourage and develop art to be displayed all over the state – focused on art and climate change.

Intersect or Collaboration – ag/creative, forestry/business, distillery/glass making. There is more happening. Forestry/crafts/arts. Lots of opportunity for collaboration. It's the most asked for on surveys – opportunities for collaboration. Creative economy doesn't necessarily mean "artist"

The Value Chain broadens the understanding of areas. Transition from dairy – difficult for old farmers. But new farmers understand and see the importance of altering practices to account for safer water quality.

Sable – bought land and started thinking of ideas; bring young creatives who wanted the same type of community in VT. Evolved to an artist in residency- for people to focus on a craft. They have a work trade program at their farm (Fat Dragon Farm). They are off the grid – no electricity, no computers. Helps to build relationships within the community. Hold public events every other Friday in the summer. Public can come to see what they are up to, builds the community of artists as well. They want to make work, sustain and live and make connections. They do an internal audit – looking at their processes through a "justice lens" (indigenous, queer, feminism, anti racism, etc)



Natural

The Northeast Kingdom are thoughtful about how natural resources are extracted. There were environmental concerns and innovative strategies to address the concerns. The NE Kingdom players all describe their work as "Hyper-Local".

BALE is a non-profit created in 2011 initially funded through foundation investments after Hurricane Irene with a lot of emphasis around the climate and planning ahead for natural disasters. BALE is involved in a farm to school program that utilizes the local farmers as a way to bring young people into the area for sustainable farming. Along with farm to school is farm to plate initiative which would like to raise from 5% to 10% or so in 10 years in terms of people eating from local farms. The farm to school program is currently being utilized in 2 schools. BALE is concerned over climate change, phosphorus loads in the water, and the agricultural industry as a whole and how changing weather can affect that industry. BALE leaders believe that a Natural resource based economic development keeps things moving in their area of the country. In order to tackle these issues they are involved in watershed planning, emergency management, and hazard mitigation planning.

The Sable Project Established in 2014 and generally houses 4 – 12 artists at a time and the initial investment of the property funded by the founder. The program is also home to a working farm where residents receive a stipend for the work they do on the farm which includes: milking cows for local dairy and producing crafts from local timber and trees for the community. They also host food and art nights for the community to come to the property and enjoy a night of local food, crafts, and music. The project was started by crowdfunding \$10,000 but funding always remains an issue. Now primarily funded through public events held every other Friday called Food/Art nights the work thrives.

Chelsea Art Collective – Currently showcasing 32 artists and over 400 pieces of art. Like most places in the region it is an obstacle to overcome the snow and cold that comes along with winter. To tackle this issue, they organized an art walk in January and amazingly had 100 people show up for the walk. The collective as a whole has increased friendliness in the city and has helped spread local art.

01



Social

New relationships and networks have emerged as a result of the Northeast Kingdom creative economy value chain.

BALE was created as a result of a natural disaster (Hurricane Irene)- community came together and there was more cross sector collaboration-focusing on the watershed. Rural communities of less than 4000 were served. Art Build- utilizing art to share climate change story. Farm to plate program supported by the State of Vermont helped the communities learn to build capacity among new leaders. Some of these collaboration efforts have ceased as the impact of the hurricane fades but "Climate change refugees" are attracted to this region and help support these types of projects. Also feels like younger people are moving to the area with a focus around agriculture and the creative economy..

The Sable Project- artists have come from all over the world to participate in this residency program. Additionally, community is invited to food and art nights on Fridays during harvest season. Utilized social crowdfunding to get started, which engaged new networks of people.

North Common Café and Arts- The Commons was an underutilized open community space in Chelsea, VT. North Common Arts began in a space north of The Commons to support the Chelsea Arts Council. Many new artists came to the table with the opening of the storefront. Art walks during the winter months have brought the community outdoors. Utilization of the north common space for art fairs, youth events, etc. has added to the social capital within the community changing the perception of who participates in the arts and what the arts are.



Built

Infrastructure issues are abundant in the Northeast Kingdom creative economy value chain.

The Sable Project ran into land use issues because the farm land is over 10 acres. The specific hurdle was Act 250, Vermont's Land Use and Development Act, which is a law passed in 1970 by the Vermont legislature designed to mitigate the effects of development through an application process that addresses the environmental and community impacts of projects that exceed a threshold in size. The farm is off grid, so no new infrastructure was added or needed.

Chelsea Art Collective - Broadband is a major issue in the small city of Chelsea, Vermont with a population of just over 1,200 people. Fiber optic goes halfway through town and could be going through the entire town by 2021. Besides the Chelsea Art Collective the only other spot for reliable wireless internet is the library. Another interesting aspect of this program is that the bank gave them the building they are currently in because the bank believes in what they are aiming to accomplish.



Financial

Several innovative access to capital or financial investments such as scholarships have been made to advance the creative economy value chain. The arts sector is seeking relevancy on par with the tourism and agricultural economies in VT. Innovative financial investments include

- o Arts council funded by the State of VT.
- o Began as a 14-month creative economy study in 2016.
- o Bank owned buildings believed in the mission of non-profits and provided rent for free space.



Political

New systems or policies have offered exciting new opportunities for the Northeast Kingdom Creative Economy value change such as:

- Understanding the Art and Water and climate change interaction through "attraction of climate refugees"
- New Director of Health and Wellness
- Disaster Irene created new systems of collaboration in places like "commons"
- More pressure on legislators toward climate change strategies

People are coming together more as a result of this community work. Moving toward racial justice as it connects to climate issues can be controversial.



Cultural

Greater connection to artists- artists and economic engines as part of the Northeast Kingdom cultural awareness. Stronger community connectiveness, justice work is just beginning now due to these new relationships and collaborations.

Cultural challenges remain and strategies are being propelled to address them.

This area of the nation is changing the definition of the creative economy- a broader stroke of what this can mean within a community and are overcoming the stigma of utilizing a healing arts facility. Land use issues/tax issues for small businesses- would benefit from these being more scalable. Community felt disconnected- needed to find a way to bring folks together by utilizing common spaces within the towns and artist led engagement has added a sense of belonging.



Utilizing education and awareness with the public leaves the door open and invites curiosity in.

Debrief - R5DC Important Takeaways

- Living off the grid for artist in residence "Food and Art" Friday nights are great ideas!
- There is value in helping people navigate legislation like Act 250 regulations
- Artists have attracted other artists. Philosophy of people contribute what they can when they can...less convincing than I typically see. Lots of others working on mentorships of younger farmers from older farmers.
- People are coming to the area described as "climate refugees" – coming to state for the farms/art/agriculture – to find sustainable, inspire space – need to be thinking about how we're promoting regional and local sustainability values.
- Rural VT and MN while very different, both share several of the same issues:
 - Creative economy struggles to compete with tourism and agriculture
 - Dairy farming has succession issues
 - And the both have a healthy debate on climate change
- The impact and importance of innovative solutions such as the healing arts. The connection between art, healing and economic development.
- I was surprised to see how effective art was in bringing together small cities and towns. Getting 100 people for an art walk in January was what really caught my eye because I cannot even imagine trying to pull that off in Minnesota. I loved hearing the success stories and all the obstacles each value chain had to overcome.
- Closed storefronts are excellent places for local arts, community ventures, smaller innovative ideas to thrive.
- This experience has enabled me to begin to think more innovatively, seeing the opportunity alongside a given challenge.

R5DC Actionable Ideas

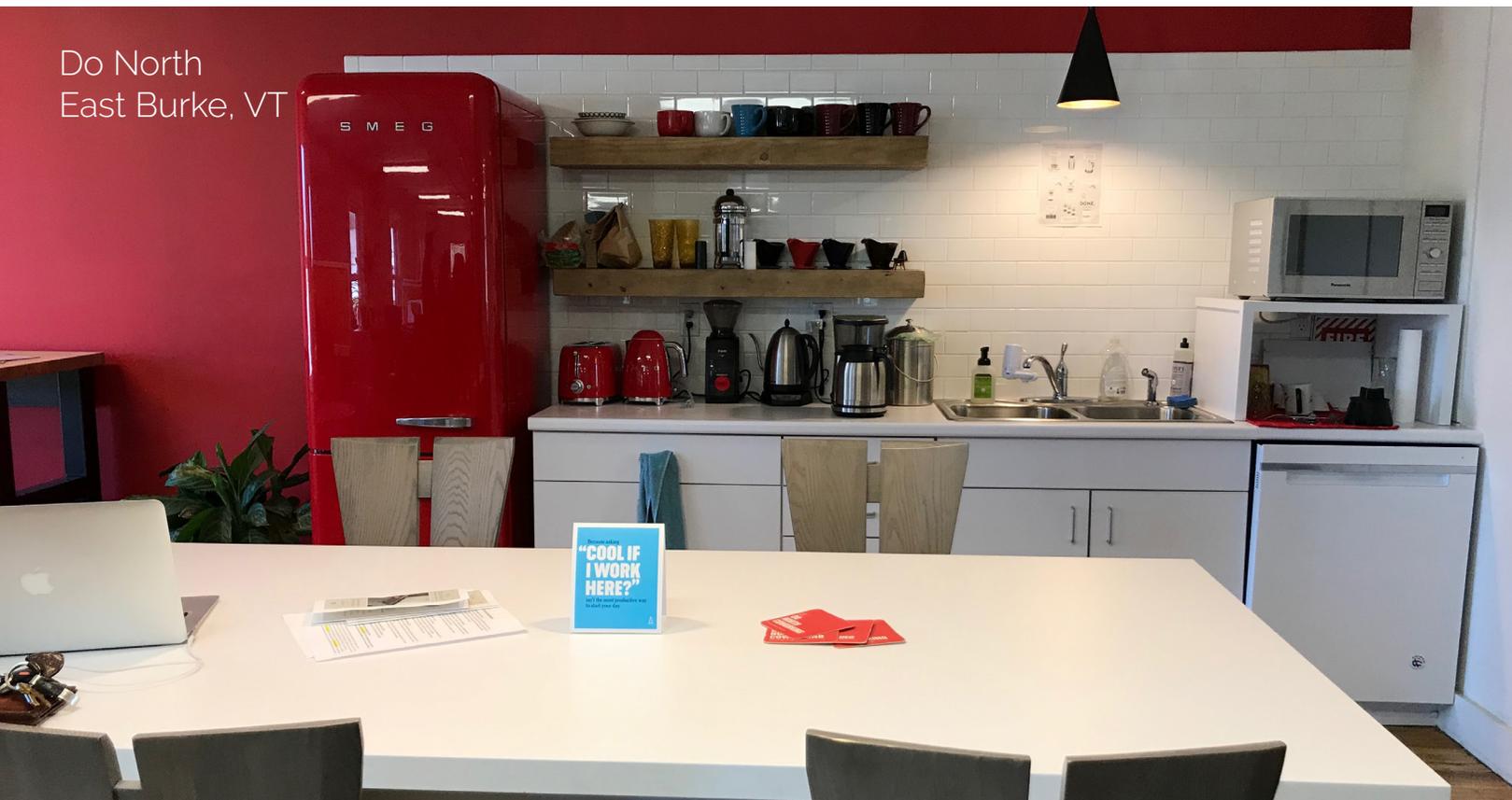
Incorporating local arts and local foods can be done in SO many ways- even in very small communities. Examples include:

- Advance the healing arts for community development purposes.
- Crowdfunding for our first Artist in residency
- Engage artists in the climate change discussion and access their unique ways of expression and storytelling
- Art wall for mixed demographics to make art accessible – curate shows in the walls of the business accelerator

Ownership & Control

New employee Owned Opportunities emerged within the NE Kingdom creative economy value chain such as Craft Brews, Glass art, Furniture have all emerged and are considered cluster collaborations. Safe Art is a non profit with a board and 6 part time staff members and are currently transitioning to a decentralized leadership model.

Do North
East Burke, VT





Energy

VEIC is a non-profit that acquires its funds through membership dues, projects and fee-for services for Local Units of Government (LUGS). Their mission aligns nicely with partners from the Tillotson Foundations and WealthWorks has been an innovative approach for VEIC. They convened many partners to address gaps and took a multipronged approach. VEIC did not sell the value proposition based on morality or climate – they focused on the economics of providing opportunities for energy assistance to low-income population. VEIC sees the WealthWorks approach to be illuminating as far as what can be achieved – but it's not intuitive, it takes work. The "convene and connect" approach is more helpful than the assertive leadership. Building local capacities is hard and the pace of progression is slow

Clean Energy NH learned that they needed to build the demand for energy efficiency through community engagement and education. They built the demand for energy efficiency by implementing 2 programs: energy circuit rider and a weatherization program.

Fahe is a CDFI doing some innovative work in Kentucky. Through Fahe 85 jobs were created, 8 EE homes built – primarily construction jobs created, some OJT and worked with local schools. They forged connections with an unusual partner, the utility companies. Fahe is marketed as a one stop shop for energy efficiency repairs. They completed audits – but were they were costly. Fahe can subsidize – though people weren't taking advantage because they didn't think it could be for free. People could get an EE loan for up to 20K. A loan pool of 175K was provided by the Regional Development Commission. When interest was lowered, more middle-income families took advantage. Interest was lowered from 4% to 2%.

The top challenge for these groups is working through the regulatory changes from state to state.

Strategies developed to address concerns:

Seeking to be more proactive vs. reacting to the will of the people i.e. seeking to be more assertive.

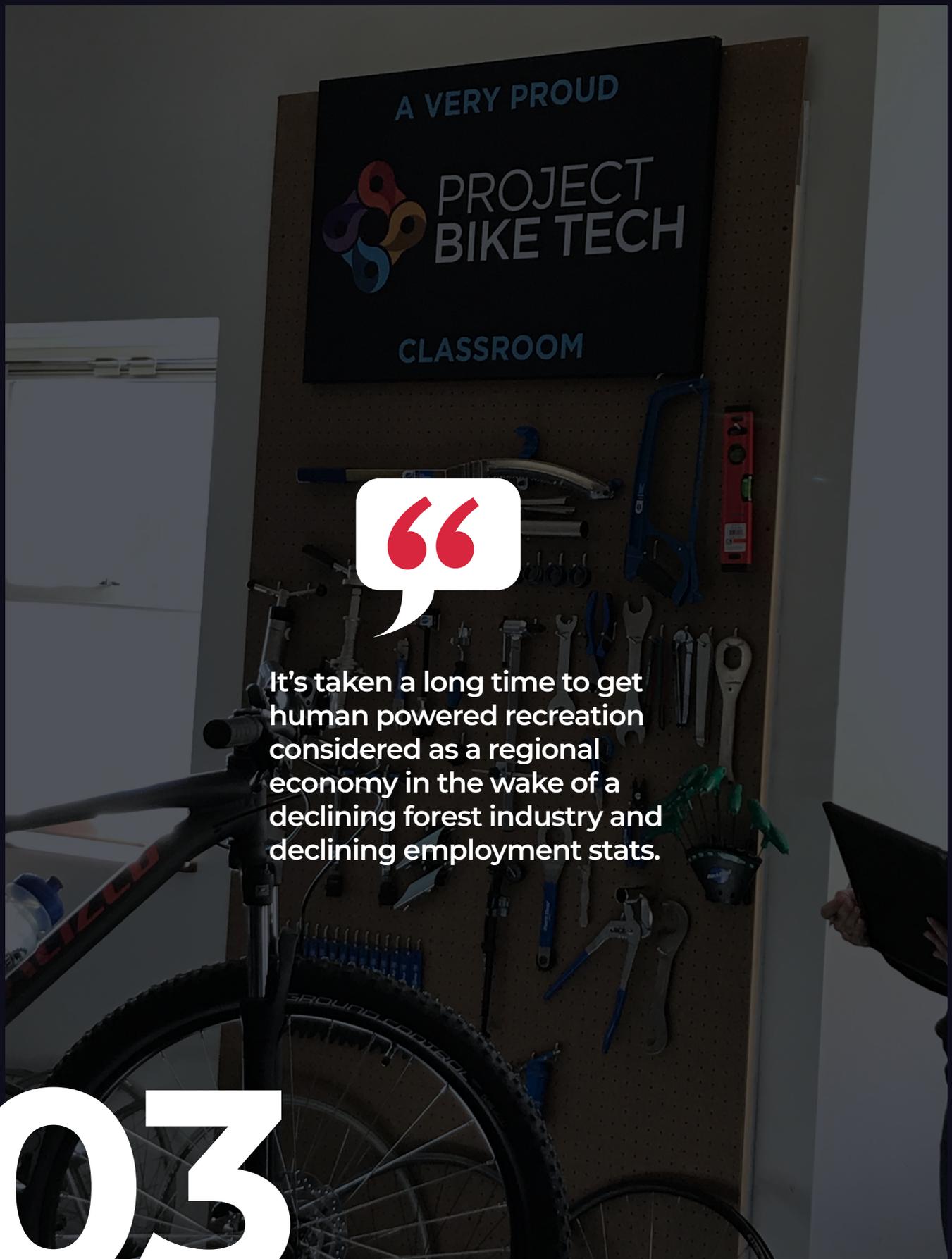
R5DC Actionable Ideas

R5DC can incorporate energy audits into our business loans as a condition of the loan and build that cost into the origination fees. Talk to RREAL about this...what an important system change!!! We need to call out uncontrollable factors from the logic models.

“

Balancing solutions between local grassroots initiatives with changes stemming from policy/regulations on utility programs - building local capacity is hard!

02



It's taken a long time to get human powered recreation considered as a regional economy in the wake of a declining forest industry and declining employment stats.

03



Human Powered Recreation

A substantial element of the larger outdoor active lifestyle market enhances existing capital and creates new assets that generate significant jobs, income streams and taxes.

Demand, Inclusivity & Engagement

It's taken a long time to get human powered recreation considered as a regional economy in the wake of a declining forest industry and declining employment stats.

Organizations worked hard to conduct meetings at convenient locations at times – 47 meetings in person and by phone in addition to the several facilitated workshops. There were challenges connecting to Quebec. The groups used information of water paddle industry including the "River Code".

For the 740 miles of trail that butts up against Canada. New and old community spark plugs created local engagement and have solid grasp on WealthWorks model. There has been intention on the emerging student workforce as part of the engagement. Extensive efforts to unite East/West sides of City of Burk. The Northern Kingdom Trail a 25 yr old non-profit worked on a feasibility study to deal with pressure on the community by of the masses of people accessing the trail. Engagement included voices from the "New Working Landscape" – 97 private landowners offering public use on private land for the trail systems.

Founded by local people is a small group celebrating 25 years of working on the Kingdom Trails. The idea started as a collaboration between the 2 areas of the trail and bringing them together. Noting that one side of town is more affluent than the other, bringing together is important. Many skills have been gained through

the process and the economic impact study that was completed helps to show the importance of the trail and its reason for existing as a shared use trail. From the most recent economic impact study in 2016, there were 95,000 visits and 85% of the visitors were out of state. People spend an average of \$120/day (gas, food, lodging) which equates to \$10 million/yr. 78% of that comes back to the people of Vermont. They've built great relationships with fire brigade and local health care. Recognized that the number of visitors puts a stress on the public resources and roads – have applied for grants to do a rehab between the two areas – to widen the road, add bike lane, repave, etc. Also did a USDA grant for a feasibility study to see recommendations on trail capacity.

Realizing that relationships are important to the trails and that the landowners themselves are a threat to the success of the trail, the partner understand the responsibility they have to educate landowners in the succession planning process to help ensure the access to the trails.

Due to healthy relationships formed community leaders have been able to have the discussions regarding safety. If local hospital is experiencing a high volume of people with an injury sustained on the trail, they reach out to the Kingdom Trails organization to inform them of a possible hazard in the area. The trail organizations get more safety information out to the public. They know they can't satisfy the experience of the visitor independently and collaborations must occur between entities.

Analysis Based on WealthWorks Capitals



Individual

Many new skills have been gained by business owners, residents and local units of government within the Northeast Kingdom human powered recreation value chain.

Given the 740 miles long distance paddling trail, international in that it dips into Quebec, Governments had to learn to communicate and collaborate for access points, safety signage, information.

Local organization learned to negotiate the land owner usage – work with state, public and private land owners along the trails. In the NE states landowners are protected from liabilities from public use on private land. New skills gained by organizations who continue to work with landowners in their succession planning for if/when land ownership changes. Land owners are not required to be part of this trail system thus partner skills to express the value has become part of the local culture.

At the Littleton bike shop students are wanting more of the career exploration and are learning a ton of new skills that add value to the human recreation economy. Bike trails and bike repair goes hand in hand and those who do the bike repairs have a job right out of training. The community is learning that there is a need for workforce to help maintain and increase the economic impact of the trail system. By having a bike tech program through school students are learning the high demand and livable wage skills.

"There was a kid who couldn't hold a screwdriver last month and who now can build a whole bike". The improvements the students have made personally and increasing community awareness of this program has everyone excited. Working with existing workforce and temp agencies – build additional/transferrable skills.



Intellectual

New forms of doing the work emerged and sparks of innovation or creativity were clear in the Northeast Kingdom human powered recreation value chain. "It's the physical manifestation of creating a destination"

Taking in the existing assets including the views, trees, topography to build this economy. The natural infrastructure is already there, and the region is building off of what's there; guides, services, dining, lodging, canoe trail. There are economic benefits; but also had to identify the complications (canoes vs fisherman). A "river code" was developed as a new form of how to do business in this economy and the region determined that a permit to be a guide was not necessary, which is different from how guides must conduct their businesses across the state border in Maine. In the summer small crews do stewardship projects along the trail.

The region is working creative ways to market what they have/are/do such as hosting a "rec after hours" for marketing/promotion and partners are learning to cross promote the small pockets of things happening. The "rec after hours" is an informal gathering modeled after chamber after hours for people to come together and recreate on the trails together. It was happening on a scheduled basis and is now happening organically and within sectors. Bike group is now meeting on their own to see what they can do.

Human powered rec value chain is different, as some of these things would be happening but more likely in the more affluent areas. What is different is where they are combining the traditional leaders with newer leaders in the area. The region may not have had access to the leaders and funders and are working on building social and political capitals via seeking more elders able and willing to show the ways while learning new ways of doing things as well from the newer leaders.

At the Bike shop, in addition to learning the bike tech and bike repair skills the goal is to expand and teach the students the ins and outs of owning a bike shop themselves. It's a STEM program on steroids. Showing students all of the options from being a bike mechanic, bike shop owner, bike/trail guide. Bike mechanic is the top job in NH - \$12-\$15/hr. Since this program is brand new there is lots of room for growth and expansion. The current instructor is passionate about his role and will help the program grow and be incredibly successful. Students are already being recruited to help out trails and bike shops during the summer months.



Natural

North Canoe Trail was founded in the year 2000 and is 740 miles long. The trail is economic dependent on forestry products such as paper, wood working, and logging. The outdoor recreational economy is a driving force in this geographical area. The logging industry used to employ many people and they would head into the forest in groups but that has now transitioned to a 2-man job with one being an operator and the other being a transporter. So, the forest industry still exists but advancements in how logging is done has reduced the number of jobs available in that field. North Canoe Trail environmental concerns include clean water throughout the canoe trail. This can be accomplished by having people adopt a 10 – 15-mile section of the canoe trail, paddle it monthly, and report back what they see or if there are any problems.

The Kingdom Trail Network is a 120+ mile long multi-use trail and accessible in all 4 seasons. This trail network is seen as a destination and many people who use the trails are from out of state. The town comes alive on weekends because of this trail system and is the driving factor behind their successful economy. Kingdom Trail environmental concerns include stress on infrastructure such as the trails themselves. The high levels of use the trail gets can create problems in the future but upgrades to the trail has been discussed.

In Danville, VT a space for arts and events was created along with creating the city more pedestrian friendly. The city itself is dissected by Highway 2 which causes cars to come through town at high speeds and creates an obstacle to make the city pedestrian friendly. No natural resources were reinvested but the trail makes them more accessible so in the long run it will pay off.



Built

North Canoe Trail partners are looking to add recreational infrastructure such as signs, canoe landings, and maps. Other infrastructure needed in the area is broadband as it is estimated that half of the population is telecommunicating. The reality of limited cell service and limited affordable broadband is deterring many people from living in the area. The canoe trail goes through private land and in terms of percentages it goes through nearly 75% private and 25% public land which can make it difficult to get landowners approval for signs and canoe landings.

Danville, VT trail connectivity is one of the main concerns in terms of infrastructure for Danville. They estimate they need 15 – 20 miles of trail to connect trails but funding is an issue. To make the city more pedestrian friendly they added sidewalks and shoulders to roads and also added walking times to destinations throughout the city which has also helped the city be multi modal friendly as well. Another interesting point brought up was about how the trail is being used. It was stated that during the week it is mainly older locals using the trail which brings up the point that locals are aging in place and happy where they are living.

Kingdom Trail new infrastructure the trail hopes to get include widening roads, adding bike lanes, and rehab a part of the trail. They are also looking to extend the trail on land they have already purchased at around \$900,000. Zoning challenges included the trail going through private property. Luckily landowners are protected by statute from people using their land, or simply they are not liable. The trail board hopes to keep good relationships with the private land owners by educating the landowners about the trail and sending out surveys. One threat they face is losing open private property when people move away, and new land owners take over. This has not been an issue yet but remains a concern.



Political

New systems or policies have offered exciting new opportunities for the human powered recreation value chain. The relationships with landowners are unique due to the education that has taken place regarding how sister-market advertising in Canada has positively impacted the economies of both countries, states, and localities.

Systems change has happened with two nonprofits coming together and are two years into their collective work. "Recafter hours" was a systems change in social capital, now being led by community members which means the strategy has long term sustainability. Danville green Group felt discouraged after meeting with state officials but hopeful for continued talks and speed reduction in area to help improve the overall space for a better sense of connectedness between villages and safety. Trail connectivity is a priority for the group but need funding.

The demographic of the current trail users is the older population but that is reflective of the community and people are wanting to stay active and in place. Noted that it varies depending on time of day and day of week. During the week day its mostly older people utilizing the trail. Evenings and weekends are more utilized by families. Danville construction of green space took 2 summers, and the key need was getting other key businesses on board. The National Governor's Association collaborated with lots of public involvement. It helped by being pedestrian friendly as multi modal transportation is important component to connect villages.



A systems change in social capital is now being led by community members which means the strategy has long term sustainability.



Financial

How were funds acquired?

- Funds for the Danville Green road/park project were acquired through an 80% state dept. of commerce grant with a 20% local match.
- Primarily through philanthropic organizations such as the Tillotson foundation, Watersheds, private land owners and from annual dogsledding events.
- A \$50k seed grant was applied for and awarded to launch the bike tech program.
- Nonprofits applied for and received a \$100k community facilities grant which was used for building renovations.
- Kingdom Trails is a nonprofit with a 9-member board. Its funds are mainly obtained through member fees, trail user fees/memberships, events, sponsors, and grants.

Any innovative access to capital or financial investments in other forms of capital? (scholarships/intellectual individuals)

- Do North asks a \$120 fee for use of the co working space.
- Dog sledding events
- Many of the events and fests they host to raise funds are innovative and unique. They also do capital campaigns through mini retail, marketing, and sponsorships.

Economic challenges

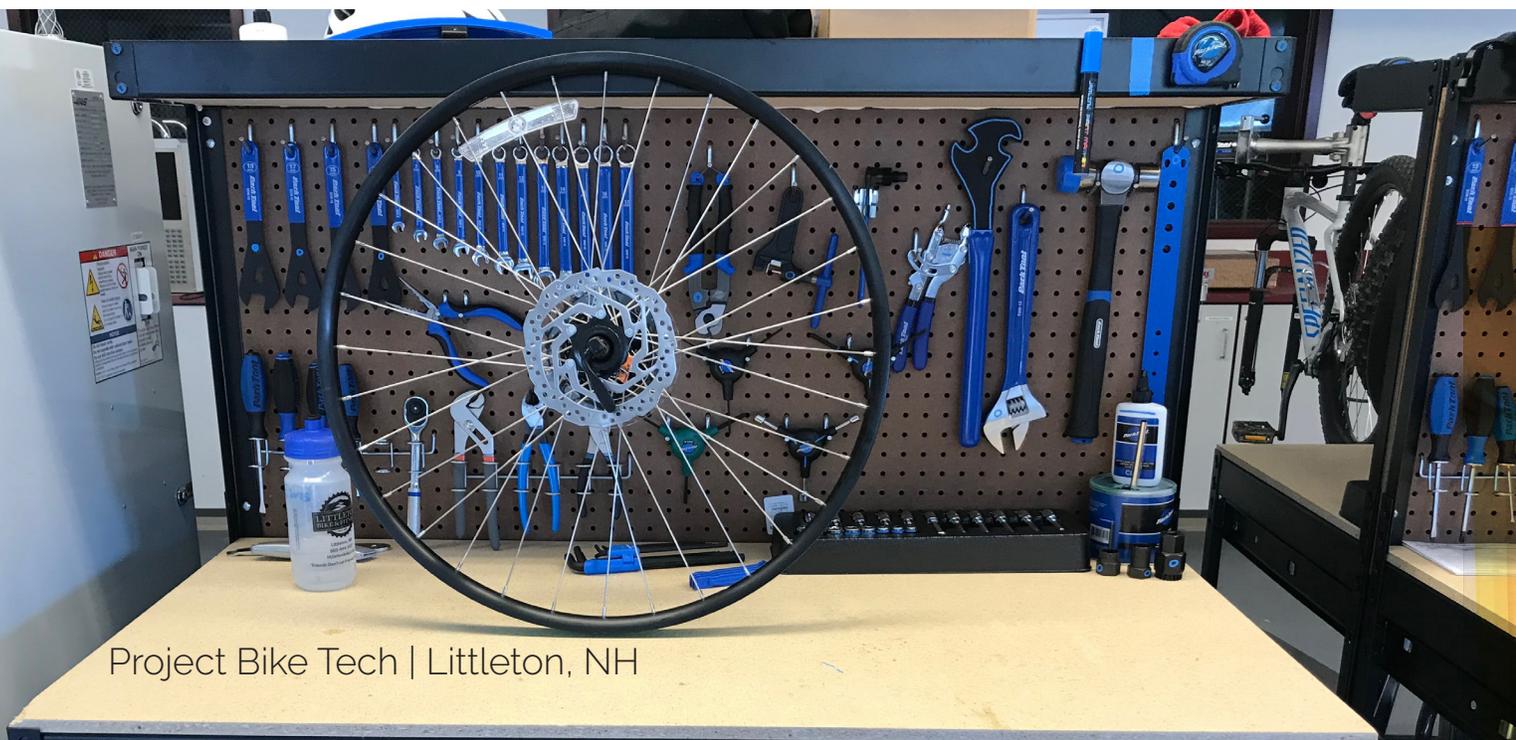
- For programs in their pilot year, and while they have estimates, the cost of operating the program is yet to be determined.
- DoNorth daily expense of operation during the early months of the co working space as they were attracting their first workers.
- Consultant recommendations included:
 - o Walking audit
 - o Better connections between trails and sidewalks
 - o Incorporation of local artist in planning process and outcomes
 - o Utilize the greenspace for artisans, makers and farmers

markets as well as other events.

- o Enhanced wayfinding and signage
- o Pedestrian refuges at crossings
- o Multimodal transportation plan
- The recreation economy is struggling to find independence from legacy industries.
- Most often business in VT look to the south markets i.e. Boston, New Jersey and New York, however, there lies another large market just to the north, that is often overlooked: Quebec Canada. This poses a huge economic opportunity.
- Shared funding source to connect trail investments.
- Proving Economic Impact of Trails
- Peak season capacity
 - o Congestion
 - o Emergency services

What strategies were developed to address concerns?

- Most often business in VT look to the south markets i.e. Boston, New Jersey and New York, however, there lies another large market just to the north, that is often overlooked: Quebec Canada. This poses a huge economic opportunity.
- Employee owned is becoming more popular but difficult because the much is part time/seasons.
- Aesthetics is the key to attracting business/workers. The renovation, and design elements that went into the space have been the biggest draw.
- Hired a consultant to administer a survey and economic impact study via paper, email, and person on the street. Outcomes included \$135k annually from trail visitors, 38% of which comes from Canada, 85% are from out of state, Each individual on avg. spends between \$115 and \$125 per day. Utilizing this data to draw additional investments into the region.



Project Bike Tech | Littleton, NH



New relationships and networks have emerged as a result of the human powered recreation value chain development.

New partnerships at the local Colonial Theater has connected businesses/towns/lenders/land managers and the Theatre folks have learned that economic development is not just a Chamber thing – just learning how to get everyone in a room socially to see what happens and the dialog that can take place and what new ideas can emerge.

Danville, VT created The Green- a common space in the center of town that hosts festivals, farmer's markets and movie nights. In addition to this space, roadways and bike paths needed updating to accommodate this new flow of people. Artists were involved in the creation of these updates, assisting with placemaking and wayfinding signage. Two communities are connected by the Rail Trail, which is utilized by bikers and snowmobilers. There is currently collaboration with the state of VT to connect two 16-mile sections of the trail. These updates will allow more people to move easily between the communities in a variety of ways.

Northern Kingdom Trail and North Forest Canoe Trail both Vermont and New Hampshire have a "no liability" policy for landowners, so there has been a long tradition in these states allowing the public to utilize private land. This allows for trail systems such as these to exist. These trail systems include camping sites and numerous access points. Businesses connected with these trail systems are not interested in growing bigger, they are interested in sustainability which means there is more opportunity for entrepreneurship and small business development.

Relationships with the fire brigade for trail safety.
Littleton Bike Program at high school initiated by a student who was interested in learning the skill of bike maintenance.
Collaboration with other schools to share this program.
Attracting girls to the program in a traditionally male dominated field. Allows students to gain skills that can be used for part time jobs during the summer months.

Top social/cultural challenges and strategies developed to address concerns:

Challenge – Decline of forest economy

Strategies –

- Community groups were formed to help facilitate needs/issues.
- Created a 'river code' to help with shared use.
- Rec After Hours – people came together in an organic way to hang out with others who were interested in the trails.

Challenge - Gaps to address are workforce and career development.

Strategy - Connecting with the high schools for succession planning.

Challenge - Lack of broadband affects the smaller towns in building an economy around the canoe trail.

Smaller town of East Burke struggles with traffic congestion on the weekends with families, bikers, visitors- the trail headquarters has outgrown the town. Infrastructure is at capacity.

Strategy - Working with USDA to do a feasibility study on these issues.



Greater connection to artists- artists and economic engines as part of the cultural awareness. Benefit to middle and upper class is more immediate – takes more effort to connect marginalized populations to these opportunities and we know that rural needs assistance with the diversity shift that is happening in the US. Marginalized populations, those on the geographic fringes will benefit from what's already happening but will also be tethered to future projects and process. This region is thoughtful of how they all will have equitable access. Intention is being talked about – what they can do to reduce their vulnerability and the cost – not just in economic development but also cultural preservation.

DO
NORTH
COWORKING

Debrief - R5DC Important Takeaways

Rural has been left behind in the diversity shift that is happening in the US- I know I have thought of this in some way before but the way it was stated and where we were at the time just has a profound impact on the day.

The development of a "rivercode" helped to create rules of how to interact and treat property exemplified how the public using private land is a very different culture from MN.

Being able to see the trail networks they have in Vermont and New Hampshire and then seeing the trail networks we have within our region made me feel as though we are not using these trails to their full potential. The Cuyuna trail network is recognized throughout the state and yet I do not believe it is connected to any other trail network. These cities and towns embrace their recreation tourists which is something I struggle to see within our region. The Cuyuna Rec. Area has the same potential as Kingdom Trails.

The lens of working on reducing dept in an industry is fascinating and a way to think deeper about financial capital. Important for us to ask: What is the "spillage" of the industry? Is a great program that segued to business development if done full circle.

The Vermont law exempting private property owners from liability of others on their property without the owner's knowledge, provides a great example of the impact that state legislation can have locally.

Simple but targeted solutions can transform neighborhoods, and communities. A key element in a thriving economy is workforce development and in this case the recreation economy, needed to train young people to fill a key gap.

Learning the difference between an incubator and an entrepreneur center/co working space will be important for our region.

Being in the transportation field I really enjoyed seeing a successful trail network and having it being used from the

Ownership & Control

Have any employee Owned Opportunities emerged?

- NFCT is looking for personable people, with business acumen, experience with Excel spreadsheets, and recruits from Prescott University and White Mountain Community College.

- NFCT and the recreation economy are in the process of developing a workforce for this sector of the economy.

- Local bike shop owner was hired to instruct the course and has subsequently hired several of the students to work in the bike shop, others have gone on to work elsewhere.

Are new businesses emerging that link from the VC?

- Several employers started out using the co working space, but then expanded and moved on to either renting other space, or into their own space altogether.

- Several students have expressed their interest in either starting their own businesses or getting into the recreation economy workforce.

- The recreation economy has been identified as a VC and several businesses have already emerged and continue to emerge as the recreation economy continues to grow.

DoNorth business accelerator audience is anyone who has the initiative and drive. Solves the issue for many who have limited access to internet. Those who aren't able to expand their internet presence now can. Provides soft landings for those who are moving into the area and lends self to higher wages. DoNorth is helping to build capacity for those entrepreneurs that don't currently have the space needed. Several businesses have started and become successful such as: Bag Balm and drone footage for forestry management. Learned it was helpful to have the freight elevator.

locals as well as the tourists. I see a lot of cities within our region wanting to get to that level of becoming a recreation destination.

Trail development in Minnesota must proceed very differently than it does in Vermont due to a completely different culture/mindset around private property rights.

The Danville Green road/park project came about due to the lack of shoulders, on a narrow 2-way street with no sidewalks that surrounded an idyllic greenspace with tons of potential.

Seeking to assist communities with small, simple, targeted solutions that can transform neighborhoods making them more vibrant.

This experience has helped me understand the benefits of a co working space, what it is, and how it might be beneficial to Region Five. Ultimately, the experience helped me better see the possibilities and impacts a similar space could have in Region Five.

We MUST incorporate business training alongside culinary training in the Bus Accelerator and these coworking spaces are part of other economies such as a human powered recreation economy or a tourism economy.

R5DC Actionable Ideas

Multi lingual directions at the Kingdom Trails signage is easily replicable.

Report to NWF, BUSH and others how our social capital strategies have long term sustainability.

I liked the idea of an Employee Study...not an employer study... but an EMPLOYEE STUDY – maybe an EDA fundable project.

Continue efforts to establish a co-working space along with business accelerator spaces similar to DONORTH but with our own flavor.

The catalyst for **INNOVATION, COLLABORATION, AND EDUCATION.**

Do North
East Burke, VT

04

What Did We Learn?

‘An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.’ - Benjamin Franklin

Living off the grid for artist in residence “Food and Art”
Friday nights

- Guests come and go teach and present
- Summer 1-2 months
- Fall - 3 weeks

Artists have attracted other artists. Philosophy of people contribute what they can when they can...less convincing than I typically see. Lots of others working on mentorships of younger farmers from older farmers.

The development of a “rivercode” helped to create rules of how to interact and treat property.

The public using private land is a very different culture from MN.

About “side hustles”

“Do North Coworking” space was by far the most impactful on me. SO MANY new ideas. I LOVED the Do North building and approach.

The lens of working on reducing dept in an industry is fascinating and a way to think deeper about financial capital. What is the “spillage” of the industry?

An idea that just came to me today...WE CAN incorporate energy audits into our business loans as a condition of the loan an build that cost into the origination fees. TALK to RREAL about this...what a CRAZY GREAT system change!!!

Helping people navigate legislation like Act 250 regulations

Closed storefronts are excellent places for local arts, community ventures, smaller innovative ideas to thrive.

Rural has been left behind in the diversity shift that is happening in the US- I know I have thought of this in some way before but the way it was stated and where we were at the time just has a profound impact on the day.

*Also see R5DC Important Takeaways in each section

How Does This Change Our Work?

“If you always do what you have always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got.”
- Henry Ford

Crowdfunding for our first Artist in residency

Engage artists in the climate change discussion and access their unique ways of expression and storytelling

Art wall for mixed demographics to make art accessible – curate shows in the walls of the business accelerator

Multi lingual directions at the Kingdom Trails signage is easily replicable

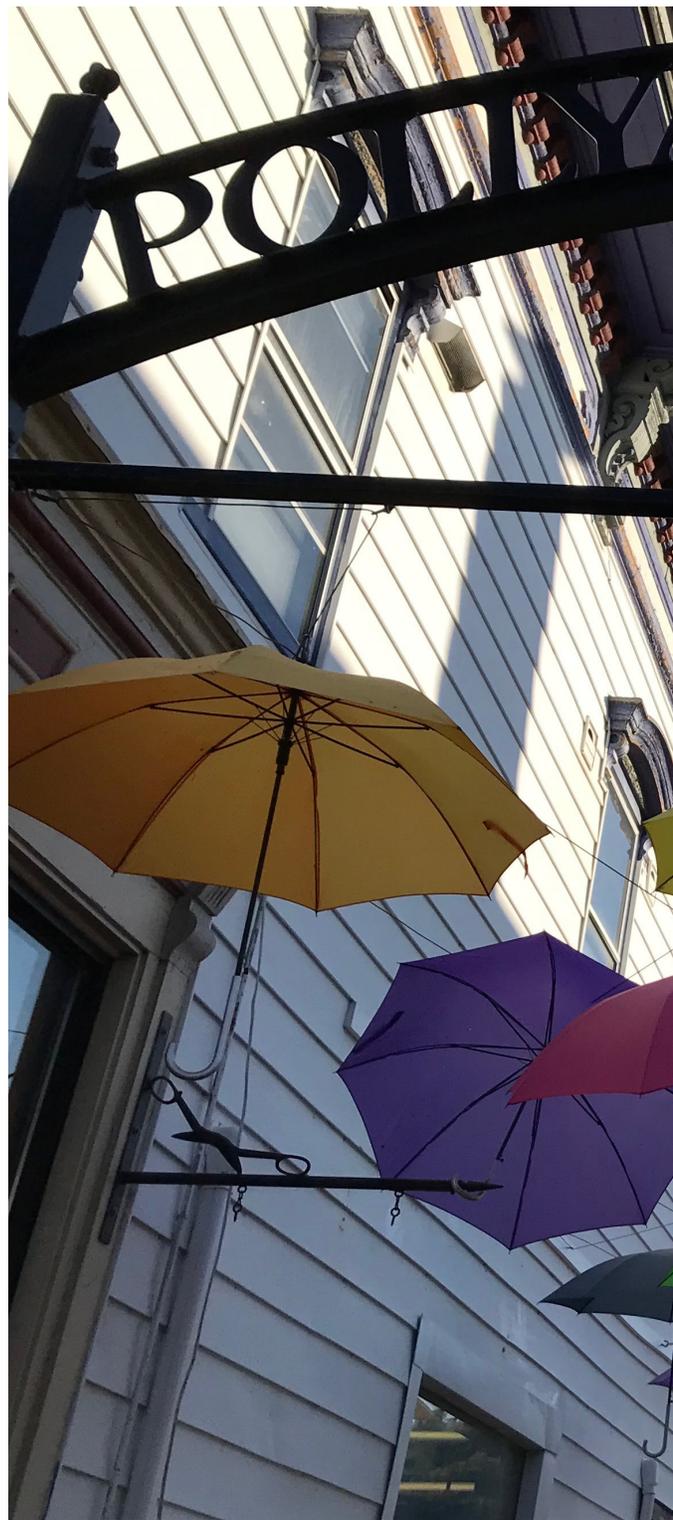
Report to NAWF, BUSH and others if/how our social capital strategies have long term sustainability

I liked the idea of an Employee Study...not an employer study...but an EMPLOYEE STUDY – maybe an EDA fundable project.

Call out uncontrollable factors from the logic models

Incorporating local arts and local foods can be done in SO many ways- even in very small communities. I see our empty storefronts in a whole new light. I also am interested in the healing arts- I know that this is something within our region but we have never fully engaged with it for community development purposes.

Not change anything- it reinforced why I do what I do- it validated the work of R5DC in rural spaces.



05

POLLYANNA GATEWAY



Pollyanna Gateway
Littleton, NH



Acknowledgements

We are so grateful to our hosts for sharing their stories with us. We appreciate their time, their energy, and the work they do in their communities. Learning from our friends and colleagues in the NE Kingdom was such a great honor and blessing. We were delighted to spend time with you in your region and learn from each of you! You are awesome! Thanks!



Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission
 BALE
 The Sable Project
 Chelsea Art Collective
 North Common Café & Arts
 SafeArt
 Kellogg-Hubbard Library,
 Northern Forest Canoe Trail,
 NEVTRC
 Danville, VT- art & transportation
 Fairbanks, etc., St. Johnsbury, VT
 Kingdom Trails, Lyndon, VT
 Do North, East Burke, VT
 Colonial Theater
 Coal Mountain Café
 Colonial Theater
 Littleton High School
 Littleton Bike Shop
 Beale House, Littleton, NH
 Tillotson Fund

Peter and Kimberly
 Chris Wood
 Otto Pierce
 Chelsea, VT
 Sarah Caouette
 Tracy Penfield
 Montpelier, VT
 Karrie Thomas
 Jody Fried
 Alison Low
 Tara Holt
 Abby Long
 Evan Carlson
 Bethlehem, NH
 Colleen
 Stephen Dignazio
 Littleton, NH
 Dave Harkless
 Neil & Louise

thank
 you



Learning Journey Agenda



Northeast Kingdom Learning Journey September 17-19, 2019

Tuesday, September 17:

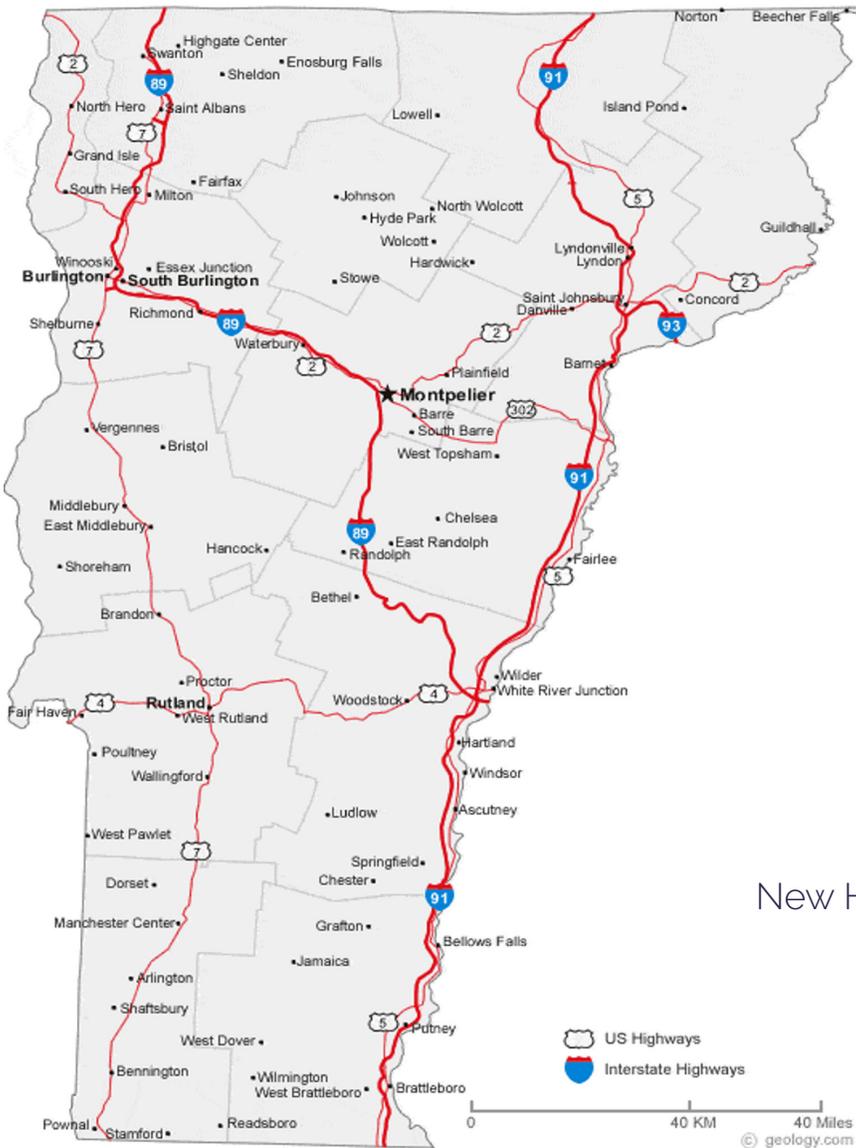
9:00am-10:00am	TRORC, Woodstock VT BALE The Sable Project	Peter and Kimberly Chris Wood Otto Pierce
11:00am-12:30pm	Chelsea Art Collective, Chelsea, VT North Common Café & Arts SafeArt	Sarah Caouette Tracy Penfield
2:30pm-4:00pm	Kellogg-Hubbard Library, Montpelier, VT Northern Forest Canoe Trail	Karrie Thomas

Wednesday, September 18:

8:00am-noon	NEVTRC, St. Johnsbury, VT Danville, VT- art & transportation Fairbanks, etc., St. Johnsbury, VT Kingdom Trails, Lyndon, VT Do North, East Burke, VT	Jody Fried Alison Low Tara Holt Abby Long Evan Carlson
1:00pm-2:45pm	Colonial Theater, Bethlehem, NH Coal Mountain Café Colonial Theater	Colleen Stephen Dignazio
3:00pm-4:30pm	Littleton High School, Littleton, NH Littleton Bike Shop	Dave Harkless
6:00pm	Beale House, Littleton, NH Dinner	Neil & Louise Tillotson Fund



Learning Journey Map



Vermont



New Hampshire

08



REGION FIVE

Development Commission



“Experiencing a rural economy outside of your own community is a great way to generate ideas and enthusiasm that can be brought back home.”

Dawn Espe

“Vermont and New Hampshire - you did not disappoint. Absolutely incredible views and very exciting work being done in the creative, human powered recreation and energy economies. What a fantastic opportunity!”

Staci Headley



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