



Northeast
Sustainable Agriculture
Research and Education

Greenbrier Valley Region **AGRITOURISM**



Martin Hall Agency & WVU Extension

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MEET THE TEAM

Account Director



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Executive Summary

The Ask

In August of 2023, WVU Extension had a mission. Notorious for its stellar views and the multi-generational legacy of its larger tourism destinations, the Greenbrier Valley region has no problem attracting thousands of visitors annually. Simultaneously, the region boasts dozens of locally-owned tourism offerings rooted in agriculture. Just a ten-minute drive from any nationally acclaimed destination is an endless view of sprawling emerald farms dotted with livestock, set against a stunning mountainous backdrop. From cideries to maple syrup and u-pick blueberry farms, the locals of the Greenbrier Valley region offer a world of dynamic agritourism just awaiting visitors. These people - West Virginia's natives - demonstrate the Appalachian spirit and are eager to share their way of life with anyone who comes by. The problem? No one's coming - despite demonstrating interest, visitors don't even know these places exist.

Research background, insights, and analysis:

The research grounded itself in the qualitative thoughts and perspectives of visitors, agritourism operators, and other stakeholders. Five interviews were conducted, analyzed an agritourism survey with over 400 respondents, and conducted a content analysis of over 300 web reviews to assess online visitor perceptions. The data collected helped us to establish an understanding of the target audiences and determine the best ways to reach them.

From research, it was found that while most people enjoy the scenic drive that the region offers, they do not want to get lost when their GPS refuses to work as a result of no cell service. The second complication that was found was that many agribusinesses in the area are family-owned and operated so they do not have enough staff to be open and operating every day of the week, they are not committed to marketing their business on their own. As an agribusiness first, they lack the marketing knowledge, time and interest in promoting their business as a tourist destination. It was also learned that the audiences value community-oriented business practices and are more likely to spend their money at places that identify as such. This lead to the governing brand idea "What else 'ya gonna do today" this message is that agritourism is an activity that can be apart of any great day.

Executive Summary

The Target Audiences

From the interviews and content analysis, it was learned that the target audiences include young families with children, agribusiness operators and older, retired adults. One of the target audiences seeks a place for families to bring their children, as they provide the laid-back educational experience where parents can take a step back and enjoy the atmosphere without having to worry if their kid is getting into something they shouldn't. The second target audience is agribusiness operators in the Greenbrier Valley. In an interview it was learned that many agribusiness operators in the region tend to see surrounding businesses as a competition instead of an opportunity for partnership. The last target audience was upper-middle class adults. Some of the interviewees noted that the number of people moving into the Greenbrier Valley was gradually increasing every year as more and more people are picking it as their retirement destination.

Execution

Research led us to the campaign recommendations. The audiences all commonly shared an appreciation for scenic views and a distaste for not knowing where they were. The solution was to lean into this infrastructure issue, treating it as a distinctive feature of the region. Four strategies were developed for the campaign cross-promotion, media relations, community relations and demonstrated reviews. A scenic map was created that will be physically placed in all the businesses featured, connecting each one with the next. To draw visitors from anchor businesses, a promotional package was created featuring a puzzle of the map accompanied by a welcome booklet describing the campaign that will be sent to stakeholders in the area who frequently interact with the target audience, encouraging them to direct visitors to the campaign. To improve SEO, an issue noted during the content analysis, signage was developed to be placed in all participating businesses encouraging visitors to leave reviews. To tie all of the efforts together, a logo was made to be printed as window decals, stickers and street signage.

Executive Summary

A brand guide was created to implement in every aspect of the campaign, and ensured that each piece of the initiative drew attention back to the map and the goal of bringing visitors from one destination to the next. Being community-oriented was a top priority for the target audiences, so developing community ties was important through the partnership map. By developing one central brand identity for every participating business, these operators could get the promotional exposure they need without requiring them to lift a finger.

To ensure work reaches those outside the sector, a media strategy was developed. The refreshed website content includes a media kit, and pitches, press releases, and a media kit puzzle that will be sent to over 20 media contacts.

Evaluation/objectives

Map and web traffic

To add a detailed section to the WVU Extension website about the agritourism offerings in the area, information about the initiative and more information about the Greenbrier Valley. The objective is to gain 300 page views on the website by three weeks after launch. This establishes an increase of knowledge about agritourism in the region.

QR code scans - promoting reviews

One of the developments that is expected to show results is creating QR codes for the WVU extension website and the business in Greenbrier Valley. This will be executed by displaying QR codes in the business to leave a review of the experience they had at the agribusiness. Results will be tracked over time to see what works and what doesn't. The WVU Extension website will have a whole separate QR code to track its results and see how many people visit the website. The objective is to get 100 scans on the QR codes by three weeks after launch.

Earned media

To earn local media attention to inform the public in the area about the initiative. This will be done by sending media kits with press releases and fact sheets to media contacts about the release of the scenic map and seal. The objective is to gain coverage in two media outlets by two weeks after launch.

Background



The Client

WVU Extension Service is a program that provides education and outreach services to the people of West Virginia. Its purpose is “providing trusted and practical educational programs that improve health, education and prosperity. These programs help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills and build a better future,” (WVU Extension, 2023).

The Greenbrier Valley Region

The Greenbrier Valley includes the Greenbrier, Pocahontas, Summers and Monroe counties. The most known attraction in the region is the Greenbrier Resort, sometimes called “America’s Resort”, which is famous for the now decommissioned bunker meant to protect members of Congress. The region is also known for the abundance of outdoor recreation such as hiking trails, the Lost World Caverns, The New River Gorge National Park & Reserve and more. A big event at the New River Gorge & Reserve is Bridge Day, which was attended by nearly 140,000 people last year (Bridge Day Stats & Facts, 2023).

The Problem

Misconceptions about agritourism only being farms, being overshadowing by outdoor recreation activities, ineffective marketing and communication, difficulty in overseeing diverse businesses, and a general lack of awareness about the state's attractions. They struggle to attract visitors, who often favor other regions, and faces internal tensions from permeant residents, including the "not in my backyard" sentiment.

Target Audiences



Paul Daniels

Paul is a 52 year old farmer from White Sulphur Springs WV. He's very hands on, values the tradition and an entrepreneur. He runs his family farm with his wife and occasional help from his adult son.

Megan Smith

Megan is a 35 year old teacher from Alderson WV. She prefers local products so she knows where her goods are coming from. She has two kids and looks for hands on educational experiences for her kids and students.



Peter Casey

Peter a retired 70 year old originally from Baltimore MD. He relocated to Lewisburg in order to enjoy the peace and quiet of his retirement. He values new experiences and is willing to pay more for local goods.



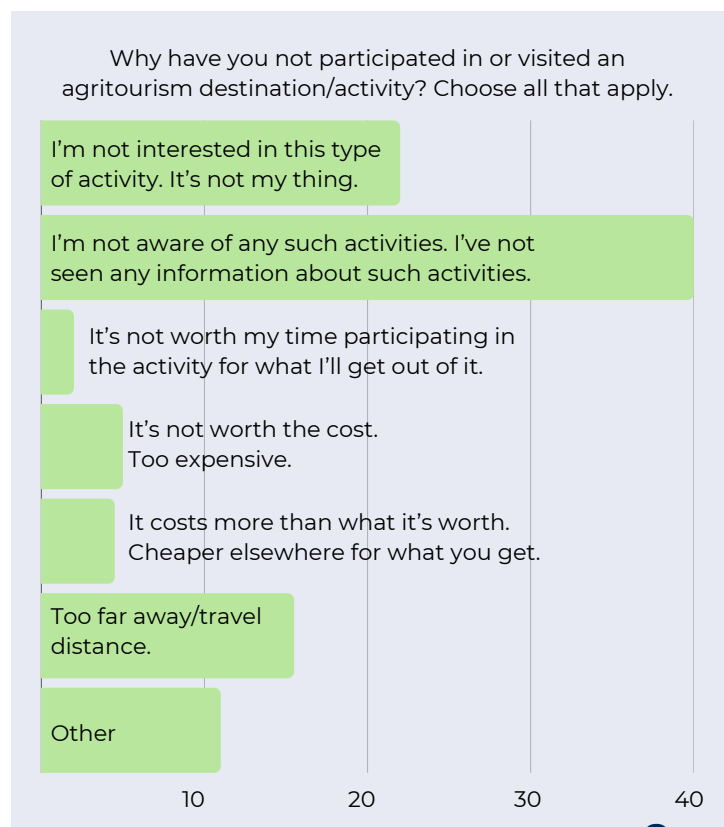
Campaign Foundations

Survey

The survey we analyzed was conducted as a part of a larger project to promote agritourism in West Virginia. This survey asked questions about agritourism trends, audience demographics and insights, attitudes and behaviors of the sample. Since the research team did not conduct the survey, information on the participants can only be deciphered from analysis. There were 400 respondents from the ages of 18 to 75 years old.

The survey allowed for a large set of data to be collected and analyzed. This gave us reliable and consistent information. The survey was read by the research team, who noted relevant questions before creating graphs and analyzing responses to identify key findings. Data was analyzed by reviewing response rates and graphing either averages or raw scores into graphs depending on the type of question.

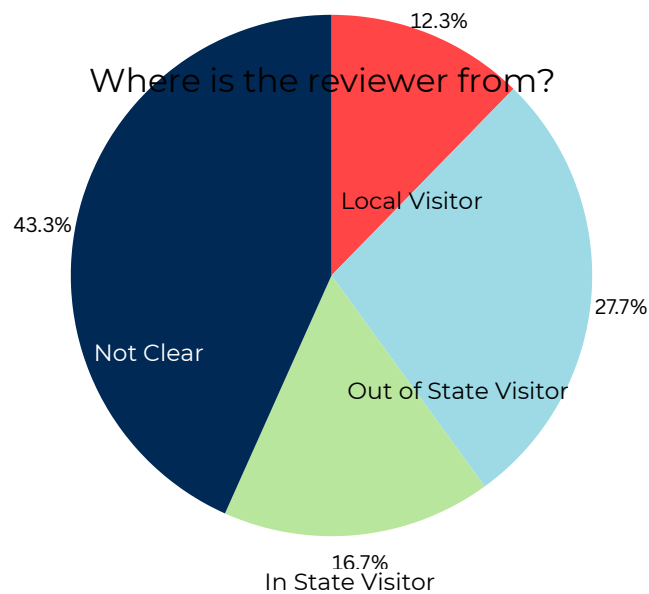
The survey helped inform our audience personas and led us to better understand the problem. The survey indicated that a majority of people that had come to the West Virginia and did not participate in agribusinesses did so because they were unaware of their existence (Appendix A.1). This led us to make one of the primary goals for our campaign to increase awareness of the different opportunities in the Greenbrier Valley. Other main goals we identified from survey analysis were the value of the country drive (Appendix A.2), unique experiences (Appendix A.3) and the desire to support local businesses & community. (Appendix A.4),



Content Analysis

Content analysis was done by coding online reviews for agribusinesses in the Greenbrier Valley. Our goal was to learn how and why people visited agribusinesses, what aspects of agribusiness are compelling enough to prompt a visitor to leave a review, and identify industry strengths and weaknesses. Over 200 reviews were gathered from Facebook, Google Reviews, TripAdvisor and Yelp. To avoid repetition and outdated information, we limited the reviews coded to five for each business, posted after December of 2019.

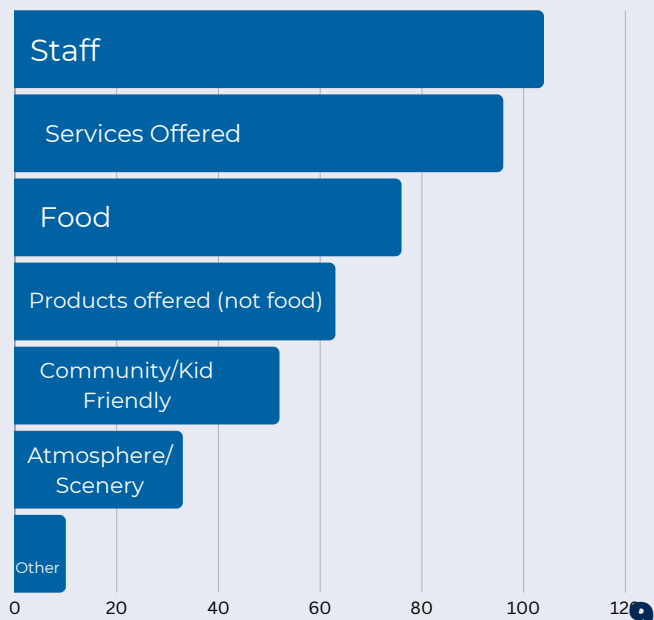
This method was chosen because it was inexpensive, easy to organize and analyze, and allowed us to get a consumer perspective using existing information.



This was backed up by the importance of community to local reviews, in the analysis portion a community section was added because of how often it came up. 52 reviews mentioned a agribusiness being community and/or kid-friendly (Appendix B.2), further helping develop our audience personas.

The content analysis also helped to get a better idea of the kinds of people that were already visiting these businesses. A total of 29% of reviewers coming from In-State (Appendix B.1). This, along with interview information, helped to narrow the scope to targeting local individuals.

Which of the following were mentioned in the review?



Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were chosen as a method of research to collect first hand opinions and knowledge from agribusiness owners and community stakeholders. The five people who were interviewed were involved in the agritourism industry or community leaders in the Greenbrier Valley region. These individuals were selected from different perspectives on the industry to help us develop a more well-rounded understanding of agritourism in the region. All interviews were conducted over Zoom and recorded, then transcribed. The data was analyzed by reviewing the transcripts of the interviews and writing down quotes, statements, or notes relevant to our research.

“I would say at least 50%, if not more, maybe upwards of 70% is families like that, come up.”

One main finding was that for many, visiting a farm is an educational experience in which children learn about where their food comes from. Demonstrating the importance of agriculture at a young age is an important aspect in growing their learning and enhancing new skills, and this is valued by parents.

These interviews gave us a better insight for the operators we would be working with. They are small operations most of the time and do not have the resources or the want most times to advertise and work on the digital presence for their business. They enjoy the hands on part of their job and are less focused on the people and hosting side of things being an agritourism location requires.

“I would like to see in general from agriculture do a better job of telling our stories. I think we’re the worst storytellers there are, and for whatever reason we’re scared to tell people what we do. And it’s a really awesome, beautiful story that grabs hold of the person. That is the consumer.”

Traveling to the Greenbrier Valley

Members of our team traveled to Lewisburg to see the area and talk to business owners. Stops included Edith's Health and Specialty Store, Sweet Cedar and Company, the Greenbrier Valley Visitors Center, Lost Caverns and White Oak Berry Farms.



In the Greenbrier Valley Visitors Center the walls were lined with brochures for different activities in the area. This helped to drive our creative strategy by utilizing a color scheme that would help our products stand out against the crowd.

When talking with White Oak Berry farm operators, we discovered the importance of considering their needs in planning large events. While a Farm Crawl may seem appealing, it can be overwhelming for operators who must temporarily halt their daily activities, accommodate a surge of guests, and ensure their venue is pristine. Despite their openness to the idea, operators require sufficient time to prepare for such events.



Seasonality plays a crucial role in agriculture-based businesses. Our discussion with White Oak Berry Farms highlighted that the operating season is as vital as including contact information in the materials we produce, recognizing the varying peak times for different farms throughout the months.

Research Insights

The Ride

The Greenbrier Valley is known for its extraordinary views. Research found that our audience prioritizes enjoying the ride on these country roads just as much as the activity. Getting to the destination is half the fun. Our survey found that easy access to these agrioturism destinations is not a high priority.

The Experience

Creating experiences with family/friends that will last a life-time. A way for you to relax and get away, immersing yourself in a small-town community. The data from interviews, content analysis, and the surveys revealed that atmosphere and scenery is a huge priority for visitors, perhaps the experience of finding the location.

The Memory

Moments you can laugh, cry, and look back on with your loved ones. One repeated message found during our primary research was that visitors respond well to the message of having a unique and special experience that they would not experience anywhere else.

The Situation

There is a lot of competition for people's time in the Greenbrier Valley. A large part of our campaign should focus on making agribusinesses stand out. Operators informed us that they need ample time to prepare so any events should be planned far enough out to accommodate them and their needs.

Strengths

- Provide hands on activities
- Family-friendly experiences
- Educational aspects for families- kids can run around and learn where their food comes from
- Businesses are very community oriented

Opportunities

- Partnerships within businesses to put on a farm crawl
- Breathtaking views in the Greenbrier Valley region
- Prior collaboration between agribusinesses can lead to a larger partnership

Weaknesses

- Poor online presence
- Limited awareness of the importance of Agritourism
- Signage- businesses being incorrectly marked
- Weak social presence- farmers just want to be farmers and not be behind a desk

Threats

- Seasonality
- Poor reviews left on google can veer people from visiting a location
- Other non-agritourism activities in the area (the Greenbrier or other outdoor activities)

The Shift

FROM: Agribusinesses are just a source of locally grown food

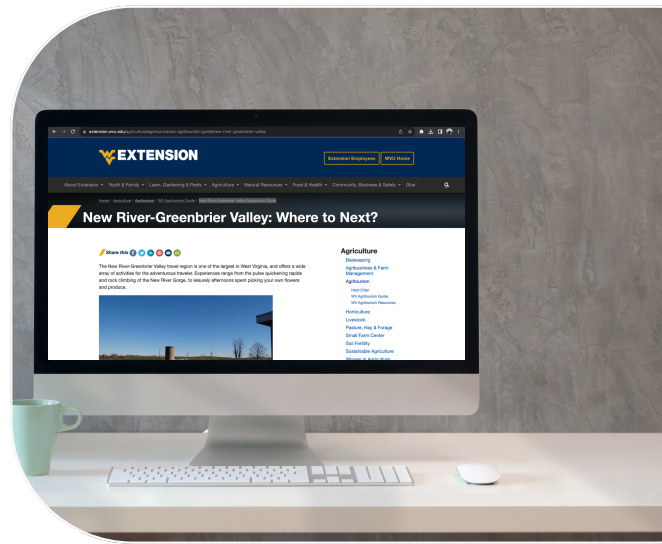
TO: Agribusiness as a source of local enjoyment

Campaign Overview

Online Presence

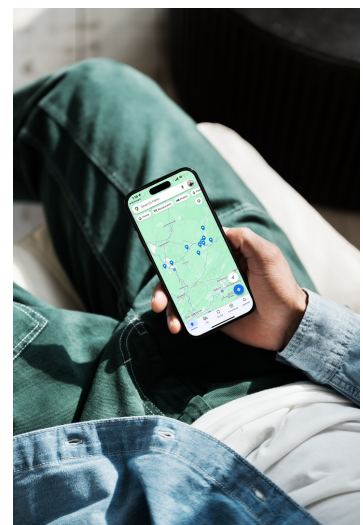
Updated WVU Extension Webpage

The hub for our campaign materials will be an updated WVU Extension website. A digital copy of our brochure, press kit and an updated list of agribusinesses in the area will be on the website. This will help improve Search Engine Optimization for these businesses as all of their pertinent information can be housed in one place. Making it a simple way for people to learn about these opportunities and help farmers to better advertise themselves.



Map of Greenbrier Valley Agribusinesses

A digital version of our map will also be available through the Extension website. Utilizing a service like Google Maps will help to make this easier to navigate for users as well as making sure businesses have the correct address listed online. We will measure the success for this by monitoring the click rates of the page.



QR Codes

There are two QR codes for our campaign, one that will lead scanners to Google Reviews page for the business they are at and another that will lead to our other materials (like the brochure) on the WVU Extension website.

Having a QR code will make it easier for visitors to leave a review on their experience while they are there, instead of hoping they'll remember once they get home. The review based QR code will lead to Google because of the increase Search Engine Optimization it will offer the businesses and the prevalence of Google Reviews when we conducted our content analysis of reviews for agribusinesses in the Greenbrier Valley region.

Having a QR code that sends users to the Extension website will help make them aware of additional agribusiness opportunities in the area. Inviting visitors to go from one business to the next and fostering a sense of community and connectedness between businesses. These will be present on the window decals.

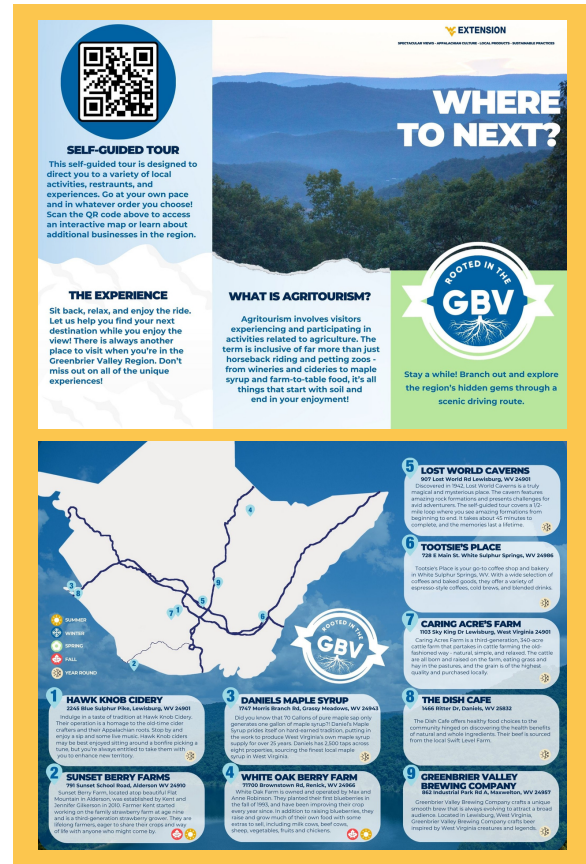
We hope to have these QR codes displayed in all of our partner businesses at the time of campaign launch and measure success through the number of code scans after launch.



Traditional Media

Brochures

Our goal when creating the brochure was to have an outlet for people interested in traveling to the GBV and wanting to learn more on businesses in the area. It showcases variations of businesses including their descriptions, locations, and their seasonality. The brochures will be accessible in participating locations specifically where people will be looking for guidance, like in their pamphlet holders and the visitor center and hotels.



Street Signage

Within our research, we had found that an increase in signage is beneficial in the growth of these businesses. With speaking with the owner of the Preston County farm crawl Signage is a big issue in finding these farms- issue with wi-fi cause people not be able to use Google Maps (some farms don't come up on google maps), and roads aren't well marked. Created these as a directional measure, but also an idea of curiosity that will cause you to look around and see all that these businesses have to offer.



Window Decals and Stickers

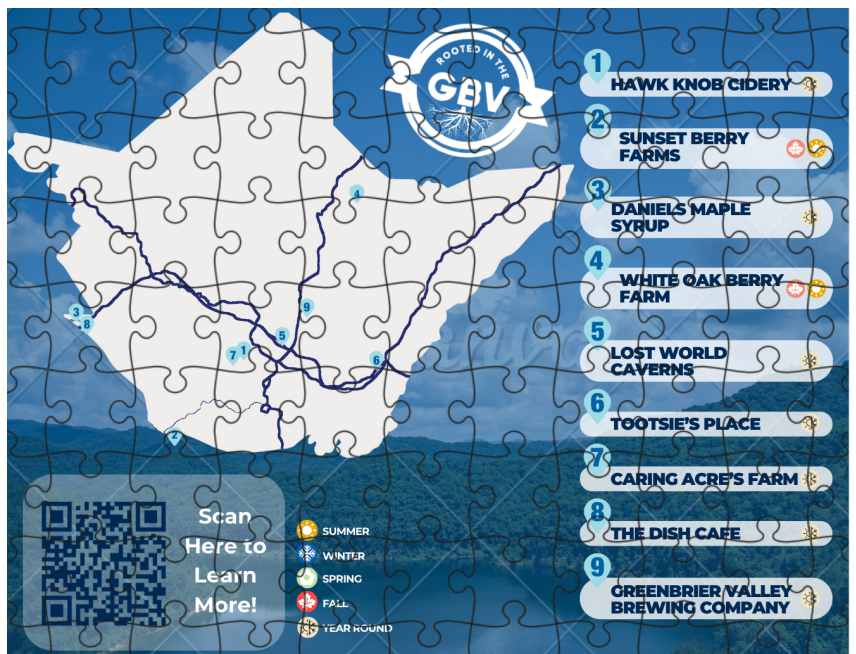
Creating stickers and window decals that feature our 'Rooted in the GBV' logo will help to unite these businesses under our campaign. Stickers and decals will be customized to feature the name of the business receiving them. The QR code on the window decal will lead to the WVU Extension website, where the rest of our campaign materials will be held.



Puzzle

The primary purpose of the puzzle is to utilize a fun and different way to get eyes on our product. Our custom puzzle will feature a map similar to the one on our brochure and the QR code that leads to the WVU Extension website.

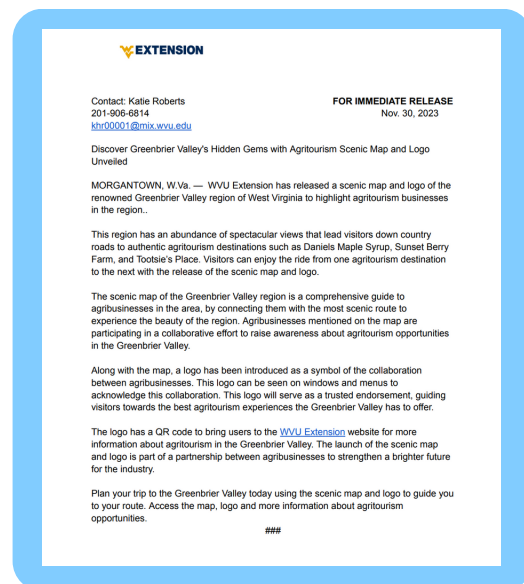
These puzzles will be sent to media, participating businesses, and community stakeholders. These can be placed in lobbies and other areas where people may be waiting as an activity while they wait, but also informing them of the agritourism opportunities in the area around them.



Community Relations

Local Business Partners

We obtained 12 local business partners in the area. This is a diverse array of businesses including farms, breweries, a cafe and winery. These partners will be featured on our traditional media materials. Each of our partners is well connected to their community which will help increase awareness of the initiative.



Press Release and Email Blast

A press release and email blast was written about the launch of the scenic map and logo. This press release will be pitched to local media outlets to inform our audiences of Rooted in the GBV. The email blast will be pitched to the Greenbrier County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Greenbrier County Economic Development Corporation for them to send to those who subscribe to them. This will help the campaign reach a larger amount of people who are already interested in agritourism opportunities. Our objective is to secure Media Coverage in two outlets two weeks after the launch of campaign.

Press Kit

A press kit has been created that will be featured on the WVU Extension website. This press kit will include copies of the press release, email blast, brand guide, logos, scenic map and welcome letter. This press kit is for the media and possible future partners. This kit can help us obtain earned media and influence possible partners to get involved.

Getting the Word Out

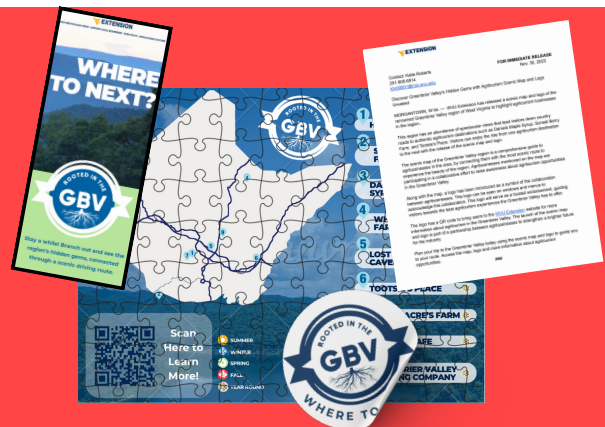
Participating Businesses

- Puzzle
- Yard Sign
- Review Signage
- Window Decal
- Brochures
- Stickers



Media

- Puzzle
- Brochures
- Stickers
- Press Kit

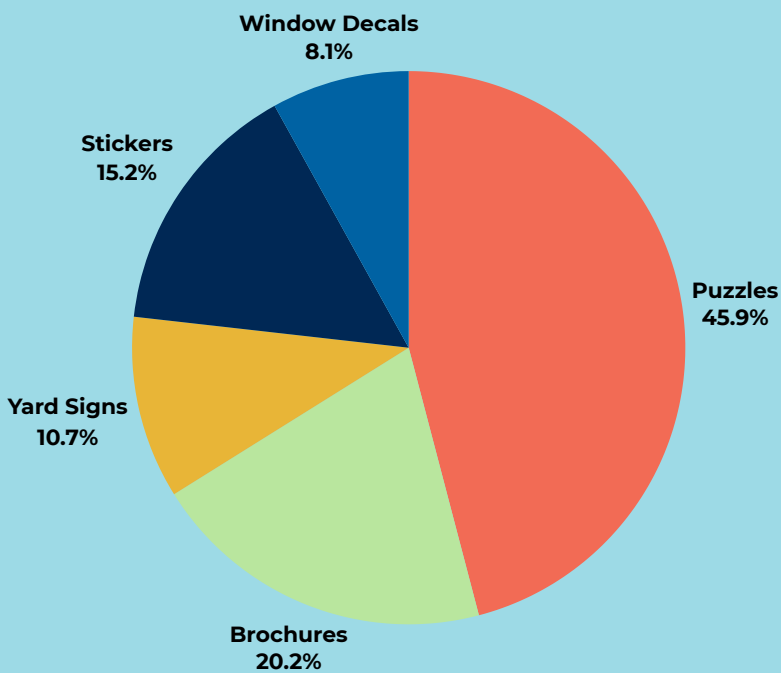


Community Stakeholders

- Puzzle
- Brochures
- Stickers
- Welcome Letter



Budget



Item	Price Per Item	Quantity	Total
Puzzles	\$20	25	\$500
Brochures	\$0.44	500	\$220
Yard Signs	\$7.75	15	\$116.25
Stickers	\$0.33	500	\$165
Window Decals	\$5.85	15	\$87.75

Total \$1,089

	Projected Budget								
Press	\$500.00								
General Adv	\$589.00								
TOTAL:	\$1,089.00								
Strategy One									
	Item	Description	Quantity	Price Per	Projected Price	Actual Price	Vendor	Estimated Delivery (as applicable)	
	Map Puzzles	48 pieces, 10.2	25	\$20.00	\$500.00		https://www.vi	2 Weeks for Free Shipping, 1 Week for \$50	
	TOTAL:			\$20.00	\$500.00				
Strategy Two									
	Item	Description	Quantity	Price Per	Projected Price	Actual	Vendor	Estimated Delivery (as applicable)	
	Stickers	2x2	500	\$0.33	\$165.00		https://www.sl	6 Days Plus Shipping	
	Yard Signs	Corrogated Pla	15	\$7.75	\$116.25		https://www.jv	24 Hour Turn Around	
	Window Decal	6x4	15	\$5.85	\$87.75		https://www.sj	2-5 days	
	Brochure	8.5x11 Gloss Fi	500	\$0.44	\$220.00		Canva	7-14 business days	
	Total:			\$14.37	\$589.00				

Timeline

	10/31	11/7	11/14	11/21	11/28
Work on Seal Design					
Research Potential Partners					
Brochure Map					
Website Copy					
Brochure Copy					
Press Release					
Review QR Codes & Signage					
Media Kit For Website					
Final Brochure					
Final Presentation					



External Team - Public Relations Specialist and Copywriter



Internal Team - Creative Directors, Multimedia Specialist and Copywriter

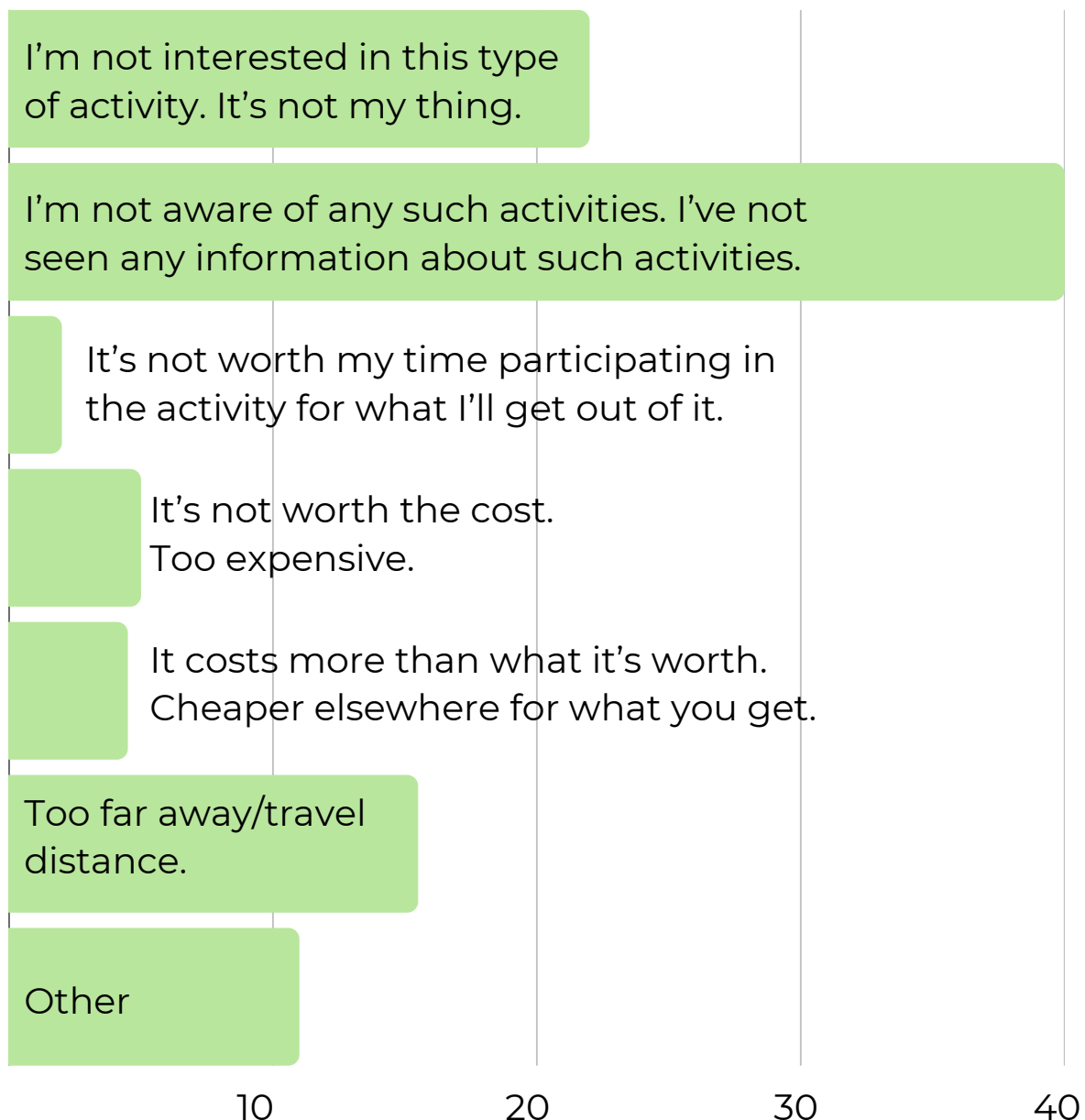


Whole Team

Appendix

Appendix A.1

Why have you not participated in or visited an agritourism destination/activity? Choose all that apply.



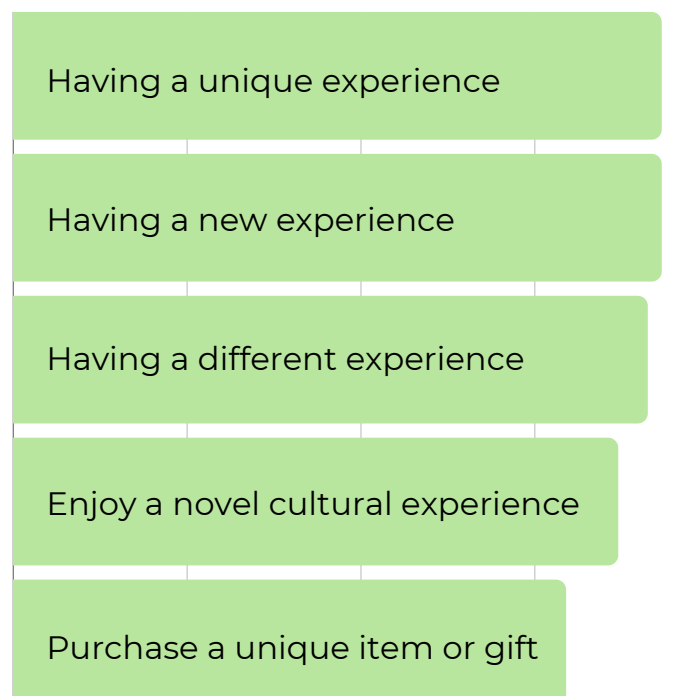
Appendix A.2

Level of importance when participating in an agritourism activity or visiting an agritourism destination.



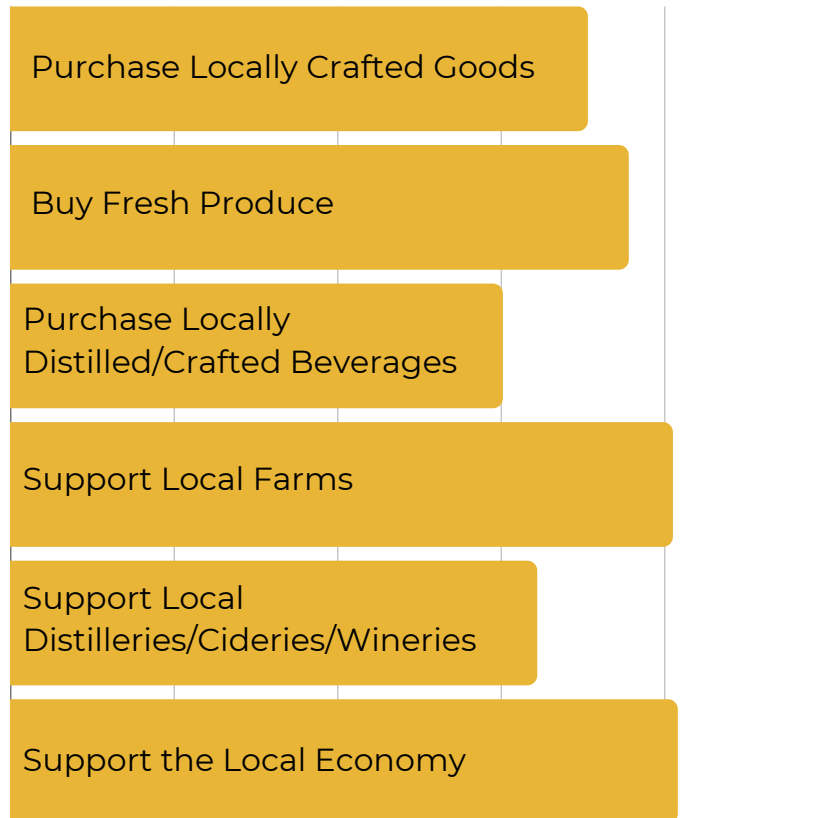
Appendix A.3

Level of importance for each of the following when you consider participating in an agritourism activity.



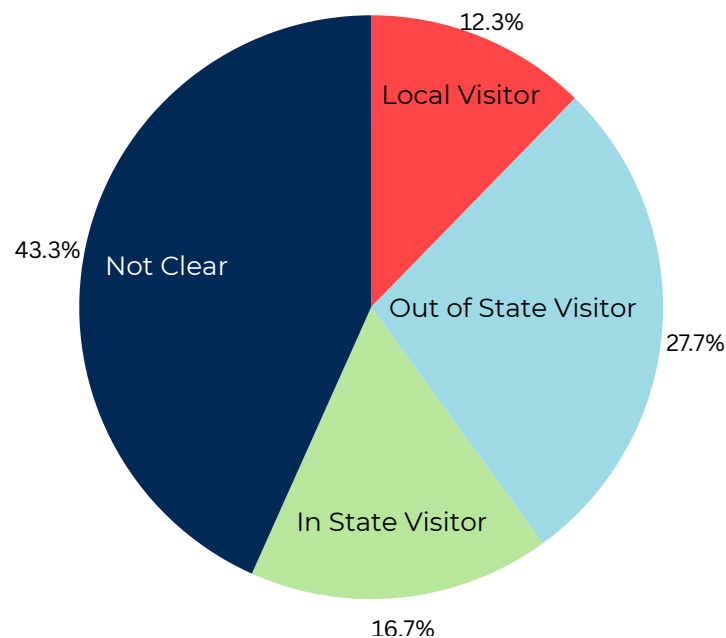
Appendix A.4

Level of importance for each of the following when you consider participating in an agritourism activity or visiting an agritourism destination.



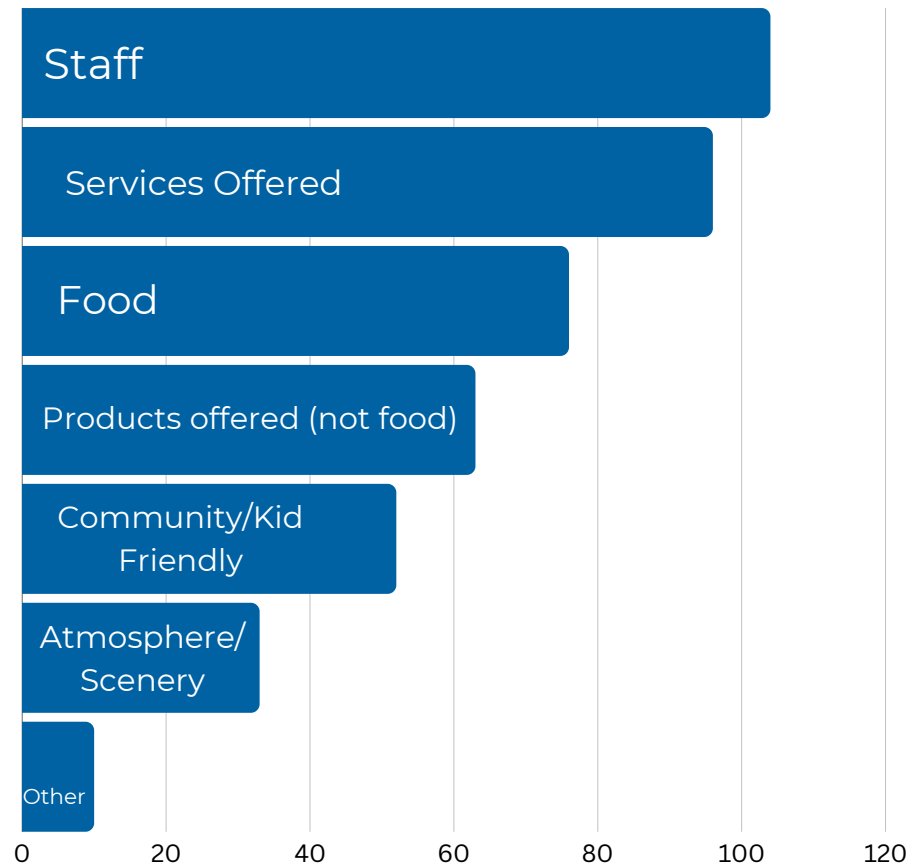
Appendix B.1

Where is the reviewer from?



Appendix B.2

Which of the following were mentioned in the review?



Brand Guide

#FF4545

#EAAA00

#0062A3

#9DDAE6

#002855

#B9E69D

Montserrat

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj
Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss
Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Montserrat - Bold

**Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii
Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr
Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz**

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