

Step 1: Assess The Potential

HANDOUT: Creating a Cultural Heritage Tourism Data Base

Before you inventory your cultural heritage assets, consider how to capture the desired information about each site, event, attraction, individual or organization. Ask these questions to ensure that the information collected will be complete and appropriate for future use:



- Will you need to contact them in the future? If so, secure a contact name, title, street and mailing address of site/organization along with the phone, fax and e-mail address.
- To keep your database up to date, include the date on each entry. This can alert you when you need to update the information.
- Think wisely about the categories you may want to sort by: name, product type, location, theme, hours/days of operation, desired customer, etc.
- Do you plan to map the location of the cultural heritage site, attraction or event? If so, remember to ask for directions from a major point of entry (airport, highway, visitor center, etc.). GIS mapping adds to your mapping capabilities, but requires extra equipment and knowledge.
- Planning to develop tour itineraries? Find out the following information:
 - parking rates and availability: auto, motorcoach, bicycles, other vehicles
 - hours/days of operation
 - admission fee, if applicable
 - special tour rates: group rate available; wholesale rate for receptive tour operators; complimentary admission driver/tour guide for groups
 - list of visitor services available: rest rooms, gift shop, restaurant, other
 - who the target customer is for the site/event
 - when do they NOT want visitors
 - what is daily/annual carrying capacity (the maximum number of visitors the site/event can host without creating a negative impact on resource or negative visitor experience)

- Creating a new cultural heritage tourism product focusing on specific themes? If so, provide a list of relevant themes – historic, cultural, ethnic, nature – for the individual/organization to cross-reference.
- How do they currently market themselves to visitors?
A quick review of marketing strategies, budget and measurement can identify potential opportunities for partnerships and ways to stretch the budget.
- 50-word description of the site or event, and its relevance to cultural heritage tourism for use in marketing materials.
- Do you want to include just existing cultural heritage attractions, or do you also want to include potential attractions as well? If you include both, be sure that you can separate them when you need to.
- Will your inventory include visitor services? (Lodging, restaurants, shopping, ATM's, public restrooms - everything else the visitor needs to make their stay complete)
- And don't forget to do a final reality check. How much time can you devote to inventorying your assets? Do you have financial resources to help with the inventory? Find an inventory format that meets your needs and your budget.

Additional information can be collected to help track overall visitation to a region and cross-reference data.



Made possible by a grant from the American Express Company and the National Endowment for the Arts



Prepared by National Trust for Historic Preservation Heritage Tourism Program