

CITY OF NORTON

- The City of Norton offers a number of lodging, shopping and dining opportunities which makes it more tourism-ready than a number of the other communities within the Spearhead region. They also are easily accessible and located along a major thoroughfare on a route many of the travelers will be using to access the Spearhead Trail System currently being developed and marketed. The City of Norton needs to capitalize on this.
- There is potential to develop both horseback riding and OHV trails in the northern portion of the county which could further entice people into the Norton area to spend money on food, lodging and supplies.
- There is an area west of the Country Cabin where people park their vehicles and trailer and access trails to the north. Working with SRRA and local landowners, these trails should be further developed into safe, looped stacked trail systems that are properly signed and opened to the public. A connecting trail to the Country Cabin would allow the riders to partake in nighttime entertainment of music and fellowship.
- It would also be recommended that a trail be developed that connects the Town of Appalachia to this trailhead and to the County Cabin.
- Hiking, biking, horseback riding trails from the City of Norton connecting with the trails on High Knob is strongly encouraged.
- The community needs to further capitalize on the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Viewing Trail System already in existence within their community. Interpretive signs at each of the sites explaining what one might see while at that location along with companion brochures and website will entice more people to drive the trail and check out the sites, enticing them to stay longer in the area.
- The City of Norton should also make itself a more bicycle-friendly community for both mountain bikes and road bikes. Bike routes should be developed throughout the community.
- The City of Norton could become a trail town for mountain bikers if more mountain bike trails were developed within the county with access into the city limits of Norton. Please Note: Using a looped stacked trail system in the design of the trails with connecting trails into the community is highly recommended. *See Volume 2: Economic Impact of Biking for more on this.*
- There has been strong interest expressed in reestablishing elk in the area. Already a number of elk have crossed over from Kentucky into Wise County and appear to be flourishing. *See Vol 2: The Economic Impact of Elk in Kentucky as the end of this chapter for more on this subject.*

SITE VISIT

In April 2009, the consultant toured portions of the City of Norton with Jack McClanahan. A follow-up tour was taken with Michael Wampler on May 6, 2009. Jason Hill and Mike Linton joined us for a portion of the trip.

THE CITY OF NORTON

Uniquely, the City of Norton is located within the boundaries of Wise County but is its own entity with its own stand alone government. With a population of just over 4,700, the City of Norton has developed strong industrial base under the leadership of Red Ramey, Industrial Development person for the city.



The City of Norton offers shopping, lodging and dining opportunities for those traveling on both business and pleasure through southwest Virginia. Hotels include Days Inn, Super 8, and the Inn at Norton. Dining includes, but is not limited to, Applebees, China Café, Fish Tales, Golden China, Little Mexico, Mi Finca, Norton's Grill & Rotisserie, Prime Sirloin, Romano's Restaurant, Yamato Steakhouse of Japan.

Tourism Attractions include:

- Bengé's Rock
- Flag Rock Recreation Area
- High Knob Recreation Area
- Country Cabin II
- Powell Valley Overlook

“The Crooked Road”, Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, runs through the City of Norton.



City of Norton - SITE VISIT

Located just off Kent Junction Road within the city limits of Norton, the Country Cabin with its descendant, Country Cabin II, is the oldest mountain music/ cultural venue currently operating along the Crooked Road.



The original Country Cabin was built in 1937 under President Roosevelt's WPA program as a community recreational facility and is a National and State Historic Landmark. Local musicians gathered at the cabin every Saturday night to perform and carry on traditional bluegrass and country music.



The popularity of the weekly event soon outgrew the log cabin and in 2002, a new larger facility was built in nearby Appalachian Traditions Village, to accommodate larger audiences and to host a wider variety of programs. The proposed - "Round the Mountain" artisan site similar to Tamarack and North Carolina's initiative will do more about encouraging people to follow a trail to the artisans and crafters locations.

The Powell Valley Overlook provides a breathtaking view of a rare geological formation. For beautiful scenery, you should also visit the Flag Rock Recreation Area overlooking Norton.

The observation tower at High Knob once provided an excellent opportunity to see several states from one viewpoint recently burned down and plans are underway to replace it.

35,924 acres of the Jefferson National Forest lie in Wise County, supporting a multitude of outdoor recreational opportunities: hiking, biking, swimming, canoeing, hunting, fishing, camping, boating, picnicking ... and of course, it's a leaf-looker's paradise.

RECOMMENDATION: The Country Cabin serve as an excellent trailhead location for the OHV riders and an excellent location for night time entertainment and special events.