

CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM: IF YOU PROMOTE IT, THEY WILL COME



TELE-WORKSHOP SPOTLIGHT SPEAKER

Amy Jordan Webb
Heritage Tourism Program Director

National Trust for Historic Preservation
1032 Hawthorn Avenue, Boulder, CO 80304
(303) 413-1986 (phone)
(303) 413-8201 (fax)
amy_webb@nthp.org (e-mail)



Speaker Profile

Amy Webb joined the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) Heritage Program in 1993 and became Director in 1996. Since then, she's seen exciting growth in cultural and heritage tourism. Her experience in developing and promoting these two overlapping tourism opportunities provides valuable insights for

America's Byways planning to market their intrinsic qualities, especially cultural, natural and historic aspects, to baby boomers and other key audiences.

CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM DEFINED

Amy Webb believes cultural heritage tourism offers immense opportunities for byways. She identified four ways to build a stronger cultural heritage tourism effort:

1. Understand what cultural heritage tourism is and what your byway has to offer
2. Be aware of national, state and local research
3. Monitor travel trends
4. Check available resources

Webb began her discussion by defining nomenclature. The primary difference between cultural tourism and heritage tourism is that heritage tourism is "place" based. A "Share Your Heritage" document from the NTHP document noted, "Heritage tourism programs create a sense of place rooted in the local landscape, architecture, people, artifacts, traditions and stories that make a particular place unique.

Cultural tourism programs celebrate the same kinds of experiences, though with less emphasis on place. Thus viewing the work of a great master artist in his home and studio is a heritage tourism experience, while viewing those very same pieces of art in a traveling exhibition is a cultural tourism experience. The content is the same while the context is different."

"Cultural tourism suggests something more urban, possibly imported, and maybe a bit highbrow," Webb explained. "Heritage tourism connotes something more rural, more place-related, and more grassroots-oriented. I see overlap in cultural and heritage tourism."

An informal NTHP survey revealed that the terms "culture" and "heritage" have different meanings for the layperson—and for potential visitors. For potential byway audiences, it may be more effective to use one term or the other depending upon the image that you are trying to convey. Byways should think about the type of experience they offer and use the appropriate terms.

Within the industry, it's important to use the terms "culture" and "heritage" together. The National Trust's definition of cultural heritage tourism is "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present." Examples of cultural heritage tourism opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Storytelling festivals
- Tribal tourism
- Folk life celebrations
- African-American heritage tours
- Farm tours and agritourism
- Living history
- Timber and manufacturing heritage
- Scenic byway programs

Historical, cultural and natural resources create the complete context for understanding cultural heritage tourism. Because of corridor management planning and other background work, byways possess a strong platform for successfully developing and promoting successful and sustainable cultural heritage tourism programs.



CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM'S VALUE

"The tourism industry has had a hard time convincing others of the true economic impact of tourism," said Webb. "It's hard to accurately capture the impact of visitor spending and to compare the economic impact of tourism to other industries. The challenge has been that tourism is always measured using a different system than many other industries. You can't scan a bar code on a tourist as he comes through the checkout. When a visitor is on a trip to your byway and she eats at a restaurant, or shops at local stores, that is tourism income. Yet, restaurants often don't break out local expenditures from visitor expenditures. So, it's hard to compare tourism to other industries, which can measure exactly how many widgets have been sold."

Ironically, a major breakthrough occurred when tourism came to a standstill after September 11, 2001.

"It's ironic that one of the things that has done more to draw attention to the importance and the impact of tourism in the past decade has been the aftermath of September 11th. After 9-11, tourism suddenly had greater recognition as an industry," said Webb. "All of a sudden the naysayers—those that scoffed that tourism was not an industry—were talking about the 'dramatic losses of the tourism industry.' Sometimes you don't appreciate what you have until you lose it—even if the loss is temporary," she noted.

Today, tourism is the country's third largest retail sales industry. In 2000, tourism generated \$584.3 billion in total expenditures to the U.S. economy.

"It's ironic that one of the things that has done more to draw attention to the importance and the impact of tourism in the past decade has been the aftermath of September 11th. After 9-11, tourism suddenly had greater recognition as an industry."

Amy Jordan Webb

**HERITAGE
TOURISM**



**CULTURAL
TOURISM**

Courtesy of "Share Your Heritage"

RESEARCH REVEALS A DESIRABLE AUDIENCE

According to Webb, national research on cultural heritage travelers was sparse until the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) began studying them in 1997. TIA repeated the study again 2001. The organization discovered cultural heritage travelers are high-quality visitors. They stay longer, do more activities and spend more than the average U.S. traveler—which makes them a very desirable audience to go after. The "2001 Profile of Cultural & Heritage Travelers" prepared by TIA revealed:

- They stay, on average, 4.7 nights away from home as compared to 3.4 nights away from home for other U.S. travelers.
- They spend, on average, \$631 per trip as compared to \$457 for all U.S. travelers.
- They like to shop. 44% of all travelers to historic and cultural sites will include shopping as part of their trip as compared to 33% of all U.S. travelers.
- They are more likely to take a group tour (6% vs. 3%).
- They take part in a variety of activities, including visiting national or state parks.
- They are older and better educated.
- Two thirds (65%) of all American adult travelers included culture or heritage on their trip in 2000, which translates to 92.7 million travelers.

Webb noted that other surveys have found that shopping is the #1 visitor activity among tourists. Travelers are looking for stores they don't have at home (73%), items they can't get at home (67%), items that represent the destination they are visiting (63%), and a unique shopping atmosphere. Many scenic byways offer these types of shopping experiences.

Most state tourism offices have tourism research that you can use to find out more about the visitors coming to your state. In some cases, this research may show statistics by county. Additionally, some local tourism agencies, such as convention and visitors bureaus, may have tourism research more specific for one part of the state.

Research should be an important part of a byway's overall efforts. But, before you begin, find out what kind of tourism research already exists for your area.

NATIONAL TRENDS GUIDE YOUR PLANNING

Webb explained that research can point to travel trends, which may influence the way a byway promotes itself. She cited several national trends currently affecting U.S. tourism:

1. Increase in weekend travel
2. Growing interest in travel packages and itineraries
3. Increased use of technology and the Internet
4. Aging baby boomers are more sophisticated travelers
5. Growing awareness of carrying capacity
6. Broadening perspective of history
7. Desire to escape “Anyplace, USA”
8. Aftermath of 9-11 and the recession

“Time is the true commodity,” Webb commented. In the “Great American Time Squeeze,” as Webb called it, both parents are working and running full-speed to accommodate their children’s hectic schedules. “This changes the way people plan and take trips,” Webb said.

“The average American takes one long trip and four to five weekend trips each year. The weekend trips tend to be within a four- to five-hour driving range. Byways within a four- to five-hour drive from a major metropolitan area will be more open to capturing people that are looking for a get-away weekend. People want to get away without being too far from home.”

People have less time to take trips and less time to plan trips. There is a growing interest in travel packages and tours. Webb said, “There is simply less time to plan. People want someone to do this for them.”

Travelers who call a toll-free number want immediate information, she explained. An informational package that arrives two or three weeks later has arrived too late. She sees the immediacy of the Internet as appealing to travelers. The increasing use of the Web to find instant information and even make travel purchases reflects the audience’s time sensitivity.

As an example, Webb described a successful partnership between the NTHP’s *Historic Hotels of America* program and AAA (Automobile Association of America). Visitors can book an online package that includes stays at historic hotels, visits to heritage attractions, and a specially designed AAA Triptik with a narrative. “You can order online, pay one price, and your entire vacation is quickly planned,” she said. Offering packages is very important and byways should consider this promotional strategy.



▲ Culture is experienced first-hand on Ohio’s Amish Country Byway. The Amish have established themselves in Holmes County, and it is estimated that one in every six Amish in the world live in this settlement. A simple way of life is what the Amish strive for, and this is clearly evident by horse and buggies, handmade quilts, and lack of electricity in Amish homes along the byway. An estimated 4 million people visit each year. Photo by John Randolph.

SPEAK TO SEASONED TRAVELERS

The visitor market is changing and traveler expectations are changing. Cultural heritage travelers include the aging baby boomer market. Never call them “seniors,” Webb advised. They are the “forever young” generation. Byways need to think of new words to market to boomers.

“The previous generation was just grateful to have the time and money to travel. Put them on a bus, take them to a number of places, and the type of experience didn’t really matter so much. By contrast, today’s boomers are more sophisticated and well traveled. They have higher expectations,” Webb said. “They want a specialized, interactive experience, not just museums with red velvet ropes and do-not-touch signs.”

Boomers look for value-added attractions and destinations that take the overall experience to the next level. Examples are a behind-the-scenes tour with a site director or a “value-added” experience like “Tea with Martha Washington” at Mount Vernon.

HOW MANY TOURISTS CAN YOU HANDLE?

Carrying capacity has become an important tourism issue. There are a lot more people, a lot more growth, and a lot more development all over the globe. Previously, tourism was viewed as an unlimited resource.

“The approach was more heads-in-beds, pack ‘em in, bring as many as we can get, and maximize income. Today, more and more destinations are realizing there is an upper limit. You can only have so many people in a certain location before the experience is diminished,” Webb commented.

In addition, there has been a growing awareness that an increased number of visitors can also have an impact on the quality of life for residents. Good cultural heritage tourism programs strive to provide experiences that are good for visitors and residents alike.

Many organizations and services have begun to rethink their core promotional approach to reflect their ideal carrying capacity. Webb noted that the National Parks have seen the quantity versus quality issue and found that the experience they can offer diminishes at a certain capacity. Some parks have offered buses to restrict vehicles within the park, while others are utilizing reservation systems to manage visitor loads and insure that the experience remains appealing.

"Focus on what your byway has that is truly unique and different. Focus on the qualities that separate your location from anywhere else in the world. That's your hook. That's your marketing angle. That is what visitors are looking for. As we become more homogenous, people are looking for those special one-of-a-kind places."

Previously, tourism *development* and tourism *promotion* covered the critical planning for the industry. “Now tourism *management* is part of the mix,” said Webb. “Tourism must provide a good quality of life for the visitor and for the residents. Capacity can affect everything from the landscape to the appeal of a destination.”

Webb encouraged byways to think about their carrying capacity. “How many visitors can you handle? How much change can you handle? How can you preserve your landscape before you’ve lost the appeal of what you’ve got? How can you manage increased visitation without destroying the quality of life for residents?”

HERITAGE AND CULTURE TOURISM - DID YOU KNOW?

* A rural tourism study by the Travel Industry Association in 2001 showed that 62% of all American adults traveled to a small town or village in the U.S. within the past three years.

* Cultural and heritage visitors, on average, stay longer and spend more money than other types of visitors.

* The top four activities that rural travelers enjoy are (1) dining, (2) shopping, (3) going to a lake/beach/river, and (4) visiting historical sites.

* Tourism can be a powerful economic development tool and also a tool to make communities a better place to live.

DON'T BE "ANYPLACE, USA"

Nationally designated byways already have begun to distinguish and identify their unique characteristics, which is ideal for speaking to today's traveler. Webb said that byways can offer the special type of experience that cultural heritage travelers are seeking.

"There are so many franchise or chain businesses—McDonald's, Target, Applebee's, the Gap—that you can virtually find in any community in the United States. You see the same mix of retail everywhere. At a certain point, you wonder: Why would someone leave home and spend money on airfare or travel to experience the same things they have at home?" asked Webb. "Focus on what your byway has that is truly unique and different. Focus on the qualities that separate your location from anywhere else in the world. That's your hook. That's your marketing angle. That is what visitors are looking for. As we become more homogenous, people are looking for those special one-of-a-kind places."

She said that Americans are looking to explore America, especially in the aftermath of 9-11 and the recession. Predictions are calling for 2002 to be "the Summer of the Rubber Tire Adventure, and that is good news for byways. "Real or perceived concerns about travel safety, travel delays, and the economic effects of the recession are making shorter trips within America more attractive. Travel right now is more family-oriented. People are looking for safe, closer-to-home, and potentially less expensive vacations. We've also seen a surge in patriotism since 9-11, and sites that speak to old-fashioned values, or 'All-American' ideals, are currently seeing an increase in popularity," Webb noted.

STUDY THE RESOURCES

Like America's Byways Resource Center, the National Trust For Historic Preservation maintains a collection of resources related to cultural heritage tourism. (See the related section in this publication for a starting list of titles and Web sites.)

More than half of the states have cultural heritage programs, according to Webb. Most are located in the state tourism office or within an arts council or the State Historic Preservation Office. Partnerships among various organizations further reinforce the cultural heritage marketing effort.

Byways can benefit from cultural heritage tourism with the right plan and the right promotion. Talk to America's Byways Resource Center staff members or Amy Webb for more information to start on the road to success. ★

▼ The annual Fort Massac Encampment along the Ohio River Scenic Route in Illinois proudly celebrates British, French and colonial American heritage. The free event draws over 100,000 visitors. It features field exercises by military re-enactment regiments, demonstrations by period crafters, puppet shows, traditional music, games, storytelling, food booths, fireworks and a special cannon salute on the Ohio River. Photo by Ned Trovillion.



Q&A

Following the discussion, Webb answered questions from the many byway leaders networked for the tele-workshop.

- Q.** What publications are available and where can we find them?
- A.** A starting list is included in this publication. You can also go to the National Trust For Historic Preservation Web site for more information at www.nthp.org.
- Q.** Do you have suggestions for charging for value-added services at local museums? How do you put a price on cultural heritage experiences?
- A.** If local museums are going to survive, they have to start thinking more like a business. It's OK to charge for real value. Those brunches and special activities take real effort and time to schedule, so participants should pay to enjoy the events. Boomers have disposable income right now and they are willing to pay for value-added services.
- Q.** You mentioned boomers, but what about Generation X or Gen Y for long-term planning?
- A.** Market demographics are important. With Gen Y, for example, we're seeing a return to environmental concerns. History and heritage are also important to this group.
- Q.** Are some types of value-added activities more attractive than others to cultural heritage travelers?
- A.** Generally speaking, cultural heritage travelers are looking for interactive or "exclusive" opportunities. For example, a recent issue of *National Geographic Traveler* talked about style changes for museums trying to build their visitor base. Essentially, the article said that the number of visitors is stable or declining slightly, but more museums now bid for those visitors' attention. The red-velvet-rope tour has given way to more interactive experiences. Build from your strengths! What kind of experience does your byway offer?

To ensure that the value added activities that you create are as successful as possible, it's important to look at the visitors you attract. Is your byway attracting older couples or families with young children? A different kind of value-added experience will appeal to different kinds of travelers. What are your visitors interested in? Specialized niches, such as ecotourism, agritourism, nature tourism and geotourism (sustainable tourism), might work with your byway.

FIVE IMPORTANT CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM PRINCIPLES

The keys to successful marketing for cultural heritage tourism are best summed up in the five principles developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

1) Focus on Quality and Authenticity

The sophisticated cultural heritage traveler has high expectations for both attractions as well as the supporting visitor services. They also are more aware of "the real thing," and will expect heritage attractions to reflect high standards of authenticity.

2) Preserve and Protect Resources

With our irreplaceable cultural, heritage and natural resources, it is essential that the wear and tear of visitation does not destroy the very thing that visitors are clamoring to see.

3) Make Sites and Programs Come Alive

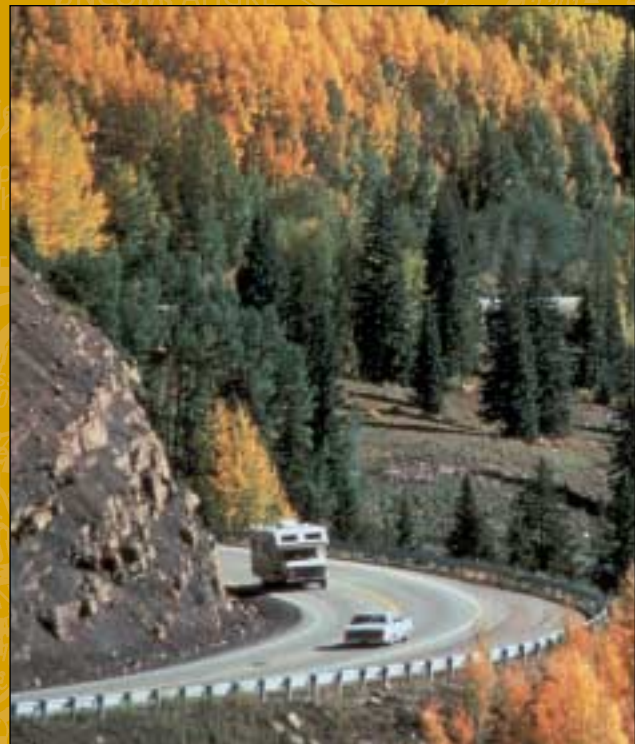
Finding creative and innovative ways to make the visitor experience engaging is becoming increasingly important in the competitive cultural heritage tourism market.

4) Find the Fit Between the Community and Tourism

Respecting carrying capacity and finding a balance between the visitor experience and the quality of life for residents is a must for sustainable programs.

5) Collaboration

Partnerships are essential for success. The tourism industry needs to work together with cultural and heritage organizations to create visitor experiences that are sustainable, high quality, authentic and appealing.



CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM RESOURCES

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION PUBLICATIONS

The National Trust gathers current data on heritage tourism and offers many cultural heritage tourism publications and products, including:

Getting Started: How to Succeed in Heritage Tourism

A 48-page color guide with the National Trust's time-tested principles and steps for successful and sustainable heritage tourism development. Updated in 1999 with new economic impact statistics and an updated resource directory. (\$15 /copy)

Touring Historic Places

A 16-page guide for group tour operators and managers of historic sites to develop, market and host group heritage tours. (\$10 /copy)

Preserving Our Past: Building Our Future

An 8-minute video describing the economic impact of heritage tourism and other benefits that heritage tourism can provide. (\$10 /copy)

Share Your Heritage: Cultural Heritage Tourism Success Stories

An 80-page, four-color publication, featuring 24 cultural heritage tourism success stories from across the country. (\$25, includes *Share Your Heritage* and *Stories Across America*)

Stories Across America: Opportunities in Rural Tourism

A 44-page publication of stories from across the country. View online at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/stories.htm>

- To order the materials listed above:
National Trust for Historic Preservation, Attn: Preservation Books,
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036
(202) 588-6296 (check & credit card orders) or go to
<http://www.nthp.org>

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS AND WEB SITES

Travel Industry Association of America

<http://www.tia.org>
(202) 408-8422

Profile of Travelers Who Participate in Historic and Cultural Activities (2001)

TIA provides research and information related to domestic and international travel. *Tourism Works for America*, released annually, and *The Historic/Cultural Traveler* are valuable resources.

Partners in Tourism

Send an e-mail to partners@aam-us.org to be added to a free List Serve mailing related to cultural and heritage tourism.

America's Byways Resource Center

<http://www.byways.org>
The Web site for nationally designated byways and other byways that provides links to many resources, materials and contacts.

Utah Heritage Tourism Toolkit

<http://history.utah.org/httoolkit/tkitremote.htm>
An online package of practical tools and resources that communities or groups can use to develop, manage and protect their heritage resources.

Cultural Tourism Resources

http://www.nasaa-arts.org/artworks/ct_contents.shtml
Valuable information on cultural tourism collected by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA).

Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism

Farming for Profit and Sustainability Tool Kit
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise/toolkit.html>
Natural Resources Conservation Service Online toolkit
(18 chapters; 850 pages).

Promoting Tourism in Rural America

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/tourism.html>
Liam R. Kennedy Rural Information Center
National Agricultural Library
An extensive bibliography of resources, funding sources, and key contacts related to rural tourism.



America's Byways Resource Center
provides information, connections and
expertise that help build better byways.
State coordinators, local groups, volunteers
and organizations with ties to nationally
designated scenic byways look to us for
hands-on assistance in planning, preserving,
promoting and managing scenic byways.

2002 Tele-Workshops

Alternative Funding:
Looking Beyond Traditional Sources
Don Charpio, Bureau of Land Management

Economics, Partnerships and
Your Byway Community
Ernesto Sirolli, The Sirolli Institute

Traveling Gracefully:
Interpreting Scenic Byways
Ron Zimmerman and Michael Gross,
University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point

Sharing Your Heritage:
If You Promote It, They Will Come
Amy Jordan Webb, National Trust
Heritage Tourism Program

Making the Grassroots Grow:
Building and Sustaining Byway Organizations

Web Site Technology
Stephen Clyde, Utah State University,
National Scenic Byways Online

America's Byways Resource Center
227 West First Street, Suite 610
Duluth, MN 55802
Tel: 218-625-3469
Fax: 218-625-3333
1-800-4BYWAYS
(1-800-429-9297) Ext. 5
www.byways.org