

A proposal and analysis

*of*

Horse riding activities, animal farms  
with barns and petting zoo, and carriage rides as an  
entertainment business venture in

Cleveland County, NC and Cherokee County, SC

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The American Revolutionary War Living History Center (ARWLHC) & Experience  
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**Overview:** The American Revolutionary War Living History Center (ARWLHC) and Experience is a proposed resort, attraction and theme park designed as an economic powerhouse uplifting the local populace around King's Mountain. The area of focus is located in Cleveland County, NC and Cherokee County, SC.

The center and experience would propose a 1776 period village closely associated with life in the western North Carolina Back country region. The look and feel of this is rustic with log cabins and many men wear coon-skin hats and deer hides for clothes.

**Primary Marketing Draw:** Its primary feature is live battles and skirmishes displayed every Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 PM. Presently, the center and Inn features a first in the world resort industry by allowing guests to get dressed up and fight inside of the war. Once guests sign the appropriate legal waivers, they are removed from accessing the internet, televisions, electronics, and have all forms of communication with the modern world taken away from them. Cellular phones, music players and watches are forbidden.

**Stated unique, world features:** Guests are allowed to fight for the British, Militia, Continental Line or as Indians. Depending on rank paid for, guests may find themselves being screamed at, scrubbing pots and pans, learning artillery drill, riding horses as a courier, on night patrols being ambushed or working with majors and colonels - to analyze proposed battle tactics for the morning. During real time kill scenarios, they will be issuing war commands via live battle activity under the sanctioned referee system.

**US Military presence:** The proposed center and experience is a disabled, veterans, project designed to positively lower the high rate of unemployed and homeless veterans. Its first goal of employment is to veterans and local folks while empowering them to own their own land, building, and business. The center also proposes to welcome US Military Official Staff Rides to historic, combat simulated exercises, and war studies - for the junior officer corps.

**Features:** An Inn of 24 rooms with Nature and Earth Spa, rock pool and waterfall, gift shops, village of old time shops, 1776 organic farm and vineyard, sawmill and demonstration area, British camp, Indian village, Militia camp, Sorghum/Jam/Jelly making center, horse riding farm with animals, creeks and waterfalls, lake with fishing and canoeing, tomahawk and knife range, battle area, blowgun and bow and arrow range, skeet and trap shooting, restaurant – tavern – grill, meeting house and chapel for weddings and vow renewals. Naturally beautiful walking, birding, hiking and riding trails. Carriage rides.

**Primary demographic connectors:** On the Interstate 85 side of King's Mountain, close to high volume Route 74 and 35 minutes from the Charlotte International Airport. I-85 is directly between Atlanta (3 hours) and Charlotte (45 minutes).

**Numbers of current visitors proving analysis:** The three parks of Crowders Mountain NC State Park, Kings Mountain National Military Park and Kings Mountain SC State Park currently have climbed to over 3 million visitors per year. The state of North

Carolina was the eighth most visited state in 2007, grew to the seventh most visited state in 2008 and recently rose to the sixth most visited state in 2009. Tourism is the third largest industry in NC.

**How horses would assist the facility:** “In tourist areas, horse riding is a major attraction, particularly in offering opportunities in instruction, gallops and extensive trails. In the latter, it may be combined with overnight accommodations and services about every twenty miles. In a mild climate, using tough ponies (requiring no stabling, etc.) trekking and riding can provide a relatively cheap attraction. Horse riding trials of a few days, to two weeks, are developing as a product”(429 Baud-Bovy, M. 1998).

Horses bring an exciting and all new aspect to any attraction, theme park or resort. In our case, they will be offered - firstly, on tours to the barn, to meet the horses face-to-face. Feed purchased in an ice cream cone cup cuts the line item budget (for feed) by approximately \$20,000.00 per year. The farm, with animals, at Tweetsie Railroad in Blowing Rock, NC did not always use this approach. Previously they paid for the feed out of their pocket.

Secondly, horses will allow an operator and owner of the farm to provide riding lessons in a controlled center. This offers a safe approach for many guests who would like to learn how to meet a horse, as well as climb up on top of him/her. Often guests are extremely hesitant to even go out on a course (on the beginner trail) as it is an extremely intimidating situation.

Thirdly, the horse riding will be offered on beginner, intermediate, and advanced trails. All three systems will wind around the 230-acre park, allowing for an exhilarating and exciting experience. From the most timid person who is interested - all the way up to the advanced rock climber who enjoys jumping into the air with a horse from a small hill – trainers and tour guides will be available.

The farm where the horses are stabled can also serve as the perfect area for a petting zoo and center that permanently holds the animals for the CrossWalk Christian show (our neighbor). This works hand in hand.

Finally, the inclusion of several vehicles amongst the revolutionary war complex will add a special touch. Some of the most exciting vehicles are the classic Conestoga wagon (which every 1776 family owned as they were extremely popular – created in Conestoga, Pennsylvania), the buckboard wagon and the many carriages for riding guests around. Snuggled underneath a warm blanket for a fall nighttime ride is fun!

Throughout history, horses have also been used to charge in combat, with cavalry, and due to the proximity of the farm to our battleground - these horses will be conditioned to gun and cannon fire. This will be a critical element of training in the horse's life. Most horses that are not trained in combat will jump and kick at the sound of a pistol being fired closely, near their head – let alone a quarter mile away. Unless horses are trained in combat to facilitate a rider, swinging a saber, and to the sound of weapons discharge –

they typically will throw their rider or be spooked. The horses used in war reenactments, that you may have seen, have been trained to the sound of gunfire. Training our horses will make them extremely safe – including even to the sound of a car backfiring in the parking lot. This is very different than most horse riding operations.

Our horses will be able to facilitate a number of different, profit making functions at the resort - for the owner of the horse facility and barn.

In summary the inclusion of horses at an attraction, resort and theme park across the two counties demographic draw of Cleveland and Cherokee will add a large, and bigger than life aspect. Even the smell of fresh dung dropped into the grass gives the true feeling of being next to real nature. When a person arrives back at their city dwelling they have tremendous stories to tell - and great satisfaction in knowing they do not live 230 years ago! Aside from the stories they will tell all week long back at work – they develop a tremendous thanks for all of the modern things they have in their humble abode.

The existence of horses walking, trotting, racing, and pulling wagons and carriages truly will add an exciting aspect to our resort, attraction and theme park.

Since the demographic is the traveler looking for an exciting experience - follow through with horses being seen at every step is influential. Pack burrows and mules for other events associated with night patrols and mining (this is where gold was first discovered in America) would be very interesting.

The differing marketing approaches primarily include photographic shoots of the horses with colonial riders doing extraordinary or amazing things. These are included on proposed billboards in several states, on cards for direct mail, in commercials and in movie theaters prior to shows beginning. Basically, anywhere they can be seen! Previous marketing and branding associated studies to this one are extensive and longer. Concerning horses at the ARWLHC - marketing, branding, publicity, promotion and advertising will always SHOW the horses to potential guests.

Aaker, David, *Building Strong Brands*, New York, The Free Press. 1996

Baud-Bovy, M., and F. R. Lawson. *Tourism and Recreation Handbook of Planning and Design*. Architectural Pr, 1998. Print.

BedandBreakfast.com via Reuters. 05 Oct 2009

<http://www.reuters.com/article/pressRelease/idUS88253+05-Oct-2009+PRN20091005>

Byrd, E.T., Bosley, H.E., Dronberger, M.G. Comparisons of stakeholder perceptions of tourism impacts in rural eastern North Carolina. *Tourism Management*, Volume 30, Number 5, pages 693-

703, 2009. This study is important prior to any planning since it takes into account four significant stakeholders and compares how they feel about tourism. The results are surprisingly not always the same. Government officials readily understand how much money pours into a county, like Cleveland County, from tourism. But not everybody else does. Return on investment must be emphasized and that's what this study shows.

Byrd, Erick, Cardenas, David. *Elements of Stakeholder Support for Tourism in Rural Communities: The Case of Eastern North Carolina*. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism. This paper offers intense, analytical metrics for researchers and also reiterates and discusses establishing the needs and concerns of all stakeholders.

Chhabra, Deepak, Sills, Erin, Cabbage, Frederick. "The Significance of Festivals to Rural Economies: Estimating the Economic Impacts of Scottish Highland Games in North Carolina," *Journal of Travel Research*, 2003. This paper talks about the importance of festivals in rural economies like Cleveland County. It specifically looks at the size and scope of a large festival and the tremendous amount of money that it brings in to the region.

Cleveland County Land Use Plan. Centralina Council of Governments, Charlotte, 2005 This land use plan plays out overall strategies for development and controlled growth with a special emphasis on... "making sure that the rural character of Cleveland County and the expanse of open space are maintained for future generations. Identifying ways in which jobs can be created without sacrificing rural character is one of the Plan's primary objectives." Greenways, SEQ, and other facets of our project planning for conservation and preservation also show up in this document.

Crane, Debbie. March 2009. Land for Tomorrow. Greenbook. 2009. Land for tomorrow and this green book share the progress made in NC with conservation and preservation of land, water and wildlife as well as the impending dangers has our population doubles by the year 2030. The danger being complete loss of land and greenways without prudent and controlled growth.

Frechtling. "An Assessment of Visitor Expenditure Methods and Models." *Journal of Travel Research*. 2006; 45: 26-35. This assessment provides advice and examination for researchers to want to quantify mathematical value in tourism. Specifically, it shows case examples for researchers to follow when analyzing money coming in from tourism.

Kotler, Philip and Armstrong, Gary, *Principles of Marketing*, 10th Edition, New Jersey, Pearson Education Inc., 2004

Land for Tomorrow. April 2009. Results of Research Poll.

[http://www.theinnofthepatriots.com/land\\_for\\_tomorrow\\_poll\\_news\\_release\\_4\\_29\\_09.pdf](http://www.theinnofthepatriots.com/land_for_tomorrow_poll_news_release_4_29_09.pdf)

This poll shows research study results about encroachment on NC land from an ever increasing population that is going to double by the year 2030. Significant endorsement is given by NC residents to protect our land and water.

Mongiello, Martin, *New Challenges for Cleveland County*, Dec. 2009, The Art Institute of Pittsburgh, PA Online. This report demonstrated opportunities for the region to create a historically based tourism epicenter and nucleus for economic development.

Mongiello, Martin, *Corporate Objectives, Marketing Objectives, Major Marketing Strategies & Tactics*, North Carolina, The American Revolutionary War Living History Center (ARWLHC) & Experience, 2009

Mongiello, Martin, *The Inn of the Patriots B & B, (The Vette Kat Harbour Bed & Breakfast)*, Business Plan Pro, 10th Edition, Palo Alto Press, 2007

Porter, Michael. *The Microeconomic Foundations of Competitiveness and the Role of Clusters*,

Mississippi: Harvard Business School, 2000. This report is put together extremely well and uses a large number of full color graphics. It shows the role of clustering in society and numerous successful clustering areas in the United States. It is critical to understand clustering as Cleveland County moves forward so that it can become a model of success like other epi-centers have. Random and sporadic growth in all types of sectors and disciplines fragments a society and detracts from clustering.

Rosenfeld, Stuart. *Crafting a New Rural Development Strategy*, Conference on Knowledge Clusters and Entrepreneurship, Minnesota: 2004. This strategy talks about clustering and blends it into epi-centers that have a strong rural flavor. It has direct applications to Cleveland County that can be garnered and studied.

Tooman, L.A. "Applications of the life-cycle model in tourism". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 1997, Volume 24, Number 1, pages 214-234. This research paper offers practical knowledge of the normal ups and downs in tourism and allows for introspection of planning to greater avoid pitfalls.

The American Revolutionary War Living History Center. 2010.

<http://www.theinnofthepatriots.com/TheAmericanRevolutionaryWarLivingHistoryExperience3.htm>

This link showcases the proposed economic project from a group of disabled veterans centered on historic tourism, a sustainable 1776 organic farm and conservation with preservation platform.

The Charlotte Observer. July 2008. A heaping helping of history. 2009.

<http://www.theinnofthepatriots.com/CharlotteObserverSundaynewspaper.pdf>

This link showcases a disabled veteran's project, which has become extremely successful in the lodging segment. This hospitality tourism project recently received an international award and now seeks to expand.

The Gaston Gazette. Oct 2008. Gateway Festival. 2009.

<http://www.theinnofthepatriots.com/ARWLHCtheGatewaystival-GastonGazette.pdf>

This link showcases a disabled veteran's project which has become extremely successful in the historic tourism segment. It showcases the revolutionary war battles that are being hosted, directed and produced with as many as 35,000 spectators.