

Sappony of the High Plains Indian Settlement



Project Title:	The Sappony Trading Path-Site Design and Planning Project
Award Amount:	\$225,000
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 1 job created
- 50 elders involved
- 40 youth involved
- \$114,696 in resources leveraged
- 2 individuals trained
- 13 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The High Plains Indians, also known as the Sappony, are an Eastern Sioux tribe recognized by the states of Virginia and North Carolina. The High Plains Settlement straddles the states’ border and is home to approximately 850 tribal members.

Since 2001, the tribal community has been working to become a tourist destination site in conjunction with the adjacent development of the State of Virginia’s Tobacco Heritage Trail. To achieve their aim, the tribe formalized their ideas for the construction of the Sappony Trading Path, a 2.5 mile multi-use trail that will serve as the basis for tourism-driven economic development. The tribe has entered into a formal partnership with the Virginia

Department of Transportation and Virginia Tourism Corporation to incorporate the Sappony Trading Path as a cultural stop along the Tobacco Heritage Trail.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project’s purpose and objective was to create site plans for the locations to be developed along the Sappony Trading Path. To complete the objective, project staff hired consultants to collaboratively create a rough conceptual design of the Sappony Trading Path site. Project staff then developed and distributed a survey to procure community input and feedback on the conceptual design. From the community comments, the project team produced two conceptual plans and presented them at community meetings to acquire additional feedback.

Leveraging funds from the Virginia Department of Transportation and technical assistance from the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the project team completed a topographic survey and map of the Trading Path site. After slight alterations were made to the site plan due to results from the topographic study, the project team finalized

the Sappony Trading Path Master Plan. The project team then completed individual plans for each of the locations within the Master Plan. These included layout designs for the main Sappony Cultural Center, early Sappony Village site, and demonstration farm, and artist depictions and blueprints for five historic community buildings: the Sappony community store, train depot, Indian school, chapel, and cabin. Although not part of the original project plan, the project team also created mock-ups of the signage to appear along the path. Finally, the project team presented all project deliverables to the community who collectively provided final approval of the Sappony Trading Path Master Plan and for each site plan.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

For the Sappony tribal community, participation in the Trading Path design process fostered an environment of empowerment, as they were provided an opportunity to give guidance on how their history and culture will be presented to the public. With the completion of the design phase, the tribal members expressed excitement to have assisted their community in moving toward its long-term goals of attaining self-sufficiency and preserving the Sappony culture.

The completion of the project's planning phase provides the project team with the necessary deliverables to pursue project implementation funding. Financially, the tribe has secured two years of funding from the Virginia Department of Transportation to begin the implementation process and sustain project momentum. The tribe also plans to continue strengthening established partnerships with local counties, which will provide necessary technical assistance to the project team while also benefiting from the additional income and exposure associated with increased tourism activity.