

2017 Appalachian Land Study

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Mission

The mission of the 2017 Appalachian Land Study is to provide accurate data about land and mineral ownership and public revenues to communities, scholars, local governments, and other stakeholders.

Values

Value 1

We seek to shape policy and serve Appalachian communities as we build healthy and prosperous communities, and care for water, forests, air, land, and culture.

Value 2

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We value local knowledge and believe that people are the experts of their own lives. We strive to implement placed based local knowledge with specialized training. We look to facilitate the development leadership and new skills by community members.

Value 3

Our research teams work in a collaborative and democratic manner, from the beginning to the end of the research process, with balanced representation from diverse sectors.

Value 4

Research questions include questions developed through a participatory design process in which collaborative multistakeholder teams solicit input from communities who are directly affected by issues studied and from other affected stakeholders.

Value 5

We collect and analyze data using methods that follow the highest scholarly standards for accuracy and rigor, and findings will be subjected to rigorous scholarly peer review.

Value 6

The research project will strive to process data quickly so that results are returned to communities and the public for discussion, popular education, and data tools.

Value 7

Research participants will be paid for their work, especially community members or others whose jobs do not include these research activities as work covered by their wages.

Value 8

This research serves the public good and seeks social justice. We do not accept funding from sources that could trigger or constitute a conflict of interest.

Value 9

We are self-critical and welcome constructive criticism from others. We will continually reassess whether the project serves the public interest and the common good.

Value 10

We recognize the historical and present forces of oppression on the lives of individuals based on their abilities, class, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other life experiences.

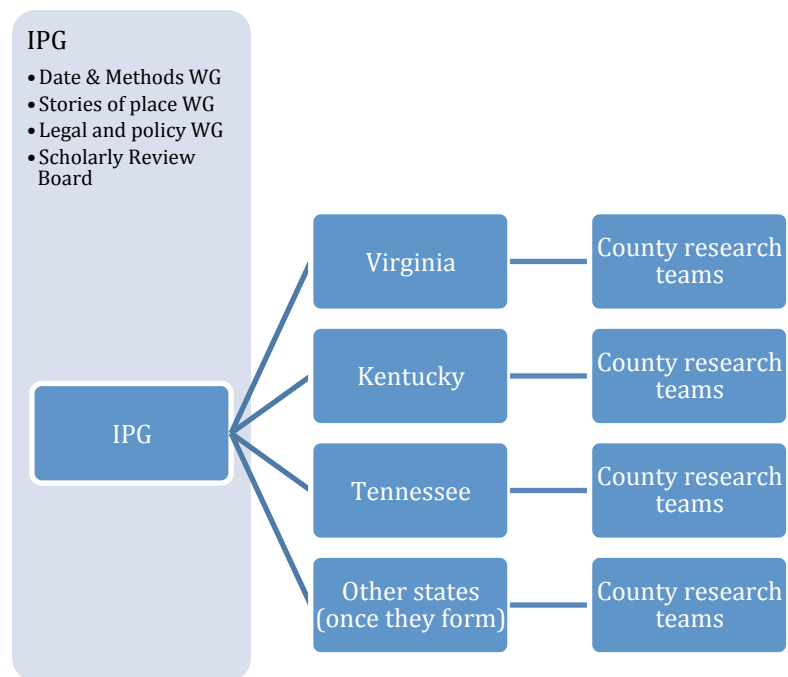
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History

In 1978, a group of committed activists and scholars came together to study who owns Appalachia, creating a political and scholarly legacy that shaped a generation (Appalachian Land Ownership Task Force 1983). For many years now, scholars and community organizations alike have pointed to the need for updated data about land to follow-up on the original study. In September 2016, 65 people gathered in Lexington KY to explore the idea of doing a follow up study, and we formed the regional collaborative network described in this document.

- For more information about this unfolding effort, please go to our website www.appalachianlandstudy.com.
- We also have a wealth of information available in our Dropbox folder “Appalachian Land Study Collaborative Docs” which one of the regional team can share with you, upon request.

Organizational structure



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County research teams

These are teams of people who reside in communities under study. They will be supported by state and regional steering committees and by specialized work groups. We will try to establish these local teams as soon as possible. They are the foundation of the research project throughout.

County research teams will play a crucial role in gathering and prioritizing the questions that drive the regional project. They will identify unique, more local issues that they want to study in addition to the ones that are universal to the whole regional study. Core research questions will emerge from community forums and participatory research. The county research teams need to engage and reflect their whole county, with particular concern to include under-served or marginalized communities in the research process.

Interim Planning Group (IPG)

The IPG will guide the regional process of collaboration during the first months. After we develop more state and county research teams, the IPG will transition into a Regional Committee, with representatives selected by state and county teams and committees. A key goal should be to nurture trust, respect, and mutual inspiration among participants in all aspects and levels of the research process. The meetings of the steering committees will be safe spaces in which people can freely express ideas and feelings, and in which their perspectives, identities, values, and emotions will be respected and validated. This is not a top-down organizing structure.

Specific responsibilities of regional committee

- To build community and inspire creativity and bold vision
- To set goals and objectives
- To develop and enforce a timeline with clear benchmarks
- To coordinate research design
- To develop a core set of research activities that all states will perform, and provide the knowledge sharing platforms needed for input of local and state data using universal regional standards, protocols, and templates (In addition, individual states might be taking on unique research tailored to their locale. And, the regional committee can get involved as helpful to states)
- To form and dissolve regional working groups and partnerships as needed
- To coordinate fundraising efforts for regional projects, and develop common resources that can be used by state level fundraising (concept papers, archives of proposals and letters of inquiry)
- To have oversight of the regional project's budget, financial accounts, and hiring [if state and county teams are doing some of their own fundraising, then we will align standards and division of responsibilities, between the different levels, in management of funds and hiring]

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Composition

- Geographic balance among states
- Balanced representation from different sectors: communities directly affected; students and youth; scholars; lawyers; planners, experts, practitioners, people with government experience; activists and nonprofit staff; other key stakeholders identified by the committee
- Learn from experience of people who worked on 1979 study
- Each state committee has voting representatives on regional committee. Working groups have someone who serves as liaison with Regional Steering Committee (whether they have voting rights to be decided)
- Have an odd number of members

State Steering Committees

These committees will oversee the conduct of research in their states and will operate according to the study's vision and principles.

Specific responsibilities

- To listen deeply to realities and needs in local communities and in their state by conducting public forums, community listening projects, and other participatory deliberation forums and research
- To liaise and translate between local, state, and regional stakeholders
- To identify research questions: a) that should be included in regional research and b) other research questions uniquely important in their state that they will seek to research
- Within their state and in participating communities, to identify stakeholders and consolidate input, in the context of ongoing power mapping and strategic planning to build wide support and co-opt potential opposition.
- To catalyze and support county level research teams who will be primary data collectors
- To serve as the communications clearinghouse for reports from and to county committees
- To develop and oversee communications campaigns to the general public in their state: clarify key themes, develop effective messages, disseminate to targeted audiences

Composition

- Geographic balance among counties, states, and between rural and urban
- Balanced representation among sectors: communities directly affected; students and youth; scholars; lawyers; planners, experts, practitioners, people with government experience; activists and nonprofit staff; artists, videographers, photographers, writers, storytellers and other culture workers; other key stakeholders identified by the committee
- Balanced representation of ecological systems, watersheds, biomes? (I.e. how are the interests of naturally occurring systems affected by patterns of land ownership and use)
- Learn from experience of people who worked on 1979 study
- Send voting representatives to the regional committee

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Scholarly Review Board

We will convene an independent panel of scholars who commit to serve for a year or two. These scholars will not be involved in the research teams conducting the work but will provide independent review of models, methods, and products.

Composition

- Karen Rignall, project Research Director, will work with the steering committees to develop a list of the kinds of expertise we need
- She and her research assistants will identify the top ranked scholars in the needed areas of expertise by interviewing scholars and scoping scholarly literatures

Responsibilities

- The Research Director will invite scholars and establish appropriate platforms for communication
- The Research Director will liaise between the Scholarly Review Board and the steering committee
- Scholars will commit to reviewing project reports every 3 to 6 months, and sending in written evaluations (including evaluation of research design, data quality control and management)
- Panels, forums, and workshops will be convened in scholarly venues. We will reach out to the Appalachian Studies Association to explore possible series of events at the annual conferences from 2017-2020
- An appropriate process for scholarly peer-review of end products will be developed
- Articles will also be written for peer-reviewed journals, with the Research Director playing a key role in catalyzing and supporting these write ups

Working Groups

To be decided by the Steering Committee. Suggestions so far include:

- **Policy Working Group:** Plays a coordinating role in clarifying impacts related to existing policy, and possible needs for new policy. Writes policy relevant reports. As soon as possible, the WG should draft recommendations about how the Land Study can relate to advocacy roles and activities. (e.g., Will this working group do more than just write reports? Will they give presentations/lobby elected officials? Present to communities? Make sure these documents get where they need to? Or will they liaise and provide materials to entities who take an advocacy role or mount political campaigns and social change movements?) [Convener: Mary Cromer]
- **Methods and Data Working Group:** The purpose of this group is to a) learn in greater depth about the approaches that have already been used to study land; b) help plan some initial scoping studies to see how different methods work when applied, and what we learn that we didn't anticipate. These initial studies will help inform future grant writing and our future work. They will be planned in conjunction with the regional steering committee once it's formed; c) review the methods, variables, and indicators used in the original land study; d) propose to the regional steering committee a set of

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rigorous methods for the study that will stand up to scholarly and public scrutiny but that will also build grassroots power and capacity. [Lindsay Shade is convening this group. Contact her if interested in joining]

- **Stories of Place Working Group:** this project will do qualitative documentation of land use and the cultural meanings of land. It brings together communities and scholars to document cultural and natural assets of counties in Central Appalachia that are working to diversify their economies. It is a community-based, collaborative research effort to map local names, oral histories, land uses, and cultural and social meanings of natural and built features of the landscape. The region is rich in history, biodiversity, and local knowledge of the land through a long history of land-based livelihoods. These natural and cultural assets can be valuable in building a 21st century regional economy that provides a quality of life that attracts tourism and in-migrants, provides residents with walkable and healthy communities, retains youth, and incubates vibrant new forms of entrepreneurship. [Chair: Mary Hufford]

Regional communication platforms

- Common cloud archives: Currently in Dropbox / Appalachian Land Study Collaborative Docs [contact Lindsay Shade to get access]
- Listserv: Contact Betsy, Lindsay, or Karen to get added.

Partnership and collaboration

Community and liberal arts colleges, and regional universities can play key roles as anchor institutions.

The Land Study group will partner with particular organizations and institutions that can provide necessary skills and capacities to the work, such as:

- Website, digital platforms, (Mountain Tech Media?)
- Communication campaigns, etc.(Center for Rural Strategies? Appalshop?)
- Train the trainers in facilitation and design of internal and public meetings (Alliance for Appalachia?)
- Student and youth participation (Y'ALL, STAY, & Scholar Activist Alliance?)
- Possible partners: MACED, Highlander

Key stakeholders and potential collaborators: to whom we should reach out early and try to build good working relationships:

- Faith communities
- Landowners
- Local governments
- Public Health departments and associations
- Planning organizations and professional associations

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June, 2017

- Community land trusts, commons, and other land-focused entities or movements
- Nature conservancies
- Others to be identified by steering committees

Appalachian Land Ownership Task Force. 1983. *Who owns Appalachia? : landownership and its impact*. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky.

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