

# V Visitor Experiences

The National Coal Heritage Area (NCHA) embodies strong themes that are authentically represented throughout the region. While the themes to be explored are supported by both physical and cultural resources, there is no organized network that links resources into a coherent visitor experience. Many of the resources, such as Thurmond and the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine, are accessible via major transportation routes. These more accessible destinations will introduce visitors to coal heritage themes and generate interest to explore the stories in the “core” coal counties, where the themes can be explored and interpreted. As visitor interest and services begin to grow, and as accessibility improves with new highway construction, visitors can discover themed destinations in the heart of coal country, in McDowell and Wyoming counties. Visitors can discover the fascinating story of the business of coal, the experience of working in the coal industry, the organization of the company town, mining technology, and the evolution of the coal industry in a series of linked destinations that are experienced in a dramatic and exciting way. Traveling to and through the area will be interesting, rewarding and convenient. Providing high quality visitor experiences is perhaps the NCHA’s most important challenge, given the physical ruggedness of the region and the dispersed nature of communities and visitor attractions.



*Early electric locomotives, Crumpler, McDowell County. WVU*



## 2.1 Connecting Visitors to the NCHA

Connecting people to the experience and stories of coal mining and providing interpretive materials that challenge perceptions and stereotypes about mining are goals of the NCHA. The individuals, families, and groups that experience the renovated company stores, intact superintendent's houses, exhibition coal mine, and related attractions will bring with them varied levels of knowledge and interest in the industry and its history. The visitor experience strategy seeks to connect the visitor – whether they are traveling through the area or within the area – with the life of the coal miner, the sense of community felt by the families in the coal camps, and the ways in which coal mining changed the region and the nation forever.



School visit to Canyon Rim Visitor Center, Fayette County. NPS



Canyon Rim Visitor Center, Fayette County. NPS



## 2.2 Visitor Experience Strategy

An overarching goal of the NCHA is to interpret the coal heritage story in a thought-provoking, fascinating, and educational manner. The visitor experience strategy informs the manner in which this occurs. A three-tier strategy of visitor centers, destination centers, and experience zones will capture, inform, and disperse visitors to sites and communities where coal heritage has been preserved and interpreted. *Visitor centers* along major transportation corridors function as gateways to the region. These visitor centers will exhibit authentic artifacts and materials to entice and direct visitors to destination centers throughout the region. *Destination centers* will develop activities, interpretive materials, and programs to form a series of linked events and sites. In addition, the destination centers direct visitors into the *experience zones* – coal camps, physical artifacts and interpretive opportunities nearby, where experiences are revealed in authentic settings.

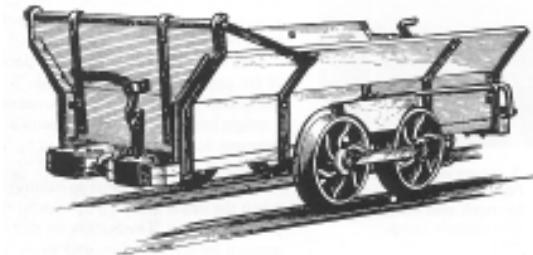


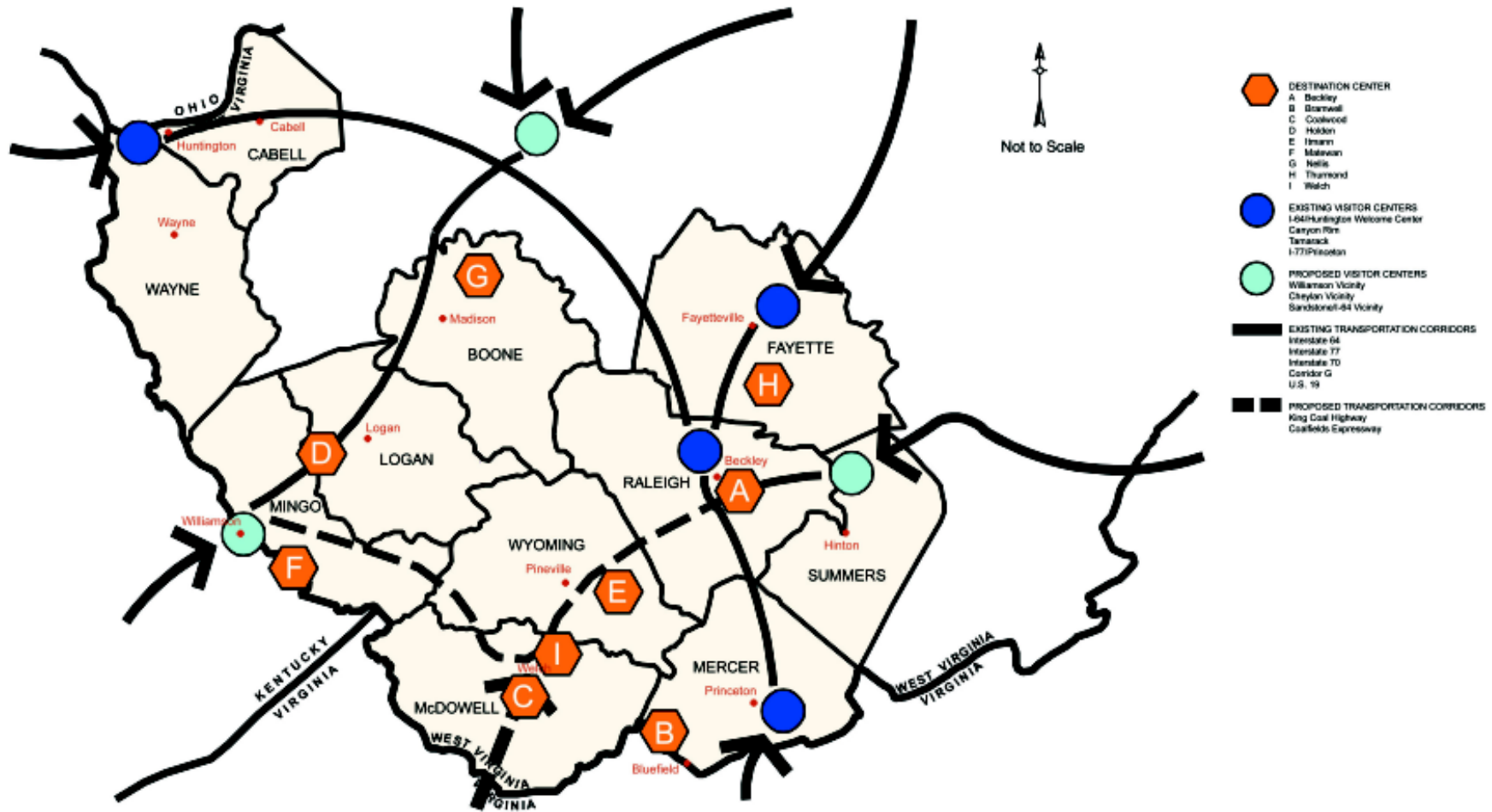
Linked thematic destinations provide an organized framework for understanding the history of the region and telling the coal heritage story. How the NCHA relates interpretive themes and sub-themes to physical sites at destination centers is illustrated at the end of this chapter. As a supplemental destination to visitor and destination centers, a National Coal Museum and Miners Memorial would enhance visitor services, interpretation, education, and it would honor miners who lost their lives in the mines of southern West Virginia and the United States. The National Coal Museum and Miners

Memorial can supplement the linked destination strategy, but its creation is contingent upon funding and the feasibility of developing a signature visitor attraction.

### 2.2.1 Visitor Centers

Visitor data confirms that residents and visitors travel with the NCHA region by private automobile. Sharing the stories of coal heritage with hundreds of thousands of visitors each year requires an effective method of informing and enticing motorists to stop, explore and learn, thereby promoting economic development, along with a more positive understanding of the region's history and culture. At regional gateways along the major transportation corridors, visitor centers encourage travelers to take the first step in this process. Four centers are currently in place and three additional centers are planned or proposed.





## Visitor Experience Strategy



Taking advantage of their locations along major travel routes, the gateway visitor centers would first capture the interest of visitors by introducing coal heritage with strong graphic images and the promise of authentic experiences. Major themes can be introduced and visitors can learn of the diversity and variety of stories that await them. Brochures and printed information about destination centers—items referred to in the tourism industry as collateral materials—would be available and visitors can put together a trip itinerary that is linked by locations or by themes.

Each visitor center promotes the coal heritage story in a unique, but consistent manner. At state welcoming centers, such as the one near Huntington on Interstate 64, visitor centers may focus primarily on printed materials, with opportunities for interactive exhibits and new media techniques. Canyon Rim Visitors Center, operated by the National Park Service, brings visitors in direct contact with the rugged landscape and is an excellent departure point for rewarding coal heritage travels in the New River area. Future centers, such as the planned visitor's center off of Interstate 64 near Sandstone Falls, can develop strategies for promoting coal heritage travel and education during its planning process.

Existing Visitor Centers:

- Canyon Rim (National Park Service)
- I - 64 / Huntington (WV DOT)
- I - 77 / Princeton WV DOT)
- Tamarack (WV Turnpike Authority)

Planned Visitor Centers:

- Chelyan/South Charleston (WV DOT)
- Sandstone Falls (National Park Service)

Proposed Visitor Center:

- Williamson Vicinity



*Tamarack, "The Best of West Virginia"  
Beckley, West Virginia. NCHA*



### 2.2.2 Destination Centers

Nine destination centers are proposed in the heritage area. The centers are geographically distributed and thematically diverse, each providing different experiences and educational opportunities. Each destination center would develop activities, interpretive materials, and programs that will tell their individual story in authentic and personal ways. Collectively, these destination centers form a series of linked sites and experiences, each of which is an important destination in its own right. Together they weave the fabric that represents the diversity of coal heritage. Centers will explore themes that are authentic to that destination and, where possible, actual sites will be utilized in communicating experiences and interpretive themes. Each center would explore one or more primary themes and several secondary themes. The company town theme, for example, will utilize restored and unrestored company houses and stores to illustrate the patterns of typical company towns and the affect such living patterns had and continue to have on miners and their families. Destination centers will develop a series of interpretive techniques that are effective in telling their story, including building, driving and walking tours; recorded oral histories; and interactive media such as videos, exhibits and displays.

The destination centers are proposed for improvement over a ten-year time frame. The criteria for evaluating them and proposing a phased schedule for their development or enhancement includes organizational capacity, accessibility, and viability as a visitor destination. Generally, the Thurmond to Beckley to

Bramwell journey follows Interstate 77. Already a popular traveler destination, this corridor has excellent potential as a pathway of thematically linked destinations. Nellis, Holden and Matewan form another pathway in the western section of the NCHA region. Accessibility is generally good via Corridor G and federal and state routes. Visitors to the heart of coal country—to Welch, Coalwood and Itmann—will experience the ruggedness and isolation much as area inhabitants did during the coal booms of the twentieth century.

The National Coal Heritage Area is expected to provide technical support, access to funding and assistance in developing attractions, programs and interpretive exhibits at destination centers. All destination centers will be owned and managed by local sponsors and organizations. Common marketing programs, ticketing arrangements and tour packaging are recommended and could be coordinated by marketing staff at the NCHA. Upon authorization, the NCHA logo and design vocabulary will be available for use by destination centers.



### 2.2.2.1 Beckley

The Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine offers a unique visitor experience through tours of this once-operational drift mine, displays of working equipment and authentic coal-camp buildings, including a company owned worker's house, community church, and superintendent's residence. The mine originally opened for operation in the 1890s and functioned until 1910 as a local family-run business. The mine was upgraded for tours in the early 1960s and has continued to attract thousands of visitors every year since that time.

Physically reconfiguring the coal mine complex to enhance interpretation opportunities and make functional improvements is recommended. Currently, both authentic and visitor support structures are grouped around a central parking lot. Interpretive exhibits are outdated and visitor support is inadequate. Upgrading the complex will improve interpretive opportunities and introduce themes linked to other visitor destinations. Improving access to the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine site and constructing additional wayfinding

signage will facilitate and improve the visitor experience. While visiting the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine, visitors are also encouraged to visit destination centers and experience zones throughout the NCHA.



*Proposed expansion of interpretation facilities and visitor services, Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine.*

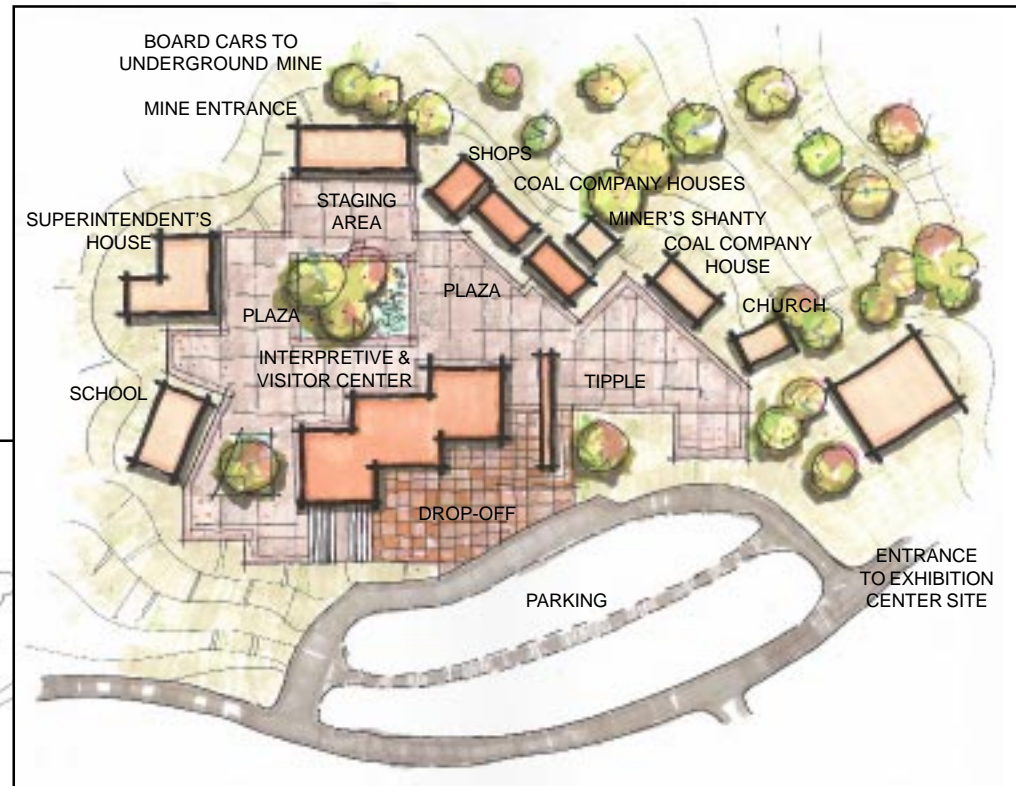
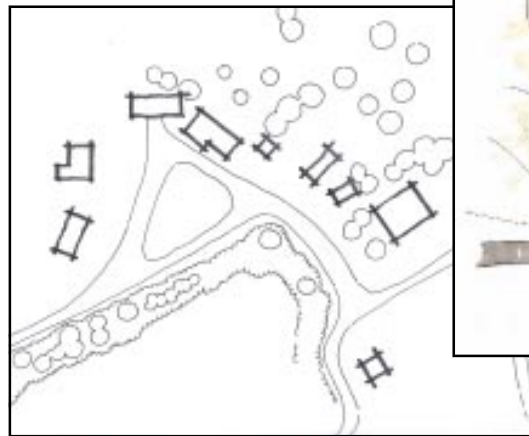


### Visitor Experiences

Visitors entering the complex will park in a new parking area immediately adjacent to the site and enter through a new visitor and interpretation center reminiscent of a company store. Visitors exiting the store will enter a central space surrounded by authentic coal camp structures that explore and interpret relationships between families, community and the coal company. A wooden tippie from the early coal boom days illustrates how coal was moved from the mine, sorted and transported to distant markets. Visitors are encouraged to walk among coal camp structures and talk to staff, many of whom are descendants of early miners. Two different eras of mining are interpreted on the underground tours. One tour explores the hand loading era and the

evolution of mechanical mining. Another tour depicts modern mining practices. Both are led and interpreted by retired miners, who will describe the geology of coal, improvements in mining technology through recent times, and the life of a typical coal miner and his family.

Existing site plan.



Proposed expansion of the Beckely Exhibition Coal Mine.



### 2.2.2.2 Bramwell

Bramwell was home to numerous coal “operators” and millionaires during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although not a company town, Bramwell’s existence depended upon coal and other lucrative institutions associated with the coal industry, such as the Bank of Bramwell and the Flat Top Coal Land Association. The town represents the concentration of wealth that the Pocahontas coal seam generated for those who controlled this resource.

#### Millionaire Mansions

Surrounded by numerous coal towns, Bramwell is a focal point for the region because of its remarkable collection of beautiful and elaborate homes of the coal barons. A walking tour of the homes provides visitors with an opportunity to understand the division between the owners and managers of the mines and the miners whose labor they directed. Bramwell also testifies to the important role that immigrants played in the coal

heritage story. Most mine owners whose houses survive were born into working-class families in England or Wales, while many of the houses display the artisanship of Italian immigrant stone masons.



Main Street, Bramwell, Mercer County. NCHA



Bramwell Depot and Excursion Train.

#### Visitor Experiences

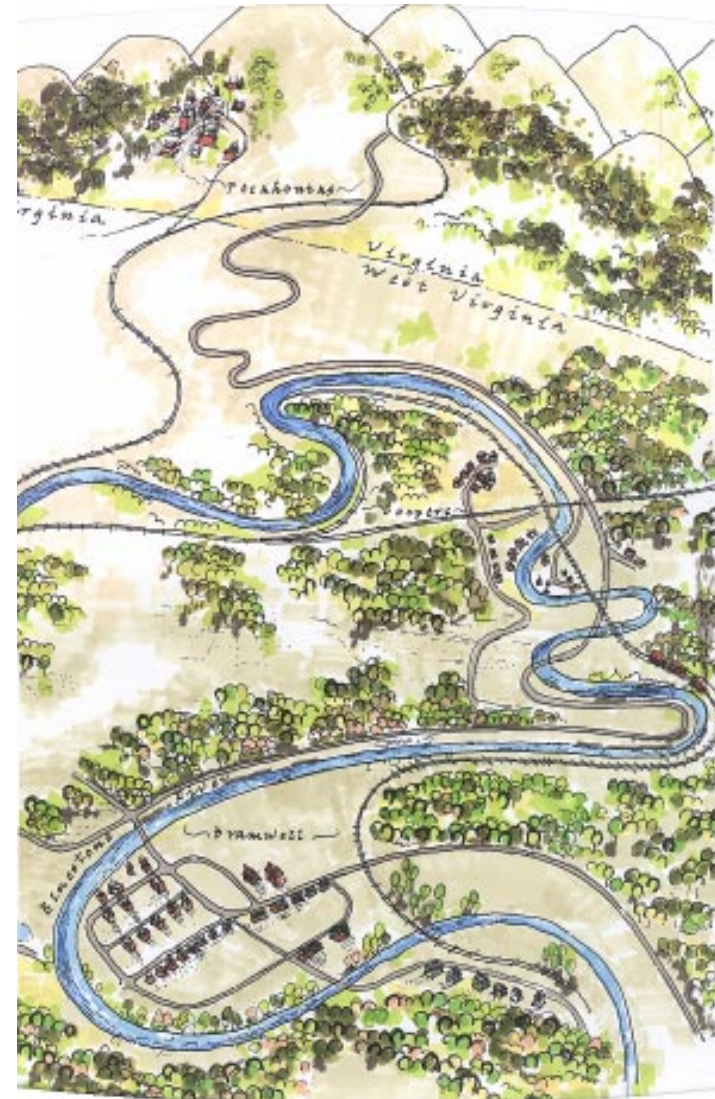
Bramwell is tucked within an oxbow of the Bluestone River and is a perfect size for walking and bicycle touring. Visitors can experience the town as inhabitants did at the height of the coal boom by arriving at the rail depot and then crossing the street to stroll and shop in the downtown area. The intact early twentieth century commercial district has numerous shops and destinations for visitors, including the original drugstore with its operating soda fountain. Just across the street from downtown is the historic Bank of Bramwell and visitors can walk among the historic neighborhood of majestic homes, each with a story to share.



### ***Bramwell to Coopers to Pocahontas Journey***

A new railroad depot sits alongside of the rail spur much as it did in Bramwell's heyday. The depot is headquarters of the Coal Heritage Trail Association and an interpretive center for coal heritage destinations in the area. From the depot in downtown, visitors can board the excursion train to Pocahontas, Virginia, once home to the world-famous Pocahontas Fuel Company. The town is an intact, but unrestored, early 20<sup>th</sup> century company town with a high concentration of cultural and civic structures. Its historic downtown has several important sites worth visiting, including the Pocahontas Opera House, the Pocahontas Fuel Company Store, and the Block Shower House. In addition, the Pocahontas Exhibition Mine, "The World's First Mine Museum," is a short distance away.

Several intermediate destinations between Pocahontas and Bramwell can be reached by car or via a walking trail and bike path. A pedestrian path will lead visitors through Coopers, West Virginia, headquarters of the Mill Creek Coal Company, one of the first mining companies in the region. Coopers, named for one of Bramwell's first mine owners, provides the opportunity to explore an intact mining community with many elements found in a typical coal town, including the superintendent's house, churches and the company store. Just across the Virginia state line is the Pocahontas cemetery and memorial to 114 miners that lost their lives in the Pocahontas mine disaster of 1884.



*The Bramwell to Coopers to Pocahontas Journey connects three diverse destinations that share a common heritage.*



### 2.2.2.3 Coalwood

Symbolically named, Coalwood is located in the heart of Appalachian coal country and reflects typical company town construction patterns. Coalwood was a complete social and commercial center for the coal miners. It is also a monument to two kinds of paternalism: that of its founder, mine owner George L. Carter, who sold the mine in disgust after the United Mine Workers of America gained the support of its miners; and an Ohio steel company that operated Coalwood as a “captive mine” until the 1960s when market forces and improvements in mining technology eliminated jobs. The town retains many different styles of homes from its heyday, including the Jenny Lind, board-and-batten, clapboard and bungalow house types, all typical for miners and their families.

#### A Story of National Appeal

Writer Homer Hickam, Jr. drew national attention to Coalwood. In his memoir, *Rocket Boys*, he provided an appealing account of growing up in a company town where nearly every aspect of life was associated with the coal industry and the mines. Hickam followed *Rocket Boys* with *The Coalwood Way*, a further account of social and cultural characteristics of Coalwood. Several landmarks described by Hickam are scattered throughout the small town, including the Carter Coal Company clubhouse, downtown commercial buildings, and residential structures.



Visitors can walk the streets of Coalwood and relate scenes and passages of Hickam’s books to authentic sites and structures. Hickam’s account of the absolute dependence of the community and its residents on the mine is clearly evident in the loss of population and physical deterioration of the community. Landmark structures like the clubhouse are mute reminders of the power and impermanence of coal mining. Hickam’s vivid description of a vibrant community strongly contrasts with Coalwood today – a powerful lesson of the cost of technological change.



Carter Coal Company Clubhouse, McDowell County.

The nearby town of Gary offers visitors a tour of its coal company offices and an opportunity to visit the Orthodox Church where many eastern European immigrants worshipped. Also in the vicinity, Caretta serves as another example of a typical company town of industrial, commercial, community and residential buildings.



### 2.2.2.4 Holden

Named for Albert F. Holden, a mining engineer and major investor in the Island Creek Coal Company, the town of Holden remains an active industrial community supplying area mines with workers, supplies, and equipment. Holden was a product of “welfare capitalism,” an early 20<sup>th</sup> century movement that sought to attract workers – and to combat unionization – by providing attractive homes and recreational facilities. Today, Holden’s housing shows the customized variety that resulted when the company sold the homes to

occupants after World War II. The Island Creek Coal Company Headquarters and Store survives as a typical office and store of its time. A magnificent brick structure, it is virtually the last structure of its type that remained open for business into the 1990s. The building still houses many of its original furnishings.



Island Creek Coal Company Headquarters and Store, Holden, Logan County. WVU

building, its furnishing and original fixtures are virtually intact. Here, visitors can understand the organization and efficiency that was brought to bear on mining and mine communities. The company headquarters was a model of commerce, administration and social interaction. At the street level, the company store provided the goods and services required by the resident population. Climbing an open staircase to the second floor, the offices of managers and their staff retain the highly polished woodwork and original light fixtures befitting their role in the company. Further yet into the building, visitors walk through and notice the drafting tables, oak map files and safety bulletins in the technical production areas.



Interior, Island Creek Coal Company Headquarters and Store.

### Visitor Experiences

Visitors will find Holden easily accessible from Corridor G with good access from large population centers such as West Virginia’s capital city of Charleston and points north and east. The Island Creek Company Headquarters is a highlight of the visit. Remarkably, the

A side trip to nearby Logan reveals a glimpse of a coalfield service center where railroads played an important role in transporting both people and goods to the coalfields.



### 2.2.2.5 Itmann

Designed and built by I.T. Mann of the Pocahontas Coal Company in 1917, the town of Itmann has retained its original form as a typical coal company town with numerous prefabricated company owned houses surrounding the company store. The centerpiece of this small town, the Itmann Company Store, stands as a symbol of the power and influence that coal companies exerted upon the communities they created. The building is one of the finest examples of coal heritage architecture because of its scale and the quality of construction.



*Pocahontas Coal Company Store and Offices, Itmann, Wyoming County.*

### Walking Tours

As the central attraction for visitation and interpretive displays within the town of Itmann, the Itmann Company Store has much to offer. The structure is one of the most architecturally significant in the region, as it is made of hand-hewn native stone and is identified by its prominent size and site and its distinguishing archways. The renovation of the historic building creates space for museum exhibits and extensive interpretive and interactive educational displays. The company store will also be the focal and meeting point for a walking tour of

the town. Smaller important structures, such as the United Mine Workers Building with its Greek Revival architecture provide context to the community. Visitors to the Itmann Company Store will gain greater knowledge of the relationship between the coal company and its workers and the physical and functional relationships of a coal company town.

### Park Pathway

A pedestrian and bike pathway from Itmann to Twin Falls Resort State Park and its "Pioneer Homestead" will encourage visitors to experience the role that traditional Appalachian culture played in the history of the coal region of southern West Virginia. The Twin Falls Resort State Park offers a full range of facilities including the Mountain Top Lodge, vacation cottages, golf and camping. The Bower family who migrated north from the Carolina Blue Ridge to build the homestead in the late nineteenth century was typical of mountain farmers who adapted agriculture to the rugged conditions that prevailed in the Appalachian plateau.

A side trip to Mullens will reveal many structures within a short walking distance of the historic downtown that are associated with the Virginian Railway. Railroad enthusiasts will enjoy the character of Mullens and the renovation and reopening of the Wyoming Hotel may offer lodging to visitors.



### 2.2.2.6 Matewan

This small town was built in the mid-1890s at a site already famous for the earlier conflict of two prominent local families, the Hatfields and the McCoy's. In 1920, it gained further fame through the "Matewan Massacre," one of the climactic events in the southern West Virginia "Mine Wars" between coal corporations and the United Mine Workers. During the early twentieth century, Matewan serviced the surrounding coal communities as an independent town rather than a company town; it was a center for social and business development. It has also endured numerous disasters, including floods and fires. Facilitated by the Matewan Development Center, Inc., the town encourages economic development through the rehabilitation and preservation of historically significant properties.

#### Visitors Experiences

Matewan continues to be an important destination for a wide range of visitors, including Hatfield-McCoy descendants, historians, and researchers. Visitors can walk the same streets and see the bullet scarred brick walls of the Matewan Massacre, while listening to recorded first-person accounts. Matewan provides an appropriate venue from which to interpret the Battle of Blair Mountain and other events in the "Mine Wars."



Albert "Sid" Hatfield,  
Chief of Police of Matewan  
at the time of the  
"Matewan Massacre."  
WVU



### 2.2.2.7 Nellis

The town of Nellis illustrates the relationship between the mountainous topography and the creation of a community that depended upon a coal company for existence. It remains one of the most intact coal communities still standing in southern West Virginia. Noteworthy structures include the Nellis Community Church, which houses the town's archives, the clubhouse, theatre, company store and numerous brick houses built by the Armco Coal Company in the late 1920s. Many of these structures have changed significantly from their original appearance and function.

The town currently has plans for creating a National Coal Miners' Memorial. The memorial will to honor the coal miners killed in mining disasters over the past

century. Plans include a Memorial Hall, consisting of coal pillars where the names of those being honored will be etched, Room 38 – a life-size display of miners trapped in a coal mine – and additional displays, oral histories, documents and exhibits of coal mining disasters.



*Nellis Community Church, home to the Nellis Archives, Boone County.*

### Discovery of Coal

While in the area, visitors will want to visit Peytona, where eighteenth century explorers first documented the existence of coal in western Virginia, giving the Coal River its name, and nearby Madison, home to the Bituminous Coal Mine Museum.



*Planned National Coal Miners' Memorial, Boone County*



### 2.2.2.8 Thurmond

Visitors can experience Thurmond as an element of the regional outdoor recreation industry along New River Gorge National River. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Thurmond was a thriving railroad town serving the coal industry. The industry depended upon railroads to

distribute coal to the industrial centers of the Northeast and Midwest. There is little left in Thurmond from the era of the coal boom except for the train depot. Recently restored to its original appearance, the depot is within walking distance of the banks of the New River. Visitors can develop an understanding of the importance of the relationship between the railroads and coal mining.



*Thurmond Station, a National Park Service site, Fayette County.*

### **The New River Area**

While in the vicinity, visitors to Glen Jean and the Canyon Rim Visitor

Center will discover unique experiences and interpretive displays. Glen Jean is now the regional headquarters for the National Park Service and features the Bank of

Glen Jean, a beautiful dressed stone structure. The Canyon Rim Visitor Center offers a spectacular view of the New River Gorge and the 900-foot-high Gorge Bridge, along with historical interpretive materials. The Visitor Center is the gateway to Fayette Station Road – a proposed addition to the Coal Heritage Trail – which provides access to abandoned mine sites such as the Kaymoor Mining Complex.



*New River Gorge Bridge, Fayette County.*



### 2.2.2.9 Welch

In the past, Welch functioned as a distribution and service center for the coalfields of McDowell County and today it still offers a distinctive ambiance not found in other coalfield communities. The assassination of Albert “Sid” Hatfield on the steps of the McDowell County Courthouse was an important event in the Mine Wars, but Welch’s overall significance in the coal heritage story is derived from its role as a service center, its current location along the Coal Heritage Trail, future access via the Coalfields Expressway, and efforts of involved citizens who are creating a mining museum and “wall of remembrance” in a historic downtown bank building. The famous documentary photographer Russell Lee captured the busy life of Welch during its heyday after World War II, when it was known as “little Chicago.” Lee’s photographs show that much of the structural fabric of the town survived the drastic population decline that followed the mechanization of coal mining.

#### Visitor Experiences

Visitors to McDowell County will see one of the highest concentrations of coal-related communities, sites, and structures to be found in Appalachia. Travelers on the Coal Heritage Trail south towards Bluefield will discover the coal communities of Kimball, site of the first memorial to World War I

African-American veterans, Northfork and Powhatan, both communities of racial and ethnic diversity, and Elkhorn, where coal camp housing, a distinctive Russian Orthodox Church, post office, postmaster’s house and superintendent’s house all contribute to the fabric of this coal-oriented town.



Vibrant street scene in post-war Welch, McDowell County. NA



### 2.2.3 Experience Zones

Destination centers have an important role, which is to inform and direct visitors to other important sites or structures in their areas, designated as experience zones. Visitors will be encouraged to visit these communities and learn first hand from the residents their personal stories and experiences. For example, the destination center in Coalwood would direct visitors to communities such as Gary and Caretta where they will learn how families and communities are remembering and honoring their history. Welch can introduce the story of historically black communities such as Northfork and Kimball, especially to the powerful memorial to African-American World War I veterans in Kimball.

Destination centers will be locally developed and managed. Currently, each center has an organization or sponsoring entity in place. Local organizations sponsoring the centers will work collaboratively to build a regional entity that seeks funding and support for project activities.

### 2.2.4 National Coal Miners Museum

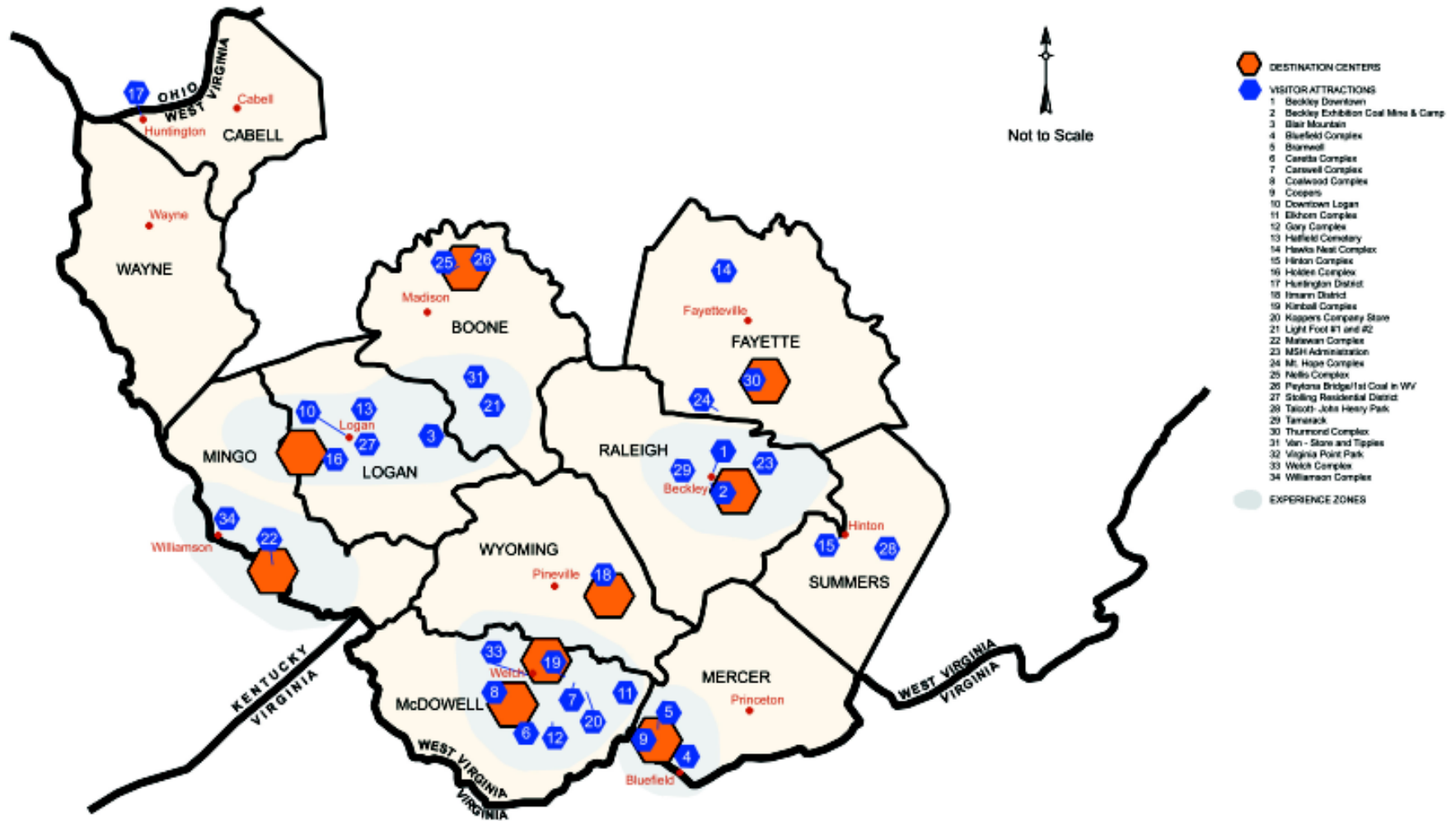
Although considered a supplement within the visitor experience strategy, a National Coal Miners Museum could attract an increasing number of visitors to the area. Envisioned as a state-of-the-art interpretive and educational complex, the museum could bring the story of coal to a broader audience. Coalfield history and culture combines all of the major elements of American

economic and social history – industrial might, labor struggles, distinctive communities, and ethnic diversity. The museum could be a destination which presents all aspects of this story. The opening of the coalfields in the late nineteenth century and the resultant explosion of growth and racial diversity could be told through images, artifacts, exhibitions, and recorded oral histories. Visitors would be able to learn firsthand of the hardships and rewards of working in coal from former miners in person and through oral and video interviews. Those visitors who are curious about their own family history and its connection with the mining life could use a genealogical database keyed to the southern West Virginia coalfields.



The Number 11 Mine Hungarian Band, Gary, McDowell County. SWV



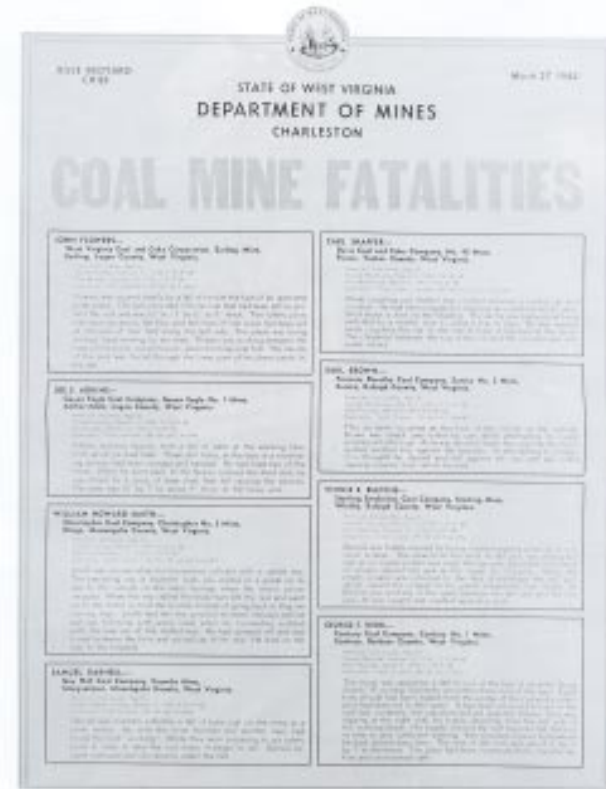


## Visitor Experience Zones



Southern West Virginia was the site of some of the most significant labor struggles in American history. The Mine Wars of 1912-1927, and especially climactic episodes such as the Matewan Massacre and the Battle of Blair Mountain, are simply the best known of these events. Stories of these battles and how they helped to shape history and the union movement could be told through recorded interviews, exhibits, and reenactments. Another important, though less dramatic, battle was the effort to protect miners as they worked through stronger mine safety and health legislation. The depiction of this effort could be reinforced through linkages with the mine disaster database now being developed by the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley and the National Coal Miners' Memorial being planned in Nellis.

The museum's role in the visitor experience strategy would be to inform visitors about and direct them to coal-related destinations and communities throughout the region. It could serve as the threshold to the authentic coal heritage structures, stories, and experiences that are located throughout the National Coal Heritage Area. Armed with a deeper awareness of the stories of work, community, and struggle that are the hallmarks of the coalfields, visitors would be encouraged to travel to the destination centers and beyond to learn about this uniquely American story first-hand.



<i>Relating Interpretive Themes to Destination Centers</i>	Beckley	Bramwell	Coalwood	Holden	Itmann	Matewan	Nellis	Thurmond	Weich	Miner's Museum & Memorial
<b><i>The Coal Business</i></b>										
Markets & Capital		●	◐	◐			◐			●
Exploration & Land Acquisition		●							◐	●
Geology of Coal							●	●	◐	●
Coal Transportation		↗	◐		◐	↗	◐	↗	◐	●
<b><i>Working in Coal</i></b>										
Occupational Culture	↗		●			●	◐		◐	●
Unionization			●		↗	↗	◐		◐	●
The Mine Wars						↗			↗	●
Danger, Safety & Health	↗		●			◐	◐		●	●
<b><i>The Company Town</i></b>										
Physical Layout	↗	↗	↗	◐	↗		↗		↗	●
Ethnicity	◐	↗	↗	◐	↗	↗	◐		◐	●
Women in the Coalfields	◐	↗	●	◐	◐	↗	◐			●
The Company Store	◐		↗	↗	↗		↗			●
Churches, Schools & Recreation		◐	↗	◐	◐	◐	↗		◐	●
<b><i>Mining Technology</i></b>										
The Handloading Era	↗			◐			◐		◐	●
Mechanization	↗		◐	↗	◐		◐		◐	●
Surface Mining				◐					◐	●
Continuous Miner & Longwall				◐					◐	●
<b><i>Crisis &amp; Renewal</i></b>										
Deindustrialization	↗	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	↗	●
Migration	◐	◐	●	◐	◐	↗	◐	◐	●	●

Linked thematic destinations provide an organized framework for understanding the history of the region and telling the coal heritage story. The matrix to the left illustrates themes to be explored at proposed destination centers within the NCHA.

- ↗ Actual Sites representing interpretive themes
- Primary Sites for possible interpretive themes
- ◐ Secondary Sites for possible interpretive themes

