



STRENGTHENING TOURISM IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

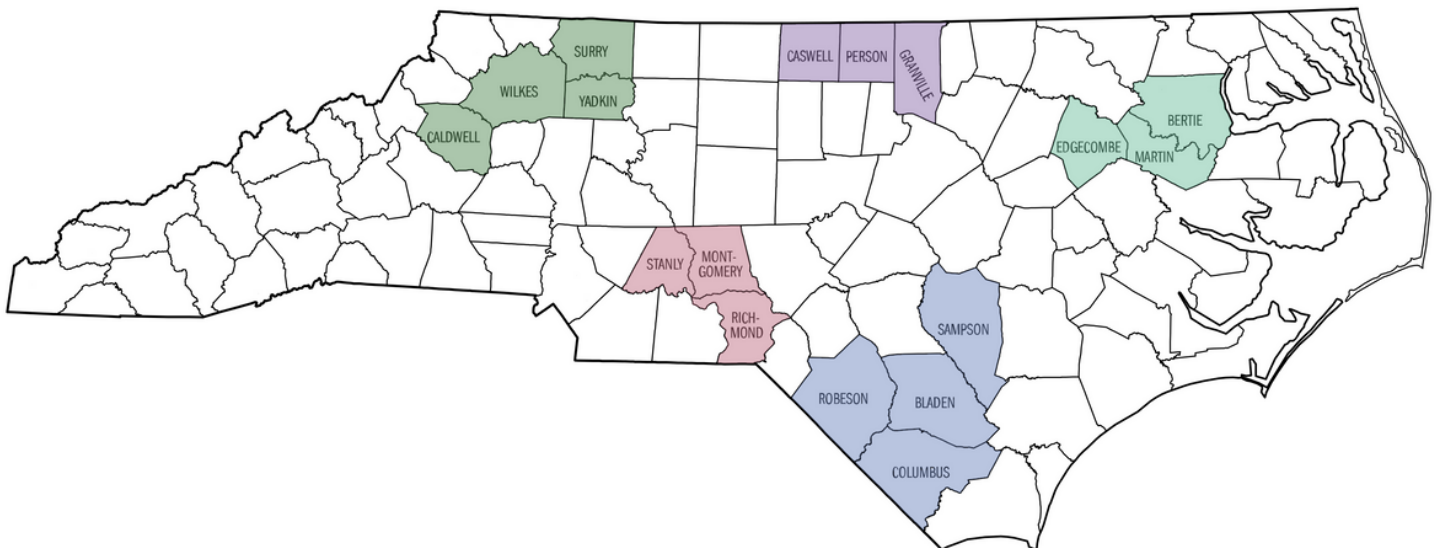
The goal of UPLIFT is to boost tourism in rural North Carolina communities. UPLIFT works regionally - across county borders - to support local tourism leaders and practitioners in realizing their vision for tourism in their community, including natural, recreational, cultural, agricultural, culinary, built and other tourism.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Develop multi-night itineraries that connect sites within UPLIFT target regions to strengthen the overall tourism offer, retain visitors for longer, increase spending and make it easier for travelers to visit
- Enhance, innovate and scale the tourism experiences offered within the regions, working with new and existing tourism providers
- Strengthen tourism economies, skills and capacities that stimulate entrepreneurship, grow businesses and create or retain jobs
- Tell the stories of the regions, their communities and individual tourism experiences to attract and retain visitors
- Integrate sustainability principles & practices into the tourism experiences supported

WHERE WE WORK

The program will focus in the counties listed below as well as counties bordering them, where opportunities for connections to regional itineraries exist.



www.UPLIFTtourism.com

UPLIFT ACTIVITIES

The first step with each region will be to identify what has already been done, what's currently happening and exists as well as what's planned. The starting point for where UPLIFT can add value in each region will be different, depending on the needs of the communities. The program offers a suite of 'building blocks' to develop tourism through festivals, attractions, businesses and DMO's/government. Partners in each region will help to identify what the optimal mix of UPLIFT 'building blocks' are for their specific needs. These include, but may also be added to:

Understanding the tourism context

- Tourism knowledge center (online resource for tourism businesses)
- Learning labs (covering market trends, sustainability. etc.)
- Market research

Planning around UPLIFT activities & travel itineraries within each region

Link tourism sites, services and businesses within each region

- Story-telling (For external promotion and internal staff knowledge)
- Building itineraries

Innovate and enhance the tourism experiences

- Tourism business incubator
- Festivals & event program with the Smithsonian Institution
- DMO and tourism leaders professional development
- Virtual tourism development

Finance projects by helping tourism organizations with grant and loan applications

Tell the story of the regions to travelers

- First impressions count (website, collateral materials, etc.)
- Promotional content

EXPECTED IMPACT

- Increase average length of stay by 1-day/night in each region
- Over 200 businesses with strengthened skills, products or operational models
- More than 250 jobs created or retained
- Over 1,000 people engaged in professional development or technical assistance
- 25 virtual tourism experiences developed
- 100 grant/loan applications supported for local partners
- 3,000,000 people reached with information about tourism in the UPLIFT regions
- Video and image assets for each UPLIFT region to help tell their story

TIMEFRAME

UPLIFT is a three year program:

- **Phase 1** began in October 2022 and will last six months, focusing on understanding where UPLIFT can provide the most value for communities in each region.
- **Phase 2** involves technical assistance and professional development programs in each region and will last up to 15 months. Two cycles of Phase 2 will be conducted, one starting in 2023 and the second in 2024.
- **Phase 3** will culminate with familiarization tours.