The Farm at Selu, Appalachian Educational Center
Planning Project, 2001

The Farm at Selu Museum Planning Project was conducted as an experiential learning project for the Spring 2001 Applied Anthropology class. The class took on the role of a planning consulting team charged with investigating possibilities for developing a farming-based living history museum at RU's Selu Conservancy. The team was guided by Mary LaLone (applying her background in museum/park organization), as they applied museum and landscape principles to a potential design for Selu.

The project started with orientation and research stages, which included field trips to the Frontier Culture Museum and Historic Crab Orchard Museum to study the organization and design of living history museums. The team then broke into research groups to study the following topics:

• The reconstructed farmhouse building as the main museum building: Including recommendations for the organization of space and exhibits within the museum building & at the outbuildings; ideas for exhibits & interpretive activities; staffing needs.

• Layout and plan for the museum site: Including layout of the museum site; outdoor exhibits & structures; trails and benches; self-guided tour; interpretive signage; parking.

• Museum facilities inside the museum & outside on the museum site: Including ADA accessibility; restrooms, drinking fountains, and other conveniences that visitors require; collection storage facilities; site maintenance & security.

• The museum audience and educational activities: Including identification of "user groups" & "support groups" and planning with & for those groups; recommendations for museum educational activities on site & museum outreach activities.

The applied planning team prepared a consulting report detailing their recommendations for the museum. They presented the report to the RU Foundation's Selu Advisory Committee and the Appalachian Regional Studies Program in April 2001. The applied anthropology team was assisted by a geology team that prepared maps showing the planning team’s recommendations for the The Farm at Selu site. (See below.)
Museum Project Co-Directors:
Professors Mary LaLone & Ricky Cox, Radford University

Applied Anthropology Student Research Team:
James Bielo, Bethany Blackwell, Sam Deel, Malinda Flanigan, Billy Howard, Anna Marie Meador, Allison Smith, & Adam Sowder

Geology Mapping Project Director:
Professor Kim Knight, Radford University

Geology Student Research Team:
Julie Gilfus & Ron Matney

For further description on the organization of this museum planning project, see:
LaLone, Mary B.
2005 "An Anthro-planning Approach to Local Heritage Tourism: Case Studies from Appalachia."