

Sample Focus Group Summary

Focus Group Summary: *Adirondack Community: Capturing, Retaining, and Communicating the Stories of Who We Are*

Metrics

1. 4 focus groups in two locations with 31 participants.
2. Over 150 names of possible storytellers in a spreadsheet.
3. 4 organizations involved.
4. 6 members of Planning Group.

Draft Sorting and Prioritizations of Focus Group Work

1. A list was made of the top categories from the four focus groups.
2. Duplicates were cleaned up and were moved higher on the list to show priority.
3. If groups used different words for similar topics, they were combined; this resulted in adding some categories that were prominent in one group, but not others.
4. Further combining was done.
5. No prioritization within categories was done.
6. Some stories could fit in multiple categories.

Final Draft Categories

- **The Arts and Humanities:** Music/art/theatre/literature/philosophy/photography/ religion/tall tales
- **How We Work:** Guides/caretaking/hunting/logging/lumber mills/construction/industry/tourism & hospitality/ doctors/business/surveying/farming/fishing/trapping/clubs/law enforcement/merchants/prisons/bootlegging/furniture/
- **Avocations:** Hiking/Olympics/birding/fishing/hunting/hiking/skiing/sports/lake activities/guide boats
- **Institutions:** Cemeteries/hospitals/schools/churches/fire departments/libraries/bars/restaurants/hotels/roadhouses
- **Catastrophes, Disasters, & Tragedies (including war)**
- **People:** Colorful characters/strong women/early settlers
- **Summer and Year-Round Residents:** Events and traditions/volunteerism/activism/philanthropy/demographic changes
- **The Natural and Man-made Environment (need better catchphrase):** Natural history/architecture/Great Camps/mountains/nature

Next Steps

1. Names for the categories need to be reviewed and edited further to be sure they are easily understood, concise (yet convey all the subtopics), and catchy.
2. Just because a topic is not listed among the top ones doesn't mean it is lost; similarly, new topics can be added.

3. Further input will be sought, especially after this summary is sent to the participants.

Focus Group #1: June 26, 4pm: Category Brainstorming/Prioritization

Note that this group did little combining and just prioritized brainstormed categories.

- **Sports: Olympics/skiing/etc.**
- **Natural history**
- **Disasters**
- **Early settlers**
- **Art and artists**
- **Sociology**
- **Farms**
- **Traditions**
- **Hunting/fishing/trapping**
- Giving
- Volunteering
- Mystical experiences in nature
- Intellectual activity
- Construction
- Schools
- Local language isms
- Mountaineering: Trails/hiking
- Summer vs. year-round residents
- History of East Hill
- Military and encampments
- Transportation
- Activism
- Daily routines
- Guiding
- Caretaking
- Governance
- Law enforcement
- Fire services
- Churches
- Hotels/hospitality
- Restaurants
- Multi-generational families
- Music

Focus Group #2: June 26, 7pm: Category Brainstorming/Prioritization

Note that this group did brainstorming, some combining, and then prioritized brainstormed categories.

- **How to make a living: guides/logging/merchants/farming/caretaking/law enforcement/prisons/bootlegging**
- **The Arts and Humanities: Music/art/theatre/literature/philosophy/photography**
- **Volunteering/activism, including fire department, Underground Railroad**
- **Summer residents**

- **Schools**
- **Outdoor recreation: Olympics/mountaineering/hiking**
- **Tourism/hospitality/clubs**
- **Demographic changes**
- Diversity
- Hard times and disasters
- Communications/technology
- Aging
- Religion
- Governance, including land use, taxes, environmental regulation
- Drugs and alcohol
- Tall tales
- Transportation
- Holidays/traditions
- Life for different ages

Focus Group #3: July 5, 4pm: *Category Brainstorming/Prioritization*

Note that this group did brainstorming, some combining, and then prioritized brainstormed categories.

- **How We Work: Doctors/hunting/logging/construction/industry/tourism/guides/business/surveying**
- **The Arts: Artists/musicians/philosophers/writers/summer musicals**
- **Summer and year-round residents**
- **Community characters**
- **Clergy/religion/churches**
- **Education/schools/teachers**
- **Events and traditions**
- **Tragedies**
- Mountains
- Buildings
- Weather
- Fires
- Advantages of living here
- Business
- Clubs
- Local organizations
- Transportation
- Volunteerism
- Land use regulation
- Wildlife/nature
- War

Focus Group #4: July 5, 7pm: *Category Brainstorming/Prioritization*

Note that this group did brainstorming, some combining, and then prioritized brainstormed categories.

- **The Arts:** Music/art/writing/poetry/philosophy/photography/tall tales
- **People:** Colorful characters/strong women/oral histories
- **NEED CATCHPHRASE:** Ausable Club/lakes/Great Camps/architecture
- **How We Work:** Builders/mining/logging/lumber mills/farming/furniture/guides/hunting/fishing/trapping/doctors/bars/restaurants/hotels/roadhouses
- **Avocations:** Hiking/Sports/Olympics/birding/fishing/hunting/hiking/
- **Institutions:** Cemeteries/hospitals/schools/churches/fire departments
- Catastrophes: weather-related/fires/illnesses
- Transportation/garages
- Local events
- Politics
- Summer residents and philanthropy
- Economic change
- Guide boats
- War

Sample Final Categories

Adirondack Community: Capturing, Retaining, and Communicating the Stories of Who We Are

Story Categories

Note: A story can be in more than one category

- **Arts & Culture:** Music/art/theatre/literature/philosophy/photography/religion/tall tales
 - Since the Adirondacks has been a mecca for music, art, theater, literature, philosophy, photography, religion, tall tales, etc., what can you tell us about arts and culture here today or in the past?
- **Work:** Guides/caretaking/hunting/logging/lumber mills/construction/ industry/tourism and hospitality/doctors/business/surveying/farming/fishing/trapping/clubs/law enforcement/merchants/prisons/bootlegging/furniture
 - Adirondack men and women have been guides, caretakers, hunters, loggers, lumber mill workers, built homes, businesses, and cultural institutions, miners, manufacturers, involved in tourism and hospitality, medical professionals, merchants, surveyors, farmers, fishermen, trappers, prison guards, country club workers, bootleggers, furniture crafters, teachers, environmentalists, advocates --- the list goes on and on, with many holding several jobs. What interesting work or workers can you tell us about?
- **Outdoor Activities:** Hiking/Olympics/birding/fishing/hunting/hiking/skiing/sports/lake activities/guide boats
 - The outdoor activities we are privileged to participate in include hiking the high and low peaks, birding, fishing, hunting, hiking, skiing, ice hockey, lake activities, boating, and more. and even at the Olympics level. How have you, a member of your family, or someone you know or heard about participated in outdoor activities here?
- **Community:** Cemeteries/hospitals/schools/churches/fire departments/libraries/bars/restaurants/hotels/roadhouses
 - This community is the institutions we have created, past and present. What story do you have about schools, cemeteries, hospitals, churches, fire departments, libraries, bars, restaurants, hotels, roadhouses, etc., that create community?
- **Catastrophes:** Disasters/tragedies/war

- Disasters, tragedies, wars, fires, etc. have impacted us. What story do you have to tell about catastrophes?
- **People:** Colorful characters/strong women/early settlers
 - What story can you tell about a colorful or interesting character, strong woman, early settlers, etc., either in the past or the present, and how they shaped history or even your life? If your family has been here for generations, why did they come, from where, and why have you stayed?
- **Daily Life:** Events and traditions/volunteerism/activism/philanthropy/demographic changes
 - Events, traditions, volunteerism, activism, philanthropy, demographic changes, etc. define our daily lives. What is special about life here or challenges we face, now or in the past?
- **The Natural and Man-made Environment:** Natural history/architecture/Great Camps/mountains/nature
 - Our natural history, architecture, Great Camps, mountains, bridges, etc. have evolved through time. How has your life experience been guided by the mountains, lakes, animals, and plant life around you? What makes our homes, businesses, and institutions “Adirondack”?