

California AgVentures



West Highland Way

With EU Assistance, Scotland's Rural Communities Diversify and Develop Nature Tourism Industry

As a response to international pressure to end massive farm subsidies that distort trade and agricultural prices worldwide, Europe is beginning to change the focus of its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) from one focused predominantly on subsidized production to one focused more on rural diversification. Rural development (as opposed to agricultural production) has now become the second most important pillar of the CAP. This switch is intended to help and sustain Europe's rural communities, and among the varied approaches to rural development are projects in agritourism and nature tourism.

I had an opportunity to see one of these projects up close while touring with my family through the Highlands of Scotland this summer. We hiked the West Highland Way (WHW), a ninety-six-mile trail through some of Britain's finest countryside. Besides being an enjoyable adventure for locals and tourists, the

WHW has proven to be a dynamic rural development project for some rural Scottish communities, encouraging economic growth and diversification through nature tourism and market development.

Established in 1980, the WHW is the oldest of four long distance routes that have been created in Scotland through public-private collaboration. Partners



A scene along the West Highland Way in rural Scotland.

Photo: Isabella Kenfield

include private landowners, rural communities, the Lottery Sports Fund, the European Union, and Scottish Natural Heritage, a governmental body created by the Scottish Executive to protect and enhance Scotland's natural assets.

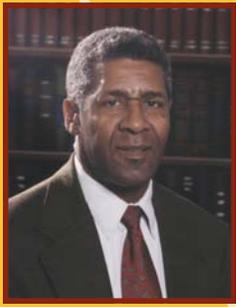
A 1994 market survey estimated that 55,000 people use all or part of the WHW annually (Burr & Waterhouse, 1998). Visitors from all over the world walk the trail, with the late spring and early summer being the busiest seasons. In early July we met trekkers from many countries, including Canada, Belgium, Israel, France, and Italy.

It took my mother, brother, and me six days to complete the trail. The terrain along the WHW varies from easy to moderate, making it particularly

In this issue

West Highland Way and Scotland's Rural Tourism Industry

SFC unveils Napa Yolo Harvest Trails Map



Editor's Note

This issue focuses on trails—one a walking trail in the Scottish Highlands and the other a California trail called the Napa Yolano Harvest Trail, a project developed by the Small Farm Center to promote ag tourism destinations in the three county region. California's ag tourism is gaining momentum. ■

Desmond Jolly
Editor

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accessible to all kinds of visitors. The WHW was designed to accommodate people of many different ages, interests, and levels of fitness. Those seeking more of a physical challenge can tackle many of Scotland's *munros*, or highest peaks, which are readily accessed from the trail.

The WHW leads hikers through a wide range of landscapes and charming rural villages. It begins in Milngavie in the Scottish lowlands, twelve miles from Glasgow, Scotland's largest city. The trail's beginning was strategically placed to connect to both rail and automobile routes, increasing the number and variety of visitors to the WHW.

From the lowlands, the trail leads into the stunning Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. Hikers walk along the shores of Loch Lomond, where high peaks and lush greenery—including ferns, wild foxglove, and heather—dominate the scenery around Scotland's largest freshwater lake. After leaving the park, the trail leads through the barren and starkly beautiful Rannoch Moor, surrounded by Highland peaks. The final leg of the WHW passes through some of the most scenic country in the Highlands, ending at Fort William at the base of Ben Nevis, Britain's highest peak.

In addition to spectacular scenery, the WHW leads hikers through twelve small villages along its route. While camping is available along the WHW, most trail walkers plan their itineraries to stay in the villages, which generally offer a range of

accommodations to fit individual preferences and budgets. We stayed in bed and breakfasts and hotels. Other walkers camp at designated public or private campsites or stay in hostels and bunk-houses.

Creation of the WHW and its growing popularity have spurred an increase in the



WHW hikers approach abandoned farm houses on the shores of Loch Lomond.

Photo: Isabella Kenfield

number and range of available accommodations. In 1980 the official guide to the WHW listed seventeen hotels, four climbers' huts, and three youth hostels along the trail; ten years later, the guide listed nineteen hotels, four climbers' huts, twelve

hostels, twelve organized camping sites, and fifty-nine bed and breakfast establishments (Burr & Waterhouse, 1998)! By creating a need for accommodations and services, the WHW has helped rural communities along its route diversify economically. Still, accommodations are in short supply during peak season.

Creation of the WHW has helped these rural Scottish communities diversify in a period when many traditional rural economic activities have become less viable.

We ate our meals in pubs, which are conveniently situated along the WHW where people tend to stop for lunch, and we

rarely had trouble finding a place for a late afternoon cup of tea or coffee to give us a boost for the final few miles. These establishments have prospered, and their clientele has greatly increased from WHW walkers. Other jobs and businesses, such as baggage transport services, also have been created. Baggage transport services

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increase the diversity of walkers, allowing people who otherwise might not undertake the walk to enjoy the trail.

Traveling the WHW was different from most outdoor experiences I have had. I appreciated the ability to experience the beauty of the surrounding landscape without being cut off from some of the pleasures of civilization—the chance to read the newspaper in the afternoon while sipping a glass of wine and the luxury of a shower and a hot meal at the end of the day. It would be fair to say that in the absence of these more comfortable accommodations, many wealthier people would not venture along the WHW.

Economic Diversification

It is clear that the small villages and towns along the WHW rely on supplying the needs of walkers for their economic success. The walk has encouraged the creation of numerous jobs, particularly in service industries.

Creation of the WHW helped these rural Scottish communities diversify at a time when many traditional rural economic activities were becoming less viable. Indeed, Scotland's rural communities face many of the same economic constraints and challenges as rural communities in the U.S. and are under the same pressure to diversify. Fortunately for Highlands communities, the Scottish and EU governments understand the important role agritourism and nature tourism can play in rural diversification.

One farm that has begun to diversify towards nature tourism is Auchtertyre. Primarily a sheep farm, Auchtertyre's

proximity to the WHW (the trail goes right through the farm) and its location between two villages has allowed the farm to capitalize on the WHW by providing services to walkers. By accessing EU grants designed to help farms diversify, Auchtertyre's managers have created a private campsite and built several wigwams (huts) as affordable accommodations for travelers.

Auchtertyre has also built a farm store, where we were pleasantly surprised to find a range of amenities and goods, including Internet service, cold drinks, hot drinks, and snacks. Additionally, the farm store carries locally-produced crafts and foods like jam and local meat.

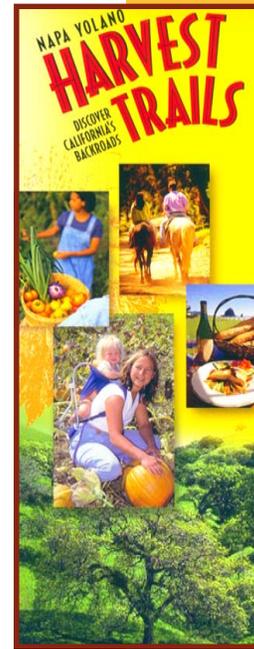
Approximately 8,000 "bed-nights" at Auchtertyre during 2002 and the farm store and coffee shop becoming estab-

lished as a mid-day refueling point on the WHW have notably increased the farm's income. Although the campsite takes up less than one of the farm's 2,500 hectares of grazing land, tourism is now the farm's most important economic activity.

Additionally, Auchtertyre injects money into the rural economy through direct employment and local services. The farm store also provides a

market at which other local producers can sell and market their goods.

Auchtertyre is part of the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC), a farm extension service that runs a number of research and demonstration projects, one of which is the issue of how to link



SFC Unveils Napa-Yolano Harvest Trails Map

On June 26 the UC Small Farm Center unveiled the Napa-Yolano Harvest Trails Map, a guide to agritourism destinations in Yolo, Solano, and Napa counties, at an event attended

by more than 200 people at the Heidrick Agricultural History Museum in Woodland.

Since 1998, the UC Small Farm Center has been developing an initiative in agricultural and rural tourism to connect consumers more directly with farms and rural communities. The Napa-Yolano Harvest Trails Map is one of these projects. The map is aimed at helping more people discover agritourism, encouraging visits to local farms, and increasing direct sales and contact between consumers and farmers, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the economic viability of the more than ninety area farms, ranches, wineries, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, art galleries, museums, parks, and nature preserves listed on the map, as well as farmers markets and agriculture-related festivals.

— continued in sidebars



Auchtertyre's farm store has greatly increased the farm's income.

Photo: Isabella Kenfield

Many local area growers, ranchers, vintners, wineries, restaurateurs, artists, and musicians participated in and contributed to the celebration of the map's release. The Buckhorn Restaurant from Winters served delicious tri-tip steak; Café California of Davis prepared a salad using produce from the Davis Farmers Market; and Gorman's of Yolo offered dessert made from peaches from the famous Manas Ranch in Capay Valley. Music was provided by the Putah Creek Crawdads and Fisher Pierstorff & Nusz, a sixties band from Woodland.

In addition, eight local wineries featured on the map offered their delicious wines for guests to taste—Stags Leap Wine Cellars, Capay Valley Vineyards, Ledgewood Vineyards, Bogle Winery, Eagle Rose Estate, Satiety Winery, and Wooden Valley Winery.

Winemakers Susan Meyer and Jim Fresquez of Rustringe Winery and Bed & Breakfast poured their Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Chardonnay, and Sauvignon Blanc. Rustringe produces about 3,000 cases each year, plus offers tastings and nature tourism activities such as hiking and swimming. "We love the country and we love to share what we have," said Fresquez. "We'd like to make more people aware of other things besides Highway 29 in Napa Valley and get people up to the country to experience the

— continued in sidebars

agriculture with tourism and nature conservation. SAC believes the nature tourism project at Auchtertyre provides a good example to other farmers of how they can diversify economically. Like the University of California's *Small Farm Center*, the SAC acts as a catalyst for new ventures in the region.

The development of tourism at Auchtertyre highlights how farm families have become important stakeholders in the WHW. Farms in the area generally tend to be large extensive grazing units; in all, only about twenty farms are crossed by the WHW. The majority of the farms are directly involved in tourism, often through provision of bed and breakfast or camping accommodations, and many rely on the WHW for at least some of their business.

Auchtertyre has been able to diversify and expand its services to visitors with the help of EU funds available under the CAP. One source was the Rural Diversification Programme, which supports rural development as opposed to agricultural production. Another source was the Farm Business Development Scheme (FBDS), which supports diversification through new farm enterprises like the shop at Auchtertyre. FBDS money can be accessed by landowners, farmers, and immediate family members on a farm, directing the funds to people who can best use them and allowing real diversification from crop production. At Auchtertyre, the wigwams, campsite, and farm store are managed by Rena Baillie, the wife of Auchtertyre's farm manager.

Nature's Added Value

In addition to helping farms like Auchtertyre diversify, creation of the WHW and its attendant facilities has helped other communities along the

WHW respond to changing economic conditions by capitalizing on their natural heritage and beauty. In this sense, it is also contributing to important environmental conservation initiatives, which are becoming more and more important in Scotland in particular and Europe in general. As the WHW becomes more valuable as an economic resource to communities, there is increased incentive to preserve the nature that visitors have come to enjoy. This is one reason the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, Scotland's first national park, was created a little more than a year ago. Both Scotland and the EU understand that farmers and rural communities are key players in environmental conservation.

These governments are also beginning to understand that the natural environment can be a tool for economic growth. According to Scottish Natural Heritage's website, "The natural heritage is a major asset for rural businesses, in both the development and marketing of products. Examples include food, whisky, and knitwear. The quality and imagery associated with the environment 'add value' to such products so many consumers are prepared to pay more for them."

One small town along the WHW that is capitalizing upon its natural beauty is Kinlochleven. In many ways Kinlochleven is a quintessential

Auchtertyre is part of the Scottish Agricultural College, a farm extension service working on numerous research and demonstration projects, including how to link agriculture with tourism and nature conservation.

factory town; much of its economy traditionally has been centered on the British Aluminium factory built at the beginning of the twentieth century. Kinlochleven evolved as a company village housing the factory's workers and their families. As Highland transportation

infrastructure developed, Kinlochleven was bypassed by major transit routes, limiting its ability to diversify economically. Now, however, its isolation and pristine setting are working to the town's advantage.

When the factory closed in 2000, Kinlochleven began to redefine itself and its economy through nature tourism,

particularly through development of services for WHW walkers. Like Auchtertyre, Kinlochleven has received EU funds to bolster its transformation from an industrial-based economy to one oriented to nature tourism. Kinlochleven is endeavoring to become one of

Europe's premier mountaineering centers by building the biggest ice climbing wall in the world and an indoor climbing wall for international competitions. The ice-climbing wall was partly funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), one of the EU's four Structural Funds designed to stimulate local economies.

Kinlochleven's natural beauty is unique, and it is not hard to understand why the town is pursuing nature tourism as a route to economic development. The village is nestled at one end of Loch Leven and is surrounded on all sides by immense peaks that tower overhead. It was my favorite village along the WHW.

Heritage Tourism

The WHW incorporates historical tourism as well. Large sections of the trail are on old droving (cattle herding) roads,

once used as major transit routes between the highlands and lowlands. Today, the trail bears the mark of hundreds of years of history and use. As I walked past centuries-old abandoned farmhouses and homesteads, it was fascinating to imagine the lives of early Scottish Highlanders. Featured along the trail are historical points of interest, including the Massacre



With the help of her daughter, Rena Baille manages Auchtertyre's farm shop and wigwam accommodations.

Photo: Isabella Kenfield

at Glen Coe, when in 1692 the Campbell Clan massacred thirty-eight MacDonalds in a power struggle within the Scottish clans. Some of the MacDonalds fled to Fort William through the same mountain valley

through which the WHW passes today.

While tourism has always been an important facet of Scotland's economy, this industry has traditionally been concentrated in urban centers. Long distance routes like the WHW and other nature and historical tourism projects are now allowing rural Scotland to capitalize on the tourist industry as well. The Scottish government's website notes that tourism accounts for 20 percent of the total workforce in the Highlands. Similarly, the Scottish Natural Heritage website states that 70 percent of visitors to Scotland list wildlife and landscape as key parts of their Scottish holiday. Because Scotland's landscape is so dramatic and beautiful, nature tourism is a viable economic activity in the region.

Of course, it must be acknowledged that not every village or farm in the Highlands can rely on nature tourism for economic development. Employees at the

wildflowers, the wildlife, the country, the air, the water. There are so many beautiful things out there that we want to share." Fresquez hopes the [Napa Yolano Harvest Trails Map](#) will help attract more visitors to Rustridge.

Also attending the event were local dignitaries, politicians, and government employees who support agritourism initiatives as a way to preserve agricultural heritage in the area and simultaneously promote economic growth for family farmers. Among them was Suzanne Mikesell, Economic Resources Coordinator for Yolo County. Mikesell believes agritourism holds the potential to sustain Yolo County's agricultural heritage. "We're a county that's committed to sustaining agriculture," she said, noting that the [Napa Yolano Harvest Trails Map](#) is "a valuable resource to get the word out to people to visit our county for agritourism opportunities."

Director Desmond Jolly opened the event by recounting the steps involved in development of the map. Jolly recalled the germination of the idea during a talk he gave to the Woodland Chamber of Commerce in 2000 and about his observations of the integrated approach to agritourism that he observed during his participation in an immersion institute on agricultural and rural tourism in Umbria, Italy, in the summer of 2000. Jolly also

— continued in sidebars

used the template of the Apple Hill model of ranch marketing in developing the project.

The map was unveiled during dinner by Richard and Evelyn Rominger of Winters. Richard Rominger was Secretary of Agriculture for California from 1977 to 1982 and Deputy Secretary of Agriculture for the USDA from 1993 to 2002. He has been a strong supporter of the map initiative and agritourism in general, noting that the map is important to initiatives in sustainable agriculture. "The map is a great addition to organic farms, farmers markets, CSAs, and farmers and ranchers who are moving more towards sustainable practices. It will help show consumers what these farmers and ranchers are doing and strengthen the bonds between consumers and farmers. It will be a big help to local agriculture." The Romingers live in Winters, where the family farms both organically and conventionally.

The Napa Yolo Harvest Trails Map was accomplished after years of hard work, research, and coordination. It is the fruit of collaboration between the UC Small Farm Program; farmers, ranchers, and landowners in Napa, Yolo, and Solano counties; and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The map is now being distributed to the public through various outlets, including the Davis

— continued in sidebars

SAC maintain that, while at Auchtertyre investment in tourist accommodations has resulted in economic growth and increased job opportunities, other studies have shown similar investments by other farms have failed to produce desired growth. Auchtertyre's proximity to the WHW and to the A82—a major road through the Highlands—are key elements to its success (Burr & Waterhouse, 1998). Villages and farms hoping to start nature tourism enterprises must be situated where visitors want to come.

Implications for California

Given the extent of California's natural and diverse beauty and its swaths of open space, it seems there are ample opportunities to create nature tourism projects similar to the WHW in the state. Because most of California is blessed with pleasant weather during much of the year, nature tourism can be developed as a year-round industry in many areas, particularly along the coast range.

What are the possibilities for creating a hiking or bicycling trail that leads visitors through our beautiful golden valleys, linking local farms, wineries, breweries, restaurants, and other rural businesses?

Increased nature tourism projects would benefit California's rural communities and at the same time contribute to preserving the state's open spaces. Such projects would be particularly productive in preserving riparian corridors that could be linked to important wildlife corridors by hiking paths. Visitors would be thrilled to see a variety of flora and fauna, the preservation and existence of which would be supported by the nature trails.

Like the WHW, California could capitalize on its interesting history to promote historical tourism in conjunction with nature tourism. Gold-Rush-era mining

towns and camps would be of interest to both Americans and foreigners. Educational tourism, about topics such as Japanese internment camps for example, could also be incorporated.

Another long distance route in Scotland, the Speyside Way, brings visitors through the heart of whiskey distilling country, and walkers can stop at different distilleries and sample local whiskies as they walk. It seems wineries could offer a similar attraction for California walkers, particularly wineries that also offer accommodations like bed and breakfasts. California's growing number of microbreweries would also benefit. Restaurants catering to walkers would support local agricultural producers and provide important jobs.

There are major differences between Scotland and California that could affect development of such projects. Scotland has a long unwritten tradition of the public's right of access that dates back to times when foot travel along paths was the primary means of transportation. The Access to the Countryside Act of 1967 was designed to support and formalize this access. Last January, Scotland passed a Land Reform Bill stipulating that the

Given the extent of California's natural and diverse beauty and its swaths of open space, it seems there are ample opportunities to create nature tourism projects similar to the West Highland Way in the state.

public (including walkers, cyclists, horse riders, the disabled, canoeists, paragliders, etc.) has the right to traverse

and utilize private lands for recreational purposes, educational activities, and commercial activities (such as guiding). Similarly, the public has the responsibility to use the land responsibly as laid out in the Scottish Outdoors Access Code, which is currently being drafted by Scottish Natural Heritage. In sum, in Scotland the public's need to enjoy land overrides private ownership.

Thus, public rights and points of view regarding land access and private property are very different in Scotland than in the U.S., where notions of private property and individualism predominate. With this country's tendency toward lawsuits, it is hard to imagine a situation where visitors could freely traverse a private estate without putting landowners at risk of liability. In Scotland there seems to be an element of trust and cooperation between users and landowners that generally is not present in the U.S., where vandalism is a realistic concern. Another major difference between Scotland and the U.S. is that agritourism and nature tourism industries in Europe receive more attention and financial support from governments.

Of course, limited rights of way and low levels of government support are not intractable. With vision and serious collaboration by landowners, local business owners, state and local governments, and the public, nature tourism projects like the WHW could be achieved.

Conclusion

The WHW and other long distance routes are good examples of how nature tourism contributes to economic diversification and stimulation in parts of rural Scotland. It is also proof of what can be achieved through public-private collaboration with fiscal support from government. The Scottish and EU governments have come to accept the changing nature of agriculture and rural livelihoods and the necessity of supporting Scotland's rural communities to adapt to these changes through diversification. Nature tourism is central to this trend. According to the Scottish government's website, "The evidence is strong for a continuing lively economy in rural Scotland. Its pattern will change, still firmly rooted in the land but becoming an economy more based on the delivery of

services than on producing basic materials. It will succeed by continuing to exploit its natural assets, by exploring its diversity, and by seizing the opportunities which are so clearly within its grasp." The Scottish and EU governments understand the importance of nature tourism and agritourism for rural economies and environmental conservation. California's rural communities would benefit from similar understanding and support from state and federal governments. ■

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Desmond Jolly, Director, SFC

Food Co-op and the American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts in Napa, and by the venues included on the map. It is also being used by other states and Canadian provinces as a model for local agricultural development. ■

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Desmond Jolly, Director, SFC



Julia Jolly tastes Capay Valley Vineyards' wine.

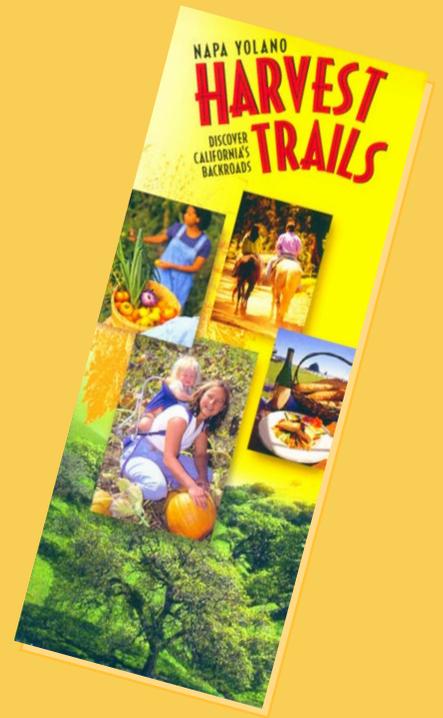


Jim Fresquez of Rustridge Winery and B&B hopes the Napa Yolano Harvest Trails Map will increase business.

NAPA YOLANO HARVEST TRAILS

DISCOVER
CALIFORNIA'S
BACKROADS

See inside
to learn about this new guide to
ag and nature tourism!



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