

the Coalfield PROGRESS

NORTON WEATHER

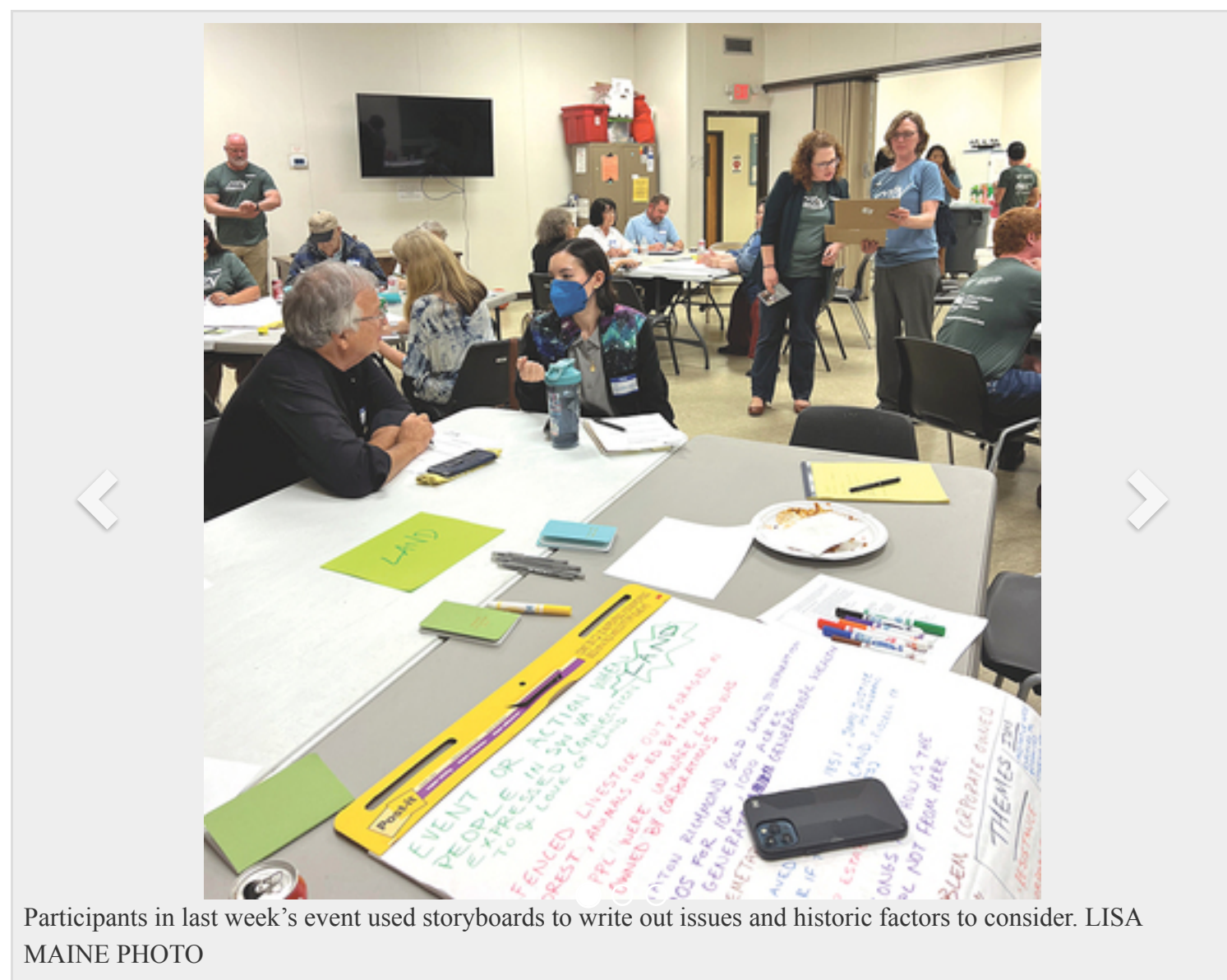


75°F scattered clouds

New historic monument ideas discussed

by LISA MAINE • STAFF WRITER

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Participants in last week's event used storyboards to write out issues and historic factors to consider. LISA MAINE PHOTO

NORTON — Resilient. Grit. Struggle. Restorative. Community. Untold stories. Determination.

Those were some of the words used to summarize Southwest Virginia last week during a discussion on how to commemorate the region's untold history.

Monuments Across Appalachian Virginia, a three-year initiative funded by the Mellon Foundation, hosted a listening session Sept. 28. The goal was to learn about special themes in the region, such as labor movements and land defense.

The Mellon Foundation makes grants to support communities through the arts and humanities, according to its website. The idea: Creating new monuments to represent the untold stories of the Appalachian region.

Those who attended were split into four groups, each at its own table, to discuss themes that have shaped the Appalachians.

Former University of Virginia's College at Wise professor David Rouse noted one thing that happened to Wise County was enclosure.

Rouse lived several years in the Hurricane section of Wise — pronounced "Hur-uh-cun."

Rouse told about his elderly neighbor who told him of his memory when livestock was fenced out, rather than in. Rouse said there was an unawareness at that time the land was owned by corporations, controlled by people who lived in Richmond, Philadelphia or Connecticut, who bought up the land more than a century ago.

Rachel Stallard said she's a futurist; she thinks about the way the land gets used by people who are not from here. Stallard thinks about the housing crisis, which is not localized, she said. A lot of people who are from here purchase land and properties and jack up rent, Stallard said.

"I think about the future of the land here," Stallard added, "and the people who get to live here, the people who are allowed to love openly here. I think about what possibilities are for the land in this area and what makes it one of the most unique places to put your intellectually creative investment."

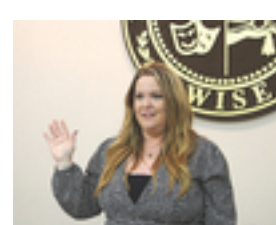
Stallard said there is a complete lack of acknowledgement of people in the LGBTQIA community existing in the area. Stallard also said people need to start financially investing in the area.

Ideas from the listening session will go toward building a possible monument in the area. Stories will continue to be collected. Another listening session will take place in Galax Oct. 26.

For more information about the project, email maav@vt.edu.



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