



Project Profile

Songer Whitewater Corp.

Location:
Fayetteville, WV

County:
Fayette

Description:
Business expansion

Total Project Cost:
\$160,000



People: Susie Hofstetter purchased a failing whitewater rafting company in 1982. Over the next eighteen years, she steadily built Songer Whitewater by improving the marketing strategy, packaging with local entities, and improving customer service. The business took on another dimension by offering high adventure rafting trips, which proved to be very successful. However, location of the base camp was a perpetual challenge and the company moved from one rented property to another. Finally in 2001, Susie purchased a prime 104-acre property and doubled the size of their base camp facility.

In order to cover expenses, Songer needed to increase revenues by hosting more weekend customers. To do this, Songer needed to purchase more river access licenses from other rafting companies, which was almost impossible. Local banks considered this too risky to fund, leaving Songer high and dry. The West Virginia Small Business Development Center suggested that Susie contact the Natural Capital Investment Fund.

Role of NCIF: Working with the West Virginia Small Business Development Center and the local county economic development authority, the Natural Capital Investment Fund developed a financial package that allowed Songer Whitewater to purchase additional rafting equipment and river seat allocations on the New and Gauley Rivers.

Impact: Songer Whitewater is now better able to handle peak demand, and will no longer have to turn away large business and college groups. This year, Songer will be hiring additional guides and introducing rafters to West Virginia's spectacular Gauley and New Rivers.