

**New York State Olympic Trail Scenic Byway
Corridor Management Plan (CMP)**

Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

Organizational Meeting

Location: Ramada Inn

Time: 6:30-8:30 P.M.

Date: December 5, 2001

Minutes

Attendees: **Bob Ashodian, Mike Sligar, Ross Jacobs, Rick Novy, Andy Nevin, David Altieri, Kate Pickert, Ken Mix, Doris Gorham, Mike Geiss, Mark Pacilio, Wayne McIlroy, Lori Borland, Bob Fetterly, Frank Ross, Charlotte Richmond, Bob Quinn, David Zembiec, and Kathy Amyot**

Kathy Amyot, Project Coordinator, opened the meeting at 6:35 P.M. and welcomed both returning and new committee members to the process of developing a “Corridor Management Plan” (CMP) for the Olympic Trail Scenic Byway. Members introduced themselves to the group and their affiliation to local communities along the corridor.

Bob Quinn, Executive Director of the New York State Tug Hill Commission, provided a **brief overview** of the Commissions role in providing service to rural communities within and around the Tug Hill Plateau. He outlined the contractual relationship between the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) and the Tug Hill Commission in partnering to develop a CMP for the Olympic Trail Scenic Byway. Bob emphasized the importance of grassroots involvement and support from local organizations, officials, and interested parties along the corridor to ensure community needs are being met in successfully developing a CMP. In addition, he stated “CMP provides an opportunity for economic development based on the intrinsic qualities that stem from scenic, historical, cultural, recreational, natural, and archeological resources along the corridor.

Dave Zembiec, New York State Tug Hill Commission, provided a **brief summary/synopsis** of the November 7, 2001 meeting by presenting an overview of the preliminary process. Dave reviewed key issues and opportunities identified in early discussions regarding the development of the Olympic Trail Scenic Byway “Corridor Management Plan” (CMP) such as the rerouting of the designated Olympic Trail along Route 3A from Deferiet to Fargo. Another key issue and opportunity the group discussed centered on the relevance of the “Olympic” theme. Dave summarized the discussion regarding concerns of committee members questioning how the traveler might identify with the Olympic theme when several of the corridor communities themselves do not identify with the Olympic theme.

Kathy Amyot, Project Coordinator, presented the second half of the Lake Champlain Byways video to provide a context for the development of the CMP. **Key elements of a CMP** were outlined and include grassroots participation, resource management, tourism development,

financial resources, marketing and promotion, support and implementation, transportation safety, and an overall regional plan.

The meeting focused on developing a **comprehensive list of resources** by building on the preliminary list previously identified at the November 7th meeting. Rick Novy, Carthage Chamber of Commerce, and Bob Ashodian, Henderson, presented the group with a compiled list of resources from their respective areas of representation and emphasized the value of the rural character and scenic beauty. Group members discussed the “Quality of Life” in the North Country and emphasized many of the 17% of military retirees from Fort Drum choose to stay in the North Country and stated it is the second most desired area for military retirement with the first being San Antonio, Texas.

In addition, committee members identified the significance of Lake Ontario and The Black River in the development of the communities along the corridor, providing intrinsic qualities unique to the area and **shared common threads** in listing resources that include fishing, boating, scenic views, history, and special events. Members of the committee agreed a common link each could identify with is the water and economic development that incorporates those resources. Mike Geiss suggested an opportunity to connect with the Olympic Trail Scenic Byway theme and recreational events/activities along the corridor. A lengthy discussion exploring opportunities along the Black River and the potential development of a White Water Rafting and Kayaking Training Center in the City of Watertown ensued and stimulating discussion regarding competitive sport events sponsored by local clubs/organizations/and interested parties communities. (See: comprehensive list of identified resources).

Committee members also identified a comprehensive **list of opportunities** related to the development of a CMP for the Olympic Trail Scenic Byway and reiterated opportunities previously identified. Group members agreed businesses offering seasonal service have an opportunity to develop year-round multi-dimensional activities to attract visitors to the area and identified the need to expand interconnected multi-use trail systems. As each community along the corridor features year-round special events to attract visitors, participants discussed a cooperative effort to promote and market the region is an opportunity to increase the potential for successful economic benefit and enhances the overall experience of the visitor/traveler.

A lengthy discussion regarding the inconsistent-zoning enforcement within communities and along the corridor challenges efforts to enhance visual. and Mike Geiss stated the Department of Parks and Recreation is offering overnight accommodations in 2002 as part of its bicycle friendly approach to attracting visitors and suggested involving the New York State Department of Transportation in the process to incorporate highway improvements that support the overall CMP.

An additional **list of opportunities** reflect economic development, resource management, community services, and visitor and roadway management are listed as follows:

- Need additional lodging/Bed & Breakfast/Hotels;
- Consistent zoning enforcement to support CMP;
- State and regional marketing, e.g. brochures, improved web site, bus tours;

- Expand the current business season, e.g. multi-dimensional activities & events, entertainment, culture;
- Invent the “product,” i.e. interpretive products (themes);
- Expand interconnected multi-use trail system;
- Establish a unifying theme and a stronger identity;
- “Sell” the small-town experience;
- “Quality Of Life”;
- Share/Learn from one another.

Committee members listed **projections for future development** along the Olympic Trail Scenic Byway corridor ten-years from the present is listed as follows:

- To balance economic growth with the preservation of rural character and scenic beauty;
- 0% unemployment;
- Historic rehabilitation of designated districts and structures significant to the history of the area and significant to development;
- Enhanced contiguous development and expansion of multi-use recreational trail systems linking Lake and river trails with other areas;
- Authentic reproduction of 1812 Warship;
- Adequate development of Water/Sewer system/infrastructure;
- Hottest travel destination by boat or car for vacationers and repeat/regular visitors;
- Maintain the sense of safety and security;
- Strong sense of community pride.

The **preliminary vision** previously identified in as follows: to add an edge to what the product developers are marketing (i.e. greater appreciation and stewardship of the resource), enhance the quality of life, the corridor becomes a desirable route travelers choose, create new and expanded business and economic opportunities, boost local and regional pride/spirit.

The group agreed to re-locating LAC meetings to the 1st floor conference room at the Dulles State Office Building, Washington Street, Watertown, New York. Free parking is accessible in the attached parking garage with a side entrance to the building located on the 2nd floor. Committee members agree efforts to incorporate relevant information from the Natural Bridge, Harrisville, and St. Lawrence County communities to the Blue Line are significant to the CMP and suggest follow-up communication explore methods to involve representatives to broaden community support. At this time, members of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) agreed to meet the first Wednesday of each month until June of 2002 from 6:30-8:30 P.M. at the 1st Floor Conference Room in the Dulles State Office Building, Washington Street, Watertown, NY.

Due to the holiday committee members agreed to change the next LAC meeting to the second Wednesday for the month of January. The next meeting will be held on **January 9, 2002** at the **Dulles State Office Building, 317 Washington Street, Watertown, NY. From 6:30-8:30P.M.**

The meeting concluded at 8:30 P.M.