

Regional and Local Histories of the Byway Area

Introduction

This section provides a basic historical overview of the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway region and the Byway communities located in Oneida, Lewis and Jefferson Counties.

Towns and villages are addressed in the order they would be experienced by a traveler starting in the City of Rome and heading northwest along the Black River to the Village of Dexter.

Regional History

According to geologists, the entire Black River Valley was inundated by a series of freshwater lakes called Port Leyden, Glenfield, and Iroquois, following the retreat of the last ice age. With the last of these lakes draining about 12,000 years ago, the first aboriginal populations, known as Paleoindians, inhabited the valley approximately 11,000 years ago. Through the next 10 millennia, aboriginal peoples made their living from the Black River. The last of the indigenous populations in the region are known as the St. Lawrence Iroquoian culture. They lived in farming villages inland of the Black River growing maize, beans and squash, hunting, and as well, fishing. They abandoned the region by the early 16th century, for reasons that are still debated among scholars today.

Throughout prehistory and even into the early historic period, the Black River Valley served as an important conduit for travel, communication and warfare between the St. Lawrence and Mohawk Valleys. Historic native populations of the region knew the trail well. The byway of today is centuries old, followed first by aboriginal people, then by the earliest European settlers of the region. It continues to function much as it has for 11,000 years, acting as a link between communities of the north and central New York.

The Black River area was open to white settlers after the Revolutionary War, particularly by the French nobility, who were fleeing persecution from the French Revolution. Most notably James LeRay De Chaumont, and Joseph Bonaparte, the brother of Napoleon Bonaparte and former king of Spain who both lived in Jefferson County. Prior to that, it was frontier wilderness occupied by the Iroquois. There were also some early settlements along the Black River in what is now Watertown where settlers were attracted by the river's power which enabled them to operate mills.

By 1805, numerous townships had been established along the Black River but transportation to and from remained difficult – even via stagecoach, the route from Watertown to Utica took 18 to 20 hours. The major opening of the Black River Valley to trade occurred when the Black River Canal became operational in the 1850s.

With the Erie Canal completed in 1825, Gov. DeWitt Clinton proposed construction of a northern canal that would link the Erie Canal with Lake Ontario. The Canal was to make use of the Black River's water and open up the vast reserves of timber, iron ore and fertile land in the North Country. In 1836, the State Legislature authorized work on the 35-mile long canal from Rome upward to the crest at Boonville and down to Lyons Falls; there it would connect to the flat section of the Black River, and with a little modification, could be used by canal boats. Construction began in 1840 and first became operational in 1851. The entire canal was completed and fully opened in 1855. It was an engineering marvel that, though it was only 35 miles long, 109 locks were required to negotiate a rise and fall of 1,079 feet. The last section to be built was a 10-mile feeder between Forestport and Boonville to supply water for both the Black River and Erie Canals. When this source of water proved to be inadequate, the State built an extensive impoundment system damming nearly every river and lake in the region to create a system with a four billion gallon capacity.

After the canal opened and the transport of timber underway, lands were opened to farming with the canal employed to haul farm products. The Black River Canal operated from 1851 to 1924. Commerce followed soon thereafter and quickly spread along the entire length of the River through Carthage and Watertown and west to Lake Ontario. Paper-making industries in particular thrived along the river from Carthage to Dexter. When the Canal first opened in 1851, 23,320 tons of freight moved through it. By 1889, 143,000 tons of primarily timber and wood products were carried along the canal. Over time though, as railroad competition proved more economical, and with the depletion of the area's natural resources, use of the Canal declined until its closure in 1924. While some manufacturing continued along the river decades later, many closed, leaving vacant mills and industrial remnants in their wake. Today, the value of the Black River is no longer placed in its ability to transport goods, but in its recreational enjoyment, natural scenic beauty, and the history of the famous Canal that led to the development of the entire Black River Trail Scenic Byway area.

Oneida County History

The Oneida County area, part of the Oneida Indian Territory, was first penetrated by early European settlers during the 1600's in search of gold, silver, spices and sugar. Not finding what they were originally searching for, Europeans established informal trade agreements with the Oneida's and would travel inland by river and waterways to trade for highly sought after beaver pelts and other furs for brass kettles, spun cloth and iron tools. Formed by an act of the State Legislature from the nations western frontier, Herkimer County, on March 15, 1798 and named after the Oneida Indians (according to legend), the region grew slowly until completion of the Erie Canal in 1825. Traveling from Connecticut and Massachusetts, early Welsh, German Dutch, and Irish settlers purchased land from speculators to forge homesteads for farming. However, it wasn't until after the Civil War, farming became a major industry of the county.

A melting pot for immigrants, the county attracted peoples from all nationalities throughout the European community. A center of the anti-slavery sentiment, the county

ended the sale of slaves around 1815. New York State soon followed the county by abolishing slavery in 1827. Strategically located central to the state, the region played a key role in the development of the new fledgling government. Battles were fought over the course of history within the area to establish territorial boundaries and equal rights in Oneida County ranging from the French and Indian, Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Early reformers in the county vehemently participated in activities advocating for social reform – i.e. equal right efforts for women, abolition of slaves, the temperance movement, etc.

The county prospered during the 19th and early 20th centuries with the construction of the Erie/Chenango/Black River Canals, expanding and opening new trade and commerce routes for goods and services. Home to the first commercial telegraph company, the county served as a major commercial center featuring a variety of major industries, textile mills, banks, colleges/schools, hospitals, transportation companies. Political giants from the 19th century called Oneida County home – i.e. Democrat Horatio Seymour, Governor of New York State in the 1850's and again in the 1860's, served as a presidential candidate in 1868 and narrowly defeated by Ulysses S. Grant. Additionally, Republican Roscoe Conkling, brother-in-law of Governor Horatio Seymour and close friend of Ulysses S. Grant, served as New York State GOP political boss during 1860's. Seymour and Conkling, among other local political giants, opened many doors in Albany and Washington in support of local industry and business.

City of Rome

The City of Rome area, territory of the Oneida Indian Nation, served as a portage to transport people and goods along inland waterways and was known as Deo-Wain-Sta by the Oneida Indians because of its location between Wood Creek and the Mohawk River. Also known as the Oneida Carry, the area became an important military route linking ports of the east to Ontario and the Great Lakes. Several forts were constructed by the British and Americans. Rome was established as a British and Colonial settlement by soldiers following the French and Indian War. The settlement incorporated as a village in 1819 and later incorporated as a city in 1870. Due to Rome's strategic location, construction of the Erie Canal began in the city on July 4, 1817. Completed in 1825, and touted as the “engineering marvel of its day”, the Erie Canal served as a major east/west transportation trade route connecting the Hudson River/Atlantic Ocean to Lake Ontario and Lake Erie.

Slow to grow at first, the village expanded after attracting the Syracuse and Utica Railroad during the 1830's and the relocation of the Erie Canal to what is known today as Erie Boulevard. The farms around Rome were major suppliers of raw materials to the village supporting the operations of grist, saw and woolen mills. The first factory system, in America began operation in 1851, for the manufacture of cheese and by 1864, Rome was the center of the world cheese market. Rome prospered as goods were transported to outside markets with the completion of the Watertown and Rome Railroad and the Black River Canal. The consolidation of the various railroad lines connecting Buffalo at Lake Erie with Albany into the first NY Central Railroad streamlined rail service and attracted

new industries to the area. In 1863, the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg Railroad moved its building shops to West Rome and spurred the development of other industries – i.e. Rome Iron Works, Rome Canning Company, Wire Cable Industry, etc.

The closing of Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome from 1941 to 1995 provided the impetus for Rome officials to form the County Economic Development Growth Enterprises (EDGE) and Griffiss Local Development Corporation (GLDC) to combat an economic downturn in 1995. Recreation and tourism industries have replaced the earlier

industrial base. The city so rich in history, takes pride in that the first American flag to fly in battle in 1777 is housed at Fort Stanwix, “the fort that never surrendered.” Visitors are invited to explore history through the many attractions and cultural events held at Erie Canal Village, Fort Stanwix National Monument, Capitol Theatre, Jervis Library, Oriskany Monument, Rome Sports Hall of Fame, Delta Lake State Park, Fort Rickey Game Farm and Turning Stone Casino.



Town of Western

Located approximately 8-miles north of Fort Stanwix, the boundaries of the Town of Western were established in 1797. Early settlers were of English, Irish, Welsh, German of Swiss decent and they traveled the area by boat and/or horse and wagon along narrow Indian trails. Attracted by the abundance of natural resources and the availability of land, early settlers cleared trees to open family farmsteads. A small rural community, the town grew slowly and was supported by local markets of logging and farming. With completion of the Erie and Black River Canal systems, local goods were shipped to outside markets. Like neighboring communities along the Black River, early settlers were attracted to the abundance of natural resources. The river served as a transportation corridor to move raw materials, provide power for the mills, factories and industries. The river area offered plenty of fishing and hunting as well.

Farming remains an important industry for the town today as well as recreation and tourism. Year-round outdoor enthusiasts are attracted to the Woods Valley Ski Resort and the Lake Delta State Park for winter skiing, camping and fishing. The town hall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is reflective of the architectural and historical contributions in the community.

The *Hamlet of Westernville* is located in the town and was settled in 1803 by General William Floyd. Westernville is located along the Black River Canal and along an old stage coach route. Once a thriving community, the hamlet tells its historic story through the architectural significance of buildings and structural remains from days gone by.



Town of Ava

The Town of Ava was formed from a portion of the Town of Boonville in 1846. Ava is located in northern Oneida County, along the Tug Hill Plateau. Early settlers came from New England, including residents of Massachusetts and Connecticut. With severe weather conditions, early settlers faced many hardships. Agriculture has been the basis of the local economy throughout the Town's history. Thus the Town's landscaped has changed dramatically as its forested areas were cleared to allow for farming operations. In addition to farming, timber harvesting and related businesses formed the basis for Ava's economy. Important historical landmarks in the Town include Quaker burial grounds and the Hilltop Methodist Church.

Town of Boonville

Located in Oneida County, the Town of Boonville is in the northernmost corner of the County, approximately 25 miles north of Utica (NYS Thruway Exit 33) and 48 miles southeast of Watertown. Formed on March 28, 1805, early settlers constructed saw mills, gristmills, tanneries, a school and churches to meet the immediate needs of the community. After the War of 1812, the town attracted more growth due to the abundant supply of natural resources – i.e wood, open farm land and water to power the various mills, factories and industries. Constructed in 1819 of local limestone from Trenton Falls in Oneida County the Hulbert House was the first 2-story structure in the town. The building originally served as a hotel in the Village of Boonville and is still functioning as a hospitality venue there.

Village of Boonville

Located along NYS Rt. 12 in the north-central part of the Town of Boonville, the Village of Boonville rests on the divide between the Black River, including its tributaries Mill and Alder Creeks, flowing north to the St. Lawrence and Lansing Kill, before flowing south to the Mohawk River. Slow to grow at first, the village grew steadily with the construction of saw and grist mills, tanneries, and wilderness farming. Constructed in

1819 with Trenton limestone as a hotel, the Hulbert House was the first two-story building in the town and remains a prominent historic feature in the village today.

Incorporated in 1855, the village flourished after the construction of the Black River Canal and the completion of the Black River to Utica Railroad. During the 70-year existence of the canal, canal boats hauled lumber, sand, and produce south, returning with manufactured goods from the cities. Serving as a transportation terminus and commercial center, the village attracted new business and investment opportunities – i.e. hotels and taverns, stores, churches, foundries and tannery, barrel, chair and carriage factories, various mills, schoolhouse were constructed. Established in 1851, Sargent’s Mill, a manufacturer of stools and chairs, still turns out the same products at the mill in their 24-acre Industrial Park. Completed in 1879, the first reservoir in the village water system was followed by installation of streetlights a year later. Telephone lines arrived in 1900, and village homes received electricity in 1904. At the turn of the century, Boonville was prime dairy country. Boonville Economic and Industrial Development Corporation constructed the site adjacent to the railroad tracks south of the village in 1978, after which developed sites were sold to N. M. Sargent & Sons and CJ Logging Equipment. The village has hosted the annual NYS Woodsmen’s Field Days since 1948.



Because of its proximity to the Adirondack Mountains and the eastern edge of the Tug Hill Plateau, forest-related industries were a mainstay of the local economy. Boonville was also home to cheese-makers, mechanics, carpenters, millers, ironworkers,

boat builders, dry goods store proprietors, and tradesmen typical of an upstate farm and canal community.

Lewis County History

The area known today as Lewis County was formed on March 28, 1805, by Governor Morgan Lewis from Oneida County. According to archeological investigation, human occupation in the Black River Valley extends back at least 10,000 years. A territory of the Oneida Nation, indigenous populations traveled to the area for fishing and hunting due to its abundant supply. The Oneida ceded the area to New York State by the Treaty of Fort Schuyler in 1788 and was sold in 1791 as part of the Macomb Purchase. Settlements were slow to grow until the construction of the Black River Canal System was completed in 1855 as part of the Rome to Carthage waterway transportation route. A 35-mile stretch, the canal served as a feeder route to the Erie Canal System and opened the “North Country” to trade and commerce. Comprised of 109 locks, the canal was abandoned in 1926 to give way to the railroad and automobile.

Densely forested, the area was first settled by French aristocrats fleeing the French Revolution followed by European immigrants from Ireland, France, Wales, Germany and Switzerland attracted to the abundant supply of natural resources to support the primary industries of logging and tanneries through the 1800’s and the dream of prosperity. By the late 1800’s, easy access to water power and a plentiful supply of wood, contributed to logging and paper making becoming important industries to the area. The clearing of forests later made way for dairy farming as a major industry that remains central to today’s economy.

Despite Lewis Co’s large expanse of forested land and rugged terrain, about 60% of its area was occupied by 4,124 farms in 1875. With the passage of time, only about 22 % of the land is still utilized for farming. Today, dairy farming is a primary industry and is concentrated in the Black River Valley with a part of its production serving the kosher market in New York City. In recent years some Amish farmers have moved in, separate from the long-established Mennonites elsewhere in the county.

During the 20th century Lewis Co continued to have a significant industrial sector which included: furniture made in Lowville from 1905 to 1931; Lowville’s products included cardboard boxes, imitation leather, bowling pins, and cream cheese. The Hale Ski Lift Company operated in Turin from 1949 to 1962. Today, fewer industries remain. Wood and other forest products continue to be harvested. Manufacturers included Burrows Paper Corp, Kraft (cream cheese), Climax (boxes), AMF (bowling pins, flooring), Fibermark (paperboard), Beaverite (binders, gaskets), Otis Technology (gun-cleaning products), Harrisville Dry Kiln, Viking Cives (snowplows), and Interface Solutions (gaskets).

The tourism industry became a growing business in Lewis County with several of its lakes serving to attract vacationers. During the 19th century visitors were attracted to area hotels – i.e the Fenton House (1826) at Number Four, the Lowville Mineral Springs

House (1872), and Forest Home and the Hermitage Hotel at Lake Bonaparte. Winter sports became significant soon after World War II. Since the Tug Hill Plateau has the most snow in the East, Turin was selected as site for the Snow Ridge Ski Area in 1945 and the Swiss Ski School. Winter recreation dispersed in the 1960s with the rise of snowmobiling; the western upland towns have become major snowmobile destinations.

Over the course of the county's history, residents, businessmen/women and interested parties participated in the nation's struggle to identify itself. Men and women fought in wars – i.e. Revolutionary War of 1812, American Civil War, World Wars, etc. Early women pioneer/s & travelers forged the way for the suffrage right movement to advance equal rights for women in New York during the mid-late 1800's and Black slaves seeking freedom traveled north to safety via the Underground Railroad.

Rich in history and intertwined with the 17 towns and 9 incorporated villages, the county continues to emulate its roots through the local culture, historic architectural building design and attractions, cemeteries, monuments, "Black River Trail" and industries.

Town of Leyden

Part of the Macomb Purchase, the Town of Leyden was the first to be formed in Lewis County on March 10, 1797 by William Topping from Connecticut. The town served as home to Nathaniel Merriam, assemblyman in 1811 & 1820 and County Judge in 1815. Great grandson of Nathaniel Merriam, Dr. C. Hart Herriam, received national recognition as an expert in the field of zoology, botany and ethology (a study of animal behavior). Dr. Hart authored several books regarding such and was associated with the Smithsonian Institute.



A port of commerce and trade along the Black River Canal, the town prospered as farmers, lumbermen and businessmen shipped lumber, potash and dairy products to NYC and Buffalo via the Erie Canal. However, by 1922 most of the canal was closed and goods, services and passengers were transported to and fro by railroad until May 1961. Influenced by early settlers to the region, the area reflects its culture and history through old structural

foundations & remnants of historic sites, architecturally significant building design and special community events, reflecting local values.

Village of Port Leyden

Located mostly in the town of Leyden, the Village of Port Leyden area was first settled in 1796 by Major John Ives. Slow to grow until the completion of the Black River Canal, the village served a small rural community providing goods and service to local residents through the trade and commerce route. Mainly a farming community, Port Leyden served as an important stop along the Black River Canal.

Town of West Turin

The Town of West Turin was formed from the Town of Turin in 1830. First settled by John Ives and his family from Connecticut, who had traveled by wagon from Fort Stanwix in 1796. Immigrants from German, Wales, Swiss, and Alsace were attracted to the area around 1830 due to its abundance of natural resources and access to the river's power to operate mills and factories. As with neighboring communities, the area was slow to grow until completion of the Erie Canal. During the 1840's, Irish immigrants working on the Erie Canal were attracted to the area.

With the construction of Constable Hall in 1819 by the Constable family, in what later became the Village of Constableville, the town seat was designated. No longer serving as the location for the town seat, Constable Hall reflects its architectural significance and history as a seasonal museum to visitors. Mainly a farming community today supporting the large dairy & small maple syrup industry, the town reflects its history and culture through special events and celebrations as well as serene farming landscape.

Village of Lyons Falls

Located in the Town of West Turin, the Village of Lyons Falls was incorporated in 1900 and was home of the Gould Paper Company, constructed in 1892. The paper company also provided excess power through its operations. The company built power lines to distribute excess power to users in the village and neighboring communities until 1950 when Niagara Mohawk Power Company purchased the power system.



The village served/s as a terminus on the Black River Canal System, NYS Rt. 12 and the railroad. Central to its development as a village, the canal provided canal boats a passageway to the 70-foot falls that had previously prohibited travel up/down the river. The Gould's Mansion now serves as an attraction to visitors interested in touring the historic structure.

Town of Turin

The Town of Turin was formed on April 14, 1800 from, what was then, Oneida County and township of Mexico. Early settlers were attracted to the area from Connecticut and southern New York due to rich soil and prime farm land. Slow to grow at first due to poor travel conditions, the town began to expand and prosper as a dairy farming community with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. As with neighboring communities, the town attracted business owners, and entrepreneurs who provided goods and service to local residents. Missed by the railroad expansion during the mid 1800's, visitors traveled to the town by a daily stagecoach route, boat through the canal or by horseback.

An early settler in the town, Benjamin Doud, is the great-great grandfather of Mamie Eisenhower, wife of President Eisenhower. Since the Tug Hill Plateau receives the most snow in the East, Turin was selected as site for the Snow Ridge Ski Area in 1945 and the Swiss Ski School. Today, the area is a major destination for outdoor winter recreationalists & enthusiasts – i.e. skiing and snowmobiling.



Town of Martinsburg

Named after General Walter Martin, Revolutionary War Hero and prominent businessman, the Town of Martinsburg was settled by Walter Martin and formed from Turin on February 22, 1803. Early settlers first established stores & shops, churches, schools, jail, taverns and mills to support their needs. The largest and wealthiest community in the county during that time, the town became home to the County Seat of the Legislature in 1805. Construction of the county courthouse in 1811 formalized the appointment until its relocation to the Village of Lowville in 1864, with the expansion of the railroad. Listed on the NYS and National Register of Historic Places, the structure serves today as the Martinsburg Town Hall.

Like neighboring communities, early settlers were attracted to cheap land for farming and the abundance of natural resources to support the paper, saw, and tanning mill industries. However, mill operations soon gave way to dairy farming and the construction of local cheese factories by the 1880s. A major producer of dairy products, a 5-ton “Big Cheese” was sent to the World’s Fair in San Francisco in 1916 and a 6-ton “Big Cheese” was shipped to the NYS Fair in Syracuse in 1938. Central to the economy, dairy farmers organized a strike in support of higher prices in the early 1930’s that led to the establishment of the Lowville Dairy Producers Cooperative.

Linked to the early freedom efforts of the 1800’s, the town served as a destination on the “Underground Railroad.” Reflected on the first historical marker to be erected in Lewis County on October 13, 1931, Hough’s Cave served as a shelter for Negro slaves on their way to freedom in Canada prior to the Civil War. In 1854, Susan B. Anthony, advocate of equal rights for women, met with supporters in the town to advocate for equal rights for women. Additionally, the town was home to the earliest paper north of Utica in 1807, the Black River Gazette.

Rich in history, today’s attraction and major industries include the Maple Ridge Wind Farm, dairy farming and tourism.

Located in the Town of Martinsburg, the *Hamlet of Glenfield* was created in 1868 with the expansion of the Utica and Black River Railroad. A small rural community, the Hamlet grew slowly as a farming community and served as a site along the Black River Canal for trade and commerce.

Town of Lowville

Part of the Black River tract was divided on August 11, 1796, when Nicholas Low acquired property by drawing lots numbered 2, 7, and 11. Lot #11 is known today as the Town of Lowville (Lot #2 is known today as Watertown and Lot # 7 is known today as Adams) and was first settled in 1798 by a company from Westfield, Massachusetts. The town was formed by virtue of an act of the New York State Legislature on March 14, 1800 and is named after, Nicholas Low (Revolutionary War Patriot and prominent businessman). Early French and European settlers were first attracted to the area to

support dairy farming activities, due to the rich soil on the Black River Flats. Construction of the Black River Canal began in 1851 in the town and opened up trade and commercial markets to support local businesses.

Expansion of the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg Railroad to the town in 1867 and the Lowville to Beaver River Railroad in 1906 provided opportunities for business and industries to flourish – i.e. the Asbestos Burial Casket Company (1885-1955), J. E. Haberer Furniture Co. (1905-31), Payne-Jones/Pajco (1935; imitation leather for books and US passports), AMF (1957; bowling pins), Kraft (1965), the largest cream cheese plant in the country, and Climax (1980; cardboard boxes). In 2002, Marks Farm was a major supplier to the kosher milk market in New York City, with hundreds of cows and a resident rabbi. Lowville is the site of the county offices, fairgrounds, a general hospital, and a shopping mall serving the county.

Village of Lowville

Incorporated in 1854, the Village of Lowville is named after the town and early land owner Nicholas Low and is located in the north central part of the county. The village serves as home to the County Seat of Legislatures, since being moved from the Town of Martinsburg in March 10, 1864. In 1894, Susan B. Anthony, central figure in the suffrage right movement and life-long advocate for equal rights for women, spoke to an audience of women and supporters on the history of women suffrage to encourage support for legislative action at the Methodist Church. In honor of the 2,500 men from Lewis County who served in the Civil War, the village dedicated the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Memorial on July 4, 1883. The memorial lists the service of Joseph Dievendorf, an African American from the Town of Harrisburg, in the 97th New York Volunteers Regiment, two years before Abraham Lincoln authorized the service of African Americans.

Town of Denmark

The Town of Denmark was the first town settled in Lewis County. It was created from the Town of Harrisburg in 1800 by Jesse Blodgett as a rest stop along the Utica to Sackets Harbor stagecoach line. Formed as a town on April 3, 1807, early settlers were first attracted to the area because of its location along a major transportation route, an abundance of natural resources to support the



logging industry and farm land. In 1804, the town attracted 36 men representing 12 townships, who gathered at “Freedom Wright’s Inn” to discuss the formation of Jefferson and Lewis Counties. Legislative approval took place on March 28, 1805. A variety of mills, cheese plants, and retail shops were established to support local needs in community centers. Today, the town features 4 old Georgian design limestone houses as evidence of days gone by and remains a point of services to travelers along NYS Route 26.

Village of Castorland

Located in the Town of Denmark and first settled as a colony in 1794 by French noblemen, and their families, fleeing persecution during the French Revolution, the Village of Castorland was named to commemorate the Castorland Colony and the role



they played in establishing the settlement. Attracted by the abundance of natural resources and access to hydro power, the village became an important area to the logging industry when T. B. Baselin, prominent businessman, constructed the largest sawmill in the area. As trade and commerce routes expanded, Castorland became a principal shipping center in the area, due to its proximity to the railroad and the canal.

Town of Croghan

The Town of Croghan formed in 1841. Croghan’s proximity to the Black River and an abundant supply of wood supported logging, tanning and paper making as primary industries of the day. Named after George Croghan, a hero in the War of 1812 for his defense of Fort Stephenson, the town grew slowly until completion of the Black River Canal, which opened trade & commerce markets. Comprised of rich farmlands, forests and swamps, the town borders the Adirondack Park with the Indian, Oswegatchie, Beaver and Black Rivers traversing through it. As with neighboring communities, early settlers were attracted to the rich farmland and natural resource of the rivers to power mills, factories and industry. Farming and the production of maple syrup serve as the primary industry of yesteryear and today, followed by the logging, papermaking and sawmill industries.

In 1883, Dr. Sarah Elizabeth Simmonet was the first woman to graduate from Albany College with a pharmacology degree. Two years later, in 1885, she graduated from the University of Buffalo with a degree as a Physician and Surgeon and registered in Lewis County as one of the first female doctors. In addition, Dr. Simmonet served as a county organizer to advance the early feminist movement through equal rights for women. Home of the famous “Croghan Bologna,” today’s visitors and residents are attracted to the area for its natural beauty and outdoor recreation enthusiasts enjoy the camping, hunting and fishing.

Jefferson County History

According to archeological investigation, human occupation in the Black River Valley extends back at least 10,000 years. A territory of the Oneida Nation, indigenous populations traveled to the area drawn by the abundant opportunities for fishing and hunting. The land was ceded by the Oneida to New York State by the Treaty of Fort Schuyler in 1788. The first white man to visit the area was Samuel de Champlain in 1615, eight years after the settlement of Jamestown by the English. Military posts were established during the French and Indian War and garrisons were placed in various parts of northern New York during the Revolution.

Around 1775, Benjamin Wright and a crew of surveyors ventured on an expedition to survey the vast wilderness along the Black River waterway. Sold as part of the Macomb Purchase in 1791, and settled by Noadiah Hubbard in 1797, the county was formed through an act of Legislature on March 28, 1805. Named after Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President of the United States, the area was densely forested and served as a buffer to Canada and the southern part of the New York State.

First settled by French aristocrats fleeing the French Revolution, followed by European immigrants from Italy, Ireland, Wales, Germany and Switzerland attracted to the abundant supply of natural resources, the primary industries of the area included logging, tanneries and a variety of mills and industries through the 1800's. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, the county prospered as goods and services were transported to larger areas. The county was prosperous during the 19th and 20th centuries. Its strategic location to the Canadian border, Oneida Lake and the St. Lawrence River along major transportation routes supported growth. An abundant supply of natural resources combined with a plentiful supply of water from the Black River to power the various mills and industries provided the key elements for expansion.

Over the course of the county's history, residents, businessmen/women and interested parties participated in the nation's struggle to identify itself – i.e. Revolutionary War of 1812, American Civil War, World Wars, etc. Early women pioneer/s & travelers forged the way for the suffrage right movement to advance equal rights for women in New York during the mid-late 1800's and Black slaves seeking freedom traveled north to safety via the Underground Railroad.

Rich in history and intertwined with the 22 towns, 20 villages the City of Watertown, and Fort Drum Military Installation, the county continues to emulate its roots through the local culture, historic architectural building design and attractions, cemeteries, monuments, Black River Trail and industries.

Town of Wilna

Bordering the Black River and the Fort Drum Military Installation, the Town of Wilna is located in the north eastern portion of Jefferson County and is comprised of the

villages of Carthage, Deferiet and Herrings as well as the hamlet of Natural Bridge. Serving as a gateway to the Adirondacks, the town attracted early settlers seeking an abundance of available land and natural resources along the major river corridor. Major industries located in the town were attracted to the main commercial area, the Village of Carthage, and include retail services, a variety of saw/flour and grist mills, as well as a variety of tanneries/foundry & machine shops/factories associated with trade and commerce that also encompassed the paper-making industry.

Due to the high demand for paper and the close proximity to the Black River for hydro power to support the paper making industry, the Villages of Deferiet and Herrings evolved during the early 20th Century.

Village of Carthage

Founded in 1798, by early French settlers fleeing persecution during the French revolution, the village incorporated in 1841. Due to its location along the Black River, early settlers had an abundance of cheap power to operate the many mills, factories and establishments lining the village shores. The village expanded and prospered during the 19th century. Contributing to the prosperity of the area was the completion of the Black River Canal in 1850 and its location as a terminus on the Erie Canal that



opened new markets for commerce and trade. However, by the end of the 19th century, construction of the railroad from Rome to Watertown resulted in economic & population shifts that initiated a slow steady decline impacting the local economy.

Today, the village is engaged in a downtown residential and commercial historic restoration and renovation project, in conjunction with neighboring communities, local/regional and state/federal organizations/agencies. Building upon success, the village is recognized as a “community of choice” in attracting new residential and commercial development and is located along the Black River Blueway Corridor, Olympic Scenic and Black River Trail/Byways and offers visitors with a variety of retail services and points of interest – i.e. recreation park/s, flat water kayaking, fishing, etc.

Village of Herrings

Formed around the turn of the 20th century as a result of the construction of the Herrings Paper Mill, the village is named after Willian P. and Fred M. Herrings, owners of the paper mill. Located along the scenic & natural resource of the Black River and serving as a bedroom community to neighboring towns/villages, it could be that Herrings is the smallest incorporated village in NYS.

Once a rest area for travelers traversing NYS Rt. 3 by stagecoach route over 100 years ago, the privately owned and managed limestone construction Herrings Inn continues to provide visitors with meals.

Village of Deferiet

Formed in the early 20th century following the construction of the St. Regis Paper mill. The last of the big paper mills erected on the Black River, the location provided investors an opportunity to control water levels during the summer season by diverting water from the dam to allow for year-round operations. A company owned village until the mid-late 1960's, houses are now privately owned and the village is operated by local elected officials.

Today, the village provides municipal services to residents and features a kayak/canoe boat launch & picnic area to visitors traversing NYS Rt. 3 along the Black River. Additionally, travelers can enjoy opportunities to scenic vistas that feature natural vegetation & wildlife habitat areas - i.e. wild turkey, deer and black bear are among the many animals frequently seen in this area.

Town of Champion

First surveyed in 1706 and formed in 1802, the town was named after General Champion as a tribute to his service during the Revolutionary War and influence in attracting early development to the area. Due to its proximity to the Black River and the availability of open space and suitable soil conditions for agriculture, the town prospered during the early 19th century as a center for commerce. Mainly a rural agricultural area, the town is comprised of 45.1 square miles and services the hamlet of Champion and Great Bend as well as the Village of West Carthage.

Located on the old stagecoach route in northern Jefferson County in the Town of Champion along NYS Route 3, the *Hamlet of Great Bend* was first settled in 1807 following the construction of a bridge across the Black River in 1804. Early settlers first constructed a power dam and grist mill in the hamlet and served as a service center for travelers as business owners constructed a 3-story native limestone inn along the travel route. Attracted by an abundant supply of natural resources and water to power local industry, the small hamlet was home to the Great Bend Paper & Pulp Company, small dairy and crop farms, complementary retail services, and a tourist economy.

Strategically located at the intersection of NYS Routes 3 and 26 and its proximity to Fort Drum, the hamlet remains a destination for services along the travel routes. Early design buildings and structures reflect the history of the community today.

Town of Rutland

Formed on April 1, 1802 by settlers from Rutland, Vermont, the town is one of 11 constituting the Black River tract. Located along the Black River, the town encompasses

a portion of the Village of Black River and hamlet of Felts Mills, sites where various mills, industries and retail establishments were located due to easy access to water to generate power to support such. Further inland and along the escarpment of the Tug Hill Plateau, the soil was more suitable for agriculture. Thus, family farmsteads were established.

The *Hamlet of Felts Mills*, located in northern Jefferson County in the Town of Rutland along Route 3, was formed by early settlers who first constructed a dam as a power source for the development of a flourmill in 1807 following the 1804 construction of a bridge across the Black River. The bountiful natural resource of wood and water to power local mills and industry influenced community development as well as its strategic location along the old stagecoach route and waterway. Small dairy and crop farms, complementary retail services supporting development, and a tourist economy supported by visitors traversing to and from other destinations were key businesses supporting the local economy.

Over the years, the mills have closed and small retail businesses have located in the hamlet. Mainly a bedroom community to neighboring communities, the hamlet reflects its history through the architectural design of privately owned homes, constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Village of Black River

Located in the Town of Rutland in Jefferson County, the Village of Black River is located 15 miles upriver from where it joins Lake Ontario. The village was first named Lockport by early settlers in 1806 then later renamed Black River and formed from land taken from the Town of LeRay and Rutland. Like many settlements along the Black



River, early settlers were attracted to the area for its abundance of natural resources and its proximity to the Black River to generate energy to power the various mills, factories and businesses. Best known for being home to the H.C. Dexter Chair Company, the village served as a community & service center for residents and businesses. By 1874, the Black River & Utica Railroad linked the village to the St. Lawrence River and Utica.

Incorporated in 1891, the village is best known for being home to the Dexter Chair Company and serves as a bedroom community to the City of Watertown and Fort Drum Military Installation. Appealing remnants of days-gone-by can be seen through the architectural design of historic homes and intriguing factory ruins scattered along its riverbanks.

Town of LeRay

Established in 1806 from lot number four of the Macomb purchase, the Town of LeRay was named after James Donatianus LeRay De Chaumont (James LeRay - proprietor). A native of France and resident of the town, Mr. LeRay traveled between the two countries to attend various business ventures as needed. As with neighboring areas in the county, early settlers were attracted to an abundance of natural resources and available land along the major transportation corridor of the Black River. Over time forests gave way to fertile farm land and new settlements were established to support local needs for service – i.e. mills, stores, churches, schools and villages. Located throughout the town were 2 hamlets and 2 villages – i.e. hamlets of LeRaysville & Sanford Corners and villages of Evans Mills and Black River.

Town of Pamela

The Town of Pamela was formed from the Town of Brownville on April 12, 1819, and named after Pamela Williams, wife of General Jacob Brown. By an act of state legislature on April 1, 1824, a small part of Penet's Square, southeast of Perch Lake, was annexed from the Town of Orleans. The town is centrally located in Jefferson County and is bounded on the north by the Town of Orleans, on the east by the Town of Le Ray and on the south by the Village of Black River, separating it from the towns of Watertown and Brownville.

As with neighboring communities, early settlers sought opportunities to purchase available land, rich with natural resources, along the Black River Transportation Corridor. Log cabins, family farms and various retail establishments dotted the landscape as trees and underbrush was cleared. The hamlets of Juhelville, Pamela Center (once known as Williamsville) and North Watertown were absorbed into the City of Watertown.

Comprised of 35.4 square miles, the town encompasses a portion of the Village of Glen Park and the small rural hamlets of Knowlesville, Pamela Center, Scoville Corners and Pamela Four Corners. Bordering the City of Watertown and Fort Drum Military Installation, the town serves mainly as a bedroom community to the surrounding area today.

Village of Glen Park

Incorporated in 1893, the Village of Glen Park lies partially in the towns of Pamela and Brownville. It owes its existence chiefly to the extensive pulp and paper mills owned by the C. R. Remington & Sons company, although construction of the electric railroad was an important factor in its development. Also the site of the Glen Park Amusement Park, featuring Montana Joe and his rattlesnake show and early Red & Black football games.

City of Watertown

Formed in 1800 as a hamlet centered on, what is known today as, “Public Square” by New England pioneers, the City of Watertown is centrally located in Jefferson County and holds the county seat. The abundant supply of water provided by the Black River served as a power supply to businesses and industries and was a central influence in the early commercial and residential patterns for development. Incorporated as a village in 1816 and as a city in 1869, the city grew rapidly during the first 100-years.

Developed early in the 19th century as a manufacturing center, the City of Watertown was said to have more millionaires per capita than any other city in the nation during the early 20th century. It is home to the oldest continuously operating enclosed mall in the U. S., the Paddock Arcade, and is home to the longest continually operating county fair in the United States. By association to F. W. Woolworth and his work as a clerk at Moore’s Hardware Store, located on the American Corner, the city serves as the conceptual birthplace of the “Five and Dime.” Additionally, the first portable steam engine was manufactured in the city and is home to the oldest surviving semi-professional team in the United States, Red and Black football franchise.

During the 21st Century, a resurgence of pride in Public Square and its role in Watertown's history, civic and business leaders have taken a strong role in its redevelopment. Unsound buildings and structures have been demolished while structurally sound historic buildings and facades undergo a coordinated and systematic approach to the restoration and adaptive reuse of vacant downtown commercial and residential properties. In 2006, the new economic development was coupled with a multi-million dollar streetscape project to reinforce the square's infrastructure, as well as beautify its roads, walkways and landscaping.

The City of Watertown features several historic landmarks listed on the state and national list and is associated with many notable people over the course of history. It remains the site to corporate headquarters of the well-known Little Trees Car Freshener Corporation and reflects the architectural design of many historic homes, businesses, houses of worship and industry.

Town of Brownville

The Town of Brownville was first settled by Jacob Brown in 1799 from the Chassanis land tract as part of the Macomb purchase. Settlers were attracted to the area due to its potential for water power and possible shipping access to the St. Lawrence River. The town was formed from the Leyden territory through a legislative act on April 1, 1802 and is one of the oldest communities in the county. Significant due to their proximity to the Black River, the War of 1812 and an abundance of natural resources, the villages of Dexter, Brownville and Glen Park contribute to the historic legacy of the town. During its early days, the town was home to and/or hosted many prominent visitors, ranging from famous military officers/entrepreneurs and investors to U.S. Presidents.

Today, the town is comprised of 3 villages and 3 hamlets. Visitors can trace historic events, culture and namesakes when visiting the local cemeteries, churches and libraries.

Village of Brownville

Established in 1802 and incorporated in 1828, the Village of Brownville was home to the founding father, Jacob Brown, general during the War of 1812-15 and later commissioned major-general of the U.S Army. General Jacob Brown had his 2-story 22-room native limestone home constructed in 1811-1815 in the village, using his home as Army headquarters from 1812-1821. As colonel of the 108th Regiment of the New York Militia at the onset of the War of 1812 and Brigadier General, charged with defending the frontier from Oswego to St. Regis (300 miles) in 1811, the militia was often called upon to fight the British during the War of 1812. General Brown hosted the first church service and town meeting in Brownville and in 1817 hosted a visit from U. S. President James Monroe. Commissioned General-in-Chief of the U.S. Army in 1821, General Brown moved to Washington until his death in 1828. Today, the General Brown Mansion houses the village offices, library, community center, historical society and museum.

Rich in history, the village has held a prominent position as a manufacturing center and served as a hub of activity that provided residents, travelers and businessmen with services and opportunities for prosperity. Strategically located along the Black River, the village expanded at a rapid rate when a system of locks and canals were constructed in 1815 by the Black River Navigation Company to transport passengers and good around the rapids and falls. As the population grew, the demand for goods and service increased and new industries, factories and businesses located along the river. Due to its significance in the early days, several prominent people visited the area and include U.S. President's. The old stagecoach route gave way to the railroad in 1852 followed by the electric railroad in 1891.

Today, the history is reflected in 15-period style well maintained architectural design buildings that can be viewed on a drive through or walking tour. The village hosts the annual General Brown Day Celebration and operates and maintains the General Brown Mansion, privately owned limestone row-tenement houses that were constructed by the Cotton Company around 1815 as well as publicly and privately owned historic & architecturally significant buildings.

Village of Dexter

Incorporated on May 8, 1855, the Village of Dexter was originally known as Fish Island and is located on Lake Ontario at the mouth of the Black River and upriver from Brownville and Glen Park. During the early history of the town, the village served as a rendezvous



for fishermen and lumbermen and in 1811, and again in 1813, the first dams were constructed across the river to power local mills and businesses. Later named Dexter after S. Newton Dexter, prominent local businessman and entrepreneur, the village lacked the allure of more industrial communities located upriver during the early years - i.e. Brownville, Glen Park and City of Watertown. Due to its strategic location on 2 major transportation waterways, the government funded the construction of piers and docks in 1836 to make the harbor more navigable. However, it was not until 1888 the village began to expand when old dams were rebuilt in support of the expansion of new industries and a branch of the railroad between the City of Watertown and Cape Vincent was constructed.

Today, the village continues to attract fishermen to its banks and offers visitors an opportunity to enjoy the natural resources the river.

Town of Hounsfield

The Town was formed from Watertown on February 17, 1806, and is named after Ezra Hounsfield. With the Village of Sackets Harbor on it's west side, the Town became home to the military and naval headquarters for the US Northern frontier during the War of 1812. Historical sites and interpretation from the War of 1812 are a popular attraction in the Town and the Village of Sackets Harbor.

Proposed Spur:

Town of Forestport

The Town was first formed from the Town of Remsen in March 1870. Later, additional land was annexed into the Town from the Town of Boonville. Located on the Black River Feeder Canal, which was completed in 1848, two dams were built in Forestport to provide storage reservoirs for the canal. With vast amounts of timber and the canal for transportation, many saw mills were built. This created many jobs in timber harvesting and mill work and resulted in boom in the town. The Town also had a village, the Village of Forestport, at one time. Unfortunately, the village was destroyed by fire and had to be rebuilt three times. Three breaks in the feeder canal also occurred. As the timber sources dwindled, the mills began to close. With fewer jobs in the area, the population and the economy in the town and village decreased. The Village of Forestport dis-incorporated in 1937.

County Historical Societies on the Black River Trail Scenic Byway

Oneida County Historical Society

Brian J. Howard, Executive Director

1608 Genesee Street

Utica, NY 13502-5425

Phone: (315) 735-3642

Website: www.oneidacountyhistory.org/

Lewis County Historical Society

Lisa Becker, County Historian

7552 South State St.

Lowville, NY 13367

Phone: (315) 376-8957

Website: www.frontiernet.net/~lchs/

Jefferson County Historical Society

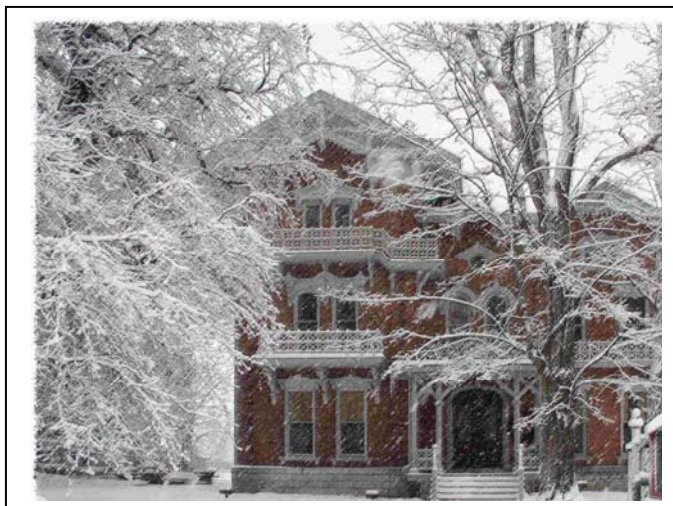
Timothy Abel, Director

228 Washington Street

Watertown, NY 13601

Phone: (315) 782-3491

Website: www.jeffersoncountyhistory.org/



Byway Description: “The Visitor’s Experience”

The Black River Trail Scenic byway begins in the City of Rome at the intersection of Routes 26 and 46. The City of Rome has many assets including, countless outdoor recreational activities, shopping, restaurants, amazing arts and entertainment events, and an abundance of historical treasures. The City of Rome is also the starting point for the historical Black River Canal which was in operation from 1851 to 1924. The canal was built from the Erie Canal in Rome and traveled north to connect with the Black River. This allowed for commerce and trade from the Erie Canal north to Watertown and then west to Lake Ontario.

Leaving the City of Rome the Black River Trail Scenic Byway travels north on Route 46. The route follows along the southeastern side of Lake Delta, offering spectacular views to Byway travelers. After Lake Delta, the landscape includes open farmland nestled between wooded areas, streams and gulfs. As the byway moves closer to the Tug Hill forest, the scenery becomes heavily wooded and hilly as the traveler passes through the Pixley Falls State Park area. Further north on Route 46, the landscape transitions into a mix of wooded areas and open grasslands as the Byway enters the Village of Boonville.



Further north on Route 46, the landscape transitions into a mix of wooded areas and open grasslands as the Byway enters the Village of Boonville.



The Village of Boonville has a number of historic and recreational assets including Erwin Library, the Boonville Fairgrounds, and various hiking and paved recreational trails along the Black River Canal. The Canal is ideal for paddling and the paved trails that meander along it can be used for walking or biking. Boonville also has a number of businesses, restaurants, a beach, and an ice skating rink. There are several festivals and fairs held in the Village as well. Scenery

through the village includes views of downtown historic Boonville as well as the Erie Canal towpath.

Further along the Scenic Byway heading north on Route 12, the route travels through the more rural portions of Oneida County while running parallel to the Black River. The landscape is primarily agricultural with some tourism related businesses such as motels,

cabins, and restaurants. Travelers can also visit the historic canal locks located directly on the Black River Trail Scenic Byway route.



The route also travels through several smaller communities: the Villages of Lyons Falls and Port Leyden and the hamlet of Glenfield. While these communities do have a concentration of residents, their character remains rural in nature with only a few businesses or commercial enterprises. Port Leyden and Lyons Falls do have a number of river access points, including parking and boat launches, as well as fishing access.

Proceeding north on Route 12, the Black River Trail continues to have a rural, agricultural aesthetic. In addition to a few larger farms, this area of the route also contains a number of smaller agricultural establishments and roadside farm stands featuring local produce and products.



In the Village of Lowville, the byway route transitions from Route 12 to Route 26. Lowville is the Lewis County seat and is home to a wide variety of goods and services, recreational amenities, and community events. Lowville is a small rural village with an historic Main Street and tree-lined residential streets with a number of historic homes. The easily walkable community even features a period courthouse. Visible from the western edge

of the village is the Maple Ridge wind farm. With 195 towers, it is the largest wind farm east of the Mississippi.

As the Byway route heads north along Route 26, the roadway is temporarily located farther away from the Black River itself. However, the road elevation increases and provides for a spectacular view of the Black River valley east of the Byway route. Travelers will observe open rolling agricultural lands dotted with dairy farms and the occasional residence. Both sides of the roadway are largely undeveloped, leaving vast areas of open space that offer scenic vistas in all four seasons.



Byway travelers will then turn onto Route 410 and head into the Village of Castorland, once again bringing them in very close proximity to the Black River and all it has to offer. Castorland is a small, rural community that boasts great river views and

access. There is a boat launch within the Village that provides access to the “Black River Flats”, an ideal area for canoeing or kayaking.



Leaving the Village of Castorland, the Byway route turns off of Route 410 and onto Route 126. The Black River Trail continues to follow Route 126 northward, paralleling the Black River and offer more scenic views of the “Black River Flats”. Route 126 leads travelers into the Village of Carthage. Here the Black River Trail Scenic Byway joins the Olympic Scenic Byway on Route 3. The

Black River itself also transitions from the flat water portion to the white water segment as water flows’ and rapids’ speeds increase.

With the Black River running directly between the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage, along Route 3 both communities boast a number of parks, playgrounds, fishing and boat launch sites. Travelers will encounter a bustling, and picturesque community with restaurants, shopping, and various services in addition to the recreational amenities.



The route continues to overlap the Olympic Scenic Byway as it follows Route 3 along the Black River. The roadway runs directly next to the Black River for most of this segment of the route and provides numerous scenic vistas. The Byway travels through the small Villages of Herrings and Deferiet. Several boat launches, parking areas and fishing access sites are located in these communities. Travelers will begin to see denser forestland as the roadway runs along Fort Drum and several of its training areas.



Continuing to follow Route 3 and the Olympic Scenic Byway, the Black River Trail proceeds into the Hamlet of Great Bend, located just outside of Fort Drum. As is evident in its name, Great Bend is nestled along the River as it turns westward and begins heading toward Lake Ontario. There are several dams in the area as well as a large campground and bed and breakfast. Great Bend also marks the start of a large paved recreational trail system along the Black

River which, when complete, will extend to just outside the City of Watertown.

As the Byway route proceeds along Route 3, travelers will begin to notice a transition from a rural, agricultural landscape, to a more developed atmosphere as route goes through the small hamlet of Felts Mills and the Village of Black River. While the communities themselves remain small and quaint, more compact development can be seen along the roadway as it continues to border Fort Drum and approaches the City of Watertown. Tourism related businesses, fishing access sites, boat launches, parks, picnic areas and recreational trails offer a variety of recreational opportunities for travelers.

Proceeding into the City of Watertown, the Byway route leaves Route 3 and turns onto Huntington Street to continue to follow the Black River. From there the route meanders along City streets as it parallels the River. The City offers a wide variety of cultural, historical, and recreational activities including a number of parks, boat launches, picnic areas, river walks, and river access points. With fast currents and large rapids, the Black River provides a tremendous resource for residents and tourists in the City of Watertown with a number of annual events, festivals and national and international competitions that are all centered around the River.

As it leaves the City via Route 12F, the Black River Trail Scenic Byway again transitions from an urban landscape to a more rural one with large spans of open space on either side of the roadway. Within the Village of Brownville, the route crosses over the Black River on Brown's Bridge and proceeds westward on Route 12F. Glen Park Hydroelectric offers fishing access while the Brown Mansion historic site is a great cultural resource for the community as well as travelers along the route.

Continuing along Route 12F, the byway reaches its northern terminus in the Village of Dexter. Dexter is located near the Black River Bay, which provides easy access to Lake Ontario. Dexter offers a variety of recreational opportunities with parks, fishing access, boat launches and spots ideal for rafting. Improvements currently being undertaken to Fish Island in the Village will add even more amenities to this end of the Black River Trail Scenic Byway.



As travelers tour the Black River Trail Scenic Byway from Rome to Dexter they will soon discover that, the Black River plays an important role in defining the character and identity of each community along the byway. While the byway route is centered along this single resource, with areas ranging from wild river, to flat water and whitewater, it's variety also helps each community to distinguish themselves. Along the entire route, travelers will encounter a variety of recreational, historical and cultural opportunities centered around the River and its history.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

New York State Scenic Byway Funding History

For over fifteen years, Federal and State transportation dollars have funded programs in New York to promote tourism, improve traveler and community services, and establish facilities that encourage local visitation and spending. Scenic Byway program funding is provided through the Federal Highway Administration of the United State Department of Transportation. Scenic Byway programs show a steady record of supporting economic and community development with ongoing funding for projects along byway routes. Over the years, New York State has benefited from the Department of Transportation's successful history of securing and distributing grant funding. From 1992 to 2007 the New York State Scenic Byway Program has received a total of \$14,086,245 in Federal dollars from the Federal Highway Administration benefiting Byway communities throughout the State.

Economic Benefits of the Scenic Byway Program

The proposed Black River Trail Scenic Byway travels through larger cities, small village Main Streets, and sparsely populated rural communities. While these communities vary in size, they face many of the same economic challenges. The economies of these communities were developed principally because of the Black River and its critical juxtaposition between the Tug Hill Plateau and the Adirondack Mountains. The Byway communities are united not only by the Black River itself, but also by this common history and abundance of natural resources. The economies of the communities along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway are based on a few major employers along with agriculture, small scale business establishments, and self-employment. Businesses in the smaller communities survive because of their ability to serve the local population and by capturing tourist spending.

The Black River and the Scenic Byway Program translates into a tourism economic engine for the area by uniting communities along the route with a common theme. Large cities and small towns alike can benefit by highlighting their variety of activities available along the Byway. Rome and Watertown can promote their location on the Black River Trail Scenic Byway and their close proximity to an abundance of natural resources, recreational opportunities, and main street shops, festivals and activities. Similarly, small communities can tout their location between major cities offering entertainment, fine dining, theaters, etc.

Effectively developing and promoting the Black River Trail Scenic Byway experience has great potential to stimulate greater economic activity in the region. The Federal Highway Administration's March 2004 press release described economic benefits. "Studies suggest that byway designations increase the number of visitors to rural communities by up to 20 percent, resulting in billions more dollars and tens-of-thousand of jobs nationwide. Those same studies have found that the typical visitor spends between \$100 and \$200 per trip." Individual communities participating in Corridor

Management Planning are poised to capitalize on the visitor attraction potential of the Byway route as a ribbon of interconnected destinations.

Although there are a few larger employers in its larger population centers (Rome, Boonville, Lowville, Carthage, and Watertown), the rural economy of the communities along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway is based largely on agriculture, small scale business establishments, and the tourism industry. Those businesses that have been able to serve both local residents as well as capturing tourist traffic have endured. Businesses that have adapted in order to provide services to their customers during all four seasons also show a greater margin of success.

With such a wide variety of recreational activities available along the Black River, effective marketing and promotion of the Byway provide these communities with the opportunity to develop amenities that will be enjoyed by tourists and residents alike.

Economic & Community Development Goals

The goals identified in the Implementation Plan for the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway include:

1. Strengthen and diversify the economy by enhancing sustainable tourism activities and creating opportunities for local businesses and producers to expand their markets and increase revenues;
2. Encourage the development of hospitality businesses along the Black River;
3. Support business activity that addresses gaps in goods or services for visitors and residents;
4. Revitalize and focus growth and development in Central Business Districts through Main Street Revitalization planning and programs;
5. Preserve the rural and historic character of byway communities to maintain appeal in drawing today's travelers to town centers.

Expanding Market Opportunities for Hospitality Businesses

With such a variety of recreational activities located along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway, the development of hospitality businesses and the related infrastructure to support these enterprises is crucial to the success of byway promotional efforts. In order for travelers to be attracted the area and to experience all that the Black River and its communities have to offer, they must feel secure in knowing that all of the services they will require during their stay will be readily available and easily accessible to them. Lodging, for example, is currently offered by a number of businesses along the route but is available only seasonally, catering either to the winter recreational motorists or the summer rafting enthusiasts. Business assistance programs which provide aid packages, hospitality training, and help to develop theme-based day- or weekend-trips will be a valuable tool to help small businesses along the Byway to survive.

Stimulating Community Development

One of the key advantages of the scenic byway program is that it links smaller rural communities via a common theme. Collectively, they become more attractive as a package experience, thereby drawing more visitors than they would otherwise attract individually. Increasing tourist traffic is likely to stimulate greater interest in Main Street revitalization and historic preservation as local officials recognize the potential return on investment by attracting visitors to stop in their communities. To support the growth of niche businesses or lodging establishments (new or existing) will require the installation or upgrading of public utilities, which can make additional business development possible.

Advances in telecommunications and web-based technologies make it possible for “knowledge and information” workers and creative entrepreneurs to live anywhere. By highlighting local quality-of-life assets—and enhancing them through revitalization projects—byway communities may attract new residents to their communities—i.e. talent—who may establish new businesses that contribute to the region’s economic health and vitality. It is therefore important that the availability of such infrastructure be considered in any planning efforts.

Success in these efforts will necessitate that communities begin with strategic and/or comprehensive planning. In essence, Byway communities must ask themselves the question, “What do we want to be, and how do we intend to get there?”

A local plan helps a community prioritize projects and guides decision-making as it is related to the allocation of limited resources in order to achieve those priorities. Communities that have completed a planning process are also better positioned to compete for various grant programs that might fund the implementation of certain projects identified in their plan. (*For specific examples, see “Related Programs, Projects, Plans, & Studies” section.*) With their future vision in hand, communities can more rationally debate the adoption of zoning and enforcement strategies—not for zoning’s sake, but with an eye toward using those practices as tools through which the community can preserve what is important to its residents while also working toward the desired future of its residents.

Strengthening Local Capacity in Both the Public and Private Sectors

Given their limited resources, many of the byway communities will need assistance from their county and regional planning and economic development agencies in preparing their plans for the future and developing the strategies to implement those plans. These agencies are also familiar with the variety of funding programs that might fund certain implementation strategies, and may even be able to assist local officials and community organizations in writing grant applications.

Training and technical assistance to the private sector will be equally important. Training for tourist service businesses (lodging establishments, dining establishments)

can focus on strategies for promoting and packaging their businesses, developing additional value-added services, and enhancing the visitor experience. Technical and financial assistance programs could help such businesses with property improvements and improving their use of technology in promotion and management.

Community, Economic Development, and Agricultural Development Agencies

Byway organizers will need to direct business owners and independent producer to those organizations offering instruction in best practices. Outreach to local business efforts could also help to target specific needs for technical assistance and training. Following is a list of those local and regional involved in economic and community development, agri-business development, and business planning assistance in Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties.

Jefferson County

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County
Richard Halpin, Executive Director
203 North Hamilton Street
Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: (315) 788-8450
Email: rhl44@cornell.edu
Website: <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/jefferson/>

Fort Drum Regional Liason Organization (FDRLO)
Carl McLaughlin, Executive Director
PO Box 775
200 Washington Street, Suite 406
Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: (315) 836-1531
Email: info@fdrlo.org
Website: www.fdrlo.com

Jefferson County Agriculture Development Corporation
Jay Matteson, Agriculture Coordinator
PO Box 232
21170 NYS Route 232
Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: (315) 782-1806
Email: coordinator@comefarmwithus.com
Website: www.comefarmwithus.com

Jefferson County Job Development Corporation (JCJDC)
Watertown Center for Business and Industry
800 Starbuck Avenue, Suite 800
Watertown, NY 13601

Phone: (315) 782-5865
Toll Free: (800) 553-4111
Website: www.jcfdc.net

Small Business Development Center (serving Jefferson & Lewis counties)

Eric Constance, Director
Jefferson Community College
Outer Coffeen St.
Watertown, NY 13601-1897

Phone: (315) 782-9262
Email: sbdc@sunyjefferson.edu
Website: <http://www.nyssbdc.org/centers/centers.cfm?centid=4>

Thousand Island International Tourism Council

Gary DeYoung, Director
PO Box 400
Alexandria Bay, NY 13607
Phone: (315) 482-2520
Toll Free: (800) 847-5263
Email: gary@visit1000islands.com
Website: www.visit1000islands.com

Watertown Empire Zone

R. Michael N'dolo, Zone Coordinator
Camoin Associates, Inc.
PO Box 3367
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
Phone: (315) 782-1167
Email: michael@camoinassociates.com
Website: www.watertownempirezone.com

Lewis County

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County

Michelle Ledoux, Executive Director
PO Box 72
5274 Outer Stowe Street
Lowville, NY 13367
Phone: (315) 376-5270
Email: lewis@cornell.edu
Website: <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/lewis/>

Lewis County Development Corporation

5402 Dayan St.
Lowville, NY 13367
Phone: (315) 376-2834

Email: ldolhof@northnet.org

Lewis County Industrial Development Agency
Ned Cole, Executive Director
PO Box 106
7642 N. State Street
Lowville, NY 13367
Phone: (315) 376-3014
Email: lcida@lcida.org
Website: www.lcida.org

Lewis County Office of Economic Development
Warren Rosenthal, Director
Lewis County Court House
Lowville, NY 13367
Phone: (315) 376-5422
Email: economicdevelopment@lewiscountyny.org
Website: www.lewiscountyny.org

Small Business Development Center (serving Jefferson & Lewis counties)
Eric Constance, Director
Jefferson Community College
Outer Coffeen St.
Watertown, NY 13601-1897
Phone: (315) 782-9262
Email: sbdc@sunyjefferson.edu
Website: <http://www.nyssbdc.org/centers/centers.cfm?centid=4>

Oneida County

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County
Ron Bunce, Executive Director
121 Second Street
Oriskany, NY 13424
Phone: (315) 736-3394
Email: rab76@cornell.edu
Website: <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/>

Mohawk Valley Economic Development Growth Enterprises Corporation (EDGE)
153 Brooks Road
Rome, NY 13441-4105
Phone: (315) 338-0393
Toll Free: (800) 765-4990
Email: info@mvedge.org
Website: www.mvedge.org

Oneida County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Phyllis Fendler, Director
PO Box 551
Utica, NY 13501
Toll Free: (800) 426-3132
Email: oneidayny@dreamscape.com
Website: www.oneidacountycvb.com

Regional

Adirondack North Country Association
(*Serving the 14-county Adirondack North Country region*)
Terry Martino, Executive Director
20 St. Bernard St.
Saranac Lake, NY 12983
Phone: (518) 891-6200
Email: anca-martino@northnet.org
Website: www.adirondack.org

Development Authority of the North Country
(*Serving Jefferson, Lewis, & St. Lawrence counties*)
Robert Juravich, Executive Director
317 Washington St.
Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: (315) 785-2593
Email: info@danc.org
Website: www.danc.org

New York State Tug Hill Commission
(*Serving the Tug Hill region portions of Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, & Oswego Counties*)
John Bartow, Executive Director
317 Washington St.
Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: (315) 785-2380
Email: john@tughill.org
Website: www.tughill.org

NOTE: *For tourism related businesses, refer also to the agency listing under the “Tourism Development” section.*

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING, & PROMOTION

Introduction

The development of a scenic byway trail is principally intended to improve local economies, promote tourism development, gain market visibility for byway communities, and protect the special resources that draw visitors to the Byway area. Many communities along the byway route offer unique and interesting traveling experiences, but would not stand out on their own as major destinations. Through cooperative planning, communities along the route can market themselves as a destination where travelers can come to experience the Black River in its many forms. As much of the byway is rural in nature, with low density population and development, many local economies rely heavily on the tourism industry to provide activity in their communities.

Promotional and marketing activities will stimulate growth in retail, hospitality services, and the production and packaging of the locally produced foods and crafts contributing to the viability of byway communities. Efforts to develop and promote the intrinsic resources located in byway communities will benefit residents and tourists alike. For example, the recent construction of the Black River Canal Museum in the Village of Boonville has created a destination for byway travelers looking to find information on the Canal's history. The preservation and interpretation of historical artifacts though, is just as important for local residents and community stakeholders whose own family histories are tied to the Canal. The desire to capitalize on byway promotion serves as an incentive for communities to preserve and enhance their historical, cultural, and recreational resources. Better stewardship of these resources enhances the community's appeal to tourists and new, entrepreneurial residents. Corridor-wide identification with the byway's themes encourages regional cooperation in planning and promotions.

Tourism Marketing and Promotional Goals

The tourism goals of the Black River Trail Scenic Byway are as follows:

1. Promote and encourage tourism commerce and communication between byway communities in order to strengthen marketing efforts;
2. Improve the availability of basic tourist information via the Internet and other marketing outlets;
3. Develop theme-based packages and tourism guides to enhance the byway experience and extend visitor stays;
4. Support the development and promotion of special events in byway communities;
5. Develop strategies to improve shoulder season, year round, new and repeat visitation by appealing to market interests of a broad audience;
6. Provide a quality visitor experience and develop strategies to improve the traveler's experience;
7. Develop a Byway Marketing and Interpretation Plan and work directly with communities on promotions and branding; and,
8. Create new comfort facilities to enhance the visitor experience.

Goal #1. Promote and encourage tourism commerce and communication between byway communities in order to strengthen marketing efforts.

The proposed re-routing of the Black River Trail Scenic Byway so that it will continue along the entire length of the Black River will help to develop the byway's theme and will encourage increased participation among byway communities. Furthermore, developing a new logo and theme which will be used in by all byway communities will provide a framework for a more cohesive marketing effort. By highlighting the unique resources that each community can offer along the Black River, communities can begin to work together to bring tourists to the entire area, rather than competing with each other for visitors.

Goal #2. Improve the availability of basic tourist information via the Internet and other marketing outlets.

Improving access to trip planning information will encourage more people to travel the byway and will help to improve their actual visitor experience. With more and more people using the internet to make their vacation planning decisions, plan their trips, and book their reservations, it is important to make sure that they can readily find information on the experience offered along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway. Easily locating lodging and other visitor services during their travel advance travel planning on the Internet also helps to reassure travelers that they will have all that they need and are looking for when visiting the Black River area. A centralized website for all byway communities is crucial to promoting the Black River traveling experience. Chambers of Commerce, tourism agencies, and ANCA must work together to develop website capacity to provide information on byway resources, attractions, services and events that is comprehensive and cohesive along the entire length of the byway. At a minimum, lodging establishments should participate in an online "lodging availability" system so tourists can be assured of availability before making futile telephone calls. Ideally, lodging establishments would offer online reservations. In either case, technical assistance and training may be necessary to aid some establishments in making this transition.

Once on the route, travelers should be able to readily locate tourist information centers should they require information or directions. An assessment of the route is needed to evaluate adequacy of information centers. For those traveling along the Black River itself, on-water signage may be needed to direct boaters/paddlers to the services they need.

Goal #3. Develop theme-based packages and tourism guides to enhance the byway experience and extend visitor stays.

While visitors may be drawn to the byway through the image and promise portrayed through its marketing and promotion, it is up to byway stakeholders to enhance the actual

visitor experience and to meet travelers' expectations. We cannot assume that byway travelers will find the right combination of experiences on their own. By packaging and promoting resources and attractions in theme-based brochures (both print and web-based), we improve the odds that visitors will connect with what they seek.

A "Tour the Black River" guide could provide travelers with information on where they could rent canoes or kayaks or charter a whitewater rafting tour. The brochure would also highlight scenic spots to stop and view wildlife, good fishing access points, and local festivals or events centered around the River. Local efforts could also build on ANCA's "Arts, Crafts, and Foods Along Adirondack North Country Scenic Byways" brochure or the www.AdirondackCraft.com website.

Goal #4. Support the development and promotion of special events in byway communities.

There exist a number of events that could be further promoted and expanded along the byway that already tie into the themes of the Black River Trail Scenic Byway. Developing and coordinating a four seasons events calendar of these key events may improve joint advertising of events and could aid the planning of additional new events. The "Special Tourism Sites, Attractions, Services, and Events" section of this CMP identifies a number of existing theme-related events.

Goal #5. Develop strategies to improve shoulder season, year round, new and repeat visitation by appealing to market interests of a broad audience.

There exist a number of events that could be further promoted and expanded along the byway that already tie into the themes of the Black River Trail Scenic Byway. Developing and coordinating a four seasons events calendar of these key events may improve joint advertising of events and could aid the planning of additional new events. The benefit of successful special events is not only the influx of visitors associated with the event itself, but especially in the extra publicity that helps to bring more attention to the existence of the byway and its various year-round offerings. The "Special Tourism Sites, Attractions, and Services" section of this CMP identifies a number of existing theme-related events.

Theme-based packages are another strategy for reaching a broad range of specific market niches and encouraging both new and repeat visitation. A visitor may travel to the region for one reason, and then learn of another opportunity during a different season of the year that causes them to return. See Goal #3, above.

Goal #6. Provide a quality visitor experience and develop strategies to improve the traveler's experience.

A number of factors affect the overall quality of the visitor experience. These include the availability of basic information on lodging, attractions, and services; the ability to navigate the byway and find its resources; comfort and safety; the impact of inclement

weather; and the ability to participate in activities unique to their particular interests. A unique positive experience encourages repeat and extended visitor stays, as well as in word-of-mouth promotion that brings new visitors.

Goal #7. Develop a Byway Marketing and Interpretation Plan and work directly with communities on promotions and branding.

The proposed Black River Trail Scenic Byway will travel along the entire length of the Black River, as well as the historic route of the Black River Canal. This allows for use of a common theme with which these scenic byway communities can more strongly identify (i.e. the Black River rather than the maple leaf logo) will encourage stakeholders to be more engaged. It provides a common rallying point to which they all feel connected, and around which they will cooperatively work together. The proposed “Black River” theme is also more authentic to the byway traveler, thereby facilitating promotional efforts that are consistent with both the product label (byway name) and the actual experience of that product. State legislation to officially extend the current Byway route to encompass the entire length of the Black River, and the adoption of a fitting logo is therefore an essential first step to effectively branding this scenic byway.

Goal #8. Create new comfort facilities to enhance the visitor experience.

Comfort stations and rest areas should be available and strategically located for traveler convenience. When traveling long stretches of a rural Byway, the need for a comfort facility can affect how much time a visitor will take to enjoy the more isolated Byway resources or whether or not they will stop to patronize a local shop or farm stand.

Private establishments may gain more sales by offering public restroom facilities in their business. For example, a shop in the Midwestern United States has a “Public Restroom” sign on its downtown storefront. People have to meander past the stores goods on their way to the restroom in the back of the store. The restroom itself is decorated with art and craft items with a note that these items are available in the store. “Visitors” frequently purchase something on their way back out of the shop.

Tourism organizations serving the Black River Trail Scenic Byway Communities:

Regional

Adirondack Regional Tourism Council
Phone: 518-846-8016 or 800-487-6867
Email: info@adk.com
Web: www.visitadirondacks.com

1,000 Islands Tourism Council
Phone: 800-847-5263
Web: www.visit1000islands.com

Jefferson County

Greater Watertown North Country Chamber of Commerce

Phone: 315-788-4400

Email: chamber@watertownny.com

Web: www.watertownny.com

Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce

Phone: 315-493-3590

Email: carthage@gisco.net

Web: www.carthageny.com

Lewis County

Lewis County Chamber of Commerce

Phone: 315-376-2213

Email: info@lewiscounty.org

Web: www.lewiscountychamber.org

Oneida County

Oneida County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Phone: 800-426-3132

Email: oneidany@dreamscape.com

Web: www.oneidacountycvb.com

Boonville Chamber of Commerce

Phone: 315-942-5112

Email: info@boonvillechamber.com

Web: www.boonvillechamber.com

Rome Chamber of Commerce

Phone: 315-337-1700

Email: info@romechamber.com

Web: www.romechamber.com

RECREATION

Introduction

The Black River Trail Scenic Byway is rich in a variety of recreational opportunities. This section provides an overview of current, four-season recreational resources and is followed by a discussion of the recreation goals from the implementation plan.

Overview of existing recreation opportunities

The Black River Trail Scenic Byway is rich in opportunities for both active and passive outdoor recreation.

Active recreation opportunities include:

- Hiking
- Cross country skiing & snowshoeing
- Bicycling and mountain biking
- Small and large game hunting
- Fishing
- Snowmobiling and winter recreation activities
- Canoeing, kayaking, and white-water rafting
- Golf

Passive recreation activities include:

- Birding and wildlife viewing
- Camping
- Picnicking

A complete listing of outdoor activity sites appealing to recreationalists is included in the Map Resource Key (see “Recreation” category entries).

Accessible Recreation Activities

There are numerous opportunities for disabled individuals to enjoy the outdoors. These include handicap accessible trails at the Lowville Demonstration Area and Forestry Nature Trail, the Brookfield Power cartop boat launches and portage routes in the Villages of Herrings and Deferiet, and the Brookfield Power Black River Portage and Shoreline Fishing in the Village of Black River. A number of handicap accessible trails exist in various locations along the byway including some in the Village of Boonville, near the Village of Black River, and in the City of Watertown. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has also constructed an accessible fishing platform on the Black River—near its Lowville Demonstration Area and Forestry Nature Trail. A list of accessible sites on state forest lands may be found on the NYSDEC

website at www.dec.ny.gov. Detailed local information and special permits are available through the NYSDEC Region 6 headquarters office in Watertown at (315) 785-2239. A Region 6 office is also located in Lowville and can be reached at (315) 376-3251.

Non-motorized Trails

Opportunities for hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing exist in community parks and state forestlands throughout the region. Staff at local Chambers of Commerce offer extensive information on recreational opportunities. The NYSDEC website at www.dec.ny.gov provides complete coverage of recreational resources on state land. Information on state land opportunities is also available through the local DEC office at (315) 785-2239.

Snowmobiling

A total of over 1,000 miles of snowmobile trails are maintained in Oneida, Lewis and Jefferson counties by local clubs. With the region's abundant snow, these trails are often open when the rest of the state is without adequate snow. Trail maps are available through the Greater-Watertown North Country Chamber of Commerce, the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, and the Oneida County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Additional information on local club contacts is available through the New York



State Snowmobile Association at www.nysnowassoc.org. The Resource Map for the Black River Trail Scenic Byway identifies where snowmobile trail corridors cross the Byway. See Attachment V for a map of the regional snowmobile trail system. Note corridor trail connections linking the Tug Hill region and Adirondack region trail systems. Jefferson and Lewis County also each have a Recreational Trails Coordinator employed by the county. Scott Burto, Jefferson County Recreational Trails Coordinator, can be reached in Watertown at (315) 782-2749. Robert Diehl, Lewis County Recreation Trails Coordinator, can be reached in Lowville at (315) 376-5972.

Miscellaneous Winter Sports and Activities

With winter weather dominating much of the year in Northern New York, many winter recreational opportunities exist along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway. Community ice rinks may be found in Rome, Boonville, Port Leyden, Lowville, and Watertown. The river, when frozen over, offers quality ice fishing. There are also several downhill ski slopes located in close proximity to the byway including one in the Town of Turin and one in the City of Watertown. Several communities also organize a variety of winter festivals and special events including Winter Snowfest weekend in Boonville and the Carthage Holiday Parade.

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

Oneida, Lewis and Jefferson counties do offer and promote ATV events and trail riding. However, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is in the midst of reviewing and changing its policies regarding ATV use on state roads and forest lands. Still, many ATV trails cross private lands (with landowner permission) and use local town roads. Before planning an ATV outing, riders should check with the local Chambers of Commerce for the most current information on roads and lands that are open to ATVs. The Jefferson and Lewis County Trails Coordinators can also provide information for recreational motorists.

Bicycling and Mountain Biking

Cycling enthusiasts traveling the byway will enjoy a unique perspective of the landscape and its communities. Rather than pedaling the length of the byway, some travelers may prefer to bring their bicycles along and enjoy a number of the designated bike-touring loops identified by local cyclists to more closely experience local history, the environment, or small-town atmosphere of the region's communities. Those who prefer mountain biking will find opportunities on gravel roads and trails through the area's forests.

The Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) is preparing a comprehensive "Biking the Byways" website which will become a valuable resource for cyclists and mountain bikers. Byway planners and stakeholder groups should take advantage of ANCA's invitation to participate in the project's development.

Hunting & Fishing

Hunting and fishing is a cultural tradition among region's population. Visitors may also enjoy these traditions on state forest lands and on fishing access sites throughout the region. Excellent opportunities are also available on private lands, with landowner permission. Game species include deer, turkey, ruffed grouse, rabbit, and other small game.

The Black River offers strong fish populations and good public access along its entire length. Available species include, trout, perch, bullhead, northern pike, walleye, smallmouth and largemouth bass, muskies, carp, and a variety of panfish. All fishing access points were identified and catalogued as part of the *Black River Blueway Trail* planning process. The plan is available online at www.blackriverny.com. The byway's northern terminus in the Village of Dexter is also



located in close proximity to Black River Bay and Lake Ontario, which offer additional fishing opportunities.

Canoeing, Kayaking, and White-water Rafting

The Black River Trail Scenic Byway runs along each of the three very distinct sections of the Black River. The first segment, which begins in Boonville and extends northward to Lyons Falls, is described as a **Wild River Area**. The Boonville area has ideal conditions for travelers to canoe. Other segments have more rapidly flowing waters and are better suited for inner tube recreation.

The next segment of the river is considered the **Flat-water Area**. This segment extends from Lyons Falls up to Carthage and is known locally as the “Black River Flats”. With a steady, but slow flow of water through this area, and only a slight drop in grade over the lengthy segment, this area accommodates small craft recreation such as canoes and kayaks. A number of popular events have been held in communities along this section of the River including the Riverfest in Lowville and the Canoedeo in Carthage.

The final segment of the Black River from Carthage to Dexter is the **Whitewater Area**, which contains steep drops and rapidly moving waters. These conditions have created some of the best whitewater rafting areas in the country. A number of competitions and events have been held in and around the City of Watertown to highlight the whitewater runs and play areas that kayakers and white water tourists are seeking. These events have attracted enthusiasts from around the globe. Several commercial whitewater tour agencies also operate in the area to offer rafting experiences to groups. Segments of this portion of the river are too dangerous even for the most experienced whitewater rafter so it is important to direct travelers to the appropriate areas and to post clear signage in areas where strong currents and rapidly moving water can create dangerous conditions.

Golf Courses

Several golf courses are available along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway. Though the golf courses are for-profit operations, they are listed in the CMP as there are so many concentrated along the route that a Byway visitor may opt to make golfing stops part of their travel itinerary.

- Beaver Creek Golf Club, Rome
- Camroden Golf & Cross Country Ski Center, Rome
- Delta Knolls Golf Center, Rome
- Mohawk Glen Golf Club, Rome
- Rome Country Club, Rome
- Sleepy Hollow Golf Course & Country Club, Rome
- Woodgate Pines Golf Club, Boonville
- Highland Golf Course, Turin
- Watertown Golf Club Inc., Watertown

- Willowbrook Golf Club, Watertown
- Rustic Golf Club, Dexter

Geo-caching and Letterboxing

The vast tracks of public lands make the region popular for geo-caching and letterboxing. Geo-caching is activity designed for GPS users who obtain coordinates of a hidden “cache” of goodies or trinkets and then search for these items, register in the logbook, and usually leave an item in return for the item you take. Letterboxing uses navigational skills to find hidden logbooks and rubber stamps. Participants stamp the logbook with their own personal stamp and stamp their own logbook with the stamp found hidden away.

More information on these activities may be found at www.geocaching.com and www.letterboxing.org. If you are new to these activities, each site has a “Getting Started” section that explains the activity, common protocols, needed equipment, and tips. If you area already experienced in either of these activities, hints and coordinates for caches may be located by entering a search by community name, zip code, or county.

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Interpretation

The state forestlands along the Black River provide abundant habitat for bird watching and wildlife viewing on the byway. The Lowville Demonstration Area and Forestry Nature Trail is located on 92 acres and features an arboretum containing over 300 different species of trees and shrubs. A wildlife area provides escape cover and nesting areas where birds and mammals can feed on



the naturally growing seeds and fruits. The site also includes the upper section of a former fire tower that visitors may still enter via the stairs.

Goal #1: Enhance and promote existing recreation opportunities

As illustrated above, the Black River Trail Scenic Byway offers a great variety of recreation opportunities. Improvements are needed to recreational infrastructure such as

parking, access sites, informational kiosks, and comfort stations for hikers, canoeists, and fishermen. A thorough inventory of existing resources and their condition should be conducted so that byway stakeholders can identify where improvements are most needed.

Better linkages are needed between the on land trail systems and the waterway. The *Blueway Trail Plan* has identified a possible route for a recreational trail system that would extend the entire length of the Black River. Improving linkages to and between various trail systems could also improve resource access and encourage longer stays.

Use of website links and theme-based brochures (crafts, foods, bicycling, fishing, paddling, etc.) can draw greater attention to niche activities that would appeal to different interests. For example, a paddling brochure could describe various paddling day trips, local paddling events, and related service businesses. Another brochure could provide information on fishing opportunities along various segments of the Black River, highlighting publicly accessible fishing spots as well as local tournaments and derbies.

Goal #2: Create additional recreation opportunities that extend visitor stays or encourage repeat visits to the region.

Local officials and recreation groups should look for opportunities to expand four season recreation activities and create additional opportunities: such as improved trail linkages, additional river access points, and events and festivals to coordinate with these resources. The infrastructure needed for these recreational activities, such as public restrooms near river access points and informational kiosks, must also be taken into consideration. Such planning efforts are already underway in several communities along the byway (Lyons Falls, Turin, Boonville) and may soon produce new project ideas. Networking the planned improvements to neighboring Byway communities will support the growth of more desirable recreational offerings along the route.

The CMP Implementation Plan (Goals C.1, & C.2) lists specific recommendations for action.

The CMP supports the implementation of the following local and regional recreational planning initiatives:

Maple Traditions Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (2009 Draft)

Contact: Adirondack North Country Association
Phone: (518) 891-6200
Email: anca-obrien@northnet.org
Web: www.adirondack.org

Olympic Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (2004)

Contact: Adirondack North Country Association
Phone: (518) 891-6200
Email: anca-obrien@northnet.org
Web: www.adirondack.org

Seaway Trail Corridor Management Plan

Contact: Seaway Trail, Inc.
Phone: (315) 646-1000
1-800-SEAWAY-T
Email: info@seawaytrail.com
Web: www.seawaytrail.com

White – Still - & Wild: A Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River in Oneida, Lewis, and Jefferson Counties in New York State (2007)

Contact: NYS Tug Hill Commission
Phone: (315) 785-2380
Email: tughill@tughill.org
Web: www.tughill.org

Lewis County Maple Weekend 2006/2007 Event Survey (2007)

Contact: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County
Phone: (315) 376-5720
Email: lewis@cornell.edu
Web: <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/lewis/>



SIGNAGE & INTERPRETATION

Introduction

An effective signage program is key to ensuring a positive experience for byway travelers. Signage along the Byway route is governed by an extensive set of rules and regulations with federal and state origins. The lead agency governing signage along official state scenic Byways in New York State is the New York State Department of Transportation. Local zoning laws must also be considered. Signage regulations fall into four categories:

1. Official Signs provided by New York State Department of Transportation (DOT)
2. Official Signs provided and permitted by DOT
3. Official Signs permitted by DOT, including Tourist Oriented Directional Signage (also known as TODS) – provided by businesses or contributing resource/attraction owner
4. Non-Official Signs provided by communities are placed outside the State right-of-way near municipal boundaries to identify byway communities. The signs must be approved by DOT and are subject to local review and approval.

Within these categories, an entire “family” of sign types exists. Interpreting existing signage language and regulations has been difficult for the professional transportation planners, as well as the layperson volunteer. The New York State Department of Transportation State Scenic Byways Signage Manual will be used as the guiding document for insuring that byway signage meets traffic safety codes and all other applicable signage regulations. Additionally, the Adirondack North Country Association’s new design standards Guide to Interpretive Signage Along North Country Byways should be consulted to insure that the Black River Scenic Byway route will place effective signage and avoid the tendency to over-sign travel and touring routes.

Introductory workshops on the byway signage manuals should be planned for local highway departments, community planners, and other byway stakeholders as a first step in pursuing the goals below. Encouraging the use of the manual will guide project implementers in the proper design, construction, permitting, and installation of signs along the corridor. Byway communities will need guidance on interpreting the new signage manual, locating signage funding opportunities, and establishing contacts with capable administrators to lead community signage efforts as they move into the development, placement, and installation of desired signs. With the ever-changing leadership in Byway communities, arrangements for ongoing signage education should be made.

Goal #1. Conduct a comprehensive signage assessment.

During CMP development, it became evident that a comprehensive signage assessment is needed corridor wide. It is strongly recommended that funding be secured to address the adequacy and legality of existing signage and interpretation in place including:

- Complete inventory of all existing signs with name of responsible party;
- Gather steward ownership contact information, including full resource name and significance;
- Notation of locations with lack of signage and locations needing improved signage.

Goal #2. Enhance wayfinding and strengthen byway identity through an effective directional signage program.

Wayfinding signage provides direction and peace of mind as visitors travel along the byway route and as they venture off the main route to access various services, attractions, and recreational opportunities. Since Byway users will include pedestrians, bicyclists, recreational vehicle users, and motorists, it is important that wayfinding signage be developed that will accommodate each of these groups. It is important to consider the needs of each of these groups when developing signage plans. In addition, byway communities along the entire route must coordinate with one another to ensure that wayfinding signage is consistent and cohesive. With a number of intersecting byway routes, the *Black River Blueway Trail*, and various recreational trail networks, a comprehensive signage strategy will be critical in order to avoid a “clutter of signs,” which ultimately confuse and disrupt the travel experience. Standardized, common sense criteria, such as the following, should be applied to all interpretation and signage activities along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway:

- Simple
- Well designed
- Easy to read (given the speed of motorists) (MUTC compliant)
- Interesting to read (for interpretive signage)
- Well timed
- Well placed
- Thematic
- Easy to follow
- Legal (programmatic and local)

An appropriate *logo* enhances the byway’s identity and helps travelers to quickly recognize directional signage as they navigate along the byway route. Byway stakeholders felt that the maple leaf logo currently being used does not effectively communicate the byway’s theme and resources to the traveling motorists. Stakeholders have suggested that a new logo be developed that incorporates water or the river. A logo that could be used for both the Black River Trail Scenic Byway and the Black River Blueway Trail would further help in eliminating visual pollution from excessive signs for available trails and resources.

The development of attractive welcome signs for byway communities that incorporate the new logo will also help travelers to readily identify communities along the route and will further provide a cohesive design between communities.

Goal #3. Enhance visitors’ and residents’ understanding and appreciation of byway resources through education & interpretation.

With such a vast array of historical, cultural and recreational resources along the byway route, interpretive signage to help the visitor to better understand and appreciate these resources will be a key component of any signage program. Well designed and properly placed interpretive

signage will engage byway travelers and help them to experience all that the byway has to offer. Chambers of commerce, historians, historical societies, county tourism agencies, ANCA, municipal leaders, local artists, and DOT should work together to develop a thematic signage program that enhances the overall byway image. Again, signage for the *Black River Blueway Trail* should be consistent with byway signage to provide a more cohesive traveling experience. The signage theme should be consistently applied to web content and print materials as well, in order to further reinforce the image and experience of the byway. Additionally, future interpretive material should be based on current marketing and branding research which will need to be conducted following the approval of the CMP.

Overview of Signage Types and Issues

Tourist Oriented Directional Signs

Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) will be used to lead visitors to area businesses located off of the Byway's primary route. Some on-route businesses may also qualify for TODS. Communities rely on a steady stream of visitor spending to remain viable in a rural economy dependent on tourism dollars. Along the byway route, two-color TODS will serve as easily recognizable, consistent beacons. Byway travelers quickly learn to watch for these signs when seeking goods, services, and attractions. Local tourism related business owners should be made aware of their eligibility to pursue this type of signage. The New York State Scenic Byways Signage Manual states that "TODS may also include advertising of services, activities, arts, crafts or products that are commonly accepted to be of specific interest to travelers." Those choosing to advertise their business establishment or resources will need information on how to obtain a permit and place a sign. Contact information naming the Department of Transportation's Real Estate division representative responsible for the particular areas of the byway needs to be prepared and distributed. It is anticipated that the Department of Transportation's signage manual will address these concerns. Additionally, information on accessing the New York State's Department of Transportation's Scenic Byways Signage Manual should be circulated to all Black River Trail Scenic Byway stakeholders and Byway partners.

Destination Markers

Resource Destination Markers are small signs placed along the route to capture the traveler's attention and direct them to Byway resources. These Destination Markers are usually provided and installed by the Department of Transportation. Along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway, recreational trails' access points and river access points need to be marked. Access points for recreation sites are hard to find, as they are so well camouflaged by the landscape and must therefore be clearly marked. Parks, fishing access points, boat launches, wildlife viewing areas and trail heads for many of the Department of Environmental Conservation's recreational and natural resources are so completely obscured that without a sign they would be missed entirely. The Department of Transportation's right-of-way provides a legal space for sign placements that are otherwise not permitted on state-owned land.

Byway Pedestrian Directional Signs

Byway Pedestrian Directional signs will guide visitors to various points of interest once they are out of their vehicles. To maintain continuity in signing the byway, pedestrian directional signs will feature the State's byway logo and lettering for the Black River Trail Scenic Byway. Byway groups still need to make decisions about where these signs are needed. Those who decide to move forward will have to absorb all costs to design and fabricate the signs. The groups will have to secure permission from any involved landowners, follow local ordinances and install the signs outside the byway's right-of-way.

Interpretive Signs

Interpretive signs provide information about significant events, places, people or things. The use of the byway logo on each interpretive sign reinforces the interconnected system and promotes visitation. These signs will be used to help visitors to learn more about the Black River Trail Scenic Byway's history, culture, natural systems and recreation. The special stories about local lore, life, and events need to be shared to improve the visitor's experience and create a greater awareness and appreciation for the area. When designing interpretive signs, communities should take the opportunity to include information highlighting other resources to encourage byway users to move from one area to another and to promote visitation of underused resources. A well-coordinated system of interpretive signs will build the expectation that each new site brings another worthwhile experience.

In order to avoid over-signing the byway, kiosks, centralized strategic interpretation spaces, and stop-offs should be used, particularly in communities along the route. These help inform the traveler of the historic, cultural, recreational and natural resources in the immediate area, as well as those at the "next" stop. Coordinating "on the ground" signage locations with an interpretive map and guide help the visitor to locate these interpretive spots. Electronic forms of interpretive programming, in the form of low frequency radio programming, Internet and audiotapes provide another dimension that might enhance the traveler's experience and should be considered. Another important aspect of centralizing interpretive information is to encourage the traveler to get out of his or her car and walk around each community, an important encouragement of commerce.

Official Byway Route Identification Signs

Byway communities will be encouraged to use the byway's name and logo on all signage to lend continuity to the Byway experience. Cities, towns and villages will benefit from the appeal of the brand name which umbrellas the entire route. The repeated use of the easily recognizable name and graphic prominently displayed on signs conditions visitors to watch for similar signs as they alert travelers that they are approaching new services, attractions, or resources. Being entirely outside of the Adirondack Park, Black River Trail Scenic Byway signs placed within the right-of-way will be brown and white in color per NYS Byway signage regulations.

Route Logo

As mentioned previously, the current maple leaf logo does not appropriately capture the theme and experience offered along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway. Stakeholders have suggested that plan implementers act on the development of a logo that more accurately depicts the river experience along the trail.

If the decision is made by the regulatory agencies to pursue a new logo, local implementers will ultimately have to follow the logo process provided in the new state sign manual. Depending upon whether or not the original graphic design was adopted by legislation, there may be additional procedures necessary to follow to re-legislate new artwork. Local implementers, in conjunction with ANCA, will need to consider the scope of the work and ways to share the workload associated with a new design and the approval process. Gathering input and consensus on whether to pursue a new design, and ultimately on developing a new design, would involve a commitment by a core group of involved byway representatives from the Black River Trail communities. A generic logo for the Black River Blueway Trail was developed as part of the Blueway Trail planning process. This logo could be used temporarily on promotional materials such as websites and brochures that are printed frequently until a new logo can be designed and approved. Sources of funding for the creation of a new design must be identified.

Community Welcome Identification Signs

The Corridor Management Plan organizers agree that Community Welcome Identification Signs should be used to highlight gateways to cities, towns, villages, and hamlets. Upon approval of this Corridor Management Plan, Scenic Byway communities will need to be contacted and reminded that they are eligible to receive Community Welcome Signs designed and installed by the Department of Transportation in the State's right-of-way. Communities may elect to supply their own welcome sign for placement outside the right-of-way. The welcome signs will include locally selected artwork and will also show the byway name and logo. Sign installers will seek Department of Transportation approval and adhere to all local ordinances. Byway communities will work with ANCA in preparing appropriate community identification signs.

Distance between communities would be helpful to have noted. For example, "Community of X, next community is X, how many miles away" considering the dearth of gas, toilets, ATM's etc. and their seasonality.

Bikeway Signage

CMP organizers want to work towards having consistent and regularly spaced bike route marking and directional signage for cyclists and vehicle operators along the Scenic Byway as allowed by NYSDOT. Some of the Black River Trail Scenic Byway route is already marked with bike lane pavement markers or "Shared Roadway" signs. Regardless, drivers need continual reminders of random presence of cyclers and other byway users. The pavement markers would be used only in cases where the shoulder width meets NYSDOT requirements. The popularity of bicycling and mountain biking continues to grow within the state as alternative means of transportation and as recreational sports. Opportunities exist for expansion of routes

and linkages, both within the community and along the route. Additional discussion is needed regarding the parallel bicycle routes and loop routes. Byway communities are developing and expanding their road and mountain biking systems and are requesting adequate signs to direct and accommodate road and trail users.

Conclusion

As the Black River Trail Scenic Byway continues to develop its resources, signage and interpretation will play an increasing role in the planning process. All proposed signage planning projects should provide travelers with the information they need to make the transition from a vehicle, to a walking environment, to a visitor experience. The New York State Regional Scenic Byways Coordinator can provide a clearinghouse function to access New York State Department of Transportation staff and regulations and to facilitate the exchange of information. The Regional Coordinator can be reached at

New York State Department of Transportation, Region 7
 Dulles State Office Building
 317 Washington Street
 Watertown, NY 13601
 Scenic Byways Coordinator: (315) 785-2354
 (general questions & assistance)
 Traffic Engineering & Safety: (315) 785-2321
 (directional signage issues)
 Real Estate (315) 785-2407
 (TOD signage issues)



TRANSPORTATION, SAFETY & COMMUNITY DESIGN

Introduction

Transportation and safety issues demand serious consideration in all activities related to planning, developing, and promoting the Black River Trail Scenic Byway. During plan development local route conditions were evaluated and transportation and safety goals were generated with input from byway committee representatives. Some goals are quite specific while others are more open-ended to address changing needs over time. Byway implementers are prepared to work cooperatively with regional NYSDOT offices to address proposed transportation improvement recommendations.

Multi-modal Issues

The Black River Trail Scenic Byway is principally a two-lane highway. Some sections of the route have three- or four-lanes of traffic, particularly in the City of Rome and the City of Watertown and along portions of NY Route 12. There are also center turning lanes in a few locations. Proposed projects in any of the other goal areas must be evaluated for the effect they may have on the flow of multi-modal traffic (pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular) along the byway, across the byway, egress off, or ingress onto the byway.

Bicycling

The Black River Trail Scenic Byway is particularly well-suited to bicycle touring. Much of the byway has marked bicycle lanes or “Shared Roadway” signs for bicycles. The existing signage contributes to the Black River Trail’s appeal to outdoor recreationalists and makes it easy to move along the route using non-fossil fuel powered transportation. While the segment of the route from Boonville to Rome along NY Route 46 does not allow for bicycle travel directly on the route, there is a multi-use trail that runs parallel to the route.



Most mountain biking opportunities along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway are informal and involve the use of snowmobile trails or gravel roads through forest lands. Although there are no formal mountain bike trail networks adjacent to the Byway, the Black River Environmental Improvement Association (BREIA) does maintain a trail system for mountain biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing. This trail system runs from the Village of Boonville to the Pixley Falls State Park.

Pedestrian Walkability

The incorporated cities (Rome and Watertown) and many of the incorporated villages (Boonville, Port Leyden, Lyons Falls, Lowville, Carthage, Black River, and Dexter) could be considered walkable, pedestrian-friendly communities. The Village of Lowville is currently working to develop a bicycle and pedestrian path along a segment of an abandoned railroad

corridor through the village. The City of Watertown recently undertook the redesign of Public Square in their downtown. This project has greatly improved the pedestrian-friendliness of downtown Watertown. Additional improvements have been made to improve pedestrian accessibility along the Black River.

Railroad

There is a short railroad line from Croghan (the site of the Northern New York Railway Society Museum) to Lowville. That line had been used in the past for a tourist excursion train using one of the Railway Society's old engines and passenger cars. The line is still in good condition and the Society's goal is to raise the funds to operate this excursion train again in the future for tourism and entertainment, but not for regular passenger service.



Within the City of Rome, the historic Martin Street Train Station is served by Amtrak. The station offers multiple departures seven days a week.

Ag: Farm Tractors, Equipment, and Wagons/Buggies

One unique aspect of this byway is the amount of agricultural related traffic—both motorized and non-motorized. In addition to modern tractors and farm equipment, byway travelers will frequently pass horse-drawn wagons or buggies driven by the Amish population. Motorists must take special care to pass such vehicles safely, giving them adequate clearance while being aware of oncoming traffic.

Snowmobiling

The rural North County is also a popular destination for snowmobilers and ATV enthusiasts, with many of the major trail corridors crossing the local highways. Although most recreational vehicle operators stop to ensure safety before crossing the roadway, motorists should use caution when they see a snowmobile or ATV approaching the roadway. —*See attachments for countywide snowmobile trail maps. The Resource Map also indicates where snowmobile trails cross the Byway.*

Waterways

Each of the byway communities has connection to the Black River, either physically or historically based on the location of the old Black River Canal. In fact, the proposed route for the Black River Trail Scenic Byway follows along the River's entire length from the start of its headwaters in Forestport to where it meets Black River Bay in Dexter. With three distinct segments, the Black River allows travelers the opportunity to enjoy a variety of river experiences including wild water (Forestport to Lyons Falls), still water (Lyons Falls to Carthage) and white

water (Carthage to Dexter). Each of these segments offers unique recreational, historical and environmental resources for byway travelers to experience.

Public Transportation

Airports

There are two airports located along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway, the Oneida County International Airport in the City of Rome and the Watertown International Airport in Watertown. Located near the northern and southern terminuses of the route, these airports offer domestic flights.

The two closest metropolitan airports are the Syracuse Hancock International Airport and the Ottawa International Airport in Ontario, Canada. The Syracuse Hancock International Airport is 45 miles west of Rome (the Byway's southern terminus). The Ottawa International airport is 130 miles north of Dexter (the Byway's northern terminus).

Bus

There is commercial bus service to the region. There are Greyhound bus stations located in the Cities of Rome and Watertown. Adirondack Trailways also has daily service to Watertown (Jefferson County). Each city also maintains a public bus service for access to their most important local resources.

Lewis County Public Transportation operates a public transportation bus service that runs daily. The route connects Lowville, with many other hamlets and villages within the county as well as to Boonville (south of the county) and Carthage (to the north). The bus service is in its infancy, having just begun operations this summer. It is hoped that the service will fill the void for those in rural areas needing transportation either to work, medical facilities, or shopping.

Scenic Byways & Sustainable Energy

During 2005, the Adirondack North Country Association participated in several State workshops on Sustainable Energy. After considering the accelerated level of change in the fuel market, the Adirondack North Country Association felt it was imperative that the Maple Traditions Corridor Management Plan consider the situation as it relates to future Byway planning. The current conditions left unchecked will inevitably impact the communities who rely on tourism dollars. Byways depend on an audience of visitors arriving by fueled vehicles so it is appropriate to address this concern in the Transportation Section.

As we begin to explore sustainable energy, environmental impacts and rising fuel costs in relation to Byway travelers, several questions arise. How will Byway communities and Byway management entities adapt to the effects of rising fuel costs? Should ANCA and Byway Committees consider actively monitoring and studying trends? What will be the impact on visitation along the North Country Byways?

A simple first step will be to explore the best methods of encouraging the use of fuel-efficient cars, SUVs, campers and trucks in the Adirondack region. One example is the Lake Placid/Essex County Visitor Center promotion that awards a special pin to those arriving at the Visitor Center in energy efficient vehicles. Byway leaders should consider following discussions on the use of alternative fuels for vehicles.

With reduced consumer spending at the gas pumps, New York State's interconnected North Country Byway routes are positioned to become economically desirable touring roads based on their road, water, land and rail linkages. The existing connections with neighboring Byway



communities will accommodate visitors trying to conserve fuel yet experience a variety of locales. Pedestrian paths and walkways, hiking trails and waterways allow many options to move through the North Country. The close proximity of resources linked via land and water routes allows access for visitors to experience a variety of activities without having to use extra fuel to motor long distances. The expansive connectivity provided through these resources is described in detail in both this section and under the Recreation heading of this document. Byway

leaders will have to collect, package, map and distribute information about alternative modes of transportation on land and water to the public. In time, it will serve all communities well to re-iterate the convenience of moving from community to community in their Byway promotions.

The sustainable energy topic is fairly new to North Country Byway planners. A good opportunity exists for the various management entities to work together to promote the "connectivity" of the neighboring North Country Byways along with the other nearby New York State Byways. The clustering of resources easily accessed by Byway crossroads in the State's 2,400-mile system should be explored more closely as we look to encourage fuel efficient touring options.

Transportation/Safety Goals and Discussion

Goal #1. Provide for the safety of all byway users

Byway users include local residents who know the local roads and travelers who are unfamiliar with the territory and potential blind spots. As the byway route travels through a number of smaller hamlets, villages, and the cities of Watertown and Rome, users will include pedestrians as well as bicyclists. In addition, segments of the byway route, run parallel to and intersect with snowmobile and ATV trails. As the byway route travels through many rural areas, farm equipment and Amish horse-drawn buggies and wagons also share the roadway.

Local officials, tourism organizations, and other stakeholder groups must work with county highway departments and the NYS Department of Transportation to conduct a thorough analysis of potential points of conflict between motorists and other byway users. Signage alerting travelers to intersections with non-motorized users, recreational vehicles, and farm equipment will be critical. Signage is also needed at pull-offs for roadside parking and river access points to assist travelers with safely accessing byway resources. Communities developing local plans should consider traffic calming strategies and pedestrian-friendly design of street crossings and sidewalks.

Examples as they apply to specific sites and usage conditions:

Example One: Pedestrian Crossings

If a parking area is located on the opposite side of the road from a resource/attraction, then pedestrian crossing signage and/or striping should be installed in order to direct pedestrians to the safest crossing point and to alert motorists to the possibility of pedestrian congestion and crossings along the marked section of the road.

Example Two: Parking Area

A new parking area for access to a recreational trailhead or information kiosk should be designed to allow for safe entrance back onto the byway.

Goal #2. Continue to improve the Black River Trail Scenic Byway Transportation Infrastructure

The road network along the byway route is principally in good condition. The NYS Department of Transportation has undertaken some major capital improvements along the route, including improvements to Route 12 in the Town of Lowville. Capital improvements and regular maintenance should continue on an as needed basis. As noted above, shared highway use should be taken into consideration when planning for any capital improvement projects. Communities should coordinate with DOT whenever possible to undertake sidewalk, street lighting, water or sewer main improvement projects during DOT reconstruction projects in their area. This will not only ensure that all byway users are taken into account, but could also lead to an economies of scale through cost and time efficiencies. Streetscape improvements identified in local design and master plans might be incorporated into DOT's "context sensitive design" approach to state highway projects if communications are maintained with agency staff. Concrete has been used for some of the trail crossings for recreational vehicles. This provides a delineation of the crossing, but more importantly protects the asphalt roadway from deteriorating over time from repeated use by snowmobiles and ATVs. Communities and DOT should continue to develop concrete trail crossings wherever possible.

Goal #3. Promote and increase linkages and connections for the use of and access to multi-modal forms of transportation

The Black River Trail Scenic Byway intersects with 3 other designated scenic byways, thereby supporting a network of scenic byways throughout the Adirondack North Country region that provides a variety of tour route options for travelers. In the City of Rome, at the southern terminus of the byway route, the byway intersects with the Revolutionary Byway. Further north, in the Villages of Herrings, Deferiet, Great Bend, Felts Mills and Black River, the Black River Trail overlaps with the Olympic Byway. The two byways also overlap for a time from the

Village of West Carthage on Route 3 (an alternate loop along the Olympic Byway) and continuing westward into the City of Watertown. At its proposed northern terminus at the intersection of NY Route 180 (Brown Street) and Water Street in the Village of Dexter, the byway overlaps the Seaway Trail, a national scenic byway, for a short distance along NY Route 180. While not directly connected to the Black River Trail Scenic Byway, the southern terminus for the Central Adirondack Trail Byway is located in very close proximity to the southern terminus for the Black River Trail Byway in the City of Rome. Finally, the proposed Maple Traditions Scenic Byway, which begins in the Village of Lowville, will connect to the Black River Trail. These numerous byway connections will provide travelers with access to a wide variety of cultural, historical and recreational resources throughout the interconnected travel routes. *(See Recreation Section/Resource Map for names and locations of trails.)*

The *Black River Blueway Trail*, a 114-mile route along the Black River waterway, also runs parallel to the Black River Trail Scenic Byway. Infrastructure development, signage and promotional efforts for the both the land and water routes must be clear and consistent so as not to confuse byway users.

A number of motorized and non-motorized trail networks intersect the byway in both the rural areas and village centers, creating numerous multi-modal transportation opportunities. These trail linkages can provide gateway access out to more extensive trail networks, or can provide alternative transportation routes between communities, thereby removing pedestrians and cyclists from the more heavily traveled roadways. Supporting infrastructure needs such as bike lanes, bike racks, and canoe launches should be identified so that they can be incorporated into future trail development projects. *(See Recreation Section/Resources Map for names and locations of trails.)*

Goal #4. Establish and maintain an electronic communication network with ANCA, the regional NYS DOT officials and the Maple Traditions Scenic Byway stakeholders

Establishing a proper communication network with the NYS Department of Transportation is a crucial step in bringing forth this CMP's transportation recommendations. The contact information will enable Byway communities to integrate the proposed actions as complementary projects and implement them concurrently as regular state maintenance and other DOT operations are conducted. Points of contacts need to be established locally between project coordinators and Department of Transportation staff. As lead agent, the Adirondack North Country Association would like to receive notification of proposed maintenance operations and other Department of Transportation initiatives planned along the route. Local communities would then be informed electronically by ANCA about upcoming planning meetings and dates of public hearings.

ANCA will need to prepare and distribute a list of names and contact information for use by local and regional plan implementers. Additionally, interested parties should be directed to NYS DOT's agency website for current names and phone numbers for Regional Directors, Regional Byway Coordinators, Resident Engineers, Regional Traffic and Safety Engineers, Real Estate Division and Regional Planning and Program Managers.

General Communication and Coordination of Transportation and Safety Issues

As indicated in the section on signage and interpretation, it is important to maintain regular communication between local municipalities and their highway departments, county highway departments, the Adirondack North Country Association, and NYS Department of Transportation. Local community leaders should ask to be added to their regional DOT office mailing list for public notices of projects and funding opportunities. Local officials should also share any plans for streetscape improvements, road work, or infrastructure work in the corridor with their county highway department and NYS DOT. This may help to identify opportunities for those entities to coordinate their projects with those that are more local, thereby saving time and expense. If local projects involve curb cuts, highway entrances, or signage issues, NYSDOT staff can identify potential safety issues and provide early consultation and advice that may also save time and expense. *(Also see Goal #4, above, regarding an electronic communication network.)*

Local officials and Byway partners should also be sure to attend public meeting held by the county or NYS DOT regarding plans for their upcoming projects. It is a good way to be aware of future projects and is also an opportunity to influence the final design of a project since these meetings are held to invite public comment as well as to inform.

The New York State Regional Scenic Byways Coordinator can provide a clearinghouse function to access New York State Department of Transportation and facilitate the exchange of information. The Regional Coordinator can be reached at

New York State Department of Transportation, Region 7

Dulles State Office Building

317 Washington Street

Watertown, NY 13601

Scenic Byways Coordinator: (315) 785-2354

(General questions & assistance)

Traffic Engineering & Safety: (315) 785-2321

(Directional signage issues)

Real Estate: (315) 785-2407

(Tourist Oriented Directional Signage issues)

Scheduled NYSDOT Highway Projects Through 2012:

PIN 701660, Lowville Village reconstruction, letting 4/8/10

PIN 780520, Rt.3 over Black River bridge rehab, Letting 5/7/09



STEWARDSHIP

Preserving & promoting historic and scenic resources along the byway corridor

Introduction

The Black River Trail Scenic Byway's natural, historical, recreational and cultural resources are integral to the byway experience. While they have value individually, collectively they create the critical mass of attractions that will draw visitors and which define the byway experience. Those touring the corridor by car may simply enjoy the natural environment from their vehicles. Others may choose to experience the wide assortment of resources firsthand when they hike, hunt, canoe, kayak, fish, ski, snowmobile, or visit local cultural and historical sites. It is only through careful stewardship that these valuable resources will be properly maintained and protected so that they will be preserved for the future. The protection of these resources is crucial to tourist communities that rely on these assets for their livelihoods.

While stewardship of local resources is essential to maintaining what defines the byway product, or brand, it is the potential economic benefit to be realized from byway development and promotion that can provide the real impetus for local stakeholders to preserve those resources. Communities that are desperate for any type of development that will create jobs or "grow the tax base" are often tempted to "take what they can get." They often resist placing too many requirements or restrictions on a proposed development for fear that organizers will opt to go elsewhere. Communities are generally more supportive of and active in efforts to preserve Byway resources when they feel economically secure and recognize the economic value of significant resources in drawing visitors and generating tourism spending.

State Level Stewardship

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYS DEC) mission is to conserve, improve and protect New York State's natural resources and environment, and control water, land and air pollution, in order to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state and their overall economic and social well being. The NYS DEC enforces State regulations and provides direct management of the state-owned lands and waters. In many cases, NYS DEC also manages the recreational resources on State Forest lands, maintaining trails, footbridges, parking areas, campsites, lean-tos and boat launches on state lands. On a periodic basis NYS DEC develops Unit Management Plans to address the future management and make recommendations for the ongoing recreational use of public lands including strategies for mitigating overuse and misuse of resources. A unit management plan is currently underway for state lands along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway.

The New York State Department of Transportation, through context sensitive design, also performs a stewardship function for natural resources along the byway corridor. DOT highway projects take measures to protect water quality, manage invasive species, and allow for wildlife crossings in appropriate areas.

Local Stewardship

Work to safeguard a variety of local resources is presently being spearheaded by local government, affiliated organizations and civic groups. Plan implementers will need to maintain

communications and work cooperatively to support these individual initiatives operating at the local level and encourage them to maintain their present level of services. The abundance of local government agencies, planning offices, community-based organizations and local leaders provide an enhanced opportunity for follow through and implementation of the management plan. Active and committed local and county historians, parks and recreation departments, tourism agencies, library associations, sportsmen associations, and recreation groups (i.e. snowmobile clubs, bicycle clubs, ATV clubs, etc.) all provide substantial human capital to help drive the preservation and enhancement of various resources depending on their area of interest. A priority action should be the preparation of a resource inventory of natural, historical, cultural, scenic and recreational offerings for distribution to local leaders. Additionally, the protection of natural resources from invasive species will be absolutely necessary to safeguard the byway for future generations.

A sampling of stewardship activities

Depending on the nature of the resource—i.e. and historic structure, scenic view, waterway, or forest—there are a number of possible activities that can serve to preserve that resource. Several examples are listed below.

- The inventory, cataloging, interpretation, and preservation of historic documents
- The restoration of historic buildings
- Use of voluntary easements to preserve scenic views or access to recreational resources
- The documentation and promotion of traditional arts or customs
- Use of local zoning to encourage quality development that appropriate to the character of a community
- Enforcement of local ordinances to minimize adverse impacts on residents or the environments
- Interpretation of local resources, regardless of type, that increases understanding and appreciation of those resources, thereby generating support for good stewardship of those resources.
- Build and strengthen partnerships with not-for-profit groups willing to educate visitors about local assets and advocate for resource preservation.

Advocates for Preservation of Byway Resources

The following organizations are involved in ongoing activities throughout the Byway corridor that address the preservation of those special assets and resources that draw visitors to the area.

- Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA)
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- NYS Department of Transportation
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation – State Historic Preservation Office
- NYS Tug Hill Commission
- Historical Societies and Associations
- Local Governments
- County Planning and Community Development Offices

- Local service organizations (Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H Clubs, etc.)
- Snowmobile Clubs
- The Nature Conservancy



Regional Cooperation and Implementation Strategy

The Black River Trail Scenic Byway CMP was assembled through input from various stakeholders at the local and regional level. Participants represented state and local government, non-profit organizations, private business, and the general public. This same assortment of stakeholder interests will also drive implementation of the CMP; sometimes independently and often through a variety of partnerships at the local and regional level—but always supported by and in concert with the unifying goals of this CMP. Essentially, the CMP helps to ensure that local organizations are playing off the “same sheet of music” while at the same time helping them to understand how their individual projects support the development of the greater whole.

Given that most of stakeholder groups have limited resources and staffing capability, it is not feasible at this time to consider forming a separate not-for-profit organization to manage the Byway. A “decentralized” approach, as described above, will provide the greatest flexibility and encourage the most efficient use of human and capital resources on a project-by-project basis. However, there will need to be some level of regional coordination and facilitation over the long term, as described in the sections below.

ANCA’s Role

The Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) will serve as lead agent to coordinate the various groups along the route and will advocate on behalf of the Byway communities at the regional and state level. Local groups will advise ANCA of their project efforts to insure proper coordination along the entire route. ANCA will be able to assist Byway communities for the short term in regionally based promotions and marketing and will make every effort to build on this.

ANCA will maintain a regional dialogue for action to encourage continued inter-community connections fostered during the drafting of the CMP. A unified communication system is needed to connect involved parties throughout the region and to support existing partnerships and the creation of new public and private partnerships. The linking of municipal governments, state agencies, community groups, Chambers of Commerce, and others in the tourism industry having related project interest will support the plan’s tourism initiatives, provide for stewardship of resources, and improve eligibility for funding. ANCA will provide letters of support for local efforts named in the plan.

Black River Trail Scenic Byway Steering Committee

ANCA should convene a Black River Trail Scenic Byway Steering Committee. This ad hoc body could be the vehicle through which ANCA can fulfill its above role in linking the various Byway stakeholders; facilitating collaborative marketing efforts; and promoting local brand awareness of the Byway as an asset for community economic development. Members could include county planning and tourism organizations, chamber of commerce representatives, local officials, and non-profit organizations. Their local knowledge and personal connection to other stakeholders will be valuable in building the partnerships necessary to implement the CMP. Agencies such as the NYS Tug Hill Commission and NYS Department of Transportation could

also serve as members of the committee, contributing a regional perspective and providing technical assistance where appropriate.

Local Implementation

Numerous local organizations were invited to participate in the creation of the CMP with the intention of 1) creating a sense of ownership and the necessary motivation to carry out the plan and 2) fostering an understanding of the role that the CMP can play in supporting their own local projects.

The communities and organizations who have committed to improving the Black River Trail Scenic Byway through locally driven initiatives will look to administrative leadership from ANCA which realizes there will be a varying level of capabilities and special needs in carrying forth plan objectives. Some communities will have a stronger local collective of skilled staff and volunteer workers while others will depend heavily on outside support for coordination of project efforts. The bulk of the economic and community development will be done locally within the towns, villages and cities with these specific actions supporting the regional goals for the corridor.

In the process of developing the Implementation Plan, which is immediately attached, the Local Advisory Committee named local and regional projects and actions that will contribute to the Byway effort. Local organizations and partners have been named to implement the actions. A list of local groups who are interested in coordinating new and ongoing projects related to the Byway was generated. They are identified as the “responsible party” in the Implementation Plan. Now residents, local organizations, and municipal governments need to continue to work together to accomplish their objectives through implementation of this plan.

Lead Agent Status and Granting Opportunities

As requested by the New York State Department of Transportation, the Adirondack North Country Association will remain involved as the lead agency to secure Scenic Byway’s and Federal Highway Administration’s enhancement money for eligible projects by providing coordination of applications to be presented to these funding sources. Those interested in applying will find applications online and may then contact ANCA to discuss appropriateness and merit of proposed work under the parameters of the two programs.

Local and regional plan implementers will also pursue other funding opportunities outside New York State’s Scenic Byway Program. Upon request, the Adirondack North Country Association will provide support letters. To better compete for funding resources, those preparing grant applications should utilize the strength of the CMP by referring to the plan’s regional partnerships and by pointing out that the local work is connected to a much larger effort serving the North Country area. Byway communities and organizations vary in their ability to successfully apply for grant funding, depending on available staffing, volunteer resources, expertise, and resources for local match. A wide range of assistance will need to be made available including information on locating grant sources, filing timelines, writing assistance, budget preparation, administration and reporting.

Funding

A variety of funding sources will be pursued to finance projects to upgrade, develop, and promote the Byway. These avenues include existing and new grant programs, private and corporate sponsorship, government allocations, foundations, and local advocacy groups.

Participation in joint promotional and advertising efforts with local and county Chambers of Commerce, ANCA, and the I Love NY Program should continue. Joint promotions should not be limited only to efforts within Oneida, Lewis and Jefferson Counties, but should include collaboration between the three counties, led by their respective tourism promotion agencies. In the meantime, it is essential that Byway communities develop plans and cost estimates for their highest priority projects, even if no funding source is readily apparent. With project plans in place, implementers are better positioned to compete for grant funding when it does become available. Such plans may also help stakeholders to break projects down into phases that are more easily fundable, and to identify doable pieces that might be accomplished with existing local resources.

An initial list of potential granting and funding sources appears below. It is important to remember that the grants landscape changes often and without much notice. Interested parties are encouraged to contact county planning offices, economic development offices and local agencies that work on a regular basis with these granting agencies. Sponsorships by local governments will be encouraged as well as the development of partnerships and the preparation of joint applications with other Byway groups.

Local implementers should maintain ongoing communications with the various grantors as:

- potential applicants need to be made aware of announcements of grant opportunities in a timely fashion;
- grant application availability and submission dates change;
- acceptable match items and amount of match required vary year to year and project to project;
- allocations funding and grant availability vary from year to year and
- the nature of eligible projects changes from time to time.

Funding Opportunities

- Federal Highway Administration (No funding currently available until next round of federal legislation is passed)
 - Transportation Enhancements Program, administered by the New York State Dept. of Transportation, for 12 categories intermodal projects
 - Recreational Trails Program, administered by NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, for recreation-oriented trail projects
 - New York State Department of Transportation's Scenic Byway Program
- National Park Service Heritage Preservation Program Grants

- New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)
 - *NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation*
 - Parks grants (acquisition and development)
 - Historic Preservation Grants (acquisition and restoration)
 - *NYS Department of State*
 - Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (for a wide range of planning and implementation activities along designated inland waterways)
- Environmental Restoration Program on municipal property, administered by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (no funding as of November 2008)
- Preservation League of New York State's Historic Preservation Grants
- New York State Council on the Arts' Architecture, Planning and Design Grant Program
- New York State Council on the Arts' Cultural Initiative Grant Program through the Arts and Business Council Inc. Non-profit arts and cultural organizations only.
- Arts and Business Council Inc./New York State Council on the Arts' Cultural Tourism Initiative Program
- Smart Growth (formerly Quality Communities) Program through the New York State Department of State
- New York State Department of Housing and Community Renewal's Rural Community Revitalization Program
- New York Main Street Program, through the NYS Office of Community Renewal
- Community Development Block Grant Program, through the NYS Office of Community Renewal
 - Community Planning Grants
 - Public Facilities Grants (water/wastewater projects)
 - Housing grants
 - Economic Development Grants
 - Micro-Enterprise Grants
- Department of Transportation's Technical Assistance in Traffic Engineering and Transportation Planning for Localities
- New York State Council on the Humanities
- National Endowment for the Arts-REACH for community arts partnership efforts
- Save Our History
- Tourism Cares for Tomorrow Northeast SARE Sustainable Community Grants
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Snowmobile Trail Grant Program
- Wildlife Forever
- Bikes Belong Coalition
- The New York State Archives and the Archives Partnership Trust

Public Education and Byway Program Awareness

Strategies need to be developed on how to best continue with educating the public about the Black River Trail Scenic Byway effort, the CMP, and its goals. Announcements need to go forward to raise awareness of the document and the available “product” which can be used to both improve communities and promote and market the area. Byway steering committee members should regularly remind their local contacts about the connection between the goals of the CMP and those of the local communities. News releases on an individual project should cite the CMP’s recognition of and support for that project.

Assessment and Evaluation

The Black River Trail Scenic Byway CMP will need to be reviewed over time and progress evaluated. As the plan evolves, the vision and goals should remain constant, however, as the original objectives and projects are completed, assessment should be made and future recommendations prepared.

The Corridor Management Plan and its Implementation

It is important for the readers of this Corridor Management Plan to recognize that the Implementation Plan immediately attached sets forth a general strategy for the communities, organizations, local governments and planners along the Black River Trail Scenic Byway to follow. It is a foundation on which to engage in a process of community improvement. Local involvement and empowerment to use this plan will contribute to overall brand identity of the Black River Trail Scenic Byway as an authentic, high quality tourism product.