

# Adirondack Coast Destination Master Plan

## Actions

The following actions have been designed to accomplish Goals established by the Adirondack Coast Strategic Tourism Steering Committee. Descriptions are intended to create a common understanding of the actions and their intentions, while understanding that there is plenty of room for adjustments as the actions are implemented.

## History

### ***Rebuild the Fleets***

The Battle of Valcour and the Battle of Plattsburgh, the first and last naval battles between English speaking nations, were critical battles in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 – and fought on Lake Champlain just off present day Plattsburgh. We will rebuild the fleets of boats for both sides of the Battle of Plattsburgh, using the process to involve visitors and the results as ongoing visitor attractions.

At completion, some of the reconstructed fleet will be launched and stationed in the Bay of Plattsburgh where visitors may have the opportunity to board. The boats may also be used during reenactments. An additional set of vessels may be permanently stationed in a shallow pool recreating the battle configuration. Visitors would be able to move among the boats (perhaps on boardwalks) and gain an understanding of the battle from the perspective of each group of sailors.

We will set up the reconstruction process in a way that visitors can pay to participate and the world can follow each boat through the process via dedicated web sites and cameras. This will create a year-round flow of visitors and a constituency for each boat and fleet.

### ***Expand Reenactments***

To bring history to life and to spread patronage across the calendar, we will engage in more frequent reenactments of history (both battles and camps). Over time, we will be able to economically support ongoing activities – creating the opportunity of reenacting careers.

We see the following:

- More frequent reenactments (both naval battles and associated land actions)
- More participants
- More aspects of battles covered
- Visitors can participate (in some roles)

Marketing will work closely with reenactment groups to make sure that expansions are supported by arrivals of paying visitors. The major expansion will take place after the bicentennial, but incremental expansion can be supported in the near future.

### ***Create Boot Camps and Reenactment Camps***

Paying visitors of all ages will be able to “live” the life of earlier times, learn historic skills and practices, and participate in mock battles. Ideas for taught practices include:

- Black powder rifles and muskets
- Blacksmithing
- Cooking over wood fires
- Tanning hides
- Paddling vintage craft
- 1700s and 1800s farm life
- Period clothing

### ***Create a Cadre of Storytellers and Feature Them in Pubs, Restaurants and Other Locations in Period Costume***

Bring history to life with creative and energetic storytelling by characters in period costume. Create a variety of characters, each with his/her own set of stories so that visitors can experience a variety of stories over a several day stay.

### ***Foster Archaeology Projects on Land and Under the Lake, Involving Paying Visitors***

Work with local and international organizations to foster archaeological projects that draw paying participants. This will create a flow of lodging and dining patrons, will provide new interpretive experiences for visitors, and expand the base knowledge of the past.

### ***Develop and Offer Guided History Tours***

Research and develop logistics and interpretation for a variety of guided history tours based from the Adirondack Coast, including:

- Walking tour of the Point District
- Walking tour of Rouses Point
- Crab and Valcour Islands
- Multi-day history tours from Fort Montgomery to Ticonderoga (traveling by boat, van, or train)

### ***Create a History-focused Corridor from the Plattsburgh City Dock to City Hall and Champlain Monument***

Gradually transition the corridor from the Plattsburgh City Dock to City Hall and the Champlain Monument into a history-focused corridor. Make this a pedestrian-friendly corridor and fill the area with history related experiences and businesses.

### ***Create a Historic Cruise***

Build a modern powered replica of one of the boats in the Battle of Plattsburgh and use this vessel to conduct history cruises and dinner cruises. Dinner cruises could connect Rouses Point and Plattsburgh. History cruises could cover the entire US portion of Lake Champlain.

### ***Open Fort Montgomery***

Work out issues to stabilize the structure of Fort Montgomery and open it to visitors. It should be possible to arrive at the fort by land or water. Opening the fort will establish a northernmost US point for water or land-based historic tours.

### ***Get Historic Buildings in Point District Open to Visitors***

Use tourism to make it profitable to open the historic structures in the Point District of Plattsburgh to visitors. Some may be visited for a fee while others may become history-related places of business.

### ***Reopen Israel Green Tavern on its Original Site***

Reconstruct the historical Israel Green Tavern on the current site of the empty meat packing plant on Bridge Street. This is the tavern where the celebration was held following the defeat of the British in the Battle of Plattsburgh. The tavern will become an important anchor business in the historic pedestrian corridor.

### ***Use Horse-drawn Vehicles for Public Transportation Around Historic Corridor and to Museum Campus***

Create a public transportation system (pay for ride) using horse-drawn vehicles that provides rides to people in the historic corridor and between that corridor and the museum campus.

### ***Build World-Class Interpretive Center***

Build a state-of-the-art interpretive center that showcases the land naval battles around and on Lake Champlain and the importance of the northern theater of that war to the present day makeup of the United States.

This interpretive center will be the center of a hub-and-spoke system that directs visitors to the several existing and potential museums and visitor centers focusing on specific parts of the region's history.

## Cycling

### ***Build the “Infrastructure” for Cycling Tourism***

- Work to secure rental cars in the airport that have receivers (for bike racks) and have the capacity to carry canoes, kayaks, and skis
- Identify lodging establishments that are bike-friendly and prepared to help secure outdoor recreational gear
- Identify cycling guides and potential tours (for both sightseeing and testing oneself)
- Develop maps of sightseeing cycling routes
- Connect the Saranac River Trail with other cycling routes
- Improve cycling lanes on key routes
- Set up connections for field lunches in insulated bags (to keep them food safe)
- Explore drop-off and pick-up sightseeing cycling service opportunities
- Design history-focused cycling tours that enable visitors to use cycles as transport among great interpretive sites and facilities
- Design agritourism-focused cycling tours

## Paddling

### ***Expand Services and Infrastructure for Paddlers***

Expand services and infrastructure for paddlers of all skill sets, for both whitewater and flatwater.

- Rental equipment
- Rental cars with racks
- Lessons
- Guided outings (some multi-day)
- Shuttle services (drop off and pick up)
- Expand put-ins and parking
- Make field meals available (and provide equipment to make them safe)

## Agritourism

### ***Bring Agricultural Products to Local Menus and Airport/shipping***

Feature regional agricultural products in menus, keeping revenues local and helping define a sense of place for visitors. Showcase agricultural products in the expanded terminal at PBG – and make them available for purchase and consumption. Expand options to produce locally grown and produced agricultural products. Enable visitors to ship agricultural products and to continue to order them after they return home. These products include:

- Apples (and apple products)
- Maple products
- Wine
- Cheese

Create agritourism route maps and calendars. Produce cookbooks featuring local agricultural products – perhaps one tied to history.

## Existing Visitors

### ***Expand Retail Offerings Including Upscale Product Lines***

Recruit new retail stores and upgrade product lines for existing stores to offer higher quality/value retail lines to visitors (especially those from Canada) and local residents.

### ***Grow Recreational Fishing and Pro Tournaments***

Build on the great fishing reputations of both Lake Champlain and regional rivers to continue to host quality fishing tournaments and to grow patronage of recreational fishing. Increase effectiveness of fishing tournaments at showcasing the quality of the recreational fisheries. Increase support for fishing, including retail equipment and supplies, equipment and boat rentals, boat ramps, and fishing guides.

## Quality

### ***Provide Hospitality Training and Product Familiarization***

Provide front-line training focusing on

- Hospitality industry skills
- Familiarization with destination experiences and products

## Airport

### ***Expand PBG Terminal and Associated Services***

Expand the PBG terminal to accommodate more airlines, more flights, and ample space for in terminal dining, retail, and rental car facilities. Showcase the region and key visitor experiences in the terminal, making the terminal facility a key marketing tool for the Adirondack Coast. Have rental cars available (and desks open) at the arrival of every flight.

### ***Foster Lodging and Dining Near Terminal***

Address zoning issues and court investment to bring lodging and dining facilities to the PBG Terminal vicinity.

### ***Secure Shuttle Service to Lodging***

Secure private sector shuttle service for passengers between PBG and local hotels. Explore similar service between PBG and Lake Placid lodging facilities.

### ***Open Covered Parking at PBG***

Create a covered parking facility at PBG and develop a modest fee for parking.

## Infrastructure

### ***Create Information and Restrooms Centers Where Visitors are Drawn***

Design a structure that can be easily recognized

- to showcase visitor opportunities in the form of large maps and graphic representations of visitor experiences,
- to distribute rack sized tourism information, and
- to provide restroom facilities

These structures could accommodate volunteer greeters during key visitor flow times.

Initial placement of the structures would include:

- Near Highway 3 and Northway intersection
- In proposed history corridor
- In Rouses Point (downtown or waterfront)

Additionally, reclaim the Valcour Visitor Center and brand it for the Adirondack Coast. Use signage and décor to help visitors understand and “feel” the value of exploring the Adirondack Coast. Showcase regional agricultural products at the center.

Use large graphic maps and the “icon system” in all visitor centers to draw visitors into a broader engagement in regional experiences and products.

### ***Grow Waterfront Lodging and Dining***

The new markets we are targeting will draw people to the Adirondack Coast for our natural and historic attributes. Studies show that nature experience travelers seek lodging and dining that is oriented to nature, and in particular to water. We are currently losing visitors who choose out-of-county lodging in order to wake up and dine with a view.

We will court investment that results in waterfront lodging and dining developments of appropriate scale which are focused on delivering great experiences to our growing leisure tourism patronage. Some of these should be along the shores of Lake Champlain, while others may look out over our beautiful rivers and forests, or smaller lakes.

We will not encourage a more rapid expansion of lodging than can be accommodated by the growth of demand, especially from leisure travel.

We will also encourage history-focused dining, particularly in the planned historic corridor and near to historic sites or facilities.

### ***Bring All Lodging Properties up to Current and Competitive Standards***

We will encourage all lodging to meet current travel standards and to deliver products that meet the expectations of travelers. We want lodging to enhance the “curb appeal” of our destination.

### ***Make Gateways, Visitor Corridors, and Waterfronts More Attractive and Accessible to Community and Visitors***

We will work to make those routes visitors travel and those places they seek attractive and presentable. We will work to upgrade and/or clean up zones visitors travel to or through that currently make visitors feel uneasy or devalue their experience on the Adirondack Coast.

### ***Provide a Template for Towns and City to Adopt Coordinated Planning Standards/Themes***

We will work with Clinton County Government to develop a coordinated and universally embraced approach to planning and development that protects the resources , viewsheds, and development opportunities important to the growth of quality leisure travel to the region – and to quality of life for those who live here.

### ***Continue to Grow Saranac River Trail and other Paths, Walkways, and Bikeways***

We will continue to grow and expand the Saranac River Trail, connecting it to other trails and developing spurs to important points of interest. Other trails will also be expanded and safety/security barriers will be addressed. The resulting network of trails will support important opportunities for visitors and residents. We will continue to grow and expand this system as resources allow and demand warrants.

## **Bilingual Destination**

### ***Improve Bilingual Road Signs km/mph***

We will install bilingual road signs and post distances and speed limits in both kilometers and miles to make this a safer and more inviting destination for our Canadian neighbors.

### ***Provide French Courses for Front Line Staff***

We will become a bilingual destination, by providing French courses for our front line staff and encouraging businesses to have French speaking staff available to visiting patrons.

## Community

### ***Design and Implement Community Education Program Focusing on Benefits of Tourism and Visiting Canadians***

We will work to help Adirondack Coast residents understand the benefits that visiting and spending visitors bring to our lifestyles, including:

- Our airport
- Selection of retail
- Dining options
- Recreation opportunities
- Tax base for local government
- Health of economy
- Job and business opportunities – careers for those growing up here

### ***Showcase Progress on Plan***

We've all seen or heard about lots of plans. People will not believe this plan is different until they see a steady flow of accomplishments. Progress will be shared with the industry and our communities.

### ***Court New Businesses and Professionals using Tourism-Supported Infrastructure and Lifestyle Enhancements as Tools***

As tourism helps grow regional infrastructure and quality of life, those accomplishments (and that momentum) can be showcased when courting new businesses to the region and new professionals to existing positions here. Further, as the Adirondack Coast refines its visitor offerings and courts new visitors, we expect that some of those visitors will find the region attractive enough to relocate businesses or become professionals living here.

## Stewardship

### ***Lead Clean-Up on Natural Resources, Trails***

The tourism industry will work with resource managers and local governments to coordinate and lead clean-up events targeted at natural resources, trails, waterfronts, water access points, etc. that are used by both visitors and residents. We will use these days to make it clear to our neighbors that the health and integrity of these important resources – and the condition of places that residents and visitors use – is important to all of us.

### ***Establish Annual Clean-Up/Spruce-Up for Museums with Hospitality Leading the Way***

We'll put the resources and energy of the hospitality industry at the disposal of local museums as we help them paint, repair, modify, and grow. Our visitor bureau will solicit support requests from the museum community and match them up with industry and local businesses who will work cooperatively to accomplish goals.

We will, further, look at a revolving support relationship that matches up hospitality businesses with museums and offers organizational and financial mentoring and ongoing support for physical infrastructure.

### ***Industry Becomes a Voice for Natural and Historic Resources***

We recognize that natural and historic resources are essential to the local quality of life and lifestyle and that they are important to our success as a destination. We will become advocates for the health and appropriate management of those resources, supporting resource managers and instilling respect and compliance with rules and policies among our businesses and patrons.

## Marketing

### ***Create Adirondack Coast Brand***

Create a brand identity that builds on the region's strengths and appeals to key target markets. Build brand recognition among those markets and use it to drive patron interest and educate potential patrons on the destination. Expand the brand and the use of the Adirondack Coast identity to products from the region and businesses calling the region home.

### ***Implement Data Collection Project***

Implement a cooperative data collection project that enables the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau marketers and lodging/attraction managers to understand key demographics in a timely fashion. Use that system to establish a baseline of demographics and then chart and report changes in those demographics as product development, marketing, and travel trends are reflected. Seize opportunities that become evident as data streams are cross referenced with weather conditions and flight availabilities.

### ***Create Maps and Calendars for Core Destination Strengths***

Use maps and calendars to help visitors find opportunities in this destination. Make those maps and opportunities available online, at industry front lines, and at industry information kiosks and centers.

### ***Use Marketing to Draw History Buffs to the Adirondack Coast Year-Round***

As the destination works to make history more immersive, interactive, year-round and accessible, use marketing to draw patrons to products and the destination. Build packages that start and finish at PBG and use the Adirondack Coast as a base camp for history exploration.

### ***Plan and Execute Interest-Based and Region-Based Marketing for Cycling***

- Develop multiple itineraries (for all types of cycling) that can be showcased on lodging/cycling/rental car websites
- Develop cycling packages with hotels, cycling companies, and rental car companies
- Identify key flight-based targets (1 or 2 hops) that connect active outdoor regions (with seasonal weather challenges) with occupancy opportunities and good cycling weather on the Adirondack Coast

### ***Plan and Execute Interest-Based and Region-Based Marketing for Paddling***

- Develop multiple itineraries (for all skill levels of flatwater and whitewater paddling) that can be showcased on lodging/paddling/rental car websites
- Develop paddling packages with hotels, paddling rental and guiding companies and organizations, and rental car companies
- Identify key flight-based targets (1 or 2 hops) that connect active outdoor regions (with seasonal weather challenges) with occupancy opportunities and good paddling weather on the Adirondack Coast

### ***Plan and Execute Interest-Based and Region-Based Marketing for Skiing***

- Develop packages that begin and end at PBG, use local lodging and dining, provide transportation to and from ski areas in New York and Vermont, and include lift tickets
- Identify key flight-based target markets and develop awareness among potential patrons in those markets
- Activate packages/conversion marketing when ski conditions and flight availability coincide

## Administrative

### ***Set Benchmarks to World Class Standards***

It is our intention to become the best destination we can be. To do that, we'll look at the best destinations and products we can find and strive to become equal or better.

We'll always set our sights high and measure our success by establishing benchmarks and intermediate goals when appropriate. We're setting up a team to set benchmarks and evaluate progress.

### ***STPC will Bring in Appropriate Partners to Manage the Execution of the Plan***

The Adirondack Coast Strategic Tourism Planning Committee, a committee appointed by Clinton County, will oversee the implementation of this plan. We'll pull in key additional players to help with that process.

### ***Add the Voice of History to the STPC***

We have chosen a destination path that recognizes history as a major part of our tourism future. To make sure that we are making good decisions for history and the destination, we will add a representative of history to the Adirondack Coast Strategic Tourism Planning Committee

### ***STPC will Retreat Each Fall to Renew Destination Master Plan***

The Adirondack Coast Strategic Tourism Planning Committee will retreat each fall to measure progress on the implementation of the Destination Master Plan. We will check off accomplishments, set new goals and actions, and realign timelines and responsibilities as needed. We will, as needed, ask other key community leaders to address this retreat or join us in our deliberations.

### ***Increase the Lodging Tax***

The current lodging tax was a great place to start to get us going. It is scheduled to expire in 2011. We will seek a renewal of the tax with some modifications of terms and a higher percentage rate. Our industry recognizes that this tax is a reflection of our hard work in recruiting patronage – and is determined to grow the marketing resources so that we can court new patrons and grow the business and community benefits of tourism to the Adirondack Coast.

### ***Increase Other Sources of Revenue for Visitors Bureau***

We recognize that the lodging tax is insufficient to make us a competitive destination (although we know it will grow as we grow lodging and patronage). We will build a concerted effort to find additional local investment to support the work of serving visitor needs and marketing the destination.

### ***Design and Implement Public and Private Partners***

Tourism cannot flourish without a great relationship with the residents of the host community and the managers of the resources upon which it depends. At the same time we (the industry) are members of the Adirondack Coast Community and want to work hard with our friends and neighbors to help this region be all it can be. To those ends, we will forge and care for partnerships between the hospitality industry and public and private sectors of this region.