

# First Wilderness Corridor Update



## Town of Johnsburg Elements

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Johnsburg, Weertown, Bakers Mills, Riparius, North River and North Creek are hamlets in the Town of Johnsburg and North Creek is the largest of the three. Weertown is the home to the local historical society.

The First Wilderness experience is enhanced by the existence of whitewater rafting, tubing, and canoeing and up-close observation and access to the Hudson River. -Water sports are available from North River to The Glen, recapturing the outdoor adventure that made the First Wilderness so appealing to tourists. In addition to whitewater rafting, a rare plant community, known as the Ice Meadows, can be viewed along the shores of the Hudson. This significant ecological feature inhabits the Hudson's shore from Riparius to Thurman. The contrast between the Lower Hudson, where industrial landscapes and working waterfronts prevail, and the pristine wilderness supporting the Upper Hudson River enable visitor to appreciate beauty and history of this great river.

#### Hamlet of North Creek

North Creek is a full service hamlet at the northern terminus of the Corridor. It is best known for the North Creek Railroad train station where Theodore Roosevelt was informed that President McKinley had not survived the assignation attempt, thus making Roosevelt president of the country. Roosevelt boarded a special train waiting for him in North Creek for transport to Buffalo where he was subsequently sworn in. The North Creek Railroad is now listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The station complex is located in the hamlet of North Creek and is the current location of the Saratoga North Creek Railway, the North Creek Depot Museum and North Creek Railway Depot Preservation Association, and the Town of Johnsburg Riverfront Park. Visitors can tour the North Creek Railroad Depot Museum, complete with a train diorama of North Creek and the Depot Station as the town was during the late 1800s, and learn all about its unique place in New York's history.

North Creek is also famous for being home to the first commercial downhill ski center in New York State. "Snow Trains," brought skiers to the hamlet as early as the 1930s. The first snow train arrived at the historic North Creek Railway Depot on March 4, 1934. It brought 400 members of the Schenectady Ski Club. Later snow trains carried as many as 800 skiers from the New York Metropolitan area. North Creek is home to New York State's Gore Mountain Ski Center, managed by The Olympic Development Authority, where visitors can find world class alpine skiing, snowboarding, telemarking and tubing. In the warmer months, mountain bikers can ride the gondola up and enjoy the network of trails from the peak to the base. Several state forest preserves (Siamese Ponds, Wilcox Lake, and Vanderwhacker Mountain) provide extensive hiking experiences. Visitors can climb the summit of Gore Mountains to see the historic fire tower and to the summits of Crane, Peaked and Balm of Gilead mountains.

A new trail system comprised of historic ski trails and travel routes connected by new trail has been developed over the last 10 years. Providing the public with the opportunity to ride up and slide down like their ancestors did in the 1930's. This trail system also connects the community of North Creek with the Garnet Hill Lodge/13<sup>th</sup> Lake area, Kings Flow and the Siamese Ponds Wilderness Area.

### *The vision*

Johnsburg is a mountain community that identifies with its incredible wild surroundings and promotes modern improvements that enhance the lives and economic opportunities of its residents, while protecting the environment that makes this a singular place. Many historic activities are still viable economic engines. The addition of modern technology and active and passive type recreation, attractions and tourism will allow the development of economies that will sustain the community into the future. This community provides the ideal place for independent outdoor oriented people to live, raise families, work and spend their retirement years in.

Three main development goals have been identified: Opportunity- for Prosperity, Preservation, and Quality of Life. The goals are supported by a set of objectives and specific examples that cover a broad range of economic and community development issues.

### *Purpose*

The purpose of formulating a vision statement is to project the desired image of the community as expressed by the community. The statement defines what the community would like to become - or change - as it sets about planning for the future. The statement is used by the study team as a list of concerns to be addressed within the Action Plan.-

### *Origin*

The vision statement was developed by community leaders in response to the challenge of managing the community's future growth. The statement evolved from several meetings of the Hamlet of North Creek Action Committee and included participation by representatives of both the County and the Town governments.

### *Vision Statement*

The community vision for the Town of Johnsburg is to become "The Adirondack's most improved community in which to live and work." Achieving the vision will require an inspired plan, dedicated support from residents and businesses, and strong support from Town, County, and State governments.

While doing this, it is also imperative to preserve the essential character of the community. In the long term, the community envisions a tree-lined Main Street, attractively lit, with sitting areas and busy shops. The architectural style shall be maintained in all new and remodeled structures.

All of these improvements, though necessary, are not necessarily sufficient to achieve our vision: The Adirondack's most improved community in which to live and work." Attaining this vision requires a dramatic increase in the Main Street retail customer base and the attraction of compatible businesses to provide employment opportunities for residents while broadening the economic base.

To broaden this economic base, the community proposes to vigorously market the town as a four-season recreation and retirement area. Success can be achieved by expanding the retail opportunities and services available, targeting the market within a five-hour driving time, offering recreation for each season, and establishing an advertising distribution system that

effectively, publicizes the area. This marketing activity should be supported by businesses that offer appropriate retail, a fitness center, movie house, indoor tennis, indoor swimming, etc. In addition, aggressive expansion of the outdoor recreation businesses such as downhill skiing at Gore Mountain, bike touring, mountain biking, rafting, outdoor tennis, cross-country skiing, back country skiing, etc., is required.

Finally, ... attaining the vision requires attraction of compatible businesses to provide employment opportunities and broaden the residential and economic base. The community feels a major effort is required to both fill vacant Main Street buildings and attract new businesses. These businesses may be attracted by the small town lifestyle, available labor force, recreational offerings, and the natural resources of the area. Potential businesses range from wood products and mining, to craft brewing, to other light industries providing products and services such as computer software, insurance, retail mail order, etc.

The purpose of the Goals and Objectives is to clarify and bring focus to the aim of the project based on the Vision Statement. There are three basic goals for the action plan: Opportunity for Prosperity, Preservation, and Quality of Life.

Opportunity for prosperity represents efforts to improve the business climate in North Creek and throughout the town. Preservation concentrates on areas in both the natural and built environments and represents efforts to identify and maintain the assets of the town.

Quality of Life represents efforts to bolster the existing parks and facilities by enhancing them to their full potential. Opportunity for Prosperity - The aim is to create jobs through the recreation industry and other forms of business. It is possible to expand existing business through vertical integration (e.g., wood products), while also considering new business ventures such as a locally based craft beer brewery.

Preservation - The intention is to protect both the historical and the natural settings; they are an important part of why people come to the Adirondacks. It is important for us to recognize those physical features that define this place called North Creek and to protect the historically significant parts of the community. The history helps to define North Creek and make it special, different from all other communities along Route 28. Preservation is a good business development policy.

Quality of Life - The goal is to expand available activities, such as active recreation (swimming, boating, fishing, skiing, hiking and mountain biking), and passive recreation (theater, museum fitness center with indoor swimming and other forms of entertainment). Improvements in quality will boost morale, improving both the "look" and the "feel" of the community.

Among many of the success stories that came from the North Creek Action Plan of 1992 was the formation of a "core committee" representing all elements and organizations within the community of the Town of Johnsburg. This group met for over 10 years and shared information as a core which then went back to each organization with the information shared.

One of the committees created during the year 1994 was the Johnsburg Community Development (JCDC) Corporation. Their mission was to encourage the development of new, year round jobs within the town. The effort focused on both existing businesses as well as attracting new “clean” businesses. The committee felt this was necessary to augment the seasonal tourism businesses and rebuild the area’s economy making it practical for your families to live and work in the town.

At that time the group identified 3 primary efforts:

- Support the town and county to obtain grant money to build infrastructure improvements.
- Obtain town funding to support JCDC operations
- Define public and private property with proper zoning that can be marketed by JCDC, Warren County and local realtors to attract new businesses.

On September 30 1994 New York’s Department of State approved the Certificate of Incorporation for the TOJ Development Corp. After a number of years on hiatus, the organization is reconstituting itself to focus on many of the same goals of the initial group but also to bring the objectives into 2015 and today’s needs for the community and the region. This group has support from business people, elected officials, and Warren County Economic Development Committee. This group will need funding and resources allocated to it to be successful. We recommend that the Town/County support the efforts of the Town of Johnsburg Community Development Corporation.

The following goals were identified during the development of the overall Corridor Plan. Action items related to these goals are provided in the following pages.

### ***Goals***

#### **Economic and Community Development Goals**

- Strengthen the economy of the region through sustainable, destination tourism development and manufacturing based developing within the context and scale of smaller settlements.
- Assist businesses to expand operations over multiple-seasons, diversify products, increase employment and stabilize their revenues
- Provide meaningful employment opportunities to retain youth and allow for new year round residents.
- Ensure that the built and green infrastructures are adequate for existing and future demand, well maintained and expanded, where appropriate.
- Focus growth and development in the hamlets and villages and revitalize Main Streets through planning and ongoing programs.
- Support community economic initiatives that contribute to the First Wilderness branding,

economic growth, sustainable levels of economic growth, and a better quality of life for residents.

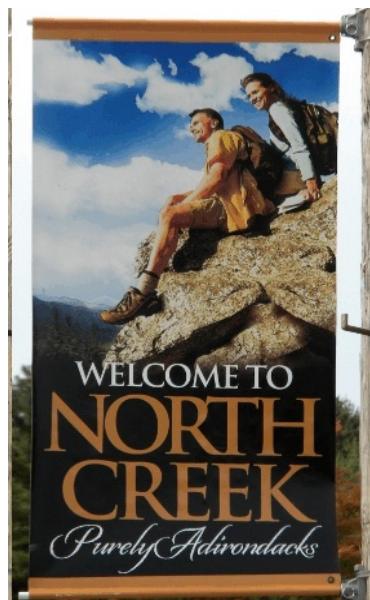
- Develop the concept of branding North Creek and the Town as a “Base Camp” of the Adirondacks.
- Support any and all efforts for Town of Johnsburg and Department of Environmental Conservation to work together in the “Great South Woods” project.
- Share the importance of shopping locally, supporting the 10 top reasons to support locally owned businesses

### **Tourism Marketing & Promotion Goals**

- Promote and encourage tourism commerce and communication between communities along the Corridor in order to better connect with tourists and visitors. Establish monthly meetings of each corridor community to act as a “core committee”, sharing goals, events, and plans. Create a communication network so each community in the corridor knows what all others are doing and the representatives from each community return to their respective business groups ie chamber or business associations, to share the activities with all. Utilize both written and electronic media for communication along with monthly meetings.
- Improve the availability of goods, services, food, and lodging that appeal to visitors.
- Foster interest in new, repeat, and extended visitation, including new audiences in Corridor communities.
- Improve visitors’ experiences to meet or exceed expectations by improving the Corridor experience.
- Create a corridor concierge whose responsibility is to meet riders at the Saratoga Amtrak station and utilize boards with itineraries of activities along the corridor each day. This person will encourage riders to sign up and fax or email each depot the information relevant to their stop as soon as the train leaves the station, including the number of people arriving at each stop, what they signed up to do and making sure that there is transportation in place for that rider. The concierge will also communicate with every appropriate business along the corridor to know who is open and how to get to their business. In return, that concierge will share all information with communities, town boards, and county authorities on a daily basis. Apply for Bed Tax money if necessary to support this activity.
- Continue to build and improve the region’s tourist products and programs in order to provide the visitor with a high quality experience and appeal to a variety of markets.
- Steward and improve accessibility to Corridor resources.

## **Recreation Goals**

- Increase, improve, and promote desirable recreational opportunities that provide holistic healthy, healing, and enjoyable experiences.
- Increase accessibility and linkages between recreational resources (land and water), promote less-utilized natural/recreation sites, and actively direct traffic away from overused sites towards underused sites.
- Protect natural and recreational resources; develop an integrated program using monitoring, management and educational activities to address the problem of invasive plants and the impacts of climate change along the Corridor.
- Support implementation of current recreation plans by state agencies, local government and tourism professionals that will improve outdoor experiences.
- Review Open Space Institute (OSI) land holdings and existing management agreements for potential additional recreation resources.



The Town of Johnsburg has the unique opportunity to maximize the development of outdoor recreation opportunities on state lands adjacent to the communities of North Creek and North River. These state lands abut a town owned park that has a viable and active hiking, mtn. biking and cross country/ backcountry ski and snowshoeing trail system that extends to Main Street in North Creek. A backcountry ski and hiking trail system (Raymond Brook/Rabbit Pond/Roaring Brook/Schaefer) has been established on the state lands in the Vanderwhacker Wild Forest adjacent to the town park. It would be advantageous for the Town of Johnsburg to develop a more expansive trail system on these state and town lands and to this end the town should provide direction in how recreational trails should be developed to maximize the communities' benefit. A feasibility and framework study for creating a more extensive system of backcountry ski descent, backcountry ski tour, cross country ski, hiking, snowshoeing and mtn. biking trails on the Wild Forest and Wilderness

public lands adjacent to Ski Bowl Park should be completed and trail development oversight provided. The town would also benefit from partnering with organizations and businesses that would assist with this development. This effort would ensure that outdoor recreational development reflects the nature, history and economic interests of the Town of Johnsburg.

## **Signage and Interpretation Goals**

- Enhance residents and visitors' understanding, awareness and appreciation of Corridor resources

and the Adirondack Park, through education and interpretation of Corridor assets, and intrinsic qualities. Develop regional interpretive programming that engages visitors and improves their understanding and enjoyment of local historical, cultural and natural resources. Offer the Corridor patrons a quality experience of the region's recreational resources through education and interpretation highlighting the unique character of the corridor.

- Work with volunteers to create a virtual diorama that educates the visitor from one end of the Corridor to the other. Example CBS documentary offer along with all the efforts of Pam Morin and Todd at Adirondack Museum. Each station would have a push button visual as would each active depot station and the documentary would be optional on the train for those who wanted to listen. Head sets that pick up sound would be offered to passengers and collected upon departure.
- Attract and direct visitors through appropriate signage to Corridor resources, including using the new route name (First Wilderness Scenic Corridor) to unify the region and to promote the entire Corridor as a destination, encouraging visitation, and exploration of all locales.
- Promote Corridor recreational assets through: the design and installation of appropriate signs or resource markers at all major historic, recreational and educational sites, including bike, cross-country, road and mountain biking trails and the use of interpretive brochures, the web, kiosks, and trail maps showing resource locations.

### **Transportation, Safety and Community Design Goals**

- Continue to improve transportation infrastructure by incorporating First Wilderness Scenic Byway (FWSB) community design considerations into proposed projects. Work with NYSDOT and County DPW staff during early stages of agency project planning to implement CMP transportation goals. Map hidden scenic spots in need of clearing for pull-offs or panoramic outlooks.



- Promote and increase linkages for the use of, and access to, multi-modal forms of transportation and connect access points to the “outside” world’s transportation hubs that are closest to the Corridor. Improve and promote opportunities for “green” travel as a means for exploring the Corridor. Maximize use of the historic railroad and river systems to access to the FWSB.

- Provide for a safe and enjoyable Corridor touring experience for all Corridor users (including bicyclists and pedestrians) by using a Complete Streets approach to planned improvements as funding permits.

#### **Stewardship Goals**

- Support regional initiatives to improve the environment to preserve and maintain the quality of the Corridor experience.
- Preserve Adirondack scenery, environment, and character in order to safeguard the intrinsic beauty of the landscape that makes the Corridor region a desirable travel destination.
- Develop strategies to promote wilderness ethics and support the “leave no trace” concept.
- Encourage the improvement of roadside aesthetics and community pride.
- Arrest the intrusion of both land and water invasive species. Develop an integrated program using monitoring, management, and education activities to address the problem of invasive plants along the roadway. This includes raising visitor awareness of how they unknowingly become transporters of invasive plants and insects as they travel from place to place exploring the Corridor.
- Promote and protect water quality by reducing, eliminating, and preventing water pollution.
- Restore and rehabilitate significant historic structures.
- Encourage early and repeated programs that cultivate future stewards from the local population of young people.
- Educate visitors about stewardship responsibilities along the trail, including stewardship of the “irreplaceable.”
- Encourage and support local projects that secure the future of the FWSB’s historic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources.

#### **Implementation Strategy for the Town of Johnsburg:**

The First Wilderness Heritage Corridor needs destination attractions to draw travelers throughout the corridor. The goal, for travelers to create lengthy itineraries to experience all that the corridor has to offer, leads the community of Johnsburg to focus on potential assets that would attract individuals from not only the US but European travelers alike.

To that aim, the community has indicated that it would support a NYS Ski Museum on Town of Johnsburg Property. Likewise many citizens and State Representatives have pledged support for such an endeavor. The economic impact of this project would be dramatic for the entire region and the State. To achieve this goal this fledgling committee needs support and funding to create a feasibility study and further to initiate their goals.

To Date, the University of the State of New York Education Department has voted that a provisional charter valid for a term of five years is granted incorporating the New York Museum of Skiing and the ski Hall of Fame located in North Creek, county of Warren and the state of New York.

The purposes for the incorporation are:

To develop the museum campus in the hamlet of North Creek, NY where commercial alpine skiing began the state and continues to thrive today.

To create exhibit design, cinema, cyber technology, interactive experienced, the arts and archival collections will accurately represent the elements of ski area operations and management, the geographic distribution of alpine and Nordic skiing facilities in the state and the unique story of each ski area's founding and development past, present and future.

The Ski Hall of Fame will honor New York women and men who have contributed their talents and energy toward making New York skiing an important economic resource for local communities and promoting alpine and Nordic skiing as a healthy lifetime activity in the state and nation.

The museum will organize as a not for profit 501 © (3) corporation with the initial development (land, site development, and structure) by several years of statewide fund raising, management and operation funded by the skiing public the ski industry and philanthropy.

### ***Economic and Community Development: Goals and Recommended Actions***

#### **Goal # 1**

*Strengthen the economy of the region through sustainable, destination tourism development occurring within the context and scale of smaller settlements.*

#### **Recommended Actions**

- Guide visitors to the less-frequented communities that are home to the under-discovered, but still valuable resources that contribute to the Corridor experience.
- Encourage volunteers at the community level to organize and host year-round activities and special events that appeal to special interests of Corridor travelers.
- Work to support housing development both for temporary visitors and also affordable housing for

the community that will service those tourists.

- Support the development of a Ski Hall of Fame in Ski Bowl Park.

#### Goal # 2

*Assist businesses to expand operations over multiple-seasons, diversify products, increase employment and increase their revenues.*

#### Recommended Actions

- Avoid overdependence on single season and/or narrow-focus tourism initiatives. Encourage more visitors during what are normally considered “off seasons.”
- Work with the Johnsburg Central School to utilize their facilities for a distance learning lab.
- Work with Paul Smiths in aiding citizens to earn long distance learning credits particularly in hospitality and tourism and find a way to credit the businesses who send their employees to these classes
- Coordinate with SUNY Adirondack’s Adventure Sports programs to develop recreation infrastructure and programs to develop recreation based businesses.
- Encourage and search for funding initiates for entrepreneurs who want to open brewing or spirits crafting.
- Provide a greater range of goods and services to year-round residents, increasing their quality of life and making the communities more attractive places to settle.
- Embrace the local foods movement and promote locally grown and produced items for purchase and consumption. Capitalize upon the growing “farm to table” market for consumption, cooking classes, food/wine/beverage tastings.
- Look for opportunities for white space development within the entire community

#### Goal #3

*Ensure that the built and green infrastructures are adequate for existing and future demand, well maintained and expanded, where appropriate.*

#### Recommended Actions

- Improve existing services, and plan for capital investment to prevent a major financial crisis when long term improvements are necessary. Continue preventive maintenance of community infrastructure systems to lessen the impact of increased visitors on the surrounding natural

environment.

- Assess existing built and green infrastructure systems, document the short and long term needs of these systems, and identify resources available to assist with the maintenance and development of these systems to handle increased capacity and closely monitor conditions to avoid any threats to holding capacity.
- Implement the recommendations of the Parking Plan prepared by The Saratoga Associates.
- Capitalize on the water based recreational opportunities and resources.

#### Goal #4

*Focus growth and development in the hamlets and villages and revitalize Main Streets through planning and ongoing programs.*

#### Recommended Actions

- Employ appropriate forms of business development that preserve the area's resources. Concentrate development in the hamlets and preserve open space as per local planning regulations.
- Identify agencies and organizations to identify funding sources and opportunities to assist the community. Support the efforts of grant writing within the community to apply for funds beyond the town line
- Collaborate with local governments to raise awareness of how community character is perceived by visitors. Encourage government involvement in stewarding the public assets that visitors use or see when traveling in their community.
- Work with local governments to foster their commitment to sound growth practices. Use oversight authority to develop and enforce appropriate zoning and building regulations that will insure their future desirability as a Corridor destination.
- Work to see that off street parking, efficient traffic flow, good sidewalks, waterfront access, and pleasing design are included in Main Street and other area revitalization efforts in each Corridor community.
- Incorporate Smart Growth principals where appropriate.
- Develop affordable work force housing within each hamlet area.

#### Goal #5



*Support community economic initiatives that contribute to the First Wilderness branding, economic growth, sustainable levels of economic growth, and a better quality of life for residents.*

#### Recommended Actions

- Invest in community improvements that support the residents, organizations, and businesses as a whole. Engage in sound economic development that improves the business climate, appeals to tourists, and maintains the natural, historic, and rural character of the area.
- Build new leadership and regional civic human capital by recruiting and cultivating residents from across the age spectrum. Capable, enthusiastic, and committed people should be encouraged to get involved.
- Increase the availability of affordable and community housing to support year-round settlement of a labor and volunteer pool.
- Draw visitors to the region using the uniqueness of Corridor, its villages, scenery, natural environment, quality of life, and available recreational experiences.
- Consider the land-tax base and recognize that the essential parts of local culture, history and the economy are Corridor stakeholders who may also be long-time residents. Raise community awareness on market factors that remove properties from the year-round housing stock and impact affordable housing. New development could not replace the loss of this essential part of the local culture, community dynamics, and economic base.
- Provide greater levels of collaboration, communication, technical assistance and grant writing resources that can help Corridor communities' access public programs.
- Secure funding sources to conduct community studies, update or prepare community regulatory documents or reports, prepare design and construction documents, and implement proposed projects.
- Promote the effective use of Scenic Corridors funding to support local economies.
- Engage in ongoing educational outreach to inform community leaders of the benefits of the Scenic

Corridor Program and its ability to contribute to sound economic and community development.

- Circulate well-documented facts supporting the program's positive economic impact in generating tourism dollars and creating eligibility for State Corridor and Federal Enhancement funding on an ongoing basis.
- Invest in community improvements that support the residents, organizations, and businesses as a whole. Engage in sound economic development that improves the business climate, appeals to tourists, and maintains the natural, historic, and rural character of the area.

## **GOAL #6 Economic Development Action Project**

- Infill Retail - To help create a strong Main Street(s) destination and extend length of stay, more small retail shops are proposed in vacant and underutilized areas with emphasis on maintaining views of, and access to water and other scenery. The intent is to provide an interesting, pedestrian-friendly Main Street that provides strong visual and physical connections to key areas of interest and to create an interesting and inviting space.

Where applicable, infill should also be encouraged and developed behind the existing buildings to capitalize upon water and scenic amenities and generate more commerce, activity, and street life. Infill projects could be developed as multi-use structures and potentially include public restroom facilities and Main Street commercial opportunities. Infill development should be in keeping with the current architectural style and scale of the Hamlet (see Design Guidelines in the Northern Hudson River Inter-Municipal Redevelopment Strategy Report).

- Complete Streetscape Improvement Program. -To enhance pedestrian circulation, seek funding to construct pedestrian walkways, sidewalks and crosswalks (where applicable) historic streetlights (pedestrian scaled), trees, benches, banners, flowers, and trash receptacles. Public investment in these amenities will help create a more inviting environment for the pedestrian and spur private investment in and near the site. Consider thematic and consistent streetscape improvements in linked Corridor communities.
- Adirondack Base Camp -Define the spatial boundaries created by the community through the establishment of landmarked gateways. Note the beginning (and end) of the community by using landforms, natural features, bridges, or additions to the built environment, such as stone-walls and piers, thematic lighting, or decorative fencing.
- Establish Design Guidelines - To ensure infill activity meets with existing character, utilize the model design guidelines in the North Creek Action Plan and the Northern Hudson River Inter-Municipal Redevelopment Strategy Report (LWRP). The intent is to encourage architectural style that is similar to the Hamlet and the Adirondack region, rather than a suburban form.

- Integrate North Creek Action Plan - Because of the progress over the past few years, it is important to continue to build upon the recommendations in the North Creek Action Plan. The existing committee should be made aware of the recommendations in this report and integrate them into their current activities. In addition, North Creek should consider updating the Main Street Enhancement Plan.

## **Tourism Marketing and Promotion: Goals and Recommended Actions**

This section also provides an overview and general guidance of strategic tourism priorities for the First Wilderness Scenic Corridor that are identified in the Implementation Plan. These projects will be launched only as staff and funding allow.

Tourism, Marketing & Promotion Goals and Recommended Actions.

### **Goal #1**

*Promote and encourage tourism commerce and communication between communities along the Corridor in order to better connect with tourists and visitors.*

#### **Recommended Actions**

- The proposed re-routing and renaming of the Dude Ranch Trail to the First Wilderness Scenic Corridor will help to develop the Corridor's theme and encourage increased participation among Corridor communities. This more authentic (and accurate) theme will facilitate promotional efforts that are consistent with the product label (Corridor name) and the actual Corridor experience. State legislation to officially modify and rename the current Corridor route is a step to effectively brand and market this Scenic Corridor and accurately tell the story of current Corridor offerings.
- Coordinate activities with other tourism promotion groups to engage in cost effective promotion.
- Engage in joint marketing and promotional efforts to external audiences to gain visibility for community assets and resources.
- Undertake cooperative hospitality training and information exchange among Corridor-based venues.
- Inventory and contact local tourism attractions to explore cross promotional potential in order to pool limited financial resources.
- Cross-promote tourist based venues. Use the communities that serve as rail stops for the Scenic Railroad Excursion as thematic waypoints for visitor activity. For example, develop various levels of services and venues at each stopping point.

### **Goal #2**

*Improve the availability of goods, services, food and lodging that appeal to visitors.*

#### **Recommended Actions**

- Develop tourism infrastructure (platforms, stations, signage, kiosks, etc.) to improve tourist experiences.

- Promote entrepreneurship among local tourism operators in order to expand goods and services. Include any business opportunities revealed in the Sites/Attractions and Service Typology.
- Develop additional “rainy day” activities to serve as alternatives in the event of inclement weather or abnormal weather conditions that pose a problem to the Corridor small business owner.
- Assist the Railways on Parade. Understanding the need for attractions and locate it within the town to entertain customers consider offering a diorama in each of his depot stations and on the train for a historical experience with dialogue.
- Use the communities that serve as rail stops for the Scenic Railroad Excursion as thematic way-points for visitor activity. For example, develop various levels of services and venues at each stopping point.
- Evaluate and coordinate festivals and special events along the trail to encourage diversification of venues and themes.
- Create a funding stream for activities coordinator position.

### Goal #3



*Foster interest in new, repeat, and extended visitation, including new audiences in Corridor communities.*

- Coordinate events’ timing to provide a seamless visitor experience. Develop and coordinate a four-season events calendar of key events.
- Organize festivals and events of historic and cultural interest to highlight historic events and cultural qualities that make the FWHC a unique destination. Events should be programmed to meet the needs of the target market and residents.
- Improve joint advertising of events and aid the planning of additional new events. Build market awareness of these corridor activities.
- Improve the availability of basic tourist information, including trip planning and reservation booking via the Internet and other marketing outlets.
- Provide Internet access to information on the First Wilderness Scenic Corridor-- including available lodging and other visitor services.

- Develop a centralized website for all Corridor communities by engaging the Chambers of Commerce, tourism agencies, and other partners to develop website capacity.
- Provide information on Corridor resources, attractions, services, and events that is comprehensive and cohesive along the entire length of the Corridor. At a minimum, lodging establishments should participate in an online “lodging availability” system. Ideally, lodging establishments would offer online reservations.
- Arrange for technical assistance and training to accommodations to establish on-line lodging availability systems.
- Develop strategies to improve tourist activity during “shoulder” seasons.
- Create activities that focus on education, culture, recreation, and culinary interests.
- Secure funding, develop a Corridor Marketing and Interpretation Plan, and work directly with communities on promotions and branding.

#### Goal #4

*Improve visitors’ experiences to meet or exceed expectations by improving the Corridor experience.*

##### Recommended Actions

- Create new comfort facilities and improve existing restrooms to enhance the visitor experience throughout the Corridor. Encourage retail venues to offer public restrooms in order to increase sales.
- Work with communities and Corridor resource managers to develop tourist thematic interpretive materials for special sites along First Wilderness Corridor to help travelers understand and appreciate their contribution and significance.
- Use the roadway, bike, rail, and foot trail land routes, water routes, and air routes to facilitate the arrival and extended stay of visitors.
- Work with local leaders, consider the effectiveness of current tourism products, programs, and practices, and use the analysis to effect improvements in tourist offerings.

#### Goal #5

*Continue to build and improve the region’s tourist products and programs in order to provide the visitor with a high quality experience and appeal to a variety of markets.*

##### Recommended Actions

- Work collaboratively with tourism leaders to raise awareness of appropriate application use of the logo to welcome visitors and identify contributing Corridor communities.
- Continue to build and improve the region's tourist products and programs in order to provide the visitor with a high quality experience and appeal to a variety of markets.
- Develop internet and print-based themed itineraries, packages, promotions and tourism guides to enhance the Corridor experience, link visitors to attractions and create itineraries to encourage extended visitor stays. Develop quality controls of the visitor experience to be certain that the actual experience meets travelers' expectations.
- Direct visitors to wildlife viewing, fishing, and hiking points.
- Highlight festivals and events.
- Direct visitors to venues where watercraft can be rented or chartered.
- Improve recognition and utilization of natural, cultural, and historical resource assets of the Corridor.

#### Goal #6

*Steward and improve accessibility to Corridor resources.*

#### Recommended Actions

- Promote undiscovered site such as:

#### Unmarked paths

	Access or Trailhead
Little Joe Pond	Rt. 8 by Hamilton Co. Line
Eagle Pond	Rt. 8 between Kibby Pond and Cod Pond
Square Falls	Rt. 8 base of 11 <sup>th</sup> Mtn. by East Branch
Mud Ponds/Shanty Br. Falls	Rt. 8 by Cod Pond TH
Bog Meadow	end of Edwards Hill Road

#### Marked Trails w/Trailheads

Cod Pond	Rt. 8 by Hamilton Co. line
Kibby Pond	Rt. 8 near top of 11 <sup>th</sup> Mtn.
Siamese Ponds	Rt. 8 top of 11 <sup>th</sup> Mtn.
Sacandaga Lean-to	Rt. 8 top of 11 <sup>th</sup> Mtn.
Second Pond	near end of Chatamac Club Road
Fish Ponds	end of Bartman Rd. off of Rt. 8

Garnet Lake	Garnet Lake spur off of Garnet Lake Rd.
Crane Mtn.	Sky Hi Road off of Garnet Lake Rd.
Mud & Round Ponds	Mud Pond Rd. off of Garnet Lake Rd.
Schaefer/Gore Mtn.	Ski Bowl Park
Raymond Brook	near end of Barton Mines Road
The Vly	near end of Barton Mines Road
Botheration Pond	near end of Barton Mines Road
Balm of Gilead Mtn.	end of Old Farm Rd. off of 13 <sup>th</sup> Lake Rd.
Botheration Crossing	“ “ “ “
Siamese Ponds & Lean-to	“ “ “ “
Puffer Pond	“ “ “ “
Hour Pond	“ “ “ “
Peaked Mtn. Pond	end of Beach Rd. off of 13 <sup>th</sup> Lake Rd.
13 <sup>th</sup> Lake	“ “ “ “
Hour Pond	“ “ “ “

### **Recreation: Goals and Recommended Actions**

While most of the recreational facilities and areas along the Corridor are not only extremely well-developed, but also well maintained, opportunities exist to improve the recreational experience. Suggestions are included in the Implementation Plan, Recreation section, which delineates the target goals and specific recommendations for action.

#### **Goal #1**

*Increase, improve, and promote desirable recreational opportunities that provide healthy, healing, and enjoyable experiences.*

Holistic Tourism is a new direction taken up by Saranac Lake. There are more opportunities for people besides hiking, biking, and outdoor adventure; there also exists the whole state of being in the presence of nature in its most basic form. The idea is to allow people the choice to either embrace an active lifestyle or to slow down and enjoy the “now” in an undemanding, low-stress visit to the mountains. Through this philosophy, we can cater to not only recreational tourism, but also to a nurturing experience that leaves people refreshed and renewed mentally, physically, and spiritually. In other cultures, there are concepts that we don't have in the US. For example, Friluftsliv, a Norwegian term meaning “free air life”, a concept that being outside is good for human beings, mind and spirit. It is a way of life spent exploring and appreciating nature. In Japan, Shinrin-yoku is a term that means “forest bathing”, the idea being that spending time in the forest and natural areas is not only good, preventative medicine, but a scientifically proven therapy.

#### **Recommended Actions**

##### **1) Ice Skating Enhancements**

- Institute public ice-skating in the park to include a ice hockey rink.

2) Design of Riverfront Park Adjacent to the Railroad Turntable

- South to the Kellogg Property structures including the following: Town Green/Park and Amphitheater/outdoor venue along the waterfront.
- Secure public funding to create parking along the west side of the railroad tracks.
- Secure easements or deeded access ROW along North Creek to the confluence with the Hudson River.
- Include the design of a transparent fence that is in keeping with Adirondack architectural style, sidewalks, and landscaping.

3) Promote the development of public and private camping facilities at recommended sites.

4) Snowmobile Trails

- Encourage appropriate snowmobile use throughout the Town of Johnsburg. Consider Trail access along river and rail corridor.

## NORTH CREEK

1) Create a “Village Green”

- A small portion of the parcel parallel to Main Street should be retained as a “Village Green.” The space should be decorated with benches, historic/pedestrian-scaled lights, trash receptacles, greenery, and flowers.
- 
- The Village Green should provide visual and physical links to the Owens House. The intent is to create a pocket park where residents and visitors can sit, relax, and maintain open views to the Hudson River.
- 
- Improve entrance to North Creek at Rte 28N.
- 
- Work with NYS DOT to beautify the entrance to TOJ determine who is responsible for blistering street lights and have them painted. Create identifiable walking / bike areas and encourage DOT to paint signs on asphalt.

## RIPARIUS

- Support the development of an “Artisan Center” and work with historic Hudson River School of Art to bring talented artists for summer internships.
- 
- Provide an interpretive panel of the history of the bridge using historic information and photos.

## Goal #2

*Increase accessibility and linkages between recreational resources (land and water), promote less-utilized natural/recreation sites, and actively direct traffic away from overused sites towards underused sites.*

### Recommended Actions

#### JOHNSBURG/NORTH CREEK

- Secure an alternate route for the Warren County Snowmobile trail to connect corridor communities without using the rail bed.
- Develop Historic/Nature/Riverfront Walk. To help preserve water quality and the riverbank, the trail should be set back from the river's edge and be paved with a stone dust rather than asphalt paving.
- Develop a trail linking Tahawus and Corinth similar to the Northville Placid Trail.
- Enhance existing kiosks along Rte28 that were provided by ANCA
- Work with concerned citizens who believe that the community needs a swimming area for its children and its residents.

#### NORTH CREEK



- Gore Mountain manages the North Creek Ski Bowl and reports that establishment of a summer operation, including the appurtenant infrastructure is needed.
  - o A canopy zip-line or boardwalk would provide a seasonal anchor for the ski bowl.
  - o Landscape furniture at the new lodge.
  - o A playground, including climbing walls and opportunities for mountain biking will support expansion into the spring, summer and fall seasons (M. Pratt, General Manager, Gore Mt., 2012).

- Work with private or public developers to create a public/private partnership to develop a new ski lodge
- Support the goals of the Gore Mountain UMP. By reference, those goals are included as part of this plan.
- Continue efforts to create a Ski Museum at the Ski Bowl. The museum should be a multi use and occupancy structure of approximately 10,000 square feet.
- Relocate Town Highway garage to a less visible area.
- Near the Kellogg Property a canoe/kayak and whitewater raft launch should be implemented to provide a connection to the riverfront trail.
- Develop canoe access and white water rafting access site location and development.

#### RIPARIUS

- Secure funding to complete design and construction documents for canoe access improvements that address slope/grading problems along the access point.
- Utilize river overlook area at Fire Department property on the west side of Riverside Road to create accessible viewing area



#### Goal #3

*Protect natural and recreational resources, develop an integrated program using monitoring, management and educational activities to address the problem of invasive plants and the impacts of climate change along the Corridor.*

#### Recommended Actions

- Maintain communications with organizations and stakeholders such as the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program and the Nature Conservancy to address the threat of invasive species to natural and recreational resources, roadsides, local communities, tourism service providers, and the visitor experience.
- Partner with Barton's Mine and SUNY Adirondack to develop an environmental teaching center as part of the Riverfront Park project. Consider the establishment of an “Environment of the Adirondacks Center”, possibly located at Riverfront Park. Include recycling, wind farming,

creating potable water, composting, etc

- Develop the connection with Garnet as the State Stone and utilize garnet in public spaces where possible

#### Goal #4

*Support implementation of current recreation plans by state agencies, local government and tourism professionals that will improve outdoor experiences.*

#### Recommended Actions

- Re-evaluate the recommendations presented in the Hamlet of North Creek Parking and Recreation Study (1997) prepared by The Saratoga Associates in 1997 as a follow up to the “North Creek Action Plan.”
- Work with DEC on the UMP for Gore Mt.
- Revisit Management plans with OSI for the Black Hole and other properties.

### **Signage and Interpretation Goals and Recommended Actions**

#### Goal #1

*Enhance residents and visitors' understanding, awareness and appreciation of Corridor resources and the Adirondack Park, through education and interpretation of Corridor assets, and intrinsic qualities. Develop regional interpretive programming that engages visitors and improves their understanding and enjoyment of local historical, cultural and natural resources. Offer the Corridor patron's a quality experience of the region's recreational resources through education and interpretation highlighting the unique character of the corridor.*

#### Recommended Actions

##### Corridor-WIDE

- Unifying elements, such as signage and interpretive kiosks, should be implemented throughout the Corridor to create visual continuity, support way finding, and provide easily recognizable destinations for visitors.
- Develop corridor-wide community signage design standards.

##### JOHNSBURG/NORTH CREEK

- Create Historic Interpretive program
-

- Building on the way finding system, an historic and ecological interpretive program can be created that is centered on Teddy Roosevelt, mining, railroad, skiing, and other First Wilderness themes.
- Utilize funds from Barton Mines to provide photosensitive historic signage/ interpretation (signs to continue along the river walkway).

#### RIPARIUS

- Create Historic Interpretive Program
- Building on the way finding system, an historic interpretive program can be created that is centered on the railroad workers' daily life, Asher Durand, the Schroon Lake Region, and other First Wilderness themes. This can be integrated with the visitor orientation kiosk.
- Work with local committees and the train museum to develop program.

#### Corridor-WIDE

- Coordination with Warren and Saratoga Chambers of Commerce and County Tourism Bureaus and other stakeholders can capitalize on collaboration to fully expand the identification of the corridor in the region.
- Implementation of corridor orientation visitors' kiosks that provide corridor location, community destinations, and community history should be coordinated with all interested

#### RIPARIUS

##### Create Visitor Orientation Kiosk.

- To help direct the pedestrian, directional signage should be placed on the Street and at or near the train station platform. The intent is to provide a way finding system that clearly and easily directs the visitor around the Hamlet. Although there will be a visual linkage, appropriate directional signage will remove any "guesswork" and make the visitor's experience more enjoyable.

#### Goal #2

*Promote Corridor recreational assets through: the design and installation of appropriate signs or resource markers at all major historic, recreational and educational sites, including bike, cross-country, road and mountain biking trails and the use of interpretive brochures, the web, kiosks, and trail maps showing resource locations.*

##### *Recommended Actions*

#### JOHNSBURG/NORTH CREEK

Investigate opportunities for directional and informational signage that leads to the old growth birches near Wilcox Lake.

## Transportation, Safety and Community Design Goals & Recommended Actions

### Goal #1

Continue to improve transportation infrastructure by incorporating FWSB community design considerations into proposed projects. Work with NYSDOT and County DPW staff during early stages of agency project planning to implement CMP transportation goals. Map hidden scenic spots in need of clearing for pull-offs or panoramic outlooks.

### Recommended Action(s)

#### Corridor-WIDE

- Support and expand ongoing capital transportation planning for FWSB highways and bridges through the Saratoga and Warren County DPW, Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council, the Capital District Transportation Committee and Region 1 DOT. As capital projects identified by these organizations for FWSB communities change from time to time, collaborate often and early in project development.
- Develop and maintain productive relationships with government highway officials, including the appropriate Department of Transportation, County and local representatives so that the Corridor roads and its corridor are well cared for and facilitate choice of options for travelers, including bicycling, walking, and driving.

#### JOHNSBURG/NORTH CREEK

##### Streetscape Improvements.

- Explore feasibility of stoplight at the intersection of Route 28 and Ski Bowl Park and/or the potential reconfiguration of the intersection with a new entrance to the ski area.
- Investigate the removal of sand banks and ditches along Route 28 with the appropriate agencies.
- Develop design and construction documents for Rail Road Place improvements including sidewalks, signage, and historic lighting.
- Continue the road in the park along the Hudson.
- Implement the 2014 Streetscape plans prepared by the LA Group and continue development/restoration of the river front trail along Railroad Place.

### Goal #3

*Promote and increase linkages for the use of, and access to, multi-modal forms of transportation and connect access points to transportation hubs that are closest to the Corridor. Improve and promote opportunities for “green” travel as a means for exploring the Corridor. Maximize use of the historic*

*railroad and river systems to access to the Corridor.*

#### Recommended Actions

##### Corridor WIDE

1. Expand the network of short line railroads and establish this model as a best practice that the other communities can emulate. Broaden multi-modal service to connect with public transit systems in Saratoga and Glens Falls.
  
2. Use the roadway, bike, rail, and foot trail land routes, water routes, and air routes to facilitate the arrival and extended stay of visitors.

#### NORTH CREEK

Pursue Gondola Connection from Ski Bowl to North Creek.

- New York State's Authority Gore Mountain operated by the Olympic Regional Development is one of the largest destinations within in the corridor and efforts should be focused on utilizing the established market to strengthen the entire corridor. One way to establish a major connection from this destination to the corridor is to provide a gondola connection from Gore, through Ski Bowl Park, North Creek and provide direct access to the station in North Creek.

#### Railroad Station Improvements

- Enhance landscape around existing station (immediate area, up to Kellogg property, and east to the bridge).
  
- Provide access to existing platform from proposed parking area.
  
- Organize and sign parking area along the tracks.
  
- Explore Pedestrian Rail Crossing at or near the Kellogg Property providing access to the waterfront.
  
- Implement the recommendations in the North Creek Enhancement Plan prepared by the LA Group.
  
- Provide a sufficient restroom stalls at or near the train station for peak operations of the train.

#### RIPARIUS

This site needs attention and plans should take into consideration the design and use of neighboring stations and the particular needs of this locale.

#### NORTH CREEK, JOHNSBURG

Create Pedestrian and Biking Links. Pedestrian and biking links are proposed in community nodes and/or at proposed train stations to expand connectivity and commerce. Many multi-modal and

single use trails exist in the corridor could be connected to the areas where community development and tourism improvements are proposed.

Locations:

- North Creek: As recommended in the North Creek Action Plan, a mile-long pedestrian trail is proposed to extend along the Hudson River and North Creek, and will highlight cultural, historic, and natural resources along its length. A route for this trail, as well as connections to it, is detailed in the Hamlet of North Creek Parking and Recreation Study (1997). In the railroad track area a physical barrier between the tracks and the trail is needed for safety reasons, and a designated pedestrian track crossing is necessary.
- Johnsburg/North Creek: Link to the Train Station, Waterfront Trail, and the Proposed Adirondack Environmental Center. A walkway paved with decorative paving surface and aligned with pedestrian-scaled lighting should be constructed through the Mundy property connecting Main Street to the train station and Hudson River and vice versa. To help direct the pedestrian, directional signage should be placed on Main Street and at or near the train station platform. The intent is to provide the way finding system that clearly and easily directs the visitor around the Hamlet. Although there will be a visual linkage, appropriate directional signage can remove any “guesswork” and make the visitor’s experience more enjoyable. The proposed walkway through the Mundy property should cross the railroad tracks and connect to the Hudson River waterfront. This in turn would link Main Street, the train station, the train turntable, the proposed Adirondack Cultural and Retail Center, and eventually the trail along North Creek that leads to the Town Park.

Goal #4

*Provide for a safe and enjoyable Corridor touring experience for all Corridor users (including bicyclists and pedestrians) by using a Complete Streets approach to planned improvements as funding permits.*

Recommended Actions

Corridor-WIDE

Work with agencies to improve parking at identified sites for extended stay hikers, canoeists and other recreationalists.

Comply with the Complete Streets policy of New York State.

- Install curbs, sidewalks, and crosswalks in all Corridor hamlets and villages.

Ensure that the roads are well maintained and developed.

- Corridor businesses are dependent on these main arteries of transportation. Working to keep the roads in sound condition will not improve visitor access but will facilitate the delivery of goods and supplies to support business operations.

Ensure that all crosswalks from proposed parking to train stations and platforms in each community are well marked and signed.

## JOHNSBURG/NORTH CREEK

### Parking

- Update and implement recommendations from the Community Parking Study (May 1997). A portion of this project involves creating parking between the railroad tracks and the riverside of the properties along Main Street. This area should be used for parking if a low, decorative, transparent fence is constructed between one row of automobiles and the railroad tracks and that designated pedestrian crossings over the railroad tracks to the waterfront are created. The intent is to provide badly needed parking spaces without creating a visual and/or physical barrier between the Hamlet and the Hudson River.
- Provide for up to 150-250 cars throughout the community and in close proximity to the train station.
- Provide for bus parking. The parking area should be appropriately landscaped and have a pedestrian walkway along the west side near the Main Street properties to prevent the pedestrian from walking in the aisle designated for automobile use.

## NORTH CREEK

Develop Off-street Parking (approximately 170 spaces).

- Use the North Creek Parking Survey (2005) as a basis for determining locations. In the survey, a number of alternative locations were evaluated, and it was recommended that three new municipal lots be created near the downtown core area.

## RIPARIUS

Work with Businesses to Develop Parking.

- Create parking near the south end of the node and possibly on the construction staging area used during the reconstruction of the bridge.
- All parking areas should be appropriately landscaped to offer shade in the summer months.
- A pedestrian walkway to direct the pedestrian to the train station and activities along Riverside Station Road is needed. Parking is necessary in this node, since it can provide the opportunity for visitors to board the train at this location rather than traveling to North Creek.
- Secure agreement with NYSDOT regarding use of staging area on north side of the bridge for a parking lot and land on south side of bridge for a passive park.

**Enhance Pedestrian Safety and Provide Amenities.**

Currently, the primary road that parallels the train station does not have any sidewalks, crosswalks, or other pedestrian amenities.

- The project entails completing a streetscape improvement program including installing sidewalks, historic lights that match the light selection in North Creek, banners, street trees, benches, and flowers. The intent is to create an exciting pedestrian atmosphere that invites the pedestrian to walk up and down the street.

**Complete Streetscape Improvement Program.**

- To enhance pedestrian circulation, seek funding for historic streetlights, trees, benches, banners, flowers, and trash receptacles.
- These amenities should be installed along Riverside Station Road and a small section of NYS Route 8 just north of Riverside Station Road.
- Public investment in these amenities will help create a more inviting environment for the pedestrian and spur private investment along the primary roadways.

## Future Stewardship

The following priorities are listed in the Implementation Plan to support stewardship and conservation goals for the corridor's natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources that contribute to the viability of Corridor communities:

- Support regional initiatives to improve the environment to preserve and maintain the quality of the Corridor experience.
- Preserve Adirondack scenery, environment and character in order to safeguard the intrinsic beauty of the landscape that makes the Corridor region a desirable travel destination.
- Develop strategies to promote wilderness ethics and support the “leave no trace” concept.
- Encourage the improvement of roadside aesthetics and community pride.
- Arrest the intrusion of both land and water invasive species. Develop an integrated program using monitoring, management, and education activities to address the problem of invasive plants along the roadway. This includes raising visitor awareness of how they unknowingly become transporters of invasive plants and insects as they travel from place to place exploring the Corridor.
- Promote and protect water quality by reducing, eliminating, and preventing water pollution.
- Restore and rehabilitate significant historic structures.
- Encourage early and repeated programs that cultivate future stewards from the local population of young people.
- Educate visitors about stewardship responsibilities along the trail, including stewardship of the “irreplaceable.”
- Encourage and support local projects that secure the future of the Corridor’s historic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources.