

DRAFT

“Collaborating With Businesses: Current Status and Future Potential”

A Critical Component to Maximizing Recreational Access in the Upper East Branch region of the Delaware River

The long term success of the utilizing the natural resources that are provided by the Upper East Branch of the Delaware and its watershed lands as a cornerstone, if not the foundation for the local economy lies significantly in the hands of many local business owners and local officials.

Between the East Branch headwaters of Grand Gorge and the impoundment that holds back the largest of all City-owned reservoirs, the Downsview Dam, lie five critical business areas, two villages and three hamlets. In order of size (population wise), they include Margaretville (596), Fleischmanns (351), and the hamlets of Andes (252), Roxbury and Arkville. There are others, such as Halcott Center, New Kingston, Denver, and Halcott, but the first five, no one would argue, are the lifeblood of the local economy. The vast majority of the businesses that provide the basis for the local economy are situated in these five locations.

Throughout this enhanced recreational access project, the major critical business owners have either participated by attending meetings, have participated by completing survey(s) and engaging in conversation at one or more of the festivals and other events where input was solicited, or have chosen not to participate.

Some of the critical business owners that have been a key component of the Enhanced Recreational Access Group include:

Allen Hinkley - Roxbury Outdoor Adventures, Dave Budin, Dell’s Sports, Al Carpenter - Al’s Sports Store, Sonny Somelofski - Catskill Outdoor Adventures, Peter Molnar - Margaretville Motel / Margaretville B&B, Craig Appolito - Catskill Outback Adventures, and Russ Matson - The Meadows Golf Center.

Some additional Key Business owners that have answered our surveys and have been interviewed include:

Jennifer Cole - Catskill Mountain View House, Julia Reischel - Watershed Post, Eric Wedemeyer - Coldwell Banker Timberland Properties, Marybeth Mills - Peekamoose Restaurant, Michael Koegel - Mama’s Boy Market, Sally and Ed O’Neill - Andes Hotel, Janine Stegemoller – Pepacton Paddles, Leigh Melander – Spillian Partners, and Ben Fenton - River Run B&B.

2012 East Branch Business Owner Online Survey

A Business Owner Survey was created by the Central Catskills Chamber of Commerce and posted to the EastBranchAccess.com website for six months (July – December 2012). Twenty-four business owners completed the survey and the results can be obtained by emailing abennett@catskill.net or at www.EastBranchAccess.com.

To briefly summarize the results, the majority of the business owners that completed the survey were in the Margaretville Area and 72% indicated that they target “tourist/traveler” with their advertising and 59% also target “full time” and “part-time residents”. More than 85% use “website/email” for advertising, and similarly 62% use “social media” as well. More than 95% of the respondents indicated that they “have time to get to know customers”, which indicates that these business owners have a very good sense of what their clientele needs, wants, and expects.

All of the respondents (22) that answered the question “are your customers interested in recreational activities” said “yes” (100%). The type of recreation that most customers were interested in was “Hiking” (94%), followed by “Scheduled Weekend Activities” and “Skiing” (89%), followed by “Biking” (78%), and then “Family Events” (72%). “Kayaking and Canoeing the Reservoirs” and “Bird Watching” rounded out the top half of the list with 66% each.

One of the most important pieces gleaned from this survey was how business owners ascertain information related to recreational activities and events. Over 72% indicated that they do so from “websites”. The absence or at least the

inadequacy of such online information for the watershed area was identified early on in the East Branch Access project, and a website has since been created, but needs to be enhanced.

Post-Pepacton Reservoir Pilot Boating Program Regional Business Owner Feedback

Additionally, on November 19, 2012, an email was sent to twenty-eight (28) “key” businesses at the conclusion of the Pepacton Reservoir boating season to gather feedback on the success of this initiative. Eight business owners responded directly to this inquiry, while another four provided feedback in person. The full results of this less-formal inquiry have been attached to this report.

A brief summary of the responses to the four questions provided this feedback:

Question #1: Do you know (or suspect) that the majority of your patrons regularly participate in outdoor recreational activities in the Catskill Mountains?

- *Overwhelmingly, the response was “yes”.*

Question #2: Would you expect that a portion of those from Question 1 go kayaking/canoeing/sailboating in the region?

- *Most agreed it is hard to estimate how many, but suspect that a portion do. Since permitting changes (i.e. boating on the reservoirs), the consensus was that there is more of this kind of activity in the region.*

Question #3. Between Memorial Day and Columbus Day weekends in 2012, did you notice an up-tick (from previous years) in vehicles with canoes/kayaks in your parking lot? If so, can you estimate a percent increase?

- *Consensus was a slight increase, maybe on the order of 10% to be conservative. It was mentioned that things, like this new program, take time to catch on and develop.*

Question #4. Between Memorial Day and Columbus Day weekends in 2012, did you notice an increase in your clientele that you would categorize as outdoor enthusiasts? If so, is it possible to estimate a percentage specific to recreational boating, and if so, what percent?

- *Increase in business overall was noted, but really impossible to estimate a percentage specific to the new boating program.*

A Well-Coordinated, Well-Represented, and Collaborative Future

Over the last several years, some of the proverbial “stars have been aligning”, or the “pieces of the puzzle have begun to fall into place” leading to what should be a more robust, coordinated, accessible, and available outdoor recreational agenda and effort. These pieces include things like the NYCDEP opening up four reservoirs this summer to a resounding positive response by the public; the new NYS DOT brown and white signs along state highways in and near the Catskill Park, which now help people not only access hiking, camping, fishing, and parking areas, but also begins to create not only an identity for the region but also a visual awareness of the plethora of outdoor recreational opportunities that exist. These new Catskill Park signs have had a positive impact as a visual reminder that people are traveling through a special place worthy of exploring and stopping to stay awhile.



While these signs are focused primarily on the NYSDEC lands, specifically within the Catskill Forest Preserve, the look and feel can be expanded throughout neighboring communities on the periphery, such as the villages and hamlets in the upper East Branch Delaware region. There are many accessible destinations in Delaware County and the upper East Branch watershed that could take advantage of this unifying symbol.

Experience Matters

Once residents and visitors are made aware of where they can go and what they can do once they get “there” (trail, river, lake, campground, etc), the next component of a successful business model or collaboration is to ensure that the information they are given is accurate - meaning their expectations will be met or exceeded throughout their Catskill region experience. This piece is so critical.

There are countless examples of local businesses, agencies, and organizations that often use open-source images to depict our natural resources: the mountain peaks, the streams, the waterbodies, and even wildlife. This approach should clearly be avoided as there are many opportunities to use local images. Not only does this approach detract from creating a sense of place for the region, but in some instances this mentality may creep into the day-to-day functions of the establishment, agency or organization, eroding the connection to “place”. Over time, this erosion may very well manifest itself in the clientele who have come to the region to experience the “place”.

Don't Forget the Locals!

While the chambers of commerce are focused on expanding tourism and to improve economic opportunities for our businesses by increasing visibility and getting ‘heads in beds’, an under-appreciated audience in the region may very well be the local residents. By encouraging local residents of our communities to enjoy, utilize, and steward over these places that offer public access, they will in-turn appreciate how unique and special their natural assets are, and how critical access to them throughout the East Branch Delaware watershed is to the future of Grand Gorge, Roxbury, Margaretville, Fleischmanns, Arkville, New Kingston, and Andes. By “sharing” our natural assets and being advocates for their expansion, use, and promotion – whether it be by a vote for some new initiative or simply a conversation with an out-of-towner in the Freshtown parking lot, our residents play an integral role in expanding access to, and business opportunities centered around, these resources.

December 2012 Outdoor Recreation Round Table Discussion

The Central Catskills Chamber of Commerce (CCCC) hosted a Round Table Discussion about Outdoor Recreation and 2013 Planning on December 5th at the eCenter in Margaretville. All of the associations and chambers in the East Branch Delaware communities, including Andes Works, ShopMargaretville, Longwood Business Association in Roxbury, Fleischmanns First, were invited, as well as key people from the neighboring West Branch Delaware and Esopus Creek watersheds.

In setting up this discussion, it was evident that for many this would not be a new conversation. It is known that local recreational opportunities have been available for decades if not for generations. But we have also known that for most residents and visitors, getting out to enjoy our natural assets - be it for hiking, boating or bicycling, it has been an adventure to find out how, where and what was available.

The twenty-three (23) attendees of the meeting included people representing the following: Central Catskills Chamber of Commerce, Catskill Outback Adventures, Pepacton Paddles, Catskill Mountain Cycling, Delaware Headwaters Initiative, NYCDEP, WIOX, CWC, NYSDEC, Shandaken Recreation Committee, Water Discovery Center, the Town of Shandaken; Catskill Mountain Club, Andes Works, Margaretville Memorial Hospital Wellness Committee, Blue Deer Center, NY-NJ Trail Conference, Delaware County Tourism, and Margaretville Lodging Inc.

There were two main themes that came out of the meeting: the need for a de-briefing about the Pepacton Reservoir Recreational Boating program, and the notion of creating a master calendar of outdoor recreational events, activities, and festivals for 2013. To further expand the Pepacton’s impact on the local economy, the NYCDEP is very much considering the addition of two more launch sites next year, perhaps one near Perch Lake Road on the northern shore. Additionally, the language for the recreational rules and regulations may be updated to allow a wider use of NYC lands by licensed guides (boating, hiking, etc).

This new group decided to develop a master list of events (outdoor-related) to hold every weekend throughout the year. This is meant to complement the major festivals, fairs, etc that are held annually (Street Fests, Shandaken Day, Margaretville carnival, etc) between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. The Central Catskills Chamber of Commerce agreed to make a calendar of all of the major fairs/festivals that occur in the region with the intent of this outdoor recreation group filling in the gaps with outdoor-related events.

This group continues to meet and has begun pulling together events and will be asking for other groups to come on board to not only work on the calendar, but also to create a sense of regionalism in the Central Catskills. Moving forward, this group will play an important role in advocating for outdoor recreation in the region, and being the voice of how critical it is to the future of the Central Catskill region.

Pepacton Reservoir Recreational Boating Program

In 2008 DEP developed a three year pilot program for recreational boating on the Cannonsville Reservoir. The program's success resulted in the expansion of the program to the Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie Reservoirs. In 2012 recreational boats including, kayaks, canoes, rowboats, sculls or sail boats were permitted on all four reservoirs. The goal of the program is to expand regional recreational opportunities for watershed residents and visitors and promote environmentally sound economic development¹.

Usage Statistics for NYCDEP Recreational Boating for 2012:

A total of 983 tags were issued on the four NYC reservoirs that were open for recreational boating in 2012. Of the boat tags, 45% went to individuals from outside of the NYC Watershed and 10% went to individuals from outside of New York State.

The tags issued included 697 for kayaks, 241 canoes, 31 rowboats, two sculls, and 12 small sailboats. Tags were issued to 70 individuals from New York City as well as boaters hailing from Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, North Carolina, Georgia, Kansas and Florida.

The Pepacton Reservoir was far and away the most popular – with over 650 permits issued.

List of Steam Cleaning vendors in the East Branch Delaware Watershed:

- Al's Sport Store – (607) 363-7740 ; 6964 River Road; Downsville, NY 13755; www.alsportstore.com
- Hogan's General Store – (845) 676-3470; 103 Main Street; Andes, NY 13731; hoganandes@yahoo.com
- Catskills Adventures & Tours– (845) 586-4464; 42480 State Highway 28; Margaretville, NY 12455; catsadventure@catskill.net
- Pepacton Bait & Tackle – (845) 750-5061; 43005 Rte 28; Arkville, NY 12406;
- Pepacton Paddles – (845) 586-2055; 213 Fair Street; Margaretville, NY 12455; info@pepactonpaddles.com
- Above Pepacton Waters – (845) 586-1534; 333 Close Hollow Road; Margaretville, NY 12455



United States Adventure Racing Association National Championship on Pepacton Reservoir (October 2012)

Text taken directly from 10/15/12 NYCDEP press release(http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/press_releases/12-69pr.shtml)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection this past weekend hosted the 2012 United States Adventure Racing Association (USARA) National Championships on the Pepacton Reservoir, in Delaware County. More than 165 competitors from around the nation kicked off the 30-hour, 100 mile race with a 12-mile canoe paddle during which racers navigated a series of checkpoints on the reservoir. Competitors then raced along an obstacle-course-like route hiking, cycling, navigating by compass, and rappelling down rock faces over the 100-mile course. The race ended at the Hudson Valley Resort in Kerhonkson, Ulster County. The event marks the first time the Reservoir has been opened for an adventure racing competition.

In 2009, DEP launched a recreational boating pilot program on the Cannonsville Reservoir. This year, DEP expanded the program to the Neversink, Pepacton and, Schoharie reservoirs. Prior to 2009, only metal rowboats with DEP issued tags were allowed on the reservoirs and only for fishing. The 2012 boating season was the most successful to date. This year, DEP issued nearly 1,000 boat tags, of which 45 percent went to individuals from outside of the watershed and 10 percent went to individuals from



outside of New York State. The strong boating season was a boon to local businesses that steam clean the boats and to those that provide tourism related services.

“The expanded recreational boating program has opened the doors for opportunities like the USARA National Championship in which hundreds of participants and observers got the chance to enjoy the scenic Pepacton Reservoir as backdrop for adventure racing,” said Commissioner Strickland. “We look forward to more events like this and to working with local communities to promote recreational opportunities that help bring people to the watershed and support local businesses.”

“We are very fortunate to have been granted permission to use the Pepacton Reservoir for the paddling leg of our race,” said USARA Race Director, Rodney Villella. “The reservoir set the stage for the event and the fall colors added to the beauty of this great resource. The racers loved the paddling section and didn’t let the cold and rainy weather at the start dampen their spirits. We are also very thankful that we had two DEP police boats on the water during the event making sure everyone was safe and sound.”²

The Bright Future of Recreational Boating on the Pepacton Reservoir

Need for Additional Launch Sites?

The 2012 data prove that additional launch sites for recreational boating are warranted at the Pepacton Reservoir. Not only is this waterbody the largest of all NYC reservoirs, it is also the most heavily used for recreational boating, by far. As part of this recreational access project, several other suitable launch sites have been identified. It is our recommendation that a number of these be re-visited to help accommodate a more evenly-distributed use of this wonderful recreational resource. In particular, the site we have identified at the intersection of Perch Lake Road and NYS Route 30 on the northern shore should be developed in 2013. This location, among other possibilities sites can be seen on the maps and in the Final Report.

Finding A Niche

One problem that was identified through conversation with steam cleaning vendors was, in essence, duplication of service – in particular within the Margaretville / Arkville area. With five listed vendors within a ten-mile radius there was a situation where the market was over-saturated, certainly for the initial season. It is expected that this over-saturation of vendors will become more sustainable as the less-successful ones will either close up shop or be forced to make changes and find a niche. As these businesses seek to find that niche, the Recreational Boating program will continue to evolve as well.

Changes to the program are almost certain, as with any new program. One issue that needs to be addressed is the ability for local proprietors to store ‘fleet’ of already steam-cleaned vessels at a particular launch site so as to service clients in a timely fashion. It has been documented that one of the drawbacks to the recreational boating program is the time it takes to get a boat tag, which includes getting the boat cleaned. If a number of vessels are ready to go at established launch sites, established by the vendor(s), then the process will go quicker. Formalizing this approach will require re-visiting NYCDEP’s Recreation Rules.

Lottery Approach Needed?

For NYS-licensed guides that wish to provide recreational boating or fishing on the Pepacton, a lottery system should be created annually to assign a specific launch site to all interested vendors so as to be able to provide such service to their



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(McIntosh Auction)
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Heron XT kayaks

Partnerships with local licensed guides:
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clientele. While maybe not the most convenient for vendors, this system will encourage a more even distribution to use throughout this expansive resource, the Pepacton Reservoir. Currently, the Shavertown Bridge area not only receives the most use by fisherman and rowboat storage, but now recreational boating as well. To overuse one of the areas, particularly one as visible as this site, threatens the integrity of the program overall, and could lead to its termination.

A list of the vendors and the number of boats serviced/tags issued can be seen on the NYCDEP's website at: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/recreation/cannonsville_boating_program.shtml

Central Catskills Great Outdoor Experience Festival

The inaugural Central Catskills Great Outdoor Experience Festival was held on August 24-26, 2012 in the Village of Margaretville. It consisted of a full weekend of recreational events and activities that celebrated the natural assets and cultural history abundant in the Central Catskills.

It kicked-off Friday with historical exhibits, films and food. Saturday featured a festival of activities: fishing, boating, outdoor vendors, food, music and demos. Sunday featured boating on the East Branch and Pepacton Reservoir, hiking in the Catskill Park, and bicycling along country roads.

The Saturday Festival was centered in Margaretville where information from regional outdoor recreational and outfitter businesses and organizations showcased the many opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy hiking, bicycling, fishing, boating, skiing and exploration of the Catskill Park and the streams and reservoirs which make up the Catskill NYC watershed region. The festival website can be seen at <http://centralcatskillsgreatoutdoors.com>



Post-Festival Summary:

The Central Catskills Great Outdoor Experience Festival, a new collaborative project between chambers, outdoor recreational businesses and organizations held at the end of August 2012 in the village of Margaretville which is located ideally for water related activities adjacent to its Main Street where the festival was held.

The weekend included a Star Gazing program on Friday evening presented by Jason Smolinski, a professor at SUNY Oneonta and held in Arkville's Delaware and Ulster Train park (over 50 attended - all ages). On Saturday, well over 1,000 attended the all day events that included: demonstrations, presentations and hands-on outdoor recreation activities. Participants canoed along the East Branch of the Delaware, took a zip-line along the tree line adjacent to the Binnekill Stream and for the kids a challenge to get to the top of the climbing wall.

Over 10 organizations and agencies filled the Outdoor Recreation tent where displays and presentations were made to inform and connect to the general public about the many options and resources available. Vendors, food, music and entertainment added to the days' amusement.

To complement the festival a series of hikes, paddles and a bicycle tour were offered both at the end of the day on Saturday and all-day Sunday. These were offered by volunteer members of the Catskill Mountain Club and the Catskill Mountains Bicycling Club. The experienced volunteers representing these organizations had groups from 10 to 20, just the right size for each activity.

Comments made by both the attendees and those guiding the events were that the public needs scheduled/organized events promoted/offered to assist the novice and/or new comer the support that they need. Many felt secure in knowing that they were with an experienced guide and everyone said that they want these types of experiences offered on a regular basis.

While the festival is important, it is also critical to not lose the outdoors focus the rest of the year (before/after festival). A series of outdoor-oriented events, or at least planning a couple of events each month that would be

promoted by many local groups would go a long way towards creating a bigger impact. Additionally, the timing (August) of the outdoor festival event, perhaps, should be re-examined. The festival is too late for water-based recreation in a lot of ways (selling kayaks, streams are usually rather low, etc), yet it is still too early for skiing promotion. Perhaps the month of June might be a more appropriate time, maybe in accordance with National Trails Day, which is always the first Saturday in June.

Get Out Catskills!

The first-ever Catskills Outdoor Guide was produced in August 2012 by the WatershdPost. It was stuffed with helpful info about getting outside in the Catskills: lists of favorite hikes, a reservoir-boating how-to guide, tips on geocaching and Catskills-style urban exploration, and section about what kind of edible plants are around.

The online version of the Catskills Outdoors Guide had additional information that couldn't fit into the 24-page print edition, including detailed maps of hiking and biking businesses, an article by Jeff Senterman, of the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference, about how to hike the Catskills without a car, and our brand-new Catskills Badges program, which rewarded outdoors skillsmanship with real badges.

Post-Production Feedback and Web Usage Results

(provided by Julia Reichel)

We printed 2,000 copies of the guide, and expected that at least two people would read each copy, so our estimated print reach was 4,000 unique readers.

For the online version, we expected that the guide would be read by 25,000 readers between Labor Day 2012 and Labor Day 2013. Overall, we estimated that 30,000 readers would see the guide in the calendar year that it would remain current.

Here's how we did:

We distributed 1850 print guides across the Catskills region. We promoted the guide by handing out physically to about 800 people at the Central Catskills Chamber's Great Outdoor Experience Festival. We also gave stacks of guides to the Margaretville and Stamford visitors centers, the Bed & Bath Shoppe, the Catskill Forest Association, The Cheese Barrel, 768 Main, the Catskill Artisan's Guild, Arkville Bread & Breakfast, the Flour Patch, rental properties at Pine Hollow Lodging, the Cha Cha Hut, the Phoenicia Diner, and the Catskill Watershed Corporation in Margaretville. In addition to distributing it in their lobby, the CWC also mailed 100 copies of the guide to the organizers of the USARA Adventure Race National Championship to hand out to their racers, who hailed from across the country.



Online, the guide was read by 3468 unique readers between Labor Day 2012 and Dec. 6, 2012. Here's how the interest broke down by section, by unique readers:

Catskills Outdoor Guide homepage	895
Adventure section	590
Boating	490
Hiking section	343
Earn Your Where the Wild Things Are Badge	325
Wild section	229
How to Paddle the Catskills Reservoirs	224
Biking section	157
Winter section	117
Hiking the Catskills Without a Car	98

Overall, the guide has been read by between 5,318 and 7,000 people. We expect to double that number between now and labor Day 2013 with online readers. It's not the 30,000 readers we estimated, but it's a good start.

Same Mountains, Different Vibe: Building a Regional Identity for the Western Catskills”

A workshop, sponsored by Delaware County Tourism, was held on November 2, 2011 at the Hanah Mountain Resort near Margaretville. The workshop was funded through a grant from the *Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative*, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The purpose of the initiative was stated as “promote natural and heritage tourism in Appalachia’s ‘gateway communities’that is, the communities that border national and state parks, wildlife refuges, forests, historic sites, wilderness areas, and other public lands”. For this *Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative*, Otsego, Greene, and Delaware Counties, which includes the upper East Branch Delaware Watershed, forms the northernmost gateway of “Appalachia”.

Gateways

While local business owners, residents, and tourists undoubtedly think of this area as the Catskill Mountain region (or the western Catskills), the theory, or really the reality of ‘gateway’ still applies to much of the upper East Branch Delaware River and watershed. Similar to the fact that tourists or locals for that matter do not care who owns the property that they can recreate on (NYSDEC, NYCDEP, a local land trust, etc) as long as they CAN recreate on it, the same applies here....call it the western Catskills, call it northern Appalachia...or other, just figure out what we are, develop it, and market it.

Whether the East Branch is a western gateway for the central Catskills, a northern gateway for the Appalachian Region, or the northern gateway for the Delaware Highlands, or even the eastern gateway for the Finger Lakes Region, it doesn’t really matter as long as tourists come to the area to experience “it”.

“Gateways” as defined by the initiative cited above are “portals to the nation’s public lands”, a “source of food, lodging, transport and business that support visitors”, and “magnets for businesses, working families, and retirees”. Several communities along the East Branch are gateway communities – Downsville, Margaretville, Roxbury, and Andes are all ‘gateway’ communities.

We are not aware of any additional follow-ups to this valuable workshop, however the majority of the attendees from it continue to work on issues of outdoor recreation and tourism throughout the greater Catskill Mountain region, including many of the initiatives mentioned in this report.

Revitalizing the Esopus/Delaware Region of the Central Catskills:

This study was “a regional economic development strategy for the towns of Andes, Middletown, Roxbury, Olive and Shandaken, and the villages of Fleischmanns and Margaretville”. Five of those municipalities were part of this East Branch Access project as well.

Provided with funding from the New York State’s Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, this regional visioning, planning and design effort aimed at revitalizing the Esopus and East Branch corridors (State Route 28 and 30) in the central Catskills. The effort aimed to “promote village, hamlet and Main Street revitalization along with enhanced access to waterways and public lands for increased recreation-based tourism. At the same time, it recognizes that the areas significant scenic and natural resources are vital to both economic prosperity as well as quality of life for residents.”

It states “water-based recreation and related tourism activity, along with other significant open space, cultural, and historical resources are the major components of the local and regional economies of the Catskill Park.” And further identifies a purpose of “strengthening the economic base by providing new opportunities for water-based recreation and associated tourism-based economic development.”

The final strategy recommends projects that “include a wide variety of strategies such as new stream access sites, enhanced linkages between streams, hamlets, and villages, and improved signage, as well as methods to promote an institutional and organizational framework to support them.”

Taking it a step further, the strategy realizes “a wide variety of economic activities throughout the Esopus/Delaware area are concentrated along, or oriented to its water resources. The Esopus and Delaware corridors can be the focus to bring new life and energy to the five towns and two villages included in this planning effort.”

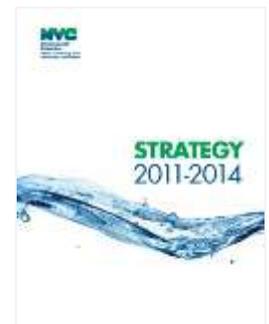
It advocates that “this revitalization strategy should also be viewed as a comprehensive regional plan that weaves together, in one place, the data, maps, vision, goals, and creative actions from past and current plans and studies. Because this strategy reflects community consensus generated over many years through other independent planning efforts, and confirmed through new public input, it will increase the Central Catskill’s ability to market and promote itself to attract appropriate development that respects the rich cultural and natural characteristics found here.”

This study will lead to a series of recommend actions that will be available in early 2013 and are expected to be of a similar nature to those that will come from this, the East Branch Enhanced Recreational Access project. Final results of this study can be found on the M-Ark Project’s website: www.markproject.org.

Goals #30 and #31 of the NYCDEP 2011-2014 Strategy:

Goal #30 - Support economic development compatible with watershed protection.

“At the core of the city’s source water protection program is the belief that economic development can and must be compatible with water quality. Through our partnership with the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC), the City loaned \$48 million to 203 watershed businesses over the last 12 years to support tourism, hospitality, manufacturing, and other industries. We have funded the extension of sewers, rehabilitated more than 3,500 septic systems, restored streams, and supported many other activities through CWC. Our partnership with the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC) promotes farming and protects water quality, but we can do more. DEP will continue to support environmentally sustainable economic development in the watershed, including a re-examination of partnership opportunities for renewable energy production, the feasibility of bringing broadband coverage to rural areas, and ensuring that the Catskill Fund for the Future (CFF) continues to make loans to businesses in the watershed.”



Goal #31 - Expand recreational opportunities in the city’s watershed.

“Over the last two years, thousands of local residents and visitors have enjoyed expanded recreational opportunities throughout the watershed. More than 117,000 people hold access permits to watershed lands, more than 11,300 people have boat tags for the city’s reservoirs, and the watershed is a growing tourist destination. We will continue to expand the acreage of watershed lands open to the public for hunting, hiking, and fishing, and we will seek to expand recreational boating to include the Neversink and Pepacton reservoirs.”

Future Trail-Building on NYCDEP Watershed Lands

There are many recent examples now of how NYCDEP is continuing to expand their role with respect to outdoor recreation in the region. Groups such as the Catskill Mtn Club already have agreements in place to construct community trails on City lands. Two of the locations are in the upper East Branch Delaware watershed and provide access to waterbodies; these are located on the Shavertown Unit and the Palmer Hill Unit. In addition to the CMC, other groups

such as the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and the NY-NJ Trail Conference continue to work with the NYCDEP to provide opportunities for family-friendly hiking trails created in the region.

References

1 – NYCDEP Recreation Boating Webpage (http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/recreation/cannonsville_boating_program.shtml)

2 – NYCDEP Press Release (http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/press_releases/12-69pr.shtml)