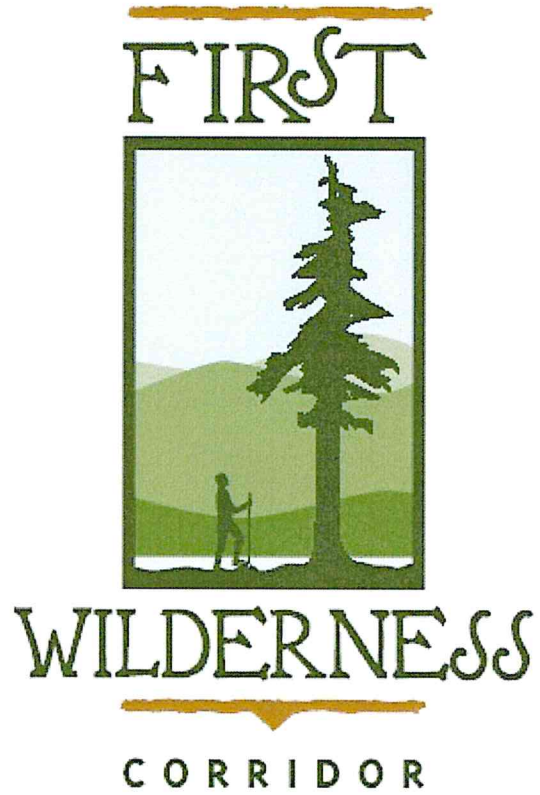


**First Wilderness Marketing Program**



*"This document was prepared for the New York State Department of State with funds provided under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund."*





**Summary Introduction** - The County of Warren in cooperation with the Towns of Johnsbury, Chester, Lake Luzerne, Stony Creek, Thurman Warrensburg, Hadley, Corinth, and the Village of Corinth completed a First Wilderness Heritage Corridor Plan in 2000 as a revitalization strategy for nine communities along Upper Hudson River and the Delaware and Hudson rail lines. These Warren and Saratoga County communities have continued to identify and refine priority projects that will promote the broader concept of “First Wilderness” throughout the corridor as it pertains to tourism, recreation, business development and economic revitalization.

**(Suggested Introduction...** Warren County, in cooperation with the communities of the Upper Hudson River Corridor, desire to revitalize local economies through projects and programs that expand tourism, increase recreational experiences and advance the cultural heritage of these Adirondack towns. The First Wilderness Heritage Corridor was developed in 2000 as a result of a redevelopment strategy for nine municipalities along the Hudson River. Its identification as a “First Wilderness” reflects its distinguishing natural features and the protected status of the Adirondacks that originated in the late 1800’s. The Corridor includes the Warren County Towns of Johnsbury, Chester, Warrensburg, Lake Luzerne, Stony Creek, Thurman and the Saratoga County communities of Hadley, Corinth and the Village of Corinth. The Corridor will also include the abandoned Adirondack Iron Works mine site at Tahawus (formerly Adirondac) in the Town of Newcomb in Essex County. This mine site has important historical significance to the rail line. It was acquired by the Open Space Institute in 2003 in order to preserve this property which was the beginning of Theodore Roosevelt’s “Midnight Ride” to the presidency in 1901. The Hudson River and the Adirondack Branch of the Delaware and Hudson River are the most significant natural and built environment features which link these Corridor communities to their past ...and their future.)

**Statement of Goals and Objectives** - Enhance the vision of the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor through effective branding strategies that serve as the foundation for consistency in marketing and promotional efforts.

**(Suggested Addition...**The Marketing Plan will identify strategies and actions that establish a unified identity for the Corridor communities. The focus will be on developing an authentic, place-based, multi-modal visitor experience. The Corridor will seek to be a destination for regional, national and international audiences. The County, through the Planning Department, will collaborate with other public, private and non-profit organizations and secure partnerships with other regional organizations to maximize tourism opportunities. Actions undertaken will strengthen the local economy and provide for the long term sustainability of the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor.)

**Objectives for achieving successful branding in the Corridor will include:**

- Creating a message that captures the vision for the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor for the various points of public contact and target audiences.
- Confirming the credibility of the branding by emphasizing the authenticity of experiences in the corridor communities, the Hudson River, the historic rail line and the relationship to the Adirondacks.
- Engaging in a dialogue with local businesses, event organizers, and organizations to insure that there is a single, clear message for positively impacting the tourism experience as the – First Wilderness Experience.

- Developing appropriate text messages and graphics for use in print and electronic media that is adaptable for general business use, event promotion and general tourism.
- Developing appropriate measuring tools and periodically measuring the effectiveness of the branding as a motivating factor in enhancing participation in local and corridor-wide events and in bringing new visitors to the Corridor communities.

**Opportunities for Marketing and Promotion** – Identify local and regional entities that are an appropriate fit for advancing the vision of the First Wilderness Experience. Objectives for creating and expanding opportunities include:

- Maximizing efforts through the internet to use the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor website and related social network sites to connect with visitors. The focus will be on keeping the established sites up to-date, attentiveness to information requests in order to deliver on the goal of an authentic “Wilderness Experience”.
- Building relationships with local and regional organizations that can add value to the effectiveness of marketing efforts. This tactical approach can deliver a richer brand experience and foster a level of advocacy and word-of-mouth recommendations that carry great weight and credibility. (e.g., Warren County Tourism Department, Adirondack Chambers of Commerce, NYS Scenic Corridors, Warren County Historical Association, Adirondack North Country Association – ANCA, Warren County Safe and Quality Bicycling Committee, Adventure Cycling Association, and other organizations as identified).
- Utilizing travel and tourism business organization to assist in the development of target audiences within the region and abroad.
- Utilizing professional marketing assistance, where appropriate, for the development of marketing materials to grow and maintain momentum of the visitor experience found within the communities of the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor.

### **Background Information for Marketing and Promotion**

It is said that the journey is often as important as the destination. In order to enhance the traveling experience, plan developers inventoried the route’s intrinsic qualities, studied the for-profit enterprises and the variety of community attractions that would be of interest to visitors. The First Wilderness Heritage Corridor provides a range of tourism sites, attractions, and services in order to provide visitors with a rewarding travel experience. Set against a backdrop of natural beauty, there are many interesting things to do or see. No matter what the weather or season, visitors to the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor can find fuel, food, and fun.

This section of the Marketing and Promotion Plan identifies the availability of sites, attractions, services and amenities that appeal to or meet the needs of travelers. Opportunities for improving tourism amenities, marketing, and promotion at the corridor-wide and community scale are also discussed. The “best of the best” tourist-based amenities (i.e. sites, attractions and services), that make for a remarkable travel experience and are owned by public, not-for-profit and private enterprises are highlighted. **(General list to be added)**

## **Tourism Planning and Development: Overview of Conditions and Efforts.**

The First Wilderness Heritage Corridor links communities along a themed and storied roadway. Planning in this heritage corridor is supported by a tourism development effort called the “Northern Hudson River Inter-Municipal Redevelopment Action Plan (2004). The rationale for the inter-municipal plan, its updates and marketing plan are to improve the regional appeal to adventure, historic and culturally inclined visitors. Cultivating authentic, consistent, and distinctive place-based tourism will be accomplished by marketing and promotion, but also by interpreting and accessing the working landscape. The Inter-Municipal Plan recommends an ongoing comprehensive inventory and assessment of Corridor tourism resources. It suggests that development of a "critical mass" of tourism resources can strengthen the “First Wilderness” name recognition and market share. The Inter-municipal Action Plan’s accomplishments and newly identified projects are incorporated into the Plan Update.

## **Corridor Market Position and Tourism’s Role in the Corridor Economy**

First Wilderness communities rely on tourism dollars to support local economies. Communities depend upon a continued stream of visitor spending. Tourism supports local economies through employment creation and retention, and increased business opportunities.

Research conducted to prepare the Marketing and promotion Plan revealed that data on Corridor communities’ market position, visitor spending and preferences varies from County to County. Warren County accumulated a comprehensive, longitudinal tourism statistical database. Comparable depth and time-studies for Saratoga were not available. The Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce indicated that they do not conduct, as a regular practice, on-line surveys. There was also regional data available on the “North Country.” In this presentation, data was not generalized and available comparable data from both Counties were used.

“In 2009, the average stay [in Warren County] for 3,023,622 lodging guests was 3.60 days and the average number of per person was 2.84. Saratoga County recently studied selected attributes of tourist behavior and reported that the average stay was slightly longer than Warren County at 4.05 nights.

Compared to Warren County, in Saratoga County, the average visitor party was also larger at 3.42 persons (Economic Development and Technical Assistance Center, Plattsburgh State University, January 2009). Warren County studies note that the 13 year average length of stay was 3.98 days, but that length of stay steadily dropped over the period (Inter-Departmental Working Paper (2009) Warren County Occupancy Survey and Report). Studies reveal that the net gain in lodging rooms is relatively small, yet chain hotels have been constructed in a few communities. Reports indicate that there might be a negative correlation between length of stay and the supplanting of “mom and pop” tourist lodging with chain hotels. One explanation may be that locally-owned rooms that offered weekly rentals have lost market share to chain hotels that rent at daily rates. As the number of locally-owned lodgings decrease, so perhaps does visitor length of stay. Opportunities to improve accommodations and reverse this trend should be explored.

Tourism dollars subsidize the tax base by providing revenues that help to offset local government’s needs to raise funds from the real property tax base. In many cases, spending provides sales tax and other taxable revenue. Without tourism revenues, local property taxes may have increased an estimated \$737 per household (2006) in order to maintain current levels of government services (NNY Travel and Research Center, SUNY Potsdam, 2007). In 2006, tourists spent over 1.69 billion dollars while visiting northern New York (Northern New York Travel and Research Center, SUNY Potsdam, 2007). Tourism expenditures in 2009 were estimated at 522 million” (Warren County Departments of Tourism and Planning). Of the 522 million, entertainment and shopping accounted for approximately 33% while food and lodging comprised 42% of expenditures (Warren County Departments of Tourism and Planning, 2009). In 2010, Warren County overnight visitors spent \$141.28 per person per day for lodging, meals, transportation, entertainment, and shopping. Day visitors expended approximately \$125 per person (Warren County Department of Tourism, 2010-2011; Inter-Departmental Working Paper Warren County Occupancy Survey and Report, 2009). Saratoga County noted that “per visitor party [average 3.42 persons] per day” (no differentiation for overnight or day visitors) expended \$551.85 per day for attractions, entertainment, events, transportation, lodging, meals, and other related expenses. Warren County daily, average per person, tourism-related expenditures were \$141.28 in 2009 as compared to \$161.36 in 2008 for Saratoga. Predominant visitor party [average 3.42 persons] expenditures in Saratoga were for lodging (\$150.11) and meals (\$86.58). Saratoga attractions, entertainment, and events accounted for 25% \$135.90 of \$551.85) of total daily expenditures (Economic Development and Technical Assistance Center, Plattsburgh State University, January 2009).

Tourism provides employment and brings in sales tax revenue during good economic times, but tourism suffers disproportionately during national economic downturns (Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board Community Economic Development Strategy, 2007). Booms or busts in the tourism employment sector can significantly influence unemployment rates in the region. Wages, salaries, and business income accounted for 746.2 million dollars of generated revenue (Warren County). No comparable figure was available for Saratoga County. Tourism generated 19% of Adirondack employment and directly or indirectly supported approximately 37,000 jobs (Tourism Economics, 2006; SUNY Potsdam, 2007). Travel and tourism related businesses accounted for 20% of the employment in Warren County (Wildlife Conservation Society, 1999). With such a strong influence on local and regional economies, tourism is one of several economic sectors incorporated into regional development strategies.

**Visitor Point-of- Origin**

In 2010, Saratoga County collected information on visitor inquiry points of origin. The top ten inquiries by state for 2010 are as follows (Source: Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, 2011): [\(Align Chart\)](#)

1

1.	NY .. 6,039	5.	OH .... 1,455
1.	PA .. 2,964	6.	CA .... 1,203
2.	NJ .. 2,075	7.	FL .... 1,192
3.	MA . 1,620	8.	MD ... 1,115
4.	CT .. 1,489	9.	TX .... 1,038

Since 1995, Warren County collected annual data from lodging visitors on their points of origin. In 2009, half the visitors were from New York. New Jersey accounted for approximately 15% of visitor origination points. The remaining 35% of visitors hailed from Massachusetts, Quebec, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Ontario, Connecticut, Ohio and points unknown (Warren County Department of Tourism, 2010-2011; Inter-Departmental Working Paper Warren County Occupancy Survey and Report, 2009). Saratoga and Warren Counties derive a good proportion of their visitors from New England, the Mid-Atlantic States, and Canada.

**Visitor Destination(s)**

In 2008, Saratoga County collected survey data from a population (692) of visitors. Hadley or Corinth was not identified as specific destinations. The Saratoga visitors’ sample indicated the popular destinations were near Saratoga Springs (Economic Development and Technical Assistance Center, Plattsburgh State University, January 2009). Warren County Department of Tourism collects visitor data in the summer and winter. Length of stay varies from season to season. Lake George is clearly the primary regional destination. In addition, Warrensburg and Lake Luzerne are very popular destinations. Warrensburg also appears to be popular year-round. The following two tables (Tables #6 &7) present highlights from the most recent visitor survey (Warren County Department of Tourism Conversion Survey, 2010-2011).

**(Align Chart)**

- 1.
- 5

	1.	
	NY ..	6,039
1.	PA ..	2,964
2.	NJ ..	2,075
3.	MA .	1,620
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The First Wilderness Heritage Corridor communities host 32% of Warren County’s campsites (Table Below). Campsite occupancy rates ranged from a low of 5.04% in Lake Luzerne to a high of 8.42% in Warrensburg, Thurman, and Stony Creek.

<b>Data Element</b>	<b>Summer Survey</b>	<b>Winter Survey</b>
Use of Internet to conduct research on Lake George Area	88% (N=552)	80.7% (N=57)
Length of Stay	24.2%: 2-3 Nights (N=525)	38.8% Daytrips 23.9% 3 Nights (N=67)
<i>Communities Visited:</i>	N=515	N=40
Lake George	96.3%	82.5%
Lake Luzerne	26.8%	5.0%
Chester	7.0%	12.5%
Johnsburg	5.8%	15.0%
Stony Creek	5.2%	2.5%
Thurman	1.7%	0%
Warrensburg	29.3%	40.0%
<i>Lodging Choice Highest Ranking:</i>	N=513	N=36
Hotel	20.3%	38.9%
Motel	24.8%	5.6%
Campground	14.8%	N/A
Housekeeping Cottage	14.8%	0

(Provide the references for Saratoga County indicated in the table below)



<b>Data Element</b>	<b>2008 Survey N=692</b>
Use of Internet	25%
Use of Saratoga.org	55%
Length of Stay	4.05 Nights
Lodging Choice Highest Ranking	N=692
Hotel/Resort	46%
Motel	29%
Campground	4%
Housekeeping Cottage	5%
Bed & Breakfast	10%

<b>FWCorridor Community</b>	<b>% (N=513) Who Stayed Overnight in</b>
Lake George	58.5%
Johnsburg	1.0%
Stony Creek	.2%
Thurman	.4%
Warrensburg	3.9%
Lake Luzerne	4.9%

One indicator of visitor destination is the relative occupancy rates for lodging facilities in the County (Table 1 Below). Comparable data was not available for Saratoga. Warren County’s database indicates that, excluding Lake George, the remaining First Wilderness Heritage Corridor communities host approximately 12% of the “rooms” in Warren County. Utilization rates range from a low of 18.33% in Johnsburg to a high of 40.11% in Warrensburg.

**Table 1**  
**Visitors by Community**

	Responses	Total Rooms	Total Facilities	Utilization Rate	Visitor Events
Bolton	2	756	22	43.49%	240,007
Chester	2	218	22	22.65%	36,053
Hague	2	411	10	17.51%	65,657
Horicon	2	33	6	20.33%	7,345
Johnsburg	1	351	21	18.33%	93,956
L Geo Town	12	4388	104	28.97%	1,501,594
L Geo Village	4	1973	38	27.22%	522,671
Lake Luzerne	2	223	14	25.09%	51,061
QBY	6	836	14	41.41%	397,567
Stony Creek	0	118	4		
Thurman	0	0	0		
Warrensburg	2	218	14	40.11%	63,834
Glens Falls	1	140	4	42.93%	43,876
	36	9,665	273	29.82%	3,023,622

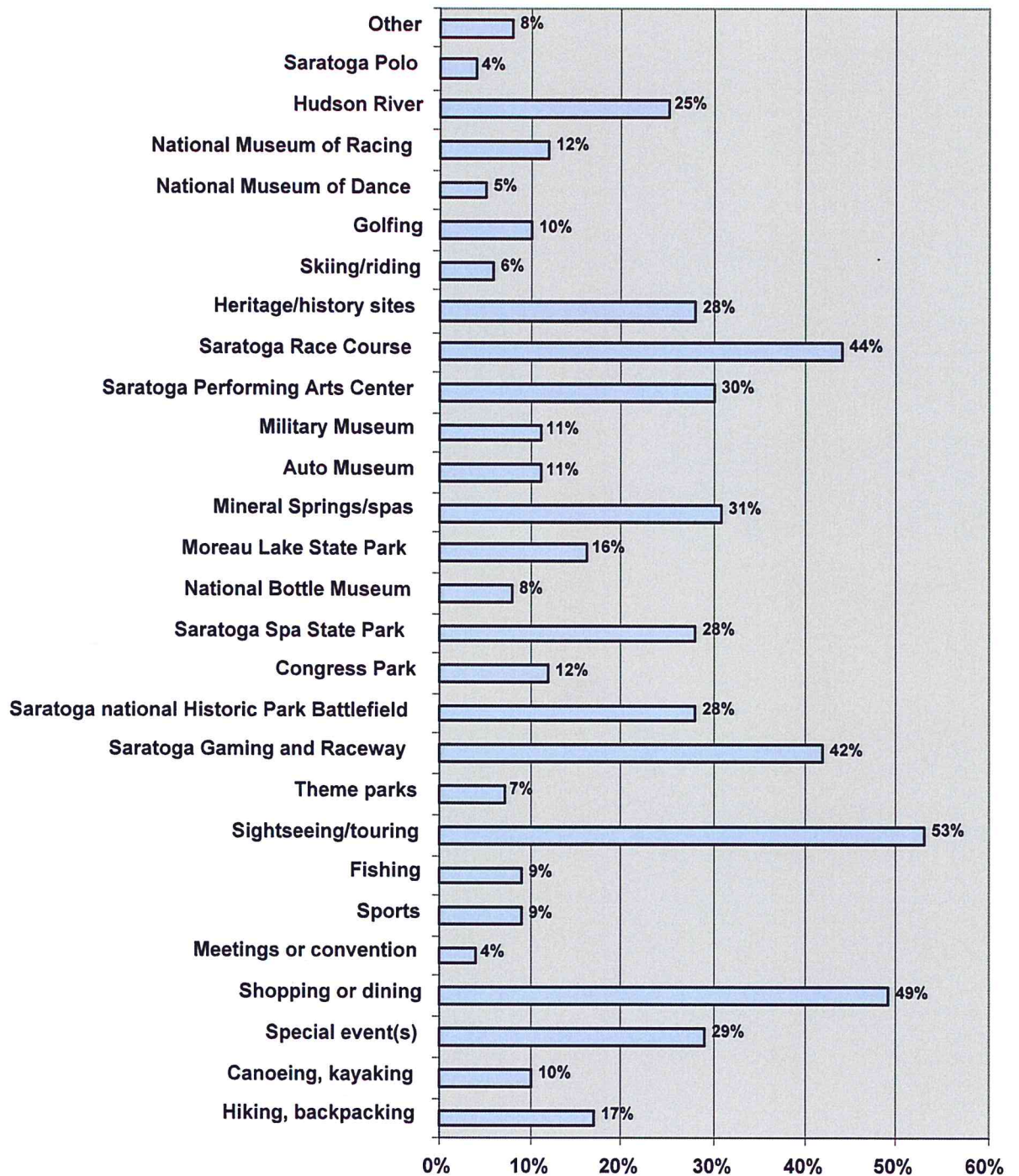
**Visitor Activities**

Visitor activities for Saratoga County can be categorized based upon expenditures and data for regional attractions. For example, 53% of survey respondents enjoyed sightseeing and scenic touring, 49% engaged in shopping and dining, and 25% noted the Hudson River.



Vacation Activities Engagement Statistical Highlights, 2009 Leisure Travel Information Study, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce. Source: 2009 Leisure Travel Information Study, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce.

### Regional Attractions



Commerce.

According to the Warren County Tourism Conversion Survey (2010-2011), top ranking summer vacation activities of respondents included dining (79%) and family amusements, such as parks, cruises, and mini-golf (70.3%). Locations in the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor that were often referenced include rodeo(s) and the Warrensburg Garage Sale (October event). During the winter, outlet mall shopping ranked highest in vacation activities (46.5%) with scenic touring ranking second (39.5%). Only 16.3% indicated skiing, snowboarding, or tubing as their vacation activity. When asked where they engaged in these activities, 66.7% indicated West Mountain and 33.3% indicated Gore Mountain (N=6). Visitation to North Creek Ski Bowl, Hickory, or Dynamite Hill was not noted.

A general comparison of activity engagement can be made although the summer and winter surveys identified different activities. The following table identifies Warren Counties vacation activities, according to engagement rates. These are statistical highlights from 2010 and 2011 summer and winter surveys provided by the Warren County Department of Tourism.

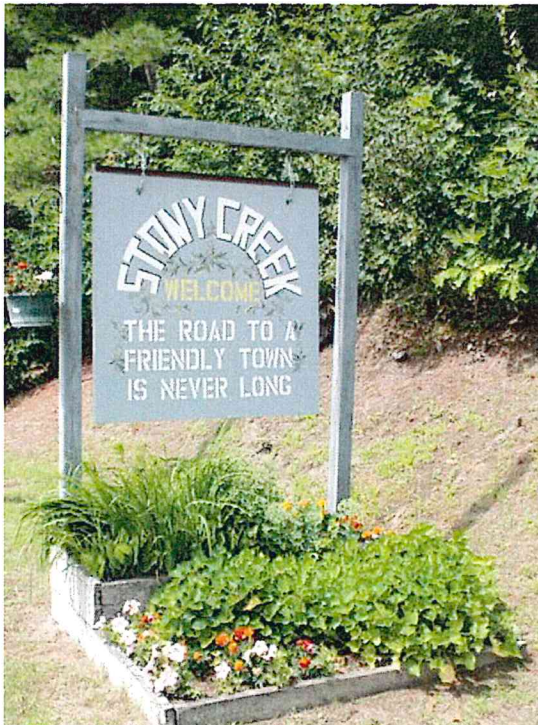
Activity	% Engagement Summer (N=518)	% Engagement Winter (N=43)
Scenic Touring	54.4%	39.5%
Water Sports	40.2%	N/A
Nature/Natural Attractions/Ecological	32.0%	25.6%
History/Heritage	31.1%	7.0%
Arts/Culture	14.9%	7.0%
Bicycling	6%	N/A
Skiing, Snowboarding and Tubing	N/A	16.3%
Cross Country Skiing, Skating and Snowshoeing	N/A	7.0%
Spectator Sports	N/A	7.0%
Antiquing	N/A	18.6%
Shopping Local Crafts	N/A	37.2%

It is imperative that tourism development take into consideration the carrying capacity of the surrounding natural environment. It is easy to become overly dependent on tourism for supporting the local economy, which could lead to the over-exploitation and overuse of the natural resources. So while it is important to make sure that the tourism industry is well-developed, it is equally as important to diversify businesses and attractions-- and to protect the quality of the air, water, and scenic resources. Considering carrying capacity will serve many purposes, but the most important benefits will be: **(Eliminate Block Indent)**

1. Providing a “rest” for area natural resources – the more one spreads out the economic base, the greater will be the capacity of the environment around it to absorb impacts.
2. Providing for a more sustainable year-round economy.
3. Creating a diverse range of activities and attractions for visitors so that they will come back to visit multiple times and have the option to engage in a variety of activities. Repeat visitation is a common motive for tourists when explaining why they have visited Warren and Saratoga Counties.

## **Hospitality: Local and County Support for Tourism**

As evidenced by the data referred to in this section, the Counties' Chamber of Commerce, and the Warren County Tourism Office work to serve and accommodate visitors' needs, behaviors, and trends. Local chambers, government, and civic organizations engage in community-based event development and supportive tourism activities. To increase repeat visitation and attract new travelers, ongoing, expanded, improved and broader support for tourism efforts are needed. The implementation of this Marketing and promotion Plan, will require the Plan facilitators to engage tourism representatives and Chambers of Commerce to achieve positive results in meeting goals. Currently, businesses, organizations, Chambers, tourism offices and residents refer visitors to area venues and activities through print media calendars and advertising. Social events, such as fire department picnics, fairs, and festivals are a good example of authentic traditional activities that visitor's value and seek out while touring a community. Increased visitor participation in community social events can create additional demand for tourism development programs. (Sample of photo inclusion for final plan doc - see below)



County Route 3, Stony Creek. Courtesy of P. Morin

The Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board CEDS, 2007 states "Half the income, population, business, and sales of the combined United States and Canada are within one day's [drive]". The geographic expanse of this international market region offers the potential influx of tourists to support a thriving retail and service trade - year round. Community leaders and government officials should be periodically reminded of the economic and social role tourism plays in their economy.

Consistent marketing messages and coordinated visitor experiences for Corridor travelers will require ongoing collaboration by key players. Laying out the "welcome mat" through courteous service and effective, approved signage can also make visitors feel welcome and encourage repeat visitation.

## **Tourism Marketing and Promotion**

Lake George and Saratoga Springs are well known and "seasonally-crowded", destinations. Smaller, First Wilderness Heritage Corridor communities who work together as a region can utilize cooperative and collaborative marketing and promotion strategies to provide visitors with an alternative tourism experiences. These strategies are designed to link smaller, community-based destinations joined by the common Corridor theme developed as a part of the branding. This would result in a cost efficient

advertising strategy for promoting the rare assets and beauty of the remote areas of the Upper Hudson River communities.

Professional technical and financial support will be needed to realize the economic potential of activities and programs identified in the Marking and Promotion Plan. Corridor communities will continue to depend on State promotions by the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, the I Love New York campaigns, and New York State's Department of Transportation's Scenic Corridor Programs. The responsibility lies with Corridor communities to highlight the Corridor's major assets and develop sound actions to achieve them. By effectively collecting, maintaining and presenting Corridor assets as part of marketing data and materials for on-line local and state promotional campaigns. Sharing critical visitor information through tourism-development networks should be encouraged as a way to facilitate planned promotions. The future viability of the ' Corridor Brand ' should be reinforced by actively participating in the development of materials that highlight the Corridor. By investing in Corridor-based marketing and promotion, intrinsic resources are protected, communities are revitalized, recreation areas are utilized, and cultural artifacts are preserved and celebrated.

### **Principals for Maintaining the First Wilderness Experience**

As indicated in the background information, the " First Wilderness Experience" can serve as a vehicle to highlight the attractiveness of the Upper Hudson River Corridor to high-income travelers interested in outdoor recreation, sightseeing, rest or relaxation. However, successfully implementing this concept will require more than just the creation and printing of a brochure with a logo. The five principles announced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation provide an excellent framework for discussing how to implement the Marketing and promotion Plan for the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor.

#### ***Focus on authenticity and quality of experience.***

A severe climate and a rugged terrain have shaped human life in the First Wilderness. In many areas, this has led to human settlement patterns that are rustic and robust. These conditions communicate something distinct about the First Wilderness. Consequently, redevelopment efforts must avoid "prettification" that is more closely associated with Vermont or Massachusetts. To date, the Hamlets of North Creek and Warrensburg have managed to maintain that rustic character in their redevelopment efforts. Similar care should be taken throughout the corridor.

In addition, part of the First Wilderness experience is about the creative tensions between desires for development versus conservation. These should not be glossed over, but should become an essential part of the interpretive story. Much more profound conflicts have been successfully included in interpretive programs in other areas. For example, tour guides at certain Civil War historic sites sometimes welcome visitors by explaining that the Civil War has been referred to in the South as the "War of the Northern Aggression," introducing the visitor to the notion that divergent views of history still exist. An appropriate approach should be taken to recognize ongoing tensions or conflicts as part of the experience.

#### ***Preserve and protect resources.***

Part of the legacy of the First Wilderness is the Adirondack Park and its commitment to preserve natural resources. This effort should be reflected in the First Wilderness experience. It is equally important to

preserve and protect resources that reflect the economic, cultural, and historic legacies of the First Wilderness. The authenticity of the experience is strengthened if—consistent with environmental protection—it includes the continuation of traditional ways of making a living and socializing. While local residents may consider their annual firefighters’ picnic or ice cream social to be fairly ordinary, it may be a very valuable guide to help a tourist appreciate the traditional ways of life that help make up the First Wilderness within the Upper Hudson River Corridor of New York State. Highlighting and promoting such events will enhance the tourism experience and may also serve to infuse new interest and vitality in these local activities.

***Make sites come alive.***

A site that is actually used by a community is a much more compelling heritage tourism experience. Fragile or endangered materials and/or facilities should certainly be protected. However, if it is consistent with sound environmental and historic preservation practices, communities should continue to actively use those sites that illustrate their history and/or culture. To take a far-flung example, part of the appeal of the great European cathedrals to tourists is that these centuries-old structures are still being used for religious services and community gatherings. If traditional places of community life and work can be kept in use, they serve as much stronger attractions to tourists.

***Find the fit between a community or region and tourism.***

Historic/cultural tourism succeeds when the resources communicate what is special about this place, its environment, and its way of life. Such places quickly lose their appeal if efforts to accommodate tourists overwhelm the character of the place. Several places in southern Vermont have suffered from this dynamic. At the same time, if the Corridor is to benefit from tourism, visitors must feel welcome and comfortable. Through coordinated programs of signage and hospitality training, visitors can be directed to the features or event that make the area special. This will provide visitors with an enjoyable experience, while at the same time minimizing any unanticipated disruptions to community life caused by errant or uninformed visitors.

***Collaborate.***

A successful heritage tourism experience comes from the creation of consistent messages and a well coordinated series of experiences for each visitor. This can only be done through the close collaboration of existing organizations and enterprises. No one single agency could keep track of all the ingredients that make a compelling heritage tourism experience. Even if one agency undertook every tourist-related activity in the area, the resulting experience would be cut off from the local groups and businesses that give the community its distinctive character. So collaboration is essential if visitors are to have an experience that truly reflects community character.

At the same time, collaboration is essential for effective marketing and promotion of historic/cultural experiences. The First Wilderness experience involves outdoor recreation, railroading, dining, local cultural events, and other opportunities to explore the community. Each one of these enterprises must be prepared to refer its visitors to other destinations within the area. Similarly, the “market presence” of such an experience can only be maximized if the participating organizations and enterprises undertake joint marketing and promotional efforts. For example, a local historical society or local restaurant is each more likely to attract new clientele if they are identified as key components of a First Wilderness

Experience. This would enable them to each capture new visitors who are attracted by a First Wilderness campaign that is aggressively promoted in markets that either the society or the restaurant could never afford to reach through its own advertising budget.

### **Marketing Strategy**

Marketing the Corridor requires the area to collaboratively highlight at the regional, national, and international level the extensive collection of resources, events, and activities that are available to visitors journeying along the route. Natural, historical, cultural, and recreational resources need to be effectively packaged and presented to appeal to pleasure travelers in search of nature-based, heritage and recreation tourism. Creative marketing strategies must be implemented to connect with new visitors, encourage repeat visitation, extended stays in a region where attractions are plentiful, activity lists are long, and there is much to be explored. ANCA's 2009 Scenic Corridor Marketing Survey confirms that the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor offers the type of activities today's travelers seek. Well-organized marketing and branding planning will allow Corridor managers to tap the target visitor markets and introduce these travelers to the First Wilderness Experience.

### **Corridor Promotion and Media Exposure**

A strategically formulated approach to Corridor promotion will ensure that as many target audiences are reached as is possible. Ongoing promotional efforts should be carried on through a diversity of media outlets. These include print and media campaigns, along with a stronger web-based presence and information that can adapt to smart phones and tablets with relevant applications. Television advertisements, when used in conjunction with traditional print media promotions, are very effective promotional tools for the New York State Scenic Corridors. A successful 2002 campaign featuring Tom Bodette as spokesperson for "New York State a la Cart" featured a combination of magazine, newspaper, and special travel guide publications, as well as a series of highly successful television commercials.

Traditional media, such as print, are still strongly in use at visitor interpretation centers and information centers along highways and at rest areas. The continued progression of new, high-tech digital devices will continue to challenge marketing professionals as well as event organizers to ensure that information is available when, where and how visitors request it. Use of the internet as a basis for the marketing strategy is central to the future success of marketing all aspects of the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor. Today's tourist utilizes the internet to gather destination information and to plan their itineraries. Warren County noted that more than 80% of survey respondents used the internet (Warren County Departments of Tourism and Planning, 2010-2011). Saratoga County respondents reported over a 25% internet use and over 55% use of the County website, [www.saratoga.org](http://www.saratoga.org) to research destinations (Economic Development and Technical Assistance Center, Plattsburgh State University, January 2009).

Developing new and improving existing websites to provide information and providing links to other high-traffic websites, such as Adirondack Regional Tourism Council or I Love NY ([www.iloveny.com](http://www.iloveny.com)) websites are necessary. A web-presence for the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor will need to be developed for placement at the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) web site [www.adirondackscenicCorridors.org](http://www.adirondackscenicCorridors.org) and the linkage established with [www.biketheCorridors.org](http://www.biketheCorridors.org).



ANCA and/or the local Corridor management entity will need to secure funding to update all existing printed and on-line maps to reflect the new name and routes.

Many small businesses are finding value in the use of a web-based marketing, Facebook or blogs as a marketing and promotion tool for their particular products or services. Internet-based, travel itinerary planning has become the norm and provides prospective visitors with the opportunity to pre-plan accommodations, transportation modalities (for example, a mixture of car, bike, train, and hike) and activities as it suits their personal interests. Quality, convenient access to internet, Corridor-related websites, and their related links are important marketing tool for the Corridor communities. Web-based applications integrate and link visitors with high-quality information at a low production cost with high-yields to world-wide audience.

### **Product Branding as Marketing and Promotion**

With shopping named as one of the preferred activity for visitors, an opportunity exists to promote the special businesses and artisans offering furniture, foods, clothes, gifts, outdoor gear, wooden watercraft, and Adirondack furnishings. Rustic, handmade, homemade, hand wrought, and handcrafted are just a few of the descriptions that tell about the products, foods and wares offered throughout the region. Promotions that appeal to the market niche that prefers quality local goods to mass-produced items are needed. Entrepreneurs should be encouraged to feature the Adirondack name or New York State name on these special products to set them off.

The well-recognized “Adirondack” name is already in place in the market. Promoting the Corridor and branding the Corridor experience with this desirable label will strengthen the First Wilderness Scenic Corridor’s desirability in a very competitive traveler’s market. Corridor businesses should be encouraged to use ANCA’s “Made in the Adirondack North Country” logo, which creates an instant recognition of quality and uniqueness associated with products and services originating in the Adirondack North Country and supports the economy of the region. Sample uses for the logo are window decals for retailers, posters for display, tent cards, labels for bags, product labels, point of purchase signs for products, bumper stickers, banners, ads and brochures, websites, and more. Details on this program may be found at ([www.adirondack.org/products.htm](http://www.adirondack.org/products.htm)). At this time questions regarding permission and use of the name and logo should be directed to the Adirondack North Country Association. Using the established Adirondack label can have tremendous impact on encouraging visitation based upon the high interest in the lore, life, products, and events that accompany this theme. The present degree of interest in all things “Adirondack” should be tapped. Corridor communities will need to be informed of the merits of using the name and logo, and instruction in how to blend it with their distinct identity.

The appropriate use of the logo and “First Wilderness” name in interpretive materials, signs, and Internet postings should be distributed to interested stakeholders. To encourage the use of the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor name and logo, it is important to network with mapmakers and authors of visitor guides.

The First Wildernes logo, identified in this Marketing and promotion Plan, will need to be adapted to conform to NYSDOT's standards for route identification signage to be placed in the right of way for the Corridor route. Additionally, the design will need to be re-worked so it reproduces well with a 2-color application that differs from the multi-tonal shading gradations currently in use.

### **Tourism Sites, Attractions, Services and Events**

A synopsis of existing and special tourism attractions and services is provided below. Following the presentation of available tourism attractions and services is a summary of the gap analysis conducted in the development of the Sites, Attractions, and Services Typology. A Corridor gap analysis was conducted after preparing an inventory and map of the tourism-related services provided by the private sector. The value in the gap analysis is two-fold, it enables the plan implementers to see what private sector services are available, and, at the same time, identify where gaps exist in tourism services. Gaps may be opportunities for new business development. The primary and common attraction to Corridor visitors is the quality and quantity of private and public outdoor recreational resources. Privately owned special attractions are quite diverse and exist in most of the Corridor communities. The data provided in the brief synopses in the chart below will serve as a source for future tourism planning as well as for business development purposes.

### **Continue Efforts to Expand High Speed Broad Band with FWHC Communities**

Develop this section with background information on the issues and also include work updated presently underway by the Adirondack Gateway Council through the HUD Sustainable Grant. Also include the pilot efforts underway with the White Space Project in the Town of Thurman.

### **Millenials, the Elderly and Special Needs Visitors**

Develop this section as it pertains to their opportunities to utilize the tourism resources of the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor.

**Redesign the charts and tables below for a better fit in the document.**

**FOOD AND LODGING**

Availability	Gaps
<p>The selection of food and lodging choices vary and the traveler is likely to find campgrounds and motels, resorts and rental cabins in just about every community from Corinth to North Creek. Lodging options in terms of style and price point are diverse and spread out along the larger communities of Corinth, Lakes George and Luzerne, Warrensburg, Chestertown and North Creek. Lodging options are also seasonally limited, depending upon location, so it is very important for visitors to call ahead for availability.</p> <p>Standard restaurant fare-both seasonal and year round is available in almost every community along the trail. While Adirondack Cuisine is a relatively new idea, upscale four season dining is plentiful in the larger communities all along the route.</p>	<p>An opportunity exists to create vernacular cuisine, such as Adirondack Cuisine to help market area restaurants, local products, and special local <i>terroir</i>. <i>Terrior</i> represents the special characteristics that the <a href="#">geography</a>, <a href="#">geology</a>, and <a href="#">climate</a> of a certain place lend to flavor of the local foods or drinks.</p>

**SHOPPING**

Availability	Gaps
<p>Recent tourism surveys indicate that one of the preferred tourism activities when on vacation is shopping. This is especially important when the weather is inclement. Corridor leaders need to promote opportunities to buy local. There are numerous opportunities for visitors to shop for antiques, local crafts, clothing, gifts, foods, and outdoor gear for recreational pursuits located in nearly every community along the Corridor. There are also outlet stores located in nearby Queensbury. Special shopping events include “The World’s Biggest Garage Sale,” hosted every summer by the Town of Warrensburg. The garage sale is a very popular destination where every sidewalk, yard, lot, garage, and available space becomes a showcase for treasure hunters. During the first week in June, Lake George Village hosts the Americade that includes a 80,000 square foot tent full of vendors. Corinth also has a diverse retail base. Outdoor enthusiasts can purchase recreational equipment including fishing rods, bullets and bait in almost every Corridor community.</p>	<p>Essential services are needed in many Corridor communities. For example, Lake Luzerne or Hadley could use a dry goods/country store, similar to the Vermont Country store or Old Forge Hardware where residents and visitors can purchase items such as socks, boating supplies, and clothing. More outfitters catering to the outdoor recreation market could be further developed throughout the Corridor.</p>

## ATTRACTIONS

Availability	Gaps
<p>A diverse collection of special attractions for visitors includes horseback riding, rodeos, whitewater rafting, skiing, and scenic railroad excursions. Special attractions are spread throughout the entire Corridor and others are easily accessible near the Corridor. Golfers can swing at 1,000 Acres (Stony Creek), Bend of the River (Hadley) and Cronin’s (Warrensburg). Equestrians can enjoy Bennett’s Riding (Lake Luzerne), and the Rodeos at 1,000 Acres (Stony Creek) and the Painted Pony Ranch (Lake Luzerne). Ski rentals are available at Gore Mountain (Johnsburg) and Snowmobile rentals at Bennett’s Riding (Lake Luzerne). Winter sliding is convenient at Tubby Tubes in Lake Luzerne. The Lake George Steamboat Company offers scenic boat cruises of Lake George and the scenic railroad at North Creek provides various excursion opportunities. Thurman offers farm tours including Nettle Meadows. Details regarding the abundance of NYS Department of Environmental Conservation campgrounds, trails and waterways can be found in the Recreation section of this plan. For details about multi-modal and alternative modes of transportation (i.e., rail, canoeing, bicycling), please refer to the Transportation, Safety and Community Design section of this plan. As travelers visit one community after another, they will find that experiencing Corridor attractions is convenient any time of the year.</p>	<p>The development of the excursion railroad eliminated an important snowmobile trail that parallels NYS Route 418. Efforts are underway to re-route the trail through private property so that the linear connection to other snowmobile trails is sustained. Bicycle, kayak, and canoe rentals are needed in Thurman, Lake Luzerne, and Hadley where a whitewater rodeo site is in development. The Corridor’s small ski areas, Garnet Hill (Johnsburg), Hickory Hill (Warrensburg) and Dynamite Hill (Chestertown) and the Town of Warrensburg’s toboggan run require renovation and further development, particularly after Hurricane Irene. The Dean Farm has 217 acres and plans call for a 3.5 mile multi-use trail with 1.3 miles of accessible trails.</p>

## ARTS

Availability	Gaps
<p>The arts are well represented throughout the entire Corridor in the form of arts centers, galleries, museums, and studios. Many are open year-round. There are also theaters and performance spaces in the Towns of Lake George, Hadley, Lake Luzerne, Warrensburg, Chester, and Johnsburg. These cultural centers offer special opportunities for visitors. For example, the Tannery Pond Community Center in the Hamlet of North Creek offers performances in music and theater by local and nationally-known artists, while the Adirondack Folk</p>	<p>Opportunities to celebrate the arts could be revitalized. For example, the Stony Creek Mountain Days and Fiddlers Jamboree utilize an outdated facility. The Town of Thurman has an active historical society, but does not currently have display space for important artifacts. Thurman is also in need of indoor performance space to supplement the open stage available at Veteran’s Memorial field behind the Town Hall used for the summer concert series. The “Last of</p>

<p>School in Lake Luzerne hosts a plethora of arts workshops for children and adults. The North Country Arts Center in Chester is a satellite gallery hosting visual art shows.</p>	<p>the Mohicans” Outdoor Drama in Lake George Town is a growing grassroots organization that lacks indoor performance space. The Floyd Bennett bandstand in Warrensburg requires renovation so that it can be used as a performance venue. The Folk School in Lake Luzerne would like to expand and create a Hudson River School art gallery across from the folk school. They would also like to build a 150-seat outdoor amphitheater and performance space.</p>
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**REST ROOMS**

<b>Availability</b>	<b>Gaps</b>
<p>Public restrooms can be located at Town Offices, Libraries, Historical Societies, and some of the public parks—only during business hours. Bathrooms are being constructed (in 2012) in Hadley and Thurman at the train stations.</p>	<p>Public restrooms are needed in Chestertown, Warrensburg, and Hadley hamlets and at the Riparius and North Creek train stations.</p>

**GAS/AUTO SERVICES**

<b>Availability</b>	<b>Gaps</b>
<p>Gasoline and automobile services, including towing services, air pumps, mechanics, and service stations can be found throughout the Corridor. Service stations can be found in Corinth, Lake Luzerne, Warrensburg, Chestertown, and North Creek. Towing and mechanic services are available in all communities except the Town of Stony Creek.</p>	<p>There are no gas stations or air pumps in the Towns of Hadley, Stony Creek, or Thurman.</p>

**MEDICAL SERVICES**

<b>Availability</b>	<b>Gaps</b>
<p>Travelers can find year-round emergency medical care and walk-in clinics. Regional hospitals are located at Glens Falls and Saratoga Springs. Urgent Care walk-in clinics can be found in Corinth, Warrensburg, and Queensbury, with by appointment-only medical facilities in Chestertown and in North Creek located at the Tri-County Nursing Home. Every town except Thurman has ambulance/emergency services. Lake Luzerne, Lake</p>	<p>The Towns of Hadley, Thurman, and Stony Creek do not have pharmacies.</p>

George, Warrensburg, Chestertown, North Creek, and Corinth have pharmacies.	
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Gaps</b>
Wireless access is available near most town halls. Internet access can be found at public libraries and, in some cases, town offices. Public telephones can be located in many of the communities throughout the Corridor. Internet service is becoming more available at lodgings. Communities are working to make internet service available to travelers at lodging and other popular visitor venues. Several additional towers have been erected recently (or will be within the next year) that will improve wireless broadband connections.	Cellular communications connectivity can be problematic, particularly in the upland reaches where signals are weak and easily interrupted by mountains and valleys. This may not be considered a problem to some visitors, who come to the region to escape the 24/7 lifestyle, but it is a problem for those who want to maintain constant connectivity. Cell phone service as an emergency connection in remote areas needs to be improved.
<b>CHURCHES</b>	
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Gaps</b>
Most of the communities provide a range of denominations for worship, including Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Pentecostal.	No places of worship are present in the Towns of Stony Creek or Thurman.
<b>BANKS AND ATMs</b>	
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Gaps</b>
Most communities have at least an ATM available in convenience or grocery stores and the larger communities, such as Corinth and Lake George have at least one bank.	No ATMs or banks are present in the Towns of Hadley, Stony Creek, or Thurman.
<b>SPECIAL EVENTS</b>	
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Gaps</b>
Special annual events, such as seasonal festivals, holiday celebrations, and themed “happenings” are scheduled throughout the year in Corridor communities. A sample event listing follows in Table # 14 below:	As can be seen from the following event chart list, most communities offer special events throughout the year. Not every month has an event and activities throughout the entire

Corridor that visitors can experience in one trip could be expanded and coordinated.

### **Outstanding Examples of Private Sector Sites, Attractions, and Services**

A few places of exceptional interest that visitors report captures local character are included in Table 15 below:

**Table 15: Places of Exceptional Interest**

<b>Place</b>	<b>Township</b>
The Barn Shops	Corinth
Fort William Henry Resort Hotel	Lake George
Painted Pony Rodeo	Lake Luzerne
Adirondack Wildwaters, Inc.	Hadley
1000 Acres Ranch Resort	Stony Creek
Whitewater's Inn & Lodge	Thurman
Oscar's Smokehouse, Grist Mill Restaurant	Warrensburg
Brushwolf's Charter & Taxidermy, The Rising House	Chestertown
Gore Mt. Mineral Shop & Barton Mines	North Creek

The following are list of recommended actions to be undertaken within local communities or within the entire First Wilderness Heritage Corridor to achieve the desired goals of the Marketing and Promotion Plan. Selected actions have specific objectives as identified. (The current actions represent a work in progress.)

**Actions:**

- ❖ Create a marketing message that recognizes that the Upper Hudson River landscape and surrounding community character is the setting for an authentic “wilderness” experience.
- ❖ Develop a marketing strategy that takes into account the various categories of the tourism industry that are diversified, customized and specialized. Their attributes can positively impact the diversity and seasonality of visitors to the Corridor. These travel categories include leisure tourism, heritage tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, wildlife tourism and wellness tourism.
- ❖ Develop an enhanced Web and Facebook presence with sites that are designed to capture the attention of local residents and businesses, visitors and travelers – national and international. The sites will provide relevant and timely information on recreational resources, hiking and cycling trails, community events, transportation availability, programs for exploring the Corridor – on land and by water and suggested travel itineraries. These sites are intended to be interactive and will include links to essential visitor services within the Corridor and to other heritage and scenic byways in the Adirondack Region. These tasks will be accomplished through a combination of planning staff involvement with assistance from a professional marketing company.
- ❖ Design and develop brochures, rack cards, post cards, banners and other advertising materials for organizations and events within the Corridor.
- ❖ Identify and market alternative or soft tourism resources and events for the handicapped and mobility impaired.
- ❖ Market ‘Main Street’ as a destination within each of the communities and develop strategies for sustainable small business development.  
(Specific Objectives: Encourage participation in the annual Adirondack Buyer Days by local craft producers sponsored by the Adirondack North Country Association.)
- ❖ Maximize opportunities for promoting train travel within the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor – particularly as it relates to visitor activities and community events.  
(Specific Objectives: Develop a partner program between local FWHC communities and the SNC Railroad for the promotion of events and special activities.)
- ❖ Identify and expand new outdoor tourism activities and events – both passive and active - within the Corridor communities. These would include organized club events such as geocaching and wildlife watching.  
(Specific Objectives: Determine the location and availability of appropriate sites within the FWHC for special events connected with off-road vehicle clubs, equine trails for



leisure and endurance events, mountain biking and off road trails for all season use, paddling and other water-craft events –sponsored by groups like Northern NY Paddlers)

- ❖ Market visitor experiences that are designed to encourage overnight travel which will generate increased economic activity for lodging, dining and shopping.
- ❖ Promote hiking and cycling trails along the riverfront and rail line that physically link Corridor communities.
- ❖ Develop and supplement existing interpretative and way-finding signage for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Identify opportunities for the use of QR codes for use with Smart Technology devices within the Corridor as a way to enhance the visitor's available information on resources and services.
- ❖ Organize an advisory committee composed of representatives from the County tourism office, local business, chambers of commerce, outdoor adventure clubs and local government that can provide guidance on marketing strategies and visitor evaluations.
- ❖ Identify other heritage corridors or scenic byways within the Adirondack Region and elsewhere in NYS that could achieve benefit through cross-promotion. Determine marketing organizations that are best suited for collaboration locally and within the region.