

River Council

September 25, 2007

Present: Lee Younge, Jim Pfiffer, Tom Beecher, Mike Hastrich, Sam Draper, Jim Arey, Jim Hare, Doc Gee, Bob Butcher, Debbie Peterson, Bob Bailey, Jennifer Fais, Linda Couchon

1 September 13th Public Meeting

About 160 people came. Great Press.
Mike Haas and Rick Manning did a great job
Great comments/participation
Summary of forms and flip charts –Appendix A
Skip Mills “clip board” comments –Appendix B
Feedback was sent to Haas

2. Additional Public Venues

9/22/07 Chemung County Sportsmen’s day at the Fairgrounds, Linda attended
Online: Smaller version of powerpoint online---available for viewing and giving feedback.
9/29/07 Chemung Fall Fest at Chemung Canal-----Linda will have booth

October 1, 7-9, Open House, Town Hall, Town of Chemung

Linda will bring materials
George Richter, Jim Birney, Doc Gee (and others!) will be there to talk to people
Please INVITE FOLKS TO ATTEND

Oct 18, 7-9. at Big Flats Community Center

Lee Younge and Justin Woods will decide on the format and let Linda know.

3. Greenway—Chemung River Greenway

The Big Flats LWRP grant includes the formation of a multi-municipal “greenway” (Appendix C)
Creating a Greenway positions us to go after Chemung River Greenway legislation creating a state line item to promote the greenway. (see Hudson Valley Greenway and the Niagara Greenway notes, Appendix D)

Great partners for this work include the Susquehanna Greenway (The Northern Branch greenway coordinator wants to meet with River Council in October), New York Parks and Conservation Association, DEC in line with their Open Space Plan, and others (see notes in Appendix D)

We will need to draft a resolution for municipalities that verifies their support of the greenway concept.

4. Sustainability of River Council

Current grants fund River Council staff via Cornell Extension (Linda’s time)
Grants currently have 12/31/07 as end date but may need to be extended into first quarter of 2008.
No new funding is available as of 1/1/08.
We have not done a good job keeping the County Executive and Legislature up to date on River Council.
There is a lot of work to be done to keep the River Council moving ahead as a regional project. A new LWRP state grant should be out any day. Work on the Greenway compact needs to be done now in order to work toward March 2009 funding.
The River Council is an excellent model for what municipalities can accomplish together.

Lee Younge will request a date for River Council representatives to meet with Tom Santulli and Mike Krusen after the October 9th meeting
Jennifer Fais, Lee Younge, Jim Pfiffer, Linda and Mike Hastrich will meet to put together a presentation for River Council to review on Oct. 9.

5. Other River Council constituencies we need to meet with

STEG via our representative, Paul Rossi.
Safety folks (County, police, fire departments)

6. FYI

Linda and Rick Manning met with Bob Adams, owner of Willow Creek Golf Course. There is no place for the river trail to go except right on the end of the golf course where folks could get “bonked”. Bob is very willing to consider options. The golf course is beautiful!

7. Next meetings:

October 9: review proposal to County

October 23

November 13

APPENDIX A

From Sept. 13, 2007 Public Meeting comment sheets

Town/ City	What project is most important to you? Why?	Comments - Passions - Feedback	What about this plan will attract people to the area?	What business(es) would compliment these river projects?
Horsehds		<p>Create sections that can be used as walking/biking trail till full trail is complete.</p> <p>Future connections to Corning, Horseheads and other bike and hiking trails</p> <p>Include future camping sites near site.</p>		
Elmira	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better access from downtown Elmira. 2. Link of trails thru different towns and cities and tie in with other regional trails. 3. Multi use but not conflicting. 4. Keep all area clean and safe. 	<p>Develop Gull Island as a tourist attraction</p> <p>The river has great value in all the points discussed. The community needs to embrace it and what it has to offer.</p> <p>The master plan and funding are important. I also have concern for the funds and grants to maintain this whole trail system. Sometimes parks & trails are built with grants and funds and are not maintained years later. This maintenance needs to be part of the master plan to insure it for future generations to enjoy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good publicity 2. Easy to use and find - signage crucial 3. Activity that all socio-economic people can use and benefit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restaurants/ shops 2. Museums 3. Tourism. 4. Rentals/outfitters 5. Hotel/campgrounds 6. Festival/community organizations 7. The working of private, public, and community is so critical to the success of this project. Master plans are so much needed with input from all parties 8. Publicity is so critical and to have positive press and making it something that all can embrace and buy into. 9. It can build more momentum as you show short term success of goals to work to long term goals. <p>Keep up the good work. You can see and experience the results.</p>

West Elmira	Extended River Trail	Markers along river with info about history at various sites Signage to indicate local businesses near trail to identify local wildlife.	Boating, fishing, cross country skiing. The variety of experiences possible for multi-generational experience	boat and bike rentals; food; theater
Elmira	Access - views, walking ways on the river in the city downtown.	Recreation & Eco-tourism. Lady from Painted Post mentioned doing reenactments--Treaty with Indians from 1791 –	River access. Continuity of trails	Outfitter Restaurants with patios over the river.
Elmira		1. Outfitters store at Water Board * Great ideas! Also add Ice Cream Shop? 2. Would White Wagon Park also have 4 hole or two for play? 3. Fish ladder great idea! 4. I'd like to see Grove & Botcher's launches upgraded "visually" to look more "park like" with some landscaping like White Wagon.	Trail, White Water Park, business	1. Bars & restaurants need to overlook river, balcony or patio. 2. Outdoor supply & outfitters, kayak, bike, hike, etc. 3. Small craft shops & galleries, specialty stores.
Horsehds	Trails open to horses. I enjoy seeing the river from the back of a horse.	I would like to see the greenways & rails to trails, have a path developed for horse use. The Pine Creek Trail in PA is a good example. Trails which we are permitted are also the Penn Yan to Dresden & Erie Canal. Educate different trail users with needs of various		
Elmira	River trail in City			Restaurants
Chemung		Chemung River Rail Trail in Trail Bed, 4.8 mile loop D.O.T. spoken to? To Lowman Old River Rd. 1. Kennedy Valve Truck Parking (city lot). 2. Trolley line connecting Corning to Waverly, Curren Rd to Fitches Bridge.	Outdoor exercise in beautiful surrounding	Message therapy
Chemung	Trails that would encourage opening as much as possible to	Our horse farm, Foxwin Farm, is located on Rt. 427, town of Chemung. Many of our riders are enthusiastic Trail Riders, so trail access	Everything!	

	horses/riders.	especially from Wellsburg to White Wagon Rd. (and beyond) would be greatly appreciated by them, and by riders from outside the area. Many riders are very interested in the historical aspects of their trails, as well as the scenery, so those areas would also potentially be very popular		
Elmira	River channels through riffles for motor boating up and down stream. Have a 2 - 3 ft. depth in riffle areas. Ideal: have a 3 ft. depth channel (pass safe) through entire river system.	Docks at boat ramps	Race boat events. Fishing events.	Boat, raft & tackle shops.
Big Flats	Equestrian. I love to trail ride.	Something similar to Pine Creek in PA for horses, bikers, walkers along the railroad bed at least 8 miles long. I am concerned that once these trails are designated for equestrian they will not be allowed.		
Corning	Hiking/biking trail along the Chemung River from Elmira to Corning.	The communities from Elmira to Corning would benefit from a hiking, biking, roller blading and cross country skiing trail along the Chemung River from Elmira to Corning. Successful examples can be seen along the Erie Canal near Rochester; trails in and around Denver and Boulder Colorado	The river is beautiful; and a trail would show it off.	Cafes, outfitters, bicycle & rollerblade sellers would benefit.
Horsehds	Improve business in Elmira - ideas: 1) Clean up and improve river 2) Put NYC lunch Café 3) Put trolley in from Elmira to Corning and return.	This improvement to the river sounds great. It could be very expensive but we need to some how to go and get it done.	A lot of advertising with other cities Chamber of Commerce.	Recreational-sneaker, boating (canoe, kayak) etc.

Big Flats		Camp sites/RV camping. Availability of canoes/kayak, youth oriented activities and planning.		Rental of canoes/bikes for two
Big Flats	River - water quality, natural habitat for wildlife, fishery - all monitored by users.	Private land liability? Who builds the bridges on private land? Who maintains these trails? Issues of low flooding areas.	Quality and destinations along the way - break points of trail.	Outfitters and food services.
Spencer	Horse trail. I'd rather spend my money locally than out of the area.	Anywhere you're willing to allow us access. You're welcome to call me. President of Twin Tier Trail Riders Horse Club, Candace Coupe, 589-6551.	We have a club that includes people from Watertown, NY to Philli. PA to NJ to Erie, NY	Food, gas, groceries, local items.
Elmira	Access pass through the dam, recreation.	The project looks great and will definitely attract more people to that area. People can spend a day outside doing outdoor activities and relaxing.	Improvements in the area will attract people to visit the area more often.	Restaurants, boating.
Elmira	Access pass through the dam, recreation.			
Elmira	Access pass through the dam. Recreation - convenient access to fund things to do. Winter boating or river capabilities.	Boating is an important area to focus on. My college friends and I love to paddle the river.	Easy access to great recreation. Convenience.	Outfitters, hotel, restaurants, coffee shop on the trail
West Elmira	Recreation, the need to relax, have a place to take the family to have an outdoor area to do activities. Promote family togetherness.	I would love to see a small stage area for local concerts in the warmer seasons. For the winter season have areas for trail walkers to get warm.		
Milan, PA	Equestrian trails we don't want to be shut out of this trail system as we have been on the trail system that runs from Watkins Glen to Horseheads. This is along a AA bed that we use to use and now can't	There are no shared use trails for Horse Riders in this area. Horse riders only need dirt paths to ride on. They don't have to be fancy on the equestrian sides.		
Southport	Plan for fish passage			
Elmira	Bicycle trails because	Put lights on the bridges in downtown to	The variety of sports:	Outfitters (water craft & bikes),

	that's what I do. A trail through downtown along the river would get a lot of use.	highlight the arches and/or super structure. This would be great for the new restaurant(s) that overlook the river.	biking, kayaking, canoeing, etc	restaurants, RV parks.
Corning	Trails that give fishing access to the river. Right now the situation is very limited by lack of parking and private property.		Would like to see publicity noting fishing spots, fish species and access points.	Sporting goods, outfitter, etc.
Elmira	Enhance trails already by the river between Grove St & Pirozzollo Park.	Grove Street location - "crest" of hill very dangerous - when driving over top, it is impossible to see if there is an oncoming vehicle or children. White Water/"fish ladder" great idea! More access to funding - great to continue future development of events.		
Elmira	Low-impact fun & education. It's highly important NOT to pollute the river as this project develops	Where artificial lighting is needed, use the newly developed lights that project downwards and do not produce light pollution laterally and upwards. Under NO circumstances should motorized vehicles (e.g. ATV's) be allowed on the trails the only exception should be handicapped persons on electric wheelchairs or scooters.		
Chemung	Hiking and walking trails			
Chemung	Trails - love of hiking & exercise	Unified trail system from Elmira to Chemung		
Elmira	1. Historical points as interest along river combines location, history, use and identifying features along Chemung (river guides, tourist and travelogues, reenactments). 2. Recreation & leisure: walking, biking, canoeing,	1. Brand Park - a possible launch site? 2. Lower bridge crossings? 3. Concerts, River Deck dances.	As our natural resources become the treasures they are : the Chemung River becomes a huge attraction, a jewel.	Breakfast: coffee, lounge overlooks

	kayaking creates appreciation of Chemung.			
Elmira-City	Gateway Park combined with upgrades to Mt Riverfront Park. A Gateway to draw people from the highway to promote all of the area tourism and increase tourism and economic development?	<p>Pedestrian - friendly combined with restaurants coffee/snack kiosks in Mt Riverfront Park will make DT Elmira an attraction.</p> <p>River access is a must!</p> <p>Model Geneva, Seneca Falls, Waterloo, Watertown, etc.</p> <p>Hook the trail to the Promenade - Lackawanna trail, Eldridge Park, Catherine Valley trail.</p>	The trails will really help people to enjoy the river.	Restaurants, tourism
Elmira	Make sections of trail good for elder hiking.			
Elmira		Safety of portage around river. Scout leader comment: "we always left the river West of Elmira because of the dangerous dam."		Outfitters

Rank in importance for the success of the river plan

	Trails	Recreation	Boat portage/dam	Access	Historical significance	
1=most important	68%	10%	10%	10%	3%	31 responses
2	7%	36%	7%	39%	11%	28 responses
3	11%	30%	11%	33%	15%	27 responses
4	9%	26%	22%	13%	30%	23 responses
5=least important	5%	9%	50%	5%	32%	22 responses

Comments recorded on flip charts

General	<p>Get schools involved for youth input. Put in an educational facility. Swimming pool at river's edge Our river can be like Rockford, IL "Along the Mohawk River". Good model. "Lazy River" for ice skating, floating, but no swimming. Restaurants on the river - taking advantage of views. Use river as an asset. Telescopes from platforms on buildings to river (Iszards). Riverfront Park should be friendly to pedestrians and festivals-keep in mind lighting. Use of water for kids. History connecting Painted Post treat with Elmira (signing). Incorporate needs of family non-trail users points of interest.</p>
Fishing	<p>Denil poor for shad. Fish attracted to sound & oxygen White Water Park great for aesthetics and fish more cost effective? Encourage fishing access - Publicize.</p>
Boating	<p>Interest in whitewater - question of cost.</p>
Land ownership	<p>Liability for private landowners when trail crosses What incentives to encourage? Recreational use statute. You are protected (may need to pay defense) Will do property owner meeting Liability for private landowners when trail crosses-what might incentives be for landowners to allow access?</p>
Trails	<p>Woods-West Elmira-mulching paths so trail takes folks through the woods. (Grove Street/Pirozzolo Park) Connect Corning to Elmira/Connect to Corning River Trail New trail in Steuben County- 30-40 miles of Great Eastern Trail. Winter use? Cross Country Skiing Add to trails - trash, recycling availability.</p>
Equestrian	<p>100 member trail horse/donkey riders – go elsewhere to ride and spend dollars Need entertainment for rest of family. They do clean ups. Horse trails - don't shut us out – can't use Catherarine Valley Trail Horses are spooked by cyclists.</p>
Kiosks	<p>Put up kiosks to inform, add emergency phone. Kiosks and signage critical.</p>
Launch sites	<p>RV Park at White Wagon Ind. Park.</p>
Bridges	<p>Lights on bridges. Bridges - not nice place to be, make less harsh.</p>

APPENDIX B

Data collected by Skip Mills on clip board

Overall everyone was very impressed and pleased with the overall concept and many of the proposals presented.

Six equestrians were interviewed. They were unanimous in suggesting,

- A horse trail from Elmira to at least Chemung would be ideal
- Split trails, Pedestrian/bicycle on one side –paved or otherwise, earthen horse trail beside it was both ideal and with no safety conflicts.
- Trail Etiquette Rules, already established, should be posted periodically.
- Historical markers on these trails are very important to locals as well as tourists.
- They would use their \$100,000. for this
- Continuing trails into Pennsylvania and Horseheads would be great.

One person favored the inflatable dam.

The low river level was a concern. The favored white water rafting idea would not function well in times like this year.

Another city uses an inflatable tub-like device for use as the local swimming pool. Placed in the river, they then pump treated river water into it for the summer.

A connection to the Tanglewood trails from the Route 352 trail could be beneficial said a BF resident.

One person was highly in favor of the suggested E. Water Street Visitor Center across from Kennedy Valve.

- Location, location, location! Much easier to locate than the Chamber office.
- 24/7 display of tourism and local site information is possible.
- Major entry area to the City
- Historical site in itself and on the proposed trails
- Provides a much better impression of the area than a truck parking area.
- Another space for the trucks to park would be necessary.
- The trucks blocking the street while backing into KV loading docks could pose some problems. Can a solution to that be developed?

With a County population over age 65 of almost 16% inexpensive, dirt or wood chip paths may be not only economical but preferred as gravel paths are rough on the feet. Blacktop paths are hard on seniors and joggers.

If not available, a set of Trail Etiquette Rules should be developed and posted along all trails. I suspect one has been developed already.

Personally, I think we are missing the boat, no pun intended, by not seriously considering the floating dock/boat tie up idea presented with the Lake Street Bridge Use material.

- With the bypass of the dam boating should flourish. Evidence of this is the interest in the Water Board building by an Outfitter.
- It adds to the attraction of the area for all boaters from the Chesapeake Bay on up.
- It provides access to handicapped persons for close river contact and fishing.
- Would provide easy boater entry to the City for restaurants, art and historical centers, Brand Park weekend activities and several trails.
- Assists the only current business providing bait and tackle supplies in close proximity to the river and those needing those facilities.
- If toilet facilities are provided in Brand Park it is another convenience and reason to stop for boaters.

It was interesting to see some of the ideas introduced in the Lake Street Bridge Use material being suggested for the Main Street Bridge. The disappointing aspect was the suggestion of waiting until the bridge was rebuilt to accomplish it.

If not available, a set of Trail Etiquette Rules should be developed and posted along all trails. I suspect one has been developed already.

APPENDIX C

Greenway 101

What

Involve voluntary regional cooperation
Connects people and communities along a linear feature such as rivers, roads, stream valleys
Links natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources while conserving open space
Reflects values of diverse stakeholders - builds on public participation/community engagement
Protects open space, water quality, wildlife habitat corridors
Guides development via actions and priorities
Both public and private ownership
Both a destination and a corridor

Benefits

Community revitalization (regional identity, unity, quality of life)
Economic (tourism, business, real estate value)
Environmental (protection, enhancement, stewardship)

Floodplain management
Education –Conservation, environmental, historic, cultural, natural
Recreation / healthy living
Transportation alternative

APPENDIX D

Hudson River Valley Greenway, www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us
Greenway Compact – a voluntary regional planning vision developed collaboratively and promotes criteria below.

Greenway criteria/goals

Natural and cultural resource protection
Regional planning
Economic development (tourism, ag and urban redevelopment)
Public access
Heritage and environmental education

Six counties:

- Westchester-regional approach to economic development-tourism, main street revitalization, protection of resources, increased access
- Putnam-mapped inventory of cultural, historic, environmental and economic resources, formulating integration strategies, land use law
- Rockland- incorporating in county comprehensive plan, waterfront revitalization plan
- Orange-
- Albany- revitalization of riverfront communities, participatory, inter-municipal committees, planning documents
- Dutchess-vision for regional thinking, strategic plan, policy framework, development patterns, key projects, land use tools

Online community planning guide

www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/commcoun/commplnguide2ndedition.pdf

Guide and sourcebook from Dutchess County available at www.dutchessny.gov (Linda has copies)

Niagara River Greenway

www.niagaragreenway.org

Susquehanna Greenway Partnership

www.susquehannagreenway.org

Multiple use greenway, links water trails, scenic, historic and cultural places.
Planning/Planning process

Purpose/scope of work
Inventory data, resources, plans
Vision
Mapping
Action Plan and Final Plan

Many online tools and resources

Greenways & Rail-Trails NY-New York Parks and Conservation Association (NYPCA)

www.nypca.org/greenways/overview.shtml

A statewide conservation initiative that:

- encourages and assists local communities to create greenways and community trails,
- promotes planning for a regional and statewide networking of trails, and to advocate for greenways and rail-trails in Albany.
- works on the local and statewide level to promote community-based trails and a statewide system of multi-use trails.
- protects existing parks
- facilitates the creation of new kinds of parks, such as canal trails, greenways, and heritage areas.

Canalway Trail www.nypca.org/canalway/index.shtml

Genesee Valley Greenway www.fogvg.org/