

## **Seven Adopted Recommendations of the Central Catskills Collaborative**

- Improving interpretation of and access to the Catskill Forest Preserve;
- Greater CCC participation in rail corridor revitalization;
- Pursuing inter-municipal funding opportunities;
- Engaging educational institutions to assist the CCC in its objectives;
- Maintaining regular communications with State agencies (e.g., the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Transportation);
- Implementation of established recommendations from planning documents and
- Further exploration of the creation of a Scenic Byway for Route 28.

## **Review of Selected Partnership Projects**

### **Esopus-Delaware Revitalization Strategy**

The six original Collaborative communities (excluding Hurley), the Catskill Center, and SUNY ESF (Landscape Architecture Department) combined efforts on a successful grant application for the Esopus-Delaware Revitalization Strategy, a proposal to improve better awareness of and connection to these two designated inland waterways through site improvements, signage, marketing, and other means. The grant, sponsored by the town of Olive, brought more than \$90,000, which was matched in-kind labor by volunteers in the communities and by in-kind services by the partnering organizations.

### **Community Resilience in the Central Catskills**

When the kickoff of the Esopus-Delaware Revitalization Project was delayed, Margaret Bryant, a professor in the SUNY ESF Landscape Architecture Department chose to initiate a separate project, at no cost to the six communities. Community Resilience in the Central Catskills was a regional planning studio project, in which several students conducted in-depth GIS mapping inventories and proposed several corridor-wide and site-specific projects along the corridor. Professor Bryant provided a project overview to the Collaborative at the February 2009 meeting, and the project concluded at the April 2009 meeting when professors and students gave a series of presentations using numerous poster board which were displayed at the meeting. The value of the posters to the Collaborative's efforts along the corridor prompted the idea of having an exhibit of the students' work.

### **Historic Route 28 - The Making of a Scenic Byway -- Erpf Gallery Exhibit**

Opened in the Fall 2010; features several of the students color panels, maps, designs (including one for proposed Water Discovery Center), as well as several panels on the scenic byway nomination, historic maps, and aerial photography. Jo Margaret Mano, Professor of Geography at SUNY New Paltz was a major partner in the exhibit – securing funding from the SUNY NP Research Foundation, researching history of Route 28, loaning historic maps, and

developing panels. She also spoke at the opening. At the opening, the scenic byway logo contest was announced by the Collaborative. (The exhibit continues to hang in the rear gallery at the Erpf Center).

### **Logo Contest**

The Collaborative decided to hold a design contest for the scenic byway logo, and they developed the submission rules and guidelines, forming a committee, establishing an email address, writing a press release, and distributing materials throughout the region to create awareness. More than 15 designs were submitted. At a Collaborative meeting, the audience helped narrow the field to six finalists. These were hung at the Erpf Gallery along with the exhibit, where people could cast votes. The winner was announced in March 2011. Kurt Boyer of Kurt Boyer Designs, a Shandaken resident who lives and has a shop on Route 28, received \$100 for his bobcat footprint logo. The logo contest helped get a lot of media attention about the project while involving the public.

### **CWC Grant for CMP**

In 2008 New York State pledged \$200,000 to the corridor communities after the communities decided to pursue a scenic byway nomination. Unfortunately, all the funding fell through. The Collaborative communities were committed to the project and applied for a CWC grant and successfully received one-quarter of the amount (\$50,000). The town of Olive stepped up to take the lead on submitting the grant on behalf of the other six communities. And the communities each pledged to contribute in-kind support by forming local byway groups and conducting the inventory of intrinsic qualities. This collaboration has been at the heart of the nomination and demonstrates how the corridor communities are cooperating inter-municipally to collectively promote their resources for economic benefit.

### **Kiosk Project**

In the late 1980s a site in Mt. Tremper was acquired for the purpose of developing a Catskill Interpretive Center; however, for various reasons, the site has remained largely undeveloped. In 2008, at Catskills Local Government Day, the idea to construct an interpretive kiosk (with regional information for visitors) was presented to a panel of speakers who included representatives from NYS DEC, DOT, and NYC DEP. All were favorable. The Collaborative then formed a committee to work on this project. At a Collaborative meeting, at which Diane Galusha was the speaker on the subject of the watershed commemorative kiosks, one of the Collaborative members suggested that SUNY Delhi be contacted, and he reached out to the president of the college. This led to the involvement of the SUNY Delhi Architecture Club and the Construction Technology Program. Students developed designs, presented them to the Collaborative, and the winning design – featuring sixteen interpretive panels – was constructed at the front of the site. Members of the community and organizations developed much of the content of the panels: NYS DEC designed the panels and helped prepare the construction site; numerous partners were

involved including the Friends of the Catskill Interpretive Center, the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program, the Milton and Sally Avery Foundation for the Arts, and Jeff Collins Stone Supply. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in August 2011 and speakers included Congressman Maurice Hinchey, Pete Grannis, Commissioner of NYS DEC, Paul Rush, Deputy Commissioner of NYC DEP, and Sherret Chase of the Friends of the Catskill Interpretive Center.

The successful partnerships of this project have contributed to the next phase of the project. After Congressman Hinchey secured \$380,000 in funding, project partners have again enlisted the assistance of SUNY Delhi. In this phase, the Architecture Department will design proposals for a facility that combines visitor information with restrooms on the main portion of the site. This is a significant step toward realizing the longstanding vision to provide an information facility for visitors to the Catskills.

### **Route 28 Audio Tour**

Brett Barry, owner of Silver Hollow Audio in Chichester, was invited to be a speaker at a Collaborative meeting, at which he proposed an audio driving tour for motorists on Route 28. The Collaborative readily supported the project, incorporated it into the draft CMP for the scenic byway, and has been working with Brett to develop format and content. The "Catskill Mountains Scenic Driving Tour", which will be a compact disc, will feature a series of interviews with area residents and experts in the areas of history, art, the environment, along with interpretive information on the region's special resources, music, and natural sounds. The project recently received funding from the New York State Council on the Humanities and is expected to be largely completed this year. This is great news. The Collaborative recognizes the importance of having tangible accomplishments that help promote our area, to accompany the longer range planning visions, such as the scenic byway. Congratulations Brett!