



LAKE TO LOCKS PASSAGE

*A program to rejuvenate communities
along North America's first interconnected waterway*

The economic future of rural Upstate New York rests upon delivering a unique tourism experience. Lakes to Locks Passage connects historic, natural, cultural and recreational resources along North America's first interconnected waterway – the Champlain Canal/Upper Hudson River, Lake George and Lake Champlain to the Richelieu River – to deliver an authentic, place-based tourism experience and foster the development of 21st century technology and multimedia skills.

www.lakestolocks.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

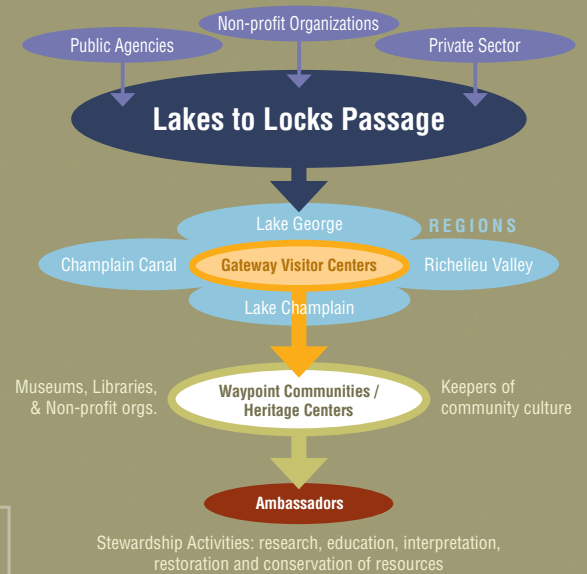
We seek partnerships with public agencies, non-profit organizations and private sector interests to help us develop, refine and implement a program that draws on the creative, intellectual and physical resources of the region to rejuvenate communities in Upstate New York. This grassroots initiative has identified key elements to guide implementation. The program:

- Serves two audiences – **the resident and the visitor.**
- **Builds pride in place** – the fundamental element for community revitalization.
- **Creates a great place to live** – which is also a great place to establish a business, invest public resources, and to visit.
- Provides educational opportunities for 21st century technology and multimedia skills.
- Provides a venue that encourages civic engagement by all members of the community.
- **Respects and employs local management** to balance economic benefit with environmental impact.
- Defines and delivers the product through **real people, in real places**, for a unique and authentic experience that will attract national and international visitors.



- Builds **public awareness, appreciation, participation, and a commitment to the stewardship** of the historic, natural, and cultural resources for future generations.
- Invests in **building capacity for the sustainable operations** of small museums, libraries and community organizations through strong organizational leadership, efficient operation of facilities, and the cultivation of volunteers and community support.
- Establishes techniques to **measure and evaluate community benefits and economic impacts** of the program.

ANATOMY OF THE BYWAY



INFRASTRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

1991

US/UK Countryside Stewardship Exchange in Essex County served as a catalyst for the Champlain Valley Heritage Network and “community stewardship” as an economic engine

1997

Essex and Clinton Counties Waterfront Plan established a regional strategy for waterfront and community revitalization, serving as the basis for Byway planning. The 2010 update to the Waterfront and Byway Plans provides the “next generation” of projects to continue revitalization efforts

2000

Lake Champlain and Champlain Canal Byway Corridor Management Plans approved, NYS Scenic Byways recommended merger of corridors

2002

Lakes to Locks Passage created by merging byways along Lake Champlain, Lake George and Champlain Canal regions; Federal Highway Administration awarded premiere designation as an “All-American Road;” non-profit status established for management entity

BUILDING *on* SUCCESSES

BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK



**LAKES TO LOCKS
PASSAGE**

THE GREAT NORTHEAST JOURNEY

Lakes to Locks Passage was established in 2002 by the New York State Legislature as a New York State Byway, and in the same year received the Federal Highway Administration's premiere designation as an All-American Road. The corridor embraces an interconnected waterway that

consists of four sub-regions – Champlain Canal/Upper Hudson River, Lake George, and Lake Champlain in New York and the Richelieu Valley in Quebec. The bi-national quality of the corridor not only fully integrates the shared heritage and resources, it strengthens the appeal of the byway as a national and international destination for travelers.

With funding from the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byway Program and the NYS Department of State Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Lakes to Locks Passage has developed a program to deliver an authentic visitor experience through a hierarchy of visitor information and interpretive facilities – providing a window to the communities, their stories, society and culture. The key feature of the system is the network of **Waypoint Communities** – the cities, villages or hamlets that have the ability to “meet and greet” the visitor. Waypoint Communities serve as a “hub” for surrounding towns, hamlets, and countryside.

Each sub-region of Lakes to Locks Passage has a long tradition as a tourism destination on its own, so some Waypoint Communities have made significant investments for infrastructure as



Lake George Village Visitor Center

a “gateway” to their sub-region. Lakes to Locks Passage capitalizes on this by developing partnerships with existing facilities to establish **Gateway Visitor Centers** in key locations to provide the “big picture” about the byway and an introduction to the stories and experiences that can be found in the surrounding sub-region.

The primary delivery point for building the emotional and intellectual connection between the traveler and the place they have come to visit is through the Lakes to Locks



Ticonderoga Heritage Museum

Passage **Heritage Centers** located in each Waypoint Community. They are the “stage” for the community to express pride in their heritage. The managers of the Heritage Centers are “keepers of

the community culture,” often the local museum, library, or environmental organization. The Heritage Centers are prominently located on the byway, ensuring that they are one of the first physical stops people will make when entering the community. When linked together, they provide connectivity within the byway corridor.

PLACE-BASED TOURISM

Lakes to Locks Passage has begun to assemble the key components of community-based destination stewardship, also called sustainable or place-based tourism. Place-based tourism engages all members of the community and builds community pride in the place they live. Each Waypoint Community has the opportunity to deliver an authentic tourism experience that is designed to spread benefits beyond individual attractions. It encourages visitors to stop, stay and spend money in a manner that benefits the entire community, serving as the basis for community revitalization and a sound local economy.

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PROGRAMS AND PRODUCTS

2004

Lakes to Locks Passage marketing plan, graphic identity, visitor information and interpretation strategy developed

2005

Lakes to Locks Passage formal agreement for Quebec-New York cross-border tourism promotion; established first Gateway Visitor Center and Waypoint Community Heritage Centers

2008

Initiated work on IMLS Heritage Centers Sustainability Training; created first “Passage Minutes” and recognized potential for 21st century technology and multimedia products

2014

Target date for establishing all Gateway Visitor Centers; establish Ambassador training throughout region

2020

Target date for establishing all Waypoint Community Heritage Centers

Lakes to Locks Passage recognizes that a visitor seeks help with “wayfinding;” therefore, a successful Waypoint Community can practice “wayshowing” by helping the visitor create a cognitive map, know where they are going, what they are looking at, and feel good knowing that the community through which they travel cares that they have a positive experience.

DELIVERING AUTHENTICITY

Consumers of place-based tourism crave authenticity. With an understanding of how people perceive authenticity, we can incorporate the principles of “wayshowing” to provoke



the audience to learn, and engage them in a personal way, thereby rendering an authentic travel experience. The purpose of Lakes to Locks Passage Heritage Centers is

to have the people who live here tell their stories, and deliver authentic experiences. The stories, rendered in a meaningful, lively and engaging way, focus on what is natural, original, exceptional, referential, influential or ordinary. Direct personal interaction strikes an emotional chord, so the visitor will remember the experience and share it with others.

HERITAGE CENTER SUSTAINABILITY

Heritage Centers allow the visitor to explore the unique stories, immediately engaging them with the community’s “real people” – the people who have a special affinity for the area, and serve as **Lakes to Locks Passage Ambassadors**. Most importantly, service as an “ambassador” for the community stimulates civic engagement; by sharing their stories, residents build awareness – appreciation – participation – leadership – and ultimately, a commitment for stewardship of the community’s historic, natural and cultural resources for future generations.

This summary of the *Lakes to Locks Passage Corridor Management Plan* was funded by the Federal Highway Administration’s National Scenic Byway Program, administered through the New York State Department of Transportation and Lakes to Locks Passage, Inc. For additional information contact www.lakestolocks.org

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STEWARDSHIP DRIVES HERITAGE CENTER SUSTAINABILITY

Lakes to Locks Passage recognizes that this process of building stewardship can also fuel sustainable operations of community organizations that are the core of a successful place-based tourism program. The challenge that museums, libraries and community organizations face is how to build strong organizational leadership, maintain operations and programs, and cultivate volunteers. Through an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant, the Essex County Historical Society worked with Lakes to Locks Passage, and the Champlain Valley Heritage Network to develop **Heritage Center Sustainability Training** for skills and capacity building. This three-pronged approach to resource stewardship and accountability of the Centers includes: operations and management; programs and events; and Heritage Center Ambassadors.

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Lakes to Locks Passage recognizes the need to understand and evaluate the outcomes of the program in terms of community benefits and economic impacts. Demonstrating community benefits and economic impacts of Lakes to Locks Passage actions and investments depends on establishing a baseline of conditions, defining specific outcomes and measuring indicators of success. We use an outcomes based “logic model” to express how we expect to bring about the desired results. Specific outcomes and indicators of success are defined to provide a way to measuring progress over time, demonstrating the relationship between those outcomes and the operation of the program.

