

LAKES TO LOCKS PASSAGE ROADMAP for NEW YORK'S GREAT NORTHEAST JOURNEY

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'Lakes to Locks Passage: The Great Northeast Journey' website. At the top, it features the 'Geotourism MapGuide' logo and the tagline 'A TRAVEL GUIDE TO THE PLACES MOST RESPECTED AND RECOMMENDED BY LOCALS.' alongside the 'I ♥ NY' logo. A large banner image shows a historic stone building. A 'LOCAL KNOWLEDGE' sidebar on the right includes a photo of a man and the text 'The best travel advice comes from the people who live here. LEARN MORE'. The main navigation bar includes 'HOME', 'DISCOVER PLACES', 'EVENTS', 'THEMES', 'ABOUT US', 'ADD PLACES', 'MY PACK BASKET', and 'LOGIN'. Below the navigation, a descriptive paragraph states: 'Midway between Manhattan and Montreal, this inter-connected waterway shaped the destiny of the United States and Canada. By bike, foot, boat, train or car, Lakes to Locks Passage provides access to charming cities, rural landscapes and Adirondack hamlets. Through all four seasons, you can travel through numerous historic, natural, cultural and recreational experiences along the scenic waterway that links upstate New York to southern Quebec.' Below this are four buttons: 'Experiences', 'Passage Perspectives', 'Make A Difference', and 'Chronicles and Legends'. A 'Featured Places Recommended by Locals' section displays three images with captions: 'Hudson Crossing Park' (Recreation), 'Victory Woods' (Heritage Areas and Sites), and 'Kings Road Park/Saratoga' (Natural Areas). On the right side, there is a search bar, an 'INTERACTIVE MAPGUIDE DISCOVER PLACES' section with a map of the region and a 'GET STARTED' button, a 'Quick Start' section with a dropdown menu, and an 'eNewsletter' sign-up section. The footer includes the National Geographic logo, a link to 'Explore other interactive map guides', and a dropdown menu for 'Choose a Not-to-be-Missed Geotourism Destination'.

The *Lakes to Locks Passage Roadmap for New York's Great Northeast Journey* is designed to establish Lakes to Locks Passage as a premiere destination for national and international travelers seeking an authentic, place-based tourism experience, while fostering community pride and a commitment to stewardship of the region's intrinsic resources. The focus of the plan is to utilize the branding of National Geographic's geotourism program to establish and promote one of America's Byways, Lakes to Locks Passage, as "New York's Great Northeast Journey, Guided by Locals."

Through the co-branded online travel guide and strategic marketing initiatives to national and international audiences, the places that are most respected and recommended by the people who live here are presented to visitors via thematic connections and multi-modal tourism opportunities. Lakes to Locks Passage has a diverse collection of resources, communities, stakeholders, interpretive themes, and opportunities for tourism development destination stewardship. The plan is designed to allow for multiple activities and experiences, that when promoted in a fully integrated manner, creates a larger "pie" for all to share.

Implementation will have three strategic goals:

- establish a unified regional identity along the waterway,
- deliver a fully integrated, authentic, place-based, multi-modal visitor experience, and
- market the co-branded regional destination to national and international audiences.

GOAL I: ESTABLISH A UNIFIED REGIONAL IDENTITY ALONG THE WATERWAY

Identity Objectives:

1. Promote the interconnected waterway – linking the different regions with a shared heritage.
2. Further awareness that “history is predestined by geography” – the different regions are unified by the geography that creates a sense of place.
3. Increase Lakes to Locks Passage brand-awareness that furthers the identity of distinct landscape regions and regional heritage tourism programs.
4. Facilitate collaboration between public, private and non-profit entities that cross traditional political boundaries, furthering the development of individual efforts.
5. Secure partnerships with the private sector, regional organizations, and elected officials as “champions” heritage tourism programs.
6. Conduct training seminars and increase publicity in the press to increase public awareness.
7. Expand communications and participation with CRE Montérégie and Quebec.

Actions:

- Secure Lakes to Locks Passage Waypoint Community resolutions.
- Conduct planning to develop Waypoint Community Interpretive Scenarios as basis of an authentic, place-based tourism experience.
- Develop Regional Interpretive Scenario for all LTLP Waypoint Communities for the interpretive theme and storylines of “Four Lives of Lakes to Locks Passage.”
- Establish partnerships to create regional Gateway Visitor Centers to provide an overview of the Waypoint Communities, and regional partners.
- Establish partnerships with existing organizations for their facilities to serve as Lakes to Locks Passage Heritage Centers.
- Develop Gateway and Waypoint Community kiosks to direct visitors.
- Develop hi-tech interactive kiosks at major public destinations and transportation centers promoting “the road less traveled to special places.”
- Utilize 21st century wayfinding tools to create an experience that encourages visitors and local families to explore the landscape with a “PassagePort.”
- Utilize public “branding” opportunities to reinforce the identity – maintain DOT roadway designation signage, establish adopt-a-road signage, heritage center and pocket park signage.
- Develop individual Waypoint Community bookmarks and heritage region rackcards that unify the communities.
- Develop decals and table-top information cards, to be used by businesses and organizations.
- Develop a fulfillment piece for Lakes to Locks Passage/National Geographic geotourism collaboration.
- Develop regional mapguides that identify the regional heritage programs, Waypoint Communities, sites and attractions.



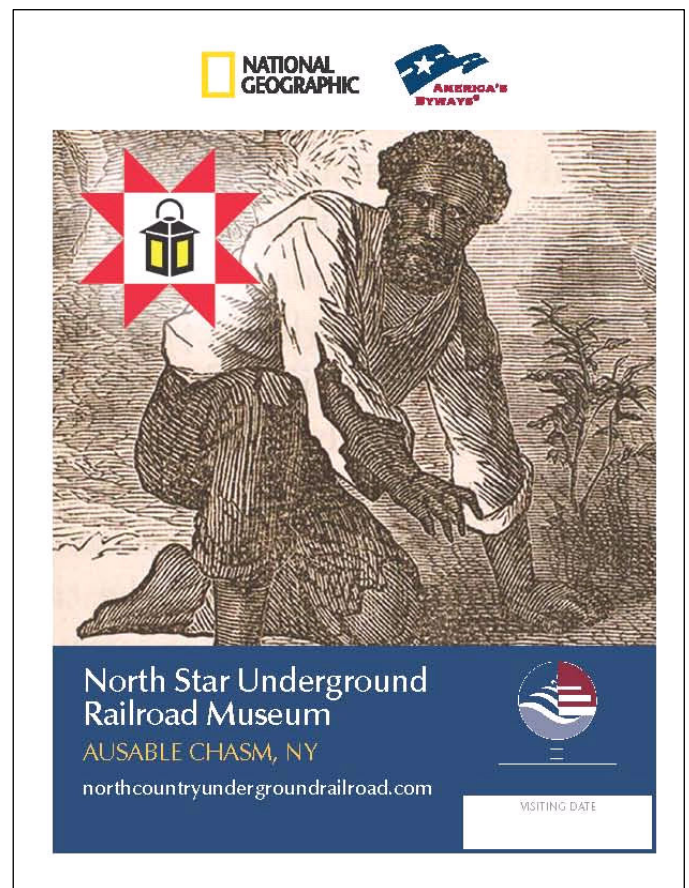
GOAL II: DELIVER AN AUTHENTIC, PLACE-BASED, MULTI-MODAL VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Experience Objectives:

1. “Brand” Lakes to Locks Passage by defining and delivering products with real people, in real places, for a unique and authentic experience that will attract national and international visitors. A tourism experience is what you remember.
2. Deliver on the promise of “guided by locals” by promoting the hidden nooks and crannies of the region through the stories provided by local enthusiasts and experts. Create a “tapestry” that is made up of “threads” of stories with many local voices.
3. Utilize the unique qualities of the interconnected waterway as the basis for multi-modal travel (bike, boat, rail, hike) that will encourage visitors to “stop, stay and spend” in our communities.
4. Support the development of infrastructure for multi-modal travel.
5. Invest in building capacity for the sustainable operations of facilities that will serve as Lakes to Locks Passage Heritage Centers.
6. Build public awareness, appreciation, participation, and a commitment to the stewardship of the historic, natural, and cultural resources for future generations.
7. Provide educational opportunities for 21st century technology and multimedia skills.
8. Serve as a catalyst for unifying the NYS Byways and Heritage Areas through thematic experiences of statewide significance, creating a larger “pie” for all to share.

Actions

- Develop interpretive scenarios for each Heritage Center and Waypoint Community.
- Develop "Ambassadors" program – recruit, train and retain volunteers and guides.
- Provide on-going training and technical assistance through workshops, circuit riders and interns for:
 1. Sustainable operations and management of the organization and facility
 2. Planning and implementation of visitor information and interpretation
 3. Heritage Center Ambassador trainings.
- Utilize tips, quotes and testimonial provided by the Ambassadors – a “celebrity” status to the heavy lifters that deliver the authentic experience.
 1. Utilize photos and quotes in print and web media.
 2. Passage Tales include oral histories and interpretation of the landscape with a local voice.
 3. Integrate content with thematic “PassagePorts.”
- Partner with other NYS Byways and Heritage Areas to identify opportunities for interactive, thematic itineraries of statewide significance. Share the co-branded technology to promote New York’s sites and attractions as a unified destination.
- Translate museum exhibits and interpretive content into French and deliver through digital technology to accommodate and facilitate our French-speaking tourism base in Quebec.
- Support efforts by communities and organizations to plan, design and construct facilities that link communities along Lakes to Locks Passage and encourage travel by boat, rail, bike and on foot.



GOAL III: MARKET THE CO-BRANDED REGIONAL DESTINATION TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES

Marketing Objectives:

1. Promote and market the Lakes to Locks Passage brand – authentic experiences guided by locals – to national and international audiences through print and digital advertising, public relations and trade shows.
2. Participate in National Geographic’s global network of geotourism partners to build the brand recognition of Lakes to Locks Passage to national and international audiences.
3. Lakes to Locks Passage becomes a highly regarded regional brand recognized by visitors and residents as a place with outstanding geographic features, stories, experiences and amenities with a broadly shared commitment to sustain and enhance those values.
4. Foster local and regional economic development activities that are focused on retention, expansion and creation of locally owned businesses that sustain or enhance the well-being of the communities and their residents.
5. Increase visitor related revenues by extending visitors’ length of stay, increasing visitation during slower seasons, and distributing visitors more broadly around the region.
6. Ensure that the Lakes to Locks Passage experiences are well received and in demand.



Actions

- The target market for initial promotion will include the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, long-term marketing strategy will be to national and international audiences in conjunction with others in the collection of Americas Byways and Geotourism projects in the United States.
- Utilize digital and print media for promotion, the creative focus is the interconnected waterway, guided by locals, with history, nature, and outdoor themes.
- Market the regionally-themed tourism attractions and events under the single campaign of “Guided by Locals” by utilizing digital technologies for video, audio, digital and mobile components to collect and market authentic stories about why people should visit this area.
- Gain media coverage through public relations, either exclusive to the Lakes to Locks Passage or in partnership with others to garner coverage of Byways and Geotourism. LTLP will secure corporate “Premiere Partners” to help underwrite the public relations activities.
- Participate in special events or “on the ground” opportunities to increase brand awareness.
- A monthly e-newsletter, drawing on submitted content from partners and existing web content.
- Maintain a social media presence with specific social media campaigns to drive follower growth or to direct traffic to the portal directly.
- Engage a third-party research entity to conduct conversion studies using the lists developed through the portal site, standard advertising and web metrics -- analyzed on an ongoing basis.
- Develop and promote packages for use by tour operators, bicycle, classic car and motorcycle clubs.
- Conduct “fam tours” for travel writers to target audiences.
- Participate in international tourism promotion trade shows.
- Translate web content and brochures into French to accommodate and facilitate our French-speaking tourism base in Quebec.