

SUMMARY OF 9-8-09 SESSION WITH RESOURCES FOCUS GROUP

Members of Small Focus Group on Conservation and Historical Resources:

Ellen Jouret Epstein, Columbia Land Conservancy; Ray Doherty, Taconic State Park; Jane Peck, Friends of Taconic State Park; Jean Peck, Roe Jan Historical Society; Grant Hermans, Bash Bish Bicycle; Elinor Mettler, Harlem Valley Rail Trail; Kent Kay, Harlem Valley Rail Trail; Caroline Stewart, Roe Jan Park.

Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association

About 15 miles of the planned 46 are paved and operational.

Association has about 1000 members.

DEC negotiates for land.

Enthusiasm high from membership and users.

Funds come from state, county and towns.

Hundreds use trail per week.

Trail encourages walkers, handicappers, botany interested

Areas of concern for future.

Parking

Anticipate many extensions from main trail to other "close-by" places.

Examples: Rte 22 near Black Grocery Rd; Copake to Copake Falls;

Wassaic to Train Station; connect RJCL and Roe-Jan Community Park;

Grant possibilities could be enhanced by consolidation of all villages-towns interests for additions-extensions. The CCLC could assist and find funding for this type of collaboration.

Cycling more Generally

Major concerns centered on safety

Bridges (narrowness and metallic grids),

Intersections, Bike Lanes, Signage

Define and sign "scenic rides", all biking routes

Develop an action plan to catalog the types and classes of roads in the area.

Roe Jan Historical Society

Founded in 1974.

Preserve and understand history of Copake, Ancram, Hillsdale, Gallatin, and Taghkanic

Housed in Old Copake Falls Church where exhibits are held

Iron Works and St. John in the Wilderness have been designated historic places.

Areas of concern for future.

Building expansion or additional space of some type; e.g. old school or train station

Support historical house tours

Catalogue and prioritize "historical properties"; provide plaques

Improved interaction with town governments

Taconic State Park

First park in the Taconic Region, 1927

More than 7000 acres *in toto*, two-thirds in Copake, includes 500 acres of farmland. Funding comes from state and federal governments. Capital funds - small

7-30 employees --- season dependent

200,000 visitors per year, half are local people

Areas of concern for future

Have and are working on a Master Plan Plans include new office and nature center (Will share this with the CPC) Iron Works is deteriorating - needs restoration soon

number of visitors will increase

PARKING is an issue

Park will oversee construction of rail trail north to Chatham

Park- town liaison has occurred on several fronts but could be improved.

Environmental education needed

Friends of Taconic State Park

New group, 2008

Promote recreational, historical, educational and cultural activities within the park and obtain grants for these ends

Areas of concern for future

Preservation/restoration of the Iron Works; create a historical village.

Grant funding; CCLC could help

Environmental education

Communication in all its aspects

Columbia Land Conservancy

Works with communities to conserve farmland, forests, wildlife habitat and rural character of Columbia County

Interacts in all its phases with 23 municipalities, especially comp open space plans

Helps identify conservation priorities: trails, overlays, open spaces, conservation subdivisions (IRS supports all these as "donations")

Considers Kinderhook Comp. Plan an excellent example of approaches in-line with CLC views.

Areas of Future Interest

CLC would be agreeable to review any draft of Copake Comp. Plan that focuses on conservation issues.

Invited Copake to invite them to review proposed easements. Are the conservation values appropriate?

Roe Jan Community Park

Oversight by RJCP steering committee of grounds includes all buildings (owned by the State)

They intend to maintain an Ag connection.

Currently receive about \$30,000 from rentals and Ag.

Renews their “lease” from the state every 20 years for \$1.

Areas of concern for future

Wish to expand on “Community garden” concept

Need more Copake people on the Steering Committee

Current outlook is to emphasize the “community” aspect of the park

Agenda includes Ag education/museum

Major emphasis was the RJCP is new, a valuable addition to our area and open to a variety of possibilities – come, join in.

General Areas of Interest

Improvement of communications between and among towns, county and various groups within towns with similar concerns.

Projects of common interest need coordination among groups.

Grants Office