HUDSON RIVER VALLEY GREENWAY

Combined meeting of

Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council,

Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Inc.

and

Greenway Heritage Conservancy HRV, Inc.

January 28, 2010

Heffner Alumni House, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Troy, New York

Minutes

Conservancy Members Present
Daniels, Jane, Conservancy Member
Griffen, Sara, Acting Conservancy Chairwoman
Jacks, Betsy, Conservancy Member

Conservancy Members Present by Proxy
Brown, Kristin, Conservancy Member
Herman, Kenneth, Conservancy Treasurer
Mazzuca, William, Conservancy Member
Rousakis, John, Conservancy Member
Wager, Richard, Conservancy Member
Wise, David, Conservancy Member

Council Members Present
Chesley, Christine, Rensselaer County Council Member
Elliott, Robert, Westchester County Council Member
McHenry, Barnabas, Chairman, Greenway Council

Council Members Present by Proxy
Crabb, Mary, Orange county Council Member
Gould, Clara Lou, Dutchess County Council Member

Delegates Present
Cosgrove, Jerry, Joint Delegate for Commissioner Hooker, NYS Agriculture and Markets
Dunwell, Fran, Joint Delegate for Commissioner Grannis, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Ridler, Steve, representing Devine, Bonnie, Joint Delegate for George Stafford, Joint Delegate for Secretary of State Cortes-Vasquez, NYS Department of State
Sproat, James, Joint Delegate for Commissioner Egan, NYS Office of General Services

Wohl, Peter, Joint Delegate for Dennis M. Mullen, Chairman and CEO Designate, Empire State Development

Greenway Staff
Bach, Christina, Finance Manager
Campochiaro, Elizabeth, Trails Coordinator
Castiglione, Mark, Acting Executive Director
Dennehey, John, Senior Planner
Keller, Scott, Trails and Special Projects Director

Call to Order
Acting Conservancy Chairwoman Sara Griffen called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance
Acting Chairwoman Griffen led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions
Acting Chairwoman Griffen introduced Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino who welcomed everyone to Rensselaer County on behalf of its 155,000 residents. She described the county as a 665 square mile mix of urban, suburban and rural areas with 3 thirty miles of Hudson River shoreline. Among the shoreline highlights are Hudson River Islands and Schodack Island State Parks, Papscanee Island Park, Troy City Dock. She concluded by expressing her appreciation for the Greenway's support over the years.

Acting Chairwoman Griffen introduced Troy Mayor Harry Tutunjian who welcomed everyone to Troy and thanked the Greenway for our work in the Hudson River Valley. He noted that Troy has seven miles of unobstructed Hudson River shoreline including the Madison Avenue Fishing Pier and a soon to be built kayak launch, the forthcoming Ingalls Avenue Boat Launch, and the 123rd Street Boat Launch with a dock at the nearby Price Chopper supermarket.

Acting Chairwoman Griffen introduced RPI Director of community Relations Erin Crotty who welcomed everyone to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) on behalf of RPI President Shirley Jackson. She noted that a decade old plan to raise the awareness of RPI in the 21st century. She credited the plan with raising $1.2 billion.

Chairman McHenry introduced proclamations for distinguished service to the Greenway to retiring Board Members Kevin J. Plunkett, Henry Peyrebrune, Abel Garraghan, Robert Astorino, and Michael Gibbons. He also introduced a proclamation for distinguished service to the Greenway to retiring Dutchess County Planning Commissioner Roger Akeley. The text of the proclamation is appended to and a part of these minutes.

Chairman McHenry introduced Westchester County Council Member Bob Elliot who recently testified before Congress on a bill introduced by Congressman Maurice Hinchey that would authorize the National Park Service to conduct a study on whether the Hudson River Valley should become a unit of the National Park system. Mr. Elliot stated that the hearing went well and the bill should move through the house. Former conservancy Board Member and current United States Senator Gillibrand will take the lead on getting the bill through the Senate. Mr. Elliot noted that the National Park Service is in favor of the study and that other studies of this sort have been authorized, but as yet have not been funded. He concluded by noting that National Park designation would not be used to usurp local home rule, but rather would follow the Greenway and National Heritage Area models of working with communities and respecting home rule.

Chairman McHenry introduced NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program Coordinator and noted author Fran Dunwell to discuss the Draft Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda 2010 – 2014. Ms. Dunwell began

by noting the DEC's support for Mr. Hinchey's bill. She announced that Governor Patterson has asked President Obama to support the Hudson River and New York Harbor with an appropriation of $52 million from federal National Estuary Program funds.

Ms. Dunwell proposed that the Hudson River Estuary Program act as the Greenway's environmental vision through the estuary plan and stated that the Greenway and Estuary Programs need to work together on land use issues. Chairman McHenry expressed his support for those ideas. Ms. Dunwell went on to note that the Hudson River Estuary program was created about the same time as the Greenway by then Assemblyman Hinchey. The 2010 – 2014 Action Agenda is available for public comment and will be finalized this year.

Chairman McHenry introduced Andy Bicking, Scenic Hudson's Director of Public Policy who noted that the NYS budget is cutting the environmental budget by 1/3rd with no funding proposed for open space acquisition.

Chairman McHenry introduced Neil Caplan of Bannerman's Castle Trust who thanked the Greenway and Fran Dunwell for the support the two programs have provided to Bannerman's Castle Trust over the years. Mr. Kaplan went on to describe the two recent collapses of parts of the castle and to request support. He concluded by noting the Greenway was the first organization to provide them a grant (for an observation deck).

Thom Johnson from Bannerman's Castle Trust presented a brief history of the efforts of the Trust to get the public to, and to preserve, the castle.

The Trust needs $6 million to stabilize the castle, but they will be opening the island for tours this spring, although the public will be kept further away from the castle than in the past.

Minutes of October 14, 2009 Combined Meeting of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council, Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Inc. and Greenway Heritage Conservancy HRV, Inc.

Minutes of the October 14, 2009 Meeting of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Grants Committee

On a motion from Bob Elliot (Jane Daniels second) the meetings minutes were unanimously approved.

Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council

Chairman McHenry called the Greenway Council meeting to order.

Greenway Community Grant

The *City of Watervliet, Albany County* is seeking grant funding in the amount of $10,000 for a National Register city feasibility study.

Greenway Compact Grants

The *Village of Fishkill, Dutchess County* is seeking grant funding in the amount of $3,475 to install gateway signs outlined in their recently completed Comprehensive Plan which includes a provision to promote the Village's historic character.

Village of Red Hook, Dutchess County is seeking grant funding in the amount of $10,000 to amend and revise planning and zoning regulations as part of the Village Center revitalization effort

On a motion from Bob Elliot (Barnabas McHenry second) the Board of Directors unanimously approved the Greenway Community and Compact grants.

Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Inc.

Call to Order

Acting Chairwoman Griffen called the Conservancy meeting to order.

Hudson River Greenway Trail Designation

Mr. Castiglione announced that the Village of South Nyack has requested designation of the Esposito-Gesner Avenue Park Ling Trail in Rockland County. This trail segment links to the Gesner Avenue mini Park, a designated Water Trail launch site.

Scenic Hudson, on behalf of The Walkway Over the Hudson, the Town of Lloyd, the City of Poughkeepsie and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and with support from the New York State Bridge Authority has requested designation of the Walkway Loop Trail. This trail encompasses the newly opened Walkway Over the Hudson (formerly the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge) and the already designated Mid-Hudson Bridge, as well as trails in Poughkeepsie and Lloyd. The Loop Trail links to the newly opened Franny Reese State Park and to the Hudson valley Rail Trail in Lloyd.

On a motion from Jane Daniels (Sara Griffen second) the trails designations were confirmed.

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

Acting Chairwoman Griffen called on the Boards to support keeping Montgomery Place in Dutchess County open. This grand historic site, a National Heritage Area "must see" site, is currently closed to the public and may be sold. Efforts are underway to get the site reopened. On a motion from Barnabas McHenry (Jane Daniels second) the motion to support keeping Montgomery Place open to the public passed unanimously.

On a motion from Bob Elliot (Barnabas McHenry second) the Boards of Directors unanimously adopted the NHA budget as presented.

Acting Director Castiglione noted that the NPS evaluation of the NHA has not yet begun. The Teaching the Hudson Valley Institute for next summer has been scheduled. The idea behind this year's classes is to make teaching like a farmer's market—lots of local goods.

Executive Director Report

Acting Executive Director Mark Castiglione's written Executive Director's report is appended to, and a part of these minutes.

Adjourn

On a motion from Bob Elliot (Jane Daniels second) the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott S. Keller
Meeting Secretary

Proclamation Commending Kevin J. Plunkett For Distinguished Service to the Hudson River Valley Greenway

WHEREAS, Kevin J. Plunkett has served admirably as Chairman of the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley from 2000 through 2009; and

WHEREAS, under Chairman Plunkett's leadership, the Greenway Conservancy's Greenway Trail program has grown to 262 miles of designated riverfront trails; and

WHEREAS, the Greenway established the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail which today boasts over 90 public access sites along its 256 mile route; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, Chairman Plunkett oversaw the allocation of over $3.6 million dollars through nearly 450 matching grants; and

WHEREAS, Kevin J. Plunkett has provided the citizens of the Hudson River Valley with his time, effort and dedication, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Joint Boards of the Hudson River Valley Greenway do hereby honor and commend Kevin J. Plunkett for his many years of service to the communities and citizens of the Hudson River Valley Greenway; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this proclamation be provided to Kevin J. Plunkett by the Greenway as a symbol of appreciation.

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Barnabas McHenry, Council Chair Conservancy

Sara Griffen, Acting Chair

Adopted
January 28, 2010

Proclamation Commending Henry L. Peyrebrune For Distinguished Service to the Hudson River Valley Greenway

WHEREAS, Henry L. Peyrebrune has left his position as a Board member of the Greenway Communities Council from 1996 through 2009; and

WHEREAS, Henry L. Peyrebrune has provided the citizens of the Hudson River Valley with his time, effort and dedication, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Joint Boards of the Hudson River Valley Greenway do hereby honor and commend Henry L. Peyrebrune for his many years of service to the communities and citizens of the Hudson River Valley Greenway; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this proclamation be provided to Henry L. Peyrebrune by the Greenway as a symbol of appreciation.

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Barnabas McHenry, Council Chair
Conservancy

Sara Griffen, Acting
Chair

Adopted
January 28, 2010

Proclamation Commending R. Abel Garraghan For Distinguished Service to the Hudson River Valley Greenway

WHEREAS, R. Abel Garraghan has served as a Board member of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council from 1992 through 2009; and

WHEREAS, R. Abel Garraghan has represented Ulster County and provided the citizens of the Hudson River Valley with his time, effort and dedication, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Joint Boards of the Hudson River Valley Greenway do hereby honor and commend R. Abel Garraghan for his many years of service to the communities and citizens of the Hudson River Valley Greenway; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this proclamation be provided to R. Abel Garragnan by the Greenway as a symbol of appreciation.

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Barnabas McHenry, Council Chair

Sara Griffen, Conservancy Chair

Adopted
January 28, 2010

Proclamation Commending Robert P. Astorino For Distinguished Service to the Hudson River Valley Greenway

WHEREAS, Robert P. Astorino has served as a Board Member of the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley from 2006 through 2009; and

WHEREAS, Robert P. Astorino has provided the citizens of the Hudson River Valley with his time, effort and dedication, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Joint Boards of the Hudson River Valley Greenway do hereby honor and commend Robert P. Astorino for his service to the communities and citizens of the Hudson River Valley Greenway; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this proclamation be provided to Robert P. Astorino by the Greenway as a symbol of appreciation.

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Barnabas McHenry, Council Chair
Conservancy

Sara Griffen, Acting
Chair

Adopted
January 28, 2010

Proclamation Commending Michael Gibbons For Distinguished Service to the Hudson River Valley Greenway

WHEREAS, Michael Gibbons has served as a Board Member of the Greenway Communities Council for the Hudson River Valley from 2005 through 2009; and

WHEREAS, Michael Gibbons has provided the citizens of the Hudson River Valley with his time, effort and dedication, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Joint Boards of the Hudson River Valley Greenway do hereby honor and commend Michael Gibbons for his service to the communities and citizens of the Hudson River Valley Greenway; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this proclamation be provided to Michael Gibbons by the Greenway as a symbol of appreciation.

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Barnabas McHenry, Council Chair
Conservancy

Sara Griffen, Acting
Chair

Adopted
January 28, 2010

Proclamation Commending Roger Akeley For Distinguished Service to the Hudson River Valley Greenway

WHEREAS, Roger Akeley has left his position as Commissioner, Dutchess County Planning and Development

WHEREAS, Roger Akeley has provided the citizens of the Hudson River Valley with his time, effort and dedication, and has been an advocate of the Hudson River Valley Greenway and regional planning, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Joint Boards of the Hudson River Valley Greenway do hereby honor and commend Roger Akeley for his many years of service to the communities and citizens of the Hudson River Valley Greenway; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this proclamation be provided to Roger Akeley by the Greenway as a symbol of appreciation.

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Barnabas McHenry, Council Chair Conservancy

Sara Griffen, Acting Chair

Adopted
January 28, 2010

Hudson River Valley Greenway
Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area
Acting Executive Director's Report
Mark Castiglione
January 28, 2010

Hudson River Valley Greenway

State Budget Update

I am pleased and thankful to report that the Greenway Council and Conservancy remain in the Governor's proposed 2010-2011 budget. The Greenway's appropriation, however, is again being cut. To avoid staffing reductions, these additional cuts are scheduled to be absorbed by the Council. The Council's operating expenses will be reduced to $203,000 and the appropriation for grants will be reduced to $136,000 ($339,000 total). The Conservancy's appropriation remains at $184,000.

Since the 2007-2008 budget year, the Conservancy appropriation has been reduced 28% from $256,000 to $184,000 and the Council's has been reduced nearly 44% from $608,000 to $339,000.

Grants Completed in 2009 (Greenway Council, Greenway Conservancy, Quadricentennial, and Teaching the Hudson Valley Grants)

Grants Completed in 2009

Community	Project	Grant Completion Date
Town of Ghent	Revisions to Comprehensive Plan	11/3/2009
Town of Kinderhook	trail conceptual design process	9/2/2009
Scenic Hudson Inc	Ramshorn Livingston Sanctuary	8/18/2009
Town of Chester	Parks and Open Space Plan	2/27/2009
Town of Monroe	recreational trail linkage plan for Town	5/18/2009
City of Newburgh	Twin Arch Pedestrian Bridge stabilization	2/17/2009
Village of Tarrytown	Tarrytown Lakes Trail Improvements	9/2/2009
Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct	Restoration of the Keepers House	2/23/2009
Village of Hastings-on-Hudson	Rowleys Bridge Trail - Maintenance	3/18/2009
Village of Red Hook	Comp plan	12/14/2009
Town of Amenia	Rail Trail extension plan	1/22/2009
City of Mechanicville	Downtown gateway and signage	2/17/2009

Rensselaer CSD	THV	8/20/2009
South Junior High School	THV	7/14/2009
Beacon School District	THV grant	8/13/2009
Town of Hillsdale	Aquifer Study	9/17/2009
Hudson Highlands Nature Museum	Discovery quest trail annual improvement program	1/16/2009
Hudson Highlands Land Trust	Take-a-Hike Program	7/29/2009
Friends of Fort Crailo	Quad: Hudson River Colonial Dutch and Native Americans	8/31/2009
Children's Museum of Science and Technology	Quad: Horseshoes & Waterwheels: New York's Tech Valley in the 1800's	3/17/2009
Thomas Cole Historic Site	Quad: Hudson River School Art Trail	9/22/2009
Beatrix Farrand Garden Association	Quad: Bellefield Design Lecture - Tulipmania	10/5/2009
FASNY Museum of Firefighting	Quad: Robert Fulton and the Community Utilization of the Steam Engine	3/4/2009
City of Watervliet	Hudson shores recreational initiative - installation of floating docks	7/27/2009
Rensselaer Taconic Land Conservancy	Rensselaer County Trail Vision Plan	5/29/2009
Waterfront Museum	Tug and Barge Quad Tour	10/29/2009
Historical Society of Rockland County, History Museum	Fall Harvest Day	12/2/2009
Historic Hudson Valley	New York's River Festival of 1909	10/29/2009
Historic Hudson, Inc.	Exploring Architecture and heritage of the Plum-Bronson House	12/2/2009
Town of Gardiner	Hamlet Streetscape Improvements	9/15/2009
Town of Marlborough on behalf of Southern Ulster Alliance	Recreational Trail System Project throughout Southern Ulster	5/6/2009
Town of Saugerties	GEIS for Kings Highway Corridor	3/31/2009
Town of Marlboro	Milton-on-Hudson Train Station Rehabilitation	3/2/2009

Conservancy Grants Awarded

At the October 2009 board meeting, a total of $95,000 was awarded to communities and trail groups throughout the valley. The recipients of this year's awards were:

Wave Hill, Wave Hill Woodlands Trail Repair ($7,500);
Town of Kinderhook, Kinderhook-Stuyvesant-Stockport Intermunicipal Trail Feasibility Study ($10,000);
City of Middletown, Orange Heritage Trail-Middletown Extension Project ($18,000);
Hudson Highlands Nature Museum, Pre-School Discovery Trail ($7,500);
Boscobel Restoration, Inc., Rehabilitation of Trail from Woodland Trail to Constitution Marsh ($5,750);
Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc., Hudson Valley Rail Trail Brochure ($1,500);
County of Ulster, Sojourner Truth Ulster Landing County Park ADA Access Trail Construction ($7,000); and
Southern Ulster Alliance/Town of New Paltz, Southern Ulster Alliance Recreation Trail Project ($17,750).

In addition, funding for two additional trail projects in Westchester County was provided through private funds allocated to the Greenway specifically for trail projects in Westchester County: Village of Dobb's Ferry, Dobbs Ferry Old Croton Aqueduct Trail Restoration ($10,000); and Village of Tarrytown with Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown Lakes Trail Extension ($10,000)

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

National Heritage Area Budget

The budget for the National Heritage Area will be presented to the board for consideration at this meeting. The budget includes revenues and expenses, including operations and programs. Programs identified in the budget were included in the approved 2009 work plan or the 2010 work plan approved by the NHA Management Committee in the fall.

We are proud to be able to work with our partners to complete these important projects.

(Nearing Completion)

1. **New HRVNHA Website:** The new NHA website will be unveiled soon and will be an elegant and technologically up-to-date tool that heritage tourist can use to plan their trip and partners can use to promote their events. With the event submission tool, our partners will be able to upload event information to the website. Travelers will be able to search sites by region, theme or any combination of categories. In addition, using the sophisticated Google Maps tool, they will be able to generate point to point directions or create a multi-destination itinerary on the fly.

2. **National Geographic Website, The Hudson, the River That Defined America:** Through the efforts of Congressman Hinchey, in partnership with the NPS and developed by National Geographic, **"The Hudson, the River That Defined America"** is an extremely interactive website that contains interactive maps, primary source material, and interviews with twenty experts in their fields. The website will be the resource for researching Dutch History, Native American History and environmental history along the Hudson River. Those interviewed include:

3. **HRVNHA Heritage Sites Guidebook:** The 125- page Guidebook will be like the website you can take with you as you explore the Hudson River Valley. The Guidebook will include details about each designated NHA Heritage Site with sites arranged by geography so people will be able to discover the sites nearby regardless of their point of departure. The Guidebook is in the final design stages and we will be working with our partner sites to distribute the Guidebook for sale.

(New or ongoing projects for 2010)

4. **11th Annual Hudson River Valley Ramble**

   Building on the success of last year, the Ramble will be held during the last three weekends in September and will overlap with the 2nd Annual Heritage Weekend.

5. **2nd Annual Heritage Weekend:** The Heritage Area will be carrying Heritage Weekend forward in 2010 as the lead organizer. The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area provided $10,000 to sponsor the Inaugural New York State Heritage Weekend. Last year, over 100 sites took part in Heritage Weekend activities. Reports indicated an increase of 30% or more at most of the sites. Many of them had special programs and tours; a few were only open for Heritage Weekend.

6. **Teaching the Hudson Valley Explore Awards:** Working with our partners the National Park Service, the NYS DEC Estuary Program and the Hudson River Valley Institute we will continue to provide grants that help get the Valley's students out to heritage sites and to connect with our environmental resources.

7. *Nature and Culture Theme Development, Marketing and Partnership Building*

   The NHA will Engage an individual or firm to focus on building partnerships to interpret the sub-themes associated with the Nature and Culture theme with the goals of increasing attendance to heritage sites by using the Nature and Culture theme; increasing awareness of the Hudson River School Art Trail and National Heritage Area; obtaining free advertising and promotion by partnering with the for-profit sector; increasing online awareness of heritage sites; and training front-line Heritage Site staff about this theme and the Heritage Area.

8. *Cycling the Hudson Valley: A guide to 150 miles of adventure, history are and architecture along the Hudson River* ***Working with Parks & Trails New York, the HRVNHA will create a new guidebook, CYCLINGTHE HUDSON VALLEY – A Guide to 150 miles of adventure, history, art, and architecture along the Hudson River. The Hudson Valley bicycling guidebook will highlight many heritage resources on both sides of the river, including important 18th and 19th century political and historic sites; beautiful gardens, landscapes and view sheds; and museums and art centers of the Hudson River School and other artists, as well as literary landmarks. It will also provide a tangible framework for promoting the strategic vision of a continuous Greenway Heritage Trail.***

9. *State Heritage Area Partnerships:* ***The NHA Management Plan outlines a strategy for Heritage Area visitor orientation, "A coordinated, cohesive approach to visitor orientation for the Heritage Area will be implemented through commitments from key public agencies and private organizations whose existing or proposed visitor information centers compliment the mission of the Heritage Area." New York State Heritage Areas offer existing physical locations where the National Heritage Area can develop a presence within the complementary context of State Heritage Area themes. Pilot State Heritage Area Visitors' Centers will include Troy RiverSpark and Kingston. This partnership with staffed State Heritage Area visitor centers offers the HRVNHA to be promoted by frontline visitor center staff without having to bear the full cost of visitor center operation in addition to the programmatic synergies between the Heritage Areas' programs.***

10. *Greater Hudson Heritage Network's Smart Stewardship Practicum:* ***The HRVNHA will partner with the Greater Hudson Heritage Network and sponsor a series of multi-format sessions for the historic site community including but not limited to:***

    Historic Housekeeping (A two part program demonstrating the elements, tools, techniques and schedules required for cleaning and maintenance of historic house surfaces and collections. A manual and additional resources will be created and circulated in print, on the web and through new blog communications from Greater Hudson.

    Collections Care for History Up Against the Wall! Workshops on Care, Handling and Environmental Considerations for Paintings, Historic Frames, and Furnishings.

    Conversations on Mutual Goals of Curators and Conservators: A new, ground-breaking professional development program that directly clarifies and improves short- and long-term planning for exhibition, preservation and access to collections in museums, historic sites and libraries.

    Conversations on Trusteeship; Mutual Goals of Board and Staff: A new concept to engage museum and historic site/society trustees in directed, informal discussion threads, with the goal of strengthening mutual understanding between board and staff, building responsible governance among volunteers, and identifying roles in organizational planning and financial sustainability.

For the Second Year, Revolutionary War Beacons Relit to Commemorate British Evacuation

For the second year on November 25th, a Xenon light display commemorated the 225th anniversary of the evacuation of the United States of America by British troops. The Hudson River Valley Institute, in collaboration with the Palisades Parks Conservancy, the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, Scenic Hudson, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and Palisades Interstate Park Commission, partnered with the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area in New Jersey to symbolically relight the beacons at signal locations used by the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. These vital systems summoned the militia in both New York and in neighboring New Jersey and warned residents of the approaching British Redcoats. The original beacons varied from tar barrels on top of poles, to pyramids, to wooden towers filled with dried grass or hay that could be ignited. The beacons enabled quick and effective communication with troops throughout the region. Rather than using fire, the commemoration utilized Xenon laser lights with hi-tech skytracker technology. The beacon project was achieved through a partnership between New York and New Jersey. Of the twelve beacon sites that were lit, five were in New York State and seven were in New Jersey. The lighting progression started in Princeton, New Jersey and stretched 108 miles to Beacon, New York. The New York Sites included: at Fort Montgomery State Historic Site, Cornwall-on-Hudson Landing, Boscobel Restoration, Constitution Island, and Mount Beacon. Many thanks to Colonel Johnson for pulling this together this year.

Alliance of National Heritage Areas Annual Meeting in DC

I will be attending the 2010 Alliance of National Heritage Areas meeting in Washington DC February 1st. On February 2nd, Chairman McHenry and I will be making visits to our Congressional delegation to update them on the good work of the National Heritage Area that is supported with the federal funds they secure.

National Heritage Area Evaluation Update

The Evaluation will again be discussed at the Alliance of National Heritage Area's meeting in early February. The process is still unclear and a pathway to complete all the evaluations has not been identified.

The National Park Service still has not allocated any funding for these evaluations and consequently progress remains painfully slow.

The pilot project for the Essex NHA has been underway for over one year and is now finally approaching completion. At this pace it seems unlikely that all the evaluations will be complete in a timely manner, leaving all nine "class of 1996" National Heritage Areas in a state of limbo.

New York's Heritage Areas Promotional Piece Nears Completed

The HRVNHA is a member of a group of representatives from the state and national heritage areas and corridors in New York State, working together to promote the goals of heritage areas. The goals of this collaborative process include building a coalition of heritage development partners, providing a forum for State and National

Heritage Areas to work more closely together, and articulating a unified message of the benefits of heritage development. Copies will be available in the first week of February 2010.