



**BAYSHORE HERITAGE BYWAY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN
CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING #4**

MEETING SUMMARY

(prepared by Sarah Couchman, L/KLA)

MEETING DATE: March 15, 2012
TIME: 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Congress Hall, 251 Beach Avenue, Cape May NJ 08204

ATTENDEES:

First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Company/Agency/Organization
Lillian	Armstrong	Executive Director	CU Maurice River
Michael	Beck	Mayor	Lower Township
Sally	Birdsall		
Cindy	Bloom-Cronin	Scenic Byway Coordinator	NJDOT
David	Bocanegra	VS Manager	USFWS Cape May NWR
Brian	Braudis	Manager	USFWS - Supawna Meadows and Cape May NWRs
Jody	Carrara		ANJEC
Norris	Clark		Fishing Creek School
Sarah	Couchman	Landscape Architect	Lardner Klein/Landscape Architects
Susan	DeLanzo	Township Committee	Middle Township
Bill	Galestok	Planning Director	Lower Township
Heide	Hanlon		USFWS
Dona	Kemling		Historic Cold Spring Village
Jim	Klein	Principal	Lardner Klein/Landscape Architects
Jane	Morton Galetto	President	CU Maurice River/SJBC
Francis	Rapa		NJ Conservation Foundation
Cheryl	Reardon		ANJEC/ SJBC
Brigitte	Sherman	Planner	Cape May County Planning
Lenore	Tedesco	Executive Director	Wetlands Institute
Elizabeth	Terenik	Planner	Terenik Land Use Consulting
Laurel	Wilkerson		USFWS
Rosalind	Wu		USFWS

MEETING SUMMARY

Norris Clark began the meeting by welcoming everyone to Congress Hall and providing a brief summary of the building’s history. He then turned the meeting over to consultant team leader, Jim Klein, of Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C. (L/KLA).

Overview of Meeting and Review of Project

Jim Klein gave a brief overview of the meeting agenda, explaining that today's meeting would address strategies for developing heritage tourism along the Bayshore Heritage Byway. This included taking a look at the target audience, sites and attractions along the byway, visitor facilities and ways of marketing and disseminating information about the byway.

Jim then took a few minutes to review where we are in the corridor management planning process, beginning with a review of the key issues along the byway. Jim summarized these issues that the project team has learned about thus far in the planning process. These include

- signage and wayfinding tools will be critical for guiding visitors along the route;
- road condition for bicycles – and the ability to accommodate all modes of travel – is an important issue for heritage and nature-based tourism;
- Coastal Heritage Trail – how should Trail sites and signage be addressed given the loss of funding for that program;
- several overlapping touring routes and resources – will require coordination to insure visitors have a seamless experience; and
- ephemeral nature of the byway's sites, attractions, and intrinsic qualities – how do we communicate to visitors the ever-changing nature of the Bayshore Region and still provide a consistently high-quality visitor experience?

Jim then reviewed the definition of the corridor and the significance of the corridor as discussed at meeting #2. The global significance and recognition of the wildlife habitat, especially birding its primary intrinsic quality and the opportunity exists to build upon the historical qualities of the settlement patterns, the maritime heritage and the associated cultural landscape. At meeting #3 we discussed changing land use patterns and the need for enhancements in the corridor

Byway Management Goals

Jim concluded his review with a brief summary of the draft management goals organized by CMC meeting topic. (See draft list of goals in the meeting #2 handout at http://www.lardnerklein.com/BHB/BHB_Memo-Vision&GoalsDRAFT011312.pdf.) This included a review of the enhancements strategies presented at the February CMC meeting. He reviewed the three scales of byway enhancements – corridor-wide, community-based and site-specific – and the strategies that apply to each scale. A description of the enhancement scales and corresponding strategies can be found in the filing cabinet on the project website under CMC #3.

A handout was provided with an updated list of enhancement projects incorporating suggestions from AC meeting #3, and afterwards.

Heritage Tourism

After a review of the CMP process and topics covered thus far, Jim began the discussion on heritage tourism with a few facts about the New Jersey's tourism industry and the nature of heritage tourism.

Regarding the economics of New Jersey's tourism industry,

- Each visitor to the state creates \$505 in expenditures, \$96 of which goes to businesses not directly related to tourism;
- Each visitor creates \$97 in tax receipts, \$56 of which goes to local and state authorities;
- Every 229 visitors pay for 1 New Jersey public school student for the year;

- Every 161 visitors creates one new New Jersey job; and
- \$2.2 billion in state tax revenues was generated by the travel & tourism industry in 2007.

(*New Jersey Destination Marketing Organizations, newjerseydmo.org/policy*)

Furthermore,

- 78% of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling, translating to 118.3 million adults each year;
- Cultural heritage travelers spend an average of \$994 per trip compared to only \$611 for other leisure travelers; and
- Collectively, cultural heritage travelers contribute to more than \$192 billion annually to the U.S. economy.

In addition, cultural heritage travelers,

- are more frequent travelers, reporting an average of 5.01 leisure trips in the past 12 months, versus 3.98 trips by non-cultural heritage travelers;
- prefer leisure travel to be educational;
- will spend more on cultural and heritage activities; and
- will travel farther to get the experience they seek.

(*The Cultural and Heritage Traveler, 2009 Edition, Mandala Research, LLC; Study commissioned by National Trust for Historic Preservation, U.S. Cultural and Heritage Tourism Marketing Council and U.S. Department of Commerce*)

The group then discussed the types of activities that attract visitors to New Jersey and which of those activities are available along the byway. Those in bold below are present along the byway, italicized indicate those with strong potential.

▪ <i>Dining and local cuisine</i>	69%
▪ <i>Shopping</i>	64%
▪ Touring and sightseeing	50%
▪ Gaming/horse/dog racing	37%
▪ Beach/lake/waterfront	33%
▪ Festival/craft fair	28%
▪ Theme/amusement park	27%
▪ Visiting historic sites	27%
▪ Nightlife	25%
▪ Museum/art exhibit	22%

(*New Jersey Heritage Tourism Master Plan, p 15*)

Following the discussion of tourism in New Jersey and heritage tourism, the discussion turned to the Bayshore Heritage Byway, specifically who visits the byway; what do they do when they get here; and how do they find out about it. Jim pointed out that the types of visitors can be described as the “4 B’s”: birders, bicyclists, boaters (paddlers) and beachcombers. In speaking with tourism professionals from the Bayshore Region, they pointed out differences between Cape May and Salem Counties in regards to their primary market regions – with Cape May drawing throughout the mid-Atlantic region and beyond as a destination and Salem County currently attracting mostly day-trippers from a slightly narrower market, but also extending further south into DC and Virginia. Many visitors indicate that they did not know such a rural landscape existed in southern New Jersey and this sense of discovery is something the

County is building upon. Tourism professionals interviewed prior to the meeting also indicated that in Salem County there has been strong growth in tourism (top growth rate of all New Jersey Counties in 2011). Cumberland County tends to get a mix of day-trippers with some coming from Atlantic City or Cape May, especially with the development of the Arts District in Millville. Tourism in Cape May County has always been the top industry and the County is looking to find ways to increase visitation in the before and after the high summer season, by marketing to the “quieter side” of Cape May to birders, boaters, and bicyclists.

Once they are here, visitors typically engage in the following activities:

- Birding/wildlife viewing;
- Walking/hiking;
- Paddling;
- Local history museums and historic sites;
- Seasonal festivities and celebrations;
- Relaxing on the beach; and/or
- Bicycling.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Jim then asked the group if there were other audiences (i.e. types of visitors) coming to the byway or if there are other activities they engage in with the following activities added

- Hunting and fishing.
- Sailing and other boating
- Farmers markets or gardening (several nurseries along the byway)
- Antiquing
- Surfing is also a popular activity on the Atlantic side of the Cape
- Architecture
- More recently people have started coming for tours of the wineries. In Middle Township, this picked up about five years ago.
- A small percentage of visitors come via boat, particularly in Greenwich. Although these people won't have cars, they may have bicycles with which to explore sites along the byway.
- Campgrounds along the route, particularly at the Cape May end.

Many visitors find out about byway or Coastal Heritage Trail related activities from printed materials and web sites. Because Cumberland and Cape May are part of one destination marketing organization (DMO) and Salem is in another, coordination will be required between the two to ensure the promotion of the entire byway. Another means of communication with visitors is mobile apps. Although none currently exist for the Bayshore Heritage Byway, Jim did mention a mobile app for Morristown, in northern New Jersey, used for a town walking tour. Something like this might be possibility for the Bayshore Heritage Byway.

Based on observations about tourism along the byway, the following draft goal was developed for heritage tourism.

Expand heritage and nature-based economic development opportunities.

Utilize the byway and New Jersey's business development resources to help the region build its capacity to attract and retain those travelers with an interest in the Bayshore's rich natural and cultural heritage and develop marketable programs and activities, along with expanded business opportunities, that

increase the comfort level of visitors – such as good food, nice places to stay, a more welcoming community appearance – and keep them coming back time and time again.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies (italicized) were presented.

1. *Build upon the target audience of birders, bicyclists, boaters (non-motorized) and beachcombers (the “4 Bs”).*

Best to focus on those visitors to whom the resources and activities along the byway are going to appeal most.

2. *Work in a coordinated manner to develop itineraries that extend the range of activities for various targeted audiences.*

In order to appeal to target audiences, need to develop compelling stories that grab their attention in their “target area” and cause them to want to stay longer to learn more. One way this can be done is to develop itineraries that tie together thematically related sites; for example, a tour that links the military history sites (NAS Wildwood, the Concrete Ship, World War II Tower, etc.)

3. *Identify clusters of resources as a means of establishing destinations that are linked together by pedestrian paths and/or bicycle paths and trails – make sure that each destination has a full service site (or plan for one).*

In addition to thematic relationships, another way to organize sites is to group them in logical clusters. (These clusters are shown in the Sites and Attractions map to be posted on the project website.)

Sarah reviewed the site list with the group, explaining that the sites had been identified by theme and level of visitor readiness. She then went over and solicited feedback on the site clusters that the consultants had proposed. Visitor readiness categories (based upon the Coastal Heritage Trail criteria) and the follow up discussion are summarized below.

Full Service Sites (F)

These sites have staff, exhibits, and restrooms. They are open at least five hours per day, five days per week (including one weekend day).

Limited Service Sites (L)

These sites are open less frequently than Full Service Sites and/or have limited services. These sites, for example, may not be staffed daily, but have brochures with self-guided tours. Or docent-led tours may be offered once monthly. Facilities may include trails, boat ramps, picnic areas and interpretation but no restrooms.

Points of Interest (P)

These sites are often scenic views or unstaffed natural areas with an interpretive wayside exhibit explaining their relevance to one of the byway themes. These sites have limited visitor facilities.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Lillian pointed out a large gap between Bridgeton and the Maurice River Corridor. She suggested that these sites could form a cluster focusing on old fishing villages and the pristine wetlands. Jane also pointed out that this area has some of the best eagle watching.
- Jody noted that the Fortescue State Marina was identified as a Limited Service Site. When Sarah explained that it was because there is no interpretation at that site, Jody referred her to interpretive signage along the beach. Sarah suggested that Fortescue, in its entirety, be considered one site instead of separating it into the marina and beaches – that would be a way for the Full Service designation to be appropriate.
- Mayor Beck noted that the Shorebird Alley really should extend all the way down the Cape. He also pointed out that the Villas WMA is currently called Cox Hall Creek WMA.
- The group discussed whether or not “limited” was the most appropriate word for that category. Many sites that have visitor services and interpretation would otherwise be considered full service but for their seasonal schedules of operation. Need to come up with a label that captures the seasonal nature of the area.
- Would also be helpful to somehow indicate the level of interpretation. Sally Birdsall pointed out that not everyone may have time for or want to be pulled into a full length tour, but may, in fact, prefer just reading the interpretive panels – would be good for people to know what they are getting into. *Jim and Tom Scofield both pointed out that her comment got to the issue of expectations. We want to be clear in how we market/label/promote these sites so that people’s expectations are met when they visit the sites. Need to present the level of visitor services and readiness accurately.*
- Fran Rapa suggested that we extend the Salem River corridor to include and perhaps be renamed as Mannington Meadows. He stated that his organization recently purchased land in that area, and there is a parking area for bird watchers. He will provide more information so that site can be mapped.
- Lillian mentioned that there is a new parking area on Hansey Creek Road since the NJ Audubon Birding and Wildlife Trails guidebook was published. There is also a new boat ramp and parking area in Mannington Meadows. Otherwise she believes the book is still current.
- Lenore Tedesco pointed out that the condition of these sites – many have litter and look like you shouldn’t be there – need to be considered. She also asked about sign maintenance noticing that the Coastal Heritage Trail signs are not being replaced or taken care of.
- Jody suggested that the map show places where paddlers can launch. *Sarah stated that she has a running list of boat ramps but knows that there are places she has left out and are only known by the locals. She will have the CMC review her list to make sure she has not left out any sites.*

Public Access Plans

Sarah summarized a conversation that she had with Cindy Randazzo at NJ DEP. The NJ DEP is working with 255 municipalities to complete public access plans, but they have not gotten to the Bayshore region yet. Still, she is eager to connect with representatives from byway townships and boroughs, and she views the byway planning effort as a good way to coordinate with DEP to get these public access plans underway. She noted that the DEP has a list of statewide access points, but she knows there are many more that are known at the local level and have not been identified by the state. The types of enhancement projects discussed at the February CMC meeting are exactly the type of projects she would like to see in the access plans.

Municipalities are encouraged to contact her at Cindy.randazzo@dep.state.nj.us to get started or continue their public access plan development.

Bill Galestok stated that Lower Township has completed their plan, and he had a copy with him. He pointed out that the rule regulating the public access plans has not actually been finalized. There had been a rule, it was done away with and now they are getting ready to adopt a revised rule, so municipalities are still somewhat on hold. He also pointed out that an important part of the public access plans is the legality – need to look into who owns the property so that visitors are not directed to access points on private property.

Historic Cold Spring Village presentation

Following the discussion on site clusters, Dona Kemling, a resident of Middle Township and representative of Historic Cold Spring Village, made a brief presentation about Cold Spring Village. The Village – composed of structures dating from just after the American Revolution to just before the Civil War – is the largest open-air living museum in New Jersey and boasts the oldest building in Cape May. Over the course of the year, Cold Spring welcomes approximately 25,000 visitors, starting with 2,700 children who come in the spring with school tours. Each structure is interpreted by paid guides and/or volunteers, and the visitor's center includes exhibits on black history, the oyster industry, fishing, etc. The Village also hosts a lecture series and special programs/events. In addition, Cold Spring Village received a small grant to promote and market the Nature Trail at Bradner's Run, and they have an agreement with the local Boy Scouts to maintain the trail.

Dona emphasized the fact that visitors will often ask what else they can do in the area – you can only spend so many days at the beach. She sends people to other area sites, including the Wetlands Institute, and Lenore Tedesco, Executive Director of the Wetlands Institute, stated that they often get the same question and send people over to Cold Spring Village. Dona encouraged other byway sites to work in a collaborative fashion and promote each other when visitors ask what activities there are available. She also offered to display brochures from other sites – this needs to be a cooperative effort.

Admission to Historic Cold Spring Village is free on the first two weekends of the season, so Dona encouraged the CMC to take advantage of the opportunity to visit!

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Following up on Dona's presentation, Lenore Tedesco explained that the Wetlands Institute also attracts approximately 25,000 visitors each year but does struggle to get people off the beach. Two things she would want to know if she were a visitor to the area are
 - Where are the kid-friendly sites?
 - Which sites have organized programs for children?
- Along the kid-friendly line, Jim also thinks about "novice" programs; for example, where can a first-time paddler become acclimated to a kayak?
- The Wetland Institute also has volunteer opportunities. Visitors can participate in horseshoe crab counts, bird counts, and other activities that they wouldn't be able to do on their own.
- The Wetland Institute is not included on the current sites list, and Lenore asked if they could be. Many of their visitors would also appreciate the natural resources on the bay side and

- establishing a connection between the byway and the Institute would be a way to broaden the byway audience (*the site will be added as it is directly related to the themes of the Byway and an important link for visitors to get beyond the beach.*)
- Susan DeLanzo then pointed out that the Cape May County Park and Zoo are very close to the Wetlands Institute and should also be included as byway sites. They are only ten minutes from Lizard Trail Swamp Preserve, which is listed.
4. *Build upon the discussion at the last meeting about coordinating beach access planning and implementation as a means of increasing the capacity for addressing visitor needs in a sustainable way – including parking (bicycle and automobile), restrooms, walking paths to the beach, interpretation and shoreline management – using the clusters as an organizing approach.* This strategy addresses the public access plan discussion summarized above. Coordinated beach access will be important for visitors to be able to appreciate the natural resources the area is known for. At the next meeting we will discuss how interpretation can be part of the public access discourse.
 5. *Use towns and full service sites as a home base for itineraries, especially towns that have visitor support services such as accommodations, restaurants, restrooms, parking, etc.* This idea, suggested by Vickie Clark of Cape May County Chamber, relates back to the clusters. Ideally, each cluster should have a full service site from which visitors can launch their excursions or use as a pit stop. Some kind of technical or business assistance should be sought to provide incentives and tips for businesses that are supportive of providing services as a way to increase business activity.
 6. *Position marketing tools (web-based and print) and event planning and programming to match visitor service improvements as a means of managing levels of visitation to the carrying capacity of the resources.* Currently the byway has a limited online presence. A natural place to promote the byway would be on the NJ DMO website – a little tricky because the byway spans two DMOs.

Sally Birdsall pointed out the need to get off paper and move to mobile apps. Given the dynamic nature of the area, its resources and its sites, conditions and information are changing constantly.

Jim suggested that print materials could be used to present the more permanent aspects of the byway (e.g. description of the Bayshore region, explanation of the byway themes, overview of activities), but more specific and time sensitive information, including site hours of operation, weather conditions, etc. would be reserved for web-based materials. Sources of information need to be linked together and the web is really the only way to create the needed information network so that visitors can get up-to-the-minute information.

Lillian expressed concern that we weren't getting appropriate participation from tourism professionals in each County. *Jim said that he had spoken with Jim Turk in Salem County and Vicki Clark in Cape May County. He is still trying to follow up with Kim Gantt in Cumberland who had attended previous meetings.* Sally Birdsall stated that she acts as a transportation planning consultant for Cumberland County, and she does think that the county is interested in the project. They are eager to tie transportation planning to eco-tourism.

7. *Gain more recognition for the route (building upon the Coastal Heritage Trail) – consider the potential for National Heritage Area designation or other recognition programs.*

Jim explained that the National Scenic Byway Program needs to be reauthorized in the new federal transportation bill. The House version of the bill ends the program, but the Senate version continues the program. In all likelihood funding for the program will be lumped in with other transportation-related funding pools. Therefore, it makes sense for the byway to consider other designations or involvement in other recognition programs. Specifically, Jim suggested considering designation as a National Heritage Area (noting that a study had already been done that found the Bayshore to be eligible for National Heritage Area designation). He pointed to two other Mid-Atlantic heritage areas, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground and Crossroads of the American Revolution.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Tom Scofield mentioned that there is legislation pending to codify the National Heritage Area designation through a congressional act (which has progressed much further than in recent attempts at this. He recommended that the byway representatives contact their congressional delegations to point out the potential benefits to the Bayshore region.
- Lillian explained that the byway organization has explored National Heritage Area designation and found it to be a very difficult process to navigate. She is glad to hear that it might be codified and hopes that the process will be clarified and simplified.
- With regard to the Coastal Heritage Trail (CHT) relationship, David Bocanegra stated that he had spoken with NPS staff at Harper's Ferry, and they are sending the US FWS the "paper copies" of the CHT signs so that the US FWS can replace the signs in their National Wildlife Refuge properties. He suggested that counties, municipalities or other organizations could request the "paper copies" of the other signs so that they could replace and maintain them.
- Jane Morton Galetto mentioned that she thought the duplicate metal signs had already been distributed to what NPS thought were the likely people to keep them up.
- Jim suggested that one way to handle the CHT relationship – assuming the proposed NJ DOT byway signage program is approved – would be to replace the CHT route marking signs with the byway route marking signs (since the CHT is not intended to be a defined travel route and maintain the CHT site marking signs (perhaps adding the byway logo to them as a means of linking the byway to the CHT sites). Jim also mentioned an earlier suggestion by a committee member was to use simple logo, such as a bird or a boat ramp be incorporated into signage or mobile applications to signal the nature of a particular site. This will be discussed in greater detail at upcoming meetings, but Jim encouraged the group to think about how they might want to handle CHT and byway signage.
- It was noted that the binocular signs are a Watchable Wildlife, Inc. program that is fee-based; however, the state is no longer paying for the upkeep of those signs.

Conclusion

The meeting concluded with a review of upcoming meetings. The next meeting, CMC Meeting #5: Interpretive Development, will take place on Thursday, April 19, 2012 from 3 to 5 pm at the Bayshore Discovery Project, 2800 High Street, Port Norris, NJ 08349.