

CHAPTER II

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Overarching New York State and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation program principles, policies and goals and objectives are the foundation for planning and development decisions. While fluid over time, these directives provide guidance to develop project specific goals and objectives to meet the multiple current and future needs of the public while preserving and protecting New York State's valuable natural and cultural resources.

This chapter presents a brief overview of the state, regional and local directives and guiding principles under which the Black Diamond Trail project evolved.

NEW YORK STATE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Programs dedicated to protecting and enhancing, for public enjoyment and economic vitality, the natural and cultural resources of New York State have come from Executive Orders and policy initiatives issued by the State's governors and supported by the State's legislatures. The programs' policies and goals and objectives set forth directives which are implemented through the appropriate state agencies.

Several statewide programs relevant to the operation of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation include the Open Space Conservation Plan, Coastal Management Program, Heritage New York Program, and Quality Communities Program. Under each of these programs emphasis is placed on working with local municipal leaders and developing partnerships with local public, private and not-for-profit organizations to achieve the highest level of quality and benefit in providing recreational and cultural resources preservation, accessibility and interpretation.

OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION MISSION STATEMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Charged with overseeing the operation of New York State owned parks and historic sites and providing technical assistance to communities across the state with locally-owned resources, the OPRHP clarified its mission and methods to accomplish its legislatively-mandated responsibilities in the following mission statement and guiding principles.

Mission Statement

The mission of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of our valuable natural, historic and cultural resources.



Guiding Principles

A Commitment to Leadership.

We recognize the preeminence of the New York State Park and Historic Site System. We are committed to excellence, innovation, professionalism and to forging partnerships. We are committed to seeking the means by which operational and maintenance needs are met as recreational and cultural opportunities are enhanced for our patrons. To meet the challenge, we are committed to pursuing compatible revenue initiatives as we continue our commitment to protect resources.

A Commitment to People.

We are committed to serving and protecting the public to the best of our ability, with courtesy and respect. We are committed to our employees and volunteers, encouraging teamwork, self-improvement and mutual support.

A Commitment to Service.

We are committed to equal access and outreach to all segments of our society, recognizing individual needs and interests. We are committed to safety, security, creativity and accountability in providing our programs and services.

A Commitment to Preservation.

State Parks and Historic Sites are unique and irreplaceable public assets. We are committed to wise acquisition, planning and where compatible, development of recreational facilities; timely and professional care and maintenance; and a responsibility to future generations in whose trust we manage resources. We are committed to providing encouragement to all agencies and individuals to identify, evaluate and protect recreational, natural, historic and cultural resources.

STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

The OPRHP prepares the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which sets forth policy directions to fulfill the agency's recreation and preservation mandates. The plan is updated every five years.

The statewide policies for the five-year period 2003 to 2008 include the following:

- ◆ Preserve and protect natural and cultural resources.
- ◆ Improve recreation site operation, maintenance and resource management.
- ◆ Improve and expand water-oriented recreation opportunities.
- ◆ Develop comprehensive recreationway, greenway and heritage trail systems.
- ◆ Support compatible recreation and interpretative programs.
- ◆ Improve cooperation and coordination in providing recreational opportunities and in enhancing natural and cultural resource stewardship between all levels of government and the private sector.
- ◆ Apply recreation research techniques and management practices to improve and expand parks and other open spaces.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL INITIATIVES

Several program initiatives are underway in the Finger Lakes Region and Tompkins County that include the Black Diamond Trail as a component or enhancement of the projects' goals and objectives.

Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway, Inc.

The 87-mile loop scenic byway was initiated by representatives from the three counties surrounding Cayuga Lake — Cayuga, Seneca and Tompkins. The success of the byway is directly tied to the natural, cultural and recreational resources within the Cayuga Lake basin available for visitors. The byway also encourages visitors to enjoy the byway by the many ways to travel (bicycle, motorcycle, walking, etc.) The Black Diamond Trail is seen as a complement to the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway segment in Tompkins County providing a safe bicycle and walking facility within the byway's service area.

Tompkins County Waterfront Plan

The plan was prepared with participation from the communities in Tompkins County that border Cayuga Lake, including the Town of Lansing, Town of Ithaca, Town of Ulysses and the City of Ithaca. The plan focuses on celebrating the history of the waterfront and its relationship to the Erie Canalway and the future revitalization of the resource. The goals of the plan include increasing public access and improve waterfront parks, enhancing boating facilities and operations, encouraging appropriate economic development, including tourism, improving linkages between waterfront destinations, residential neighborhoods and existing business districts, and conserving and interpreting natural and cultural resources. The Black Diamond Trail is listed as a key waterfront project to implement the plan.

Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC), 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan

Charged with conducting the transportation planning process for the urbanized area of

Tompkins County, the ITCTC has developed a set of goals and objectives that will direct the expansion of the area's transportation system to a multi-modal, comprehensive service program. Providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities are two of the seven issue areas addressed in the plan. The ITCTC also developed a transportation/trail corridor study to identify corridors that can be developed for multi-use trails. The Black Diamond Trail is recognized in this study as one of the trail projects.

Town of Ithaca Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan

The Town of Ithaca has progressively planned for its residents open space and recreational needs since the late 1970s. Developing a system of off-road bicycle and pedestrian trails to connect parks, residential neighborhoods, commercial districts and places of work if included in the plan. The Town of Ithaca recognizes the contribution the Black Diamond Trail will have to meeting this objective.

City of Ithaca, Cayuga Waterfront Trail

The City of Ithaca is in the process of developing a trail network along the waterfront in the city to provide an off-road bicycle and pedestrian facility for residents and visitors to travel between parks, commercial facilities, neighborhoods and cultural amenities. The Black Diamond Trail will provide an extension of the waterfront trail to additional areas of the city.

City of Ithaca, Southwest Natural Area Master Plan

The City of Ithaca acquired 60-acres of remnant floodplain forest and former agricultural lands to replace a 60-acre parcel in the City's southwest area slated for new commercial and residential development. The City is planning to develop the area as a natural park facility. The Black Diamond Trail will provide bicycle and pedestrian access to the future park.

**BLACK DIAMOND TRAIL
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Applying the previously identified overarching directives to the Black Diamond Trail project, a set of goals and objectives were developed for the trail. The goals and objectives bring implementation of the statewide policies down to the regional and local levels.

GOAL

Increase opportunities for trail-based recreation and multi-modal transportation options in the Finger Lakes Region in general, and Tompkins County in particular.



Objectives

- ◆ Develop a trail facility that maximizes the opportunities to link to neighborhood, recreation areas and other bicycle and pedestrian commuter destinations.
- ◆ Promote the relationship of the Black Diamond Trail to the Finger Lakes bike routes and other regional trails.

GOAL

Protect, enhance and interpret the scenic, natural and cultural resources of the trail corridor.



Objectives

- ◆ Ensure that trail development is compatible with environmental resources.
- ◆ Identify and protect environmentally significant resources along the trail.
- ◆ Encourage the appreciation, enhancement and preservation of the trail's viewsheds.
- ◆ Develop opportunities for the interpretation of significant natural and cultural resources within and adjacent to the trail corridor.

GOAL

Develop the trail in a manner that promotes a safe, high-quality, diversified recreational experience and alternate transportation choice.



Objectives

- ◆ To the greatest extent possible, develop a trail facility that can be used by all ages, skill levels and physical capabilities.
- ◆ To the greatest extent possible, develop a trail facility that is separated from motor vehicle traffic.
- ◆ Develop a compatible multi-use trail that will, at minimum, facilitate bicycling and pedestrian uses.
- ◆ To the maximum extent possible, encourage and support multi-seasonal use of the trail.
- ◆ Use trail-etiquette education to manage and monitor trail user conflicts.

GOAL

Minimize and/or mitigate, as practical, impacts on adjacent landowners.

Objectives

- ◆ Use design and construction techniques that minimize the impacts of trail use on adjacent landowners.
- ◆ Foster a trail ethic that encourages recognition and respect of the rights of adjacent landowners.

