



# **Lake Champlain Byway Corridor Management Plan**

## **Grand Isle County**

### **2017**

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# PREAMBLE

*The purpose of this Preamble is two-fold. First, it recaps the activities of the Lake Champlain Byway Council since its inception in November 2004 and secondly, it presents a set of overarching goals and strategies for the Byway as a whole.*

The Lake Champlain Byway is a Scenic Byway designated by the State of Vermont located in the northwest portion of the state. From north to south, the formal designated motor route is 134 miles (215 km) long and consists of U.S. Route 2 through the Grand Isle County, U.S. Route 7 through Chittenden County and then portions of U.S. 7 and portions of Vermont Routes 22-A, 73 and 74 in Addison County.

The Byway is managed by the Lake Champlain Byway Council, a registered Vermont Non-Profit Corporation. The purpose of the Corporation is to serve as the managing and coordinating body for the Lake Champlain Byway, a designated Byway within the State of Vermont and to undertake and support projects that balance the promotion, preservation, enjoyment, and stewardship of the Byway's intrinsic resources.

The Council's Board of Directors consists of 12 members: representatives of seven regional organizations and an additional five at-large members appointed by the first seven members. The Byway was first conceived in the 1990s and then came to fruition in the early-to-mid 2000s. The formation of the Council in November 2004 formalized this long-standing collaboration of the various regional planning commissions, regional chambers of commerce and others organizations.

From late 2004 through spring 2017 the Byway Council carried out various activities to develop the Byway. These activities fell into two categories: coordination and project management. Coordination was carried out by Board meetings to confer on such topics as development of grant proposals, tracking grant implementation, and updates to the Council's Bylaws. Coordination was effected by frequent consultations with the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. Going forward it is anticipated that the Byway Council will need to meet less often given the lack of grant funding.

Project management consisted of overseeing the implementation of seven grants secured by the Council from the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byway program as follows:

## *FY07-#01, Travel Information and Improvements*

- Developed a "Lake Champlain Byway" brochure in both English French and outdoor information panels;;; completed a Byway website;; installed trailblazer signs on Route 2 in the Champlain Islands and in towns of Addison County, and developed and constructed two portable toilet shelters in the Islands.

## *FY08-#05, Corridor Management Plan Update and Capacity Building*

- Funded participation of RPC and municipal staff at the 2009 and 2011 National Scenic Byways Conferences and funded the development of the 2017 updates to the three respective County Corridor CMPs.

## *FY08-#06 Chittenden County Recreational & Cultural Sites Inventory*

- Funded the Chittenden County RPC to create a recreational and cultural sites inventory for its eight byway communities and hire contractors to work with each of the

communities to provide preliminary designs and cost estimates for various improvements recommended by the inventory.

*FY09-#02 Byway Publications*

- Developed and distributed a water recreation guide to Lake Champlain and the Byway's other waterways and a winter activities guide.

*FY10-#01 and FY11-#02 Bicyclist Rest Areas*

- Via a subcontract from the Byway Council, Local Motion (a regional advocacy group for biking, hiking and walking) designed and installed eight small bicyclist rest areas along the route of the Lake Champlain Bikeway which traverses through several Byway communities.

*FY12-#01 Interpretive Planning*

- Developed and completed an Interpretation Coordination Plan for the Byway.

Management and development of the Byway is informed by its three respective Corridor Management Plans for each of the three counties (Grand Isle, Chittenden and Addison) traversed by the route of the Byway. The purpose of these Plans is to outline protection and enhancement of the byway's intrinsic qualities and character.

The completion of all three county Corridor Management Plans" represents the last significant project managed by the Council as Federal Fiscal Year 2012 was the last year such National Scenic Byway grants were made available. Going forward, it is anticipated that the only significant project management activity to be undertaken by the Council will be oversight of the Byway's website, [www.lakechamplainbyway.com](http://www.lakechamplainbyway.com).

Each CMP is unique to its respective county, however, the Lake Champlain Byway Council and the Board of each of the three respective Regional Planning Commissions hereby endorse the following overarching goal and strategic actions for the Lake Champlain Byway:

Overarching Goal

To undertake and support projects that balances the promotion, preservation, enjoyment, and stewardship of the Byway's intrinsic resources.

Strategies

- 1) Economic Development: promote tourism opportunities that are consistent with the principles of sustainable development;
- 2) Transportation Improvements: promote programs and projects that improve transportation infrastructure for all travel modes, improve safety and enhance the traveler experience; and
- 3) Regional Coordination: promote collaboration in marketing and interpretation among the agencies and organizations with an interest in the Byway's intrinsic resources.

# THE NATIONAL PROGRAM

A Byway is a special route (or network of routes) that offer the traveler access to beautiful scenery, cultural and natural resources. They open up vistas and introduce visitors to places that might otherwise be passed by. They can be spectacular destinations or a favorite local road. They can be rural, suburban, or urban. The common thread among all Byways is that it must be a roadway regarded as a special resource to be promoted and protected.

The National Scenic Byways (NSB) Program was established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. The rationale and benefits behind the National Scenic Byways Program includes:

- Assuring that Americans know and appreciate scenic, cultural and natural resources
- Supporting economic development in communities and regions
- Protecting and enhancing scenic, cultural and natural resources
- Managing traffic by diverting and channeling tourist traffic
- Encouraging visitors to explore, learn, and appreciate

The Vermont Byways Program was established in 1996, partly in response to the National Scenic Byways Program, to obtain federal transportation grants for tourism or resource conservation; promote tourism through marketing; and assist local groups in managing resources along designated byways.

Overall guidance for the byway program has established that:

- A byway must be significant in at least one of the six intrinsic value categories: natural, scenic, cultural, historic, recreational, or archaeological.
- A byway program is for the recognition, interpretation, maintenance, enhancement, and preservation of the intrinsic qualities of the byway.
- A corridor management plan demonstrates a commitment and provides a strategy to preserve and protect identified assets. The expectation is that designation increases tourism, creates new jobs, and fosters economic development. The plan should have a narrative as to how the byway will be marketed.
- Continuity is important in the byway. Byways must accommodate 2-wheel drive autos and should accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.

## Federal Program

Federal NSB program funding was reauthorized in 1998 and 2005 to support state and tribal programs, corridor management planning, safety improvements, byway facilities, access to recreation, resource protection, interpretive information, and marketing. As a result, designated byways exist in nearly all states. The federal program was unfunded in 2012 with the authorization of the transportation bill Moving Ahead for Progress in

the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Transportation Alternatives Program presents a federal transportation funding option for the following eligible projects:

- the construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas;
- historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities related to a byway; and
- bicycle and pedestrian facilities along a byway.

## **Corridor Management Plans**

A corridor management plan outlines how a community intends to preserve the intrinsic values of a byway in sustainable balance with economic development and tourism. Developing a corridor management plan includes a process to identify and document resources and broad community involvement, monitoring, and continued advocacy. A corridor management plan reflects the community's vision of its byway with an action plan that describes how the community will establish and maintain its byway.

## **Intrinsic Resources of a Byway**

Intrinsic resources are characteristics that make a place unique. Six categories of these resources are identified as giving byways a sense of place. For the Lake Champlain Byway, historic and archeological qualities were combined into the historic category and the intrinsic resource of "working landscape" was added. Communities can choose to nominate their byway in one category or in any combination of categories, depending on which resources the community identifies as important to protect. All of these intrinsic characteristics can be experienced along the Lake Champlain Byway.

### **Natural**

Found in unusual geologic formations, topography, climate, hydrologic features (e.g., streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands and oceans), wildlife, and habitats for rare or endangered species.

### **Scenic**

Includes visually appealing natural and cultural landscape elements that offer a heightened or memorable visual experience. Some of the potential elements that contribute to scenic values include water and landform features, landscape compositions and effects, vegetation patterns, structures, and roadway characteristics.

### **Historic**

Sites, districts, structures, artifacts, or other evidences of historic activities. They may be places where significant historic events occurred, or associated with an important personality. This includes areas where the landscape influenced an event. Also included are archaeological resources such as evidence of hunting or gathering areas, burial sites, artifacts, and building remnants.

### **Recreational**

Both active and passive recreation features, such as state and local parks, reforestation

areas, hiking trails, water access points, bike and pedestrian trails, indoor recreation facilities, and cross-country and downhill ski areas.

**Cultural**

Resources important in the course of human events. Examples may include churches, museums, colleges/schools, festival sites, or other civic resources. Sites of ethnic importance and structures or landscaping that possess artistic merit or represent achievements in architecture, engineering, technology, design or scientific research and development are possible resources.

**Working Landscape**

Examples include landscapes related to farming, forestry, mineral extraction, or working waterfronts. Sites or areas of importance to the development of the industries and areas where the landforms strongly influenced a development pattern are resources. Structures or landscaping that are particularly representative of their period, or represent achievements in technology or developments in agriculture are possible resources.

# LAKE CHAMPLAIN BYWAY

## A Byway Beginning

The Vermont counties of Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Rutland and New York counties of Clinton, Essex, and Washington came together in the late 1990s to explore the concept of a Lake Champlain Byway. While the two states differed in their approach to the byway effort, the collaborative effort to create a regional Byway was pursued. New York had already designated a byway route at a state level several years earlier, so local communities explored how to capitalize on the designation. Vermont's approach to byways requires that local communities nominate a route for designation, so communities identified existing resources and explored the benefits and challenges of byway designation. Committees identified what was special about their county, and what should be addressed in the Corridor Management Plan.

## Waypoint Communities

A Byway Waypoint Community is one that is located within the Lake Champlain Byway corridor along a designated route; offers (or has the potential to offer) multi-modal transportation, visitor services and amenities, traveler information, public restrooms; and can serve as a “hub” for the byway traveler to nearby byway resources that may not be located along a designated route. These communities create a cohesive experience for the visitor and facilitate linkages along the entire Byway.

## Making Connections

The Lake Champlain Byway formal designated route is 134 miles long and from north to south consists of US 2 through the Champlain Islands, US 7 through Chittenden County and then portions of US 7 and portions of Vermont Routes 22-A, 73 and 74 in Addison County. The Byway has grown steadily since its inception in 2000 as different communities have sought and obtained designation.

Grand Isle County	
2007	Alburgh, North Hero, Grand Isle and South Hero
2011	Isle LaMotte
Chittenden County	
2002	Milton, Colchester, Winooski, Essex Junction, Burlington, South Burlington, Shelburne and Charlotte
Addison County	
2000	Vergennes, Middlebury
2009	Ferrisburgh, Cornwall, Shoreham, Orwell, Whiting
2013	Addison, Panton



### **Lake Champlain Islands**

US 2 offers intimate views of Lake Champlain and panoramic scenes that help visitors experience communities, resources, and settings. It connects local roads and attractions and can best accommodate byway traffic. The designation of US 2 in Grand Isle County extended the Lake Champlain Byway approximately 29 miles north from Chittenden County, nearly doubling the length of the Vermont byway (see map in Appendix A). It connects with the Lake Champlain Region of New York's Lakes to Locks Passage, a National Scenic Byway and All American Road. Cooperative planning with both Chittenden County and New York communities is achieved through the Lake Champlain Byway Council, as discussed in *Lake Champlain Byway, Shared Regional Goals*. See the following chapter for more information on the Grand Isle community towns.

### **Greater Burlington**

The eight byway communities of the greater Burlington area present a diverse menu of opportunities for the traveler. It includes densely populated urban areas, growing suburban areas and areas that remain rural. Burlington is the hub for the region having a classic small city downtown with its numerous museums and arts and entertainment venues and several lakeside parks and beaches. You can get around easily on foot, by public transportation or use the city's famed bike path that fronts Lake Champlain. Winooski, a historic mill city, boasts numerous brick and stone buildings reflective of its industrial heritage. The downtown is completely redeveloped with pedestrian-friendly streets and pocket parks and includes a boardwalk along the roaring Winooski River as well as two fine local museums, quiet nature trails and great fishing holes. South Burlington is a newer, growing suburban community but has several excellent parks and natural areas all linked by an extensive recreation path system. Essex Junction is a compact village that hosts the Byway's only Amtrak passenger station. It is also home to the state's largest outdoor cultural and performance venue, the Champlain Valley Exposition which hosts a traditional country fair around Labor Day and numerous other events year-round.

The towns of Shelburne, Charlotte, Milton and Colchester have histories based upon agriculture and other traditional industries. They host many opportunities for outdoor recreation such as parks and natural areas, rivers, ponds and hiking trails. The traveler can experience classic New England village architecture and tour several well-regarded local museums. Of particular interest are Shelburne Museum and Shelburne Farms, Mt. Philo State Park in Charlotte, Sandbar State Park in Milton and the boating center of Mallett's Bay in Colchester.

### **Addison County**

Located in the lower Champlain Valley bordered by the Adirondacks to the west and the Green Mountains to the east, Addison County is rich in lake, pastoral and mountain beauty. History comes alive and each community along the Byway offers glimpses of its past along with an array of social and cultural opportunities—from concerts, museums and community plays to pancake breakfasts and strawberry festivals. In springtime wildflowers grow in profusion, making our roadsides, meadows and woodlands a welcoming garden. Nearby mountains, forests and lakes invite you to pack a picnic, enjoy swimming holes, hike the trails or camp under a sea of stars.

The area's proximity to Lake Champlain and year-round recreation in the Green Mountain National Forest make it a desirable destination. Golf, tennis, hiking and biking are favorite pastimes in the summer; in winter, snowy mountains and fields are perfect for Alpine and Nordic skiing as well as snowshoeing. The golds and reds of autumn make fall foliage some of the most spectacular in the world.

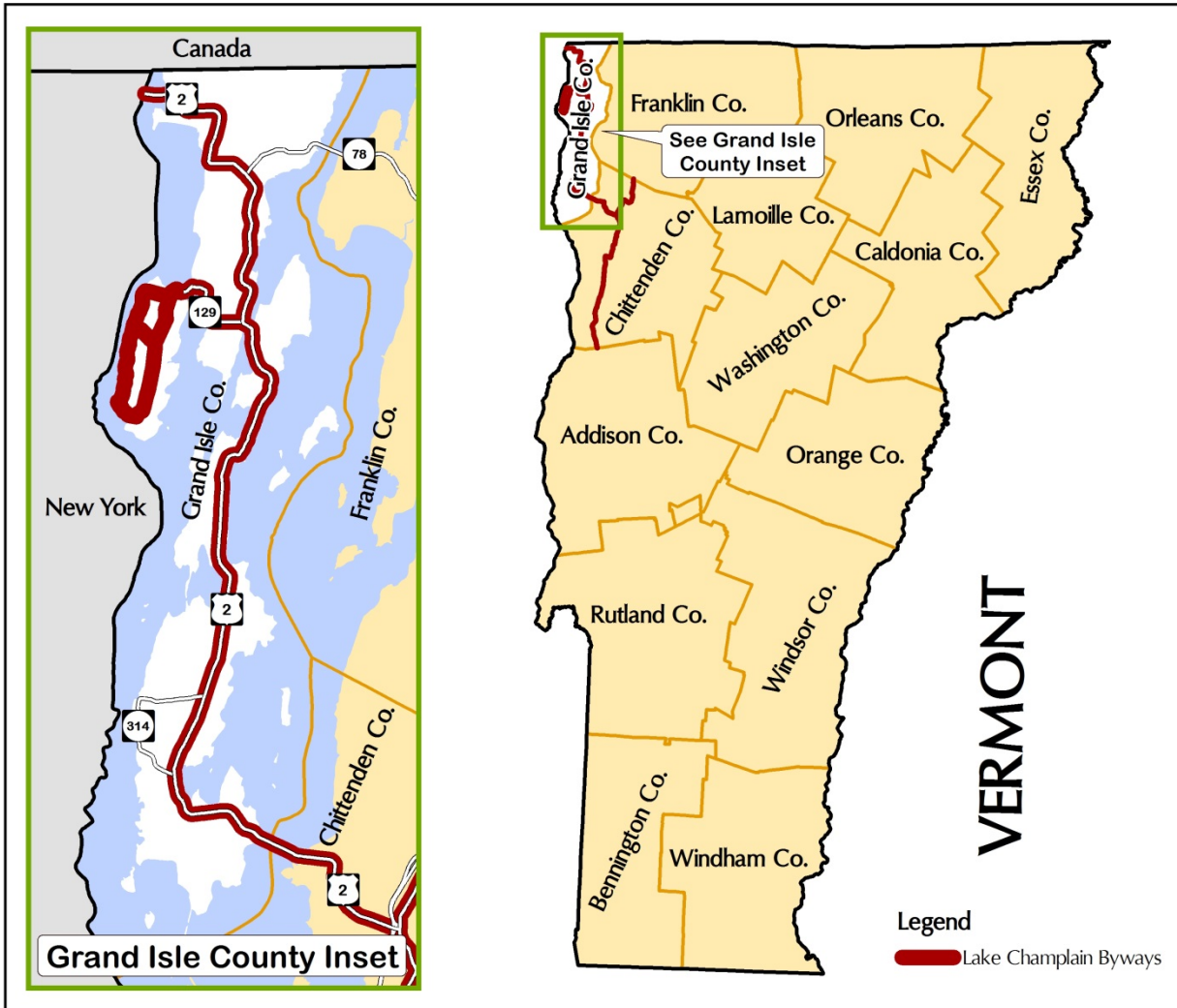
## **Lake Champlain Byway Accomplishments**

- Waypoint communities have been established in Addison, Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties.
- Intermodal transportation links have been achieved in key locations with improved recreation paths, bicycle route maps, ferry and paddling information and options for walking tours.
- Interpretive materials have been developed for the Byway that creates links across jurisdictional boundaries including the website and lure-piece brochures.
- Restrooms and pull-offs have been identified in several locations.
- Interpretive and marketing plan for the Byway was completed in 2014.
- Two byway wide brochures that highlight activities for water recreation sites and winter activities were completed and distributed.

# GRAND ISLE COUNTY'S BYWAY

## The Islands Experience and Route Designation

Referred to as “the Islands,” Grand Isle County has been a tourism destination for visitors from throughout New England, Northern New York, and Southern Quebec for nearly 100 years.



It is the site of the first European settlement in Vermont, home to the famous Isle la Motte “black marble,” and host to significant historic, cultural, and archeological resources.

The Islands are quintessential Vermont – surrounded by water. With a quiet rural charm, waterside farms, orchards and vineyards encompass the landscape; the largest natural sand beach in Vermont; abundant recreational opportunities including year-

round fishing, boating, swimming, and skating; and historic Revolutionary War villages. Linked in a 27-mile chain and connected to the mainland by bridges, causeways, and a land connection to Canada, the Islands provide extraordinary scenery with pastoral fields and expansive lake views surrounded by picturesque mountains. Small but full of character, they are home to 6,970 (2010 U.S. Census) year-round residents whose distinct independent spirit continues a proud tradition of self-sufficiency.

The Champlain Islands are the place where Vermont, New York, and Quebec meet. History, natural resources, and working landscape provide the background for the Island experience, but visitors come to the Islands primarily to experience its peaceful lakeside settings and to participate in recreational activities. Tourism has been a mainstay of island life since the early 1900s when visitors visited the islands by steamboat. Vice President Teddy Roosevelt was visiting Isle La Motte when the news came that President McKinley had been shot. Today, summer cottages line the shore, and tourism contributes significantly to the economy of the Islands.

US 2 is the lifeline of Grand Isle County and is its sole north/south through road. Its historic role as the “Main Street” for the county’s towns -- with distinct villages surrounded by farms and rural residential development -- will likely remain its permanent role due to the county’s physical geography. Whether by car, bus, or bicycle, visitors experience a slice of Vermont not many expect, and Grand Isle County communities have determined US 2 as their designated segment of the Lake Champlain Byway.

## **Exploring Island Resources**

The Islands are defined by Lake Champlain. It provides the bond that unites cultural traditions and the physical barrier that separates each island from each other and the mainland. The Islands are a working landscape, continually redeveloped to reflect the economic necessities of sustaining Island life. Appendix A provides a map of resources along this route

### **Recreation**

Drawn by the laid back attitude that the Islands convey, visitors soon find themselves seeking recreational activities that strengthen families, contribute to mental and physical relaxation, and provide exercise. With seven State Parks, state fishing accesses, and numerous private sites, visitors can find water-based recreational activities, like fishing, swimming, and boating, and land-based activities, like bicycling, horse riding, hunting, and special events. Recent work to increase recreational activities has focused on increasing access to Lake Champlain and on enhancing the bicycling infrastructure including the addition of the Local Motion Bike ferry.

### **Natural**

The natural resources of the Islands are the heart of Island living. Resource-based economies -- including farming, forestry, fishing, and quarrying -- allowed for the

development of small hamlets and villages in each of the five towns that remain today as important community centers. Ecotourism continues to grow as a resource-based economic activity of the Islands. Visitors come to learn about geology in Isle La Motte, the Lake Champlain flyway in North Hero, and dune ecology in Alburgh. Alburgh Dunes State Park is a 625-acre property with a sand dune system formed from glacial till and acts as a barrier island. State parks and private preserves provide ready access and interpretation of the natural resources of the Islands. State fish and wildlife areas offer boating, fishing, birding, and hiking opportunities. Partnerships among businesses, interpretive professionals, and resource sites continue to open the Islands to visitors who want to learn about and appreciate their unique (and fragile) ecosystems.

### **Agricultural**

“The Garden Spot of Vermont” and “The Beauty Spot of Vermont” are town nicknames that reflect the extended growing season of the Islands. Thanks to the warm microclimates of Lake Champlain, the Islands support a strong and diverse agricultural economy. In addition to orchards, dairy and cattle farms, visitors will find flower and vegetable farms, vineyards, and a fish culture station. The Islands climate suggests it will continue to make an ideal setting for agriculture, however the “crop” evolution will likely reflect local, specialty markets and rising land prices. Agricultural tourism is a new addition to the economy of the Islands. It provides support income for some farms and gives visitors a better understanding of farm life. Up until 2016, the Islands had an annual Open Farm and Studio Tour that brought many visitors to local farms to learn about the local agricultural industry and allow them to experience a piece of Vermont life.

### **Cultural**

Small, close knit communities characterize much of Vermont, and the Islands are no exception. Cultural expression, however, is found in daily exercises of Islander independence and an appreciation for a unique living environment given the area’s geography. Cut off from the mainland in the past and with limited land connections today, Islanders have relied on their own skills and knowledge to see them through difficult times and to provide their own entertainment. The group “CIDER,” Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources reflects this cultural trait. Islanders as a whole have a strong entrepreneurial spirit -- 90% of Island businesses are sole proprietor establishment. They evolve with the market, making or selling new products as the market demands.

The rural character contributes significantly to a quality of life, another piece of Island culture. Quality of life is important to all Islanders, including those who were born in the Islands, transplants who have made it their home and visitors who reside here in summer. Quality of life is achieved by striking a balance between the other five intrinsic qualities and the economic opportunities that provide for day-to-day living. Islanders share their culture with others through special events, interpretive programs, and the visual and performing arts. Visitors can experience the culture of the Islands simply by visiting and talking to some local business owners or just enjoying the view.

## **Historic**

Historic and archeological resources are pervasive, but not always publicly accessible. Like many of the Islands' resources, historic and archeological sites have been used and reused throughout the history of the Islands. The sites are often fragile and unable to withstand intense visitation or are privately owned. Islanders rely on a few essential historic sites, several local museums, and informational programs provided by historical societies to tell their stories.

Historic sites available to byway travelers include stops in Isle la Motte for the site of the first European settlement in Vermont commemorated by a statue of Samuel de Champlain and an early settlement, the Hookenspoon, in North Hero originally used as a summer fishing camp and houses a display of artifacts.

## **Scenic**

Few Island views lack scenic qualities. The combination of farmland, natural settings, Lake Champlain, and the Green and Adirondack Mountains make every setting dramatic. Scenery preservation was an important consideration for burying power lines along the US 2 causeway between Milton and South Hero. US 2 has been identified as a scenic Vermont highway by local, state, and national travel and tourism publications for many years. This unofficial designation has brought both motorized and non-motorized travelers to the route.

## **Grand Isle County Byway Accomplishments**

- The Missisquoi Bay Bridge was replaced in 2008 in collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VAOT).
- In 2011, two port-a-lets and informational kiosks were constructed along US 2 that provide a short-term solution to the availability of public restrooms. These facilities are located in the Town of Grand Isle and near the Apple Island Marina in South Hero.
- Partial improvements to the US Route 2 and VT Route 314 Intersection with the planned construction of a left-turn lane on US 2 westbound onto VT 314; as of 2017 project under development with VAOT.
- Alburgh Village streetscape project is expected to construct in 2017 and will include the reconstruction of sidewalks (with curbing) along the eastern side of Main Street between Peterson Place and Champlain Street with a connection to the elementary school. Crosswalks will be added across US 2 at Peterson Place and Champlain Street and remarked on Champlain Street and on Industrial Park Road.
- Parking has been delineated and improved for visitors in front of the North Hero House.
- Bikeway routes have been established throughout the county.
- Various interpretive and informational brochures have been created.
- Partnerships have been strengthened with local businesses, organizations and entities.

- A pavilion was completed at Knight Point State Park for outdoor performances and general use by the public.
- As of 2016, six bike rest areas have been developed throughout the Islands and provide covered picnic tables for cyclists along with other amenities.

# ACTION PLAN

## Corridor Management Plan

This Action Plan is organized around the three central goals that were consistently heard from community input: improving the transportation system, strengthening economic development, and enhancing community character. These goals reflect the county's extensive experience with tourism. They also reflect hopes for the county's future development.

County residents have been clear that the Corridor Management Plan should be used as a guide to actions that support the county's vision. As a vision for the future, the plan's goals can only be realized if residents continue to support a countywide effort. The plan is not intended to replace or take precedence over local planning and zoning.

Regulatory efforts to maintain scenic qualities and community character are a town-specific balance between community needs and individual equity.

### Grand Isle County Vision

The low-key atmosphere of communities and spectacular views of Lake Champlain inject local and out-of-town travelers in Grand Isle County with a sense of well being and relaxation. A Lake Champlain Byways future will assist in managing the impacts of tourism, continue efforts to coordinate travel and tourism, and strengthen local communities. It will work within the framework of infrastructure that we are able to provide and will continue the lifestyles and variety of recreational opportunities that are important to us.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Overview

US 2 is the main thoroughfare of Grand Isle County as its sole north/south road. Its historic role as the "Main Street" for the County's towns will likely remain its permanent role due to the County's physical geography. Locally the corridor serves as the main road connecting the islands and carries commuter traffic from growing residential development. It also functions to connect Grand Isle County to the state of New York, Chittenden County, Vermont and a link to Quebec, Canada. As the volume of vehicles increase from travel both within and through the County, the character of Route 2 has begun to also take on a highway quality.

There are three distinct sections of the corridor. VT 78 and a portion of US 2 in Alburgh are part of the National Highway System (NHS), linking Interstate 87 in New York and Interstate 89 in Vermont. The NHS designation, which only four other State Highways in Vermont share, reinforces the fact that this route is extremely important in the national strategic transportation network and is a critical link between Vermont and the rest of North America. The northern section of the corridor carries a high proportion of large trucks transporting goods across the borders of VT, NY and Canada. The Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) as of 2015 on Route 2 from the NY line to VT 78 was estimated at 4,900 vehicles. Vehicle traffic drops down to around 2,500 vehicles after



the VT 78 intersection. Volumes increase south of the Grand Isle village area and grow dramatically after the intersection with Ferry Road/VT 314. This segment of Route 2 averages 9,250 vehicles as it connects the Islands to Chittenden County and incorporates travelers utilizing the ferry to NY.

This dual role of highway and “Main Street” creates conflicts among the users of the roadways because each user group has different expectations of the road’s purpose and has different travel needs. This should continually be monitored for means to reduce these user conflicts.

## **Vision**

The County’s transportation system acts as a port of entry for visitors to the Islands. Visitors are funneled over bridges and causeways, onto the ferry, and into marinas and public access sites. A user-friendly, inter-modal transportation system should welcome visitors to the community, introduce them to services and resources, and offer them a pleasant and safe travel experience.

## **Goals**

- Plan for and implement roadway improvements that facilitate travel on foot and by bicycle, boat, and other motorized vehicles.
- Develop transportation services and facilities that meet the needs of all travelers, including publications and information systems, pedestrian crosswalks, multilingual signs, parking, restrooms, and scenic overlooks and pull-offs.
- Identify opportunities to link public transit options to other modes of transportation.

## **Actions**

***Implement improvements that reduce roadway conflicts and enhance safety while retaining the small-scale character of Island communities.***

Reducing roadway conflicts is a high priority for local communities. Improvements such as reducing lane width, increasing shoulder width, and spot safety enhancements will support local use and visiting travelers. On-road improvements will enhance safety and use by non-motorized travelers. Public transportation and off-road facilities for non-motorized travelers could offer an excellent alternative for reducing roadway conflicts.

- ☐ Improve safety and congestion at the US Route 2 and VT Route 314 Intersection. As of 2017, VAOT is implementing a left-turn lane on US 2 westbound onto VT 314. Additional improvements should be coordinated with VAOT and NRPC to address congestion from right-turns on VT 314 onto US 2 southbound.
- ☐ Build a roadway profile of 11-foot travel lanes and 5-foot shoulders on VT 78.
- ☐ Work with the Town of South Hero on their roadway improvements which include widening shoulders to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel.

- ☐ Improve or expand recreation access points along VT 78.
- ☐ Work with Green Mountain Transit to identify opportunities to expand or link public transit to other modes of transportation along the Byway.
- ☐ Work with Local Motion to continue to develop “pocket” parks where cyclists can pull over, rest, eat and swim along Route 2 and in waypoint communities.
- ☐ Facilitate multi-modal connections within the transportation system, such as public parking areas that serve commuters and visitors, public transportation, boat-to-shore connections, bicycle racks for business and service locations, etc.

***Develop facilities and services that support the travel experience.***

Facilities and services specific to tourism that the area currently lacks include public restrooms, scenic pullovers, and roadside picnic or rest areas; as well as improved informational/directional signs and materials. Studies have identified rest areas with bathrooms as a high priority for the traveling public (Impact Research Associates, Inc. 1996). Some local businesses provide restroom facilities for their customers, but many are limited given the available infrastructure to handle wastewater. The Alburgh Welcome Center provides restroom facilities in the northern Islands, and the Economic Development Corporation office provides limited restroom facilities mid-Islands; however, additional public restrooms should be designated and/or developed at strategic locations elsewhere in the County.

- ☐ Work with other communities and local businesses to investigate opportunities for construction, maintenance, and management of public restrooms, scenic pullovers, and roadside picnic or rest areas. Consider the use of composting toilets or other innovative technology where wastewater infrastructure is limited.
- ☐ Collaborate with other tourist attractions, State Parks, businesses and community resources to identify gaps in facilities and services in Grand Isle County.

***Implement village enhancements that welcome travelers, calm traffic, and create a pedestrian-friendly environment.***

Targeted enhancements could help to ease the negative impacts of the roadway on village areas. Signaling village entrances can encourage traffic to slow through village areas. Village environments that provide pedestrian infrastructure persuade travelers to stop and explore. Pedestrian-friendly environments also encourage residents to shop locally and encourage businesses to centralize in these locations. Ideas listed below should be considered during future transportation planning efforts and roadway corridor upgrades.

All Villages

- ☐ Install village-scale lighting to create a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- ☐ Plant trees to create a sense of place and help to reduce speed limits.
- ☐ Implement access management strategies to increase pedestrian and roadway safety.

South Hero

- ☐ Reduce travel lane width to 11 feet and shoulder width to 4 feet within the village.

- ☐ Create a shift in the roadway alignment to offer a visible break in the image of a long, straight road.
- ☐ Install textured and defined crosswalks to facilitate safe pedestrian travel.

#### North Hero

- ☐ Install a separated pedestrian path or sidewalk along Lake Champlain between North Hero House and Hero's Welcome. Consider connecting the path/sidewalk to the businesses with crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety.
- ☐ Create a gateway at the southern and northern ends of the village.

#### Grand Isle

- ☐ Define the village entrance and calm traffic with signposts or pillars at the road edge.
- ☐ Create a bicycle path or wide shoulders along the west side of US 2 between the village and school. Install a crosswalk in front of the school.
- ☐ Install village-scale lighting and share-the-road signs.

#### Keeler's Bay

- ☐ Create 10-foot parallel parking in the village where adequate room exists.

#### South Alburgh

- ☐ Investigate opportunities to reduce the speed of motor vehicles at the south end of the village near the US 2/VT 129 intersection, especially lowering the cross slope of the road and cutting back the embankment to increase sight distances.

#### Alburgh Village

- ☐ Continue supporting implementation of the village streetscape project that reconstructs sidewalks along the eastern side of Main Street between Peterson Place and the Elementary School entrance and improves crosswalks. Construction expected to occur in 2017.

### ***Assist travelers in finding their destinations***

Improved informational services would assist travelers in finding services and points of interest. Signs also play a strategic role in marketing the Lake Champlain Byway. The Alburgh Welcome Center provides an opportunity for expanded information services in the northern Islands. Information and maps should be available throughout the region as visitors travel from different counties and states. Informing travelers about opportunities for alternative modes of transportation will also help alleviate traffic.

- ☐ Continue to distribute *Bicycling the Lake Champlain Islands* and its accompanying service directory as well as the *Grand Isle County Guide to Activities*.
- ☐ Support the Chambers' existing effort to provide visitor information at Welcome Centers and other locations with high visitor exposure.
- ☐ Explore additional information systems to help travelers learn about and explore the Islands, such as web sites and GPS wayfinding.

# TOURISM ECONOMY

## Overview

Lake Champlain, the Island's traditional landscape, and the area's rural character combine to make Grand Isle County an attractive tourist destination, particularly during the short summer season. The challenge is to increase the potential for earning income from tourist-based businesses during other times of the year. The potential exists to increase tourism based on recreation, natural and cultural heritage, and agri-tourism. Island residents are reluctant to increase the number of tourists in the busy months because of the development pressures to increase capacity. The barriers include unpredictable weather and snowfall; lack of marketing resources; seasonal nature of visitor amenities; and lack of infrastructure to handle large boats. The Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce and the Lake Champlain Islands Economic Development Corporation create marketing strategies to expand the tourism season with four-season fishing, bicycling and other recreational opportunities that can occur at other times.

Additional interpretive signs and historic site markers could help the traveling public and contribute to an appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Islands. Business signs should also compliment local character in their design, size and location.

In 2014 the Byway Council completed the Lake Champlain Byway Interpretation Coordination Plan to improve the coordination between regions. The goal of the plan was to build awareness among Byway site managers of potential partnerships for marketing. This plan identified several strategies for cross site promotion that could be employed such as providing itineraries that highlight additional experiences within a 30 minute drive of a destination or the creation of an online calendar for use by entire byway.

## Vision

The County's tourism economy relies on the infrastructure local communities and businesses are able to provide. The foundation for strengthening the tourism economy is supported by communities' actions that enhance quality of life while enabling local businesses to handle more visitors. Enhancing the tourism season should include extending the length of visitor stays and increasing the length of the tourism season on the Islands.

## Goals

- Support the concept of "shoulder" seasons for the county's tourism industry by promoting activities that help visitors experience the Islands during fall, winter and spring. These activities include but are not limited to the Great Ice festival in North Hero, bicycling, fishing, and wildlife watching.
- Build on opportunities offered by the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce to market the Islands as part of the Lake Champlain Region, to enhance

the diversity of the tourism clientele and to educate Vermont, New York, and Canadian about visitor experiences available in the Islands.

## **Actions**

### ***Strengthen and expand partnerships to leverage funding and increase organizational capacity.***

- ☐ Strengthen ties and joint marketing initiatives among Island organizations, including Island Arts, the Islands Center for Arts and Recreation, local community theaters, historical societies, libraries, the Farmers Markets, and the land trusts.
- ☐ Develop regional marketing efforts through the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership and Lake Champlain Byways, Lake Champlain Bikeways, and the National Heritage Partnership.

### ***Continue to develop and promote a “Lake Champlain Islands” identity.***

- ☐ A Champlain Islands Grown identity was created 5 years ago by the Champlain Islands Farmers Market. It has been extended to include a significant grant-funded project to create value added agriculture based business in the Islands. It should be shared to coordinate with broader regional marketing efforts.
- ☐ Continue to distribute the annual Islands promotional brochure and maintain the Chamber’s related website information.

### ***Continue existing marketing efforts and develop new efforts that extend visitor stays and increase the length of the tourism season.***

- ☐ Coordinate with the Lake Champlain Byway efforts to expand and promote the Byway as a destination and encourage travelers to stay.
- ☐ Investigate new outlets for targeted marketing efforts.
- ☐ Extend the current season by targeting extended season niche markets, e.g. four-season fishing, bicycle touring, and off-season writing and art workshops. Efforts to expand the season could include the following:
  - Sponsoring special events during the non-peak/shoulder seasons (April/May and September/October). Examples of events held at other resort communities in Vermont include antique shows, automobile rallies, horse shows, home and food shows, craft fairs, boat shows, and arts and cultural festivals. The Great Ice event in North Hero is a model that attracts visitors during the currently slow winter season.
  - Marketing Island amenities in neighboring regions during non-peak/shoulder season. Strategic marketing could take advantage of peak periods in the Burlington area, such as college graduation and summer festivals, to raise awareness of both Chittenden County residents and visitors who have yet to discover the Islands, as well as the Quebecois and other Canadians.

### ***Strengthen tourism infrastructure and continue development of visitor services.***

- ❑ Support the development and expansion of businesses and attractions unique to the Islands, such as new or expanded golf courses; boat launches and other shore-based facilities, especially those that provide greater lake access to the general public; sports fishing facilities and accommodations; other outdoor recreation-based businesses and facilities.
- ❑ Complete the site plan for the Islands Center for Arts and Recreation at Knight Point State Park. Projects to be completed include an outdoor concert site; the pavilion was erected and serves as space for performances and events in inclement weather.
- ❑ Continue to work with local business owners and entities related to tourism to expand services and provide a broad range of attractions for visitors.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

### Overview

Community character results from a combination of what people see and what they experience. The development pattern of Grand Isle County is based in its agricultural and tourism heritage. Large farms covered inland areas while shorelines were sprinkled with summer cottages. A village or town center grew out of the need for a central meeting place for worship, commerce, and governing.

Islanders have found many ways to convey the Islands character, especially the visual and performing arts and interpretive programs on history and natural resources. Outdoor summer venues are popular, but the mountain/lake setting makes for unpredictable weather. Schools, town halls, and other meeting and performance spaces have seen steady increases in requests for use. Several historic buildings have been adapted for use by historical societies, libraries, and community organizations.

### Vision

The built environment and local customs reflect the individual identity of Island communities. Strengthening those individual qualities will help keep the Islands, the Lake Champlain Region, and Vermont as special places. Efforts to enhance community character should recognize the contributions of residents and visitors and should respect community individuality. They should also be based on projects and activities that encourage an understanding and appreciation of both individual and regional character.

### Goals

- Implement transportation enhancements that keep our small-scale highway corridor yet meet the needs of travelers, residents and business owners.
- Support and develop products and activities that enhance appreciation for our working landscape and natural resource based industries so we can maintain our

visual relationship with Lake Champlain.

## **Actions**

### ***Conserve the rural landscape and support the agricultural economy.***

- ☐ Support common goals for preserving the county's rural landscape (as identified in the South Hero, Grand Isle, North Hero, and Alburgh Town Plans). These goals include:
  - Preserving the rural, small town character through requiring that growth and development respect the agrarian heritage, natural and cultural resources, and natural beauty that makes the county unique.
  - Directing development into village areas and planned developments in order to maintain traditional development patterns and efficiently provide infrastructure and services.
  - Supporting farming and maintain agricultural land to keep the rural landscape and help the local economy.
  - Enhancing the county's tourism economy through encouraging environmentally sound, clean businesses, new technology, and home-based businesses and providing a broad and stable tax base.
  - Making a commitment to the area's children, families, land, water, and natural beauty to ensure towns remain special and unique to year-round residents and to visitors.
  - Examining and recommending courses of action relating to recreation, economic development, resource conservation, and community activities through issue-specific committees and working groups.
- ☐ Support planning techniques used by communities to conserve the rural landscape.
- ☐ Assist municipalities to plan for compact village growth and to obtain the resources necessary to support planned development.
- ☐ Encourage the development of public places, cultural events, and the arts within growth centers.
- ☐ Support efforts to conserve productive, active farmland in contiguous sections.
- ☐ Support agricultural programs and products that permit land to remain in agricultural use.
- ☐ Encourage agri-tourism efforts that provide secondary incomes to agricultural producers.

### ***Create an environment where local culture can continue to thrive.***

- ☐ Support efforts to create, enhance, and market visual and performing arts centers; both indoor and outdoor.
- ☐ Enhance the local economy by utilizing the creativity of individuals and businesses.

### ***Support historic preservation efforts that develop an appreciation for local customs and culture.***

- ☐ Support efforts to protect the geologic resources of the Islands and to educate

residents and visitors about the importance and use of those resources.

- ☐ Encourage projects and activities that build a link between Island history and the present-day landscape that visitors observe.

***Support efforts to conserve and enhance the natural landscape.***

- ☐ Support local efforts to protect the unique natural features of the Islands and to educate residents and visitors about the importance and use of those resources.
- ☐ Encourage projects and activities that build a link between the county's natural features, sustainable tourism efforts, and Island character.



## LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Grand Isle County's byway effort is built upon many successful partnership and programs.

### **Bicycling the Lake Champlain Islands**

The Lake Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce, Lake Champlain Bikeways, Vermont State Parks, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, and local citizens teamed up to produce "Bicycling the Lake Champlain Islands" in 1999. This guide to cycling in the Islands, which included photos, maps, and historic interpretation, explored five loops that offer cyclists alternatives to cycling on US 2 and VT 78 while they learn about the wonderful features of the area. The most popular publication distributed by the Lake Champlain Bikeways Clearinghouse, the guide was redesigned and updated into a four-color publication in 2006. The guide is distributed widely throughout Grand Isle County and at various gateways in the Lake Champlain region. The guide is also available in French for visitors from Quebec. Lake Champlain Bikeways promotes it on its web site, [www.champlainbikeways.org](http://www.champlainbikeways.org).

### **Vermont State Parks**

Vermont State Parks attract close to one million visitors per year, collecting over 4.5 million dollars in park receipts, primarily through park user fees. Grand Isle County, with five state parks, has more per mile than any place else in Vermont. Grand Isle State Park, with at 27,480 camper nights in 2010, is the State's busiest campground. Sand Bar State Park, just across the US 2 causeway from the Islands, is the State's most popular day use area, with 50,516 annual visits. Combining day and overnight visitation, nearly 100,000 people annually visit area parks, while spending \$600,000 on park fees.

Park managers are willing to work with businesses and organizations to form travel and tourism partnerships for co-marketing, packaging, and promotion of a variety of vacation components. The parks also develop cooperative ventures with local organizations that use the park facilities or amenities for festivals, trainings, and educational programs. Park partners include schools, the Chamber of Commerce, Island Arts, fire departments and rescue squads, Lake Champlain Committee, and VT Fish and Wildlife.

### **An Islands Center for Arts and Recreation**

Sharing the Islands' character with visitors and residents is one goal of a growing partnership to find cooperative space for community services and the arts. Building on its success in developing the outdoor "Islands Center for Arts and Recreation" at Knight Point State Park, the Chamber - in combination with the South Hero Players, Village Players, and Islands Arts - has joined together with other community groups and developed a pavilion style structure for performances, meetings and other activities.

The North Hero Community Hall has also been rehabilitated and is available as a performance venue and for community use. Recognizing that both residents and visitors provide a substantial pool of artistic talent, the partnership seeks a facility to house local services and provide space for the visual and performing arts.

## **Coral Reef Preservation**

Isle La Motte is one of the world's richest sites for the study of geology. Its unique features include what has been called "the world's oldest reef" - the Chazy Coral Reef - which underlies the southern third of the island. In 2009 the Chazy Coral Reef was designated as a National Natural Landmark. Recognized by geologists and paleontologists around the world, the reef represents an extremely valuable resource for paleontological research and is a source for local pride. It stands as the state's only example of an Ordovician coral reef and is considered among the world's best such geologic representations. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the reef also provided two kinds of stone geologically known as Black River limestone and Chazy limestone (part of the ancient reef structure) which was shipped all over the country. The black limestone, marketed as black marble, was used in NY City's Radio City Music Hall (Radio Black) and the floor of the Vermont State House.

In 1998, a proposal to reopen the Fisk Quarry on the southern end of the island prompted local citizens, working with the Lake Champlain Land Trust and the Preservation Trust of Vermont, to purchase the Quarry and hold it in trust as a preserve. The Isle La Motte Reef Preservation Trust purchased the property, and erected informational signs to promote a better understanding of the island's geologic and cultural history. In 2005 the Trust raised the funds to purchase the 21-acre Goodsell Ridge Preserve, and renovated the farmhouse into a Visitor and Interpretive Center, which was dedicated in the fall of 2006. The Goodsell Ridge was dedicated at a National Heritage Site in 2010.

## **Agri-Tourism**

Agri-tourism provides an opportunity for the visitor to learn more about agriculture, how our food is grown, and what life on a farm is all about. The Islands offer extensive agri-tourism opportunities including learning about dairy farming, picking apples at local orchards, buying home-grown produce at a farmer's market, purchasing farm-made cheeses and chocolates where they are made and sampling wines at a local winery. The South Hero Land Trust developed a Champlain Islands Agricultural Guide, which contains information about farms in the Islands. The following local successes highlight the many agri-tourism efforts in the Islands.

- Individual agricultural businesses are inviting visitors to their properties by developing and marketing events and activities. Summer concerts at Snow Farm Vineyard and Winery in South Hero bring a taste and appreciation of wine, cheese, Islands-made ice cream and other agricultural products to an outdoor concert setting. Farm-animal petting zoos, value-added products

(fruit pies, farm-grown vegetables, and hand-made crafts), and other attractions have been added to the orchard experience at Allenholm Farm and Orchard and Hacketts Orchard.

- The Vermont Fresh Network was developed by the Vermont Department of Agriculture to encourage partnerships between local farmers and chefs in area restaurants. The program promotes buying fresh, locally grown produce, giving farmers the opportunity to create value added products and providing chefs with high quality, farm fresh products. Farmers and restaurants in Grand Isle County participate in the Network. The South Hero Land Trust convened the Farmers Market Initiative, and as a result there are two Farmers Markets per week during the season: Wednesdays in South Hero and Saturdays in Grand Isle.

## **Alburgh Rail Trail**

Through a joint effort of the Alburgh Snow Springers, Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, and the Town of Alburgh, 3.5 miles of the former Central Vermont Railroad were converted to a cinder-surfaced, all-season trail. The trail passes through the Mud Creek Wildlife Management Area and is jointly managed and maintained by the partnership. The trail is used primarily as a snowmobile trail and walking path, but it has also been discovered by local cyclists and birders.

## **Island Line**

Promoters of the Island Line imagined a trail connecting downtown Burlington, Mallets Bay, the Champlain Islands' orchards and vineyards, Quebec's Valley of the Forts, and Montreal. This trail concept was initially proposed in the 1960s after the Rutland Railroad abandoned its route from Burlington through the Champlain Islands. At that time, implementation of the trail concept was not feasible due to landowner concerns. Since that time, a 13-mile trail has been developed from Burlington to Colchester using the abandoned rail corridor and on-road routes. The Bike Ferry brings cyclists across from Colchester to South Hero on summer weekends.

Local Motion helped to develop a network of “pocket parks” throughout the Islands; these six rest areas were installed in 2016 and 2017. The rest areas are located at businesses, nature preserves and historic sites throughout the Islands and serve to connect local businesses to the increasing number of residents and visitors who ride the roads. These stops provide places for cyclists to rest, eat lunch, learn about the area from co-located interpretive panels, or simply enjoy the views safely out of the road.

# Appendix A

## Maps & Brochures Lake Champlain Byway

Mapping and interactive website resources are a critical piece in marketing the scenic Byways. Byway web content, accessible via [www.lakechamplainbyway.com](http://www.lakechamplainbyway.com) can be regularly updated and is currently maintained by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission.

Byway maps highlight recreational, historic, natural and cultural points of interest. The following brochure provides visitors with highlights of the areas attractions.

- Brochure, Grand Isle County: Guide to activities along the Lake Champlain Byway

Bilingual marketing resources have also been created for the byway, an example of one in Grand Isle County also details that activities in the region.

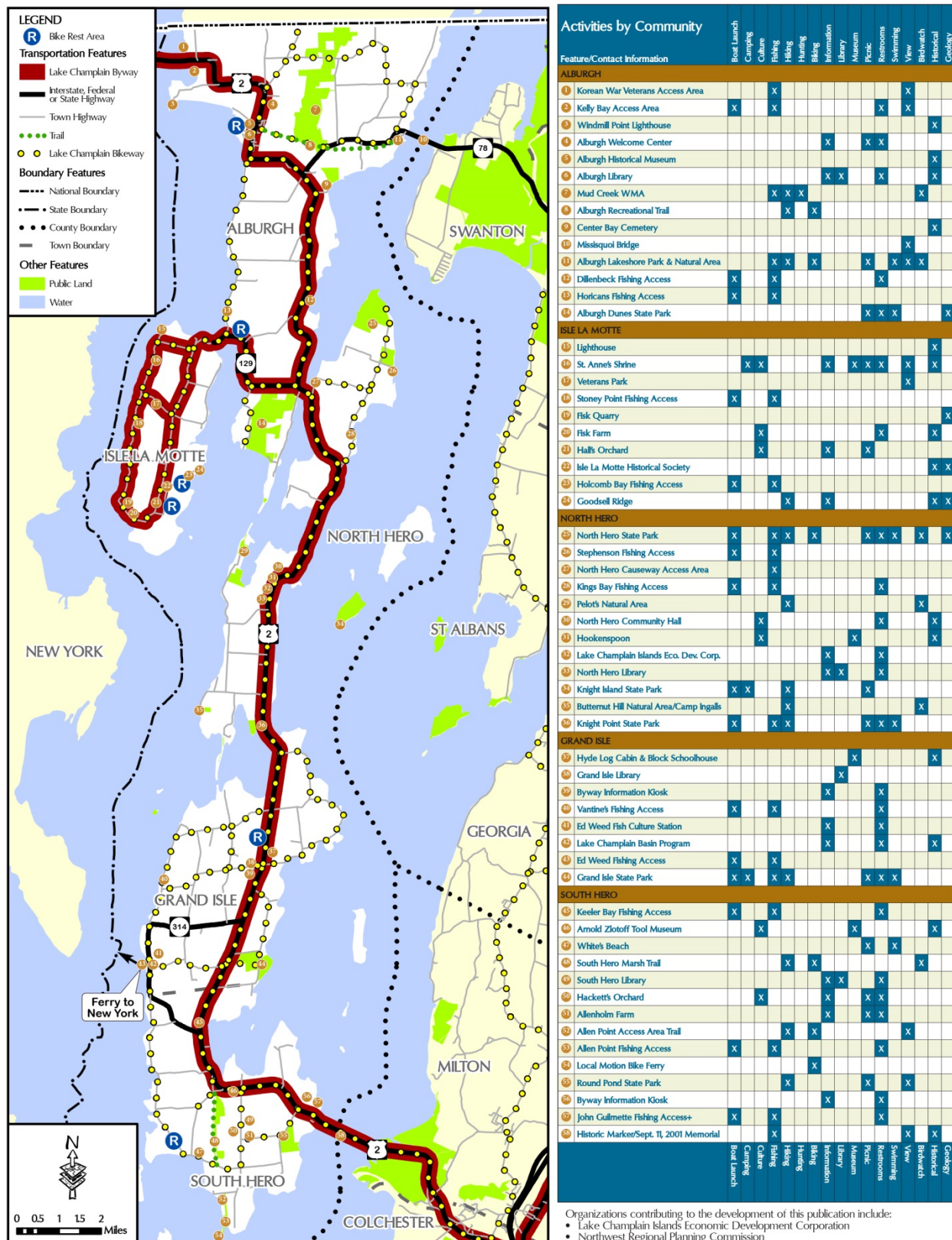
- Interpretive Panel: Explore Grand Isle County, Activities along the Lake Champlain Byway

Additional brochures detailing resources along the entire Lake Champlain Byway are accessible in English and French from the following website:

<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/economic-development/lake-champlain-byway/>

- Brochure, Water Recreation along the Lake Champlain Byway
- Brochure, Winter Activities along the Lake Champlain Byway







## Welcome to the Champlain Islands!

The Lake Champlain Islands in Grand Isle County stretch south from the Canadian Border and are accessible by three bridges as well as a ferry that connects the Town of Grand Isle to Cumberland Head, New York. The islands have roughly 200 miles of shoreline and stand apart from the rest of the state as a unique island community. The Adirondack Mountains of New York rise dramatically to the west across the lake and Vermont's Green and White Mountains are visible to the east and south. All the islands are distinct but at the same time, share the identity of being part of the islands.

The Lake Champlain Islands serve as a haven for residents, visitors, and summer vacationers. There are state parks, historic sites, and scenic views. The islands with expansive areas where you can relax, and enjoy the natural character of Grand Isle County. Both public and private campgrounds and other accommodations across the islands provide ample opportunity to stay and explore.

The economy and character of the islands is built upon agriculture and tourism, often combining the two in agritourism pursuits of farm stands, restaurants, and vineyards. The South Hero Land Trust provides information on local producers and products from around the islands and identifies the islands' agricultural heritage. Visitors can also plan a trip around an annual event like the Open Farm and Studio Weekend at the Four Strawberry Social at the Vermont Farm, concerts at Knight Point State Park, and the Island Arts Festival. The islands also offer a variety of services to enjoy music, food and art.

History buffs will appreciate the opportunities to learn about historical events that occurred along the islands, geological formations, and historical memorabilia. Each island can lay claim to stories of early settlement in the region. The islands are also a key part of Lake Champlain's history as a staging point for many crucial battles during the War of 1812.

There are 81 different species of fish in Lake Champlain; some of the more abundant species around the islands include smallmouth and largemouth bass, northern pike, yellow perch, and brook trout. The islands are also a popular spot for fishing, with many public access points along the shore. The islands are also a great place to enjoy the lake's scenic views and enjoy the lake's scenic views.

## Alburgh

[www.alburghvt.org](http://www.alburghvt.org)

Alburgh is a peninsula reaching south into Lake Champlain from Quebec. There is ample opportunity to enjoy what Alburgh has to offer with several boat launches, walking paths, and nature reserves.

A multi-use recreation trail extends 3.5 miles from the Village of Alburgh through the Mud Creek Wildlife Management Area and connects to the Alburgh Lakeshore Park. The Mud Creek WMA extends 151 acres from the Canadian border south to the mouth of Ransons Bay in Lake Champlain. This site offers opportunities to view wetland bird species ranging from songbirds to waterfowl and shorebirds.

Four fishing access areas provide spots to pass the time fishing around town; three of the sites also provide a boat launch. A local museum is run by the Historical

## Isle La Motte

[www.islelammotte.us](http://www.islelammotte.us)

Isle La Motte is rich with natural and human history. A statue of Samuel de Champlain marks his landing on Isle La Motte in 1609; this community is the oldest European settlement in Vermont.

Isle La Motte's best known attraction is St. Anne's Shrine, maintained for the past 100 years by the Society of Saint Edmund. The site of Fort St. Anne was built by French soldiers under Captain Sieur de La Motte in 1666 but was soon abandoned as a defensive position. It is now used as a chapel and is a noteworthy place of worship and retreat. Seeing the gold-leafed statue of Our Lady of Lourdes gleam in the falling light of a sunset is a must for anyone traveling to Isle La Motte.

To build the Fort, the French used limestone quarried in town. Five quarries operated here during the 19th century and were famed for "black marble" limestone that was shipped throughout the country for use in buildings as famous

## North Hero

[www.northhero.org](http://www.northhero.org)

Named in honor of the hero Ethan Allen, the famous commander from the Revolutionary War, North Hero provides a relaxing spot for recreation and taking in the views.

The North Hero Historical Society maintains the Hookerspoon, a home built in 1890 that was originally used as a summer fishing camp and now houses a rotating display of artifacts that include ephemera, household, railroad, fishing, school, local government, and family items.

North Hero is home to four state parks. North Hero State Park is a day use site and a stop on the Lake Champlain Paddlers Trail. This park is quite large at 399 acres and is relatively undisturbed, allowing for some rare flora habitat. Knight

## Grand Isle

[www.grandislevt.org](http://www.grandislevt.org)

Grand Isle has a long history of being a vacation destination going back to the 1870s. Visitors were put up in boarding houses and summer hotels, the most famous of which was the 1903 Island Villa Hotel, now known as the Grand Isle Lake House. Grand Isle State Park is on the site of the former Birchcliff summer resort and has expanded from 54 to 226 acres offering camping and recreational opportunities. A nature path offers an expansive view across the Island Sea to Mount Mansfield and the Green Mountain ridge.

In addition to being a vacationing hub, Grand Isle has a burgeoning art scene that is centered around Grand Isle Art Works, a gallery where local artists can exhibit their work.

## South Hero

[www.southhero.org](http://www.southhero.org)

Farm land, dairying, and orchards make up the agricultural economy that has been the mainstay of South Hero. Vermont is famous for a number of foods that are distributed throughout New England and apple products are one of the most notable. Allenholm Farm and Hackett's Orchard are both multi-generational orchards that offer pick your own apples. Allenholm Farm is the oldest commercial apple orchard in Vermont.

Like many of the towns in Grand Isle County, South Hero is a welcoming place for cycling and enjoying the shoreline. Cyclists can enjoy the quiet routes along the town roads or take the Allen Point Access trail and ride the Island Line Trail for a

Alburgh Dunes State Park/John Lyman

Isle La Motte

North Hero

Grand Isle

South Hero

Lake Champlain

Fisk Farm/Prada Bradley

Isle La Motte

North Hero

Grand Isle

South Hero

Lake Champlain

Butternut Hill/Hill House/Lake Champlain/John Lyman

Isle La Motte

North Hero

Grand Isle

South Hero

Lake Champlain

Hyde Log Cabin/John Lyman

Isle La Motte

North Hero

Grand Isle

South Hero

Lake Champlain

South Hero

Isle La Motte

North Hero

Grand Isle

South Hero

Lake Champlain

South Hero

Isle La Motte

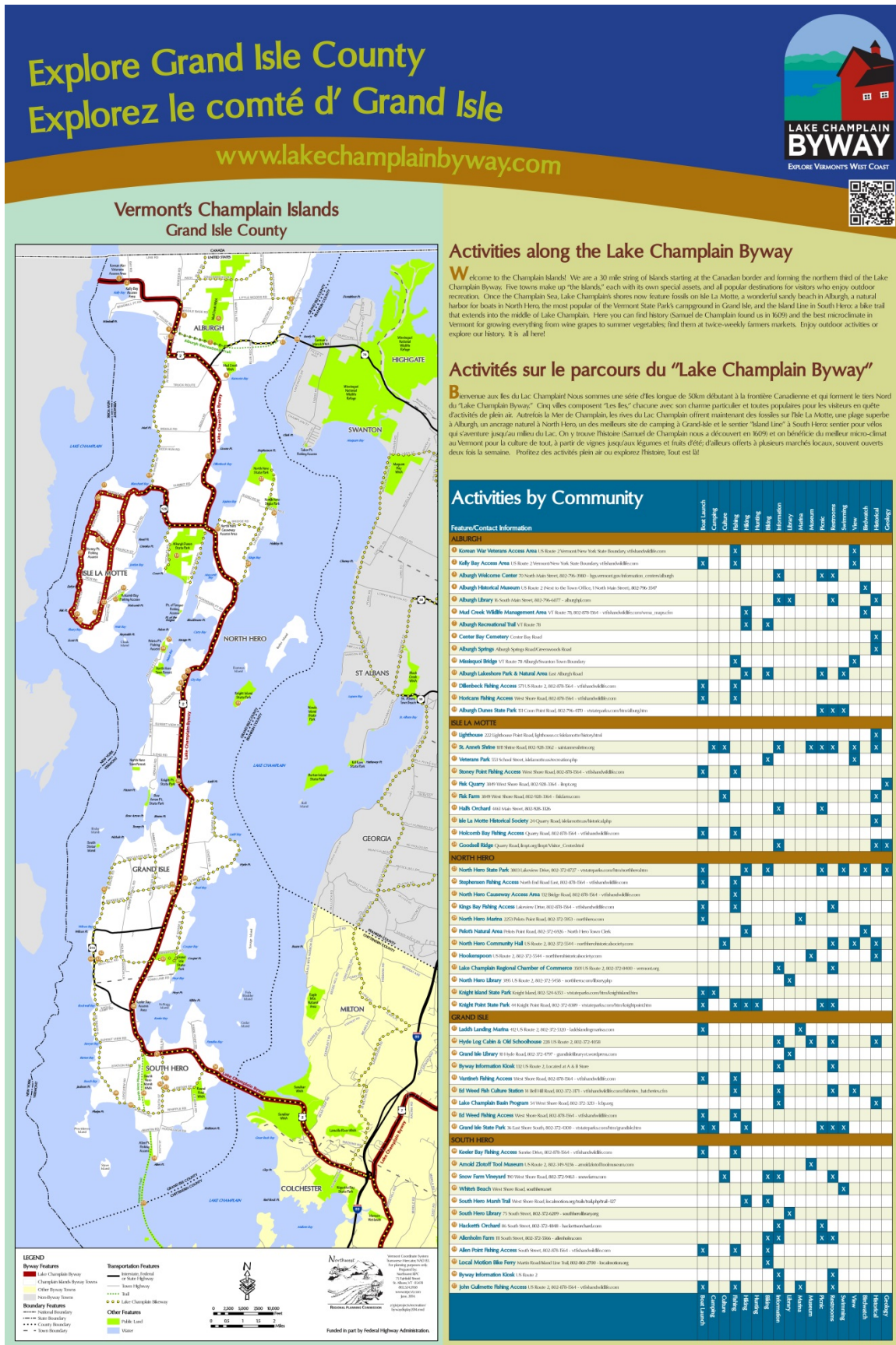
North Hero

Grand Isle

South Hero

Lake Champlain







# Appendix B

## Byway Partners

The following are current and potential partners in Grand Isle County for Lake Champlain Byway efforts:

### Local Governmental Organizations

Conservation Commissions  
Planning Commissions  
Recreation Committees  
Selectboards  
Zoning Board of Adjustments/ Development Review Boards

### Regional Organizations

Island Arts  
Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Lake Champlain Islands Economic Development Corporation  
Lake Champlain Basin Program  
Lake Champlain Bikeways  
Lake Champlain Walleye Association  
Northwest Regional Planning Commission  
Green Mountain Transit  
Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources  
Vermont Association of Snow Travelers  
Local Motion  
Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (State Parks)

### Local Organizations

Churches  
Community Organizations  
Historical Societies  
Libraries  
Schools  
Grand Isle County Site Managers  
Isle La Motte Preservation Trust  
Theater Groups – South Hero Players, Village Players

## Appendix C

### Lake Champlain Byway History

Grand Isle County embarked on the byway planning process in 1997 to increase the benefits and reduce the impacts of tourism on local communities. Residents saw a need for service and infrastructure enhancements, resource protection strategies, and visitor education. Throughout a two-year process, citizens attended workshops, local advisory committee meetings, and informational sessions to provide their thoughts and ideas. They also participated in other countywide projects that contributed to the Byway Corridor Management Plan. These projects included the County Roadway Corridor Study, the County Strategic Development Plan, and a new regional marketing effort. Municipal leader “tours” helped gather information and ideas from village and town leaders. Regular newsletters provided updates on the Lake Champlain Byway project and related efforts. The Grand Isle County section of the 1999 Lake Champlain Byway Corridor Management Plan was built on existing activities and studies, with local communities choosing to implement the plan’s recommendations through activities already in place.

In the years since the 1999 plan was developed, many activities and strategies outlined in the plan have been implemented. In 2005, the Lake Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce resumed local discussions about byway designation as a tool for implementation of local projects, and initiated a public process to garner support from all communities along the US 2 corridor. The public process included:

- Visiting all five Select Boards and four Planning Commissions (Isle La Motte does not have a Planning Commission) to discuss designation;
- Securing letters of support from the four Select Boards of towns on Route 2;
- Discussing the opportunities of byway designation at the Grand Isle Business Roundtable and with other community groups; and
- Writing articles with information about the process for *The Islander* - a local weekly newspaper - and for the Chamber newsletter.

Meetings were also held with Board of Commissioners of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, whose staff provided writing assistance for the plan update, with the support of all municipalities and the Lake Champlain Byways Council. U.S. Routes 2 was formally designated as part of the Lake Champlain Byway in 2007.

## Appendix D

### 2014 Interpretation Coordination Plan

The Interpretation Coordination Plan for the Lake Champlain Byway was focused on the byway's intrinsic resource sites. The three goals of this project were:

- to build awareness among managers of the different sites along the Byway about each other's sites and programs;
- to identify areas of overlap where collaboration may be possible; and
- to assist with the development of consistent messaging among the sites and for the Byway itself.

#### **2014 Site Manager Survey**

In the spring of 2014 the Lake Champlain Byway Council (LCBC) sent out a survey to forty seven sites along the Champlain Byway, which included the Grand Isle County resources. The survey was available for two months. The intention of the survey was to better understand the opportunities, challenges and current use of the sites along the byway, and how efforts between site managers could be coordinated.

The survey focused on four categories:

**Operational** – when is the site open, who is coming, how many are coming, and who are the site managers trying to attract?

**Interpretive programming** – are there paid/unpaid interpretive staff, what kind of interpretive methods/material/special programs and what is most popular of these?

**Interpretive Themes** – what, if any, is the interpretive theme of the site?

**Outreach Services and Marketing** – what outreach services do the sites use and are site managers interested in a joint membership and/or discount ticket program?

The survey found the following commonalities:

1. Majority of sites have no paid or volunteer interpretive staff.
2. Printed material, followed closely by special programs are the most popular interpretive materials.
3. Outdoor interpretive panels and exhibits are the next most popular programming.
4. Answering questions and providing demonstrations are the primary interpretive staff interactions with the public.

#### **2014 Site Manager Meet-Up**

On May 6th, 2014 the LCBC hosted a site manager meet-up at Shelburne Museum. Seventeen sites participated and shared experiences, beneficial partnerships, barriers to success and opportunities for collaboration.

Collaborative, statewide projects/programs were identified that benefit more than one site along the Byway. Sites in Grand Isle County benefit from the following:

- Lake Champlain Basin Program
- Local Motion

- Green Coupon
- VT Department of Tourism and Marketing

### Project Ideas

The following were project ideas from the meeting:

- Develop a specific, unifying theme of alternative transportation corridors (bicycling and international waterway)
- Suggested itineraries
- Byway theme of the year
- Who's in Our World – within a 30 min drive
- Routes 'the journey is part of the experience'
- Start a 'Byways club'
- Attract locals
- Develop exit survey for site visitors
- Engage the for-profit sector
- Better way-finding
- Building critical mass among year round facilities
- Share major events on an updateable, on-line calendar

### 10 Action Items for Byway Coordination Efforts

Based on the May 6th discussions and the above mentioned survey responses, Landslide Inc. wrote a summary report - The Lake Champlain Byway Interpretation Coordination Plan. This document contains recommended action items to increase the success of the Lake Champlain Byway program and associated sites. The following Action items pertain to Grand Isle County, and are recommended tasks to pursue to increase the functionality of sites along our Byway, and encourage visitors to our byway towns:

### **2014 Identified Tasks for Interpretation Coordination**

1. Share major events on an updateable, on-line calendar to increase awareness of on-going activities and special events, updated by site managers throughout the year.
2. Who's in Our World (within a thirty minute drive) – produce a spreadsheet that outlines proximity of sites and other venues to each byway feature.
3. Provide 'suggested itineraries' or 'routes' for visitors based on proximities - 'go on historic place walk, see the views at point view, go for swim here and end up at pub X'.
4. With the Lake Champlain Byway Council, develop annual unifying theme for the Lake Champlain Byway – building programming and events around a theme.
5. Consider focusing efforts on alternative transportation opportunities along Byway – cycling, boating, and train, especially as a way to attract locals.
6. Start a 'Byway Club' to incentive visiting all sites along a byway.
7. Work with the Lake Champlain Byway Council to develop an 'exit survey' for visitors.
8. Attract locals by weaving 'stay-cation' and 'buy local' campaigns into marketing the Byway.
9. Engage the for-profit sector; for-profit businesses should provide a symbiotic relationship to the Byway.
10. Improve way-finding by working with the Lake Champlain Byway Council to develop

both on-line and pdf versions of routes, and consider a common family of signs.

Based on these tasks, the following recommended actions can be identified for Grand Isle County, specifically:

- 1.** Reinvigorate partnerships between the Lake Champlain Byway Council and a diversity of Grand Isle County stakeholders within the two focus areas of agriculture and recreation: farmers, local food producers, recreation-business owners etc.
- 2.** Create partnerships between fellow Grand Isle County byway towns, byway site managers, and local business owners.