



Grasse River Blueway Trail Plan

July 2018



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**Department
of State**

The Grasse River Blueway Trail Plan

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I. Introduction

Plan Vision



The Grasse River looking south in Louisville.

Like many rivers in the North Country, the Grasse River and its tributaries defined the settlements established in the 19th century, as they nestled amongst 115 miles of winding water running north to the St. Lawrence River. While scenic vistas, relaxing Sundays of fishing, swimming, and picnicking on the Grasse were likely enjoyed, the draw was the power the water provided. As the River presented the opportunity to be a harnessed resource for industry and agriculture, small bustling economies and communities established along the river's path surrounded by farmland and forests. Now, in the 21st century, the farmland and woodlands remain active, but many of the hamlets have become quiet communities where families live, congregate, and recreate; but work and shop elsewhere.

Although having unique qualities, the Grasse River unites these communities with the amenities it provides as a natural attraction and source of recreation for locals and visitors alike. Communities along the River remain diverse, from tiny hamlets to densely settled villages with commerce and industry. Some families stay for the way of life long ago established by the River, the tranquility, the extraordinary fishing and paddling. New



Falls in Russell.

families relocate to the area and choose to stay for the same reasons. They share the common understanding that the River is a special place and resource.

This Blueway Trail Plan brings the Grasse River communities together to create an identity based on their connection to the River that can be celebrated, protected and promoted. The Plan's scope is to understand the existing recreational resources and identify cooperative ways to enhance the experience and opportunities along the River corridor for residents and visitors; and to demonstrate regional stewardship in protecting the River's invaluable ecosystem.

The Blueway Trail promotes a balance of diverse recreational and cultural opportunities with land and water stewardship. With education and community dialogue will come stronger stewardship along the River. Through experiential place making, the River will continue to be sacred to those who explore the waters and its banks. The Blueway Trail intends to encourage care and a sense of accountability so that the water quality will remain appreciated and the unique and diverse habitats healthy.

Through regional branding and marketing, more visitors will invest day-trips and multi-day excursions to the Blueway corridor. By identifying opportunities for overnighting at campsites, bed and breakfasts and hotels and finding great places to eat and relax, visitors will continue to seek entertainment and culture through local music and performance, farmers markets, museums and galleries, and larger festivals. New families and more visitors will bring investment into these small communities and their local shops and services, improving the economy, amenities and quality of life.

The Blueway Trail Plan envisions a future where experienced paddlers will continue to rock the rapids upriver in the spring, while the less experienced will enjoy short or long excursions on the scenic flatwaters

from Morley to Louisville. Fishermen and women will continue to share their love and extensive knowledge for the River with family and friends while preserving rare species and habitats through education of fishing methods and invasive species control. The native fish population will remain strong and continue to thrill and challenge fisherman living on the River and visitors from across the Country. Explorers, nature-lovers, and educators will continue to harness the river ecosystem as a tool. The land trail systems, cycling and other activities will complement recreation on the River putting the Grasse River on the map as a recreation destination. Enhanced equestrian amenities will bring trail riders from across New York State and beyond. The plan considers multi-season utilization to boost local economies. During a “good” winter, ice-skaters, cross-country skiers and perhaps dog-sleds will travel as far as their legs will take them, stopping at local businesses for guides and supplies.

Those who have had the privilege of experiencing the Grasse River understand the vibrancy of opportunities it provides. This Plan is the first step in developing this shared vision for the Grasse River Blueway. Successful implementation will require regional coordination and collaboration. The generations that the Grasse River has shaped, the relocators who have been convinced to stay, as well as the visitors who continue to encounter the sacredness that the Grasse River instills in each experience are proof of its importance. It is participation from each of these actors within the planning process that the Blueway Trail Plan has been created to further promote existing recreational resources and identify cooperative ways to enhance the experience and opportunities along the River; and to demonstrate regional stewardship in protecting the River’s invaluable ecosystem.

Defining a Blueway Trail

A blueway trail is a small boat and paddling route that combines recreation, tourism and environmental awareness. It includes launch points, fishing access, camping locations and points of interest for canoeists and kayakers. A blueway trail interconnects with the land to enhance the experience, establishing connections to play areas, rest stations and land-based attractions. Blueway trails connect to hamlets and main streets established the river as a defining feature within a community, and source of recreational tourism that generates economic activity and promotes revitalization. Blueways encourage ecological education and preservation of wildlife resources as part of promotional activities, informational signage at key access points, local programming and community land and water management practices.

A regional Blueway Trail Plan provides an opportunity to understand existing conditions and assets, identify gaps and opportunities and develop project ideas and actions that can be undertaken at the local and regional level. It creates a regional identity, vision and goals where ideas and resources can be pooled to reach more communities, more effectively and efficiently. They can advance regional waterfront and community revitalization goals, including:

- reclaiming the waterfront as a regional activity center;
- strengthening the physical and economic linkages between the riverfront and developed hamlet centers and villages;

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- enhancing water-dependent and water-enhanced businesses;
- increasing public access for water-based recreation and tourism;
- promoting the communities as a regional destination; and
- protecting and enhancing water quality and wildlife habitat.

The Blueway Trail Plan has three major components: a profile of the existing River corridor characterizing the River and its ecosystem, identifying communities and settlements and existing assets and attractions on and off the River that the trail is expected to connect; a set of goals; projects and recommended actions for implementing the vision and goals; and a strategy for implementation.

The following goals (in no particular order) will frame the Blueway Trail Plan:

- ❖ **Promote and market the Blueway** as a four-season natural resource and recreational amenity for residents and visitors.
- ❖ **Increase and enhance safe access to on-river activities** including paddling, fishing and swimming.
- ❖ **Improve on-land amenities** to enhance and complement the River experience including parks, land trails for different users, camping and other visitor infrastructure.
- ❖ **Enhance community revitalization** by connecting the River to hamlets, “main streets” and other intrinsic resources.
- ❖ **Guide stewardship** through education of the River’s ecological importance and heritage and provide guidance on protection at the individual, community and regional level.

Partners and Community Engagement

The Grasse River communities of Town of Russell, Town and Village of Canton, Town of Madrid, Town of Louisville and the Town and Village of Massena directly participated in the development of this Plan. The Town of Canton, through their Office of Community Development, submitted a grant application to the NYS Department of State Office of Planning and Development seeking funding to create improved access to the entire Grasse River waterfront. The Town and Village of Canton had previously completed a Waterfront Revitalization Plan and as part of that planning process, identified the importance of bringing all



Visioning workshop held in the Louisville Fire House in July 2016.

of the Grasse River communities together to focus on the River as an important asset for community and visitor recreational enjoyment and a natural resource worthy of collective protection.



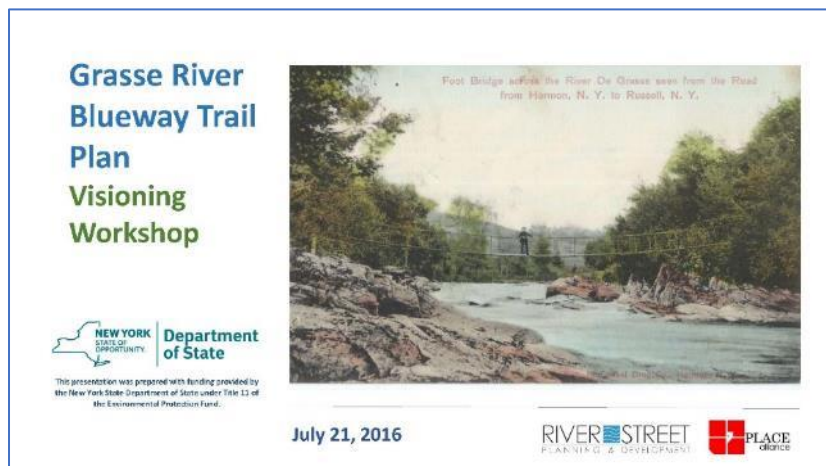
Blueway Trail Plan

This Blueway Trail Project is funded by the NYS Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program under Title 11 of the Federal Environmental Protection Fund. In addition to the grant funding, the Town of Canton contributed staff resources to administer the grant on behalf of the communities. A project advisory committee (PAC) was established to represent the participating communities who are also Grasse River stakeholders such as paddlers, fishing enthusiasts, land trail organizers, natural resource advocates and property owners. The Project Advisory Committee was the sounding board for this Plan and the involved communities, providing input on local opportunities and issues; helping to focus the project; reviewing draft products; assisting in the public outreach process; and assisting in the review and selection of key projects and priorities to be addressed in the future.

Community Visioning - What does the Grasse mean to you?

The Grasse River Blueway Trail project was kicked-off with a public workshop in Louisville to introduce the project and gain public input from leaders and citizens who live, work and play on the River regarding what they love about the River as well as concerns, opportunities and challenges.

A “visioning session” was conducted as part of the workshop to understand from the community what the Grasse River means to them. They were asked what they love about the River, what concerns they have that they would like address, and how they would describe the River if changes were made for the better. The Vision for the future varied greatly depending on the vantage point but, some emotions and goals were constant – it is one of St. Lawrence County’s greatest assets and a reason people choose to live where they do.



What do you love about the Grasse River?

The diversity of the ecosystem (fish species, flora, fauna) • The waterfalls • The peaceful quality of the River • The quiet (especially upriver) • Its beauty and nature • The Pyrites swimming hole • The lack of accessibility which keeps it quiet • The Muskie population • The Buccaneer Lounge (former Cascade) and watching the Falls • The Morley Mill and the opportunity for its reuse • Paddling – the C1 Championship last year • Each community's ability to promote the River • Henry Rushton's Canoes/the icon of canoes • The tributaries of the Grasse River • The upstream native Brook Trout and fly fishing • The remoteness on the River between Pyrites and the North Branch/Russell segment of the Grasse • Mountain biking trails near North Branch • Equestrian opportunities near North Branch/Russell.

What would you like to change about the Grasse River corridor?

The industrial waste (rebar etc.) in the River in the Village of Canton should be cleaned out for better navigation of the River • Repair/replace broken weir in Massena to restore water levels to Louisville/Massena • More education about the native Muskie population and risk from over-fishing and species' vulnerabilities • Lack of River access from Russell to Pyrites (all privately held land) • Lack of wayfinding signage identifying river access points • Lack of portages to get around river obstacles • Lack of promotion of recreational assets and activities on and off river including the mountain biking trails in Russell • The put-in at Route 68 is so shallow you have to walk • Inability to establish boat launches in several locations due to DEC restrictions on the shoreline/riverbanks • Need better understanding of planning for the Grasse River on a regional and community level • There are no campsites accessible from the River (by canoe) • Need multi-use land trails near the River.

When the things you'd like changed happen, what will the Grasse River corridor be like?

There will be continuity in protection and promotion of Grasse River resources. • There will be a balance of the Grasse River as a resource and an asset. • More people will visit the Grasse River corridor. • The "new" visitors will respect the River through education about its ecosystems and unique habitats, invasive species threats etc. • There will be whitewater rafting in Canton. • There will be economic development such as a brew pub on the River • The outdoor recreation created by the Grasse River will promote health and wellness. • The diversity of the River will be celebrated. • It will remain scenic. • It will still be peaceful. • There will be responsible growth and development. • Resources will have been integrated. • There will be more multi-use land trails. • There will be fewer boater-paddler conflicts in Massena and more boater safety. • There will be education and knowledge of invasive species issues by visitors. • There will be versatility with many on-river assets. • There will be campsites on the River. • We will still smell cows. • We will still hear birds. • It will remain quiet. • History will be celebrated. • There will be pride of living on the Grasse River that you can identify with on a regional and state-wide level. • There will be responsible growth.

Blueway Summit - Sharing Information and Ideas

Regional planning involves bringing together people with different geographic and community vantage points, interests and knowledge into the process to develop the best set of ideas and recommended actions. A half-day stakeholder summit was held in the Fall of 2017 to bring together stakeholders, local and regional community leaders and others interested in participating the development of the Trail Plan. The summit included an information session about the project and, break-out groups oriented around river



Blueway Trail Stakeholder Summit.

corridor user groups and interests including: paddling, fishing, land trails and recreation, community revitalization and economic development. The breakout groups were tasked with confirming existing



Blueway Trail Stakeholder Summit.

assets, brainstorming opportunities for new physical enhancements and programmatic ideas to: increase passive and active opportunities to enjoy the river and address challenges to safe access; better connect on-land and community amenities that could add-value to the Blueway Trail experience; and protect the River corridor's natural and intrinsic resources. A reconvening of the full group to report back revealed many of the same recommendations and ideas were identified by multiple groups demonstrating the synergy of goals and ideas despite having different focal

interests regarding the River. Key themes that emerged included:

- The lack of central location for information and promotion of amenities on and off the Grasse River corridor for locals and visitors is curtailing usage.
- Informal river access points constrain are an integral part of river access and portage today. Gaps in formal or upgraded access points constrain river usage along some segments.
- Consistent educational and interpretive signage at boat launches and in waterfront parks about wildlife, heritage, invasive species, fishing best practices etc. are an opportunity to inform and protect and celebrate the river's ecology and heritage.
- Land trails for horse riding, mountain biking and hiking are an increasing opportunity to recreate along the River Corridor on public easements and state lands.

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- Increasing and promoting winter recreation and events is an opportunity.
- The lack of campgrounds and campsites is a missed opportunity that could extend recreational experience.

Presentation of Blueway Trail Plan Ideas

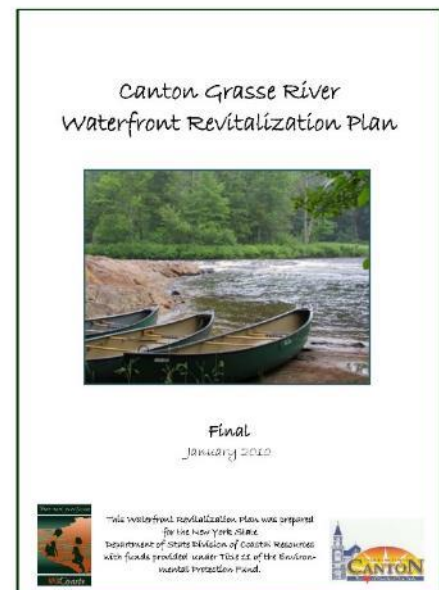
Following the completion of a draft plan a presentation was held in the Spring of 2018 to present the draft goals, actions and priority projects that could be implemented throughout the blueway corridor as well as community specific projects. The attendees feedback was reflected in the Plan. The plan was then made available on local websites for further review.

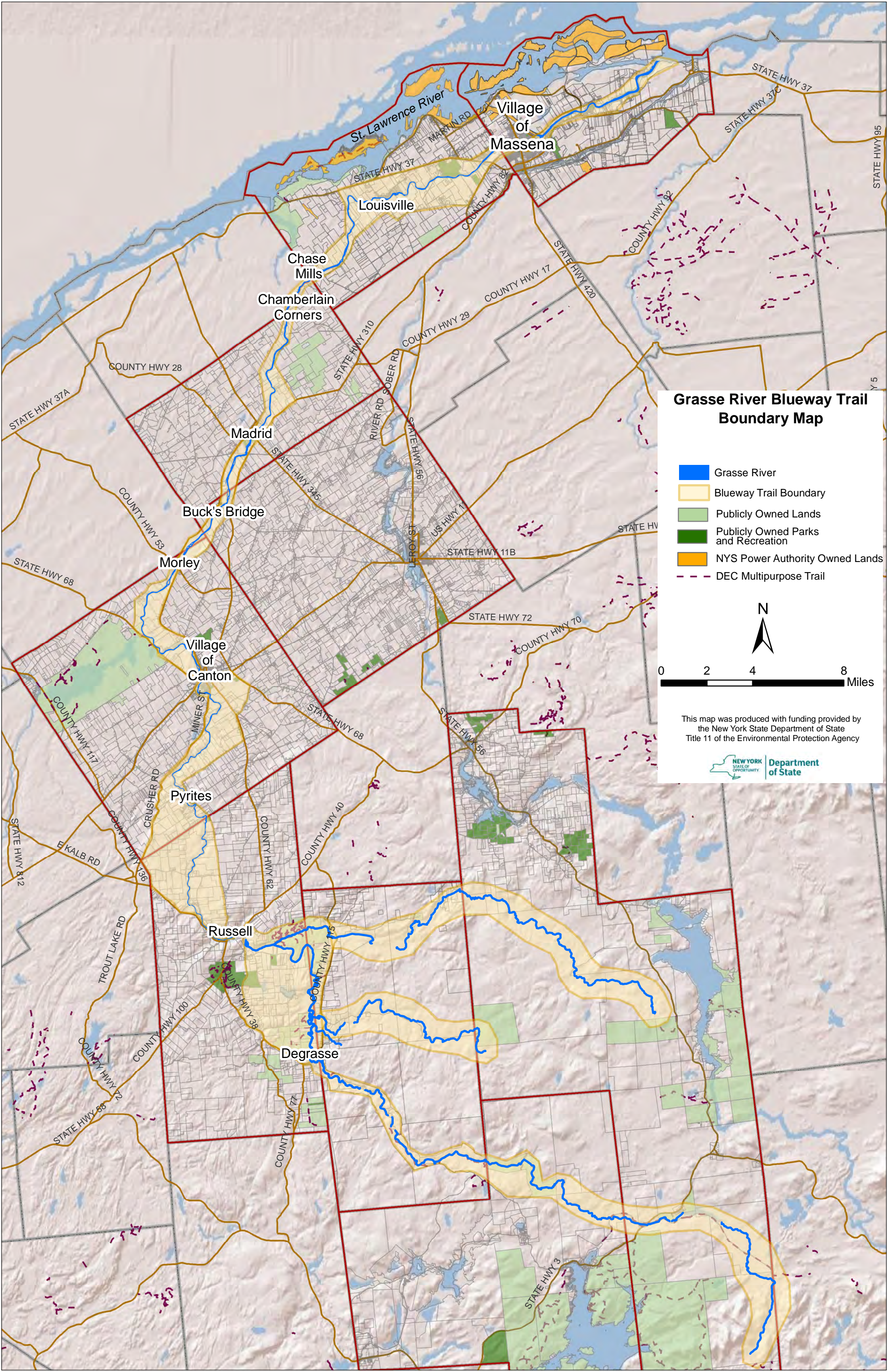
Blueway Trail Boundary

The Grasse River Blueway Trail includes the length of the River from the headwaters in the Towns of Colton and Clare to the Grasse River's confluence with the St. Lawrence River in the Town of Massena. In addition to the main branch of the Grasse, the boundary includes the North, Middle and South Branches, encompassing much of the River's watershed. Off River, the trail includes lands along the main branch to the closest significant north-south road paralleling the River with a few exceptions in the area of the Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area and the Little River just outside the Village of Canton. It is important to incorporate lands that connect to major roadways as portions of the River are relatively inaccessible without access by car. The Blueway Trail boundary incorporates the traditional hamlets along the River and significant portions of the Villages of Canton and Massena. A map of the boundary is on the following page.

Related Local and Regional Planning Initiatives

Waterfront planning at the local and intermunicipal level has been part of the conversation along much of the Grasse River for the past decade through a number of initiatives. **The Canton Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan** is an intermunicipal Waterfront Revitalization Plan developed by the Town and Village of Canton. The Plan considered waterfront revitalization and protection along its 19 miles of the River. The Plan's goals are to enhance opportunities for public access to water-based recreation on the waterways; revitalize Main Street and Riverside Drive and underutilized waterfront commercial properties; develop efficient, pedestrian and bicycle friendly transportation access; protect sensitive waterfront resources, open space and scenic resources; preserving historic resources and enhance opportunities for heritage tourism; growth management; and protect community character and quality of life. The project was funded by an Environmental Protection Fund grant from the NYS Department of State Division of Coastal Resources Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. This Plan was followed by





**Grasse River Blueway Trail
Boundary Map**

- Grasse River
- Blueway Trail Boundary
- Publicly Owned Lands
- Publicly Owned Parks and Recreation
- NYS Power Authority Owned Lands
- DEC Multipurpose Trail



0 2 4 8 Miles

This map was produced with funding provided by
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Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program Pre-Nomination Studies (Step 1) through the NYS Department of State for some areas along the riverfront in the Village of Canton and Hamlet of Pyrites. A feasibility study has also been completed for a whitewater playpark in the Village of Canton in the area of Coakley Falls.

An intermunicipal waterfront revitalization planning initiative has been initiated in Massena and a portion of Louisville that while not completed, has resulted in waterfront zoning that supports development intended to promote recreation, public access and protection along the river and supporting riverfront compatible uses. The Town of Madrid also has zoning that recognizes the Grasse River waterfront as a unique opportunity for planning and development.

Supplementing and supporting local planning efforts are regional initiatives. Regional economic development initiatives such as the **North Country Regional Economic Development Council's (REDC) Strategic Plan** and the **St. Lawrence County Economic Development Strategy** support hamlet revitalization and tourism enhancement projects that are critical to the North Country's future. The North Country REDC recognizes the importance of recreation and eco-tourism as part of the North Country's economy and the difference for many small hamlets with businesses that rely on summer and winter recreation. Strategies include regional marketing of small communities that have a common identity (like the Grasse River) to stretch tourism promotion capacity and dollars; lengthening the shoulder seasons with increased four-season recreational opportunities and by turning day-trippers into overnight stays; supporting agri-tourism; and modernizing and increasing lodging options.

A portion of the Grasse River corridor was proposed to be added to the Military Trail Scenic Byway (proposed to be renamed the North Country Scenic Byway) in a study conducted by the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) in 2012. This scenic byway



Proposed extension of the Military Trail Scenic Byway to include a portion of the Grasse River corridor. Source: Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA), North Country Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (2012)

already includes the Village of Massena and would then extend south to include a portion of Route 11 that would incorporate Potsdam and Canton. The proposed changes are based on the recognition of Canton and Potsdam as “economic and education centers, with [their] rich and diverse attractions for travelers,” and the appropriate inclusion of the Grasse River which supports the theme of the Byway: “bountiful north flow waters.” Incorporating a portion of the Grasse River corridor into a Scenic Byway increases heritage and eco-tourism promotion of the region and provides opportunities for collaboration on projects with other byway communities. **The North Country Byway Corridor Management Plan (2012)** identified the interconnectedness of blueway trails and other recreation and connectivity planning,

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community revitalization strategies, and natural resource and heritage preservation projects as partners in regional and local tourism, collaborative marketing and stewardship. Several goals reference these initiatives, and the importance of the six river systems.

Other planning and land management programs and policies are in place at the headwaters and portions of the South, Middle and North branches in Clare and Colton which are part of the Adirondack Park. Planning and some aspects of private land use and its development related to recreation, land use and water resources are managed by the **Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan (APLUDP)**. The APLUDP classified all land within the Park into six categories based on existing settlement patterns, physical limitations related to soils, slopes and elevations; unique features such as gorges and waterfalls; biological considerations such as wildlife habitat, rare or endangered plants or animals, wetlands and fragile ecosystems; and public considerations such as historic sites, proximity to critical state lands, and the need to preserve the open space character of the Park. The six categories vary in the manner in which land may be developed relative to density, some aspects of land use and the level of review of all projects by the APA.

Recreation planning is also demonstrated on State owned lands and conservation easements throughout New York State. Along the Grasse River or in close proximity are several State Forests that represent important recreational assets and significant opportunities for expanded use. The use of all State-owned (Forest Preserve) lands is determined by **Unit Management Plans** (UMPs) for individual state land units. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) administers and facilitates the development of Unit Management Plans which assess the natural and physical resources present within a State land unit. They also identify opportunities for recreational use and consider the ability of the resources and ecosystems to accommodate public use. Within these Units, Recreation Management Plans (RMPs) are also developed for sub areas or individual tracts. For State lands in the Adirondack Park, the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan sets forth a land



View from Tooley Pond Road.

use plan. The classification system and guidelines set forth are designed to guide the preservation, management and use of these lands by all interested state agencies in the future.

Portions of the Grasse River are part of two Unit Management areas that are in the process of finalizing Plans: The Grass River UMP which includes the popular Tooley Pond Tract; and the St. Lawrence Foothills Unit which includes the Downerville, Whippoorwill, Degrasse, and Silver Hill State Forests. Draft Plans for both units have been completed in the past year. Both plans identify additional on-land recreation



Blueway Trail Plan

opportunities including biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, equestrian and snowmobiling and the need for additional small-scale amenities to improve the recreational experience including primitive campsites, lean-tos, privies, horse platforms and parking areas.

II. The Blueway Today: Existing Character and Resources

The history of the Grasse River and its communities is similar to most small rivers in northern New York State. Settlements along the River were derived from using the River's energy to power mills and transport logs. Grist mills, saw mills, paper mills, wood working operations dotted much of the Grasse. The mills and factories that developed created vibrant hamlets where people lived, shopped and entertained. Many of these communities peaked in population in the late 19th Century and continued to thrive through the early 20th Century. Today, these hamlets are far less populated and represent quiet rural residential settlements and agrarian communities still supported by community services and institutions but with less commerce and few employment opportunities outside of Canton and Massena. While the Grasse River and its tributaries have taken on a smaller role in each of these communities, for many, it is why they continue to stay, summer over and visit.

The River

The Grasse River is approximately 115 miles long entirely located in St. Lawrence County. It is a tributary of the St. Lawrence River and a sub-basin of its Watershed. At its highest point in the Adirondacks, it is 2,350 feet above sea level. The River originates at the South Branch beginning near Long Tom Mountain in the Town of Colton, consolidating in Russell to form the main branch which then flows to the St. Lawrence River downstream of Massena. The Grasse is a cold-water river



The Grasse in Massena looking south at the Main Street Bridge and broken weir.

upstream to the hamlet of Pyrites where it becomes a warm-water river to the confluence with the St. Lawrence creating diverse ecosystems and changing fishing opportunities. The Grasse River is fairly shallow —anywhere from 2 to 12 feet deep becoming unnavigable during the summer months of mid-June through mid-September along most stretches in an average rainfall season. It is estimated that 85 miles of the 115 can be paddled when river depths allow.¹ The River has two functional dams - a

¹ NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation Website: Fishing and Canoeing the Grass River: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/49285.html>

NOTE: Information regarding river conditions and difficulty are for general reference only as part of this Plan. River conditions change regularly and this should not be utilized by paddlers for trip planning.

**VARIED CONDITIONS:
Flatwater, Class II, & Class III**

**Greater water depths
between Massena &
Louisville allow for motor boats**

**Portage at the
Madrid Dam**

**Greatest depths
past Buck's Bridge**

**WIDELY VARIED CONDITIONS:
Class I-Class IV+**

**Portage required around
former industrial
structures in the river**

**Fairly remote stretch with
some shallow depths**

**Class I-II with
some flatwater**

**VARIED CONDITIONS:
Class II-Class V**

**North Branch:
Some Class II & III**

**Middle Branch:
Class III, IV, (V)**

**Lower South Branch:
Class III, Class IV-IV+**

**Upper South Branch:
Generally Class II-III (V);
Some flatwater**

MAP SOURCES:
American Whitewater Website, River Reports:
<https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/view/>
NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation Website, Fishing and Canoeing the Grass River:
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/49285.html>

Grasse River Blueway Trail River Character

Grasse River

Riffles or falls

Dam

N

0248

Miles

This map was produced with funding provided by
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hydroelectric power dam in the hamlet of Pyrites, and the other in Madrid. A broken weir in the Village of Massena requires portage.

The Headwaters, North, Middle and South Branches

The upstream section of the River, much of which is located in the Adirondack State Park, represents the largest area of on-land recreational amenities along the Blueway. The Grasse originates with the South Branch in Colton eventually picking up the Middle and North Branches in the Towns of Clare and Russell that merge into one main branch just before the hamlet of Russell. The lands along the River are predominantly wooded or farmland with only scattered homes where roads meet the River. The shallow depths, rapids and water falls create scenic river vistas, but also Class IV-IV+ conditions which can only be tackled by an expert paddler. Several tributary streams and ponds contribute to the fishing, paddling and swimming experience.

Photo Credit: Eric Adsit



Kayaking Rainbow Falls on the South Branch.

Like much of the Adirondack Park, this portion of the River includes significant State-owned lands and easements acquired from forestry companies creating areas of public access with growing recreational amenities. These State Forests and conservation easements create road and trail systems that have established several opportunities for car and foot access to the Grasse River and tributary streams and ponds with prominent trout fishing, and significant land trail systems for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. The NYS DEC has developed draft Unit Management Plans which consider additional public recreational uses for each of these State Forests and conservation easements.

From an outdoor recreation tourism standpoint, this section of the Grasse combined with land-trails and amenities provides the most opportunity for different types of recreating - single day excursions, overnight stays via camping and multiple day recreation options.

Section 11: The Blueway Today

The Main Branch - Russell to Canton



The River in the Village of Canton.

Downriver from the informal canoe/kayak put-in the hamlet of Russell to Pyrites the main branch of the River is quiet and remote, becoming more pastoral and less forested with areas of flatwater intermixed with islands, riffles and some waterfalls. Some falls and shallow depths continue to make navigation challenging at times and portage is necessary. The Lazy River tributary is popular for local swimming. At the hydroelectric dam in Pyrites

portage is necessary and no formalized location exists to do so. Downriver of the dam is a formal public hand launch at a beautiful spot near the County Route 27 bridge. Down river of Pyrites to the Village of Canton the River remains remote with little to no additional access opportunities but the River is navigable up to the Miner Street Bridge. Through the Village of Canton, the landscape along the River becomes developed with residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses. River navigation through the Village becomes impossible due to former industrial remains in the River and impassible falls requiring portage at either Taylor Park or the Miner Street Bridge. A variety of recreational amenities can be accessed from the water at Taylor Park Beach and the River can be experienced from land at other waterfront Parks and public spaces in the Village including Bend in the River Park, Willow Island and Heritage Park. The Little River tributary is also a popular fishing and paddling stream that meets the Grasse in Canton. Below the Village, no put-in exists until the NYS DEC boat launch featured at the eastern edge of the Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area. A new launch downriver from the Village would open up a relatively untapped stretch of the River.

Downriver - The Flatwaters to the St. Lawrence

The stretch of the River from the hamlet of Morley to the confluence with the St. Lawrence River is generally flatwater of varying depths between 4-8 feet upriver and 5-12 feet downriver. Riffles and small rapids create some small stretches of Class II and III conditions. The landscape is pastoral with working farms and hamlets. Paddling and fishing up and downriver becomes easy in this stretch allowing for less planning and more novice paddling experiences.

Numerous bridge crossings are utilized as informal access for launching and portage. Improvements at some of these locations would make them safer and more accessible. The Madrid dam requires portage which is provided with informal launch on the west side of the river; a dock on the east side in the Town Park before the dam and a hand launch and boat slip downriver of the dam. A handicapped accessible fishing dock also exists on the east side downriver.



Flatwater at Route 37 Bridge in Louisville looking downriver to Massena.

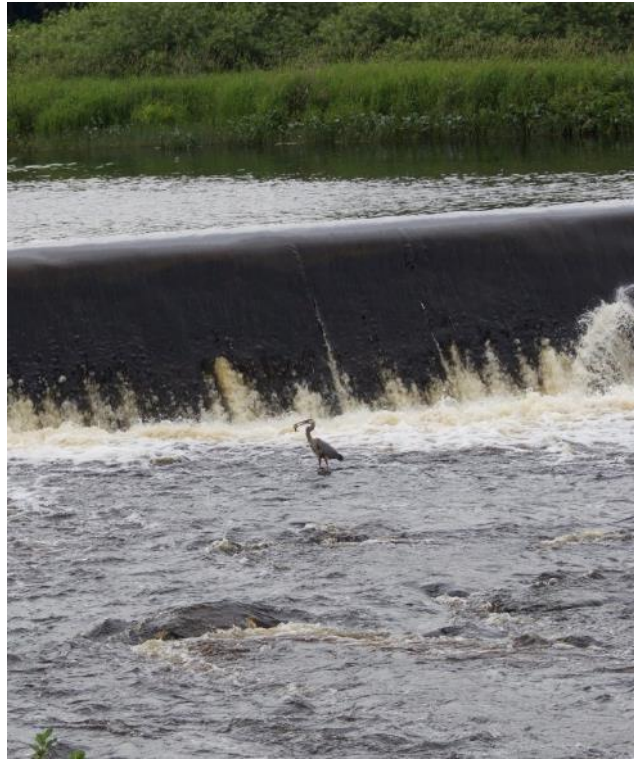
Downriver of Louisville the riverfront becomes developed with residential, commercial and industrial land uses in Massena. Boat launches, a marina, campgrounds, an RV Park and other tourism-related infrastructure are also available toward the mouth of the River. The water depths in this stretch allows for many types of motorized watercraft. Boater conflicts between paddlers and motorboats reportedly can be a safety issue.

Fish and Wildlife

The Grasse River has a diversity of wildlife and fish species. It supports cool and warm water fish populations which are summarized in the table below and is home to a variety of other wildlife including waterfowl, passerine birds and furbearers such as otter, muskrat and beaver. On land, common furbearing wildlife includes white-tailed deer, coyote, fisher, pine marten and bobcat, black bear in the Western Adirondack Foothills, and moose, although uncommon, are increasingly present. The Upper and Lower Lakes WMA provides significant habitat for fish and wildlife. While only a small sliver of the WMA borders the Grasse River Blueway, it has one major impoundment with 4,341 acres of wetland. The WMA is divided into three areas: refuge, restricted use and public hunting. There is no public access in the refuge area although there is an observation tower at the west end of the refuge which is open year-round. The restricted use area is closed to the public from June – August 15th with pedestrian access from April 15th – May 31st. Trapping is by permit within this area. The public hunting area is open year-round.

Section 11: The Blueway Today

According to the New York Natural Heritage Program database from DEC, various plant, animal and community species have been identified as rare, threatened, endangered or protected. There are seven species identified on the Natural Heritage data base as occurring in the Grasse River area including: Drummond's Rock-cress (*Boechera stricta*) is listed as endangered, and Pod Grass (*Scheuchzeria palustris*) is listed as rare. The Fir Clubmoss (*Huperzia selago*) and the vascular plant Southern Twayblade (*Listeria australis*) are both listed as endangered. The Extra Striped Snaketail (*Ophiogomphus anomalus*), a type of dragonfly, is designated – special concern. Two birds are listed: the Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) is designated special concern and the Spruce Grouse (*Falci pennis canadensis*) is endangered.



A heron on the Grasse at the Madrid Dam.

Invasive Species

Invasive species appear to have a very low presence in the Grasse River to date, although the threat exists from species in the St. Lawrence River and Adirondack waterbodies. Documentation of aquatic invasive species is limited by the sheer magnitude of the streams, lakes and ponds to be monitored in New York State. However, the aquatic invasive species European frog-bit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*) was found in the Grasse River near Lampson Falls in 2005. European frog-bit is a floating-leaved aquatic capable of producing dense mats of vegetation that completely cover the water surface, which can shade out native vegetation and thereby reduce plant diversity, and also impede human recreation by entangling around boat propellers and making swimming difficult. The Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) first detected the species, and routinely cleaned the sites where it was found greatly reducing its prevalence. APIPP will continue to monitor and perform maintenance work as needed until it is no longer present. Preventing the spread of invasive species to the river requires education about inspecting, cleaning boats and equipment (including waders), and monitoring the River itself. Signage at boat launches and fishing access, posting information at bait and tackle shops and on local and regional websites is the best form of education. Should a nuisance invasive species of significance be detected in the future, boat inspection and washing stations at popular locations should be considered.



Water Quality

Protecting river water quality is critically important to maintaining a healthy ecosystem and drinking water supply. The NYS DEC classifies the quality of New York State streams using a New York State Stream Classification and Usage System. Class A waters can be a source of water supply for drinking, culinary and food processing purposes and are suitable for primary contact (swimming, diving etc), secondary contact (boating and fishing) and fish propagation and survival. It should be noted that this classification may be given to waters which are treated to meet New York State Department of Health drinking water standards. Class B and C waters are suitable for primary and secondary contact and fish propagation and survival, although for Class C waters other factors may limit the use for these purposes – particularly contact recreation. In addition, streams may be classified as “trout waters” with the letter “T” or trout spawning waters “TS.” Special requirements apply to sustain these waters that support valuable and sensitive fishery resources. A table below summarizes the water quality of the Grasse and tributaries.

Grasse River Water Quality Classification		
River Name	Segment Description	Water Quality Class
South Branch Grass River, Mid, and tribs	from Newbridge to Brandy Brook	C(T)
North Branch Grass River, Upp, and tribs	above Gleasons Mills	C(T)
Grass River, Middle, and tribs	from Madrid to Canton	B
Middle Branch Grass River and tribs	entire stream and tribs	C(T)
Grass River, Upper, and minor tribs	above Pyrites	C(T)
Grass River, Middle, and minor tribs	from Canton to Pyrites	A
South Branch Grass River, Upp, and tribs	above Brandy Brook	C(T)
South Branch Grass River, Low, and tribs	from mouth to Newbridge	C(T)
Grass River, Middle, and tribs	from Massena to Madrid	B
North Branch Grass River, Low, and tribs	from mouth to nr Gleasons Mills	C(T)
Grass River, Lower, and tribs	from mouth to Massena	B
Source: NYS DEC Water Bodies Water Quality Classification Database: https://data.ny.gov/Energy-Environment/Waterbody-Classifications/		

The Grasse River from the mouth to approximately seven miles upstream is a federally designated Superfund Site presently under remediation. In 1989, hazardous substances including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were found in the Grasse River and on-land from operations related to the aluminum production company Alcoa as a result of discharges into four outfalls². Analysis of fish in the Grasse River revealed high levels of PCB contamination and, as a result, in 1990 the New York State Department of Health issued a consumption advisory recommending that no fish be eaten from the Grasse River between the mouth of the Grasse River and the Massena Power Canal. In the spring of 2017, construction work began on a multipurpose facility that will be used as a staging area to support future dredging and capping operations.

² <https://www.epa.gov/ny/grasse-river-superfund-site-massena-ny>

The Communities

The River flows through portions of seven towns that include two villages and nine hamlets of St. Lawrence County. The two major population centers are the Village of Canton and the Town and Village of Massena. Canton's location along the middle stretch of the Grasse River makes it a central hub of the Grasse with a large number of resident and visitor amenities. Massena is the last stretch of river for the Grasse as well as the Raquette River converging with the St. Lawrence River. The abundance of water and hydro power established Massena as an industrial hub with a major Canadian border crossing over the St. Lawrence as well.

Canton

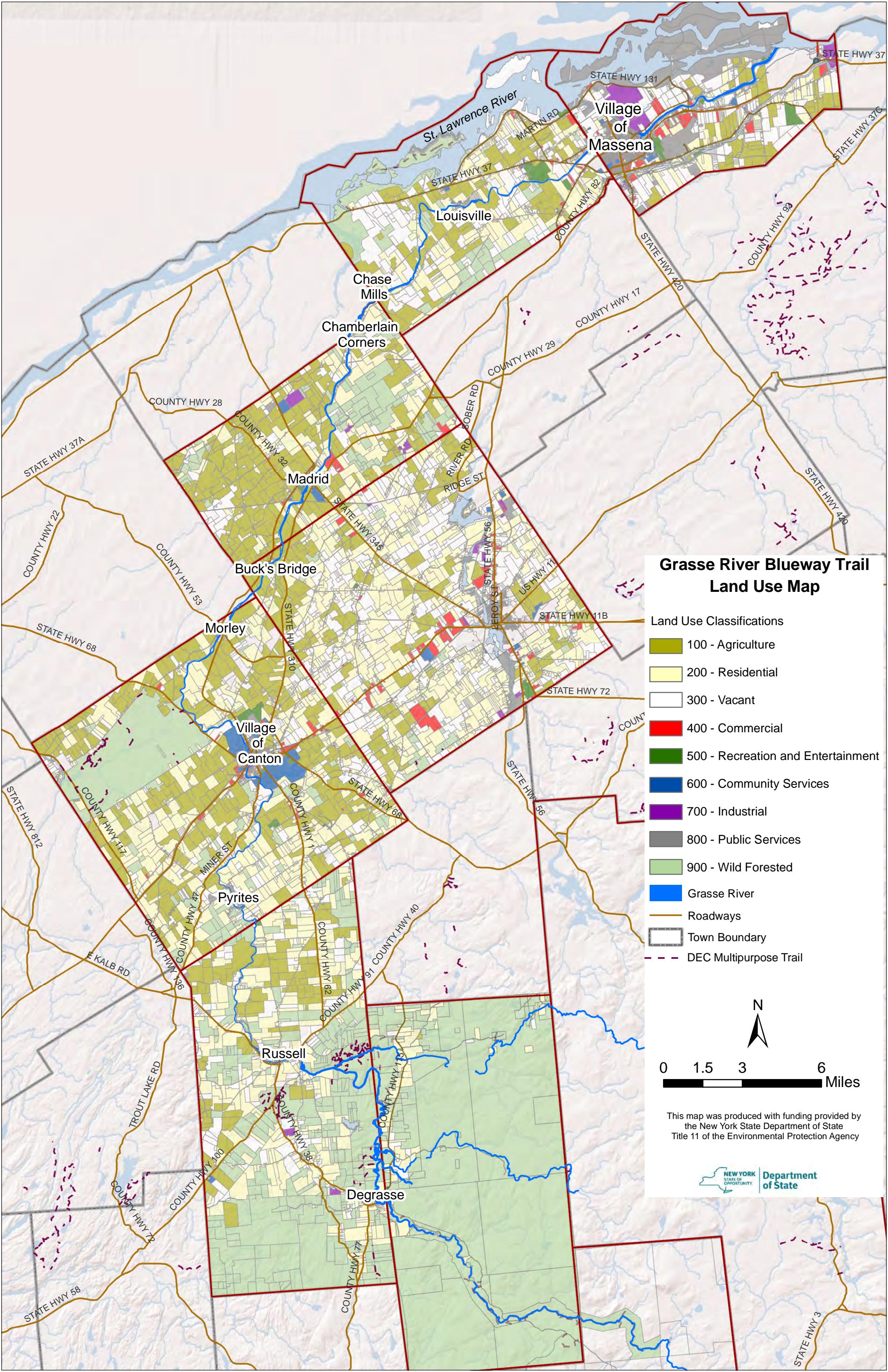


Downtown Main Street Canton.

The riverfront in Canton is one of the most diverse stretches. With 19 miles of waterfront, it includes the Village of Canton, a densely settled hub community in the County and college town, with the hamlets of Pyrites and Morley representing historic settlements juxtapositioned amongst miles of rural and agrarian landscapes. The Little River, an important tributary, meets the Grasse just upstream of the Village of Canton.

The continued presence of farmland protects scenic rural landscapes along the River corridor that can be experienced travelling any major roadway. The dense settlement of the

Village of Canton is attributed to many early factors beginning with mills but also including industries such as J. Henry Rushton's boat building; the construction of Main Street (US Route 11) in the late 1840s as an east-west transportation route; and the selection of Canton as the County seat in 1830 bringing government offices, services and jobs. The community was further given an economic boost with the founding of St. Lawrence University in 1856 and the Agricultural School at St. Lawrence University in 1906, a state sponsored school which became independent from the University in 1925 (now SUNY Canton). Today, with 2100 students at St. Lawrence University and 3,000 at the State University of New York-Canton, these schools are some of the largest employers in St. Lawrence County and the Grasse River region. Canton's historic downtown remains largely intact with some pockets along the River where infill redevelopment is warranted. The constant flow of students and visitors to the colleges has created larger scale lodging options, and a variety of eating and dining establishments, shops, a movie theater and more.



Grasse River Blueway Trail Land Use Map

Land Use Classifications

- 100 - Agriculture
- 200 - Residential
- 300 - Vacant
- 400 - Commercial
- 500 - Recreation and Entertainment
- 600 - Community Services
- 700 - Industrial
- 800 - Public Services
- 900 - Wild Forested

Grasse River

Roadways

Town Boundary

DEC Multipurpose Trail

N

0 1.5 3 6 Miles

This map was produced with funding provided by the New York State Department of State Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Agency

The university campuses have also provided more public amenities for local residents. As an example, the Little River boat launch can be accessed by the public with a permit from St. Lawrence University. Canton's population was estimated to be 11,339 in 2015 according to the U.S. Census American Community Survey Five Year estimate. Of that, 6,665 people lived in the Village of Canton. As a college-town, the population fluctuates dramatically between summer months and the school year.

Massena

The Grasse River meets the confluence with the St. Lawrence River in Massena. The Grasse defines the northern edge of the Village of Massena's downtown district, and continues to cut through the Village on the eastern border where it connects with the old Alcoa Power Canal (Massena Canal) and ultimately, the St. Lawrence River. The



Grasse River waterfront redevelopment opportunities on Water Street in Massena.

waterfront transitions from residential into commercial and industry in the heart of the Village, transitioning back out to residential areas with more rural landscapes, recreational uses and some industrial facilities at the mouth.

The construction of the Alcoa Power Canal (Massena Power Canal) connecting the Grasse and St. Lawrence Rivers completed in the late 19th Century, allowed Massena to become an industrial center capitalizing on the power of the River for electricity and production for most of the 20th Century. Key industries have included power production with the New York Power Authority hydroelectric plant; aluminum production; and commerce on the St. Lawrence Seaway. Unfortunately, as is a common story on many riverfronts, hazardous substances including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were found in the Grasse River and on-land from operations related to the aluminum production company Alcoa in 1989. In 1990 the New York State Department of Health issued a consumption advisory recommending that no fish be eaten from the Grasse River between the mouth of the Grasse River and the Massena Power Canal. By order of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) remediation began in the mid-1990s and still continues today. In the spring of 2017, construction work began on a multipurpose facility that will be used as a staging area to support future dredging and capping operations.

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The population has steadily decreased since the decline in industry, beginning in 2008 with the relocation of many General Motors employees and the subsequent closing of the manufacturing plant and the some of Alcoa's aluminum facilities. Today, Massena's population is estimated at 12,721 according to the US Census American Community Survey. The Town and Village are working to define a new future that includes a more diverse economy and downtown revitalization along Main Street and Water Street on the Grasse River. The Grasse River waterfront is one of several key assets in the community that could spur reinvestment downtown, attract new families to the existing array of housing options and increase tourism.

Louisville

The Town of Louisville is on the banks of both the Grasse and St. Lawrence Rivers. The Grasse River is generally characterized by flatwater as it flows through agricultural lands, residential pockets and the hamlets of Chase Mills and Louisville. The population in 2015 was estimated at 3,155 according to the US Census American Community Survey Five Year estimate. Along the Grasse River, development is mostly located at the edge of the Village Massena, in the small



Former Town Hall built in 1900 is an opportunity for adaptive reuse in the hamlet.

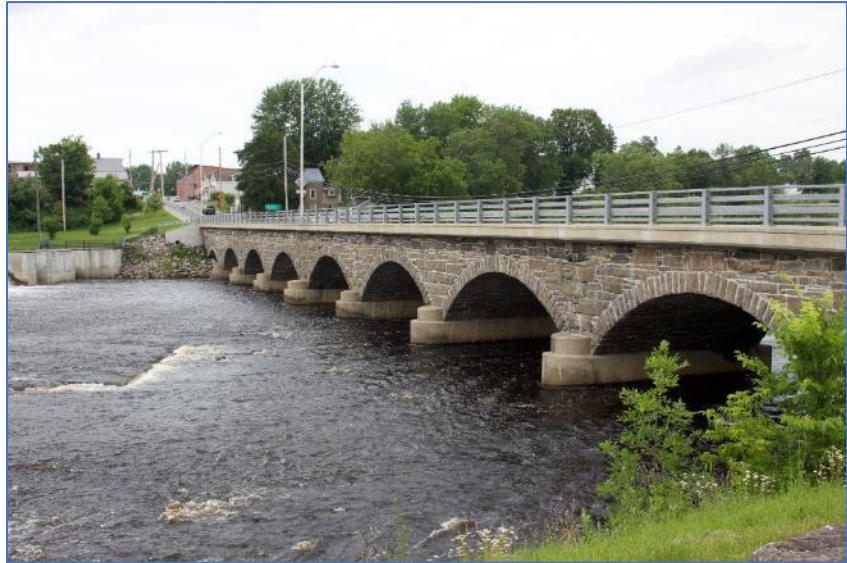
hamlets of Louisville and Chase Mills. Additional development is on the waterfront of the St. Lawrence River. Development includes residential neighborhoods, an independent senior living facility, community services, and a small number of service businesses. The Louisville community services complex houses the Town offices and a community center that provides event space and an ice rink for youth and adult hockey leagues throughout the winter months. Other amenities include a playground facility, pavilion and baseball fields. Louisville holds an annual family-friendly Summer Bash at the community center. The former Town Hall on Lincoln Street, an architecturally interesting structure built at the turn of the 20th Century, is available for adaptive reuse.

Louisville, and the upstream portion of the Village of Massena, are in a unique situation of having lost significant river depth about 25 years ago when the weir in Massena broke and was not repaired. The shallow depths have greatly curtailed the use of the river for recreation and sport in the summer. The weir remains in place today but water and fish flow through the compromised section. The new boat

launch to be constructed at the Route 37 Bridge between Louisville and Massena it is hoped will bring more use of the upstream portion of the Grasse River for populations from both communities.

Madrid

The flatwaters of the Grasse River flow through Madrid – its history more focused on logging, mining and agriculture. The town of Madrid includes the hamlets of Madrid and Chamberlain Corners, which is a historic settlement located on the northern border with Louisville. The hamlet of Madrid is the town center and includes a mix of businesses, homes, and significant community and recreational resources including paddling, fishing and other water-



Madrid Stone Bridge built 1882 looking west toward the hamlet's center.

enhanced recreational amenities. The population in 2015 was approximately 1,721, of which 659 are in the hamlet of Madrid, according to the US Census Community American Survey Five Year estimate.

Madrid's most densely populated area is located on the west side of the Grasse River with more small businesses than most Grasse River hamlets including a bank, bakery, small market, country store, a handful of restaurants and a bed and breakfast. A boat take-out/put-in launching area exists above the Dam providing easy access to shops and services for paddlers. Along the Grasse River, there is the 9-hole Madrid golf course, Stonebridge Kayak and Canoe Rental and the Municipal boat slip, hand launch and handicapped accessible fishing dock downriver of the Madrid Dam. For portage purposes, another small boat dock exists above the dam as well as other recreational facilities at the town park including a large pavilion, lawn area, bandshell, ball fields and playground. Madrid hosts canoe races, providing camping for the event, and a summer concert series each year in the Park. Just down Rt. 345 from the town park is the St. Lawrence Power and Equipment Museum, home to a variety of buildings, annual exhibits and special events.

Section 11: The Blueway Today

Town of Russell

The Town of Russell is where the Grasse River branches merge into one main branch. The hamlets of Russell and Degrasse represent small, traditional hamlets that continue to provide community services and a handful of stores and services. Of note, the hamlet of Russell has a gas station and convenience store – the only one for a significant distance on the upper Grasse. Popular tributaries include the Lazy River which is historically popular for swimming, and Plumb Brook popular for trout fishing. The State Forests of Downerville, Whippoorwill, Degrasse and Silver Hill have a growing number of recreational offerings that have put Russell on the map as a recreation destination – particularly for equestrian amenities. According to the US Census American Community Survey estimates from 2015, the population was 1,947 with a growing year-round population.



Hamlets of Russell (above) and Degrasse (below).



Russell was first settled in 1805 and was home to a planing mill, sawmills and assorted industrial factories as well agriculture and forestry. During the War of 1812, Russell housed a 3-story high arsenal to store artillery, small arms and ammunition. As businesses turned over and reinvented themselves in the 20th century, a lack of sewer infrastructure has hampered the ability of business and industry to locate in the hamlets. Presently, the hamlet of Russell is a bedroom community with a bustling Town Hall that includes a theater for community plays and other entertainment, Memorial Hall and Museum, a small library, a few churches, a fire department and post office. A small number of restaurants and taverns also exist – including one that caters to horse riders coming directly from the trails of Whippoorwill State Forest. With increased recreational amenities, it is hoped that these businesses will be maintained and more may be established.

River Recreation Assets and Activities

Recreation on the Grasse River includes fishing, paddling, boating, swimming, waterfalls, birding and other wildlife observation, and ice-skating. These river-related activities are supplemented by on-land recreation including hiking, snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing, equestrian, cycling and mountain biking, snowmobiling, hunting and camping. Touring scenic byways by bike, motorcycle and automobile – stopping at scenic vistas, interesting hamlets and villages, museums, and other attractions are becoming increasingly popular tourism activities. A map series of the River divided into three sections on the following pages illustrates the variety of recreation-related amenities and intrinsic resources present today on the Grasse River Blueway Trail.

Fishing

Fishing may be the most popular activity today on the Blueway Trail. With quiet beauty, abundant species and changing characteristics of the River as both a cold and warm water river, anglers can have many different experiences. The opportunity to fish muskellunge, a large, fairly rare species native to few places other than the Grasse, and the challenge of doing so in a small river boat is a particularly special experience. As one sportsman stated at the Grasse River Blueway Stakeholder Summit, “fishing native muskie [on the Grasse] represents a fisherman’s dream.” Anglers fish from flat-bottomed boats (canoes), small crafts with outboards or electric motors for trolling when water depths allow, wading, or on-shore. Float-trips in a canoe are a popular way to fish the Grasse - starting miles up-stream and drifting down.



Fishing in Morley. Photo: Wiseacre-Gardens.Com

As discussed elsewhere in this Plan, the upstream section of the Grasse River to Pyrites, including its branches, is generally cold-water with stocked brown trout and native brook trout. While trout is the main draw for fisherman, smallmouth bass and rock bass are also popular. Downstream, from Pyrites to the St. Lawrence River, the River supports mainly warm-water fish species. A variety of gamefish, including walleye, smallmouth bass, northern pike, brown bullhead, panfish and an occasional muskellunge, can be found in this stretch. Sections of Plumb Brook, South Branch Grass River, North Branch Grass River and Grass River currently receive annual stocking of Brown Trout. Brook Trout are only stocked in one small

Grasse River Blueway Trail Canton Russell Clare Assets Map

FACILITY NAME	MAP #
Canton	
Bend in the River Park	1
Canton College	2
Grasse River State Boat Launch	3
Indian Creek Nature Center	4
Harrison Grist Mill	5
Oswegatchie Museum and Art Gallery	6
Remington Recreation Trail	7
Silas Wright Museum	8
St. Lawrence University	9
Taylor Park	10
University Golf Course and Country Club	11
Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area	12
Canton Boat Launch	51
Pyrites Park	52
Heritage Park	53
Willow Island Park	54
Buck St Park	55
Hand Carry Boat Launch	56
Rushton Falls	61
Cascade Falls	62
TAUNY	71
Partridge Run Golf Course	72
Unofficial Access	76
Pyrites Boat Launch	78
Woodcock Rapids	79
Unofficial Access	80
Kip Trail	81
Sadlemeier trail	82
Russell	
Boyd Pond	20
Grasse River / Donnerville Wild Forest	22
Whippoorwill State Park	23
Boat Launch	58
Jackson Falls	60
Degrass State Forest – trails	69
Silver Hill State Forest – parking camping trails	70
Hart's Falls	74
Clare	
Grasse River Hand Canoe Launch	24
Lampson Falls	25
Tooley Rd Canoe Carry-In Launch Site	21
Trailed Boat Launch	59
Basford Falls	63
Harper's Falls	73

Grasse River

Publicly Owned Lands

Publicly Owned Parks and Recreation

NYS Power Authority Owned Lands

DEC Multipurpose Trail

Walking trail

Bike trail

Horse Trail

Boat Launch

Picnic Area

P

Parking

Camping Facility

Waterfalls

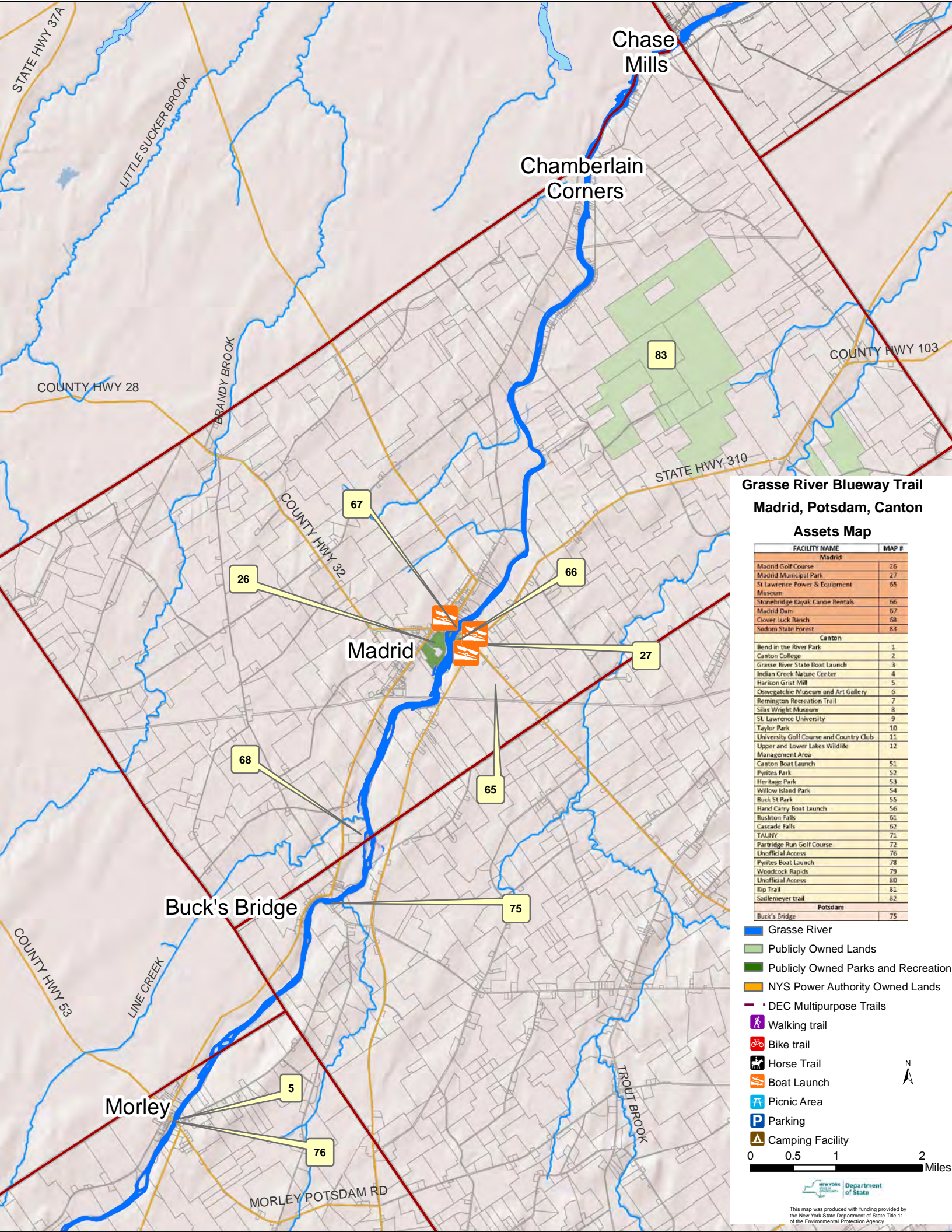
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Miles

N

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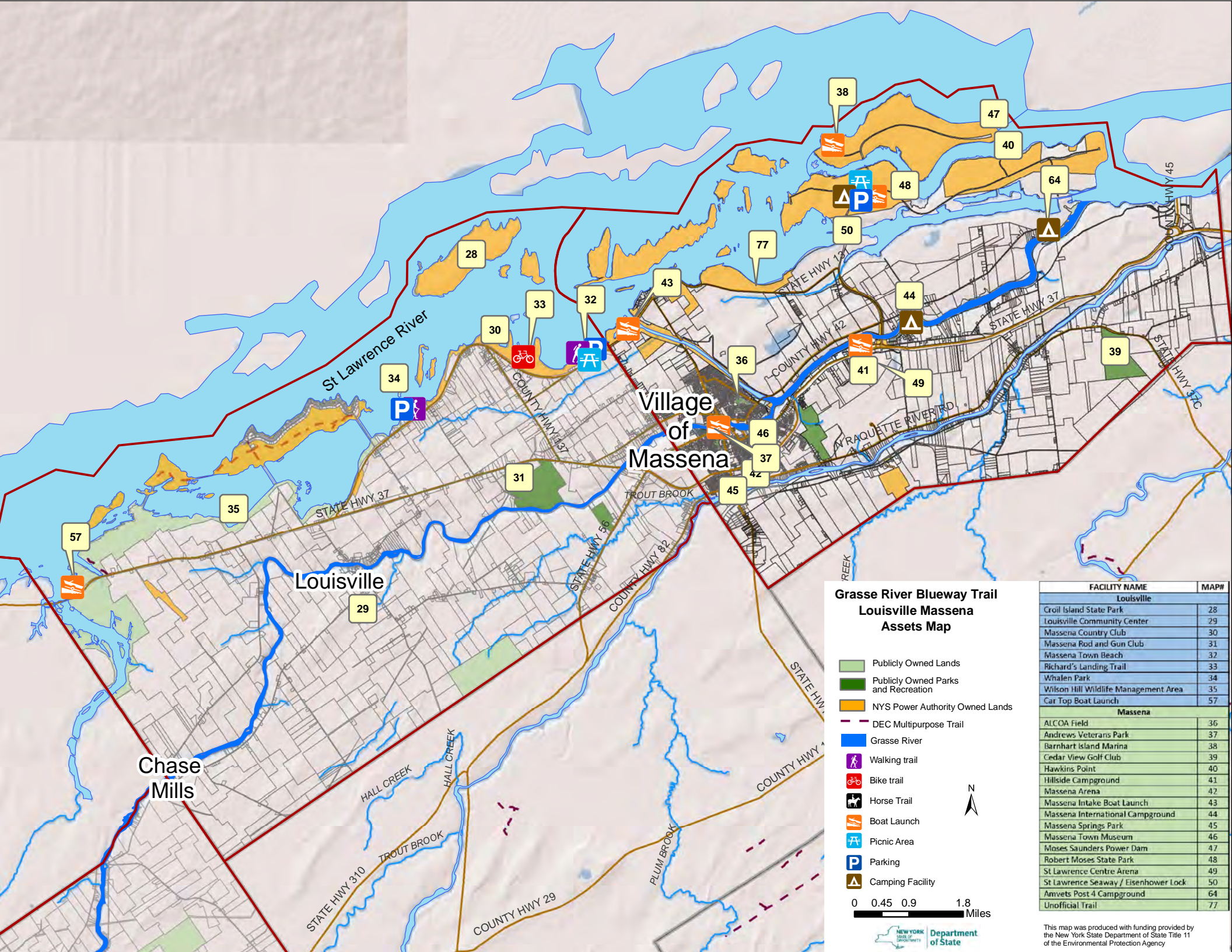


**Grasse River Blueway Trail
Madrid, Potsdam, Canton
Assets Map**

FACILITY NAME	MAP #
Madrid	
Madrid Golf Course	26
Madrid Municipal Park	27
St Lawrence Power & Equipment Museum	65
Stonebridge Kayak Canoe Rentals	66
Madrid Dam	67
Clover Luck Ranch	68
Sodom State Forest	83
Canton	
Bend in the River Park	1
Canton College	2
Grasse River State Boat Launch	3
Indian Creek Nature Center	4
Harrison Grist Mill	5
Oswegatchie Museum and Art Gallery	6
Remington Recreation Trail	7
Sias Wright Museum	8
St Lawrence University	9
Taylor Park	10
University Golf Course and Country Club	11
Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area	12
Canton Boat Launch	51
Pyrites Park	52
Heritage Park	53
Willow Island Park	54
Buck St Park	55
Hand Carry Boat Launch	56
Rushion Falls	61
Cascade Falls	62
TAUNY	71
Partridge Run Golf Course	72
Unofficial Access	76
Pyrites Boat Launch	78
Woodcock Rapids	79
Unofficial Access	80
Rip Trail	81
Sodermeyer trail	82
Potsdam	
Buck's Bridge	75

- Grasse River
- Publicly Owned Lands
- Publicly Owned Parks and Recreation
- NYS Power Authority Owned Lands
- DEC Multipurpose Trails
- Walking trail
- Bike trail
- Horse Trail
- Boat Launch
- Picnic Area
- Parking
- Camping Facility

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



This map was produced with funding provided by the New York State Department of State Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Agency

Section 11: The Blueway Today

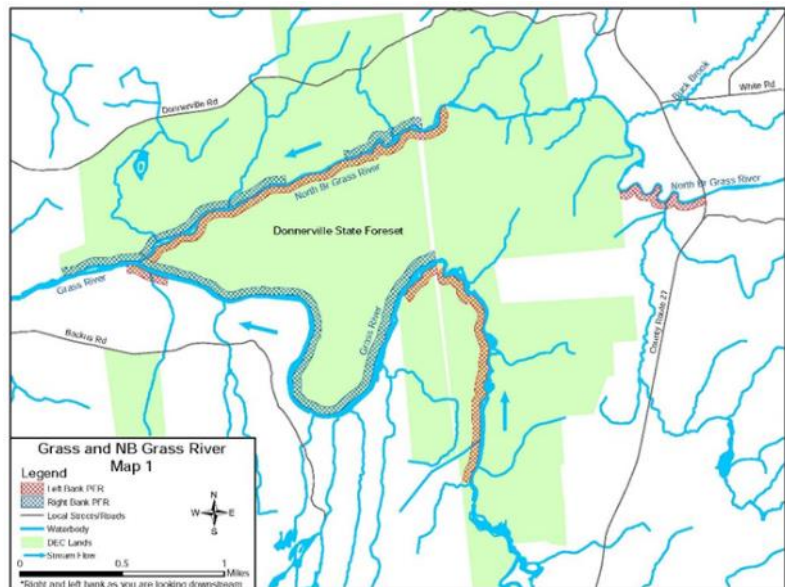
section of the South Branch along Degrasse State Forest. Currently, a special angling regulation is in effect for trout in St. Lawrence County streams related to the season window and daily catch limit.

The protection of the native muskellunge population is an important goal of this Plan. Presently catch and release is voluntary for fish over 40" caught upstream of Louisville's falls and over 48" caught downstream to the mouth of the River.

There is concern that with increasing popularity of fishing the Grasse for muskies, the species could be overfished. Requiring catch and release would better protect the population as would prohibiting certain fishing hooks which irreversibly harm the fish and better education about best practices for removing hooks. There are few fishing docks on the Grasse River or tributaries, although a large handicapped accessible fishing dock exists in Madrid downriver of the dam. Shoreline fishing exists in the State Forests and NYS DEC Public Fishing Rights easements which are permanent easements from willing landowners, giving anglers the right to fish and walk along the bank (usually a 33' strip on one or both banks of the stream). On the Grasse River there are 10.3 miles of public fishing rights segments on the North and Middle Branches in Downerville State Forest and beyond. Plum Brook, a popular trout stream, has 3.2 miles of public fishing rights and additional accessible segments within Whippoorwill State Forest.



Handicapped Accessible Fishing Dock in Madrid.



NYS DEC Public Fishing Rights Map on the North and South Branches of the Grasse. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/44864.html>

Paddling and Boating

Canoeing and kayaking are the most popular forms of navigation on most of the Grasse River and some of its tributaries. The wide variety of paddling experiences available and the peace, tranquility and remoteness are what draws many to paddle the Grasse as illustrated on the map of River Conditions.



Paddling group on the Grasse between Pyrites and Canton.

Other small watercraft with small out-board motors or electric motors for trolling are also used to fish. Larger boats and other watercraft are utilized in Massena near the mouth of the River where water depths increase dramatically. Shallow river depths along much of the Grasse River prevents paddling between July and September in an average rainfall summer. Access along the river includes hand launches with docking and boat slips, beaches, surface launch areas, and informal put-ins and portages often at bridge underpasses and roadsides. These informal launch areas provide

access to the Grasse River's more remote sections and provide important portage options as the Grasse River has numerous challenging sections that are welcomed by some but avoided by many. Some obstacles in the river prevent navigation altogether including the Pyrites Hydroelectric Dam, the former mill and logging remains and falls in the Village of Canton, and the Madrid Dam. Additional portages in some locations would improve safety and enhance navigability. On-river signs noting hazards and opportunities to portage would increase safety and accessibility for paddlers of differing



Example of a popular informal launch area at Buck's Bridge with parking area at the top.



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abilities. Improvements to some informal launches would enhance access.

Formal public boat launches with hand launch docks and/or boat slips, parking lots and sometimes other amenities such as kayak/canoe racks, interpretive signage, picnicking exist in some locations as part of a larger park, state land tract or in some locations as stand-alone amenities. Three new launches are planned for construction in Louisville at the Route 37 Bridge, in Massena at the new Village Park and in the hamlet of Russell.

Land Trails, State Forests and other Recreation Amenities

A successful blueway trail has as a symbiotic relationship between land and water activity. Waterfront parks, land trails systems and other on-land recreation near or adjacent to the Grasse River are an important part of the blueway trail experience both directly and indirectly. Waterfront parks providing boat launches, fishing and swimming areas that connect river users to other amenities like picnicking areas, walking and hiking trails, restrooms and campsites add direct value to the river experience. Water-dependent services and retailers such as bait and tackle shops, canoe rentals, outfitters and guides also have a direct relationship with River recreation. On land amenities and experiences that are not water-dependent, are often enhanced by the scenic vistas and wildlife observation opportunities the River provides. These amenities include land trails systems, river side parks, tourist information kiosks, historic sites, eating, drinking, entertainment and lodging establishments, and agri-tourism establishments.

Land Trails

Land trail networks include traditional hiking, mountain biking, equestrian trails as well as walking trails and multi-use path systems often found in community parks and campuses connecting amenities or established as fitness trails accessed by the local community and its visitors. These foot paths and bike trails connecting downtowns and parks to the River are a combination of sidewalks, paved paths, or stone dust trails. There are a number of on- and off-road trail networks in the Village of Canton on the university campuses, the Remington Recreation Trail – a 5K Multi-Use Trail, and Heritage Park interpretive trail. Additional multi-use trails and off-road pathways have been identified as part of a multi-modal planning effort. Robert Moses State Park on the St. Lawrence River in Massena has 10 miles of marked self-guiding trails, guided snow shoe hikes, and offers cross-country skis and snowshoes for rent. The park also hosts sled dog races that draw North Country participants as well as those from Canada and several states.

The most prevalent land trail systems along or near the Grasse River, however, are on the State Forest lands upriver on the North, Middle and South Branches in Russell, Clare, and Colton. The State Forests and conservation easements are a growing asset for the upper Grasse River area as more trails, paddling access and amenities are added.

Downriver, new opportunities exist for trails development in Sodom State Forest in Madrid and as part of



Photo credit: Rhonda Thompson

State lands near the upper Grasse.

efforts by land trusts and other conservation organizations. For example, trails are planned by the on newly acquired lands near Hart's Falls by the St. Lawrence Land Trust.



Mountain Biking at Downerville State Forest.

There are large networks of multi-use trails that are generally open for hiking, horse-riding, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. Some trails are also designated for mountain biking. Many of the trails connect to, or provide viewshed of the River's many waterfalls. Lampson Falls, in the Grass River State Forest may be the most popular destination of the Upper Grasse River. (For a map of waterfalls along the Grasse River see the Recreational Assets Map). Other areas State Lands and Easements have open spaces with no formal trails but hiking, hunting and fishing are permitted.

Equestrian recreation is an increasingly popular activity in the North Country. Equestrian trails are used by both individual riders and larger organized groups who will make day trips but are often looking for campgrounds and other overnight accommodations. There is growing recognition among communities and tourism organizations that trail riding could be an important tourism asset if the infrastructure is in place. Within the

upper Grasse River corridor, efforts are being made by communities and local trail rider organizations in partnership with DEC to rehabilitate and improve the most popular to ensure continued usage, establish new trails within existing networks and eventually create equestrian trails that would link Degrasse, Downerville, and Whippoorwill Corners State Forests. New trail segments have been identified and some included in the recent draft Unit Management Plans for these State lands – particularly in Whippoorwill and Degrasse. Additional amenities such as parking for horse trailers, horse platforms and campsites near popular trailheads have also been proposed.

Mountain biking, like horse riding, is an increasingly popular form of recreation. Mountain biking is allowed on most of the multi-use trails on State Forest lands. There is great potential for increased usage of the State Forests as often seek out challenging trails featuring hills, frequent elevation changes, picturesque scenery, and lengths of several miles. The St. Lawrence Mountain Biking Association (SLMBA) has partnered with the DEC through the Adopt-A-Natural Resource/Volunteer Stewardship Agreement Program to develop mountain bike trails in Downerville State Forest.

Camping

The lack of camping opportunities along the Grasse River has been identified as an area for considerable improvement. Primitive camping is permitted on all State Forest lands in Russell and Clare. There is a private campground in Massena. Otherwise, the only other camping opportunities are in some municipal parks for events such as canoe races. At the time of this Plan's development, some additional private campground projects have in planning stages. Primitive camping on State lands involves little or no

Section 11: The Blueway Today

amenities such as running water, electric, picnic tables, and restrooms. Camping is generally allowed anywhere except within 150 feet from a water body, road, or trail, unless the area is posted as "Camping Prohibited."

A few lean-tos and fire rings exist, in more popular areas in each State Forest. Camping for more than three nights or with 10 or more people requires a permit from a forest ranger. Camping is allowed on some conservation easements but only at designated primitive campsites.



Example of a primitive campsite at Whippoorwill State Forest.

Touring

Whether by bicycle, car or motorcycle, many of the roads along the Grasse River provide scenic viewsheds of the river, waterfalls, pastoral scenes and working farms, woodlands, and historic hamlets including several churches on the National Register of Historic Places. Bridge crossings are often the best vantage points of the River. The vast acres of open farmland preserves the viewshed from county roads meandering away from the River that would likely be screened out by trees and brush.

Off-River and Non-Recreation Community Amenities, Destinations, and Assets

Like land trails, part of the Blueway Trail experience is supplemented by the amenities and destinations off the river. Eco-tourism and heritage tourism often combine the community experience with either a cultural destination such as a museum, or an outdoor recreational activity that celebrates the natural environment. For some, deciding where to paddle may



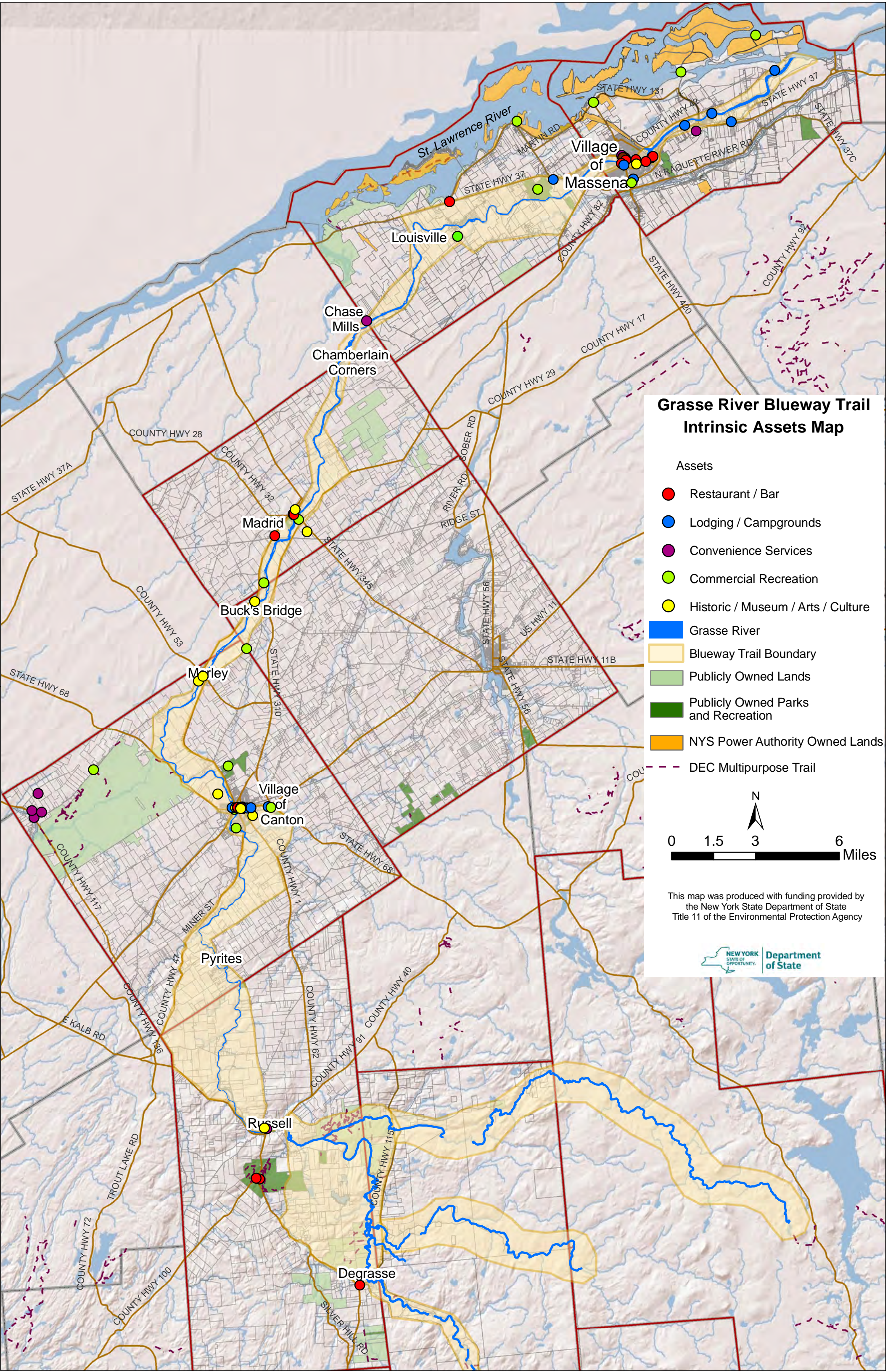
Madrid shops within walking distance of canoe/kayak launches.

be based on the ability to find a good restaurant or lodging. Others may want to get in a round of golf, others may wish to visit a museum or check out a church on the historic register. Amenities can also be as simple as having places to stop for lunch, use a restroom or grab dinner after a long hike or paddle. While none of these things exist solely because the Grasse River Blueway Trail is in their backyard, some of them do benefit from its proximity. In addition, the ability to promote multiple activities, destinations and events within the region and individual communities attracts more visitors, businesses and residents. Even a small increase in resident population and tourism can make a difference in the viability of a small business. One new shop or eatery can decide whether a person touring the Grasse River by bicycle or car stops or keeps going. The map on the following page illustrates many of the existing destinations, assets and amenities that may supplement the Grasse River Blueway Experience including:

- Places and Buildings on the National Register of Historic Places;
- Cultural destinations such as museums, universities, galleries;
- Entertainment and recreation venues such as theaters, sports complexes, golf courses and skating rinks;
- Eating and drinking establishments;
- Shops and services; and
- Lodging and camping.



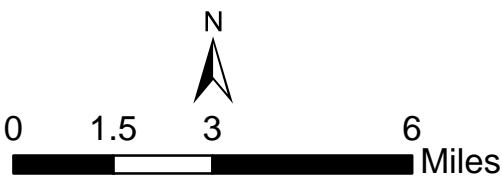
Harrison Grist Mill in Morley.



Grasse River Blueway Trail Intrinsic Assets Map

Assets

- Restaurant / Bar
- Lodging / Campgrounds
- Convenience Services
- Commercial Recreation
- Historic / Museum / Arts / Culture
- Grasse River
- Blueway Trail Boundary
- Publicly Owned Lands
- Publicly Owned Parks and Recreation
- NYS Power Authority Owned Lands
- - - DEC Multipurpose Trail



This map was produced with funding provided by the New York State Department of State Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Agency



III. PLAN GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

GOAL 1: PROMOTE THE GRASSE RIVER BLUEWAY TRAIL THROUGH INCREASED ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND MARKETING.

Promotion of the blueway trail as a natural, scenic, and recreational amenity for existing residents, and to attract visitors to recreation, and new families and businesses to live and locate, is a critical piece of this plan. Marketing to tourists is obvious but, promotion includes increasing awareness of what's available in your own backyard. Many stakeholders raised the issue that there is no comprehensive collection or dissemination of information about activities and amenities on the Grasse.

Communities linked by a common recreational resource can work together to encourage visitation to multiple communities within a region. Investment and promotion of complimentary amenities can encourage visitors to expand the geographic scope of their trip. Communities that participate in collaborative marketing strategy make it easy for visitors to plan multi-day trips by offering customized itineraries, easy to access information, and specific amenities and incentives for Blueway Trail users.



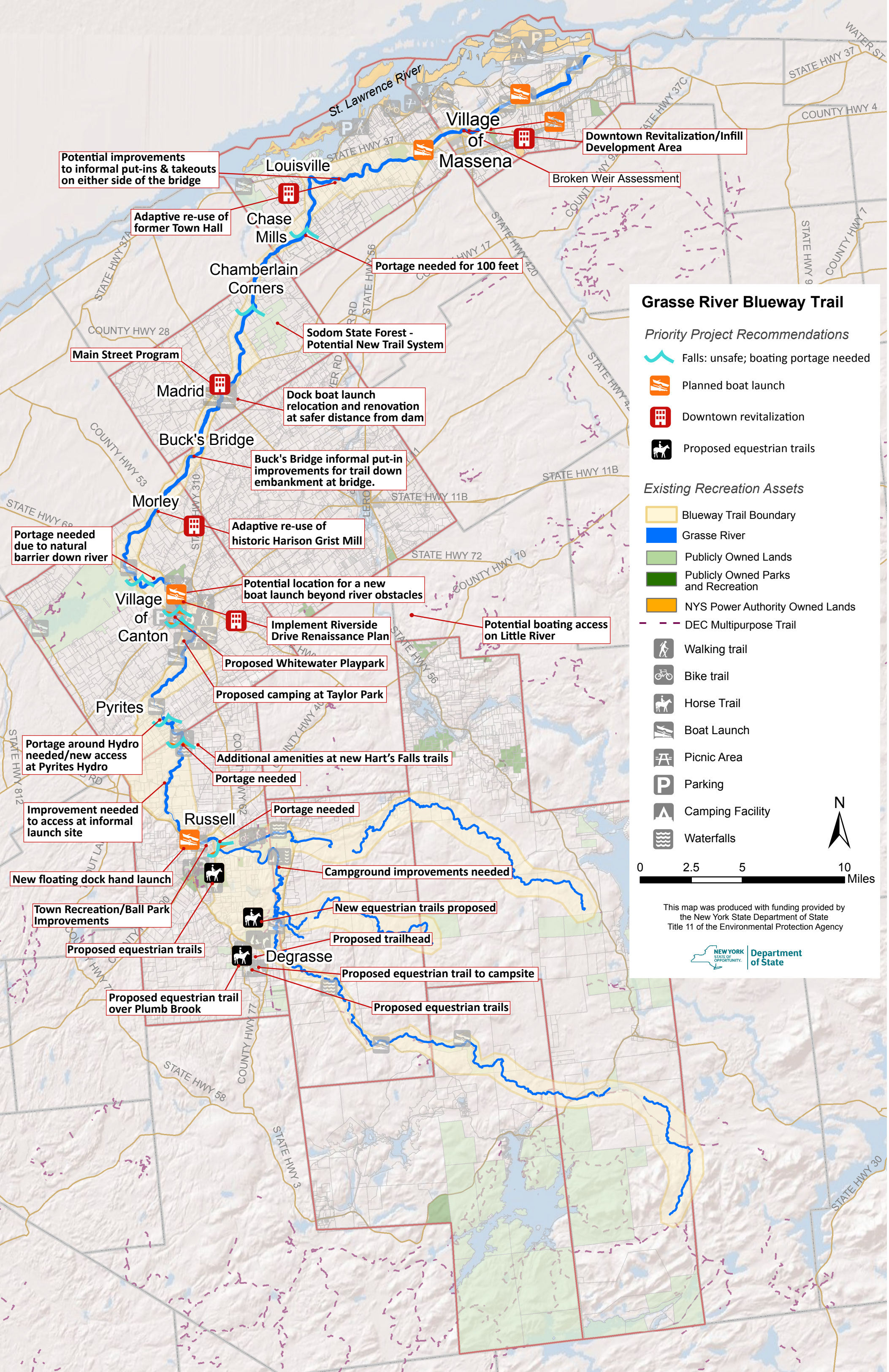
The Blueway logo with a template for identification or wayfinding signage.

Potential Strategies and Projects

- ≡ **Consolidate information about amenities and recreation into one resource that could be posted or accessed from different websites.**





The Blueway Trail communities should identify an entity or partner, such as the St. Lawrence County Tourism office or Chamber of Commerce, to develop materials or a webpage that provides information about recreating and visiting the Grasse River. Ideally this could be a simple webpage with an interactive map or a more sophisticated web portal or app. Once developed, information will not change radically so maintenance may be relatively minimal. A more simple product could be a digital brochure with a map that can be viewed online or downloaded. This could be updated annually for any changes in amenities. A partnership with the Chamber of Commerce could include member sponsorship or advertising to offset some of the cost.

- ≡ **Utilize the newly developed Grasse River Blueway Trail logo for signage, branding, place making, and marketing materials (included in this Plan see Goal 6).**

















Grasse River Blueway Trail

Priority Project Recommendations

-  Falls: unsafe; boating portage needed
-  Planned boat launch
-  Downtown revitalization
-  Proposed equestrian trails

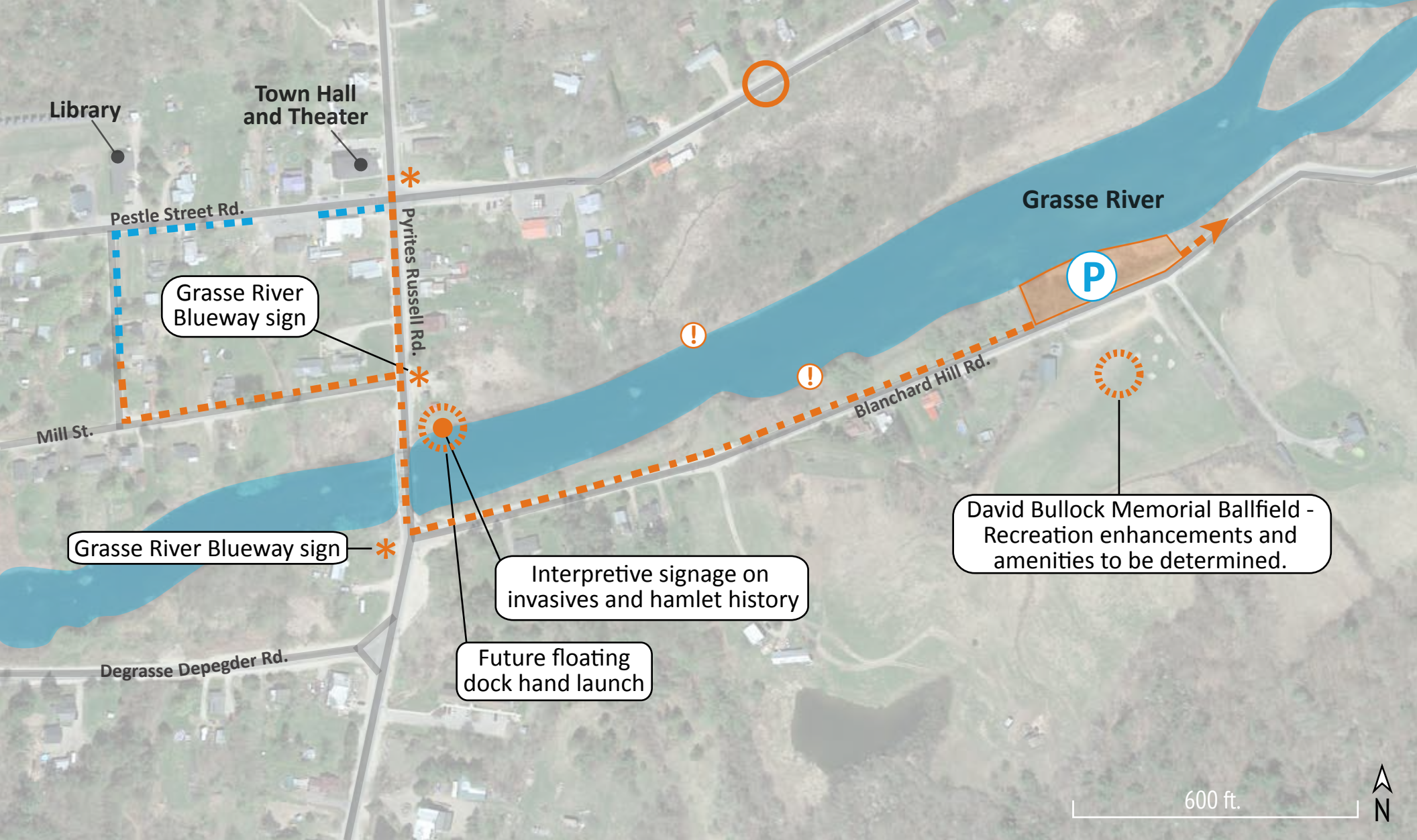
Existing Recreation Assets

-  Blueway Trail Boundary
-  Grasse River
-  Publicly Owned Lands
-  Publicly Owned Parks and Recreation
-  NYS Power Authority Owned Lands
-  DEC Multipurpose Trail
-  Walking trail
-  Bike trail
-  Horse Trail
-  Boat Launch
-  Picnic Area
-  Parking
-  Camping Facility
-  Waterfalls

0 2.5 5 10 Miles

This map was produced with funding provided by the New York State Department of State Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Agency









Hamlet of Russell: Existing and Proposed Amenities




EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

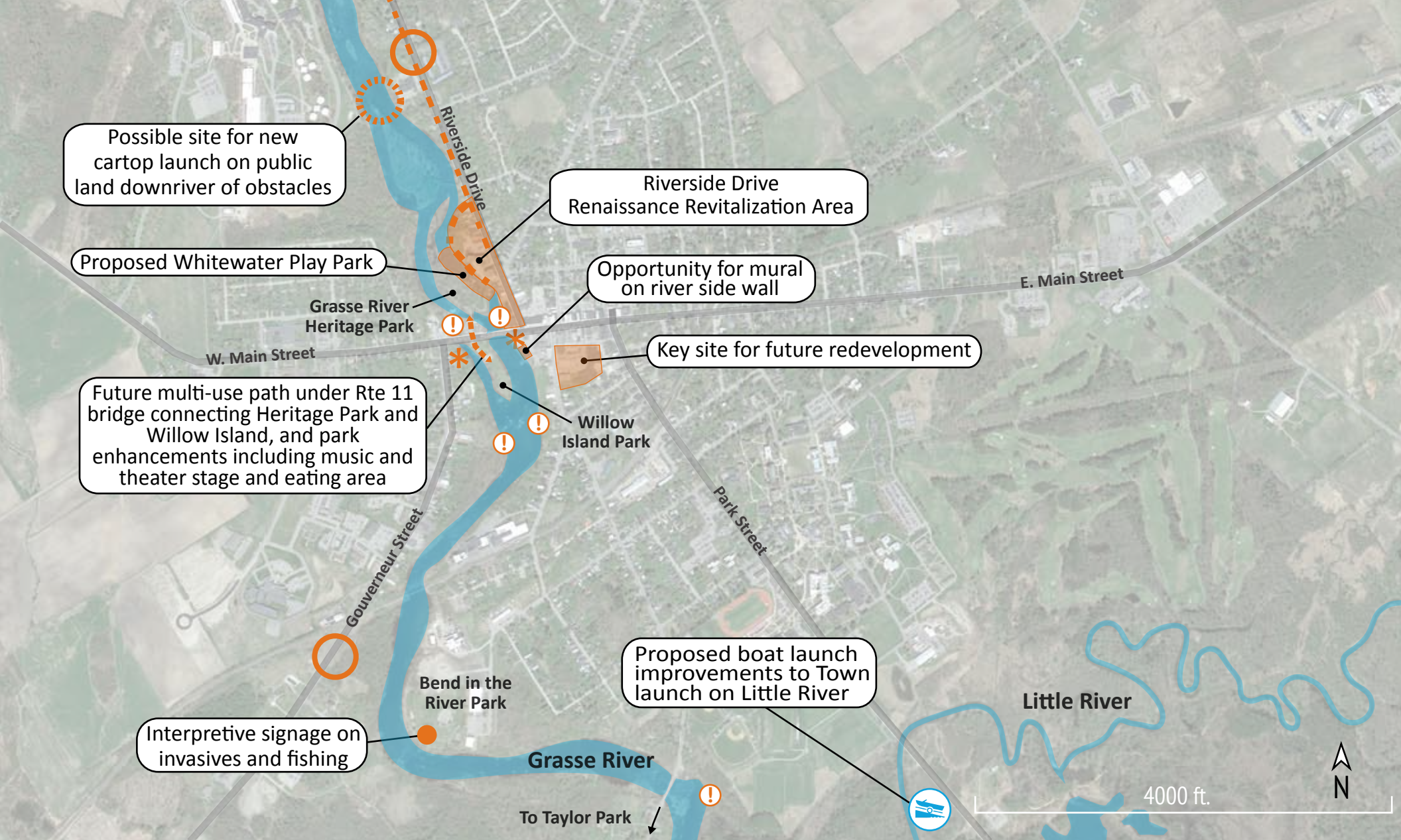
--- Existing sidewalk

 Parking area

PROPOSED

-  Wayfinding signage
-  Interpretive signage
-  On-river hazard signage &/or portage opportunity
-  Gateway signage

-  Waterfront access or trail
-  Possible pedestrian connection
-  Opportunity Area



Canton:
Existing and Proposed Amenities

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE



Boat launch

PROPOSED



Grasse River Blueway sign



Interpretive signage



On-river hazard signage
&/or portage opportunity



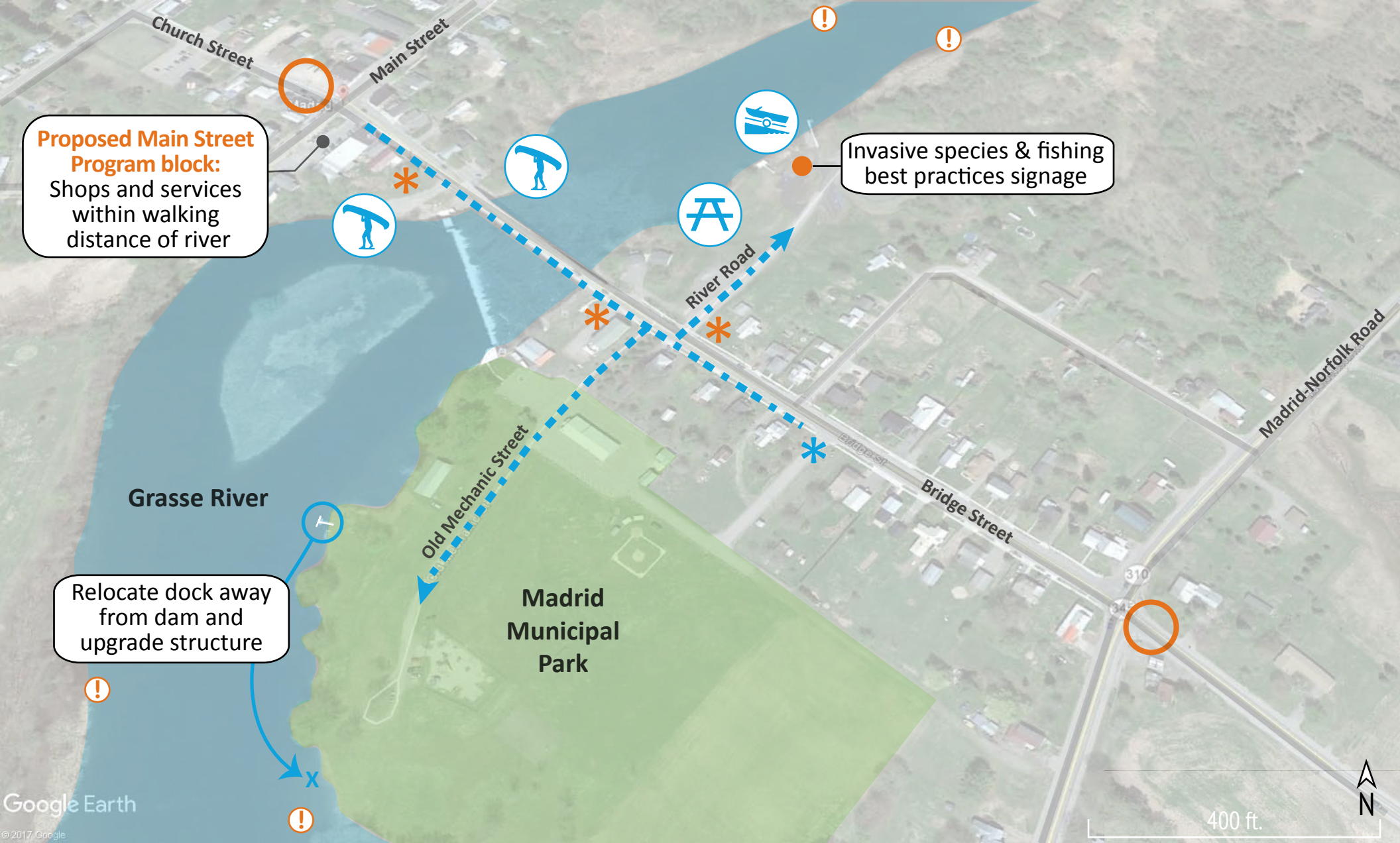
Possible bicycle or
pedestrian connection



Opportunity Area



Gateway



Hamlet of Madrid: Existing and Proposed Amenities

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE



Main entrance to park



Pedestrian connections



Riverfront picnic area



Portage/launch



Boat launches &
ADA fishing dock

PROPOSED SIGNAGE



Wayfinding



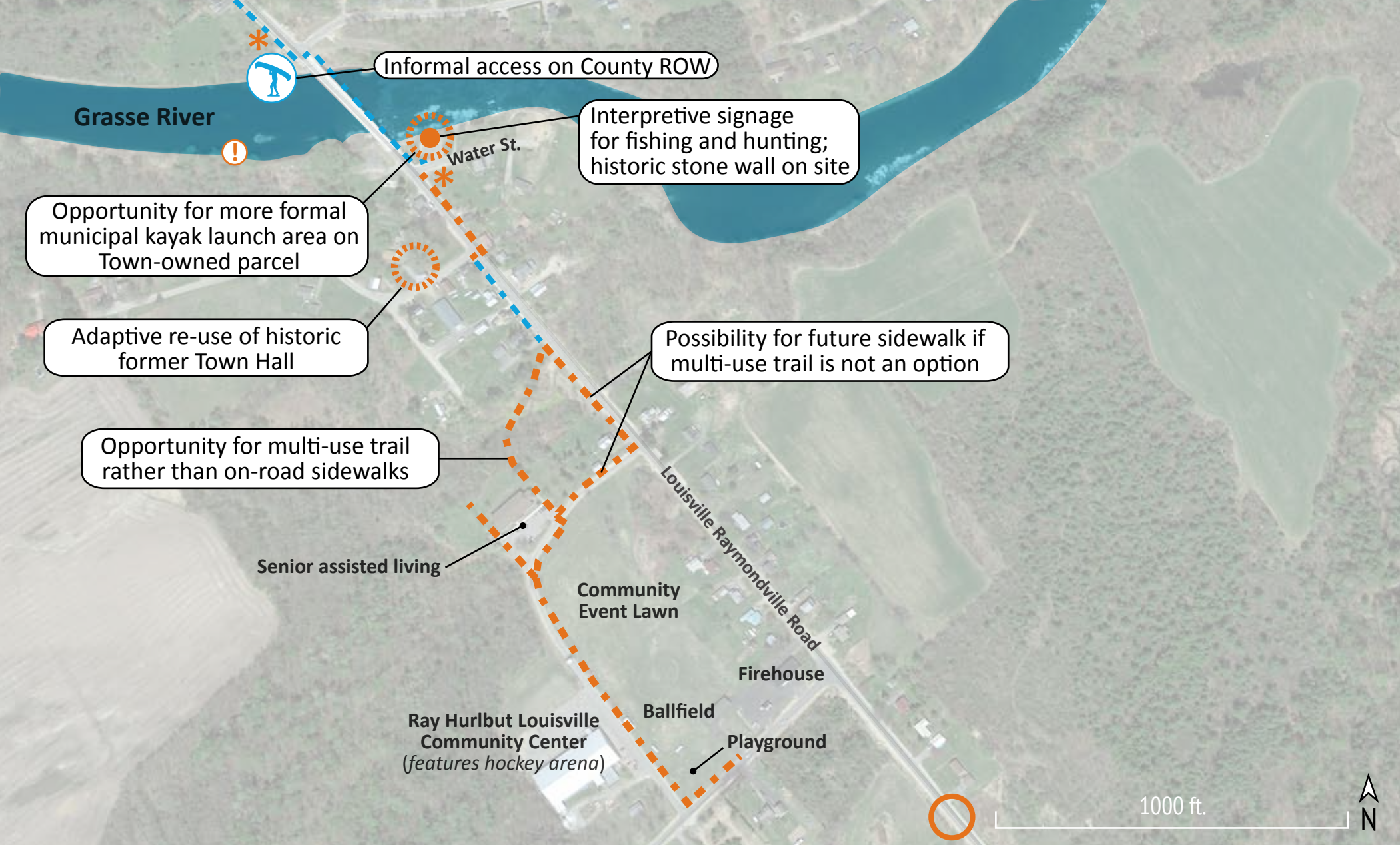
Interpretive



On-river hazard signage
&/or portage opportunity



Gateway



Hamlet of Louisville: Existing and Proposed Amenities

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE



Portage/launch



Pedestrian connection

PROPOSED



Grasse River Blueway sign



Interpretive signage



On-river hazard signage
&/or portage opportunity



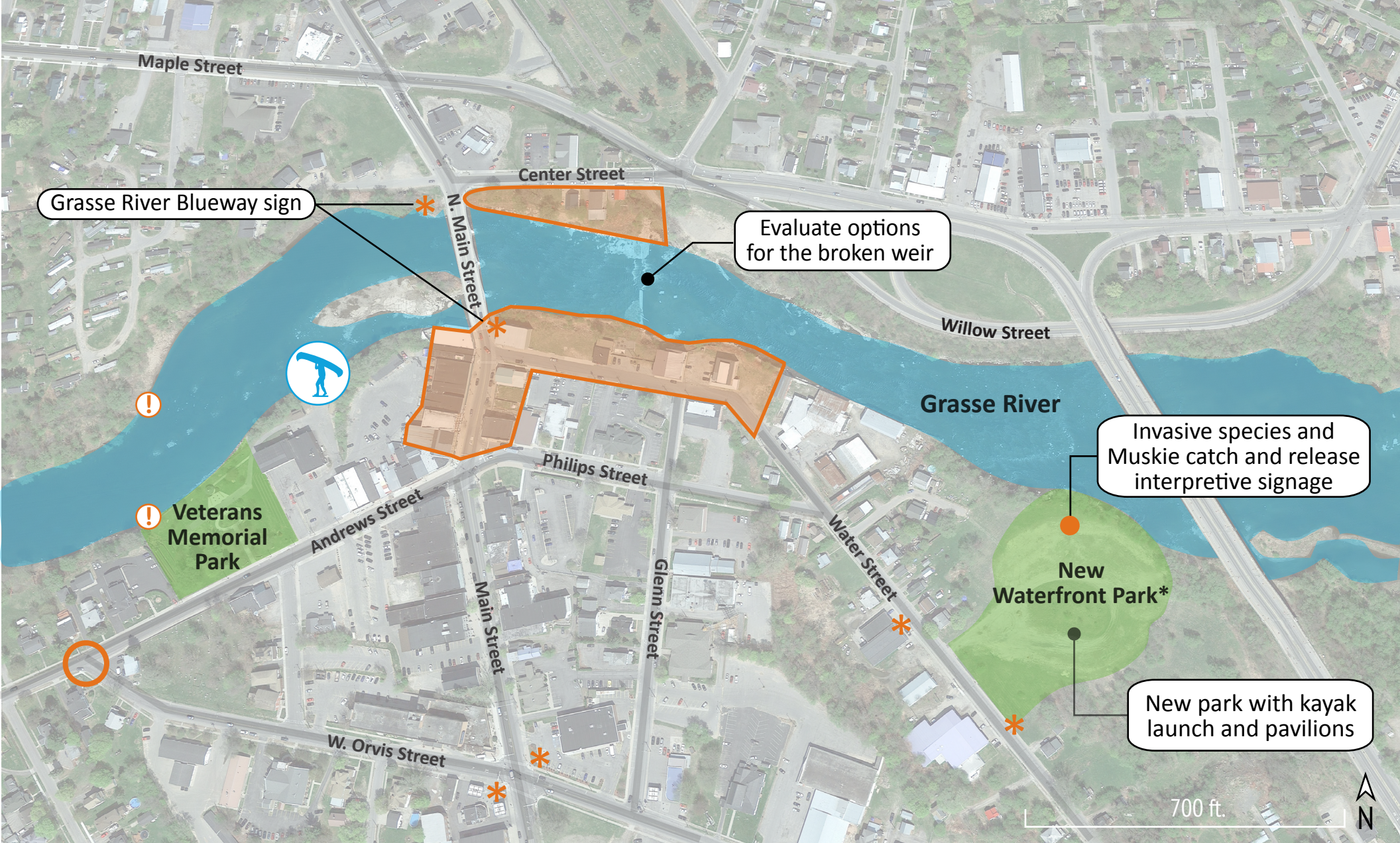
Possible pedestrian connection



Opportunity Area



Gateway



**Village of Massena:
Existing and
Proposed Amenities**

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE



Portage/launch

PROPOSED



Wayfinding signage



Interpretive signage



On-river hazard signage
&/or portage opportunity



Targeted Waterfront
Revitalization Area



Gateway signage



Construction 2018



Blueway Trail Plan

As part of this Grasse River Blueway Trail Plan a logo has been developed for use on signage, and other branding and marketing materials. The use of a consistent logo for all materials creates an exciting and consistent image.



Develop a marketing strategy to attract visitors, residents and economic investment.

A marketing strategy will be developed that recognizes the regional Grasse River Blueway identity and the interest in pooling limited resources. The strategy will identify target markets, marketing materials to be produced, the organization or agency for implementation and potential funding mechanisms to maintain marketing efforts. Target markets may include new and existing residents, prospective businesses, and outdoor sport and recreation enthusiasts and eco-tourists from the Northeast and Canada. The strategy should identify a mechanism for pooling resources through a partnership with an existing community, regional organization (such as the County Tourism office or Chamber of Commerce.)



Encourage tourism and visitor-oriented amenities and destinations, services, and businesses to work collaboratively in cross-promotion and packaging of complimentary activities.

Service businesses and retailers serving visitors and tourists such as lodging establishments, eating and drinking establishments and gift shops could offer discounted or “free” items at complimentary establishments and work with recreation, cultural, educational and entertainment attractions in the region to promote visitation and events.



Utilize local and regional events such as canoe races, winter festivals, small fishing tournaments, and waterfront concerts and entertainment to promote regional Grasse River recreation.

Annual festivals, tournaments and races, seasonal events, or weekly concerts in the park bring local and regional communities together, attract visitors year-round and enhance the “off” season and “shoulder” seasons promoting the region’s



The Madrid Bluegrass (River) Festival was a great examples of large, multi-day event that attracted people from beyond the region.

Section III: Plan Goals and Strategies

natural resources, recreational opportunities, and strong community energy. These events serve as an opportunity to promote the Grasse River region and individual communities as a place to live, do business and visit.

GOAL 2: INCREASE AND ENHANCE ACCESS TO ON-RIVER ACTIVITIES AND AMENITIES.

The development of the Blueway Trail plan is first, and foremost, about increasing access and enhancing the experience of recreation on the Grasse River. Fundamental to achieving that goal is to ensure that there are enough safe locations to get on and off the river and that activity is diverse and year-round.

Potential Strategies and Projects

≡ Develop new boat launches for increased access in each hamlet population center.

Several locations have been identified for new formal launch facilities. Some launches are intended to serve only non-motorized boats which is consistent with the river characteristics in those locations. Other launches can accommodate larger watercraft in sections of the Grasse River where water depths are greater. Potential projects include:

- Construct a floating dock hand-launch in Russell at the Town-owned access.
- Support the planned construction of the hand launch at the Route 37 Bridge in Louisville to be constructed by Arconic (formerly Alcoa).
- Relocate and improve the hand launch dock upriver of the dam in Madrid's Town Park.
- Support existing Village of Massena Waterfront Park (Water Street at Parker Bridge) project that includes a kayak launch and fishing dock, pavilions, and band shell.
- Pursue the development of boat launch and docking amenity for larger water craft at the present Arconic



Perspective View

Rendering of planned boat launch amenity at the Route 37 Bridge in Louisville. Source: www.fws.gov, "Town of Louisville Route 37 River Access Project"

clean-up lay down area in the Town of Massena near the Route 131 Bridge reusing the infrastructure established for the clean-up once its complete.

- Pursue a formal public access arrangement at the informally used property below the bridge in the hamlet of Louisville.
- Increase utilization of Taylor Park providing more swimming area and ADA accessible beach access, and extend access off-hours and off-season.
- Improve Canton's Little River cartop kayak/canoe launch. Improvements relate to creating a more formal launch area on the embankment to improve the ease and safety of entering and exiting the water.



Massena site for possible future boat launch amenity.



View of planned site for a floating dock boat launch in Russell adjacent to an existing picnic pavilion.



Increase local fishing access in each hamlet population center.

Ensure that each hamlet has a designated fishing access site suitable for young or novice anglers and the handicapped. Fishing is commonly conducted in the water, from the shoreline or in small watercraft. Docks or other easy access fishing amenities are not as common but would be a valuable addition for growing the next generation of anglers. Several projects are proposed or underway that will construct docking as boat launches which could also be used as fishing access. In addition to these facilities, other fishing access could be created by:

- Discussing partnership opportunities with NYS DEC to development additional fishing easements along the Grasse where public lands or conservation easements already exist.
- Contact private land owners along the Grasse River about potential interest in development fishing easements.

Section III: Plan Goals and Strategies

≡ Improve heavily utilized informal access points with simple trail and parking clearings.

As described in Section II, informal access points are commonplace on the River. Often located at bridge-crossings where embankments are cleared and public rights of way exist these are important for portage purposes around rapids and falls, and greatly increase river access where formal launches don't exist.

≡ Continue to develop portages at locations identified in this plan where falls or obstacles make navigation difficult.

There are locations along the Grasse where falls and shallow water depths render the river impassible or nearly impossible to navigate for all but expert paddlers for much of the season. Without options for portage or launching before or after these obstacles, there are segments of the River not generally paddled by novice or those with intermediate abilities. New portage locations can be developed by acquiring easements or permission on privately held lands or improving the accessibility of existing informal sites often found at bridges (see Goal 2 above.)

≡ Promote additional on-water recreation activities.

Water-dependent recreation opportunities can be enhanced by supporting emerging recreational ventures and activities, including:

- The design and implementation of the whitewater playpark in the Village of Canton.
- Working with local outfitters to supply equipment for and encourage “new” recreational activities on the river as they evolve (such as stand-up paddle boards, tubing etc.) which could be used on flatwater.

≡ Establish more local and regional events such as canoe races, winter festivals, small fishing tournaments, and waterfront concerts and entertainment.

As discussed in Goal 1, annual festivals, tournaments and races, on and off-season events, or weekly concerts on the waterfront bring local residents and visitors from around the North Country. They can attract visitors year-round and help support the “shoulder” seasons for area businesses who enjoy the uptick of people to downtowns, services and businesses. They



Canton Canoe Weekend is a great example of a multi-day event.



Blueway Trail Plan

bring communities and families together and create important memories. These events serve as an opportunity for more recreation, cultural and community engagement whether actively using the River for recreation or passively appreciating it as the backdrop to event.

≡ **Create more embankment pull-offs, for resting and swimming where public access allows.**

Simple clearings along embankments for resting, stretching the legs, or swimming are important amenities for long paddling excursions. Noting publicly held lands or easements where pull-offs are permitted on maps and/or land markers is important as paddlers often have no way of knowing if land is privately or publicly held.

GOAL 3: IMPROVE LAND-BASED AMENITIES TO ENHANCE THE RIVER EXPERIENCE.

Improvement to land-based recreational amenities including municipal park improvements, trails development, camping amenities etc. within the Grasse River corridor or adjacent thereto supplement on-river activities and increase the overall use of, and visitation to, the River corridor year-round. Generally, the Grasse River corridor downstream of Canton lacks land trails (hiking, mountain biking or equestrian).

Potential Strategies and Projects

≡ **Support the development of proposed equestrian trails and related amenities in Russell and Clare on State-Owned Lands and other locations.**

The development of additional equestrian trails and amenities would supplement the existing equestrian and multi-use trail networks already utilized and maintained in Whippoorwill and DeGrasse State Forests which include stretches of the Grasse River branches. In particular, parking for horse trailers and camping facilities that accommodate horses and trailers have been identified as important to attracting additional trail riders. Partnering with NYS DEC to



Example of equestrian amenities at the Otter Creek State campground.

Section III: Plan Goals and Strategies

develop additional trail segments that connect state lands and better maintain existing trails, are priorities for regional trail organizations and identified in related Unit Management Plans presently under development by the NYS DEC.

Support the development of a trail network at Sodom State Forest in Madrid.

Sodom State Forest is a state-owned forest with road access. It is not on the Grasse River, however, if a trail network were developed, the forest's relative proximity to the Grasse would complement the recreation opportunities on the river. Presently there are no trails on the state forest lands but road access does exist. This stretch of the River corridor general lacks multi-use trails systems.

Support land trusts and other land conservation organizations in the acquisition of lands and easements for the development of trails, camping and other amenities.

Land trusts and other land conservation organizations are an increasingly important partner in conservation and public access to land for low impact recreational activity. The recent acquisition of the Hart's Falls Preserve by the St. Lawrence Land Trust and subsequent development of trails and public access to the Falls is a good example.

Enhance community waterfront parks with new amenities and pograms.

Several projects have been identified to enhance existing parks including:

- Increase programming and hours of operation at Taylor Park in Canton and renovate facilities as needed. The bath house has been identified as an important amenity for river users that requires improvement.
- Landscaping and picnicking amenities at the Madrid Boat Launch.
- Additional recreational amenities at the David Bullock Memorial Ballfield in Russell including possible river access across from the Ballfield.

Develop a map of scenic views and vantage points for motor touring and cycling.

The rural landscapes and riverfront beauty experienced from land is a celebrated asset of the Grasse River region. For a number of reasons, including agricultural and forestry land uses, state land and conservation easement acquisitions, and relatively low growth pressure have facilitated the preservation of rural landscapes. As the region encounters development projects,



Bicycle tourist traveling from Quebec, CA to Honduras via St. Lawrence County.

whether large or small, it will be important to consider important viewsheds when working with developers to ensure that these viewsheds and their vantage points are not compromised. Some river communities have tools in place, others should consider updating zoning and subdivision regulations to protect viewsheds and vantage points using scenic overlay zoning districts and conservation design subdivisions.

≡ Develop campsites and campgrounds along the River.

Consider developing small camping areas within town parks downriver or on other public lands upriver (particularly below Russell where opportunities are prevalent on State lands.) Possible public sites with acreage include Taylor Park in Canton, Bend in the River Park in the Village of Canton and Madrid Town Park. Other opportunities include the development of private campgrounds. Communities can begin to support privately developed campgrounds by making sure local zoning and site plan considerations allow the development of campgrounds.

GOAL 4: ENHANCE HAMLET AND VILLAGE CONNECTIONS TO THE RIVER RECOGNIZING THE RIVER AS AN ASSET FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION.



Example of an inviting storefront in Madrid.

The economic vitality of a community’s central commercial district and the promotion of small business development are critical not only for meeting the needs of local residents but also as components of a successful tourism development strategy. “Main Streets” provide the services necessary to enhance the visitor experience (accommodations, food service, entertainment, shopping, etc.). Attractive storefronts and pedestrian friendly streetscapes significantly improve the character and sense of place of downtown commercial districts and hamlets.

The Grasse River communities have identified a wide range of projects and needs for enhancing their hamlets and strengthening the local economy. Needs range from façade and streetscape improvements, to marketing, filling storefronts for the local population and developing tourism amenities.

As each community works toward hamlet revitalization it is important to integrate the River into that strategy through access (pedestrian connections, parks, outdoor seating at eating and drinking establishments and wayfinding signage), marketing and promotion, community events/programs and tourism-related events.

Potential Strategies and Projects

☞ **Improve paths and sidewalk connections to the River from Hamlet centers.**

Some communities have formal river access in close proximity (within a quarter mile walking distance) of a hamlet center typically as part of parks or boat launch areas. Where such access does exist, it's important to establish a safe pedestrian connection. Paddlers can exit the water and access goods and services. Hamlets and downtowns typically have more activity when associated with a waterfront amenity/destination. It's important for paths and sidewalks to be visible or well posted with wayfinding signage directing users to and from the hamlet and river. Specific projects identified in this plan include:

- Create a connection from the boat launch/take-out upriver of the Madrid Dam on the west side of the river to the Madrid town center.
- Design and construct the walkway under the Route 11 Bridge in Canton and implement elements of the Canton Master Trail Plan.
- Improve the existing sidewalks in the hamlet of Russell and make new connections to, and along the River and to the David Bullock Ballfield.
- Consider extending sidewalks or creating an off-road trail connecting the waterfront in the hamlet of Louisville with the town's community center and other recreational amenities.



Conceptual idea for Riverside Drive, Canton developed for the Canton Master Trail Plan.

≡ Identify key buildings for adaptive reuse, “main street” façade improvement areas or infill sites on the riverfront and in nearby downtowns and hamlets.

Development within a ¼ to ½ mile or 5-10 minute walk radius of a river access point, downtown or hamlet center can be critically important for economic vitality and also provide opportunities for new waterfront-related or waterfront-enhanced uses. Renovating old structures and infill redevelopment can be cost prohibitive without financial assistance from community sponsored State and Federal programs. These programs often fill critical gaps in funding and leverage additional private sector investment in the future. An example of a successful project as part of the Rouses Point Main Street NY Program is illustrated to the right. Specific buildings and target areas identified in this Plan include:

- Adaptive Reuse of the Old Town Hall in Louisville
- Adaptive Reuse of the Harrison Grist Mill in Morley
- Support Massena’s Water Street Grasse River Waterfront revitalization effort including but not limited to:
 - Adaptive reuse of former Slavin’s Furniture Building and adjacent parcels redevelopment (10/12 and 14/16 Water Street)
 - Adaptive re-use of former Mill Building (38 Water Street)
- Implement the Riverside Drive revitalization effort in Canton
- Develop a NY Main Street program in the hamlet of Madrid.
- Identify adaptive reuse possibilities for the decommissioned sewer treatment plant adjacent to Bend in the River Park in Canton. Uses could include commercial or civic reuse such as a community center.
- Support development of the Jubilee Plaza in the Village of Canton.

NY Main Street Program Building Renovation and Re-use Rouses Point, NY



Before and after

Section III: Plan Goals and Strategies

≡ Develop placemaking elements in hamlet centers and on the Riverfront.

Place-making elements are often a combination of unique elements that represent an individual community such as local public art but also may include wayfinding and informational signage and kiosks and other gateway improvements, landscaping -- including flowering baskets, pocket parks with seating for viewing the river. An example of a public art project would be the development of a mural on the large wall of the commercial building (Dollar Store) facing the Grasse River in the Village of Canton. Another example would be flower boxes on some of the bridges crossing the River in the hamlets.

≡ Develop a regional visitor center along the Grasse River possibly in conjunction with a heritage center or museum that celebrates the contributions of J. Henry Rushton and other historic people, places, events, and traditions of the River.

A visitor center/museum should be centrally located on the Grasse River or at a prominent gateway to the River. As a hub community in the region and on the river, the Village of Canton would be a practical location with its natural influx of visitors to the universities and through traffic on US Route 11, a heavily traveled transportation route in the North Country. As an alternative, the Hamlet of Madrid may be good location with several recreational amenities on the River, a large town park and a hamlet center with businesses and services.

≡ Develop more arts and entertainment focused amenities on Willow Island Park.



Willow Island Park in the Village of Canton is a passive park with a large lawn, picnicking facilities and a sculpture park. A floodproofed bandshell or stage pavilion could be constructed that would utilize the large lawn area for audience seating.

Willow Island Park sculpture is a good example of place-making elements.

GOAL 5: INCREASE EDUCATION OF THE RIVER’S HERITAGE AND ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE AND PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON PROTECTION AND STEWARDSHIP.

≡ **Protect the native Muskee population from over-fishing and ineffective catch and release practices.**

The most comprehensive way to protect the native Muskee population would be to work with the St. Lawrence County Fish and Wildlife Management Board, County Legislature and NYS DEC to develop new regulations permitting only the catch and release of Muskees - regardless of size, and prohibiting the use of treble hooks which are impossible to cleanly remove from the fish. Recognizing that the process for amending State regulations may take time, a more short-term strategy would be a river-wide campaign advocating for voluntary catch and release of all Muskees, avoiding the use of treble hooks and the proper way to handle the fish. This information is presently provided on many fishing websites but should be carried over to all local community websites, at local bait and tackle shops, on signage at boat launches, fishing piers and docks, and formal waterfront access locations.

≡ **Protect the Grasse River corridor from invasive species by promoting best practices for combatting their spread.**

Fortunately, aquatic invasive species have been relatively inconsequential on the Grasse River to date. To maintain this status the Grasse River communities should be proactive providing educational signage at boat launches and docks, in riverfront parks and community websites recommending actions for paddlers and anglers. Particular attention should be given to the headwater areas and at the confluence of the Grasse with the St. Lawrence where larger boating populations utilize the River.

≡ **Develop a heritage paddling tour identifying mill ruins and other historically contributing sites along the river.**

Similar to an interpretive tour on land, this heritage tour would be oriented to be accessed from the River. The paddling tour could be marked by simple markers with numbers that correspond to a tour pamphlet found on a website and downloadable or it could be developed as a phone app.



Hart's Falls mill ruins.

Section III: Plan Goals and Strategies

- ≡ **Develop wildlife educational and observation materials, particular for birding, to encourage observation and appreciation for the Grasse River corridor.**

“The Grasse River is our old growth forest.”

**- Blueway Trail Stakeholder
Summit Participant**

Wildlife observation and photography, particularly bird watching, is a growing backyard recreational past-time as well as a significant part of eco-tourism. The Grasse River corridor and St. Lawrence County features an abundance of water fowl, songbirds and other wildlife representing a tourism opportunity that could be expanded through additional marketing and programming. Promotional and educational materials

could be developed to disseminate to birding clubs and organizations, schools and for posting on community websites. Educational materials might include signage in parks and at boat launches highlighting certain species’ habitats and written material such as downloadable PDFs for email and internet distribution. Wildlife recreation could be cross-promoted with other eco-tourism related activities and tourism service providers such as lodging, food and outfitters.

- ≡ **Protect water quality by adopting land management practices that minimize impacts on waterways, wetlands and riparian areas.**

The River’s water quality is vulnerable to a number of human activities if not managed properly. There are a variety of voluntary actions and regulatory mechanisms for protecting the Grasse’ River’s water quality:

- Support voluntary stewardship programs like the St. Lawrence Land Trust’s *Friends of the Grasse River Watershed Pledge* that acknowledged property owners who pledged to protect the river as a natural resource and provide land owners with information on best practices.
- Adopt land management regulations at the municipal level to protect open space, viewsheds, water quality and community character. Tools may include zoning and subdivision regulations



Lampson Falls

in the form of development standards, overlay districts, conservation districts, conservation-design subdivision and performance standards.

- Reduce non-point source pollution which originates from sources that are not localized or easily identifiable. Non-point source pollution includes runoff from “urban” areas and agricultural operations. Limiting non-point sources of pollution can be accomplished by the following: reducing or eliminating the introduction of materials



Example of a planned waterfront residential subdivision in Massena.

which may contribute to non-point source pollution; avoiding activities that would increase storm water runoff; controlling and managing storm water runoff; retaining or establishing riparian areas and vegetated buffers; providing soil stabilization; and preserving natural hydrologic conditions through maintenance of natural water surface flows, retainage of natural watercourses and drainage systems. The required use of best practices for stormwater management such as the New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual for new development and the protection of wetland and other watercourses will help protect the Grasse River.

- Residential septic systems, particularly old systems, may be a source of pollution for the Grasse River in the future, if it is not an existing problem. Careful monitoring of water quality, identification and address of failing septic systems and providing mechanisms within Subdivision Regulations and Site Plan Review that require proper siting and installation of septic systems on the River will help prevent or abate this potential source of pollution.
- As agriculture is one of the dominant land uses on the Grasse River, farmers and the St. Lawrence County Soil and Water District are encouraged to participate in programs such as the New York State Agriculture Environmental Management (AEM) program to develop Certified Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) regulations. A Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) is a conservation plan, unique to animal feeding operations, designed to evaluate all aspects of farm production and offer conservation practices that help achieve production and natural resource conservation goals.

Section III: Plan Goals and Strategies



Establish a museum or heritage center that celebrates the contributions of J. Henry Rushton and other historic people, places, events, and traditions of the River.

(see also Goal 4 Recommendations)



Blueway Trail Plan

GOAL 6: IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE GRASSE RIVER BLUEWAY SIGNAGE PLAN INCORPORATING A GRASSE RIVER BLUEWAY TRAIL LOGO

The Grasse River Blueway logo and discrete use of signage will provide a place-making element, wayfinding, identification, education and safety on, and off, the river. The signage will incorporate the new “Grasse River Blueway” logo developed as part of this plan on a variety of signage creating a cohesive look and sense of place. The logo could be replicated or added to other Grasse River related identifiers such as the Grasse River Watershed.

Potential Strategies and Projects

Install wayfinding or gateway signage at key locations and destinations within hamlets, villages and along key transportation corridors that will connect people to waterfront access points.

In some areas, wayfinding signage will be on rural stretches of County roads that hug or cross the river, in other places it will be at a busy intersection (see map) providing specific direction to a destination. Signage may be in a variety of formats including:

- A small simple sign with the logo and a directional arrow;
- the logo with the Blueway name with or without some additional direction;
- or
- The logo with an additional icon depicting an available activity such as paddling, fishing, swimming.



Example of an eye-catching information kiosk in the the Catskills Village of Tannersville known as the “Painted Village.”

Develop identification signs that include the logo and identify amenities or points of interest such as boat launches, parks, riverfront trails.

Identification signs may include a community logo, with or without the amenity name such as “Louisville Municipal Boat Launch.”

Develop educational and interpretive signage and kiosks.

Educational and interpretive signage may address the following:

Section III: Plan Goals and Strategies

- Fishing best practices signage at boat launches and docks that correspond to written materials for bait and tackle shops, outfitters and websites encouraging catch and release for certain fish species such as muskellunge and best practices regarding hook usage and removal.
- Invasive species concerns and best practices for avoiding their spread
- “Carry in-carry out” and “leave no trace” practices for garbage as appropriate
- Heritage interpretation
- Wildlife and nature Identification
- Visitor information, websites and locations for acquiring additional information on riverfront recreation
- Nearby off-river recreation and tourism destinations

≡ **On-river signage may include low profile signs that provide important safety information or direct river users to helpful land amenities.**

On-river signage must strike a balance of enhancing the river experience while avoiding sign “clutter” in the sometimes pristinely natural environment of the Grasse River corridor. Signs may include 12” x 12” signs with symbols indicating:

- Hazard warnings
- Portages ahead
- Mile markers
- Put-ins, waterfront parks, land trails and campsites



Example of on-river signage conceptual developed for the Delaware River.



IV. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Framework

Smart Growth Principles

The Grasse River Blueway Plan reflects some of the latest thinking about New York State's smart growth initiatives. Over recent decades the idea of "smart growth" has grown more familiar and trade-offs between livability, preservation and economic expansion are no longer commonplace. This Blueway Trail Plan follows smart growth principles through support programs, projects and development that serve the economy, community and the environment. While not all principals pertain to this Plan, the Blueway Trail Plan emphasizes many of the smart growth principles as highlighted below:

- **Mix land uses**
- **Take advantage of compact building design**
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- **Create walkable neighborhoods and hamlets**
- **Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place**
- **Preserve open space, farmland, waterfronts, natural beauty and critical environmental areas**
- **Strengthen and direct development towards existing community centers**
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective
- **Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions**
- **Coordination and Collaboration**

Implementation through Coordination and Collaboration

Regional Grasse River Waterfront Committee: A Grasse River Blueway Trail advisory committee was established as part of this Plan. Either the existing committee or a committee that includes representatives of the municipalities, representatives of recreational and river organizations (such as FishCap, St. Lawrence Land Trust, Trail Riders North etc.), St. Lawrence County planning, tourism and department of soil and water conservation, and other organizations should continue to meet to implement the Blueway Trail Plan. This committee could also coordinate future regional funding applications as described below.

Supervisors and Mayors Meetings: Opportunities for joint planning, consolidated services and intermunicipal agreements exist. Many of the factors influencing the corridor today are regional including tourism, waterfront planning and the strong call to protect community character, conserve the natural environment and protect historic resources. The most obvious places for collaboration on the Blueway is in marketing and promotion, cohesive branding – including signage, and intermunicipal or regional grant writing. The elected leadership of the corridor communities should meet quarterly to discuss important issues and monitor implementation of the Blueway Trail Plan.

Section IV: Plan Implementation

Local Level Implementation: In addition to regional coordination, each Blueway municipality should identify a working group to implement local projects. This group would work with the Town and/or Village Boards to pursue project implementation, funding and also function as a liaison to the Regional Advisory Committee.

Collaboration on Funding Applications: The Regional Committee should continue to pursue multi-agency funding applications that either fund a specific corridor-wide project (such as corridor-wide signage or kiosks project) or one application that includes several individual community projects that taken together enhance the Grasse River Blueway Trail. Submission of one larger funding request addresses capacity constraints for grant writing in the smaller communities, allows the pooling of matching resources and demonstrates a commitment to a regional vision and planning. One municipality (which could include St. Lawrence County) would sponsor the application on behalf of the communities. Each community could have a Memorandum of Understanding with the sponsor community identifying their project scope, match contribution and capacity for implementation.

Interagency Coordination: St. Lawrence County, DEC, DOS, DOT, OPRHP, APA: The communities should be in close coordination with St. Lawrence County for projects related to tourism, the Watershed and county travel corridor. New York State Agencies including the Department of State, Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Transportation, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Adirondack Park Agency for those communities located in the Adirondack Park, are important partners for ideas and best practices, funding and permitting. These connections could be essential to implement many of the projects outlined in this action plan and to advance new initiatives. The Blueway Trail planning process provides a foundation for this collaboration and this strategy should be shared with the State agencies as a starting point for ongoing dialogue. A meeting with the agencies and the municipalities should be arranged once this plan has been finalized and endorsed locally.

River Access Enhancements

The development of new river access points and enhancing existing amenities on the blueway trail is a critical component of this Plan. The projects identified include new boat launches serving small and larger watercraft, fishing access in hamlets, portages for improving navigation and avoiding river obstacles, and waterfront park enhancements. Project magnitude varies considerably, some projects are already in the pipeline while others have just been identified. Therefore, the implementation steps provided may not apply to all projects.

Implementation Steps:

- **Planning:** For new projects, analysis for feasibility and need may be a first step. Feasibility includes site availability (publicly owned, easements, use permits etc.), site access, conditions of the Grasse River from the site for access purposes, permissiveness and cost. Necessity for safety purposes such as portage needs to improve boater safety, or improving an unsafe boat launch may be considered over other projects.



Blueway Trail Plan

- **Land Acquisition/Easements/Permits:** If a site is not already publicly owned, land acquisition, which can be facilitated by purchase or easement, may be required. Funding for land acquisition and easements is available (see below.)
- **Design and Permitting:** Complete design development plans for boat launches including location and design of the boat launch itself, any necessary path or trail development to the launch site and parking. All necessary permits that may be required for construction from the municipality (Site Plan), New York State (NYS DEC) or the US Army Corp of Engineers must then be acquired.
- **Fundraising:** Secure financing for boat launches including State and Federal grants, private partnerships and local public investment.
- **Construction:** Boat launch development, either car top or ramp, may be accomplished in phases. The first phase is site preparation, access paths, launch construction and signage. A second phase may include landscaping and installation of amenities such as benches, kayak/canoe racks, informational kiosks and parking areas.
- **Promotion:** Promoting new amenities along the blueway trail is a critical component of increasing usage of the Grasse River by residents and visitors. Lack of awareness of recreational amenities was clearly identified as a reason for underutilization. Ribbon cuttings and public notice in the local media about new amenities as well as posting information on municipal websites is a first step. Informing regional promotion entities such as the St. Lawrence County Tourism Promotion office, other North Country Tourism promotional sites, as well as user organizations such as fishing and paddling groups.

Potential Partners and Funding Sources:

NYS Dept. of State (NYS DOS), Dept. of Planning and Development – The Planning and Development Office administers the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program which provided the funding for this Plan as well as other planning, development and construction projects,

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP) – OPRHP provides assistance related to technical assistance and funding for trails and park enhancement under their Recreational Trails program and Parks program.

NYS Dept. of Transportation (NYS DOT) – NYS DOT is a partner in planning, design and permitting of all streetscape improvements associated with State roads and the administrator of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding.

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) NYS Adirondack Smart Growth Program – The DEC is a potential partner for projects that involve State-owned lands and river fishing easements and river management.

NYS Adirondack Park Agency (APA) - For communities within the Adirondack Park, the APA is a partner in planning, land development, conservation and promotion.

Section IV: Plan Implementation

St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District – County CSWCD provides expertise in watershed and waterbody management that may be accessed by a community as needed.

St. Lawrence County Tourism Promotion Office – The County Tourism office is an important regional partner in promotion of all aspects of the Blueway Trail Plan.

Municipal Recreation and Public Works Departments – Municipal departments can provide in-kind labor for projects as their time and expertise allows.

Private organizations - Local and regional organizations such as St. Lawrence Valley Paddlers, FishCap, Trout Unlimited, Grasse River Heritage, St. Lawrence Land Trust and major user groups such as St. Lawrence University are important partners in promotion, lending expertise, and donations of time, materials and financial resources.

Businesses – Water-dependent businesses such as outfitters, bait and tackle shops, marinas, and campground operators; and water-enhanced businesses such as restaurants and overnight accommodations.

Land Trail Development

The creation of new public land trails can be challenging if land is not already publicly owned. Assembling trail segments often requires a compilation of public access lands, existing roadways, sidewalks and rights-of-way, and then obtaining easements, or other agreements with property owners to fill gaps in trails. Partnerships with local land trusts or similar conservation/public access entities to obtain easements can be the most practical. The following steps are necessary for most land trails development projects.

Implementation Steps

- **Planning:** Using the inventory of existing trails and ideas for new trail segments identified as part of the Blueway Trail Plan and other planning efforts, establish priority trail segments based on feasibility and segment importance. Priority might be given to filling gaps in existing systems or making key connections between the river and other destinations such as on land parks or hamlet centers and downtowns.
- **Land Acquisition/Easements:** Acquire property or easements (if necessary) partnering with local land trusts or other organizations when available or working directly with property owners on access agreements.
- **Design and Permitting:** Develop conceptual drawings, site plans for trails and determine whether any unique characteristics require structures (such as bridges over streams), substantial earthwork or construction in road rights of ways. Meet with NYS DEC, State or County DOT or others as necessary. Develop designs for construction documents.
- **Fundraising:** Secure financing for trail development including State and Federal grants, private partnerships and local public investment.



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- **Trail and Amenities Construction:** Trail development may be accomplished in phases. The first phase is site preparation, trail construction and signage. A second phase may include landscaping and installation of amenities such as benches, bicycle racks, informational kiosks and parking areas.
- **Promotion:** Promoting new amenities within the corridor of the blueway trail is a critical component of increasing usage of the Grasse River by residents and visitors. Lack of awareness of recreational amenities was clearly identified as a reason for underutilization. Installing wayfinding and identification signage for new amenities using the Grasse River logo provides physical recognition of amenities. Ribbon cuttings and public notice in the local media about new amenities as well as posting information on municipal websites is a first step. Informing regional promotion entities such as the St. Lawrence County Tourism Promotion office, other North Country Tourism promotional organizations, is important as well as user organizations such as hikers, mountain biking and cycling groups, and horse riders.

Potential Partners and Funding Sources:

NYS Dept. of State (NYS DOS), Dept. of Planning and Development – The Planning and Development Office administers the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program which provided the funding for this Plan as well as other planning, development and construction projects,

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP) – OPRHP provides assistance related to technical assistance and funding for trails and park enhancement under their Recreational Trails program and Parks program.

NYS Dept. of Transportation (NYS DOT) – Planning, design and permitting of all streetscape improvements associated with State roads and the administrator of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding.

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) NYS Adirondack Smart Growth Program – The DEC is a potential partner for projects that involve lands located in the Adirondack Park.

Municipal Recreation and Highway Departments – Municipal Highway departments would permit and partner on any municipally-owned streetscape projects and could provide in-kind labor for other projects as their time and expertise allows.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) – Provides webinars, best practices, research and training for improving community walkability and bikability.

Regional trails organizations such as Trails North Riders.

Hamlet Revitalization

This Blueway Trail Plan identifies elements of what is often referred to as “Main Street” revitalization as critical to community sustainability. Filling storefronts, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, infill development, façade and streetscape improvements, development of tourism infrastructure and marketing are all critical to downtown/hamlet revitalization.

Section IV: Plan Implementation

Implementation Steps for Building Façade and Renovation Programs:

- Potentially seek a technical assistance grant to assist with programming and feasibility for future NY Main Street funding or other redevelopment funding if needed. This is an optional task.
- Determine income eligibility of key segments of a downtown or main street as required for a target area under some funding sources. If income eligibility levels meet the thresholds required, consider funding through NY Main Street, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or other sources. If income criteria can be met
- Reach out to commercial or mixed use building owners in that target area and hold an informational meeting to inform interested parties of the identified program and what is required upfront to apply for funding.
- If there are only a couple of select, larger buildings or sites and these properties have potential private sector investors, other funding options may exist through New York State including the NY Main Street “anchor project,” Empire State Development programs and Office of Community Renewal CDBG Economic Development programs.

Implementation Steps for business development and retention programs:

- Consider undertaking a targeted regional or local Business Assistance Survey to determine more accurately the specific needs of local small businesses, identify whether existing programs can meet that need (and link that business to the appropriate program) and, if not, inquire as to what type of business assistance is lacking.
- Meet with potential local and regional partners including St. Lawrence County, Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), Chambers of Commerce and local Industrial Development Agencies to identify the right mix of strategies for business retention, expansion and recruitment.
- Select business development strategies which may include: establishing a revolving loan fund to provide financing for business expansion; facilitating access to sources of capital and technical support; working with large employers to identify purchasing and service needs that could be met by local businesses; working with regional partners to take advantage of existing small business assistance programs such as the Microenterprise Program; and providing ongoing outreach to businesses to solicit information on their needs.
- Assuming much of the need relates to small business development, communities could partner with the Office of Community Renewal, Community Development Block Grant Program to sponsor microenterprise programs to develop a customized Business Assistance Program whose target is to assist existing or start-up businesses with technical and financial assistance.



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Potential Partners and Funding Sources:

NYS Office of Housing and Community Renewal NY Main Street Program – The NY Main Street Program provides technical assistance and financing for building rehabilitation programs, façade and interior commercial and mixed use building improvement funding.

NYS Office of Housing and Community Renewal Microenterprise Program and Small Business Development Programs (HUD Community Development Block Grant Program) – HCR administers the Microenterprise Program which is a community sponsored and administered program that provides technical and financial assistance to micro-sized start-up and businesses seeking expansion. The Small Business Development program provides direct assistance to businesses with a community sponsored application process.

NYS DOS Department of Planning and Development – The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program supports feasibility and market studies.

Empire State Development Corporation – ESD provides a number of funding opportunities for site development, redevelopment and business development – including tourism.

NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program – The BOA program provides funding for evaluating, designing and marketing the redevelopment of brownfield areas.

Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) – DANC provides regional support for infrastructure investments to support development.

St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce – The large network of small and micro-sized businesses in the County. The Chamber of Commerce also provides tourism marketing for St. Lawrence County.

Marketing

The Blueway communities should coordinate with local business and tourism partners to develop a marketing brochure for the corridor communities. The approach should be focused, perhaps on an eco-tourism theme including birding, hiking and fishing as key themes. Marketing might also include a retail recruitment package for the corridor. This package should incorporate multiple available properties into a single listing portfolio and include information on incentive programs, financial and building packages, and so on. These unified marketing efforts should include all activities in the hamlets that affect economic development, consumer activity, residential attractiveness and overall quality of life.

Potential Partners and Funding Sources:

St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce – The large network of small and micro-sized businesses in the County. The Chamber of Commerce also provides tourism marketing for St. Lawrence County.

FishCap, St. Lawrence Valley Paddlers, Trails Riders North, Audobon Society and other recreational organizations, outfitters, tourism infrastructure establishments such as bed and breakfasts, hotels, eating and drinking establishments and other related Businesses .

NYS DOS Department of Planning and Development – The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program supports marketing plans and initiatives.

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Empire State Development – Provides marketing assistance through its Market New York program.

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) NYS Adirondack Smart Growth Program – The DEC is a potential partner for a wide variety of downtown revitalization projects that involve that portion of the Blueway located in the Adirondack Park.

Land and Water Protection

The value of water resources is determined by the quality of water as well as its quantity. Contaminants that commonly reduce water quality include nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), suspended sediments, toxins, salt, and pathogenic protozoans, bacteria and viruses as well as runoff or infiltration from fields, yards, roads and other human uses of the landscape. These contaminants affect the suitability of surface and groundwaters for drinking and other municipal uses, recreation, and habitat for plants and animals and should be protected.

Early detection and rapid response efforts to contain or eradicate newly invading species are also important. The key step along the corridor today prevention and control in close cooperation with NYS DEC. Restoration is an important part of site-specific prevention and control strategy for fighting invasive species. By eradicating invasive species and restoring native vegetation in a particular habitat, ecosystem functions may be restored and further invasions can be monitored. In the end, eradication comes down to cooperation between the communities and state and local agencies. Programs like monitoring, mapping, control, supervision of construction or mitigation contracts, environmental compliance and regulations, data sharing and increased public awareness are keys.

Land protection and management starts with municipal oversight and property owner responsibility. As previously discussed, land management at the municipal level includes codes development and project review that supports open space preservation, utilizes land efficiently, protects community character and scenic landscapes.

The issues, recommendations for land stewardship and water protection are further described in *Section III Goals and Strategies* of this Plan. Below are potential partners for a variety of recommendations.

Potential Partners and Funding Sources:

- Property owners, industry, business
- NYS Department of State Department of Planning and Development – The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Adirondack Park Agency
- NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
- St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District
- St. Lawrence County Planning Department
- Adirondack Park Invasive Species Plant Program
- St. Lawrence Land Trust
- Local Universities' Ecology and Environment Programs



Community Projects Implementation Matrix

The Implementation Matrix provides a summary of the *community-specific* projects described in Section III and as organized by each community. Section III provides the projects as they relate to each goal providing an opportunity to think about projects and funding from that perspective as well. The purpose of the matrix is to provide the Grasse River communities with easy access to their project list, targeted time-frames, identification of partners and sources of funding. The “funding source” column refers to channels through which the municipalities can seek funding either individually or collaboratively. These funding sources, programs and criteria for eligibility existed during the development of the Plan, but are subject to change. A key to the abbreviations used for these funding sources is included at the end of the matrix.

At the time of this Plan’s development, the [New York State Regional Economic Development Council’s Consolidated Funding Application](#) is the dominant access to funding each year with many of the grant sources cited in the Matrix available through that mechanism. Some funding sources, however, are available as a separate application process and should be researched carefully so opportunities are not missed. Municipalities should register as part of the [New York State Grants Gateway](#) to be apprised of new State grant funding opportunities as they arise each year. Municipal budgets have not been included as a funding source in the matrix as it is assumed that they are always a potential source of funding. Likewise, a good potential source of funding for any project is through a State or Federal Legislative representative. This Legislative funding has not been listed as a source of funding as they could be included under most of these projects.

Section IV: Plan Implementation

Grasse River Blueway Trail Plan COMMUNITY PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX			
Short Term = 1-2 Years		Medium Term = 3-5 Years	Long Term 6-8 Years
Project/Action	Time Frame	Partners	Potential Funding
Town of Russell			
Construct a floating dock hand-launch in Russell at the Town-owned access	Short Term	NYS DEC, NYS DOS, NYS OPRHP	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF
Improve existing sidewalks in the riverfront hamlet of Russell and create new pedestrian connections to the riverfront and waterfront Ballfields	Medium Term	NYS DOS, NYS OPRHP, NYS DOT	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF, OPRHP Recreational Trails Program (RTP); FHWA TAP/FAST ACT
Support the development of proposed equestrian trails and related amenities in Russell and Clare on State-Owned Lands and other locations.	Short to Medium Term	NYS DEC, NYS APA, Trails Riders North, other equestrian groups, NYS DOS and OPRHP	NYS DEC, Adirondack Smart Growth Program, NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP RTP
Enhance the community waterfront park with additional recreational amenities at the David Bullock Memorial Ballfield in Russell including possible river access across from the ballfield.	Medium Term	Local ballfield user groups such as a little league, softball leagues or fire depts, NYS DOS, NYS OPRHP	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF



Blueway Trail Plan

Grasse River Blueway Trail Plan			
COMMUNITY PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX			
Short Term = 1-2 Years		Medium Term = 3-5 Years	Long Term 6-8 Years
Project/Action	Time Frame	Partners	Potential Funding
Town of Canton			
Develop a regional visitor center along the Grasse River possibly in conjunction with a heritage center or museum that celebrates the contributions of J. Henry Rushton and other historic people, places, events, and traditions of the River (Town/Village of Canton)	Medium-Long Term	St. Lawrence County Historical Society, St. Lawrence County Tourism Promotion Office, Grasse River Heritage	Empire State Development Market NY, NYS NEA, NYS LWRP DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF,
Enhance community waterfront park with increased programming and hours of operation at Taylor Park in the Town of Canton and renovate facilities as needed.	Short – Medium Term	Town Recreation Department, recreation and youth user groups, NYS DOS and NYS OPRHP	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF
Improve Town of Canton's Little River cartop kayak/canoe launch.	Short Term	NYS DEC, NYS DOS, NYS OPRHP	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF
Adaptively reuse of the Harrison Grist Mill in Morley	Medium Term	NYS OPRHP, Empire State Development, NYS DOS	NYS OPRHP Preservation Program, NYS DOS EPF, Empire State Development

Section IV: Plan Implementation

Grasse River Blueway Trail Plan COMMUNITY PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX			
Short Term = 1-2 Years		Medium Term = 3-5 Years	Long Term 6-8 Years
Project/Action	Time Frame	Partners	Potential Funding
Village of Canton			
Design and implement the whitewater playpark in the Village of Canton.	Medium Term	NYS DEC, NYS DOS, US ACOE, Grasse River Heritage, paddling enthusiasts	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF
Design and construct the walkway under the Route 11 Bridge in Canton and implement elements of the Canton Master Trail Plan.	Short - Medium Term	NYS DOT, NYS DOS, NYS OPRHP, Municipal Highway Depts, County Highway, Grasse River Heritage, Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF, OPRHP Recreational Trails Program (RTP); FHWA TAP/FAST ACT
Develop more arts and entertainment focused amenities at Willow Island Park.	Medium Term	Traditional Arts of Upstate NY (TAUNY), local musicians, St. Lawrence University, SUNY Canton and Potsdam Music and Arts Programs, ArtPlace America	NYSCA, NEA, ArtPlace, NYS OPRHP, NYS DOS LWRP EPF



Blueway Trail Plan

Grasse River Blueway Trail Plan			
COMMUNITY PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX			
Short Term = 1-2 Years Medium Term = 3-5 Years Long Term 6-8 Years			
Project/Action	Time Frame	Partners	Potential Funding
Implement the Riverside Drive revitalization effort in Canton	Short to Long Term	Property owners and St. Lawrence County (if owner), NYS DOS including the Brownfield Opportunity Area program and Local Waterfront Program, Empire State Development, Office of Housing and Community Renewal	NYS DOS BOA Program and LWRP EPF, Empire State Development
Redevelop the Jubilee Plaza site in the Village of Canton	Medium Term	Property owner, NYS DOS including the Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program and Local Waterfront Program, Empire State Development	NYS DOS BOA Program and LWRP EPF, Empire State Development
Identify adaptive reuse possibilities for the decommissioned sewer treatment plant at Bend in the River Park.	Medium Term	NYS DOS	NYS DOS EPF
Town of Madrid			
Relocate and improve the hand launch dock upriver of the dam in Madrid's Town Park.	Short Term	NYS DOS, NYS EPF OPRHP	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF

Section IV: Plan Implementation

Grasse River Blueway Trail Plan COMMUNITY PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX Short Term = 1-2 Years Medium Term = 3-5 Years Long Term 6-8 Years			
Project/Action	Time Frame	Partners	Potential Funding
Support the development of a trail network at Sodom State Forest in Madrid.	Medium Term	NYS DEC, St. Lawrence Co., NYS DOS	NYS DEC
Enhance Madrid Boat Launch facilities with landscaping and picnicking amenities.	Medium Term	NYS DOS, NYS OPRHP	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF, AARP Healthy Communities
Create a connection from the boat launch/take-out upriver of the Madrid Dam on the west side of the river to the Madrid town center.	Medium Term	NYS DOT, NYS DOS, NYS OPRHP	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF and RTP
Develop a NY Main Street program in the hamlet of Madrid.	Short to Medium Term	Property owners and businesses, NY Main Street, NYS HCR, local lending institutions, other programs such as weatherization to offset property owner investment	NYMS Technical Assistance Program, Anchor Building Program or Target Area Program; NYS HCR CDBG Housing Rehab. Program
Town of Louisville			
Support the planned construction of the hand launch at the Route 37 Bridge in Louisville to be constructed by Arconic (formerly Alcoa).	Short Term	Arconic (former Alcoa), NYS DEC, US Dept. of the Interior, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, NYS DOS, NYS DOT	Arconic Inc., NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF



Blueway Trail Plan

Grasse River Blueway Trail Plan COMMUNITY PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX			
Short Term = 1-2 Years Medium Term = 3-5 Years Long Term 6-8 Years			
Project/Action	Time Frame	Partners	Potential Funding
Pursue a formal public access arrangement at the informally used property below the bridge in the hamlet of Louisville.	Medium Term	Adjacent property owner, NYS DOS, NYS DEC	NYS DOS LWRP
Pursue the adaptive reuse of the Old Town Hall in Louisville including an analysis of present condition.	Medium Term	Town of Louisville, NYS OPRHP Office of Preservation, NYS DOS EPF, Empire State Development	Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage – Preservation Program and DOS
Consider expanding pedestrian connections between the Louisville Hamlet riverfront and community center and recreation facilities	Long Term	County Highway (on road amenities), property owners (trail easements)	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF, OPRHP Recreational Trails Program (RTP); FHWA TAP/FAST ACT
Village of Massena			
Support existing Village of Massena Waterfront Park (Water Street at Parker Bridge) project that includes a kayak launch and fishing dock, pavilions, and band shell	Short Term	NYS DOS and NYS OPRHP	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF

Section IV: Plan Implementation

Grasse River Blueway Trail Plan COMMUNITY PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX			
Short Term = 1-2 Years Medium Term = 3-5 Years Long Term 6-8 Years			
Project/Action	Time Frame	Partners	Potential Funding
Support the Village of Massena's Water Street Grasse River Waterfront revitalization effort	Short – Long Term	Property Owners, Massena Business Development Corporation, Local lending institutions, NYS Empire State Development, NYS DOS, NYS HCR	NYS Empire State Development, NY Main Street Program (Target Area, Anchor Building and Stability Programs,) NYS CDBG Microenterprise and Small Business Development Programs, NYS DOS EPF (streetscape improvements)
Town of Massena			
Study the impacts and river conditions related to the existing broken weir including water levels in Louisville and Massena, fish migration and habitats	Medium Term	NYS DEC, US ACoE, NYS DOS	NYS DOS LWRP EPF
Pursue the development of a larger craft boat launch and docking amenity at the present Arconic clean-up lay down area in the Town of Massena near the Route 131 Bridge reusing the infrastructure established for the clean-up once that is complete.	Long Term	Arconic (former Alcoa), NYS DEC, NOAA, US Dept. of the Interior, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, NYS DOS, NYS OPRHP	NYS DOS EPF, NYS OPRHP EPF



KEY TO ABBREVIATED PARTNERS AND FUNDING SOURCES NAMES

AoCE – Army Corp of Engineers

ArtPlace NCPF – ArtPlace America National Creative Placemaking Fund

CDBG – Community Development Block Grant

ESD – Empire State Development

FHWA FAST Act - Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) – This program replaces previous alternative transportation funding from the Transportation Alternative Program and the Transportation Enhancements Program.

NEA – National Endowment of the Arts

NYMS – New York Main Street (NYMS) programs administered by the NYS Office of Community Renewal

NYS AG and Markets – New York State Department of Agricultural and Markets - Municipal Agriculture and Farmland Protection Grants

NYSCA – New York State Council on the Arts, Arts and Culture Initiatives

NYS DEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

NYS DOS BOA – New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program

NYS DOS EPF – New York State Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program funded by the Environmental Protection Fund

NYS HCR – New York State Department of Housing and Community Renewal

NYS DOT – New York State Department of Transportation

NYS OPRHP EPF – New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation programs through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)

NYS OPRHP RTP – Recreational Trails Program (RTP) administered by OPRHP funded by the Federal Highway Administration