

Upper Susquehanna Water Trails Stakeholders Meeting

Wednesday, April 26, 2017
2:00 – 3:30 pm

Binghamton County Office Building
Conference Room
60 Hawley Street
Binghamton NY 13902

Attendees:

- Dale Fox, Bainbridge, General Clinton Canoe Regatta
- David Buck, Endless Mountains Heritage Region (EMHR)
- Mike Lovegreen, Upper Susquehanna Coalition/EMHR
- Annette Schultz, EMHR
- Stephanie Brewer, Broome County Planning
- Rick Shumaker, Binghamton, ACA, ACKC
- Dennis Wischman, NYSDEC
- Carly Dean, Chesapeake Conservancy
- Beth Lucas, Broome County Planning
- Jim Pfiffer, Friends of the Chemung River Watershed
- Dan Butch, Luzerne County

Summary: Upper Susquehanna water trails stakeholders convened in Binghamton, NY on April 26, 2017 to outline a strategy to improve trail continuity for paddlers. Attendees agreed that in order to encourage people to use the water trails safely, trip planning materials and wayfinding signs need to be robust (with information on dams, portages, access sites and amenities) and ubiquitous (easy to find during trip planning, and visible along the water trail). Neither the Susquehanna nor the paddlers on the river are bounded by political boundaries; therefore, efforts to support the paddling experience need to have continuity across jurisdictions.

Introductions:

- Annette Shultz: EMHR will update the water trail maps and online resources for the [Susquehanna River North Branch Water Trail](#) by the end of 2018. This effort first involves a scoping process to be outlined by June 2017. EMHR aims to partner with water trail stakeholders in NY who are also in the process of updating trail resources to create a cohesive experience for paddlers.
- David Buck: EMHR promotes the “444-Club” to recognize paddlers who have paddled the 444 miles of the Susquehanna from Cooperstown to Havre de Grace. Paddlers planning their thru-paddlers have increasingly indicated a need for a single location to find trail-related resources, as well as up-to-date

resources with information in particular on dams, portages, and camping, as this can be a serious safety issues.

- **Discussion on the need for greater continuity in trail resources:**
 - Safety
 - Safety of where you are—in case of emergency
 - Encourage new people to use water trails
 - Safety of dams
 - ID public access sites
 - Encourage thru-paddlers
 - Added value: researchers and restoration professionals (river models); college kids always looking for projects
 - Protect and support landowner rights
 - Focus on signs and maps that can be seen from the River
 - Working together across boundaries

- **Most important mapping, signage, and access needs**
 1. Identify the coverage of existing/planned water trail maps: There are resources for all sections of the upper Susquehanna. **Priority:** Develop a schedule for planned updates/reprints.
 - [General Clinton Canoe Regatta](#): Bainbridge Chamber of Commerce: Memorial Day
 - DEC Recreational River Guide; Chenango County (DEC) (Link?)
 - Go-all-out-Broome (launching Memorial Day), Broome County Planning
 - Trails of Tioga County: Tioga County Planning (Link?)
 - [Friends of Chemung County](#)
 - [DEC NY State Boat Launch Sites](#)
 - [Susquehanna River North Branch Water Trail](#)

 2. Consistency in how to display water trail information on maps: **Priority:** Develop an MOU for water trails stakeholders to agree on standard design and symbols. EMHR to scope this out in their June 7, 2017 plan.
 - Develop a method to integrate water trail resources online
 - Mile-makers for key locations
 - Mapping dams and portages; Rick will send info on portages
 - Map camping locations for thru-paddlers
 - Standardized symbols for water trails (NPS)
 - River miles along the trail; for paddlers, restoration professionals, and researchers
 - Printing maps on cotton bandanas (Chemung)
 - What are the attributes that need to be included

3. Consistency in wayfinding signs: **Priority:** Develop an MOU for water trails stakeholders to agree on standard design and symbols. EMHR to scope this out in their June 7, 2017 plan. Research the legal liability of when signs are down; Annette's experience with paddling trails: Chesapeake Legal Alliance.
 - Susquehanna Greenway (NY), Susquehanna Greenway Partnership has sign standards books
 - Create consistent wayfinding signage (blue highway signs—mileage from Cooperstown/mileage to Chesapeake Bay)
 - River miles along the trail; for paddlers, restoration professionals, and researchers
 - Process for getting signs at DEC and other state-owned lands; DOT on highway bridges
 - Prioritize where signs go first: get started with village parks/municipal parks to put signs up on bridges
 - Signs on trees; Yellow Signs—location markers, not mile markers
 - Written plan on how it's going to get done; get multiple states to sign up

4. Continuity in web-based resources: **Priority:** Get them linked online in one location (Envision the Susquehanna website for now, hopefully NPS eventually).
 - Need an overarching government-based entity to manage all of the information and keep it updated (linking back to source data)
 - Need an agreement on the attributes that should be collected for each data point.
 - Resources:
 - [Friends of Chemung County](#)
 - [DEC NY State Boat Launch Sites](#)
 - Go-all-out-Broome: Coming online Memorial Day
 - NPS: hopes to coalesce paddling info for the Chesapeake's major rivers in next few years (along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail)
 - EMHR: developing a platform similar to [Mapmyride](#)
 - [Susquehanna Riverview: Virtual Tour](#)
 - [NPS: Find Your Chesapeake](#)

5. Additional Discussion topics:
 - Project management site: EMHR plans to create something to share resources and keep everyone up-to-date.

- Project scoping: NY needs a scope in order to commit to a partnership. EMHR is in the process of scoping the project, will include PA and NY trail needs.
- “Speak the language”:
 - Water trails help encourage economic development through River-related tourism (Susquehanna Greenway Partnership’s River Towns program); could local businesses sponsor maps?
 - Address the specific needs of novice paddlers, i.e. where to leave their boat during lunch, how to arrange transportation back to their car, etc.
 - DEC’s public access sites were set up to support the fishing and hunting community.
- Tap into colleges and universities to collect trail-related information, help with maps, install signage, etc.

6. Next steps:

- Carly will send out notes
- Annette will draft up a scope by June 7
- Beth will send out Go-All-Out-Broome
- June 27th; 2 pm: next in-person meeting; second option: June 28th
 - At the Library
 - Workshop session in the morning
 - Field Trip in the afternoon

