

PART D - BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In three sentences, describe the project type, purpose and location; the need for the project; and what will result if the project is undertaken.

This is a “Visioning and development of local or regional revitalization strategies” project whose purpose is to expand the existing Chemung River Council (created in 2007 with LWRP funds in Chemung County) to include the Village of Painted Post, Village of Riverside, City of Corning and Town of Corning in Steuben County and to create a Vision for the Chemung River from its beginning in Painted Post to the Steuben County line.

There is a need for the project to bring the number of river-related trails, launch sites and amenities in southeast Steuben County into a coherent whole, dovetailing with the recently released “Chemung River Comprehensive Master Plan” developed with LWRP funds in neighboring Chemung County and filling in “gaps” in regional, state and interstate blue and green trail systems.

The project will result in a Southeast Steuben “River Vision” and a strengthened Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership with support from the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed covering the length of the Chemung River within two counties aimed at improving public access to the Chemung River, protecting the River’s natural resources, generating jobs/revenue for outdoor sports/water-related businesses, strengthening community cooperation, and further advancing the Chemung River as part of the Susquehanna River Trail and the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. *(See the attached 11/26/2007 Leader article)*

PART F. WORK PROGRAM

Describe the proposed project, including the objectives to be achieved, problem(s) to be addressed, and anticipated environmental benefits of the work. If the project is a construction project, describe, as appropriate, what will be constructed, the management practices or technology to be employed, and land ownership. Attach site plans and design drawings, if available, and include photographs of existing site conditions.

Identify the project’s component tasks or stages and their costs, and provide a schedule for their completion. Clearly identify the nature of the local funding match.

Objectives

- Convene and develop a productive working network among community, municipal and inter-municipal representatives with a common interest in environmentally-responsible river development in southeast Steuben County.
- Hold public forums, including a Van Tour and Chemung River Float, for local officials and residents alike to identify assets and opportunities for river-related economic development, recreational, natural resource and related projects to be developed along or linked to the Chemung River.
- Create a Painted Post / Riverside / City of Corning / Town of Corning River Council that will be invited to merge, by the end of the project, into the larger Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership with support from the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed, a not-for-profit organization formed in 2008 currently functioning in Chemung County, that works in concert with the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership.

- Develop, with the help of qualified consultant(s), a River Vision for southeast Steuben that 1.) identifies existing river-related trails, amenities, launch sites, businesses, cultural facilities and other projects and 2.) develops a concept plan of additional projects that will fill in ‘gaps’ and/or expand and improve the public access network, especially linking to projects noted in the Chemung River Comprehensive Master Plan, completing needed links to the Finger Lakes Trail, the Great Eastern Trail (to be parallel to the Appalachian Trail through the southern tier), the national North Country Trail, and the Susquehanna River Trail as part of the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network to name a few.

Problems to be addressed

The Chemung Valley Greenway has been a concept promoted since 1974 with the publication of the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board’s Open Space Plan. Since that time, many elements of the system of riverside trails and launch sites have been built, (such as the rails-to-trails hike/bike path in Painted Post and the river access site in the Town of Corning), or are underway (such as the \$4 million Centerway Bridge restoration and bike path project.) However, the system is not complete: there are gaps in hiking/biking/pedestrian trails, there is little clear signage, and the river launch sites are still unfinished. This is much more than a lack of services for local residents: visitors expect a robust system of environmentally-friendly ways to tour an area. More than 400,000 visitors a year come to the Corning area to visit the Corning Museum of Glass, the Rockwell Museum of Western Art, area wineries and other attractions. They clamor for information on paddling, fishing, hiking and biking while they are here. Completing the waterfront access and related trails system will fill this need as it enhances the visual environment in Corning, Painted Post, and Riverside. Local outfitters and water-related businesses also expect to benefit as people plan longer trips on the River or discover that access to the River has become easier.

Undertaking this work has been a piecemeal, uncoordinated approach in the past as individual communities made improvements within their boundaries or NYSDEC selected river access sites with little local consultation. This began to change with the creation of the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership in 1999 when NYSDEC and STC called all interested communities and residents together to work together to improve public access to the Chemung River and its tributaries, the Canisteo, Cohocton and Tioga Rivers. This volunteer organization has enjoyed success with the completion of launch sites along more than eighty miles of riverfront from the Village of Canisteo in western Steuben County to the Pennsylvania line. (*See attached Public Boat Launch Sites Map*). However, the Partnership has a narrow focus of launch site development and watershed protection; they do not address the larger picture of creating a unified system of land and water trails. In 2007, the Chemung River Council in Chemung County whose voting members from each community worked with state and regional partners to implement their new Chemung River Comprehensive Plan. However, their work was restricted to Chemung County and concluded with the publication of the Chemung River Master Plan. Nevertheless, a group of highly-motivated individuals felt that the work begun by the River Council was too important to let idle. The Friends of the Chemung River Watershed was established in December 2008 as a not-for-profit organization of community volunteers whose mission is to protect, preserve and promote the watershed, and to improve economic resources, the quality of life and the natural environment for the residents of the Chemung River Watershed. This application would create the Southeast Steuben River Council which would be invited to merge with the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership with support from the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed to strengthen multi-community cooperation and complete a Vision for the Chemung River.

This project is our best opportunity to help achieve goals noted in the Chemung River Greenbelt priority project #106 listed in the 2006 NYS Open Space Conservation Plan. It also furthers the regional bicycle and pedestrian network concepts in the 2003 Schuyler-Steuben Transportation Needs Study as championed by the Southern Tier Central Bicycle Advisory Committee and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BACPAC) which was formed to implement the Needs Study. The project also expands on the Chemung Basin River Trail as part of the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. (*See enclosed Chesapeake Bay Gateways map*.)

Anticipated Environmental Benefits

Providing a carefully planned network of greenway and blueway trails provides safe public access to our natural resources. It reduces human intrusion into sensitive habitats, such as rattlesnake dens and eagle nesting areas. The system also protects the critical flood protection levees by limiting foot/bike traffic to properly built paths and by restricting use by ATV’s. In general, access to the River and its environs promotes better stewardship of the land and water as people enjoy

these resources in very personal ways. Eventually, with expanded use by hikers and cyclists, automobile traffic may be reduced and pedestrian/cyclist safety improved..

Work Tasks

Task 1. Establish the Project Advisory Committee - the Southeast Steuben River Council

The City of Corning, Town of Corning, Village of Painted Post and Village of Riverside will establish a project advisory committee to oversee all aspects of the project. The committee shall be made up of project stakeholders, including representatives of State and municipal agencies with jurisdiction over project activities or the project area, and non-governmental and community based organizations. It is anticipated that members of the existing Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership will volunteer to take part in this new Southeast Steuben River Council (SES River Council). (*See attached Partnership membership list.*). The Southern Tier Central Bicycle Advisory Committee and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BACPAC) will also be invited to suggest members. The SES River Council will meet at least monthly immediately before/after the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership for convenience of the common members. The SES River Council will meet periodically with the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed or a Friends subcommittee to present findings and recommend mutual projects. Meetings will lead to the eventual merging of the Southeast Steuben Council into the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership or other appropriate organization with support from the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed. Also, the SES River Council will benefit from technical assistance provided by staff of the NYS Parks and Trails “Healthy Trails/Healthy People” Program as part of the Chemung Valley Riverside Trail Project, if approved.

Task 2. Hire consultants for contractual work.

Because Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board staff currently co-chairs the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership and has undertaken water resources planning projects since coming to the agency in 1979, the City of Corning requests authorization to contract with STC for project oversight, mapping preparation, coordination with the landscape architect team and related work. A subcontract would be prepared that meets DCR requirements.

Because a River Coordinator has been undertaking the oversight work as part of the Chemung River Comprehensive Master Plan project and because the SES River Council and Vision Project would benefit greatly from the River Coordinator’s services, the City of Corning request authorization to contract with the River Coordinator for conduct of the Van Tour, participation in the three visioning workshops and related work.

Because HAAS Landscape Architects is the firm that contracted with the City of Elmira to undertake the Chemung River Comprehensive Master Plan and because the purpose of the Southeast Steuben River Council and Vision Project is to undertake similar work tasks to be consistent with the Chemung County program, the City of Corning requests authorization to contract with HAAS Landscape Architects to take part in the public forums, undertake fact-finding, prepare the vision document and report, and related work. The City of Corning procurement process permits hiring of consultants without a formal RFP process when the cost is less than \$10,000 and the City feels that continuing the work of HAAS Landscape Architects is a cost-effective way to ensure seamless consistency with the Chemung River Council as the project moves forward to create a two-county entity and master plan. A subcontract would be prepared that meets DCR requirements.

STC, the River Coordinator and HAAS Landscape Architects are referred to as “the consultants” in the following work tasks.

Task 3. Prepare the Waterfront Revitalization Area Map

The SES River Council, with the assistance of its consultants, will prepare a narrative and map of the proposed waterfront revitalization area and boundary. The area will include the length of the Chemung River from Painted Post to the Chemung County line, as well as adjacent land and other land which may affect the River through

drainage, watershed, and any other similar factors. The attached project area map shows the Chemung River and its adjacent communities which would be the furthest extent of the waterfront revitalization area.

Task 4. Preparation of a Community Outreach Process and Plan

The City of Corning as part of the SES River Council with the assistance of its consultants will prepare a method and process to encourage community participation in the waterfront visioning process. The process shall include three public workshop type meetings to be conducted as part of the waterfront visioning and consensus-building process as well as a Van Tour and the Tenth Annual Chemung River Float. The Outreach Plan shall identify key individuals, organizations, and entities to be involved, and shall identify the visioning process and the roles and responsibilities in coordinating the entire outreach process, logistics, and the proposed schedule of public meetings, Van Tour itinerary, and other appropriate outreach. All public meetings will be publicized in the community through press releases, announcements, individual mailings, and any other appropriate means. The Van Tour will be an opportunity for the consultants and SES River Council members to visit the waterfront area to identify opportunities for connections within each other's communities. A summary of each public outreach session and the Van Tour will be made available in written form and through other appropriate means, such as websites.

Task 5. Review Existing Plans and Meet with Community Leaders

In an effort to understand the waterfront issues of the municipality and neighboring communities, the River Council with the assistance of the consultants shall identify and review existing planning documents. This review process will also include consultation with waterfront/community leaders, and with neighboring communities, if applicable. Representatives from the SES River Council will meet with the Friends and the Partnership to identify common issues and discuss the feasibility of joint waterfront planning efforts. The consultants will develop a written findings report describing and assessing existing planning documents and the issues and opportunities identified by the River Council members. Connections to the elements described in the Chemung River Comprehensive Master Plan will also be included in this report.

Task 6: Inventory and Analysis

Based on the review of existing planning documents, meetings with the Friends and the Partnership, and appropriate additional research and analysis, the consultants shall assist with the development of an inventory and analysis of existing conditions, including narrative, maps and relevant data. This inventory will be used to assist in the identification of issues and opportunities for the waterfront revitalization area. Based on preliminary findings and the inventory and analysis, the consultants will also design workshop activities and prepare materials needed to conduct the first community visioning workshop. The inventory and analysis of existing conditions shall mirror the information found in the Chemung River Comprehensive Master Plan including, but not limited to, the following:

- Existing land use
- Existing water use
- Existing zoning and other relevant local development controls
- Land ownership patterns, including underwater lands
- Public access and recreational resources
- Infrastructure (i.e. water supply, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, and transportation systems)
- Historic resources (National Register sites and districts, locally designated resources, archaeological resources)
- Scenic resources
- Topography and geology
- Water quality (point and nonpoint sources)
- Natural resources (wetlands, steep slopes, minerals, etc.)
- Flooding and erosion
- Significant fish and wildlife habitats
- Important agricultural lands
- Environmental issues (hazardous waste sites, solid waste, etc.)
- Navigation and dredging issues
- Description of key waterfront issues

Task 7: First Community Visioning Workshop

The SES River Council and the consultants will conduct the first of three public workshops. The community visioning workshop will present an inventory and analysis of existing conditions, preliminary issues and opportunities identified, and will solicit public input. Workshop activities shall be designed to help participants reveal ways in which they use and value their waterfront resources, and the varied relationships between the waterfront resources and the municipality. Participants will also be encouraged to identify important issues and opportunities, and discuss what they would like to change if they could.

Task 8: Initial Issues, Opportunities, and Vision Report

The consultants shall prepare an Initial Issues, Opportunities, and Vision Report, based upon the inventory and analysis, public input received at the first community visioning workshop, and other considerations, such as the waterfront revitalization policies set forth in Executive Law, Article 42, and as provided by the DCR. The Initial Issues, Opportunities, and Vision Report will describe key waterfront issues and articulate a future vision for the four communities' waterfront, and will also identify long term uses and short and long term projects.

Task 9: Conduct of the Van Tour

The SES River Council will review all materials gathered to date and select key locations for the consultants to see in the field. The Council will select members to be on the van with the landscape architect team. STC/River Coordinator will secure a vehicle(s), schedule the stops, invite the public and community officials to be on hand to discuss issues with the tour participants, accompany the tour, take photographs, document comments and prepare a summary report. This is another excellent opportunity for increased public education through media coverage.

Task 10: Preparation of Alternatives

Using feedback from the first public workshop and the Van Tour, the consultants shall conduct focused research based on the Initial Issues, Opportunities, and Vision Report. The consultant will identify appropriate case studies from other communities to share with the SES River Council and prepare materials to facilitate the second public workshop, in which an exploration of alternatives will be discussed as expressed in the community's vision.

Task 11: Second Community Vision Workshop: Exploring Alternatives

The SES River Council and the consultants will conduct a second public workshop after a review of the Initial Issues, Opportunities, and Vision Report developed from the first workshop and the summary of the Van Tour. At the Second Workshop, the consultant will present a summary and analysis of the Initial Issues, Opportunities, and Vision Report. Through facilitated discussions and activities, the participants will review and edit/revise this report. Case studies and information obtained of waterfront development efforts in other communities will be shared, after which participants will explore alternative expressions of their vision (as appropriate), consider alternative future choices, and begin to identify actions and means to implement their vision.

Task 12: Draft Report: Issues, Opportunities, Vision, and Strategies

The consultants shall prepare a summary analysis of workshop activities and prepare a Draft Report outlining Issues, Opportunities, Vision, and Strategies, reflecting the ideas and views expressed at the second public workshop. The document shall include a revised vision statement (if necessary), illustrate community expressions of the vision, and provide a preliminary list of specific actions and strategies to address the identified issues and to achieve the vision. The Draft Report will also describe long term waterfront uses and short term projects and actions needed to revitalize the local waterfront and manage waterfront resources. In addition, the Draft Report should include an initial market analysis, as a test of the feasibility of the expressed vision.

The Draft Report will also outline a strategy for completion of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, including the development of coastal policies, review of local laws, and development of an implementation strategy.

Task 13: Third Community Vision Workshop: Implementing the Vision

Following completion of the Draft Issues, Opportunities, Vision, and Strategies Report ~~and the River Float~~, the SES River Council and the consultants will conduct a final community visioning workshop to present the Draft Issues, Opportunities, Vision, and Strategies Report and to solicit public input regarding its completeness and accuracy. In addition, the participants will discuss and identify short- and long-term priorities, as well as strategies for continuing public participation in the implementation process. The purpose of the workshop is to foster an appreciation for the waterfront area as a community asset and celebrate the work accomplished by the communities through the visioning workshops. There will also be opportunity to discuss next steps and case studies of other community waterfront development efforts. The Friends of the Chemung River Watershed and the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership will be invited to the workshop to see the final product and discuss how it complements or completes elements in the Chemung River Comprehensive Master Plan.

Task 15: Final Report: Issues, Opportunities, Vision and Strategies

The consultants shall prepare a Final Issues, Opportunities, Vision and Strategies Report, reflecting the ideas and views expressed at the third public workshop. This report will be shared with all municipal board members of each of the participating communities as well as involved River Council participants. Economic development-related projects will be included in the Southern Tier Central Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Findings will also be shared at a future STC Regional Leadership Conference, which draws about 400 area local officials from across the region.