

# South Shore Blueway Water Trail Implementation Meeting #1

April 16, 2015, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Freeport Recreation Center. Meeting Room

130 E Merrick Rd. Freeport, NY

## Meeting Summary

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### Welcome & Introductions

In Attendance: Barbara LaRocco, & Zhennya Slootskin Going Coastal, Inc.; Kyle Rabin, Committee Chair; Nora Sudars, Grants Administration Village of Freeport; Brian Vander Veer, Town of Oyster Bay; Steve McDonald, North Atlantic Canoe & Kayak (NACK); Tara Schneider Moran, Town of Hempstead Conservation & Waterways; Hank Leggio, Director of Operations - Jones Beach State Park; Brian Schneider, Nassau County Dept. Of Public Works; Michael Fehling, Empire Kayaks; Sean Jordan, Town of Oyster Bay Environmental Resources; Colin Bell, Program Coordinator Town of Oyster Bay Environmental Resources, Walter Bundy, Kayak Fishing Association of New York & Grant Writer.

Barbara welcomed attendees to begin the work of implementing and raising awareness of the South Shore Blueway Plan. She stated that she and Kyle Rabin had reached out to potential new committee members, including Maureen Dolan Murphy, of Citizens Campaign for the Environment and SSER CAC and Steve Berner, President of LI Paddlers and Patricia Aitken.

### A. Committee Members Provided Updates on Proposed Trail Sites

#### 1. Village of Freeport – Nora Sudars

**Waterfront Park** has been awarded Local Waterfront Revitalization (LWR) Grant in the amount of \$16,000 for development of the launch at Waterfront Park. The Village will match the award and the Blueway Committee will act as the coordinating committee for that grant. The Cameron Engineering prepared site designs and permit application was rejected due water levels being too low to accommodate the proposed floats. The Village is open to considering other ideas and modifying the designs accordingly. In the meantime, Waterfront Park will undergo new bulkheading through mid-summer. In 2014, a local party at the park's small beach had offered kayak rentals. It is not known if that party will return this summer. Freeport's **Albany Ave Boat Ramp** is also open for kayak launching.

#### 2. Nassau County – Brian Schneider

The County also received a Local Waterfront Revitalization (LWR) Grant awarding \$240,000 for the development of 7 launches at 6 parks, with a target of 2016 for completion on all sites. Sites include: **Millburn Boat Basin** undergoing redesign that incorporates ADA compliant dedicated kayak launch by Woodstock Construction. **Bay Park** offers 2 sites, both beach and marina, will be ADA accessible. **Cow Meadow Park** will again have a beach launch and **Wantagh Park** will add ADA compliant floats at the docks. The **Cedar Creek** design for an elevated boardwalk was the most expensive of the sites at just under \$1 million, when all most launches in the Plan cost out at under \$50,000. An alternate launch site was reviewed, but too little water at low tide will prevent that site. The County will study other places for launch citing at Cedar Creek. United Water, operator of the Nassau County sewage treatment plants at Bay Park and Cedar Creek, has expressed interest in helping realize the full potential

of these sites, though this is still in the exploratory stage. In addition, **Inwood Ramp** will undergo bulkhead replacement that will incorporate a kayak launch into that project.

### 3. **Town of Hempstead – Tara Schneider Moran**

Town of Hempstead has 10 proposed launch sites, 4 designed site improvements, and 1 landing: **Baldwin Park\***, **Harbor Isle** (no access yet), **Hewlett Pt** (no access yet), **Marine Nature Study Area Landing Only**, **Newbridge Park**, **Norman Levy\*** (Dept of Sanitation challenges with low-water), **Oceanside Park**, **Seaman’s Neck**, **Woodmere Dock\***, **Town West Marina\***, **Inwood Marina\*** (*\* Only sites accessible at this time*)

The Blueway Trail Plan has the full support of the TOH Conservation & Waterways Department, however most proposed sites come under TOH Parks, which does not have funds to support permitting or improvements. Conservation & Waterways has agreed to fund the permit applications, which cost about \$250 per application. Tara’s office has someone on staff that can manage the applications submissions and wanted to know how design modifications are handled. Beyond this, Conservation & Waterways has the capability to do grading and other site improvements, but this will require interagency cooperative agreement to get this underway. Stakeholder advocacy to the TOH elected officials may help the process along and raise awareness and engage more people in the administration in supporting the project.

### 4. **Town of Oyster Bay – Brian Vander Veer**

Town of Oyster Bay is seeking additional funds to move the process along. **Alhambra Road** is undergoing review as part of a larger development project. Still grading of the beach will be done now. Installation of a mobi-mat for ADA access runs about \$5000 and there is need for funding. At **John Burns Park** the Town is building racks for kayak storage, this has been very successful on the north shore. Adding ADA access floats to the dock will require additional funding. **Tobay Beach** is a landing only destination where paddlers need to avoid the swimming beach area.

### 5. **Jones Beach State Park – Hank Leggio**

Trailheads: Jones Beach **Field 10** is most accessible. **West Boat Basin** Marina has long walk to launch. **Zach’s Bay** land or launch at the eastern part of the beach, avoiding the swimming area. **Green Island** is landing only stopover. The new fishing is shared responsibility between the Park and DOT and has very limited parking. Hank mentioned that he had recently been introduced to a new product alternative to the Mobi-Mat, which can be costly. It is lighter weight, easier for staff to roll and provides seamless transition between sections.

## **B. Funding**

Priority funding at this stage is infrastructure and site improvements, as well as outreach to raise awareness and garner support in the community. Though Nassau County and the Village of Freeport have grants to develop their respective sites, there is a huge funding gap to complete trailheads in the Towns.

Colin Bell stated that a windshield estimate of improvements at the 2 Town of Oyster Bay launch sites is about \$30,000. He pointed to the example of inter-municipal agreements for cost-sharing, which was helpful in the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Trail project, also partially funded through a LWR grant. The Town provides 50% of project cost and the locality is responsible for providing the remaining 50%. The Massapequas NY Rising Community Reconstruction Plan includes Alhambra Beach, to rebuild it in a storm resilient way that also includes kayak storage. Know that it is a featured project, but critical infrastructure needs will get priority.

Barbara LaRocco commented that there may be some umbrella items, which are common to many site plans and lend themselves to cost-sharing, such as signage, ADA accessible improvements, mobi-mats, and outreach materials. Potential funding sources discussed include State Legislature Discretionary Funds, South Shore Estuary Reserve Funds, the Consolidated Grants round in June offered funding opportunities from Parks and LWF grants, and other small grants such as Toyota's Everyday Capacity Fund which supports outreach. Going Coastal will review grant deadlines and eligibility criteria of the Funding Sources database compiled as part of the Blueway Plan.

Nora Sudars noted that NY Rising projects have a good chance of being funded under the Consolidated Grant Application. The grants require local match that does not tap federal funds. Best to go with state level funding, as little federal funding is available, there are no Congressional earmarks, but possible line items from Senators.

Walter Bundy stated there is a need to seek endorsement of project for Economic Assistance Program funds from elected officials such as Economic Assistance Program, which is triggered by letter to Senator.

Brian Schneider proposed that the group look beyond grant money and consider sponsorships, for example support from United Water, PSEG LI, Home Depot, REI, and other large south shore companies.

### **C. Letters of Support**

Going Coastal will prepare a sample Letter of Support for Blueway Committee members to use as a template in having local officials from the County, Towns and Village prepare letters to use in funding requests and grant submissions.

Kyle Rabin offered that it might be useful to have joint letter of support signed by all the participating government entities requesting specific grant funding. Colin commented that if such a letter would help offset development costs to the town, Oyster Bay would sign on.

Kyle suggested that individual paddlers and stakeholders be encouraged to write letters supporting the water trail to local officials and decision-makers. The website can contain information about who and where to send letters.

Going Coastal will also draft request letter asking for support and action from elected officials, community organizations, local decision-makers, conservation groups, and business leaders.

### **D. Work Scope and Outreach**

Scope of Work under Task 19 and the implementation checklist were handed out to committee members and reviewed. (See attachments)

#### **1. Website/Social Media**

The website - southsoureblueway.com will be the central communications hub for the trail. A banner ad will be created for other websites to promote our site and link to it. The project planning website, created by Going Coastal in Google Sites Apps, will be archived. A new branded website is set up on Bluehost FTP and made public in mid-May. The free Google Site may work for the Friends of the Blueway at a later date. The website is still being populated with content and help is needed. For example, the Explore the Bays

pages describe plants and wildlife encountered, perhaps TOH Conservation & Waterways could help with descriptions or local Audubon members or Wikipedia. Our Facebook page reaches about 250 paddlesport enthusiasts and is used to drive traffic to the website (facebook.com/southshoreblueway). Mail Chimp is the main notification and newsletter program with a strong database built during the planning process.

## **2. Promotional Materials**

- a) Web Map - In order to better share data the interactive maps created in Google Maps will be migrated to Carto DB, an Open Source mapping system for the web, is compatible with ESRI and most major mapping applications. The main drawback is we cannot customize interactive maps and the Carto DB logo, but it is the same for Google Maps. Barbara indicated that Jaime Ethier had enquired about sharing the map data with the DOS and other partners. Carto DB provides a platform for easily sharing.
- b) Print Map/Trail Brochure - Barbara stated it may be premature to publish the brochure designed under the Blueway Plan at this stage, since Phase I launch improvements were just getting underway. She suggested instead to produce a postcard map with trail information designed to generate interest and get people into the website and Friends Facebook page as a cost effective outreach tool. The brochure with full map would be reserved for 2016, the official trail launch. The committee can choose either to show only Phase I sites that are funded with permits or to show all proposed sites on the map. It was suggested that all sites be included in promotional materials in order to show what we are asking support for.

## **3. Signage**

Basic Blueway Trailhead markers with the logo and website can be installed now at accessible sites to designate the site as an official part of the Blueway and indicate to boater the point of entry and landing. Going Coastal will have samples for assessment the next committee meeting to look at size and materials. Interpretive Signage will be part of Phase II of trail development.

## **4. Friends of the Blueway**

Going Coastal has scheduled a stakeholder's meeting on May 13 at 6:30 pm. Rob Weltner of Operation SPLASH provide space for the event on Woodcleft Ave in Freeport. The purpose is to build a community volunteer base and advocacy group to help implement and sustain the trail. The Friends group can establish Ad Hoc committees to help raise awareness and expand outreach for the trail. Once organized, the Friends could designate representatives to serve on the Blueway Committee.

## **5. Exhibits/Presentations**

1. Barbara ask for assistance from the Village of Freeport to print up to 5 oversized Trail Maps on their plotter for use in displays at public places and events, like town halls, libraries, festivals, the Freeport Rec Center, and other high traffic locations to generate awareness for the project. A reading copy of the South Shore Blueway Trail Plan can be made available at the libraries and the promotional postcard with website information and call to action can be disseminated wherever the map is displayed.
2. Going Coastal is creating a presentation and online Prezi slide show to illustrate the Blueway Trail story and plan to the public and make presentations to Nassau County town boards, neighborhood associations, business organizations, tourism agencies and conservation groups. Barbara asked the committee to suggest potential audiences. Kyle will work with Going Coastal on list of organizations for presentations.

## 6. Events

Zhennya stated that events can help engage paddlers, community, media, tourists & residents. Place-based events create a sense of ownership and draw attention to a site. Events can take the form of ribbon cuttings as each new trailhead is opened or free kayak demo days. She mentioned Jones Beach Field 10 as an excellent site for a community paddling event for beginners due to its ample parking, facilities, short carry to water, and protected bay. Advanced paddler events might include poker paddles or geocaching paddle of the open sites. Opportunities for tabling at REI and occasions, like Hobie Day at Empire Kayaks on May 3. We would like to have flyers about the Stakeholders Meeting and postcards ready by that date to distribute.

## 7. Timeline/Meetings

- a) Barbara stated the timeline for Task 19 is 1 year, nevertheless Going Coastal will lead the project through to June 2016 to the completion of Phase I site improvements and officially launch the trail, brochure and map, and signage.
- b) Only 4 Committee Meetings will be held, which means a lot of effort will take place between meetings. Barbara requested committee members have an alternate person to attend meetings in their absence.
- c) Kyle Rabin invited attendees to volunteer to Co-Chair the Blueway Committee with him going forward.

### *Outreach Discussion:*

Kyle Rabin stated that we need to generate more interest from the community for the Blueway Trail. He suggested we focus on cheerleading aspects, engaging community and building support. In addition to press and local media, elected officials also have newsletters to include information about the Blueway to their constituents.

Brian Schneider mentioned that the county is seeing tremendous interest in paddler sports/infrastructure.

Brian Vander Veer stated the support for kayaking is growing on the north shore and they expect similar growth on the south shore for kayak storage.

Zhennya commented about similar exponential growth at Rye Marina on Long Island Sound, which installed kayak storage racks and almost immediately had to double capacity.

Hank stated Jones Beach State Park would need time for approval process in addition to including sites on the exhibits and maps.

Walter recommended that a symbol on maps indicate sites awaiting permits and to even include contact information for people to call the permit offices to help the process move forward.

Brian Schneider discussed the Marina Building at Cow Meadow Park for a possible kayak operation. An earlier RFP for a marina operator got no responses due to the costly capital improvements required, which made it not financially feasible.

Barbara asked to obtain copies of any RFP with regard to site operators and improvements to post on the website.

#### **D. Next Steps**

Mike Fehling stated there is a need now to show people progress has been made. Since the workshop, a year later what do we have to show, we need to demonstrate we went from here to there, show something realistic. He suggested announcing target date for opening.

Brian Schneider suggested revealing that there is a plan in the process of being implemented— it is a work in progress and that people can access the trail now and we can tell them progress and layout next steps needed to move it forward.

Zhennya stated that this was a very good point, especially since so much work has already been done, 10 years since the trail nomination for Nassau County Bond Act. It makes sense to show concrete progress by formally announcing the Blueway Plan at the upcoming Stakeholders Meeting, showing how people's input is part of the plan, and making sure we include milestones and accomplishments. It is essential that we communicate concrete progress and that improvements will be made with the help of municipalities.

Barbara stated many of the trailheads are presently open, just not improved for ADA accessibility. Maps and the website can make this clear to the public and the target for trail Phase I opening is Summer 2016.

Meeting adjourned 1:00 pm.

*Check the South Shore Blueway website for meeting materials posted in advance of the meeting and minutes: [www.southshoreblueway.com](http://www.southshoreblueway.com). New email address: [southshorebluewaytrail@gmail.com](mailto:southshorebluewaytrail@gmail.com)*

**‘SCOPE OF WORK’  
FOR SOUTH SHORE BLUEWAY TRAIL**

The additional tasks to be performed by Going Coastal, Inc. (‘Consultant’) amend the Scope of Work for the South Shore Blueway Trail Memorandum of Agreement with the Village of Freeport to commence on the date it is executed and shall continue until full performance of all work and services by the Consultant has been completed.

**Task 19: Promotion of the South Shore Blueway Trail**

To ensure the success of the South Shore Blueway Trail, the Contractor or its consultant(s) shall develop and implement a program for marketing and promoting the South Shore Blueway Trail.

Promotion activities will include the

- 1) launching of an approved website and social media webpages with content developed under Task 16,
- 2) coordination with regional tourism offices, local governments and community groups,
- 3) establishment of a “Friends of the Blueway” group to continue garnering support for the trail, and
- 4) coordination of an inaugural Blueway paddle event.

Products include:

- 1) Publicly accessible website and social media pages promoting use of the South Shore Blueway Trail.
- 2) Minutes of meetings with regional tourism offices, local governments and community groups to promote the South Shore Blueway Trail and implement the South Shore Blueway Trail Plan.
- 3) Incorporation papers for the “Friends of the Blueway” group.
- 4) Documentation of inaugural Blueway paddle event.