



4.0 Managing the Seaway Trail

4.1 *The Byway Experience*

Scenic Byways are pleasurable driving experiences that offer visitors experiences they are not able to get elsewhere and that they will enjoy enough to return to experience again and to which they will refer others. The Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania has advantages in its location and amenities that will attract target audiences and engage residents:

- It is part of an emerging multi-state regional scenic byway network linking byways in New York and Ohio, providing a consistent and cohesive Seaway Trail experience.
- It provides a range of visual experiences along its route including bucolic countryside, an historic urban center and revitalized waterfront.
- Dramatic vistas along the route include the Appalachian Ridge as well as Lake Erie, streambeds and rolling hills, providing on-going visual interest.
- It provides a unique heritage “product” embracing dramatic moments from the nation’s birth through to the present, including the French and Indian War, War of 1812 and the emergence of the environmental movement.
- It provides a range of passive and active recreational opportunities in settings that are ecologically unique in the nation, if not the world.
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4.2 Management and Coordination

On a statewide basis, the following have been identified as needed to grow heritage tourism

Formalize leadership for heritage tourism by designating a state level lead entity that was a collaborative of public and private partners. **Develop a statewide heritage tourism strategy** that would raise awareness of the values of heritage tourism, set common goals and priorities, raise standards for heritage tourism sites and visitor services and coordinate heritage tourism development efforts at the local, regional and state levels

On the Seaway Trail, the primary role of a manager will be to work with local communities and interest groups to coordinate activities, and plan and implement strategies for improvements working with public and private financing sources.

In New York, Seaway Trail, Inc. manages the Seaway Trail. Seaway Trail, Inc. is a membership organization. The organization works with its members and local governments and interacts directly with tourists in its mission of promoting wise and sustained use of the Seaway Trail Scenic Byway in New York.

Since its inception in Pennsylvania, the Erie Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) has administered the Seaway Trail under the terms of a memorandum of understanding between it and Seaway Trail, Inc. The Erie Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is a member of Seaway Trail, Inc. and has a seat on its board of directors. It encourages its members to join Seaway Trail and to advertise in Journey magazine.

The Erie Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is funded through an accommodations tax levied countywide and state grants. Many of Erie County's accommodations are located in the City of Erie and in areas near or related to the Seaway Trail, so the CVB's promotion of the Seaway Trail does not present a conflict.



The bluff on Lake Erie. The waterways of the Great Lakes unite the Seaway Trail in New York and Pennsylvania as well as providing linkages to other byways, including Lake Erie Coastal Ohio.

4.2.1 Relationship with Seaway Trail, Inc.

Seaway Trail, Inc., manager of the New York Seaway Trail and Seaway Trail Pennsylvania have a unique relationship among scenic byways. Seaway Trail, Inc. was founded in 1978 to promote the Seaway Trail as a tourist destination and encourage regional economic development through tourism. The Seaway Trail in New York is one of America's longest established, having been designated as a National Recreational Seaway Trail in 1984 and a National Scenic Byway in 1996.

The Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania was designated a state Scenic Byway in 2003, and is seeking designation as a National Scenic Byway. Seaway Trail, Inc. has been working with its partners in Pennsylvania since 1991 on cooperative promotional efforts.

Seaway Trail, Inc. published its Action Plan II to guide the organization in planning, organization, finance, operations and marketing. In October 1996, it amended Action Plan II to include what has become the Pennsylvania portion of the Seaway Trail to provide a seamless visitor experience and to unite the opportunities and resources.

Action Plan II as amended identified three goals for the Pennsylvania portion of the Seaway Trail:

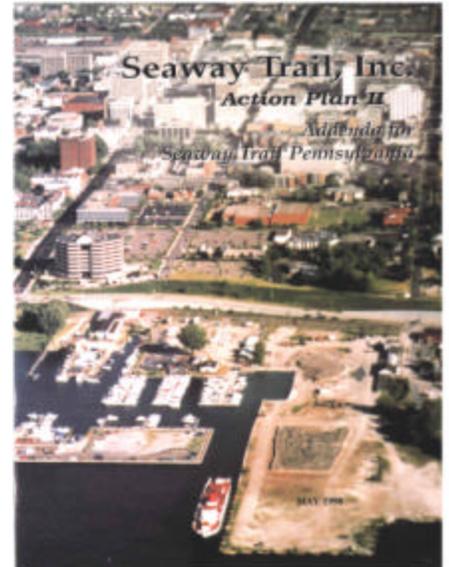
- Pursue an increased but stable rate of economic development and growth of the tourism economy
- Protect and enhance the scenic, natural, cultural, recreational, historical and archeological resources of the Seaway Trail
- Develop the Seaway Trail as a high quality experience for recreation and vacations

These goals and the objectives also contained in the Action II amendment are consistent with the planning and implementation framework established by this Corridor Management Plan.

The relationship between the more established organization and the newer Pennsylvania effort is unique because generally, multi-state scenic byways tend to form at one time and establish management and organizational approaches that complement one another and provide pipelines for funding.

Seaway Trail, Inc. and the representatives promoting the Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania are creatively addressing a number of issues, including ways the two Seaway Trails can work together given the challenges presented by their differences.

Seaway Trail, Inc. is very interested in helping Seaway Trail Pennsylvania and sees itself as the manager of the entire length of the Seaway Trail in both states. However, both agree that it is important that Seaway Trail Pennsylvania have an organization or some entity in place to manage its portion of the Seaway Trail, implement this Corridor Management Plan and identify and pursue funding opportunities.



Action Plan II: highlights economic development and tourism, protection and enhancement of the intrinsic resources of the Seaway Trail and development of a high quality byway experience.



Proposed Site of new hotel and Convention Center on Erie's Bayfront

Seaway Trail has expertise and experience in pursuing funding (grantwriting) it can share with Pennsylvania. In addition it produces a number of publications, guides and maps which it revises as funding permits to include additional information, including Pennsylvania sites, resources and information. Seaway Trail, Inc. also produces interpretive panels and other roadside educational and interpretive materials.

Seaway Trail Pennsylvania will be able to contract with Seaway Trail Inc. for specific services related to the promotion and development of the Pennsylvania Seaway Trail.

From the perspective of Penn DOT and Federal Highway Administration, the Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania should designate a local entity as recipient of State and Federal funding and to serve as a local point of contact. Three organizations are principally involved in current management efforts as Seaway Trail leaders in Pennsylvania. They are:

- Pennsylvania Sea Grant
- Erie County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Erie Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Each of these organizations is potentially eligible to receive and disburse grant funds for the Seaway Trail. The Erie MPO has byway management in its mission and workplan, and will be able to enter into contracts on behalf of the Seaway Trail and also to assist in long-range planning, management and other activities.

All three organizations are enthusiastic about continuing their close relationship with the Seaway Trail as it develops. At the present time they will continue to work together on an informal basis to continue development of the Seaway Trail and to develop the programs and materials necessary.

4.2.2 Stewardship of the Seaway Trail

Myriad partners who have jurisdiction on the Seaway Trail will assist the entities working together to manage the Seaway Trail and to implement its Corridor Management Plan. Other entities are promoters of the Seaway Trail. They all have expressed their support and enthusiasm for the Seaway Trail by introducing and supporting local legislation to establish the Seaway Trail, implementing Seaway Trail activities and facilitating establishment and marking of the Seaway Trail, volunteering on committees working on Seaway Trail-related activities, etc.



They will continue to be central to the implementation of the Plan and the protection, promotion and beneficial use of the cultural, historic and natural resources of the Seaway Trail. They can do this through:

- Identification and protection of valuable cultural historic and natural resources
- Working with communities to ensure that plans, zoning, design standards and other land use approaches address byway needs
- Obtaining easements and working on acquisition programs for significant views and improving selected views in a sustainable way
- Implementing sign ordinances, design standards and overlay districts to protect, promote and enhance the byway
- Coordinating, sponsoring and helping to fund improvement projects related to the development and promotion of the Seaway Trail, including transportation, interpretation and other projects
- Advocating for the Seaway Trail and tourism interests in the region



Protecting and promoting the Seaway Trail includes working with communities on land use approaches such as zoning, design standards, sign ordinances, and overlay districts.

These organizations include:

- The communities along the Seaway Trail Scenic Byway
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management
- Pennsylvania Sea Grant
- Erie Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Erie County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Lake Erie Region Conservancy
- Erie Area Council of Governments
- Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority
- Erie Maritime Museum
- Erie County Historical Society and Museums
- Presque Isle State Park
- Erie Bluffs State Park
- SONS of Lake Erie Fishing Club
- North East Chamber of Commerce
- Seaway Trail, Inc.

4.3 Funding and Financial Resources

Resources to implement the Seaway Trail Plan are available through a number of sources. They include financial resources through grants to local governments, entrepreneurial and economic development incentives and capacity building programs. More than 70 sources have been assembled. A matrix of funding sources appears at the end of this document.