Raquette River Corridor
Strategy For Revitalization

Prepared by the Raquette River Corridor
Revitalization Strategy Advisory Committee
in cooperation with the NYS Department of State,
Division of Coastal Resources and
The Technical Assistance Center at SUNY Plattsburgh (TAC)

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We would also like to particularly thank Mike Prescott for providing most of the photos included in this report, as well as the fine work he has done in educating the public about the history, culture and recreational aspects of the river corridor. Advisory Committee member Jamie Savage also deserves special recognition for translating the significance of the Raquette into song. We would also like to thank Rick Rosen for providing the basis for the maps we created on the different sections of the river corridor and the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) for providing much of the information about related plans and projects outlined in Appendix C.

We also would like to thank Andy Labruzzo of the NYS Department of State’s Division of Coastal Resources for his helpful guidance throughout the project. Finally, we would also like to thank all those residents who participated in three public visioning sessions held in different parts of the river corridor. The community visioning process provided the seeds for the ultimate goals and strategies developed through this planning process.
A Revitalization Strategy for the Raquette River Corridor

Table of Contents

Charting the Future of the Raquette River Corridor..........................Page 3
Defining the Boundaries of the Raquette River Corridor....................Page 5
Few Have Real Appreciation for Corridor Assets.............................Page 6
Raquette River’s Rich History and Culture....................................Page 6
The Raquette River Corridor: Four Rivers in One............................Page 7
Corridor Provides Visitors a Diverse Outdoor Experience.................Page 9
Hiking Opportunities Highlighted....................................................Page 9
Ample Opportunities But Limited Access ......................................Page 10
Key Local waterfront Revitalization Issues.................................Page 12
Some Conclusions Based on Visioning Sessions.............................Page 14
Online Information About Raquette River Canoe Routes....................Page 15

Goals, Objectives and Strategies........................................... 15-19
1. Develop Framework for Voluntary Regional Cooperation..............Page 15
2. Encourage Improvements to Corridor Access ..............................Page 16
3. Encourage Responsible Use of River’s Ecosystems ......................Page 17
4. To Provide More Complete Information for Visitors .....................Page 18
5. To Support Educational Uses of the River ..................................Page 18
6. Encourage A Corridor-Wide Approach To Promotion....................Page 19
7. To Promote Corridor As Engine Driving Local Economies.............Page 19

Mt. Blood: Ode to the Raquette River............................................Page 20

Appendix A: Public Participation Plan
Appendix B: Community Visioning: Issues by Category
Appendix C: Raquette River Related Plans and Projects

The Town of Colton, acting on behalf of the Raquette River Corridor Project contracted with the Technical Assistance Center at SUNY Plattsburgh (TAC) to provide technical assistance in the development of this strategic plan. TAC is SUNY Plattsburgh’s economic development outreach service. TAC’s mission is to increase the region’s capacity for economic growth by providing technical assistance, applied research and information services. Call (518) 564-2214 for more information about TAC and its services.

What Do You Think About The Raquette’s Future?
Please let us know what you think about the proposals outlined in this report! Written input and comments regarding the plan are welcome and should be directed to: Jim Murphy, Economic Development Specialist, Technical Assistance Center at SUNY Plattsburgh, 101 Broad St., Plattsburgh, NY 12901 or via e-mail at murphyja@plattsburgh.edu Comments will be accepted until June 6, 2007. All comments received by that time will be incorporated into the final report.
About The Project:

Charting The Future of the Raquette River Corridor

The ultimate purpose of this project was to help chart the course of the future of the Raquette River corridor, by developing goals and objectives designed to:

- Increase opportunities for public access, water-based recreation and tourism;
- Protect sensitive waterfront resources;
- Revitalize villages, hamlets and main streets;
- Protect historic resources and enhance opportunities for heritage tourism;
- Protect water quality, and
- Develop a sustainable tourism-based economy.

The process used in developing this strategic plan has been as important – perhaps even more important – than its final recommendations. The route we have taken, charted by New York State’s Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, has helped towns and villages throughout the state to bring new life and energy to their communities. This process focuses on building consensus and implementing a clear vision of the future. It depends upon broad public involvement, creative partnerships, patience and persistence.

These elements were especially important in developing a plan for the Raquette River corridor. At more than 170 miles, the Raquette is the second longest river in New York State. But it has never really been looked at as a single entity. Instead, the Raquette has been viewed in only small segments, flowing through three counties and no less than 15 municipalities. It starts in the Adirondack Park and ends at the Akwesasne-St. Regis Mohawk Reservation.

One of the first challenges in developing a single vision for such a complicated stretch of water was to identify and to bring together the river corridor’s many stakeholders, including state agencies with management authority over the waterway, like the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation, municipal officials, tourism promotion agents and economic developers, river-related businesses and recreational enthusiasts and other residents who value the river and understand the importance of both protecting and taking full advantage of this unique asset.

With guidance and the financial support of the NYS Department of State’s Division of Coastal Resources, a core group of people interested in making more of the river corridor was expanded to include as many stakeholders as possible from throughout the corridor. The formation of the Raquette River Corridor Revitalization Strategy Advisory Committee brought together people with many differing views about how best to protect and/or use the river as a significant catalyst for economic growth. The committee worked together for several months to meld their disparate dreams into a common vision and to, ultimately, lay the groundwork for a shared future for all Raquette River communities.

The Advisory Committee and the Dept. of State approved a Public Participation Plan designed to ensure that everyone who valued the river had an opportunity to offer their ideas, concerns and priorities for its future development. Past practice has taught that successful waterfront revitalization happens when the community realizes that the waterfront belongs to them. The Advisory Committee drove that point home when conducting three visioning workshops designed to help

Continued on Page 4

For more information about the Raquette River Corridor revitalization project or the Friends of the Raquette River Corridor, visit their website at:
http://www.racquetteriver.org/
participants reveal the ways in which they use and value their waterfront and the river corridor and to identify important issues, opportunities, and potential obstacles to future waterfront revitalization efforts.

The workshops were held in different parts of the river corridor:

- Aug. 3, 2006 at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake
- Aug. 10, 2006 at Norwood-Norfolk Central School, and
- Aug. 17, 2006 at SUNY-ESF Ranger School in Wanekena.

The Aug. 10 workshop drew more than 40 participants, including public officials, business leaders, recreational enthusiasts and members of the general public.

The other two sessions drew significantly fewer people, but nevertheless allowed members of the Advisory Committee to make important connections with stakeholders in those regions. All three public sessions generated significant publicity for the revitalization effort.

Because so many of the recommendations outlined in this report will ultimately require community support, it was vital to involve the public right at the beginning of the process. The course of action outlined in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program has not only helped the Advisory Committee to build and sustain local support for the revitalization effort, but has also helped to foster an appreciation of corridor-wide assets and a recognition of local issues and concerns of communities along the Raquette.

This input, as well as the expertise of the experts and enthusiasts who make up the Advisory Committee, were used to develop a consensus vision for the future of the river corridor and the goals and strategies that will be used to achieve that vision.

The cooperative nature of this effort will provide the impetus for an ongoing process for enhancing the tourism economies of the river corridor while protecting the assets that make those economies sustainable.

One of the most important aspects of this process is that it connects the communities along the river corridor in ways that have not been explored before.

Charting The Course of the Raquette’s Future...
As the river tumbles off the Adirondack Dome, the vertical drop from Carry Falls reservoir to Hannawa Falls is approximately 800 feet over a distance of about 35 miles - a drop of almost 23 feet every mile.

The geographic boundary for the Raquette River corridor was designed to follow recognizable natural features surrounding the river, the primary highways used to access the corridor and those communities with current and/or potential connections to the Raquette River. Since one of the primary goals of the initiative was to seek ways to better connect river communities to the Raquette, as well as each other, the geographic boundaries of the study area included each of the communities in their entirety.

The communities identified as Raquette River communities for the purpose of this study include:

In St. Lawrence County, the Town of Massena, Village of Massena, Town of Norfolk, Village of Norwood, Town of Potsdam, Village of Potsdam, Town of Parishville, Town of Pierrepont, Town of Colton and the Town of Piercefield. The project also includes lands within the Akwesasne-St. Regis Mohawk Reservation.

In Franklin County, the Town of Tupper Lake and the Town of Harrietstown.

In Hamilton County, the Town of Long Lake and the Town of Arietta.

The Raquette River Corridor extends approximately 170 miles from the source of the river near Blue Mountain Lake to its final destination at the Akwesasne/St. Regis Mohawk Reservation on the St. Lawrence River.
A Revitalization Strategy for the Raquette River Corridor

Few Have Real Appreciation For Corridor Assets

At more than 170 miles, the Raquette River is New York State’s second longest river, next to the mighty Hudson. But driving along the scenic Olympic Byway west to where Route 3 intersects with Route 56 in the middle of the Adirondack Park, few visitors to New York’s “North Country” will gain a true appreciation for the central role the river corridor has played in the region’s history, culture and economy for more than 200 years.

Some sections of the river have clearly defined tourist markets interwoven into the local economy, while other sections are almost invisible to visitors and residents alike. The casual motorist traveling along the roads that run along or across this vital waterway are likely to miss much of what the Raquette has to offer. Even experienced paddlers and sportsmen are apt to view the corridor in only small sections, suitable for a day of fishing, some overnight camping or the pursuit of specific recreational opportunities like hunting or whitewater rafting.

Few have viewed the entire river corridor in any meaningful way. Fewer still have tried to incorporate the entire corridor’s many assets into a unified strategy for revitalizing the communities along the Raquette. While all corridor communities understand the economic importance and potential of their waterfronts, some do a better job than others in directly connecting the Raquette to their local economies. To date, local river-related economic development is not being conducted on a corridor-wide basis.

Corridor’s History and Culture:

Raquette River Provided Region’s First ‘Highway’

The early history of the Raquette River was written by the native peoples who used the lower section of the Ah.na.wa’te, or rapid river, as it flows into the St. Lawrence River for hunting and fishing sites and, later, the region’s first trading settlements. With the river filled with fish and the forests full of game, the native ancestors of Akwesasne and sister tribes used the river as a water highway to native settlements as far south as Norwood, and beyond to the great wilderness that was the Adirondacks. Later, the French and then the English used the river to extend their beaver trapping empires. Early explorers of the Raquette noted tall pines, which soon were harvested to be exported through Montreal to Europe for masts of sailing ships. It is interesting to note that exploration of the Raquette began from the St. Lawrence River to the north. It was much later that exploration reached into the higher elevations of the Adirondacks.

The first really permanent non-native settlement, where the river leaves the mountains and enters the St. Lawrence Valley, was established after 1802 when David Clarkson and his brother-in-law purchased a large part of the Township of Potsdam. In spite of the long, cold winters, land was cleared for farming, and the river provided both transportation and power for the logging industry. A lot of Adirondack timber was floated down the Raquette to saw mills in Potsdam. By the mid-1800s, busy little towns like Norwood, Norfolk and Raymondville were also harnessing the power of the Raquette for saw mills, grist mills, paper mills and woolen factories. Settlement at Childwold, adjacent to the Raquette in the town of Piercefield, did not occur until 1878. In 1892, the Piercefield Paper and Mining Company began operating a paper mill at Piercefield. This mill on the Raquette was one of the original mills in the later formation of International Paper Company.

During the early- to mid-1800s, the community of Massena also grew in prominence as a health retreat as people flocked to the area to enjoy the medicinal benefits of bathing in the sulphur mineral springs found along the Raquette River. Known to the Indians as Kanaswastakeras, meaning “the place where the mud smells bad,” the Iroquois had been visiting the springs and using the waters for their “curative” powers for generations before settlers from New England and Europe came to this area. The sulphur springs provided a booming economy for the place known as Massena Springs. Many grand homes and hotels opened and grew to accommodate the many people who would come to “take the Massena waters.” For those who couldn’t travel here, the curative waters were locally bottled and shipped far and wide. The Springs continued as the community’s primary industry until the turn of the 20th century when industry found its footing with low cost hydro power.

Primarily in response to the interests of Potsdam’s lumber entrepreneurs, a law was passed by New York State

Continued on Page 8
The Raquette River Corridor: Four Rivers in One

Perhaps the easiest way to appreciate the true magnitude and diversity of the Raquette River corridor is to consider it as four rivers in one, each defined by distinct natural features and historic functions. The river is referred to as the “Trunk Line” along its upper source, the “Wild River” where it runs free and relatively unencumbered with its rapids and falls, the “Workhorse River” along the section of river dominated by hydroelectric dams and reservoirs, and “Ah.na.wa’te” or Rapid River, a term used here to describe where the Raquette flows into the St. Lawrence River at Akwesasne (St. Regis Mohawk Reserve on the U.S. side). It is important to note that the Mohawks, however, refer to the entire Raquette as Ah.na.wa’te.

*Trunk Line* – This section of the river includes the traditional Adirondack canoe route running from Raquette Lake to Forked Lake, through Long Lake and down the Raquette River to the canoe carry around Raquette Falls, then down to Axton Landing. During much of the early settlement of this flat-water section of the upper Raquette, the river was used for hunting, fishing and trapping, first by native peoples, then the French and English and later by early settlers, expert wilderness guides and those wealthy sportsmen who came to view the northern wilderness as their personal playground. In the early spring, this section of the river served the burgeoning lumber industry downriver. Logs cut in this section of the river during the winter were driven down the Raquette to mills in Tupper Lake or further down to mills in Colton, Hannawa Falls, Potsdam, Norwood and Norfolk.

*Wild River* – This section of river, from Piercefield to the beginning of the Carry Falls Reservoir, remains much as it has for centuries. Because this segment of the river drops by more than 100 feet in elevation in approximately 15 miles, this section includes much of the serious whitewater left on what was once a very wild river. There are carries around most of the rapids and falls, but they are not well marked. This section of the Raquette River is very scenic and includes several miles of pristine flat water paddling. “The wild river” is today a little known treat for the whitewater-paddling enthusiast, but lumbermen once knew it for its very dangerous rapids and falls.

*Workhorse River* – Today this section of river contains nine dams with reservoirs (Carry Falls, Stark, Blake Falls, Rainbow Falls, Five Falls, South Colton, Higley Falls, Colton, and Hannawa Falls). Most of them are used for the production of hydroelectric power. Most of these dams were constructed during the 1950s and the reservoirs that were created are now large lakes that provide excellent recreational opportunities. As the river tumbles off the Adirondack Dome, the vertical drop from Carry Falls reservoir to Hannawa Falls is approximately 800 feet over a distance of about 35 miles - a drop of almost 23 feet every mile. The hydroelectric production of these dams is enormous. All of the dams have well-marked carry trails for paddlers wishing to travel from one reservoir to the next. Historically this section of the river was a very wild section of river. With logging and milling being the primary use of the river, it was, and is still a real workhorse of a river.

*Rapid River* - There are no fewer than nine additional dams and impoundments from Hannawa Falls down river to Raymondville, but these are smaller in scale and scope. They are not as imposing and do not create extensive reservoirs. This section of the Raquette River is very different from the sections further up-river. This is a pastoral and industrial river. There are a few sections of class I rapids around some of the dams and there are several old industrial ruins of pulp and paper mills along the river, as well as currently operating paper mills near Norwood and Norfolk.

*Note* - The orientation of the residents of the Lower Raquette River, as it flows through the St. Lawrence Valley to empty into the St Lawrence River, is much different than those of the Upper Raquette. Here the river has served as “the backyard” for these communities, used primarily to carry pollutants away from the factories, towns and villages along its banks. Modern pollution control measures have cleaned up this section of the river, but the popular orientation is still very different from the residents living up-river. There the Raquette is viewed as the “front yard” for those communities that have traditionally based their livelihoods on river-related tourism.
In 1846, New York State classified the Raquette River as a public highway for the benefit of downstream lumber mills.

Advisory Board Member Mike Prescott spent much of the summer of 2006 paddling the entire length of the Raquette River, developing a comprehensive educational program highlighting the history, culture and natural assets of the corridor. He is presenting this program in communities along the corridor. For more information on Mike’s program, e-mail him at mpresco1@nycap.rr.com

Raquette River History, From Great Camps To Healing Waters...

In 1846 declaring the river, from Raquette Lake to the St. Lawrence, to be a public highway for lumbering. Now the river channel could be improved and fully utilized to float logs to down-stream lumber mills. Lumbering was a tough and dangerous job in wild and unpredictable territory. Many river drivers were swept away, hurt and drowned, working the logjams along this wild and remote section of river. Paddlers can still see the remains of rock retaining walls built to keep logs in the river flow and not allow them to pile up in low-lying backwater areas. Many used the giant glacial deposit, “Sunday Rock” in South Colton to mark the transition from civilization to wilderness, where there was no Sunday - and very little law. A logging railroad was constructed in 1916 and improved access by rail and petroleum-powered equipment brought an end to the big log drives on the Raquette by 1924.

In the mid- to late-1800s, about the time when W.H.H. Murray described the corridor in his book “Adventures in the Wilderness,” the Adirondacks became the premier destination for small boat vacations. Distance from major population centers did not exclude the Raquette River corridor from the rush of wealthy sportsmen who were discovering the attractions of the northern wilderness. By the end of the Civil War, several small hotels were catering to downstate sportsmen, including a hotel near Stark Falls known as Racquette House. More hotels sprang up to accommodate the visiting “sports,” and exclusive hunting clubs were formed by outside interests. The Kildare Club, originally known as the Vanderbilt Club, was founded in 1881 and acquired 10,000 acres of land in Hopkinton’s Kildare section, abutting the Franklin County line. Today much of this property remains a private estate. In 1894 the Jordan Club was founded and soon purchased a section of land for a seasonal community on the eastern shore of the Raquette at Hollywood, a community now submerged beneath the waters of Carry Falls Reservoir. Similar clubs were founded throughout the adirondacks and along the Raquette River corridor.

The inhabitants of the Raquette River corridor once used boats more for necessity than pleasure. The canoe, rowboat and Adirondack guide boat were all needed to ease the burdens of travel before the advent of a good road system. With the introduction and maintenance of a good road system, boating became less essential as a means of transportation.

Construction of the Niagara Mohawk power projects in the 1950s also significantly altered the nature of the river corridor, as waterfalls and rapids were dried up or covered up and new lakes created behind the power dams.
Corridor Provides Visitors Diverse Outdoor Experience

The Raquette River corridor provides visitors with a rich and diverse outdoor experience. From its picturesque scenery to its bountiful array of plant and animal life, the river corridor serves to showcase thousands of acres of distinctive river and marsh habitat.

The Raquette River corridor is home to endangered species like the bald eagle and the spruce grouse. According to New York State Breeding Bird Atlas data, 101 species of birds are believed to breed along the river corridor. Birds associated with marshes, ponds, lakes and streams are numerous and include the common loon, great blue heron, green heron, American bittern, Canada goose and shore birds such as the spotted sandpiper. The most common ducks found along the river include the American black duck, mallard, wood duck, hooded merganser and common merganser. Birds of prey common to the corridor include the barred owl, great horned owl, red-tailed hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, red-shouldered hawk, coopers hawk and broad-winged hawk. Songbirds, such as woodpeckers, flycatchers, wrens, thrushes, vireos, warblers, blackbirds, finches, grosbeaks, and sparrows can all be spotted along the corridor.

There are many rare and exotic plants, as well as plentiful fishing for walleyes, perch, bass and pike. Certain native species, notably brook trout and round whitefish, have declined due to the introduction of other fishes. Other natives, brown bullhead and creek chubs, for example, are presently much more abundant than ever historically, having been spread to many waters where previously absent. Like the majority of waters in today’s Adirondack wilderness areas, fish populations along the river corridor have been substantially altered by the activities of mankind.

The Raquette River Corridor is teeming with all kinds of wildlife, including coyotes, fox, otters, beaver, porcupines, minks and muskrats, as well as larger mammals like moose, white tail deer and black bear, providing a variety of hunting opportunities.

For whitewater enthusiasts, the 15-mile stretch of the Raquette River from Piercefield to Carry Falls is one

Continued on Page 10

More Hiking Opportunities
http://northcountryguide.com/tourism/outdoor/hiking/

Jamestown Falls and Moody Falls (easy)
Short, unmarked routes lead to views of these exciting falls on the Raquette River. About 1.5 miles north of the intersection of Routes 3 and 56, an unmarked trail leads to the base of Moody Falls where the river twists through a chasm and drops 22 feet. Another mile up the road, a .3 mile woods road leads to views of Jamestown Falls, a long cascading waterfall. Private property is adjacent to both areas, please stay within the boundaries of state land.

Stone Valley Recreation Area (7.5 mile loop or 3.2 miles one-way, easy to moderate)
The turbulent Raquette River provides the backdrop for this walk which has several steep sections and leads along both sides of the river. You’ll enjoy viewing the dramatic rapids, waterfalls, gorges, rock outcroppings and a section referred to as “The Tubs.” The first mile below the Colton dam is especially exciting. Informational plaques are located along the trail and there are some tannery ruins on the west side.

http://adklaurentian.org/?page=stonevalley.html
http://www.adirondackhistory.org/newguides/index.html

Higley Flow State Park Trails: A number of great trails are available at Higley Flow State Park. Take route 56 south to South Colton and turn right onto Cold Brook Drive – watch for signs on the right. Small day use fee during summer months, but trails are open for skiing all winter at no charge. The Warm Brook Trail follows the Blue Trail Markers. It is 1.3 miles of rolling, hilly trail through the park’s northern hardwood forests and pine plantations. The Beaver Pond Trail follows the Yellow Trail Markers and is .9 miles long. The interpretative trail goes through several different ecological habitats - pine plantations, wetlands, open meadow, and northern hardwoods, and winds around a beaver pond. There are seven interpretative signs alongside this trail. The Cedar Brook Trail follows the Red Trail Markers and is 3.8 miles long. The trail has several loops that go through pine plantations. It offers steep, hilly terrain, suitable for advanced cross-country skiers. For more trail information and trail maps, contact Higley Flow State Park at 262-2880.

Browns Bridge-Postwood Park (5.7 miles, easy)
This trail system, used primarily for cross-country skiing, is intersected by numerous back roads that provide many different options for walks of various durations. There is a swimming area and a canoe access site at the sand beach on the Raquette River.

http://www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/Trail-Guide/SLCTrailGuide-7-03.pdf
Corridor Offers Ample Opportunities, Limited Access

While the Raquette River corridor provides ample opportunity for canoeing, kayaking, fishing and communing with nature, full enjoyment of this remarkable resource is limited by access that is, at best, informal, inconsistent and/or simply unavailable along many stretches of the river.

Although boating access is available at numerous spots along the river, much of the corridor is inaccessible to motorists because of the lack of designated public parking areas, ‘drive-in’ camping facilities, appropriate signage and other infrastructure that would make access to the river more convenient, particularly to the occasional or day use visitor. Access issues are generally more pronounced in the northern portion of the corridor.

Even where access might be available, public lands, canoe carries and take-outs are sometimes not well marked and access seems to be limited to the summer season. To date, no formal assessment of the corridor’s trails, carries or other infrastructure has been conducted to facilitate a better understanding of how – or even whether – to make access improvements.

The Raquette River corridor includes some of the most popular Adirondack canoe routes. Canoe routes along of the premier routes in the state. The rapids and waterfalls include Upper and Lower Sol’s Rapids (class II and class IV), Burnt Island and Pier Rapids (class II), Hedgehog Rapids (class II), Moosehead Rapids, (very scenic mile and a quarter, class II and III), Moody Falls (very dangerous class V-VI falls) and finally Jamestown Falls (like Moody Falls an extremely dangerous class V – VI falls). Brookfield Power also schedules releases for whitewater paddling of the Stone Valley section of the Raquette in Colton.

With its warm summer days and refreshingly cool nights, overnight camping at any of the several lean-tos located along the river banks of the Upper Raquette is a once in a lifetime experience, if only for its panoramic views of the gently sloping Adirondack mountains, especially when summer gives way to the blaze of autumn colors at the end of the season.

As the Raquette flows to the dam at Colton Flow, it is typical of other small rivers that flow through the county. Access is available at numerous points, fishing pressure is light, and gamefish range from crappies and muskie on the lower sections to trout in the upper regions. Through the Raquette River corridor, visitors and residents can access hundreds of square miles of state forest land that is open to the public for hiking, hunting, bird watching and many other forms of recreation.

Farther upstream on the Raquette are Jamestown and Moody Falls, accessed by short trails from Route 56. Stone Valley is a cooperative recreation area and the hiking trails that run along both the east and west sides of the river can be accessed from the bridge in Colton.

Brookfield Power, Inc., the primary operator of the Raquette River hydrogeneration facilities in St. Lawrence County, operates several recreation facilities, including boat launches and two campgrounds, off Route 56 on the western shore of the river that provide public access. A small parcel of New York State wild forest land adjacent to Route 56 at Jamestown Falls provides public motor vehicle access.

Higley Flow State Park is located in the township of Colton. The park is located on Higley Flow, a body of water which is an impoundment of the Raquette River. The park offers a sandy beach on Higley Flow with shower facilities and a lifeguard, a nature center which offers summer activities for children, picnic tables and pavilions, a playground, hiking, a nature trail, recreation programs, a boat launch, fishing, a campground with tent and trailer sites, seasonal deer hunting, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and ice fishing.

The Red Sandstone Trail, located between Hannawa Falls and Potsdam (see map, next page), provides another unique hiking opportunity along the river corridor. The trail begins on Mill Street in Hannawa Falls

Continued on Page 11
Corridor Provides Ample Opportunities For Fun...

Continued From Page 10
across from the fire station and continues without interruption for 3.5 miles to the northern tip of Sugar Island. It is intended to be a four-season trail. The Sugar Island portion of the trail includes more than two miles of cross-country ski trails.

The Catamount Lodge and Forest, located on Route 56 near Colton, also maintains a trail system which is open for public use and provides access to the Catamount Forest Preserve parcel.

Canoe access to the river above the dam in Potsdam is available in the village near Clarkson Inn. Below the dam access is easily found at bridges, roadsides, and sites near the hydroelectric dams. Handicapped access and a boat launch are found at Norwood Pond.

Norwood Pond is a popular place for recreation on the Raquette River and can be quite busy. On the other hand, the section of the river between Potsdam and Norwood and between Norwood and Raymondville is often forgotten because of the dams obstructing the river and low levels of water at certain times of the year. Canoes and other easily portaged boats are ideal to navigate this section of river. Access to the Raquette is also available at Springs Park in the village of Massena and at the river corridor’s end at Akwesasne, where the Raquette runs into the St. Lawrence River.

DEC Identifies Corridor Assets In Unit Management Plans
The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has released the Draft Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the Raquette Boreal Unit, which contains a large section of the Raquette River corridor. Unit Management Plans are intended to assess the natural and physical resources present within a unit, identify opportunities for recreational use and consider the ability of the resources and ecosystems to accommodate public use. Further, they identify DEC management objectives for public use which are consistent with the land classification guidelines and the wild character of these lands. The UMP is available at: http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dlf/publands/ump/reg6/raquette/index.html
Key Local Waterfront Revitalization Issues

a) Stakeholders Need to Coordinate Efforts, Work Together: Because it is such a vital asset to the region, the Raquette River corridor attracts several stakeholder organizations with a vested interest in the future of the corridor.

The best efforts of these groups, however, are not very well known or understood by others with similar vested interests. All too often, these groups do not communicate well with each other about ways they may cooperatively advocate for the corridor, plan improvements, pool resources or share their strategic plans in a way that maximizes results.

Likewise, communities along the river often do not look beyond their own municipal boundaries in developing plans for maximizing the economic and recreational potential of the Raquette. The first step in finding common ground for cooperative action will be to develop strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with all those who share a love for the Raquette and are interested in its future.

b) Comprehensive Corridor Information Needed: While there are several sources of information available to visitors about the Raquette River, there is not one single, complete information source for the entire 170 miles of the corridor. This could be because the river corridor cuts through portions of three counties as well as the Adirondack Park, with little linkage between available information sources in many cases.

There is also no single, comprehensive guidebook available to paddlers providing corridor-wide information about routes, access points, carries and campsites.

c) Communities Need to Connect to Corridor, Better Package Experience: Further, there are some sections of the corridor that are not very well connected to river communities and the corridor itself is rarely viewed as an integrated system. There has also been inadequate effort to “package” the Raquette River experience in a way that promotes increased tourism.

The type of nature-based tourism that this process will encourage and promote should not only create new tourism-related jobs which bring in outside revenues, but also enhance the region’s overall quality of life. Quality of life issues are also very important in recruiting and retaining industries well beyond the tourism sector and, as a result, assets like the river corridor should be included when promoting the local quality of life to potential new businesses.

d) Balance Must Be Sought Between Access and Protection: While the ultimate goal of developing a comprehensive revitalization strategy for the Raquette River corridor will be to increase access to and usage of the river’s natural assets, those who have been involved in the process recognize that with this goal comes the responsibility to ensure that the very reasons people come to enjoy the river are not diminished or destroyed by carelessness or overuse.

Certain species of fish, like brook trout and round whitefish, have already declined and some of the vibrant natural habitat along the river is already endangered. There is currently little understanding about the impact of public use on the corridor’s habitats, because of the lack of consistent inventory and assessment of the situation.

Furthermore, there is a need to educate people unfamiliar with interacting with wildlife about issues of safety and the necessity of being stewards as well as tourists when visiting the river corridor.

e) River Lacks Corridor-wide Identity: The Raquette River is the second longest river in New York State. The Raquette, however, is rarely viewed in its entirety, primarily because it lacks a single, unifying brand or corridor-wide identity. There is currently little interconnection of recreational opportunities at different sections of the Raquette that would enhance the overall experience of visitors, resulting in extended stays, increased expenditures and expanded economic impact. With limited resources for promotion, it only makes sense for river com-

Continued on Page 13
Visioning Process: Analysis of Issues, Opportunities, Constraints

The community visioning process provided the seeds for the ultimate goals and strategies developed through this strategic planning process. In three public sessions in different parts of the river corridor, participants discussed how they use their waterfront and river corridor, why they value it and what they see as existing problems and opportunities. Their input helped to identify the geographic boundaries of the project and to help define the potential goals, objectives, priorities and resources available for the revitalization strategy.

Facilitators guided the public through a formal visioning process which included a SWOT Analysis (a discussion of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), as well as a public discussion of their visions of the future, by providing ideas prefaced with the questions, “I wish,” “What if,” or “We could.”

This information helped the Advisory Committee to better size up what they have to work with and what may be working against the effort. This process also helped the committee to gain a better understanding of the waterfront and its assets as well providing an important connection to people and resources that will play an important role in future revitalization efforts.

A summary of those sessions, sorted by area of emphasis, appears in Appendix B.

The Corridor Advisory Group developed the following vision statement, based in part on the community visioning sessions: The vision of the Raquette River Corridor is to encourage cooperation and interaction among the townships along the river thereby creating a sense of unity, and to engage in the joint promotions of the recreational opportunities and natural beauty of the river so that residents and visitors can best experience the second longest river in New York State. Enhanced facilities along the corridor should promote tourism and encourage tourists to spend time along the river while conserving and protecting the natural resources of the area. Increased tourism and recreational activities will encourage revitalization of riverside hamlets through association with and promotion of the Ten Rivers Region. Each township may emphasize its own features while supporting those of the adjoining communities.

Key Local Waterfront Issues Identified Through Visioning Process...

Continued From Page 12

Communities to work together to bring tourists to the corridor. What is needed is a unified approach to promoting the Raquette, providing an opportunity to emphasize the assets of a single community while supporting those in communities throughout the corridor. An added benefit of this approach may also be to draw visitors away from overused sections of the river to more underutilized areas.

f) Need for Education Programs: The Raquette River corridor, with its long, rich cultural heritage and teeming natural habitat, offers anyone who visits an education of a lifetime. The lessons that can be learned from the river about our past, present and future, however, could be better integrated into the curricula of local school districts, our many institutions of higher education and could enrich the experiences of those visiting the river corridor.

Public visioning sessions pointed out the need to develop educational programs that showcase what is unique about the corridor and its relationship to the communities and people living along the river. The Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks (The Wild Center), the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake, the Akwesasne Cultural Museum and museums in municipalities along the corridor present perfect opportunities for establishing or expanding river-related education programs.

The New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation has also cited the need to develop well-planned and multifaceted educational programs designed to influence visitor behavior. The numerous wetland habitats and hundreds of varieties of birds, fish, flora and fauna all represent a wonderful living lab for the next generation of ecologists.
Some Conclusions, Based on Visioning Sessions....

- It is important to promote the “wild side” of the river.
- The fact that we are “a little out of the way” is a plus.
- It is important in the future to conserve (rather than preserve) what we have. The minute we bring in more people, that will dramatically change the nature of the river.
- We need to use our assets to bring people and money into the region. The river corridor is an important recruiting tool for Potsdam’s colleges and major industries. With quality of life issues so important to efforts to recruit and retain top level professionals, the river will play an even more important role in bringing and keeping industry of all types in the region.
- Need to promote the river as the second longest in New York State
- Need to take a regional approach to everything we do
- Usage must be sustainable. What is eventually developed must have limited physical impact over time.
- Stakeholder groups will play a role in environmental stewardship.
- While the river itself may not be much different in 10-15 years, how we access and promote the river and connect to the various “Raquette River Communities” will be enhanced.
- What we do must show respect for the river, express pride in its communities and promote greater economic viability.
- Keep in mind the working nature of this river and its role as a power producer
- Need to connect with Clarkson and other educational institutions with a stake in the river.
- Need to “keep things small,” in the proper scale. We must be careful not to greatly alter the nature of the river to promote a specific type of activity. Promotion and expansion of whitewater rafting, for example, would change the nature of the river in ways that may not be compatible with other uses.
- Primarily marketing to the “outdoor enthusiast” and the “eco-tourist
- Need to look at reservoir system as “little lakes,” perhaps even changing their names. We also need to make these jewels easier to find. You don’t even know the reservoirs are there!
- Need to develop clear connections to other regional attractions and vice versa. (from the colleges to the casino).
- Need to tie the road to the river, especially along Route 56 south of Colton. Look at developing a blueway and/or byway trail system
- The journey as the attraction!
- Promote the diversity of experiences.
- Develop a single canoe trail for the entire length of the river
- The river should appeal to different types of users, be multimodal in the sense that it connects roads and river and multi-nodal, that is having lots of access points to enter and exit.
- Develop a map showing carries from Blue Mountain Lake to Akwesasne
- Need to develop signage on the highway and along the river that is unique, consistent and includes things like take-outs and put-ins, carries and important safety information.
- Need to incorporate GPS coordinates and internet-based “virtual tour” of the river
- Kiosk maps and information available electronically that would be akin to a museum’s self-guided tour, with specific stations along the corridor.
- Raquette River Corridor initiative should be incorporated into town and village planning efforts and be included as part of comprehensive plans, LWRPs, comprehensive plans, etc.
- Need to highlight the river’s connection to each community…make the designation “a Raquette River Community.”
- Need to work cooperatively with RR Communities on projects of common interest and to develop formal – and financial – relationships with each community.
Once consensus was reached on the general vision of the Raquette River corridor, members of the Advisory Committee worked to develop a step-by-step strategy to guide the group for the next phase of plan preparation and ultimate implementation. Using the guideposts suggested by the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, the committee utilized the information collected at the visioning sessions and through the inventory and analysis to develop its goals, priorities and strategies for implementation.

**Goal 1: To Develop a Framework for Voluntary Regional Cooperation**

**Objective: To Connect River Stakeholders as Meaningful Partners in Revitalization Efforts.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies/Activities</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Potential $ Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Create a Blueway Trail plan</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Dept. of State (DOS); River Communities; Stakeholder Groups</td>
<td>DOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop a more formal working relationship with each of the municipalities along the river corridor. Explore the possibility of developing a Memorandum of Agreement establishing a Raquette River Intermunicipal Coordinating Committee.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Dept. of State (DOS); River Communities</td>
<td>Minimal Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Connect to other conservation and/or recreation initiatives and/or organizations that involve or intersect with the river corridor.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>RR Stakeholders; State Agencies; APA Adk Mountain Club; Private Interests (Power Companies)</td>
<td>Minimal Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Enter into a meaningful dialogue with regional tourism promotion and economic development organizations to ensure that programs complement rather than compete. When possible, integrate programs with all groups sharing common ground.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>TPAs and Chambers; ED Organizations State Agencies Rec. Clubs</td>
<td>Minimal Costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Online Information: Raquette River Corridor Canoe Routes and Whitewater Rafting**

*Raquette River Through Franklin County:*
http://www.adirondacks.com/frankadkroute1.html
http://www.adirondacks.com/saranacsection.html

*A Guide to Canoeing and Boating Long Lake & Raquette Lake*
http://www.longlake-ny.com/Boating.html
http://www.longlake-ny.com/fishing.html

*Whitewater Rafting Websites*
http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1387/
http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1386/
http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Gauge/detail/id/2040/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies/Activities</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Potential $ Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify Opportunities for increased public access to the corridor.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>NYS DEC and DOS Adirondack Mt. Club Stakeholder Groups Municipalities</td>
<td>DOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify/establish a principal point of river access in each community where information can be made available to the public.</td>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>Dept. of State (DOS); River Communities</td>
<td>Minimal Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Work in cooperation with DEC on developing more camping opportunities on Carry Falls Reservoir and the former Whispering Pines camp on Blake.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>NYS DEC Dept. of State (DOS) Stakeholder Groups Brookfield Power</td>
<td>DEC DOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identify or develop designated stops along the corridor for rest, overnight stays and better access to land-based attractions.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>NYS DEC Dept. of State (DOS) Stakeholder Groups Municipalities</td>
<td>DEC; DOS Municipalities Private Interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Investigate the possibility of developing state land between Raymondville and Massena for a state campsite.</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>NYS DEC Stakeholder Groups Municipalities</td>
<td>DEC Stakeholders Municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Work with other stakeholders and DEC to develop criteria for the establishment of new trails along the corridor, as well as guidelines for trail development and siting.</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>NYS DEC Dept. of State (DOS) Stakeholder Groups Municipalities</td>
<td>DEC; DOS ANCA, ADK No. Forest Canoe Trail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 3: To Encourage Responsible Use of River’s Fragile Ecosystems

Objective: To Strike a Balance between Economic Development and Resource Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies/Activities</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Potential $ Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Network with environmental groups connected to the river corridor and help advocate for the environmental stewardship of the river at all levels of government.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>River-Connected Environmental Groups; APA, ANCA; Northern Forest Canoe Trail</td>
<td>Minimal Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide information to the general public on how to live with the land, river and wildlife, including a Code of Ethics for visitors and stakeholders.</td>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>Environmental Groups; APA, ANCA; Northern Forest Canoe Trail Dept. of State (DOS)</td>
<td>Dept. of State (DOS); River Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Promote protection of river resources by supporting sound land use policies and management practices that ensure a balance between development and protection.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>NYS DEC Dept. of State (DOS) River Communities</td>
<td>Minimal Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Facilitate ongoing research that adds to our knowledge of the corridors complicated ecosystems and the impacts of public use over time</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>DEC Stakeholder Groups Regional Universities</td>
<td>DEC Stakeholder Groups Regional Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Develop strategies that divert people away from overused areas to underused areas.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>DEC TPAs/Chambers Dept. of State (DOS)</td>
<td>DOS; DEC River Communities TPAs/Chambers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Goal 4: To Provide More Complete Corridor Information for Visitors

**Objective:** To Provide a Comprehensive User-Friendly ‘Roadmap’ to the Corridor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies/Activities</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Potential $ Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Encourage and facilitate consistent visitor orientation and informational signage along the river.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>DEC; APA; DOS ADK Club Stakeholder Groups</td>
<td>Dept. of State (DOS) Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify/inventory all existing or planned trails connecting to the Raquette, including trail ownership/management, authority and status.</td>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>DEC; APA; DOS ADK Club Stakeholder Groups Other Users</td>
<td>DEC Department of State (DOS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Develop a comprehensive “Paddlers Guide” (with online access) providing information on routes, access, carries and camping opportunities.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Chambers/TPAs Adk Mountain Club; No. Forest Canoe Trail; Outfitters APA; DEC; DOS</td>
<td>DOS Stakeholders Outfitters TPAs/Chambers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Create informational kiosks at key access points.</td>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>TPAs and Chambers; Municipalities; ANCA Dept. of State (DOS)</td>
<td>TPAs and Chambers; Municipalities; ANCA Dept. of State (DOS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Develop a “badge” system that promotes paddling experiences along different sections of the corridor.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>TPAs and Chambers; Municipalities ANCA Rec groups</td>
<td>TPAs and Chambers; Municipalities ANCA Rec groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Develop suggested itineraries, designated tours, timelines, with varying levels of difficulty.</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>TPAs and Chambers; No. Forest Canoe Trail; River Businesses</td>
<td>TPAs and Chambers; No. Forest Canoe Trail; River Businesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goal 5: To Support Educational Uses of the River corridor

**Objective:** To Work with Schools on Programs Relating to River’s History and Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies/Activities</th>
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<th>Potential $ Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Develop relationships with local school systems to facilitate the development of curricula relating to different aspects of the river.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>River School Districts BOCES Museum Programs</td>
<td>Ed Grant and/or Foundation Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Put together a traveling exhibit or road show for schools highlighting the cultural and economic importance of the Raquette.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>River School Districts BOCES Museum Programs</td>
<td>Ed Grant and/or Foundation Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Network with college programs that use the river as a “learning lab,” as well as museum programs like The Wild Center in Tupper Lake.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>College Programs Museums</td>
<td>Ed Grant and/or Foundation Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Offer public seminars on topics like fly-fishing, etc.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Chambers/ Rec Groups Private Outfitters</td>
<td>Fee-based? Rec Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Develop a Raquette River museum or river component at other museums, including an exhibit celebrating the river’s history of power production.</td>
<td>2012 or later</td>
<td>Municipalities Museums Dept. of State (DOS)</td>
<td>Member Item Dept. of State (DOS) NYS Office of Parks...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Goal 6: To Encourage a Corridor-wide Approach to Promoting Assets

**Objective:** To Develop and Promote a Corridor-wide “Identity” and “Brand.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies/Activities</th>
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<th>Partners</th>
<th>Potential $ Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Encourage the promotion of the Raquette River as a single unit with its own identity. Develop a consistent logo, marketing materials.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>No. Forest Canoe Trail; Chambers Trip Planners</td>
<td>Dept. of State (DOS) Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. With tourism stakeholders, develop a comprehensive Tourism Development Plan.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>ANCA; ARTC Chambers</td>
<td>DOS; TPAs Chambers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Develop Memorandum of Understanding with RR municipalities to coordinate planning efforts</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Municipalities Chambers/TPAs</td>
<td>Dept. of State (DOS) River Municipalities TPAs/Chambers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Enhance existing website to offer more information about programs, packages, downloadable coupons, etc.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Chambers/TPAs Private Partners</td>
<td>TPAs and Chambers; Municipalities ANCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Promote marketing partnerships with river-connected attractions, amenities and businesses. Develop “Passport” discount packages.</td>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>Attractions Lodging Properties Restaurants</td>
<td>Attractions Lodging; Restaurants TPAs and Chambers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Establish e-mail database of visitors and begin e-marketing efforts and newsletter.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Chambers Trip Planners Travel Websites</td>
<td>TPAs and Chambers; ANCA Private Partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goal 7: To Promote the Corridor as an Engine Driving Local Economies

**Objective:** To Better Link the Corridor to the Economies of Raquette River Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Potential $ Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Encourage land use policies that are compatible with the economic goals of the corridor, using model land use regulations to promote sustainable economic development.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Dept. of State (DOS) Municipalities Planning Depts.</td>
<td>Dept. of State (DOS) Municipalities Planning Depts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Work with other stakeholders to ensure that tourism development plans and marketing efforts have the shared goal of boosting corridor community economies.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Chambers/TPAs ANCA; ARTC Planning Depts. Dept. of State (DOS)</td>
<td>Dept. of State (DOS) Chambers/TPAs ANCA; ARTC Planning Depts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Develop Corridor materials for inclusion in all business recruitment efforts.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Municipalities IDAs Chambers</td>
<td>Municipalities IDAs Chambers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Encourage the development of river-related businesses and services.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Municipalities IDAs Chambers</td>
<td>Municipalities IDAs Chambers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Encourage the development of a revolving loan fund or other incentives to promote tourism-related businesses along the corridor.</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Municipalities IDAs Development Offices</td>
<td>Municipalities IDAs Development Offices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mt. Blood: Ode to the Raquette River
Words and music by Jamie Savage*

Verse 1~
Long before there were any roads
Long before any folks settled these northern woods
The mountains pushed up, fields and trees grew tall
And the Raquette River carved them down and
Helped cycle life through freeze and thaw

Refrain~
This river is mountain blood, it nourishes our bones
A place to live for wildlife, and a well-spring for our towns
A water highway through the woods, yes it’s more than it seems
It’s a partner in our lives, and
A player in our dreams

Verse 2~
This river’s held close to many hearts
There are many who remember how, on these banks their families got their start
Working at the sawmills, sorting logs down at the booms
And helping build communities
With stores and banks, and parks and schools

Refrain~

Verse 3~
This river is the source of endless fun
For campers, boaters and paddlers, and those who fish in the morning sun
And the trails along the banks, used for centuries
By native hunters and messengers
Are used by all now to hike and ski

Refrain~

Verse 4~
Now we bring our minds together as one
From the lake at Blue Mt., to Akwasasne where the partridge drums
To give thanks for the Raquette, and the lakes she fills and drains
Her long course connects us all
Bringing life and peace, and power to change

Refrain~

*Advisory Board Member Jamie Savage inspired the group by writing this special song, showcasing the unique role the river has played in the region’s history.