

The Saranac River Trail Greenway, Inc.

The **Saranac River Trail** is a recreation trail which started in the City of Plattsburgh. There is a not-for-profit entity named *Friends of the Saranac River Trail* which is primarily interested in trail clean-ups and promotion within the City of Plattsburgh. A significant portion of the existing trail falls on SUNY Plattsburgh property and SUNY has been a major partner all along. When the SUNY Technical Assistance Center was still open, a preliminary study was done related to the possible expansion of the recreation trail beyond the City of Plattsburgh. The *County Planning Office* assisted with making the maps for that study. A more comprehensive Feasibility Study was completed later by *Alta Planning + Design, Inc.* through one of those Department of State grants.

Laurie Williams and other community volunteers created an informal group called the *Saranac River Trail Valley Corridor* which eventually became an actual corporation on file with New York State called the *Saranac River Trail Greenway (SRTG), Inc.* Some of these volunteers continue to serve on the *Saranac River Trail Greenway (SRTG)* board. This corporation has 501(c)3 status with the IRS and is a not-for-profit corporation. It is an independent entity. It is not a government entity in any way. The SRTG by-laws indicate that the board members are appointed by certain municipalities which happen to be those that are involved with the area of interest identified in the Feasibility Study for the Saranac River Trail Greenway (not to be confused with the Feasibility Study for the Saranac River Trail, which is a separate document with a different scope).

Friends of the Saranac River Trail and the SRTG are two separate not-for-profits. The SRTG is primarily interested in promoting trail expansion between Lake Champlain and the Town of Saranac. The vision is for a marathon length trail, consisting of a braided network of difference trail types, and including various spurs.

James Bosley, **Planning Technician for Clinton County**, primarily works on the County's public transit program. However, he also assists with taking meeting minutes for the Saranac River Trail Greenway, Inc. (with a few exceptions) since its creation administers the Department of State grants related to the Saranac River Trail where Clinton County was the grant recipient. He also attends the SRTG meetings and takes the minutes. He is not a board member and does not vote.

Since the completion of the two DOS grants, his involvement is limited at this point. His intention is to apply for NYSDOT funding for final design and construction for the "Blue Trails" project, though there will be a match requirement and it is uncertain at this time how it will be met. Also, per NYSDOT, the easements for that section of trail must be in hand prior to applying for funding. The County Planning office address serves as the address for the SRTG. This office keeps the SRTG's records just for the sake of continuity.

The *Town of Plattsburgh Planning Department* continues to be especially helpful to the SRTG in many ways, including: identifying possible funding opportunities, providing document templates, and doing the bulk of the work involved with the adoption of the Treadwells Mills section of trail. Other efforts and support continue as well. *Laurie Williams* is no longer on the SRTG board, but through her work with the *Foundation of CVPH* she has been successful in securing funding for parks in Morrisonville which could be considered part of the Saranac River Trail system. There are efforts going on in the Town of Saranac for improvements which could be considered part of the Greenway as well. Also, the County Highway Department will be widening shoulders on certain roads as they come up for repaving so that the roads will be more bicycle friendly and those stretches can be considered part of that braided network of trails. *Clinton County* has supported the SRTG by receiving and administering the two DOS grants, providing James involvement, widening the shoulders through the Highway Department, and granting multiple Tobacco Settlement funding requests related to trail efforts. The *City of Plattsburgh* continues trail efforts within the city including a grant for two pedestrian bridges for downtown.

The SRTG board has power over its own by-laws, mission, and efforts. Board members promote the trail expansion, secure easements, fund-raise, and coordinate between the different involved municipalities. Construction costs may require the municipalities to secure grants. The SRTG may need to request that the municipality to ask go after a particular opportunity and maybe even using some of the funds raised by the SRTG to help with the match requirement. These funds may take years to raise or may necessitate securing commitments from large companies or foundations. Volunteers serving on the SRTG board remain the driving force behind trail expansion, with the various municipalities, especially the towns, being involved from time to time as grant recipients.