

## **PART C. PROJECT NARRATIVE**

### **HOUSATONIC “RIVER ROADS” BIKEWAY**

#### **1.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

##### **1.1. Primary Goals:**

- Restore and enhance the recreational values and services of the Housatonic River damaged by pollution through a multi-use Housatonic Bikeway linking existing river roads from Salisbury to New Milford and creating sustainable recreation with minimum physical impact.
- Increase, improve and promote opportunities for river related recreation through outreach program including Interpretive Signage, Maps, Brochures, Website, Podcast.

##### **Objectives:**

- Develop and implement comprehensive Public Outreach and Marketing to build public awareness and support for Bikeway
- Create Interactive GIS Bikeway Map integrating varied recreational opportunities along Housatonic River corridor.
- Create safety plan, produce and install directional markers for Bikeway
- Create, produce and install approximately 12 Interpretive Signs containing natural resource, historical and stewardship information specific to each site along the Bikeway.
- Create Housatonic River Bikeway Website with maps, calendar of river events and links to all participating groups as appropriate.
- Create downloadable Podcast audio tour of Bikeway
- Develop plan for best future locations of off-river bikeway sections in Cornwall and Kent
- Develop sustainable Bikeway Monitor Program
- Design and implement Opening Events for Bikeway.

#### **Overall Approach to Project Implementation**

The Bikeway Project proposes to link existing river roads next to or near the Housatonic to produce a continuous 45-mile multi-use biking and hiking route from Mass/CT border to the center of New Milford. The proposed Housatonic Bikeway route includes approximately 35 miles of existing publicly maintained paved and dirt roads directly adjacent to the Housatonic. The additional 10 miles will initially be on roads that are not adjacent to the Housatonic. The project will propose the best minimum impact options for moving those 10 miles to locations adjacent to the Housatonic. No land or rights of way need to be acquired. The lands that would be used for all possible options for moving the Cornwall and Kent sections closer to the River are already in State or Federal ownership.

The Housatonic River Bikeway seeks to make the breathtaking beauty of the Housatonic River Valley accessible in order to increase public appreciation and enjoyment of the river. The proposed route runs along the river for approximately 45 miles through scenic areas of Salisbury, Canaan (Falls Village), Cornwall, and Kent, and New Milford. The route will be across the River from North Canaan and will pass through parts of Sharon. A survey conducted by the Northwest Connecticut Council of Governments reveals a strong desire by residents of the region to utilize the proposed roads as a means of human powered transportation, recreation, and access to the river. This project will make a significant investment in the wellness of the region’s inhabitants. Even health insurance companies are now promoting biking and walking as a way to improve physical health. The Bikeway will be a recreational resource that does not add to global warming.

Low volume-low speed roads, ideal for walking and biking, already parallel the river for 35 miles, and originally existed for the full 45 miles. These “River Roads,” as most are named, were the original routes chosen

for relatively level travel by horses and wagons. Some of the roads remain gravel; they see little car traffic, and they offer intimate views of the River. The river roads meander through varied parcels of state, national and locally preserved land and also provide access to the centers of Falls Village, West Cornwall, Cornwall Bridge, Kent, and New Milford. What is missing are the signed connections between the river roads where they move from one bank to the other, and the public outreach to make them more accessible. From Ashley Falls to New Milford, there are only two sections where river roads are no longer available: from west Cornwall to Cornwall Bridge, and from Cornwall Bridge to Kent. Those sections total about 10 miles. Most of the banks on both sides of the River in this section either have river roads that are not “through roads,” or are already in public ownership. The exceptions are a one mile section on the east bank from Cornwall Bridge to Swift’s Bridge Road, and a half mile section on the west bank south of West Cornwall.

Our approach to project implementation begins and ends with community involvement. The first step will be to assemble a Housatonic Bikeway Steering Committee. The members will represent towns and key stakeholder groups. This working group will meet regularly to guide project planning and all phases of implementation.

The Bikeway is the centerpiece of our “River Roads” project supported by a multi-faceted, multi-media recreation guide that will greatly increase and enhance opportunities and usage of Housatonic River recreation. The project elements are designed to work together resulting in a seamless experience of the rich and varied opportunities for river recreation. Currently there are many recreational opportunities along the Housatonic. We anticipate that Restoration Grant proposals may create some new ones as well. However, there is no integration or coordination of these various types of recreation. The visitor may randomly visit one location, but have no way to learn about other nearby opportunities. We will present each feature in the context of the whole.

We will begin with a detailed GIS map of the entire corridor. This map will be used on the river brochure, each interpretive sign and online. The online version will be interactive allowing the user to click on each site and connect to photos, other websites or specific information about the site. Along the Bikeway a series of directional markers will be developed to promote safety and ensure a hassle free tour. These signs will be small medallions much like the colored blazes used on hiking trails. We envision using a logo/symbol that riders can easily recognize and follow. These markers will be part of a comprehensive safety plan developed by project team members with extensive biking experience in the US and Europe.

A series of Interpretive Signs will be installed at approximately 6-8 key locations along the Bikeway. Other Interpretive Signs will be installed at approximately 4-6 significant, highly visible and easily accessible sites nearby but not necessarily directly on the bikeway. These sites will be chosen by the Bikeway Steering Committee.

Each sign will feature

- Detailed map of the entire Bikeway with “You Are Here” designation.
- Site specific Natural Resource, Historic or Cultural information
- Stewardship information advocating River Care



All of the elements will be part of a new Housatonic River Website that can be linked to all related sites such as the CT DEP, River Commission, Towns, Boating and Fishing organizations and others. This website will become the place for “one-stop-shopping” for Housatonic Recreational Opportunities. Finally, a downloadable Podcast will be developed for the walker/rider seeking a “guided tour” of the Bikeway. This totally sustainable

“paper free” method will appeal to many trail users. Audio tours have become a standard communication means used by Museums, Historical Sites, and many other tourist destinations.

Attracting low impact visitors to a recreational path along the river corridor will give them a close-up encounter with the river. Even spending a short amount of time in the vicinity of the river, one can not help but be captivated and inspired by its scenic beauty. These experiences will replace any negative images of the Housatonic River as a damaged resource with a fresh, new image of the river as a valuable natural, historic, and scenic resource.

On the practical side a multi-use recreational Bikeway may have the added benefit of reducing automobile travel along the river and increasing physical activity among northwest Connecticut residents and visitors. Regular physical activity, such as walking, running, cycling, and skating, is a proven benefit to the cardiovascular and mental health of people of all ages. Multi-use trails offer a unique and inexpensive opportunity for people to engage in regular physical activity.

## **1.2 Project Scope and Project Implementation Plan**

See Project Budget for detailed subtasks under each Phase.

### **Phase One: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of FY 2009 January thru June**

Outreach, Build Community Support, Form Bikeway Steering Committee.

### **Phase Two: FY 2010 July 2009 thru June 2010**

Field Work

GIS Mapping

Begin Web Development

Begin Signage Development

Begin research and gather community input for Cornwall and Kent Sections of Bikeway

Marketing Plan

### **Phase Three: FY 2011 July 2010 thru June 2011**

Complete Interpretive Signage

Install directional markers and Interpretive Signage

Complete Web Development and Digital Elements

Sustainability Planning

Marketing Plan

Bikeway River Festival - Opening anticipated in Spring-Summer of 2011.

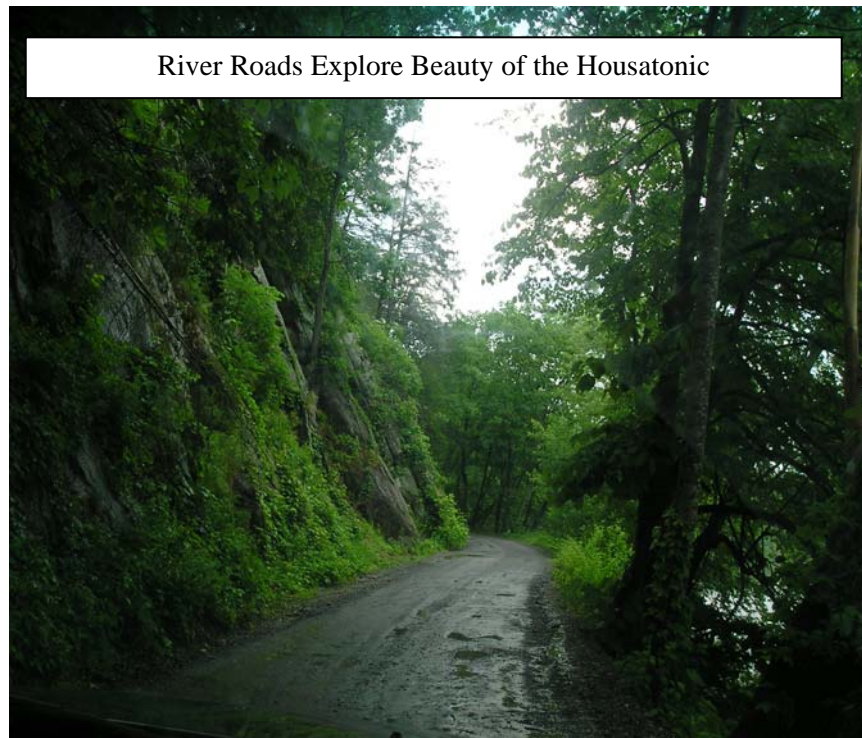
Complete Planning for Cornwall and Kent Sections of Bikeway

### **Moving the Cornwall and Kent Sections Nearer to the River**

The Cornwall and Kent sections of the Bikeway will initially go on roads that are less than ideal long-term choices. The Bikeway map will mark two alternatives for these sections. One alternative, for both the Cornwall and Kent sections, is Route 7. However, narrow shoulders on Route 7, particularly around ledges just south of West Cornwall, are a problem. Narrow shoulders are also a problem south of Cornwall Bridge. There, narrow shoulders combine with hills that increase speed differences between bikes and vehicles. These problems limit Route 7 as it is now to very experienced “road” bikers. For the Cornwall section, the Bikeway map alternative for cyclists who do not want to deal with Route 7 will be Routes 128, 125, and 4, going up to Cornwall Plains and down Furnace Brook Valley. For the Kent section, the Bikeway map alternative to Route 7 will be Route 4 west, turning south over Skiff Mountain, and then down North Kent Road or Macedonia Road to River Road. The Skiff Mountain Route goes through many high meadows, and, like the Furnace Brook Valley, is easily as attractive as many sections of the Housatonic. Both routes have the drawback of demanding hills, especially the Skiff Mountain route.

The project will study alternatives for locating the Bikeway close to the River in these Sections. The main issue is to minimize impact on areas that now relatively undisturbed, at least by recent human activity other than the railroad, even though they once had river roads. At this point, the most feasible option for the Cornwall section appears to be a bike trail in the State Forest land on the west bank of the River from West Cornwall to Cornwall Bridge, paralleling Route 7. Route 7 already impacts that side of the River. The main problem is ledges near Route 7 just south of West Cornwall. From there south to Kent, the leading long term alternative right now also appears to be on the west bank, where the Appalachian Trail runs. It may be best to wait until the build up of traffic on this popular section of Appalachian Trail requires some alternative to the current path, which in some areas already causes small scale bank erosion. A better trail will be required fairly soon in any case. The existing river roads running south from Cornwall Bridge, and north from Kent mean that a new trail constructed to accommodate bikes and growing Appalachian Trail traffic will only be a mile and half long. It could also be two separate trails, one for walkers, and one for bikers. It should also be noted that there are also minimal impact possibilities on the east bank for both sections.

The Study of near-river alternatives for the Cornwall and Kent sections will mean that informed choices can be made rapidly so that the Bikeway become a consistent, safe, doable trail, near the River, for people of all abilities for its full 45 miles.



### **Approvals Needed**

No regulatory approvals are anticipated for this project.

## **2.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA NARRATIVE**

### **2.1 Relevance and Applicability of Project**

#### **2.1.1 Location of Project**

The location of the project is along 45 miles of the main stem of the Housatonic River from Massachusetts/Connecticut border to New Milford. Extensions may be possible both to the north of Ashley Falls, and the south of New Milford. Our project team is cooperating with the Berkshire Bike Path Council on their goal of creating a bikeway from Vermont to Connecticut.

#### **2.1.2 Natural Recovery Period**

The Bikeway and Recreation Guide will provide significant and measurable healing to the recreational services of the River far in advance of the Natural Recovery period. Negative images of the Housatonic as a damaged resource will endure until corrective actions are taken. There is no means for natural recovery of the recreational services without human intervention of the types we propose.

This project will increase recreation for 45 miles with little or no construction impact. In addition, it should be noted that recovery takes oversight. Bikers and walkers provide oversight. As a group they are very likely to report any negative impacts they see along the River so these can be addressed.

#### **2.1.3 Sustainable Benefits**

Project benefits are comprehensive, long term, and self-sustaining. The lead sponsor, Northwest Conservation District, has over 50 years of experience promoting conservation in the region and key expertise in trail development and mapping.

Biking and walking are icons of sustainable human activity. One of the major advantages of this proposal is that it offers a way to dramatically increase the recreational benefits of the River without significant new construction, and with less car traffic than is normal for most recreational activities. Bikeway usage grows over time and the multiple unique benefits of an integrated recreational experience will attract a constantly growing usership of new and repeat visitors.

We will insure the sustainability of the signage proposed by using high pressure laminate materials guaranteed for ten years. The digital elements of the project (Website, Interactive Maps, Brochure, Podcast) are inherently sustainable due to ease of editing and updating.

We will develop and train a corps of Bikeway Monitors, frequent bikeway users who live in the area. The program will be modeled on the Trail Monitors directed by CT Forest and Park Association on their Blue Trail Network. After a period of years, we envision these volunteers being fully invested in the project and perhaps forming their own "Friends of the Bikeway" stewardship and advocacy organization. The pattern of growth in volunteer support is very common both during and after the creation of bike trails.

#### **2.1.4 Magnitude of Ecological Benefits**

While the focus of this project is primarily recreational, significant ecological benefits will also be achieved. The River Stewardship goals expressed on signage, brochure, website and podcast will constantly inform and reinforce good river care. These messages over time will translate into a healthier river due to decreased non point source pollution from littering, erosion, overuse of lawn chemicals and pesticides and other human activities.

In the longer term, the potential of even greater ecological benefits exists. Transportation engineers typically assume traffic growth at 2-3% a year. Whether the Bikeway exists or not, traffic growth on the river roads is

likely. However, once they are identified as a Bikeway, it will be possible to argue that motorized traffic on the river roads should be limited to property owners and service vehicles.

### **2.1.5 Magnitude of Recreational Benefits**

This project will address the demonstrated need for orientation, integration and communication of the many recreational opportunities along the Housatonic. It will significantly increase opportunities for recreational use of the river. It will bring people to the river for low impact activities. They will leave informed, inspired and anticipating their next visit. The web based nature of key elements of the project have the potential to reach much wider audiences than previously possible and to restore recreational services that were damaged by pollution.

An effort was made to get visitor numbers for the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, the nearest comparable facility to the proposed Housatonic Bikeway. While numbers were not obtained, anyone familiar with Millerton, NY on a summer weekend is also familiar with the numbers of walkers and bikers who pour off the rail trail into the center of Millerton. Trails across the country have similar usage levels, even when, like the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, they do not run along a beautiful river.

Recreational bike usage feeds bike commuting. Bike commuting is growing fast in many areas. Bike commuting, particularly along a relatively flat corridor like the River Valley, will grow as people use it to access jobs. Most jobs in the area are centered in places like Kent, Canaan, and New Milford, along the River and the proposed Bikeway.

## **2.2 Technical Merit**

### **2.2.1 Technical/Technological Feasibility**

Overall, the project has a very high likelihood of success due to detailed planning, long term stability of the project sponsor and an experienced project team possessing the expertise to complete the tasks involved.

Signage elements of the project are feasible using long standing and widely proven techniques. The National Park Service has made extremely effective use of all types of signage on bikeways and hiking trails to educate visitors and enrich their experience of nature. Here in New England, many examples of effective signage exist such as the Cape Cod Rail Trail, New London Waterfront Historic Trail and close by, the Harlem River Bike Trail. More and more, the web is the prime tool for planning personal recreation. A printed brochure will also be provided for those visitors who prefer one.

Feasibility of the Bikeway is not a question. The low volume, low speed roads are there. So are the state, federal and other preserved lands which border the River. The only technical questions are about the best minimum impact alternatives for moving the Cornwall and Kent sections close to the river. Short sections of the close-to-river alternatives may have to cross steep slopes and/or steep rock outcroppings. However, the engineering solutions to those problems have been solved on many other bike trails. The only technical issue is finding the best trade-off between lowest cost and least impact. Those trade-offs, including analysis of engineering approaches, costs, and construction impact, will be included in the study of minimum impact alternatives.

### **2.2.2 Adverse Environmental Impact**

Every effort to minimize any small adverse impacts will be planned and taken. Towns along the Bikeway will continue their road maintenance according to Best Management Practices as recommended in CT 2002 Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control. In fact, NCD has been and will continue to be the leader in providing Water Quality Protection training to many Highway Departments. We will give careful attention to the siting, installation, grading and landscaping of all signage to avoid adverse impacts of erosion. A Team of Trail Monitors will be recruited and trained to serve as the eyes and ears of the river. Any problems observed will be reported and addressed quickly.

The most significant environmental impact from the Bikeway will be that, like any other recreational project, it may bring more cars to the Valley. However, it will result in less car miles and less fossil fuel usage than any other activity except fishing. To address car impact, the corridor map will address safest non-auto access so that fewer people will bring cars.

### **2.2.3 Human Health and Safety**

Participants in any activity such as walking, hiking, biking are clearly demonstrating their choice to engage in the activity and their implicit belief that the health benefits clearly outweigh any minimal risks involved. CT State law requires bike helmets for all riders under the age of fifteen and serious riders understand the advantages of proper equipment and clothing. The main safety issues are State Highway crossings, and curves on roads. The budget provides time for field work and for consulting with state and town road officials on safety issues, including route choices, crossings for major roads like Route 44 in Salisbury, and signage plans. The signage plans will include signs to let motorists know that there will be bikes on the road.

### **2.2.4 Measurable Results**

The following tangible, specific results will be measurable

- Visitors to the website will be tracked
- Visitors to the interpretive signage points will be measured by observation
- Biking logs will be used at selected times at key points on Bikeway
- Bikeway users will be surveyed
- Bikeway Monitors will record their observations in a secure section of the website.

The number of riders and walkers on the Bikeway will be measurable, but not until the end of this project. Major specific project deliverables completed within the time period will include installed Interpretive Signage, Print Brochures with map, Website with digital interactive maps and podcast and study of the Cornwall and Kent alternatives.

The Trail Monitor Program will establish and train a group of local citizen volunteers who use the trail frequently, check for any problems and provide digital reports to project team. The monetary benefit of these volunteer services each year going forward is substantial.

## **2.3 Project Budget**

### **2.3.1 Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits**

The “River Roads” Bikeway Project will deliver significant benefits for a very reasonable cost. Since the Bikeway will use existing “River Roads” and the State and Federal lands along it already exist, economic costs will be low relative to the facility created. Costs will be very low relative to benefits, especially when compared to trail projects like rail-trails. Costs for this Bikeway will be \$4000-\$5000/mile, as opposed to \$200,000 or more for most rail trails.

Environmental benefits achieved include increased awareness and stewardship of the river, increased surface water quality leading to improved aquatic habitat. The project will have very minimal environmental impact. Social benefits achieved include a local sense of community and well being, increase in the public’s understanding of the natural world, increased aesthetic values related to the interpretive signage, increased coordination between the many stakeholders and the River Monitor program which will lead to community based environmental protection efforts. The long term benefits will greatly exceed expected costs involved. Once completed, the benefits will continue to increase indefinitely as visitors return and explore new parts of the trail.

### **2.3.2 Implementation-Oriented**

This project will deliver actual restoration of the recreational benefits and services of the river that were damaged by pollution. The great majority of project dollars are directly tied to implementation. A 45 mile multi use recreation Bikeway with Interpretive Signage, Website, Interactive Maps and Podcast are all concrete deliverables that will be created.

### **2.3.3. Budget Justification and Understanding**

The Project Manager, Patrick Hare of Hare Planning, Inc. has substantial professional experience in developing large scale bike trails and understands the endless important details that must be addressed carefully, correctly and respectfully. The Project Team understands that a 45 mile Bikeway is a major project. The budget is focused on getting it mapped, signed, and used. The cost is necessary because the Bikeway will modify usage patterns along 45 miles of transportation and land in which public, private, and non-profit owners and stakeholders feel they have vital interests. The Bikeway raises safety and route location questions that will cause frustration if clear answers are not available. The report on getting the Cornwall and Kent sections closer to the River will define the cost and choices of moving the Cornwall and Kent sections closer to the River. The budget must be adequate to address these.

Northwest Conservation District has managed numerous large grant projects in the past. Significant recent construction grants funded by Section 319 of the Clean Water Act administered through the CT Department of Environmental Protection have been on the Pomperaug River in Woodbury and Beebe Hill Erosion Site in Falls Village. Other current 319's are on Northfield Brook in Litchfield and Mill Brook in Cornwall (summer 2007). We have successfully won and completed many other grants from a wide range of sources: Farmington River Watershed Association, Rivers Alliance, USDA Rural Development and private Foundations. We have extensive experience in recruiting and managing volunteers for activities such as Streamwalks or Invasive Plant removal.

The project team has varied experience in environmental education, land planning and management. We focus on conservation problem solving including Low Impact Development techniques, stormwater management, erosion control and wetland protection. These services are supported by our talented, experienced GIS department and our Web Development expertise.

We have used GPS and GIS technologies to develop and map trails for many clients including the New Milford Reservoir Property, Pratt Center, Cornwall Conservation Trust, Naromi Land Trust in Sherman, New Hartford Open Space Commission as well as private land owners.

### **2.3.4 Leveraging of Additional Resources**

This project also leverages the considerable maintenance dollars that the towns already provide for an expanded use of the river roads. Towns along Bikeway currently put substantial funds every year into maintaining the River Roads. The Bikeway will dramatically increase the benefits from those funds.

For future phases of the project beyond what is proposed here, matching funds from the Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area are very likely. The Bikeway is a strong priority of officials of the Heritage Area as well as the Tourism Bureau. The project planning team is cooperating with the Berkshire Bike Path Council on their goal of completing a bikeway from the Vermont Border to Ashley Falls that would then link with this Housatonic Bikeway. We believe that the synergy of the two projects will be very important in securing future federal funding. USDOT "Transportation Enhancement" funds are also a strong possibility.

Foundation Grants and Corporate sponsorship of Bikeway segments by major corporations with facilities on or near the Bikeway will also be pursued. Advertising revenue from local business sponsorship will be sought to offset costs of website maintenance absorbed by the NCD. As demonstrated by the Harlem Valley Rail Trail in



New York State and the Farmington Valley Greenway in Connecticut a recreational bike path greatly improves both public opinion of a region and local business revenues.

Volunteers are a key component of the project starting with the Bikeway Steering Committee. The volunteer Bikeway Monitor Program is designed to recruit and train Bikeway/River Stewards and set up plans to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Program. Bike trails are well known for their ability to generate dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer groups who advocate for their trails. Finally, substantial in kind resources have already been committed by the project team in Research and Development and Project Proposal Writing

### **2.3.5 Comparative Cost Effectiveness**

Cost of the Housatonic Bikeway compares very favorably to the costs for other bike trails. Typical Rail Trail construction runs about \$200,000 a mile. Trails without pre-existing rail beds are much more expensive. The Housatonic Bikeway will get close to the same trail quality for only \$4,000-\$5000 a mile.

## **2.4 Socioeconomic Merit**

### **2.4.1 Community Involvement and Diversity**

Extensive Community Involvement is a given in this project. A Bikeway Committee with representatives from each town will be created with help from local elected officials. At this point it is expected that other stakeholders along the river will be represented as well as advocacy groups for the river. Other organizations such as CT DEP Parks and Wildlife Management Areas, the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, the Northwest CT Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the Housatonic River Commission, the Schaghticoke Nation, ConnDot, the Housatonic Railroad, Housatonic Valley Regional High School, and other stakeholders may also be involved.

Diversity along the Bikeway is a given because it will be accessible to riders of all ages and abilities. The Bikeway segments vary in length and difficulty and will appeal to diverse ridership.

### **2.4.2 Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts**

There will always be a certain amount of NIMBYism generated by any public trail or bikeway. However, in this case the "River Roads" are already public and already traveled by vehicles, bikes and pedestrians. There are no questions of legal ownership. The main issue to communicate to property owners along the River may be that use of the Bikeway will be not massive. Because at least half of the Bikeway will be gravel roads, "road bikes" with thin tires at high speeds (for bikes) probably will not use it. It will be more of a family bikeway. If anything, the Bikeway has the potential of limiting vehicle traffic on these roads as a part of wise planning in the future.

### **2.4.3 Coordination and Integration**

The Housatonic Bikeway Project is complementary with the goals and recommendation of numerous existing plans. This project will carry out several recommendations of the Housatonic River Management Plan published in September 2006 by the Housatonic River Commission:

#### **Recreational Management Recommendations**

2. Develop a means of monitoring the recreational use of the river by segments.
6. Encourage coordination of educational and recreational programs within the River Corridor.
11. Work...to encourage appropriate tourism and recreational management decision making that preserves the long term health of the River.

### Water Quality Recommendations

2. Cooperate with other organizations in educating the general public and municipalities about non-point source pollution and its impact on water quality.

The project will also work in synergy with plans developed by the land use commissions of individual river towns. For example, The Natural Resources Inventory published by the town of Sharon in 2005 advocates protection of Scenic Roads and recommends “Investigate the possibility of connecting trails and recreational roads using protected open space.” p 38.

This sentiment is echoed by many of the towns along the river as well as local environmental non-profits.

#### **2.4.4 Public Outreach**

Information about the Bikeway will be very widely disseminated using the web, The NCD Newsletter with a circulation of 25,000 will also be used. There will be releases to the local press, email and targeted mailings.

The project definitely will enhance the careful and responsible use and protection of the Housatonic. The website, brochures and stewardship signage will all combine to motivate proper river care. Non point source messages such as careful lawn care, septic maintenance, using only commercial car washes, proper disposal of hazardous materials and pet waste will be part of the information program.

The Trail Monitors will receive special training in river and water quality stewardship and will transmit that knowledge to other trail users.

#### **2.5 Applicant Implementation Capacity**

##### **2.5.1 Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team**

###### Project Manager

Patrick Hare, Professional Transportation Planner, Principal, Hare Planning

BA, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois

MA, Town Planning, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland

- 30+ years experience in planning
- Lead planner for Master Plan for Communities of Kensington-Wheaton, which won an award from the local chapter of the American Planning Association, in part for its bike planning.
- Manager of a major growth policy study for Montgomery County, Maryland
- Proposed and led planning for the Metropolitan Branch Trail, a major rail-with-trail project in Washington, DC, serving 7 Metro stations.
- Proposed and conducted innovative study of the “Island and Bridges” approach to suburban bicycle planning.
- Former Board member, Washington Area Bicycle Association
- Member, Cornwall Planning and Zoning Commission
- Bike commuter for 10 years, and mountain biker

Shane Kramer, GIS Manager, GIS Cartographer, Northwest Conservation District

BA, Central CT State University

4+ years varied experience using GIS for land planning and environmental problem solving.

Semi Professional Mountain Biker Racer

Sean Hayden, Soil Scientist, Land Use Specialist in Erosion and Sediment, Low Impact Development  
Northwest Conservation District

BA, University of Connecticut, College of Natural Resource Management and Engineering  
20+ years experience in Environmental Consulting and Non-profit Environmental Conservation  
Planning  
5+ years experience as Educational Director and Naturalist at Lost River Reservation in New Hampshire

Kristen Ponak, Web Designer, GIS Cartographer, Northwest Conservation District  
BA, University of Connecticut  
3+ years experience in GIS Cartography, Web Development for non profit environmental groups.  
Currently develops and maintains websites for the five CT Conservation Districts, the Connecticut Envirothon, CIPWG CT Invasive Plants Working Group, CLA, Candlewood Lake Authority and others.

### **2.5.2 Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team**

Curtis S Read, Chairman of the Board, Northwest Conservation District  
Founder & Principal of Lablite, LLC and Hydro Technologies, Inc. (lab)  
President of Little Simon Properties, Inc (2,600 acres in Adirondacks)  
BA, Hamilton College  
Masters of Agriculture, West Virginia University  
Thirty years experience in agriculture and water quality issues

David Scofield, Board of Directors and Treasurer, Northwest Conservation District  
20+ years experience as Mountain, Tandem and Recumbent Biker, member of American Bicycle Association, Rails to Trails, Adventure Cycling, Tandem Club of America.

#### Project Administrator

Jean Cronauer, Executive Director, Northwest Conservation District  
BA, Marygrove College, Michigan  
25+ years experience in public education and non-profit administration.

### **2.5.3 Project Commitments**

The majority of In Kind Contributions are committed. The services of a Graphic Artist, marketing professional and media personality to narrate podcast will be engaged at the appropriate time. Our goal is to invite professionals committed to the Bikeway who will donate their time or provide a non profit rate. The services donated by the Trail Monitors are not committed at this time, but will provide substantial sustainable benefits to the project.

## **3.0 LAND ACQUISITION PROJECTS**

No Housatonic Restoration funds are being requested for land acquisition.

### **ENDORSEMENTS**

I am writing to you on behalf of the **Central Connecticut Bicycle Alliance** (CCBA), a bicycle advocacy group. The CCBA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a three fold mission:

- Promoting bicycling and human powered transportation as environmentally friendly, healthy, and economical forms of transportation and recreation.
- Working to improve the bicycling environment and the quality of life in the Central Connecticut Region.
- Educating motor vehicle operators and bicyclists about their respective rights and responsibilities.

CCBA is strongly in favor of efforts to increase the bikeability of Connecticut, so we are very pleased to endorse and support this proposal for the Housatonic Bikeway. This would be a major and very welcome addition to the trail system in Connecticut and would improve the healthful recreational capabilities in a naturally beautiful part of our State.

CCBA would also be pleased to discuss ways we could provide additional help as this very worthy project unfolds. Thanks for the opportunity to be of assistance.

Martha Page, Vice President and Advocacy Committee Chair, CCBA Board of Directors

**“The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area** strongly supports the proposed New Milford – Salisbury Bikeway, as we see regional bikeways celebrating our natural, cultural and historical heritage as an important step in the region's development as a flourishing National Heritage Area.”

Ronald D. Jones, Chairman, Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc.

**“The Berkshire Bike Path Council (BBPC)** is working to promote the establishment of a multi-recreational path in Berkshire County, from Vermont to Connecticut. Our overall goal is to link the region together with a bike path while conserving a greenway corridor.

We were so pleased to hear of the Northwest Conservation District efforts to develop a Housatonic Bikeway. Their efforts would provide a continuous greenway corridor from Vermont to New Milford CT. Linking together across State lines has been done successfully in other communities. We're glad Jean connected to BBPC early on in their process. We look forward to working together to make interstate cooperation happen between CT and MA.

BBPC would encourage the NRD to give their proposal serious consideration with an appreciation for how this project will avail so many people the opportunity to connect to the greenway river corridor.”

Marjorie Cohan, Chairman BBPC



### **Summary: How Project Meets Evaluation Criteria**

#### **Relevance and Applicability of Project**

- Location of Project: The Housatonic Bikeway will be located along 45 miles of the River, on existing roads on or near the River.

- **Natural Recovery Period:** The project will restore and replace recreational values and services damaged by pollution by bringing people back to enjoy the River.
- **Sustainable Benefits:** The project will provide for sustainable recreation, walking and biking, with little or no new construction.
- **Magnitude of Ecological Benefits:** The stewardship goals expressed on signage, brochure and website over time will translate into a healthier river. Also, once the Bikeway is in place, it will be possible to argue that motorized traffic on the river roads should be limited to property owners and service vehicles.
- **Magnitude of Recreational Benefits:** Usage of the Bikeway will be comparable to that of Rail Trails with their flat profiles and easy riding and walking. Website and signage will connect visitors and greatly increase access to river recreational opportunities.

#### **Technical Merit**

- **Technical/Technological Feasibility:** Feasibility of the Bikeway is a given because the low volume, low speed roads are already there, and so are the preserved lands that can be used for moving the Cornwall and Kent sections of the Bikeway closer to the River.
- **Adverse Environmental Impacts:** Less than any other form of recreation.
- **Health and Human Safety:** Standard bikeway safety standards will be met.
- **Measurable Results:** Stewardship and Interpretive Signage, Bikeway Maps and Signage, Website, and Podcasts, and study of moving section close to river.

#### **Project Budget**

- **Relationship Expect Costs/Expect Benefits:** Costs will be very low relative to benefits, especially by comparison to comparable trail projects like rail-trails. Costs for this Bikeway will be about \$3000-\$4000 per mile as opposed to \$200,000 or more for most rail trails.
- **Implementation Orientation:** Concrete deliverables will be created: Maps, Interpretive, Directional and Stewardship Signage, Podcast and Website.
- **Budget Justification/Understanding:** Budget built from detailed task estimates.
- **Leveraging Additional Resources:** Leverages investment in existing river roads, substantial community involvement and in kind matching funds.
- **Comparative Cost-Effectiveness:** Recreation/dollar of cost will be very high.

#### **Socioeconomic Merit**

- **Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts:** None
- **Coordination and Integration:** Consistent with many efforts for the river.
- **Community Involvement:** Bikeway Committee with towns and organizations.
- **Public Outreach:** Maps, Website, Podcast, Alternative Routes Study

#### **Applicant Implementation Capacity**

- **Technical Capacity of Applicant/Project Team:** Applicant/Project Team includes technical capacity in bike planning, GIS Mapping, websites, ecology and administration.
- **Administrative Capacity:** NCD has managed similar projects.
- **Project Commitments:** Majority of Matching Funds are already committed.

**TABLE 1. HOUSATONIC RIVER NRD FUNDING ALLOCATION BY FISCAL YEARS <sup>1</sup>**

<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b>	<b>HOUSATONIC “RIVER ROADS” BIKEWAY</b>							
<b>SPONSOR NAME:</b>	<b>NORTHWEST CONSERVATION DISTRICT</b>							
<b>EXPENSE CATEGORY</b> (See App. A)	<b>FISCAL YEAR 1</b> <b>2009</b>		<b>FISCAL YEAR 2</b> <b>2010</b>		<b>FISCAL YEAR 3</b> <b>2011</b>		<b>FISCAL YEAR 4</b>	
	<b>Housatonic</b>	<b>River</b>	<b>Housatonic</b>	<b>River</b>	<b>Housatonic</b>	<b>River</b>	<b>Housatonic</b>	<b>River</b>
	<b>NRD Funds</b>		<b>NRD Funds</b>		<b>NRD Funds</b>		<b>NRD Funds</b>	
A. SALARIES	<b>\$11,062</b>		<b>\$20,000</b>		<b>\$20,000</b>			
B. OVERHEAD AND BENEFITS	<b>\$3,688</b>		<b>\$5,000</b>		<b>\$5,000</b>			
C. CONTRACTED SERVICES	<b>\$11,000</b>		<b>\$25,000</b>		<b>\$25,000</b>			
D. SUPPLIES, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT, PRINTING			<b>\$1860</b>		<b>\$16,680</b>			
E. TRAVEL								
F. OTHER (LIST)								
G. OTHER (LIST)								
<b>TOTAL BY FISCAL YEAR</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$25,750</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$51,860</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$66,680</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL (sum of boxes 1+2+3+4)</b> <b>[This sum is the total NRD fund request and should match Part A, Budget Summary, Box 1]</b>							<b>\$144,290</b>	

<sup>1</sup> The fiscal year is July 1 – June 30. If the proposed project will be completed in one year, fill in only the column titled “Fiscal Year 1.”

**TABLE 2. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY BY TASK AND FUNDING SOURCE**

<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b>	HOUSATONIC “RIVER ROADS” BIKEWAY						
<b>SPONSOR NAME:</b>	NORTHWEST CONSERVATION DISTRICT						
<b>TASK<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>HOUSATONIC RIVER</b>		<b>OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS</b>				<b>TOTAL COST BY TASK</b>
	<b>NRD FUNDS</b>		<b>COMMITTED</b>		<b>NOT COMMITTED</b>		
Proposal Development			11,600				11,600
A. Outreach, Building Community Support, Lead Bikeway Committee, Consult with Stakeholders	\$28,750		\$7500				\$36,250
B. Field Work	\$15,000		\$3500				\$18,500
C. GIS Mapping	\$6000		\$2000				\$8000
D. Interpretive Signage	\$32,430		\$5750				\$38,180
E. Web Development, Brochure	\$22,110		\$11,360				\$33,470
F. Bikeway Monitors	\$2250		\$750		\$13,500		\$16,500
G. Develop Solutions for future Cornwall and Kent Sections	\$19,750		\$9750				\$29,500
H. Marketing	\$6000		\$3000				\$9000
I. Bikeway River Festival and Opening Events			\$4000				\$4000
J. Project Management	\$12,000		\$3000				\$15,000
<b>TOTAL BY FUNDING SOURCE</b>	<b>5</b>	\$144,290	<b>6</b>	\$62,210	<b>7</b>	\$13,500	<b>8 GRAND TOTAL</b> \$220,000

**NOTES:** Box 5 should be the same as the Grand Total indicated in Part D Table 1. Box 6 above should match Part A, Budget Summary, Box 2. Box 7 above should match Part A, Budget Summary, Box 3. Box 8 should match Part A, Budget Summary, Box 4

<sup>2</sup> The listed tasks should correspond with information provided in the Project Implementation Plan.