

Moriah Assessment

Updated November 2008

Intro Statement

Moriah sits in a good position to develop a steady and sustainable tourism economy. It boasts incredible views of Lake Champlain. It is ground zero for Champ sitings. There is great boating and fishing. It has easy access to Amtrak (historic station) and sits close to the mid lake bridge across Lake Champlain. It has great Adirondack scenery and an exciting history.

But, there's no place to sleep. Limited options for dining. And very little visitor-oriented retail. There is a town-owned RV park, but it's mostly filled with full-season campers, leaving no place for those seeking to come for a night, a week, or a weekend. There is also another RV park owned by the village of Port Henry. Both are situated on the shore of Lake Champlain.

There is a sense, in discussing tourism possibilities in Moriah, that people are not used to thinking in terms of what could be. Moriah will need to be able to envision a future and want it bad enough to make it happen, before tourism development has a serious chance.

The future is not something one can count on outsiders doing to or for Moriah – the energy and vision need to come from within the town.

Snapshot of Current Tourism

This is an evolving document – more will be added as it comes to the table through research and community discussion. The following lists are not prioritized.

Infrastructure

- More Publicly Owned Shoreline than anywhere else on Lake Champlain
- Lake Champlain
- Amtrak and Historic Station
- One of two bridges linking Middlebury and Burlington
- Historic Downtown and Churches
- Mining History and Museum
- Great Town Hall
- RV Parks
- Champ
- Golf Course
- Unique Geological Features
- Town-owned old-growth trees
- Old power house site
- New sewer plant
- Witherbee
- Dock/pier for tour boats
- Movie-making sites

Experiences

- Heritage Exploration
- Boating
- Fishing and Hunting
- Ice Fishing
- Mountain Biking – bicycling - hiking
- Touring by Car through Classic Adirondack Scenery
- Town-owned old-growth trees
- Witherbee
- Tubb Mills Ponds – Upper Feeder Pond – Eagles Nest Pond (bound by State and IP)

Products

- RV Park
- King's Inn
- Golf Course and Tournaments
- Fishing Tournaments
- Family Fun Cabins
- Collin Motel
- Iron Center Museum

Gaps

- Lodging
- Dining
- Retail
- Experience-based Products
- Iron Center Museum hours
- Hands-on with what is seen at the museum
- Tracey Road traffic going to Lake Placid – don't see what Moriah has
- Manmade facilities
- Knowledge of Moriah's iron miners
- Town-owned old-growth trees

Seasons

There are plenty of experiences year round in Moriah, but most of those have not been turned into products. And, without the lodging opportunity, the existing season is based on nearby destinations (and business from those staying at the season-long RV park).

Quality

Rates

Competitiveness

Competitiveness requires products.

Positive and Negative Impacts

When the mine closed, jobs went away. There continues to be a threat that the mill could close – and more jobs could go away. Tourism can't fix all of that, but it could generate both jobs and business opportunities.

The improvements necessary to succeed in tourism would also make Moriah a better place to live – potentially spawning more civic pride. Perhaps these improvements would also attract other economic opportunities.

Benefits

- Tourism could spawn dining opportunities that locals (with income from tourism) might enjoy.
- This economy needs revenue

Visitors (demographics)

Visitor Satisfaction

Potential New Products and Experiences

- Cabins
- Other Lodging
- Historic Tour
- Trail system (on private lands that can take motorized vehicles)
- New B&Bs from existing old mansions and large single family homes
- Bicycling tours
- Old power house site could be a hotel location
- Town-owned old-growth trees
- Tubb Mills Ponds – Upper Feeder Pond – Eagles Nest Pond
- Tour boats coming into the dock
- Hands-on of Moriah's history
- Dock/pier for tour boats

Community Wants

- Jobs and Business Opportunities
- To help businesses already here
- To utilize community assets
- To expand on the tax base
- Second wage earner jobs
- Private investment
- Could be satisfied with day trippers
- Community pride
- All levels of jobs

Community Concerns

There are two kinds of visitors – the visitor looking for a “Lake George” atmosphere and the visitor who comes to see what is here

Visitor Perspectives

Products and Experiences that Contribute to a Sense of Destination

- Ice Fishing
- Boating
- Fishing
- Touring by Car through classic Adirondack Scenery
- Historic Town and Churches

Products and Experiences that build on Essex County/Adirondack Sense of Destination

- Ice Fishing
- Boating
- Fishing
- Touring by Car through classic Adirondack Scenery
- Historic Town and Churches

Products that Conflict with Destination Appeal

Seasonal RV Park

What Makes This (or Would Make This) a Destination

- Lodging
- Dining
- Tourism-oriented Retail in downtown Port Henry
- The energy and activity from having visitors present
- Pier for boat tours
- An anchor or defining product or experience

Visitor Satisfaction (what contributes, what detracts, what is needed)

Frustration when one drives to Moriah and finds the museum closed

Other Issues from Local Input

Summary

Moriah sits on opportunity. The location is good. The experience selection is also good. The door is open to four seasons. Moriah has the potential to host a tourism economy that sustainably supports a reasonable level of jobs and businesses.

It will take investment in infrastructure. First lodging, but also dining and retail. It will take the development of products based on the great heritage and natural history experiences that are a natural to Moriah.

The question is: Does Moriah want this bad enough to step up and make it happen?