

# Essex County Tourism Master Planning Project

## Schroon Lake December 2008 Progress Report

### Key Discussions

Schroon Lake wants to grow its tourism economy. The planning team wants to do that by attracting a higher spending clientele than they currently enjoy and by having that clientele use Schroon Lake as a base camp to enjoy visitor experiences both nearby and around the Adirondacks.

Schroon Lake discussions have centered around two key issues. The first issue is related to lodging and the need to develop a good collection of currently appointed and competitive lodging, so that visitors have quality options for spending several days in Schroon Lake. The second issue is how to position Schroon Lake in the marketplace so that it occupies an attractive niche that will draw visitors – and so that local residents will be energized to join in the process of building a great future.

The Schroon Lake planning team is tracking several potential lodging development options. While the team is tracking those options, there appears to be no path for the team to influence the outcome on any of those, at this point. Roger Friedman will call for action if such an opening arises.

The team recognizes the need for those lodgings to be related to the experience of being in Schroon Lake, to reinforce the image of Schroon Lake as a small steeped-in-history Adirondack lakeside community. The team also recognizes that there would be an advantage to having new lodging facilities oriented to a view (Schroon Lake or other) over the highway. At the same time, there is considerable interest in accomplishing two goals with one move by redeveloping some of the out-of-date and out-of-repair lodging facility sites with new, current and competitive facilities.

After much discussion, Schroon Lake's planning committee has settled on a plan to position Schroon Lake as an Adirondack Lakefront Base Camp. The committee feels that Schroon Lake has (and will have more) dining and activity offerings to compliment a beautiful setting for a base camp. There are a number of great outdoor and cultural activities that a visitor can experience close to the base camp, including those based on the lakes, rivers, trails, and wilderness. They also feel that local events coupled with the Seagle Colony will provide a richness to the Schroon Lake base camp experience.

Further, Schroon Lake is positioned so that one can explore from the shores of Lake Champlain to the great Adirondack Mountain experiences (including skiing, watersports, biking, climbing, and touring) to the great attractions (including the Olympic complex, the Wild Center, the Lake George attractions, the gorges and chasms, and so on).

With all of the experiences Schroon Lake can offer as a base camp, it hopes to develop as an affordable family destination that attracts a higher spending, longer staying clientele than it currently sees.

Schroon Lake is also committed to “working” on the issue of curb appeal. Great progress has been made in the downtown and lakefront areas. Progress will be needed on the approaches from both the north and south, along routes that visitors would travel to arrive at Schroon Lake.

### **Visitor Perspective**

Schroon Lake intends to build on the progress of the past few years to better present itself to visitors. The revitalized downtown and lakefront improvements will be matched with new lodging and a broader selection of year-round dining offerings. The approaches from the north and south will be improved (better curb appeal) so that visitors will have both the facilities and the desire to choose Schroon Lake as the base camp for their Adirondack retreats.

To achieve the “base camp” appeal it desires, Schroon Lake will work to present to potential visitors a broad selection of activities they can engage in from Tupper Lake to the Vermont Shores of Lake Champlain. Local lodging establishments will be able to “arrange” for their patrons to engage in those activities.

### **Local Perspective**

The Schroon Lake community is looking for jobs and business opportunities related to tourism – and the planning committee is working to “engineer” those into the plans for the future. New developments will provide jobs as they are constructed and then even more jobs as they operate and are maintained. The base camp strategy opens the door for more guided experiences on rivers and trails, by bike and kayak, using skis and snowshoes, for fishing and backpacking, and more. These activities are at the heart of why many people choose to live in the region – and working at them should have an appeal to some residents.

### **Structural Perspective**

Schroon Lake is on a path to secure the development of new lodging facilities, to expand its year-round dining opportunities, and to improve the curb appeal to visitors approaching the community. These structural moves will enable more and longer overnight stays in Schroon Lake at higher rates. That will power an economy that channels more into dining and retail, and supports experience-based tourism products. It will be important to ramp up new lodging concurrently with the expansion of dining and experience products.