

Team Red Foxes

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Synthesis Paper

The hiking trails in Rensselaer County are tourist and family friendly because of the diverse possibilities for relaxation, education, and discovery. The trails provide places for scavenger hunts and nature writing that will enhance student learning, as well as an opportunity to experience the landmarks and landscape of Rensselaer County. The hiking trails in Rensselaer County are tourist and family friendly because of the diverse possibilities for relaxation, education, and discovery. Have no fear, hike in Rensselaer! Rensselaer County is the home to many hiking trails that can provide hours of endless entertainment. It provides its visitors with a place to relax and unwind, while also learning about the history of Rensselaer County.

Rensselaer County holds significant history. The towns take pride in the magnificent mountainous trails. Some trails within the county are picturesque and others are beautiful. There is a variety of trails including hiking and biking and during winter, even snowmobiling. The mountains and state parks have a magnificent variety of nature and many different organizations who love the outdoors are involved in maintaining the parks' organic beauty.



The Rensselaer County trails we researched have a variety of highlights that make them attractive to visitors. The five trails are Nature Trail, Berlin State Forest Trail, Orange Trail, Chet Bell Trail, and Singletrack Trail. Most of the trails include

a multitude of different trees and flowers that make the trails very enjoyable to walk along.

Some of the trails we discovered are easy to walk, so they would be a great outing for people of all ages. The trails around Rensselaer County offer its visitors very different experiences, but are provide for adventure and relaxation. Some trails are more difficult and are for more experienced hikers, but most we discovered are appropriate for all ages.

The information that hikers take away from the wayside exhibits, will affect their feelings about their overall hiking experience. If they can learn interesting bits of information about the trail and what they might encounter during their hike, their hiking experience will be enhanced. The exhibits will include brief information about the history of the trails or the park, as well as aspects of nature such as trees and animals to look out for while they are on the hike. When provided with this information, hikers will be more aware of their surroundings and have a positive view of the trails in Rensselaer as their hike will

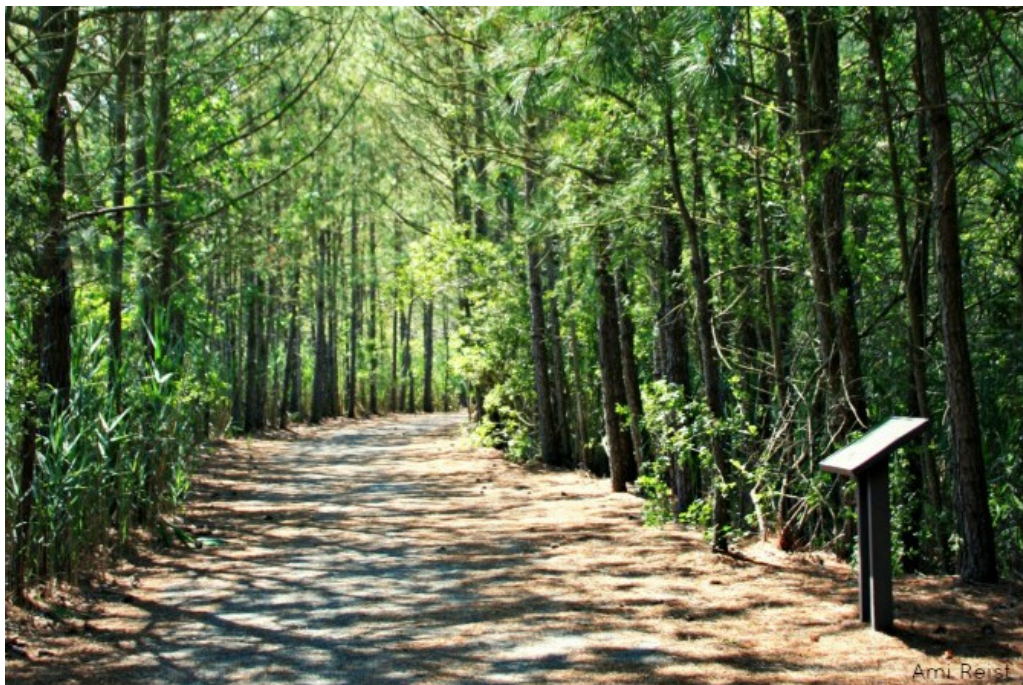


have more meaning and significance.

Highway signs are key to attract tourists to the trails. By having signs on major roads it can get people to notice the trails and give them something fun to do on a sunny Saturday. Each sign is designed in a similar way; therefore the driver will notice right away that a trail is near. The signs include the name of the trail, how far away the trail is, and a picture of a key sight associated with the trail. By advertising the trails on the highway it will draw people in and make

them want to stop, weather to go for a hike or just to have a quick picnic before continuing on with the road trip.

There are more than enough things to do in Rensselaer County. There are numerous historic sites, hiking trails, farms and museums. There is something for people of every age to enjoy. History buffs can visit the famous Bennington Battlefield where a Revolutionary War battle occurred. Families can visit the Engeline Farm where there are an abundance of activities that can be enjoyed all year round. Children and parents will love explore the Children's Museum of Science and Technology, home of the only Digistar II planetarium in the Northeast. Throughout the county there are plenty of places to grab a bite to eat and stay the night. More information can be found on the Rensselaer County Tourism website as well as the Facebook page.



Taylor's Essay- History of the Lives of the Trails Then and Now

Rensselaer County holds significant history. The towns take pride in the magnificent mountainous trails. Some trails within the county are picturesque and others are beautiful. There is a variety of trails including hiking and biking and during winter, even snowmobiling. The mountains and state parks have a magnificent variety of nature and many different organizations who love the outdoors are involved in maintaining the parks' organic beauty.

Tibbits State Forest is 893 acres which was donated by Reverend John K. Tibbits to New York State in 1953 as a memorial to his family who had owned the land for over 150 years. Near the Tibbits State Forest is Tibbits Mansion which is now part of Hoosac School.

During the 1800's travelers on the turnpike had to be aware of the "Shingle Hollow Desperadoes" who lie in wait in the forest. Today, New York Route 7 divides the Forest into two sections. There are about four miles of hiking and logging trails. The forest has pine, hemlock, and white oak trees and ferns and wildflowers flourish throughout the trail.

(<http://www.townofhoosick.org/tibbits.shtml>)



Pittstown State Forest

Singletrack trails were built and continue to be cared for by the Mohawk Hudson Cycling Clun and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Since 2011, Saratoga **Mountain** Bike Association now has a volunteer agreement with DEC to build

and maintain the trials in Pittstown. **It is at the base of Rensselaer Plateau.** There are about ten

miles of trails. **Pittstown State Forest Singletrack** trails were built and continue to be cared for by the Mohawk Hudson Cycling Club and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. There are rock wall crossings, logs, ramps, rock outcropping drop ins, switchback turns and short steep climbs.

<http://saratogamtb.org/pittstown/> and http://trails.mtbr.com/cat/united-states-trails/trails-new-york/trail/pittstown-state-forest-singletrack/prd_169350_4566crx.aspx



The Berlin State Forest is apart of the Taconic Ridge State Forest. It is located along the borders of New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont. The area contains approximately 6,000 acres of State Forest land and 5,500 acres of NYS Conservation Easement land. Taconic Ridge State Forest presents picturesque views of the Taconic Range, Mount Greylock, and Berlin

Mountain. Berlin State Forest has an endless number of trails on its 634 acres. The summit is the highest point on the trail at 2,798 feet. From the summit, you can see Mount Greylock in Massachusetts. Some areas are washed out and some can get rocky, but the walk down from the summit is effortless.

<http://nysparks.com/publications/documents/empire-state-trails/EmpireStateTrailsNorthern.pdf>

Chet Bell Trail, apart of Grafton State Park, is filled with streams and rock formations within a forest of spruce, pine, oak, and birch. Deer, hawks, red squirrels, and chipmunks are likely to be found on the trail 1.5 mile loop-around trail. Grafton State Park is steadily 10-15

degrees cooler than the Hudson Valley Region. The park itself receives snow earlier in the fall, and it stays longer until the spring. Therefore this **trail is considered to be snowmobiler friendly.** Bikers also use this trail and so do horses.

http://www.bikekinetix.com/t_ny/ny_state/grafon_lakes_trails.php and

http://www.localhikes.com/Hikes/Grafton_Chet_0160.asp

Schodack Island State Park lies along the east shore of the Hudson River. The original islands were Upper Schodack Island, Lower Schodack (Moesmans) Island, and Houghtaling (Schutters) Island. The smaller islands were Mull's Platt (Plaat in Dutch), Mull's Island, and Little Schodack Island. Schodack Island State Park was fertile and ideal for agriculture. Although most likely occupied before recorded history, **the first contact with Native Americans in this area occurred in 1609.** Henry Hudson's friend visited a Mohican chief who lived in the area near Castleton-on-Hudson. **Over time, deeds to the Schodack**

Islands were collected by Dutch settlers from the Mohican Indians. Mohicans sold land and mill sites in 1648, and in 1650 and 1663. The Mohicans sold Lower Schodack Island in 1670 and Houghtaling Island in 1671. Nevertheless, they were still living on Lower Schodack Island apparently as late as 1748.

While most early settlers

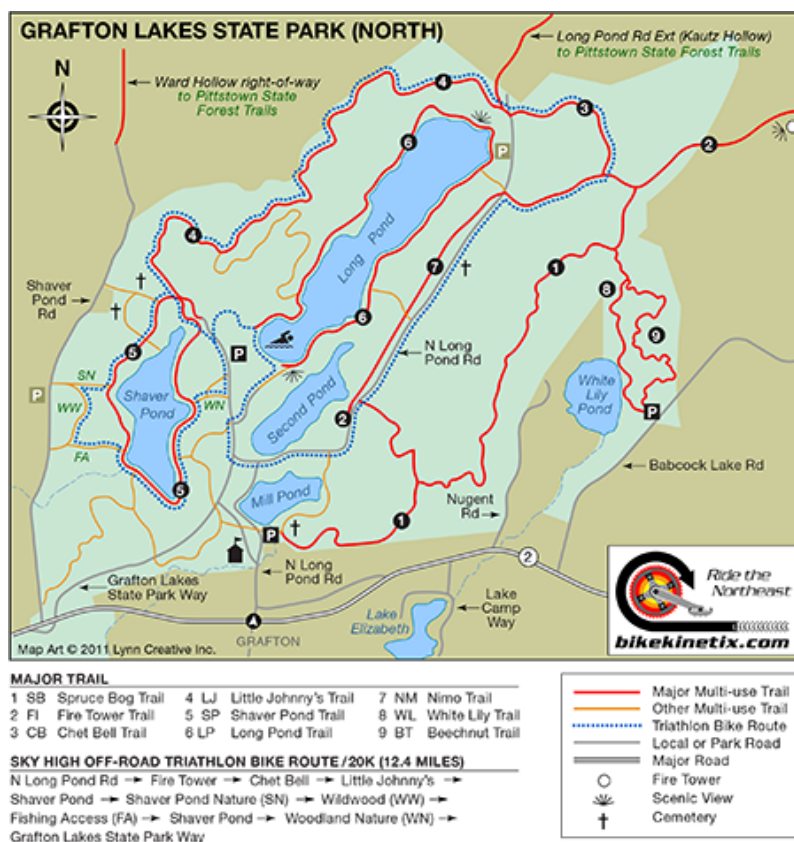
lived on the mainland around present day Castleton-on-Hudson and Schodack Landing, structures were built on the Schodack Islands as early as 1650 when a hay rick was built to house grain. By around 1670, there were probably houses and barns there. Timber was being



cleared in the late sixteen hundreds and farm was established there in 1730. A building, most likely a farm house, was built around the 1750s and was still standing in 1779, as shown on maps.

After the Revolutionary War and continuing into the first half of the 19th century, land speculation through purchases and sales of relatively small lots took place.

Back then, streams were natural land



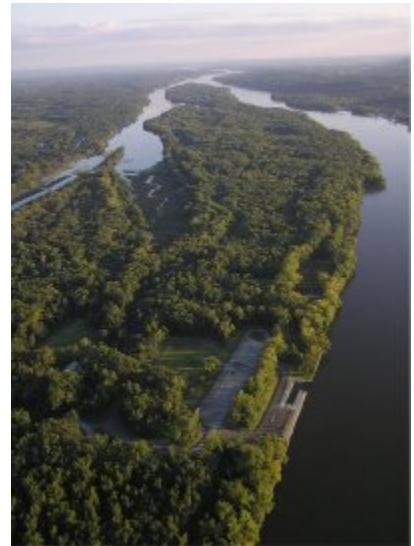
boundaries. In 1863 the State of New York began constructing barriers along the west shores of the Schodack Islands. **Later the Federal government took over the tasks of constructing barriers to control erosion and to establish conditions for the construction of a deep water channel in the Hudson River.**

By the third quarter of the 19th century the new industry of cutting, storing and shipping natural ice formed around the Schodack Islands since it became a necessity for those around New York City. The Knickerbocker Ice House was probably the first of the many ice houses to be built on the islands. Because of refrigeration, natural ice industry declined in the 1920's.

Today, Schodack State Park is home to a Bird Conservation Area home to a variety of birds and has a designated a State Estuary. Home to bald eagles, cerulean warblers and blue herons that nest in the cottonwood trees the beautiful creatures can be found on the eight miles of multi-use trails.

<http://friendsofschodackisland.org/history-of-the-schodack-islands/> and <http://nysparks.com/parks/146/details.aspx>

Rensselaer County has beautiful hiking trails with a rich history and people who are passionate in keeping the trails as picturesque as can be.



Bibliography

<http://www.townofhoosick.org/tibbits.shtml> - found historical information on the Tibbits Trail
<http://saratogamtb.org/pittstown/> and http://trails.mtbr.com/cat/united-states-trails/trails-new-york/trail/pittstown-state-forest-singletrack/prd_169350_4566crx.aspx - found information on the type of trail and mountain bike information regarding it (Pittstown)

<http://nysparks.com/publications/documents/empire-state-trails/EmpireStateTrailsNorthern.pdf>-

Berlin State Park information regarding Taconic State Ridge

http://www.bikekinetix.com/t_ny/ny_state/grafton_lakes_trails.php and

http://www.localhikes.com/Hikes/Grafton_Chet_0160.asp- Chet Bell Trail- quality of the trail

<http://friendsofschodackisland.org/history-of-the-schodack-islands/> and

<http://nysparks.com/parks/146/details.aspx> -Schodack State Park Trails; historical and trail type

Erin's Essay

The trails we explored for our case study have a variety of features that will attract many visitors to the trails. **The trail that is located in Tibbits State Forest, called the “Nature Trail”, has a two-mile trail which consists of mostly easy walking.** Along the trail there is flora that consists of pines, hemlocks, and white oak trees. **In addition there are a multitude of different beautiful flowers that line the trails such as ferns and other wildflowers.** These picturesque aspects of nature that are along this trail are what make it very attractive to its visitors. **The next trail we explored is the Berlin State Forest Trail located on Cowdry Hollow Road.** The trail is an easy walk for the most part, that has a stable grade for most of the trail. Even from the steepest part of the trail it is still an easy walk down that could be accomplished by most ages. **This trail is an easy walk, so it attractive to many different age groups.** This trail would be a good suggestion for both families with young children, or groups with older members. Additionally, the trail is open all year round so it could be an option for a fun day outdoors in both the warm and cold seasons. **The Chet Bell Trail, that is located in Grafton Lakes State Park, has a variety of highlights that makes the trail inviting to hikers.** In the fall, the foliage along the trail turns into a sea of beautiful reds, oranges and yellows. Many “leaf peepers” enjoy hiking along this trail to take in the beauty of fall. There are Spruce, Pine, Oak, and Birch trees located along the hiking trail that all turn gorgeous colors in the fall. **In addition, there are small streams along the trail, as well as access to a remote and impressive lake. The area that the trail is located in is very removed from the hustle and bustle, so it is very quiet and relaxing for is visitors.** Since the trail is so distant, people can expect to see wild creatures such as deer, hawks, red squirrels and chipmunks. The trail also has many highlights that make it enticing for people to visit and hike the trails. Furthermore,

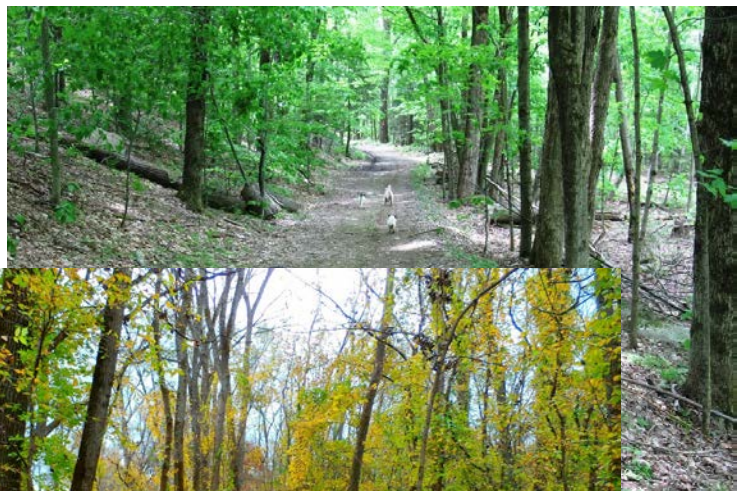
Schodack Island State Park offers a historical experience for its visitors because the visitors are able to “walk in the footsteps of native people who lived here 4,000 years ago on this slender island between the Hudson River and Schodack Creek”

(https://www.trails.com/tcatalog_trail.aspx?trailid=XFA210-015). This trail is an easy path that allows a wide variety of people to enjoy the wilderness along this trail. Visitors can enjoy this trail from April to October, so it could be a fun spring or summer activity for the whole family.

The final trail we researched is the Singletrack in the Pittstown State Forest. This trail is technically a biking trail, but it also could be used as a hiking trail. **The trail is an intermediate trail because of its rocky terrain, switchbacked turns, and other hills.**

Technically it is designed for expert hikers or bikers because it is a long and strenuous trail. The area next to the Singletrack includes drinking water, restrooms, and a lift service for its visitors which is helpful when they complete their hike. This trail is an adventurous and strenuous trail that can be a great outing for experienced hikers and bikers. The trails located around Rensselaer County are beautiful attractions that draw visitors from all over New York.

While on the trip, the students will engage in a multitude of engaging lessons that will teach them about the key features in Rensselaer County. **The students will learn about the people who walked the land here many years ago while at Schodack Island State Park, and learn about the different flora and**



fauna while hiking through the trail at Tibbits State Forest. The students will use many different intelligences while on the trip, which will enhance the learning experience. By incorporating different types of intelligences, the teacher will be able to connect with many different types of learners. The lessons that are incorporated into the trip correspond with different common core standards for 6th graders. The trip will engage the students and will teach them many new things about Rensselaer County.

Grade Level: 6th grade

Lesson Plan Overview: The students will hike five trails around Rensselaer County. Before leaving the hotel, the students will be reminded on the proper etiquette to follow when out on the trails to make sure everyone stays safe on the adventures. While out on the trails, students will engage in different activities with their assigned team that will teach them about different features of nature in the Hudson River Valley. On the bus back to the hotel students will engage in a group discussion regarding their findings from the hikes.

Learning Intelligences Used: The two intelligences of Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences used in the lessons are bodily-kinesthetic and interpersonal. The students will use bodily-kinesthetic when they engage in physical activity as they hike through the trails. The students will be learning through hands-on activity while using real objects in the forest. Interpersonal intelligence is used during the lessons because the students will be asked to collaborate with groups members to complete the different activities on the trails.

Common Core Standards: [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.9](#)- Compare and contrast the information gained from experiments, simulations, video, or multimedia sources with that gained from reading a text on the same topic. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.A](#)- Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by

referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C](#)- Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

Learning Objectives: 1) Students will gain insight about certain aspects of the hiking trails around Rensselaer County 2) Students will get practice demonstrating proper etiquette while out on the trails

Materials:

- Worksheet for leaf hunt
- Nature Journals
- Scavenger Hunt worksheet
- Clipboards
- Lined paper for haiku poems
- Pencils
- Plastic bags for leaves

Class Engagement:

Schodack Island State Park- Orange Trail:

- Students will have learned previously in class about the different Indian Tribes that resided in the Hudson River Valley many, many years ago such as the Mohawks and the Lenni Lenapes.
- The students will participate in an indian- inspired canoe building activity, where they will be asked to build their own canoe with materials they find along the trail.
- The teams will congregate at the Hudson River front to do the “float test”. Whichever teams creates the canoe that floats the best will win the prize.

Berlin State Forest:

- Students will be given a worksheet with a list of different leaves they will need to find along the trail
- The teams will need to collect all of the different types of leaves and put them in the bag and bring their complete bag to the teacher
- The team that has all of the leaves in the bag first will win the prize.

Grafton State Park- Chet Bell Trail:

*Students will learn about the elements of writing a nature journal on the bus to the trail

- Before we embark on our journey on the trail, the students will be distributed the nature journals
- Students will complete their journal while on the trail when we stop for a break
- Some students will be asked to share their entry if they feel comfortable when we get back on the bus

Pittstown State Forest- Singletrack:

- Students will learn about writing haiku poems while still in the classroom before the trip
- Teacher will explain the task while they are still on the bus so the students are aware of what needs to be done when they are out on the trail.
- After walking down part of the trail, students will stop for a break to write their nature haiku poems
- When back on the bus, those who are willing to share with the class will do so

Tibbits State Forest- Nature Trail:

* Students will be learning about different elements in nature including the different flora and fauna that live in the forests of New York.

- Before starting the scavenger hunt, the students will be asked to raise their hand and name something they know they know that either grows or lives in the forest.
- Students will break up into their predetermined teams, given the scavenger hunt sheet, and told to complete it while walking along the trail. The first group to have a completed sheet wins the prize
- When back on the bus they will be asked to share some of the items they found on the trail

Closure: Through the five lessons that will gain understanding on the different types of plants and animals that live in the Hudson River Valley. They will also have the chance to practice writing journals and creating haiku poems. On the bus ride home, we will discuss what each student's favorite part was and what they learned on the trip.

Annotated Bibliography:

https://www.trails.com/tcatalog_trail.aspx?trailid=XFA210-015 - This site provided information from Schodack Island State park. It told about the grounds the trail is on and other statistics about the trail.

http://www.localhikes.com/Hikes/Grafton_Chets_0160.asp - This site tells all about the Chet Bell Trail that is located in Grafton Lakes State Park. I was able to find all of the information on the trail from this site. It provided all of the highlights that are on the trail from the types of trees along the trail and other elements along the trail.

<http://alltrails.com/trail/us/new-york/berlin-state-forest-trail-cowdry-hollow-rd-th> - I was able to obtain information about the Berlin State Forest Trail from this site. I found the description of the trail that included the level of difficulty and the length of the trail.

<http://www.amcmohawkhudson.org/outdoors/view.asp?loc=tsf> - This site had information about the Nature Trail that is located in Tibbits State Forest. It provided information on the trail and also had a map to show where the trail run.

http://trails.mtbr.com/cat/united-states-trails/trails-new-york/trail/pittstown-state-forest-singletrack/prd_169350_4566crx.aspx - I found information on the Singletrack Trail that is located in the Pittstown State Forest on this site. I was able to find the difficulty level of the trail as well as what kind of obstacles are located on the trail.

<http://www.singletracks.com/bike-trails/pittstown-state-forest.html> - I found some additional information on this site about the Singletrack Trail. It was able to provide me the highlights of the trail and what is offered at the trailhead.

Kaylee's Essay- Wayside Exhibits

My assignment for the case study was the wayside exhibits. I had to make sure that I included **all the necessary information that hikers may need to know on the trails**. I included the types of trees that could be found, the types of animals they may see, how challenging the trail is, a brief history of the trail and more. **I also included a picture of our teams logo and the county's logo on each exhibit.** **This kind of information would equip the hikers with the basic knowledge of the trail so that they could see whether or not they would like to pursue it further.**

For each wayside exhibit, the title of each trail played a role in my artistic choices. For example, in the Nature trail, from Tibbitis State forest park, **I chose a dark green background because it reminded me of the colors that you find in nature and in the forest.** I included a list of activities that you could partake in while on the trail so that the hikers are aware of all the possible options that they can utilize the trail for.



This list of activities is accompanied by visuals so it had a more attractive appeal for the hikers. You can also see very lightly underneath some text, are pictures of the trees in the forest that you can find on the trail. General information about the trail is included in white font such as the trails distance, its difficulty and the time it takes to complete it. **Making the font color white, contributes attention-grabbing component of the exhibit.** What also helps to capture the attention of the hikers, is the shapes and word bubbles behind all the written pieces of information on the exhibit. **These shapes and word bubbles also help to separate the different pieces of information.**

In the Chet Bell trail from Grafton Lake Sate park, I included pictures of some of the kinds of trees and animals that could be found in the trails so that the hikers could keep their eyes peeled for these kinds of aspects that **could enhance their hiking experience. I kept these pictures in color so they would remain vibrant and visually appealing.** I also included a general map of all the trails at the state park and an arrow pointing to the Chet bell Trail so hikers could know where they were located in relation to the rest of the park. **I used colors that would work well together** but also complement each other in a dazzling way. It was also important that

the exhibit conveyed peaceful feelings, as **the trail is known for being a great place to escape the fast paced life of Grafton's south shore. Varying the opacity levels of the colored shapes and pictures, also contributed to where the viewer focused his or her attention and the serene mood.**

I continued to use these same artistic ideas and concepts to all five wayside exhibits to create engaging and beautiful wayside exhibits.



Overall, the wayside exhibits play a significant role in the way that people assess their overall experience hiking. **The colors, fonts, pictures and other artistic designs of the exhibits convey certain messages to the viewers and affect the way they view the trail, and thus their county.**

Annotated Bibliography

<http://www.amcmohawkhudson.org/outdoors/view.asp?loc=tsf>- This link was used to get information about the nature trail in Tibbitis state forest. The trails basic information regarding its distance, layout, ecology and brief history was all made available through this site.

http://www.localhikes.com/Hikes/Grafton_Chets_0160.asp-This link was used to get information about Chet Bell trail in Grafton state park. This link provided information about general trail information including the trails length, difficulty, hiking time, elevation, highlights, location and hike type. It also included a brief summary of the trail.



MaryClare Bacha- Highway Mock-ups

The goal of these **highway signs** is to make people want to stop and visit the trails **within Rensselaer County**. Many people and tourists are unaware that these trails even exist, and the signs can help with that. Each **highway sign** was designed similarly. A **red/pink sign** that will capture the driver's attention because it is an unusual color for a sign, an easy to read, bolded font, a key image or symbol associated with the trail, and how far away they are from the trail.

Nature Trail is located off of Route 7 in Rensselaer County. Highway signs will start to appear five miles before the trail. **The sign is bordered with flowers because Nature Trail is**

known for its wildflowers, ferns, and trees. The flowers represent a point of attraction to make one want to stop. The sign also has a parking sign, so travelers know there is parking for the trail, which may encourage them to stop and hike. The parking lot is located on Route 7 just before the intersection with Route 22.



Chet Bell Loop Trail is located near Cropseyville, NY. This highway marker is located four miles away from the trail. **The sign has fall trees on it because it is a popular destination for people to see the leaves change for fall.** There is also water on the sign because there is a big lake at the trail. The images on these sign will hopefully attract families and tourist.

Berlin State Forest Trail is located on Cowdry Hollow Rd. This highway marker is five miles away from the start of the trail and includes footprints and a hiker. **It is an easy walk and is open all year around,** which is something to advertise so it gives something the tourist something to do in their spare time.

Orange Trail is located at 1 Schodack Island Way, Schodack Landing, NY. These signs will begin three miles away and have a **picture of two Indians holding hands** because you can

hike where Indians hiked 4,000 years ago. This is a historical trail that can draw tourists and schools to come visit this state park and hike Orange trail.

Highway markers for Singletrack Trail will start appearing four miles away from the entrance. The marker has a **bike on it because in addition to walking you can hike the trails, which will appeal to bikers. The sign also has a rock on it, because it is a rocky trail and it can be dangerous.**



When the trail is a mile away, there will be many mini signs that will pop up. The sign will be the same color as the main markers as well as having the key image from the main poster. For example the Nature Trail sign will just have a flower, with words such as follow the sign for more fun. Hopefully the driver will see all these signs and be more intrigued to stop and visit!

Annotated Bibliography

http://trails.mtbr.com/cat/united-states-trails/trails-new-york/trail/pittstown-state-forest-singletrack/prd_169350_4566crx.aspx

This website for Singletrack Trail was used for finding a key image for the mock-up sign by describing the trail as rocky and as having a bike trail.

<http://www.amcmohawkhudson.org/outdoors/view.asp?loc=tsf>

This website for Nature Trail said where parking was and that there are a lot of wildflowers and plants.

<http://alltrails.com/trail/us/new-york/berlin-state-forest-trail-cowdry-hollow-rd-th>

This website gave an address for Berlin Forest state trail as well as things to do when hiking the trail.

http://www.localhikes.com/Hikes/Grafton_Chert_0160.asp

The website for Chert Bell Loop Trail said where it is located and what the trail is known for.

https://www.trails.com/tcatalog_trail.aspx?trailid=XFA210-015

This website for Orange Trail gave the address and what was historic about the trail.

Tourism Organizations (Catherine Sabatino)

There is no shortage of things to do in Rensselaer County. There are plenty of historic sites, farms and museums. There is something for people of every age to enjoy. One of the main historic attractions in Rensselaer County is the **Bennington Battlefield**. This is the location of a Revolutionary War battle that occurred in August 1777 between the British forces of General John Burgoyne and Colonel Friedrich Baum against the American forces under Brigadier General John Stark and Colonel Seth Warner (<http://www.renscotourism.com/home.aspx>). The British tried to capture American storehouse in Bennington because they needed to replenish their provisions. The British had underestimated the strength of the Americans and they surrendered in October of the same year after two unsuccessful battles in Saratoga. Visiting this historic location, you will see the 276 acres of game fields with interpretive panels that offer plenty of information.

For families, Rensselaer County has plenty of things to do and see. Children of all ages will love the **Engelike Farm** in Troy, New York. Here you can pick your own flowers, pumpkins and strawberries. In the summer there are plenty of vegetables that you can either buy at the stand and farmers market, or you can also pick your own. In the fall there is pumpkin picking, hayrides, a corn maze and haunted hayrides. From May to October, their zip line is open. In the winter there is snowshoeing and cross country skiing. There is an abundance of activities at the Engelike Farm can be enjoyed all year round.

Rensselaer is also home to the **Children's Museum of Science and Technology**. This museum was established in 1954 and was at the forefront of the nation's children's museum movement. Ranked one of the top 20 science center in the nation, this beautiful museum is currently the only place in the Northeast where visitors can see a Digistar II planetarium (<http://www.renscotourism.com/home.aspx>). This exhibit is specifically designed for children and their families to explore the world of science and it makes a perfect field trip for students of all ages.



Throughout the county of Rensselaer there are plenty of accommodations to stay in. Located in the city of Troy, New York, the **Olde Judge Mansion** is a beautiful and relaxing bed and breakfast. The Victorian-Gothic style home was built in 1892 and has 5 bedrooms and 5 bathrooms. In the morning, guests are served a hot and hearty breakfast made by the hostess Tina Urzan. Another lovely place to spend the weekend is the **Mattison Hollow B&B** located in

Berlin, New York. This historic home was built approximately 225 years ago in 1790. All of the bedrooms have antique furniture and all have private baths. This bed and breakfast is in the perfect location. It is only minutes from skiing, the Cherry Plain State Park and all of the famous cultural and recreational activities that make the county of Rensselaer has to offer.

Mattison Hollow B&B



Olde Judge Mansion



One of Rensselaer's most famous restaurants is **Peck's Arcade** in Troy, New York. The building was built in 1874 originally as a hotel and later it was used as a boarding house. In 1883, Peck's Arcade opened as a department store. In those days the word arcade did not mean a place to play different kinds of games the term originally referred to a collection of many different items. The food at Peck's Arcade has many global influences made with only the finest ingredients.

There are plenty of things to see and do when visiting Rensselaer county. More information about this historic area of New York can be found on the Rensselaer County's **Tourism website** as well as the **Facebook** page. It would be very beneficial for the county to create more social media outlets such as Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, etc. to offer more information to visitors.

Bibliography

<http://www.renscotourism.com/home.aspx>

This website provided all of the tourism information about Rensselaer County. On this website are multiple historic sites, places to eat and sleep and a calendar of different upcoming events and things to do.

Itinerary: Taylor Burke

DAY 1

You will leave from New York City at around 10:00am. You will take a stop at Yanni Too's Restaurant just 2.5 hours away from NYC. You will take I-87 N which is the fastest route to the restaurant. After a nice filling sit down lunch, you will head to the first hiking trail, The Schodack Island State Park- Orange Trail. Yanni Too's Restaurant is a 4.5/5 star rated restaurant located just about a half hour away from the State Park. You will take NY 912 M E and arrive at the state park at around 2:30pm. You will hike for about an hour along the Orange Trail. Within the state park there are many other activities to do. You will have free time to decide between bike trails, volleyball matches, horseshoe games, kayaking, and canoeing. At around 6:30pm you can venture off to the bird conservation area and check out the different species from bald eagles to blue herons. Around 7:00pm you will leave the park grounds and head off to dinner at Boathouse Grille taking NY-912M W and NY-144 S and arrive at around 7:30pm. After dinner you will head off to your hotel. You will leave the restaurant at around 9:30pm and arrive a your hotel within 10 minutes to spend the night at Best Western New Baltimore Inn to get some rest for the long day ahead of you tomorrow.

DAY 2

After having the free breakfast provided by the Best Western New Baltimore Inn, you will leave on your journey for the day at about 8:30am to go to Berlin State Forest. Taking NY-22 N, it will take an estimated time of about an hour and 15 minutes to get to Berlin State Forest arriving at about 9:45am. You will spend about two hours hiking, snowshoeing, dog walking, or biking here (11:45am). After spending some time at the Park, you would visit Peck's Arcade which is a popular restaurant and have a sit down lunch. To get to Peck's Arcade it is about an hour drive by taking NY-2-W (12:45). After eating, you will head back out on the road at about

2:15pm. The next stop of the day is known as Engelike Farm. Engelike Farm is about a 10 minute drive (2:25) by taking NY-2 W/ Brunswick Rd. Here you can spend about two hours picking flowers, pumpkins, strawberries, vegetables. You can even enjoy mazes, hayrides, zip lining, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, all depending on what time of year you go (4:30pm)! After visiting Engelike Farm, which is fun for everyone, you can bring your children or students to Rensselaer's Children's Museum of Science and Technology. From Engelike Farm take Garfield Road and you should arrive there within 15 minutes (4:45pm). At the museum, kids can explore the world of science for about 2 hours (6:45). After all the exploring, the kids will probably be hungry, so you will go to Moscatiello's Italian Family Restaurant. Thankfully this is only a 2 minute drive by taking US 4 S and Jordan Road. After a nice relaxing sit down meal, you will head off to your hotel at 8:30pm. The hotel you will be staying at is Best Western Plus Franklin Square Inn Troy/Albany, just a 10 minute drive taking I-87 S. You will need your rest for day three of your exploring Rensselaer County.

DAY 3

On the last day there will be many things planned for you to do. Today will be an early day, after your breakfast you will depart from the hotel at 7:30am and arrive at Grafton State Park- Chet Bell Trail at 8:00am. It will take about an hour to hike the Chet Bell Trail. You will explore the Bird Sanctuary and Peace Pagoda for about a half hour and you will leave around 9:30am. From here you will go to Pittstown State Forest- Singletrack via NY 2-W and Tamarac Road and arrive at the park within 30 minutes (10:00am). This trail is a little longer and more difficult. It will be about 5 miles long riding your mountain bike with rocks, logs, and steep climbs. This trail will last about three hours to do (1:00pm). From here you will go to Tibbits State Forest and have your lunch packed so you could enjoy more of the day outside. You will take NY 7 E and arrive at the forest within 15 minutes (1:15). At Tibbits State forest you will enjoy hiking, fishing, hunting, or cross country skiing. You will spend about two hours here between hiking and other activities you choose to do (3:15). From here you will go to Historic Bennington Battlefield Park which is about a 15 minute drive (3:30) and spend about 2 hours learning about the history of the Bennington Battlefield (5:30). To grab a satisfying meal before your venture back to NYC, you can go to Great Wall Chinese Restaurant (7:00pm). After eating, you will leave your long weekend to Rensselaer County and back to NYC.

Bibliography

<http://www.renscotourism.com/home.aspx>

This website provided most of the tourism information about Rensselaer County. On this website are multiple historic sites, places to eat and sleep and a calendar of different upcoming events and things to do. Used a lot of the information provided by Catherine in the "Tourism" section of the paper.

<https://www.google.com/maps>

Google maps provided me the best way to plan the itinerary planning out times, directions, and where to go first, and so on.

Guidebook Catherine Sabatino

Tibbits State Forest

Address: Tibbits State Forest, Hoosick Falls, NY, 21090

Website: <http://www.townofhoosick.org/tibbits.shtml>

Phone: (518) 686-5045

Historical Description:

- Tibbits State Forest is 893 acres which was donated by Reverend John K. Tibbits to New York State in 1953 as a memorial to his family who had owned the land for over 150 years.
- Near the Tibbits State Forest is Tibbits Mansion which is now part of Hoosac School.

The Site:

- There are about four miles of hiking and logging trails.
- The forest has Pine, Hemlock, and White Oak trees as well as ferns and wildflowers flourish throughout the trail.
- For hunters, the State Forest offers plenty of opportunities to hunt for a large variety of wildlife.

Directions: Take I-87N. Take exit 23 for interstate 787N toward Troy, NY. Exit at 9E to merge onto NY-7 E toward Troy/Bennington. Drive 20.8 miles, the destination will be on the left.

Picture: <http://www.townofhoosick.org/tibbits.shtml>

Pittstown State Forest

Address: Ward Hollow Road, Johnsonville, New York, 12094

Website: http://trails.mtbr.com/cat/united-states-trails/trails-new-york/trail/pittstown-state-forest-singletrack/prd_169350_4566crx.aspx

Historical Description:

- Pittstown State Forest Singletrack trails were built and continue to be cared for by the Mohawk Hudson Cycling Club and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.
- Since 2011, Saratoga Mountain Bike Association now has a volunteer agreement with DEC to build and maintain the trails in Pittstown.

The Site:

- It is at the base of Rensselaer Plateau.
- There are about ten miles of trails.
- Trail levels: Advanced
- There are rock wall crossings, logs, ramps, switchback turns and short steep climbs.

Directions: Take Route 2 East in Troy, NY. At the light (corner of rt 2 and rt 278), take a left and then an immediate right onto Tamarack Rd. Follow Tamarack Road, take a right onto a large dirt road. There's no sign, but it's called Williams Rd. Follow Williams to the next Road, and

bear right (now called Edelman rd). Follow this straight and you'll see a sign letting you know that you are now entering the Pittstown State Forest. Park at the first large opening on your left.

Picture: <http://www.whitgift.co.uk/images/General/202-MountainBikeClub.jpg>

Berlin State Forest

Address: 1150 N. Westcott Rd. Schenectady, NY 12306

Website: <http://nysparks.com/publications/documents/empire-state-trails/EmpireStateTrailsNorthern.pdf>

Phone: (518) 357-2066

Historical Description:

- These lands were established in the 1990s and interconnect with lands purchased on adjoining lands to increase the recreational opportunities on the Taconic Ridge.

The Site:

- The Berlin State Forest is apart of the Taconic Ridge State Forest.
- It is located along the borders of New York, Massachusetts and Vermont.
- The area contains approximately 6,000 acres of State Forest
- Taconic Ridge State Forest presents picturesque views of the Taconic Range, Mount Greylock, and Berlin Mountain.
- Berlin State Forest has an endless number of trails on its 634 acres.
- The summit is the highest point on the trail at 2,798 feet. From the summit, you can see Mount Greylock in Massachusetts.
- Some areas are washed out and some can get rocky, but the walk down from the summit is effortless.

Directions: Take Taconic State Parkway N to Birge Hill Rd in Chatham. Take exit toward NY-295/Chatham. Follow NY-295 turn right onto US-20 E. Continue on NY-22 N. Drive to Cowdry Hollow Rd in Berlin. Turn left onto NY-22 N. Turn right onto SE Hollow Rd. Continue straight to stay on SE Hollow Rd. Turn left onto Cowdry Hollow Rd.

Picture: <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-wjiIeZwp6fA/U6jGC-a4OOI/AAAAAAAAAHkU/few9kOSGZvE/s1600/June+23+2014+025.JPG>

Chet Bell Trail

Website: http://www.localhikes.com/Hikes/Grafton_Chets_0160.asp and <http://nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/documents/MasterPlans/GraftonLakesStatePark/GLStateParkDMP-FEIS.pdf>

Phone: (518) 279-1155

Historical Description:

- Chet Bell Trail, apart of Grafton State Park.
- The land in the park has a long history of recorded human use dating back to the late 18th century.

- Settled soon after the Revolutionary War, the land was extensively timbered and farmed through the 1800's and was essentially treeless by the 1890's.
- The park opened in 1971.

The Site:

- Chet Bell Trail, is filled with streams and rock formations within a forest of Spruce, Pine, Oak, and Birch.
- Deer, hawks, red squirrels, and chipmunks are likely to be found on the trail 1.5 mile loop-around trail.
- Located on the forested mountain ridge between the Taconic and Hudson Valley, the park includes five ponds and offers activities for fishing, swimming and boating.
- Grafton State Park is steadily 10-15 degrees cooler than the Hudson Valley Region.
- The park itself receives snow earlier in the fall, and it stays longer until the spring.
- Bikers also use this trail, and so do horses.

Directions:

Take I-87N to Green Island. Take exit 9E from I-787. Continue on NY-7 E. Turn right onto NY-278 S. Turn left onto NY-2 E. Turn left onto N Long Pond Rd.

Picture: <http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-oPzxD0oQopU/UgU4fWNAZ5I/AAAAAAAAAGkQ/I9nW7DrLsYM/s1600/Grafton+Fire+Tower+-+August+6+2013+043.JPG>

Schodack Island State Park

Address: 1 Schodack Island Way, Schodack Landing, NY 12156

Website: <http://nysparks.com/parks/146/details.aspx>

Phone: (518) 732-0187

Historical Description:

- Schodack Island State Park was fertile and ideal for agriculture.
- Although most likely occupied before recorded history, the first contact with Native Americans in this area occurred in 1609.
- Over time, deeds to the Schodack Islands were collected by Dutch settlers from the Mohican Indians.
- Mohicans sold land and mill sites in 1648, 1650 and 1663

The Site:

- Schodack Island State Park lies along the east shore of the Hudson River.
- Today, Schodack State Park is home to a Bird Conservation Area home to a variety of birds and has a designated a State Estuary.
- Home to Bald Eagles, Cerulean Warblers and Blue Herons that nest in the cottonwood trees. The beautiful creatures can be found on the eight miles of multi-use trails.

Directions:

Take U.S. 9 N. Take a slight right onto NY-23/NY-9H N. Continue straight onto NY-9H N for about 15 miles. At the traffic circle continue straight onto U.S. 9 N. Turn left onto Schodack Landing Rd. Turn right onto Muitzeskill Rd. Take a sharp left onto NY-9J S.

Picture: <http://ww1.hdnux.com/photos/13/55/36/3069884/3/628x471.jpg>

Bibliography:

<http://www.townofhoosick.org/tibbits.shtml>

Information on Tibbits State Forest

http://trails.mtbr.com/cat/united-states-trails/trails-new-york/trail/pittstown-state-forest-singletrack/prd_169350_4566crx.aspx

I used this website to find information about the history of Pittstown state forest.

<http://nysparks.com/publications/documents/empire-state-trails/EmpireStateTrailsNorthern.pdf>

Information about Berlin State Forest

http://www.localhikes.com/Hikes/Grafton_Chert_0160.asp and <http://nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/documents/MasterPlans/GraftonLakesStatePark/GLStateParkDMP-FEIS.pdf>

Chert Bell Trail

<http://nysparks.com/parks/146/details.aspx>

Schodack Island State Park

