

CAREFULLY DESIGNED TOURS FOR TOURISTS

Thanks to small grants from the Rural New York program and the Citizens Advisory Committee of Lake Champlain, BRASS is giving interpretive tours this year, and coordinating and promoting tours given by other organizations. It is our effort to demonstrate how popular interpretive tours in the ecology, culture and history of Essex County's Champlain Valley may be. If tours are quickly filled and enthusiastically evaluated, BRASS will have demonstrated the potential for continuing tours in the coming years by non-profit groups or by entrepreneurial businesses. This could be a way of providing income and jobs while not destroying the environment, landscapes, and rural hamlets we love.

With the help of other groups (like Adirondack Architectural Heritage, Arts Council for the Northern Adirondacks, the Champlain Valley Heritage Network, the Port Henry Economic Development Office, Cooperative Extension, Friends of the North Country, Adirondack Council, High Peaks Audubon, and the Adirondack Centr Museum), recommendations for quality standards have been set for the demonstration tours:

- interpreters/guides must demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter, and experience in communication;
- tours are primarily educational, with plenty of opportunity for tourists to interact with guides;
- travel modes and tour activities must minimize impacts to the environment and to the rural character of our hamlets;
- food and accommodations should be of benefit to our farmers and existing facilities; tour size is limited to 12 in any area of environmental sensitivity; groups in hamlet areas with over 12 tourists must provide good potential for tourist/guide interaction;
- if possible, tourists should leave with tangible products like maps, brochures or documents, to extend their learning;
- guides should be trained in first aid and CPR.

Below is a brief description of tour offerings this summer:

- Bird identification and natural history of Webb Royce Swamp and Coon Mountain.
- Participation in an annual butterfly count, monitoring the abundance and distribution of species.
- Touring the Boquet's floodplains, oxbows, and delta to observe the geomorphology, wildlife, and land uses.
- An historic architectural walking tour of Keeseville.
- Learning about the iron mining history and architecture of Moriah.
- A tour of Essex and Split Rock Mountain for photographers, artists and ecologists.
- An interpretive bicycle tour on Stony Lonesome Road between N. Hudson and Ironville, along with participating in Apple Fest at the Pennfield Museum.
- A tour of AuSable Chasm and the Keeseville Historic District.

- Two days with an interpretive guide consisting of Fort Ticonderoga, a boat trip to Mount Independence, tour of 1812 Homestead, walking tour of Jay, local crafts demonstrations, High Falls Gorge in Willmington, and Octoberfest at Whiteface Mountain including the chairlift.
 - Friday afternoon August Extension tours consisting of: timber harvesting in a managed forest; a working dairy farm (with llamas, goats, ostriches & emus); Lincoln Pond ecology and wildlife; and a working apple orchard during picking season.
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