



**“BRINGING THE WORLD TO OUR BACKYARD”**



## Conference Schedule

HOSTED AND SPONSORED BY:



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CONFERENCE LOCATION:



HOLIDAY INN  
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**W**elcome to the first-ever New York Rural Tourism Conference – an event dedicated solely to the issues facing rural destinations. Built upon the concept of “Bringing the World to Our Backyard,” we hope this event will inform and inspire and become an annual tradition for rural tourism-driven communities from across the state.



shopping dollars, maximizing the promotional punch with limited marketing funds – but sometimes they are unique to your community. The purpose of this conference is to plant seeds and give you ideas that you can take home to your own communities and tailor to fit your particular destination’s needs.

Those of use who promote tourism or work in the tourism industry beyond the big city lights face unique challenges in trying to attract visitors to our “backyards.” Sometimes these challenges are common – attractive and useful signage to direct and inform visitors, the need to spruce up small downtowns to lure visitors’

We also want to inspire you to look around your own community and perhaps broaden your view of what “rural tourism” really is. Maybe you have some rural tourism gems right in your own backyard that you’ve never considered marketing opportunities. Be prepared to drive away with some real strategies for “Bringing the World to Our Backyard!”

## Conference Agenda

### Thursday, January 11

**8am-5pm**      **REGISTRATION TABLE OPEN**  
 Front Lobby  
*Sponsored by Seneca County Tourism*

**Noon-1:30pm**      **KICK OFF LUNCH**  
 Location: Ballroom  
*Sponsored by Greater Niagara’s Country Byways*



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER DAVID DOUBILET**  
**CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER-IN-RESIDENCE**  
**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE**  
*Sponsored by Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance*

**1:45-3:00pm**      **CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS**  
**CHOOSE ONE:**

**Tourism in the Bag**  
 Location: Fillmore Room  
 Rosemarie Reyes, Roseworks, Ltd., Hoboken, NJ  
*Shopping and dining are consistently the top activities of all tourists in America. Learn how to increase your shopping and dining tourism through dynamic packaging and win/win partnerships that are proven successful marketing strategies throughout the U.S. This workshop is part of the NCA Learning Workshop Series, from the Travel Industry Association of America.*

**Visual Imaging: Rural Signage Systems for Tourism**  
 Location: Cayuga Room  
 Randy Crawford, Principal, Crawford & Stearns, Architects & Preservation Planners  
 John DiMura, Trails Director, NYS Canal Corporation  
 Steve Roof, Assistant Right-of-Way Agent, NYS Dept. of Transportation  
*Finding your way in rural areas can be challenging for visitors. How do visitors find you as they travel highways, byways and waterways? How does your community and business signage influence their impressions once they get there? Presenters from NYS Dept. of Transportation, NYS Canal Corporation, and an architectural firm will discuss signage regulations, applications and examples.*

**Downtowns: Grassroots Community Tourism Development**  
 Location: Seneca Room  
 Gary Ferguson, Executive Director, Ithaca Downtown Partnership  
 Lisa Nagle, Principal, Elan Planning & Design, Saratoga Springs  
*Healthy main streets are key to capturing visitor spending in small rural communities. From creating attractive, welcoming streetscapes and visitor services, to encouraging tourism-based entrepreneurs, to managing historic and cultural resources for sustainable tourism – main street topics are key. Presenters from the Ithaca Downtown Partnership and Elan Planning and Design in Saratoga Springs will discuss the attributes of successful downtowns and give you ideas on how you can achieve them in your community.*

**3:00-3:30pm**      **AFTERNOON BREAK - VISIT SPONSOR TABLES**  
 Location: Courtyard  
*Sponsored by the Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning*

# Conference



# Agenda

## Thursday, January 11, continued

- 3:30-4:45pm REPEAT WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS**  
(CHOOSE ONE FROM PREVIOUS LIST)
- 4:45-5:45pm ATTENDEES ON OWN**
- 5:45-6:30pm Wine RECEPTION**  
Location: Courtyard  
*Sponsored by Cayuga County Office of Tourism and Holiday Inn Auburn/Finger Lakes*
- 6:30-8:00pm Dinner**  
Location: Ballroom  
Each table showcasing a product of New York  
*Sponsored by the NYS Department of Economic Development, Division of Tourism ("I Love New York")*
- 8:00pm AFTER DINNER SOCIAL**  
Location: McMurphy's Irish Pub (in hotel)  
*Sponsored by New York State Canal Corporation Entertainment sponsored by Holiday Inn Auburn/Finger Lakes*

## Friday, January 12

- 7:00-8:30am REGISTRATION TABLE OPEN**  
Location: Front Lobby  
*Sponsored by Seneca County Tourism*
- 7:00-8:30am BREAKFAST BUFFET**  
Location: Ballroom  
*Sponsored by Escapemaker.com*
- 8:30-9:45am CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS**  
**CHOOSE ONE:**

### **Defining the Essential Market Geography of Your Rural Destination**

Location: Cayuga Room

Dr. Warren Brown, Director, Program in Applied Demographics, Cornell (University) Institute for Social and Economic Research

*All destinations are not equal and your marketing and development plans must address the unique character of your rural destination. But who is your optimal market? This workshop will help you understand how to go about determining who that essential market is for your particular destination.*

*Additional conference sponsorship/underwriting provided by Tioga Downs and Vernon Downs.*

*Speakers Gifts sponsored by Adirondack Life, Inc., Ad Workshop, Finger Lakes Scuba, and JMF Publishing Inc.*

### **Roundtable Discussion: Working Successfully With Local Partners**

Location: Fillmore Room

Moderated by Valerie Knoblauch, President, Finger Lakes Visitors Connection

*This moderated and structured discussion group is geared toward tourism promotion agencies, chambers of commerce and business associations, and will identify the common challenges and hurdles of getting our local partners to understand, support and appreciate tourism promotion. The group will strategize practical ideas and action items that can be implemented to help local partners get "it."*

**NOTE:** Space limited to 25 per session; only one rep per agency, please. Priority seating for TPA, Chamber and Bus. Assoc. reps.

### **The Faces of Recreational Tourism**

Location: Seneca Room

Jan Brabant, paddler (Clayton, NY)

John Clark, fisherman (DeKalb Junction, NY)

Josh Poppel, bicyclist (Albany, NY)

Jennifer Reschke, hiker/backpacker (Medina, NY)

*Recreational tourism is a fast-growing segment of the industry, with many niche interests providing economic opportunities for rural destinations. Are you prepared to take advantage of these trends? Actual recreational enthusiasts representing backpacking, fishing, paddling and cycling interests will tell you what influences their decisions to travel to a particular destination and what they look for in terms of infrastructure, services and amenities to shape their visitor experience.*

### **9:45-10:15am MORNING BREAK - VISIT SPONSOR TABLES**

Location: Courtyard

*Sponsored by Syracuse.com*

### **10:15-11:30am REPEAT WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS**

(CHOOSE ONE FROM PREVIOUS LIST)

### **11:30am-Noon EXTRA TIME FOR LATE CHECKOUT, ETC.**

### **Noon-1:30pm LUNCH BUFFET & CLOSING REMARKS**

Location: Ballroom

*Sponsored by the New York State Travel & Vacation Association*

**Thank you for attending!**  
**Please drive safely!**

# Speakers/Presenters



## **Jan Brabant** - *Owner, T.I. Adventures, Clayton, NY*

Born and raised in Clayton, Mr. Brabant's love of paddling started with St. Lawrence skiffs and canoeing as a child. He was introduced to kayaking while a student at Western State College in Colorado. He moved back to Clayton 22 years ago and opened T.I. Adventures, offering kayak rentals, sales and tours, to introduce people to the still-young sport of kayaking. Mr. Brabant has served as a judge for many whitewater kayaking competitions, including the World Freestyle Kayaking Championship in Spain in 1999. He is active with the American Canoe Association, the Thousand Islands Land Trust and Save the River.

## **Warren A. Brown** - *Senior Research Associate, Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, Ithaca, NY*

Dr. Brown directs the Program on Applied Demographics and is the Research Director of the New York Census Research Data Center. He represents New York State in the U.S. Census Bureau's Federal-State Cooperatives for Population Estimates and Projections. Dr. Brown's teaching, research and consulting efforts involve him with the application of demographic information in many areas of community and economic development including revitalization of downtown shopping districts, workforce planning, the hospitality and recreation industries, analysis of housing markets, and environmental protection.

## **John Clark** - *Fisherman, DeKalb Junction, NY*

John Clark travels extensively for one of his favorite sports - fishing. For 15 years he served as a technical consultant to the PBS fishing series "Streamside." He has also served as a fishing guide for a private consortium of 40 lakes in northern Quebec and taught classes on fly fishing. He has rowed a kayak the entire length of the St. Lawrence River, biked across Canada, and he and his wife currently operate several inns and cottages near Canton, NY.

## **Randall Crawford** - *Principal, Crawford & Stearns, Syracuse, NY*

Mr. Crawford is an architect licensed in New York and Pennsylvania. In private practice for nearly 30 years, he has provided consulting services for numerous historic sites in New Hampshire, North Carolina and West Virginia as well as throughout New York State. His principal expertise lies in the areas of historic preservation, the rehabilitation of historic properties to accommodate new uses and handicapped access, Main Street revitalization and compliance with regulatory requirements for historic properties.

## **John DiMura** - *Senior Development Specialist, NYS Canal Corporation, Albany, NY*

Mr. DiMura manages the Canalway Trail Program and other Canal revitalization projects, including an initiative to establish uniform wayfinding and interpretive signage along the Canal. He participated in the development of the Canal Recreationway Plan and the subsequent Canal Revitalization Program. He is currently involved with the planning and implementation of the Canal Revitalization II Program, completing the 348-mile Erie Canal Trail from Tonawanda to Waterford. Mr. DiMura has over 25 years of project planning, design and construction experience with both the Canal Corp. and the NYS Thruway Authority.

## **David Doublet** - *Contributing Photographer-in-Residence, National Geographic Magazine*

Mr. Doublet has documented the planet's ever-changing underwater world since 1971, photographing over 60 stories for National Geographic Magazine. Mr. Doublet's work also appears in countless other publications worldwide and he is a contributing editor and feature columnist for "Behind the Shot" in Sport Diver Magazine (U.S.) and Seascapes and Dive Magazine (U.K.). Mr. Doublet has authored seven books on the sea, including the most recent, Fish Face by Phaidon Publishers. He makes his home in the coastal towns of Clayton, New York and DeKelders, South Africa.

## **Gary Ferguson** - *Executive Director, Ithaca Downtown Partnership, Ithaca, NY*

Mr. Ferguson is charged with planning, managing and promoting downtown Ithaca, and has helped spearhead new office, housing, retail and entertainment development since 1999. Mr. Ferguson has also directed and led downtown programs and projects in Ohio, Colorado, Massachusetts and Maine, and served as a consultant and advisor on downtown issues to

communities across the country. He served a six-year term as a board member of the Washington, D.C.-based International Downtown Association, and is Vice President of the New York Urban Council. He is a contributing author to the recently-published book, "Making Business Districts Work."

## **Valerie Knoblauch** - *President, Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Canandaigua, NY*

A native of the Finger Lakes, Ms. Knoblauch started her career in tourism in the wine industry and has held her current position for 22 years. She is the author of several articles and two books, and speaks frequently about tourism destination management and strategic planning for tourism. She has received several awards, including an appointment to the White House Conference on Travel and Tourism, the New York State Travel and Vacation Society Member of the Year Award, and the I Love NY Individual Achievement Award, in addition to being active on the Board of Directors of the Travel Industry Association of America.

## **Lisa Nagle, AICP** - *Founding Partner, Elan Planning & Design, Inc., Saratoga Springs, NY*

Ms. Nagle has worked with communities in the northeast on strategic planning, visioning and economic development for over 15 years. She also has extensive experience in grant writing and using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to assist clients in making informed decisions with regard to community planning, site development and resource management. Ms. Nagle has worked closely with various community interest groups to help create several consensus-based plans that are being implemented.

## **Joshua Poppel** - *Executive Director, New York Bicycling Coalition, Albany, NY*

Before working with the Coalition, Mr. Poppel was a full-time guide with Vermont Bicycle Tours where he led inn-to-inn tours across the United States as well as in New Zealand. He has also participated in cross-country bike tours of the United States and Denmark and has biked extensively in Italy and France. The Coalition provides a coherent, credible voice for the interests of all bicyclists in the state, and promotes bicycling tourism as a way to revitalize the upstate NY economy.

## **Jennifer Reschke** - *Outdoorswoman/Environmentalist, Medina, NY*

An active member of the Adirondack Mountain Club and the Sierra Club, Ms. Reschke has been backpacking throughout the U.S. and Canada. Ms. Reschke does yearly volunteer projects for the National Park Service, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through Wilderness Volunteers. Currently, she is training her four-month-old Vizsla puppy in Wilderness Search and Rescue. Ms. Reschke works at the University of Buffalo as a senior research specialist.

## **Rosemarie Reyes** - *Owner, Roseworks, Ltd., New York, NY*

Ms. Reyes began her career in tourism working with various tour wholesalers in New York and France, handling everything from tour managing and operations to contract negotiations, event planning and product/business development. Four years ago she switched to strategic communications with a focus on marketing, specializing in tourism and entertainment communications. Her clients include Broadway shows such as Mamma Mia! and Wicked, as well as tour wholesalers like Travel Bound. As a free-lance writer she contributes to travel industry journals and magazines, and writes marketing copy for businesses such as Planet Hollywood and Circle Line Downtown.

## **Steve Roof** - *Assistant Right-of-Way Agent, Real Estate Office, NYS Department of Transportation, Syracuse, NY*

Mr. Roof is the primary contact for advertising sign issues in the region covering Cayuga, Cortland, Onondaga, Oswego, Seneca and Tompkins counties. His duties include answering public calls about signage, identifying illegal signs, inspecting signs for continued compliance with regulations and issuing and processing applications for Tourist Oriented Directional Signs, LOGO signs (the signs on the Interstate routes) and registered signs. Prior to joining the DOT eight years ago, Mr. Roof was an independent licensed real estate appraiser.

2007 NY Rural Tourism Conference Committee: Laurie Marr (Conference Coordinator), Suzanne Bixby, Dawn Borchert, Harvey Botzman, Gary DeYoung, Spike Herzig, Moe Koch, Mike Linehan, Dan O'Brien, Kelly Rapone, Stella Reschke, Deborah Taylor, Jim Walter, Kristina Wormuth.