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STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW
Determination of Significance
POSITIVE DECLARATION
Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement

July 24, 2006

Lead Agency: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP)

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the rules and regulations implementing Article 8 (Environmental Quality Review) of the Environmental Conservation Law. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), as Lead Agency, has determined that the action described in this notice may have a significant effect on the environment, and that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be prepared.

Title of Action: Niagara River Greenway Plan

SEQR Status: Type I

Scoping: No Yes If yes, indicate how scoping will be conducted.

Location of Action: The Niagara River Greenway will be located along the Niagara River in Niagara and Erie Counties. The specific boundaries of the Niagara River Greenway will be determined as part of the Master Planning process.

Description of Action: The Niagara River Greenway Commission proposes to prepare, adopt and implement a Niagara River Greenway Plan (the Plan) that will guide the development of various projects in the Niagara River Corridor, which includes 11 NYS Parks, a National Scenic Byway, and Niagara Falls, a National Historic Landmark. The Niagara River Corridor has been identified by the Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area of international significance. The corridor is in the New York State Coastal Zone Boundary and portions of Local Waterfront Revitalization Areas. While the corridor supports some commercial activities as well as a number of parks, public access facilities, trails and conservation areas, these public resources largely stand alone.

The proposed Plan will establish a vision for a linear system of interconnected parks and conservation areas that will redefine the Niagara River in terms of its history, economic vitality, and ecological significance. The primary components of the Plan include increased public access to the Niagara River, a corridor trail system with complimentary connections to land access points, balanced economic opportunity that compliments the natural and scenic environment and emphasis on the region's industrial heritage.

Reasons Supporting this Determination: The Greenway Plan is an action that may have significant impacts on the environment. The plan provides direction for future use and protection of a large area of land adjacent to the Niagara River. The plan calls for the maximizing of positive impacts while, if not eliminating, then minimizing potential adverse impacts. The Niagara River corridor contains important ecological and historic resources including an internationally significant Important Bird Area, Significant Coastal Habitats, rare, threatened and endangered species, significant ecological communities, a National Historic Landmark and other significant historic properties that could potentially be affected by this planning process and plan implementation. The Plan will provide guidelines and direction for the use and protection of scenic, recreational, natural and historic resources within the Niagara River Greenway for an extended period.

Consistent with the Niagara River Greenway enabling legislation, the NYS OPRHP, as lead Agency, has determined that a Generic Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared. Formal scoping will not be conducted. However, several public information meetings have been held to inform the public about the planning process and receive public input. These meetings resulted in the identification of issues and potential impacts which will help guide the preparation of the Draft Plan/GEIS. Additional opportunity for public input is provided through Greenway Commission meetings and meetings of local government subcommittees and the Citizens Advisory subcommittee.

Additional information about the plan and planning process is available on line at:
<http://www.niagaragreenway.org>

For Further information :

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