

**Notes from Invitational Meetings -- November 21 and 22, 2005  
Regarding Amendment to the Oil Region National Heritage Area  
Management Plan, including Environmental Assessment**

These notes are a composite from a series of 9 meetings held on November 21 and 22, 2005 and facilitated by Mr. Jonathan Lane of ICON architecture, assisted by staff of the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism; please see enclosed list of attendees. Some statements were mentioned more than once.

These notes are clustered by these general topics rather than by the geographical site in which the comments were provided:

Preservation  
Partnerships  
Marketing  
Recreation  
Environmental Assessment  
Community/Economic Development  
Organizational/Administrative

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Preservation

Retain commitment to Crawford Center in Emlenton

Encourage adapt historic buildings for safety and active reuse.

Consider façade restoration grants/regrants by ORA and municipalities.

Municipal code officers need technical assistance regarding waivers for historic buildings available via new Uniform Pa. Building Code.

Subsidize technical assistance by preservation architects to property owners.

Emphasize using upper floors more fully for commercial and/or residential use; realize this may entail sprinkler systems and elevators.

Please reactivate the OHR Preservation Committee as part of ORA structure.

Map the former oil boomtowns, plus famous oil wells.

Venango County Park & Natural Resources Authority (formed in 2003)

seems to be focused only on Two Mile Run County Park; need to get active on the rest of their designated mission.

Titusville is considering historic overlay district; will need funding help with educational activities for the public and for property owners.

Code officers desire to offer incentives to property owners who comply with the specific design guidelines.

(Preservation, continued)

Spread awareness of Titusville Towne Square as example of sound historic rehabilitation of upper stories for mixed use in downtown.

Need to preserve and access collections like those owned by Titusville Historical Society; perhaps use as changing exhibits at museum sites.

Cemetery tours can feature architecture, stone work, ironwood, and the famous people/families buried there.

Historic bridges should be preserved; perhaps route a driving tour to showcase them.

Assist municipalities and others with cemetery preservation; ex. - Memory Acres in Pleasantville.

To date, one theater fully rehabilitated and operational; also desire mid-size historic theaters restored and reopened. Community Playhouse has the playwright (sp.) for several historic plays, but lacks permanent home presently. Area also lacks dinner theaters generally.

Restore Egbert Oil Company building in Oil Creek State Park; convert to bed and breakfast operation.

### Partnerships

The “Franklin Sport” airplane should be provided a permanent home at Venango Regional Airport, inside a see-thru structure connected to the main terminal building; this would be new partnership by DeBence, Airport, and Experimental Aircraft Association.

Purchase historic home along Liberty Street in connection with Historic Franklin Preservation Association; use as training site while being restored and rehabilitated using public and private funds; then sell, using proceeds to repeat with another structure; and, along the way, video the progression and air on Venango Video.

Make sure that the ORNHA Management Plan and the Venango County Comprehensive Plan are consistent and cross-referenced; especially re. natural resource protection and outdoor recreation development. Also cross-reference to the 7-municipality Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan being prepared for southern Venango County.

Combine county and city funding to partially subsidize the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of second/upper stories along Routes 8/62 and in other parts of the designated historic districts. The County’s affordable housing trust fund might also be blended.

Figure out how to assist accommodations businesses to expand, reuse historic properties, etc.

Emphasize educational activities, especially in schools. Connect to Pa. Department of Education’s standard learning objectives.

(Partnerships, continued)

Involve the Justus Trust(s) even more regarding educational endeavors.

Partner more with Clarion University, the Harvey Center for Oil History, University of Pittsburgh at Titusville, Oil City Area Heritage Society, and area townships.

Titusville Renaissance, Inc. is re-invigorated now and may become a more active partner.

Use parking area at Perry Street as a festival site in Titusville.

Approach Dr. Bill Shields re. more connections with University of Pittsburgh at Titusville; several professors now do specific short-term research projects, surveys, exhibit design, some guiding.

Eco-tours could include Titusville Opportunity Park, mitigated wetlands with deer, birds, and beaver all inside city and near Drake Well; desire to develop Pine Creek as designated trout fishing area.

Historic plays could be performed and packaged with other historic and outdoor recreational activities; involve the "Allegheny Partners."

Write a historical musical intended to be performed in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Anchor an oil barge on Oil Creek at Drake Well as a performance venue.

Titusville Arts Council is doing outdoor art re. wood at the Myer Recreation Complex; this large BMX and other sports setting is big enough for organized tournaments and group camping for special events.

An active dining car on board the OC&TRR on regular runs and special events would be distinctive feature and money-generator.

The Wabash Car (owned by private individual) is now being restored to become first-class, with air conditioning and full tilt seats; estimate operational for 2008, thus allowing a higher price admission for it on the OC&TRR.

Idea: Drill a gas well on grounds of Drake Well Museum, for educational purposes, intending to reach the Medina layer.

Perhaps several organizations could share a professional fund-development person/employee.

### Marketing

Always do website links, because potential visitors use the internet to explore and research area and specific destinations in advance of trip.

ORA should do more to focus on festivals in whole region; suggest put a festival sub-page on ORA website; also, broader marketing of festival series; somehow count each event administrator's expenditures as match.

ORA should do quarterly magazine like "Westsylvania."

(Marketing, continued)

Construct across Liberty Street in Franklin a permanent free-standing banner holder, to feature events and in between promote ORA; need actual engineering for this (ex. -- put poles in the alleyways).

Need to specify sites for OHR Visitor Orientation Centers in Franklin and Oil City; Frank Weltner says DeBence is still open to negotiation; consider Venango Museum in Oil City.

OHR Regional Signage System is very much needed, as directional as well as promotional items.

Construct full-size derricks in median of I-80 at east and west edges of area. Prepare and distribute via internet and CDs living-history type guides to area.

Banners on bridges would be a nice touch, along with decorative lighting. Many partners need marketing funds, especially after making infrastructure and exhibitry improvements.

Some municipalities are starting to assemble items for local museum about each area's history; Titusville, Pleasantville, and already open in Emlenton.

Continue adding mini-parks in downtowns; for instance, with the Take Pride groups in Oil City and Titusville.

Increase marketing to teachers so that more school trips/tours result.

### Recreation

Priority remains linking the existing paved bike trail systems.

Gradually upgrade trail head facilities and add interpretive signage throughout trail system and boat access areas.

Provide technical assistance in packaging outdoor recreation, lodging, packed lunches, and transportation services.

Appeal to bicyclists of all ages and skill levels.

Add loopy-types of trails (hiking, mountain biking, paved bike trails) after the main linear paved bike trail system is intact. Opportunities include Dotter Road, the area near Whitehall Camp and Sloan Road east of Emlenton, the west bank of the Allegheny River across from Emlenton, Deep Hollow Road, 208 from Emlenton to Clintonville, and link to Two Mile Run County Park.

“Safe Routes to School” (PennDOT grant program) is an example of allowing bikes on sidewalks.

Suggest the former BiLo Grocery Store on 8/62 would be good indoor recreational facility.

Put bike trail through former refinery into Emlenton.

Extend bike trail to Foxburg, after resolve mixed ownership on this strip.

(Recreation, continued)

Sponsor 2006 and subsequent Bicycle Sojourns as oil history tours on bikes.

Make this area's bike trails part of the Erie-Pittsburgh bike corridor/system.

Make this area's hiking trails part of the North Country Trail system.

Increase public access to Allegheny River, for kayaks/canoes and jetboats.

More fully utilize State Forest land as well as State Gamelands.

Encourage more active classification of State Gamelands for mixed use recreational trails as officially authorized; include related information at Gamelands parking lots.

Green-scaping and street-scaping are growing in momentum; suggest more overlooks; such as along Bloss Street access to Drake Well Museum.

Desire a bike trail spur beyond downtown Titusville to at least Perry Street or even Hasbrook Park in Hydetown (where Clear Lake Authority's section of ownership begins).

Rent bikes with surreys.

Use the Oil Creek stretch from Perry Street to Brown Street by building parallel trails, access, fishing stations, kayak launch, parking spots.

Re-route trail in Oil City's southside at parcels owned by Lou Kraft, rather than zigzagging on city streets.

Provide opportunities to stop and spend money while on trails; such as shopping, refreshments, lodging, B & Bs, etc.

### Environmental Assessment

Venango County is considering conducting Natural Heritage Area Inventory during 2006-2007. Crawford County's is already completed.

A greenways plan is also needed.

Growing Greener II earmarked \$1 million (spread over 6 years) for each Pa. 6th class county for economic development purposes and to do environmental clean-ups in consultation with the respective County Conservation District; 11-23-05 VCD will make their recommendations to Venango County Commissioners; expected are acid mine drainage mitigation (ex. - Williams Run), oil well plugging, and environmental education.

McClintock Well #1 could be a desalinization wetland/cattail demonstration site involving unusual partnerships; McClintock #2 is already plugged.

### Community/Economic Development

Assist potential operators of new accommodations with business planning services.

(Community/Economic Development, continued)

Expedite the overall Routes 8/62 project.

The former Honeywell refinery should be donated to Borough of Emlenton; then Emlenton should develop as a “bike park” and other uses; NPS’s River and Trails Unit (David Lang) is proposing a feasibility study regarding this overall site; much of the acreage could be developed for residential or other uses, too.

Broadband initiative will accelerate communications.

Because have ceased efforts on Weaver Garage project, delete its budget and time tables from the Management Plan.

ORA needs a showcase project on which to focus public attention, one with direct job creation.

Campground expansions are recommended.

Maher Museum still needs developed, once a project administrator/agency is identified. “Classic sepia-toned photography” business could be linked to the Mather Photo Studio. Also consider Mather as an educational center/activity.

Bring/retain OC&TRR/Drake Well guests into Titusville’s commercial area, preferably while leave vehicles at those other parking lots; ideas include trolley-style bus, horse-drawn wagon/carriage, bicycle-drawn rickshaws, 3-wheel rental bicycles, and on special days a train-shuttle from Perry Street to Drake and back.

Generate more history-related events in each downtown within the region.

At Perry Street, need exhibitry/electronics to open and deck the 4 cars called the static display (boxcar; caboose as party car; O. C. the Train as interactive photo-opportunity; and old Cytemp engine).

Assist entities interested in arts and theaters to do business planning.

Visitation is heavier on weekends, but many downtown stores and restaurants aren’t open on Sunday and only some on Saturdays; adjust if desire to reach these audiences.

#### Organizational/Administrative

Consider lengthening to include Foxburg.

Increase information flow from ORA to general public; for instance, add annual public hearings.

Compile and issue summary report/list of completed projects and their respective impacts.

#### Enclosure: Attendees

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Notes from Invitational Meetings, Nov. 21 and 22, 2005

In Augmentation to ORNHA Management Plan Folder

## **Attendees: Invitational Meetings of November 21 and 22, 2005**

November 21; 8:00 a.m. at Crawford Center in Emlenton, Pennsylvania

Nancy Marano -- Borough Manager, Borough of Emlenton

Nancy Newbury -- Co-owner of The Old Emlenton Mill

Jonathan Lane -- Project Consultant

Marilyn Black -- Vice-President for Heritage Development, Oil Region  
Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism (ORA)

November 21; 10:30 a.m. at FICDA office in Franklin, Pennsylvania

Tom Allen -- Executive Director, Franklin Industrial and Commercial  
Development Authority

Ronnie Beith -- Director, Franklin Fine Arts Council

William Gabrys -- City Manager, City of Franklin

James Holden -- President, Allegheny Valley Trails Association

Tracy Jamieson -- Director of Community Development, City of Franklin

Frank Weltner -- President, DeBence Antique Music World

Jonathan Lane -- Project Consultant

Marilyn Black -- Vice-President for Heritage Development, ORA

November 21; 1:00 p.m. at Courthouse Annex in Franklin, Pennsylvania

Judy Downs -- Venango County Planning Commission

Debra Frawley -- Venango County Planning Commission

Gary Hutchison -- Commissioner, County of Venango

Larry Puleo -- Board Member, Allegheny Valley Trails Association

Jonathan Lane -- Project Consultant

Marilyn Black -- Vice-President for Heritage Development, ORA

November 21; 3:30 p.m. at Titusville Towne Square in Titusville, PA

Michael Allyn -- Executive Director, Titusville Redevelopment Authority

James Becker -- Titusville Redevelopment Authority

Leah Carter -- Titusville Planning Commission

Mary Ann Nau -- City Manager, City of Titusville

Barbara Zolli -- Administrator, Drake Well Museum

Jonathan Lane -- Project Consultant

Marilyn Black -- Vice-President for Heritage Development, ORA

November 21; 5:30 p.m. at Four Sons Restaurant in Titusville, Pennsylvania  
Gary Hutchison -- Commissioner, County of Venango  
Betty Squire -- Board Member, Oil Creek & Titusville Railroad  
Barbara Zolli -- Administrator, Drake Well Museum  
Jonathan Lane -- Project Consultant  
Marilyn Black -- Vice-President for Heritage Development, ORA

November 22; 8:30 a.m. at Pleasantville Borough Building  
Stephanie Drake -- Borough Secretary, Pleasantville Borough  
Jonathan Lane -- Project Consultant  
Marie Rainey -- Marketing and Memberships Manager, ORA

November 22; 10:00 a.m. at Cornplanter Township Building at Plummer  
Laura Kelly-Pifer -- Township Secretary, Cornplanter Township  
Cathy McBride -- Next Township Secretary, Cornplanter Township  
David Strickland -- Third Millennium Architects  
Jonathan Lane -- Project Consultant  
Marie Rainey -- Marketing and Memberships Manager, ORA

November 22; 11:00 a.m. at Venango Museum in Oil City, Pennsylvania  
Mary Balas -- Board Member, Venango Museum  
Robert Cross -- Vice-President, First United National Bank; and VM Board  
Betsy Kellner -- Executive Director, Venango Museum  
Louis Kraft -- Louis Kraft Company; and VM Board  
Andrew Restauri -- First United National Bank; and VM Board  
Jane Stephens -- Board Member, Venango Museum  
Libby Williams -- President, Oil City Arts Council; and VM Board  
Jonathan Lane -- Project Consultant  
Lois McElwee -- Coordinator for the Sesquicentennial of Oil, ORA

November 22; noon at Venango Museum in Oil City, Pennsylvania  
Mary Balas -- Board Member, Venango Museum  
Holly Best -- Manager, Oil Creek State Park  
Kim Harris -- Board Member, Colonel Drake Cultural Alliance  
Betsy Kellner -- Executive Director, Venango Museum  
Louis Kraft -- Louis Kraft Company; and Board of VM  
Jane Stephens -- Board Member, Venango Museum  
Jonathan Lane -- Project Consultant  
Toni Kresinski -- Events Coordinator, ORA  
Lois McElwee -- Coordinator for the Sesquicentennial of Oil, ORA

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