

COASTING *forward*

A Plan to Market and Promote the Adirondack Coast
During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic



Coasting Forward with the Adirondack Coast

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There is no doubt that this is an unprecedented time in recent history. The community, residents, businesses, government and travelers are all navigating a “new normal”. At the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau (ACVB), a division of the North Country Chamber of Commerce, we understand this and have revamped our 2020 marketing plan to ease travelers’ anxieties, welcome visitors back safely and help kick start a “support local” movement amongst those who call the Adirondack Coast home. Below please find our plan for moving the Adirondack Coast forward.

While this time has caused several challenges:

- Visitors’ fear of travel
- Residents fear of going out in public and skeptical about welcoming visitors to their community
- Temporary Closure of the US-Canada Border
- Uncertainty in state funding for 2020 & 2021(I Love NY Matching Funds)
- Potential business closure
- Questions around hosting large scale events

It has also created several opportunities:

- Reimagining our tourism marketing & offerings
- Looking at new drive in markets to message to
- Strengthening the “Buy Local, Support Local” Movement
- Engaging with potential travelers in new and fascinating ways
- Looking at new cooperative ways to work with regional TPAs to help present a unified message and leverage limited dollars

This is why we have adjusted our marketing plan to include a “phased reopening” process. Just as NYS has done, we will look to each phase to re-introduce the Adirondack Coast to our audience and community.

The phases include:

- **Phase 1:** Moments and Memories: Reminiscing about the Adirondack Coast
- **Phase 2:** Be a Tourist in your Town: The Ultimate Staycation
- **Phase 3:** Welcoming our Neighbors to the North! & Fishing Lake Champlain!
- **Phase 4:** Open for Business: Embracing Travel
- **Plattsburgh International Airport**

We know this is a hard time for everyone, but your Visitors Bureau team along with the leadership of the North Country Chamber of Commerce, will continue to implement aggressive marketing efforts, to not only help the community bounce back, but become stronger and more diverse.

PHASE 1: Moments and Memories: Reminiscing about the Adirondack Coast

There is no doubt that when the State initiated “NY at Pause”, we immediately had to change our message to potential visitors. With everyone sheltering in place we had to switch the messaging from “Come Visit” to “Be Safe and We’ll Be Here”.

We chose to implement content and programs that connect our audience to memories they have of the area, giving them a moment of peace in this hectic time and focused on finding ways for our visitors/residents to bring the Adirondack Coast to their house.

Here is what we’ve done and what we will continue to do:

- Changed Social Media imagery: “We’ll still be here”
- Implemented Adirondack Coast Moments: moments to give followers peace of mind and a moment of Zen during the day
- Bring the Adirondack Coast to your Couch: gathering any activity or products that businesses are offering that visitors can access from their home into one blog that can be used to keep the Coast top of mind while they support our local businesses.
- Transitioning our bi-monthly e-newsletter from things to do now to Adirondack Coast related items to add to your bucket list when travel is safe again

We also have turned to our industry and state partners to have meaningful conversations about reopening the Adirondacks to visitors in a sensitive way, as well as finding a way to leverage dollars effectively.

Partners have included:

- Visit the USA
- I Love NY
- Adirondack Regional Tourism Council Board
- New York State Tourism Industry Association

- City, town and county liaisons
- ROOST
- Tourism businesses throughout the Adirondack Coast

We've provided and will continue to provide:

- **"Brew Chats":** Virtual meetups with our tourism partners to help with the planning process, gather ideas and answer questions.
- **Webinars:** We continue to host industry webinars to give partners access to free marketing resources as well as safety training to help them reopen safely.

At the same time we have stopped much of our paid marketing and are relying on organic methods of marketing to create sincere engagement. We know the best use of funds is to hang tight and spend them when they will have the biggest ROI in terms of room nights and sales tax revenues.

We anticipate this messaging and phase to continue until our tourism partners are open and the community feels comfortable moving around and seeing out of area visitors in their backyard.

PHASE 2: Be a Tourist in your Town: The Ultimate Staycation

Phase two will be somewhat unconventional, when talking about tourism, but comes with great opportunity. We know that the community will be uncomfortable with visitors coming to the area and moving around and know that this acceptance will come with time. The ACVB will take this opportunity to build awareness among local residents about all there is to do in the area. We will encourage them to "Be a Tourist in Their Town", "Plan a Staycation" and "Support Local". Tourism is uniquely positioned to help societies and communities affected at this time return to growth and stability.

We also understand that residents and travelers will be looking for signs that the industry has its act together in terms of hygiene and employee safeguards. We will work with our Tourism partners to ensure the safety of customers, visitors, residents and the workforce by offering:

- Signage
- Training
- And other industry needs

Since we do not see out of area travel being encouraged immediately we will encourage our residents to explore their backyard and build deep connections with all that is offered on the Adirondack Coast. This will help us continue to educate people about what the area offers, help them become better advocates and combat the common statement, "there is nothing to do here."

By doing a local campaign and promoting our tourism opportunities on the Adirondack Coast, we also look to solidify the "Buy Local, Support Local" movement that is gaining strong momentum throughout the industry. We will encourage people while "staycationing" to visit a locally owned business to see what their neighbors are offering and the impact they have on the community.

How we plan on doing this:

- Keep travelers/locals updated on goadirondack.com with safety precautions, reminders for personal hygiene - latest updates and information issued by health and travel professionals.
- Start small and encourage shorter 1-2 day “staycations”
- We will create video style road trip itineraries for social use
- Restructure our existing group itineraries for the leisure traveler. People will want to get out and see their family and friends after a long time apart, so we want to help them make the most of it! SAFELY!
- We will use Facebook live and virtual experiences to showcase their “backyard”
- Website Development - goadirondack.com

Phase 3: Welcoming our Neighbors to the North! & Fishing Lake Champlain!

The ACVB staff knows that the border being closed has essentially closed us off to one of our largest travel markets. However, we understand that this will not last and that leisure travel will once again be open. With that, we want to make sure that we continue to message to this audience that our neighbors are welcome, as they always have been, and we look forward to moving that relationship forward.

We will begin to implement some of our traditional Canadian marketing efforts with a new tone of sensitivity and welcoming. We will use messaging that reiterates our long standing relationship with them as well as memories of family trips they may have made in the past. As always this will be bilingual and a major focus.

Ideas include:

- Google Display ads
- Social Media Messaging
- Travel deals and/or high value packages to promote - tourism partners may be looking to offer large discounts to inspire travel and then raise prices later.
- E-newsletters
- Public Relations
- Influencer Marketing

We anticipate that in this phase several businesses will be back open, as well as our visitor’s center at the North Country Chamber of Commerce.

Beekmantown Welcome Center (EXIT 40)

NYS also has taken funding out of the budget to staff and open the Beekmantown Welcome Center. In a good year this welcome center (exit 40) welcomes over 100K visitors a summer. We will look at putting bilingual signage up directing visitors with questions to the North Country Chamber of Commerce where our staff can answer questions, make travel suggestions and hand out needed collateral.

Bass Fishing Tournaments

The 5 Bass Fishing Tournaments that we host yearly, are something that we will need to consider and plan with sensitivity. We have created a separate plan (attached) about hosting these with the anticipated guidelines from the state. The team is already anticipating these being spectator free with a virtual weigh-ins and encouraging those interested to watch from the comfort of their own homes. Staff has also looked at postponement dates, if needed. These events will continue to evolve as the state lays out more directives.

PHASE 4: Open for Business: Embracing Travel

This phase we do not anticipate until late in the year, if not 2021. The idea in this phase of marketing is to slowly turn back to what we know works and execute campaigns that encourage general travel to the area, similar to what we outlined in our original 2020 marketing plan. However, we will tweak the messaging to constantly remind travelers that we must practice safe travel habits and be sensitive as well as aware to those around us.

Markets we will reach out to:

- Montreal
- Greater Quebec
- Ottawa
- Capital Region and Saratoga (before the pandemic we were seeing strong growth from these markets and will continue to grow on that success)

Marketing Ideas include:

- Social Media
- Google Ads
- Public Relations
- Influencer Marketing
- Trade Shows
- Collateral Development
- Website SEO
- Cooperative Marketing Initiatives

Motorcoach Travel

In this phase staff will also look at the state of Motorcoach travel. We will work with Industry groups like American Bus Association and gauge travelers' comfort to travel by bus. Once that is understood, staff will work to bring this market back to the area, implementing changes needed to adapt and build comfort with this market.

- Sample Itineraries - showing new ways to explore the area
- ABA Marketplace
- Eblasts and Mailings

Plattsburgh International Airport

Finally, we need to discuss Plattsburgh International Airport, as it was showing strong growth potential for the region to be a fly-in market. We want to keep that momentum when travelers start to feel more at ease with air travel. This situation we expect to be fluid and the audience will change as we execute this plan.

Here is where PBG fits into each phase:

- **Phase 2:** We will remind our local residents that we have an airport in their backyard that can take them to great and safe destinations.
- **Phase 3:** We will incorporate messaging to our Canadian audience that PBG is still here and ready to serve them. We will incorporate messaging that will make them feel safe, but also reconnect them with our area and airport. Remember we are Montreal's US Airport.
- **Phase 4:** We will bring back marketing efforts in the DC market to start showcasing the Adirondacks as a vacation destination and that PBG can bring them here.

Notes:

- The ACVB will only roll out each phase as it makes sense from guidance put forth by New York State, CDC and local officials.
- The ACVB wants to be smart with spending. We will only begin to spend money and rollout campaigns when we anticipate the strongest ROI. We want to ensure that we are using our past knowledge and expertise to help bring the Adirondack Coast back to the thriving destination that it has been.
- The ACVB will also monitor the community's comfort level as we develop each step. The last thing we want to do is cause stress within the community.
- The ACVB will exhibit patience and work with a fluid timeline to adhere to all the needs listed above.
- The ACVB will continue to update and communicate with stakeholders throughout the year, and pivot efforts when needed.

The team at the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau and North Country Chamber of Commerce looks forward to executing this aggressive plan and continuing our long partnership of Marketing Clinton County and the North Country Region.

BASS FISHING *Tournaments*

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2020 Bass Fishing Tournament Plan

Because of “NYS at Pause” VCB is working on Adapting Bass Fishing Tournaments

With the 2020 Fishing Tournaments scheduled to kick off in June (fingers crossed), the Adirondack Coast staff is working with its partners to navigate this changing landscape. We are working to ensure we host the tournaments safely and in accordance with state and local mandates.

The tournaments are scheduled as planned, with the first tournament taking place in mid-June. There are two large tournaments that come with big price tags, requirements and staff that we need to address now:

- July 9-11: Toyota FLW Series
- July 30-August 2: Bassmaster Elite Series

Below is our plan for the 2020 Bass Fishing season, using our best judgement from conversations, data and expectations. We have also outlined how each tournament will adhere to social distancing, as well as health recommendations. The organizers will also look at holding events outside, with no spectators (offering virtual weigh-ins) and bringing anglers in for weigh-in in smaller groups.

2020 Tournament Dates:

- June 20: FLW BFL: Northeast division
- July 9-11 (Postponement Date: August 18-20): Toyota FLW Series
- July 25: Reynolds Boats Northern Bass Open
- July 30-August 2: Bassmaster Elite Series
- September 26-27: ABA Open Series

Postponement dates: Each tournament has confirmed a potential postponement date, which we will use if industries and needed facilities are not open when the tournament arrives.

Communications: VCB Staff spoke with Bassmaster and FLW. The conversation focused on how we can adapt the tournaments to meet new social distancing guidelines placed on NYS Events.

- The organizers have agreed that, if three weeks before the tournament NYS services and industries, are not open that are needed to pull of the tournament we will postpone.

City of Plattsburgh & Facilities: With the City's decision to not open the Marina and the City Beach (at this time), we have already talked about possibilities. A meeting location, venue space and dock space are part of the City's responsibilities, but in light of the current climate and pandemic - we understand the need to be fluid. We also should note that the Council can reverse closure decisions as the state's

shelter in place order evolves.

- **Marina Option:**
 - **Plattsburgh City Marina:** We've asked the City if they could have DPW put in the docks that are needed for the full season and allow us to use the space, with minimal needs from their staff. This is our ideal option and so far it has been approved.
 - **Plattsburgh Boat Basin:** PBB has agreed to assist as needed and as their capacity allows.
- **Meeting Location:**
 - **If we can have a meeting, we will look to use these locations:**
 - **Crete Civic Center:** We use this space for registrations and meetings. Ideal situation is this stays our location, only needed for two events, Bassmaster Elite and Toyota FLW Series.
 - **City Gym:** While closed, it does offer the space needed.
 - **Schools & Colleges:** If possible to hold gatherings we will see if an area school will provide space.
 - **If we cannot have an indoor meeting organizers plan to do without a meeting or we can look at an outdoor meeting at the weigh-in and marina space.**
- **Waste Management Services:** Delivery and servicing of the dumpsters and/or cans needed for the weigh-in site, as well as the service area can hopefully still be maintained by the City.

Other Factors: Besides the things listed above, we cannot host these events if we do not have the following businesses open in the community. We will be watching very closely what the Governor lays out regarding reopening the community.

- **Businesses that need to be operational:**
 - Restaurants
 - Service facilities (boat repairs)
- **Event/Gathering Guidelines:** We also need to be aware of any event restrictions set forth by the Governor when he "un-pauses" the State. Many of these events are well over 100 people, so gatherings of this size will need to be permitted.
 - If the State prohibits large gatherings, the tournament organizers, City and Visitors Bureau is ready to initiate a virtual weigh structure. The following safety precautions will be put into place based on the guidelines given by New York State:
 - Registration and meetings will take place outside with masks and proper spacing
 - We will work with the organizers to ensure the safety of anglers and co-anglers while sharing a boat. Protocols and procedures must be enacted to ensure that no fishing equipment may be shared, unless it has been cleaned and disinfected between users.
 - Flights of boats will come into the marina further apart and with fewer boats giving plenty of space to maintain social distancing
 - Porta toilets (if required) will be properly cleaned and disinfected once a day throughout the tournament

- Weigh-in lines will be well marked with proper 6 foot spacing
- Crowds will not be encouraged or allowed, all promotion will be pointing interested viewers to the organization's website to enjoy virtually
- Tournament organizers must be prepared to provide masks to all of their staff for use during the tournament when 6 foot distancing is not manageable (Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use or when damaged or soiled, may not be shared, and should be properly stored or discarded.)
- Tournaments must provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for personnel, including handwashing with soap, water, and paper towels, as well as an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible.
- Tournaments must conduct regular cleaning and disinfection at least after every trip, daily, and more frequently as needed, and more frequent cleaning and disinfection of shared objects.
- Safety plan must be visible on site at all tournaments and signage must be posted throughout the site to remind staff and anglers to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- The sharing of food and beverages will be prohibited
- Organizers will need to train all personnel on new protocols and frequently communicate safety guidelines.
- Staff and anglers should be questioned each day regarding health and if sick or show signs of COVID-19 must be sent home or to the proper medical facility.
- Tournaments must have a plan for cleaning, disinfection, and contact tracing in the event of a positive case.
- We will be sure the tournament organization and anglers respect the guidelines of our community so that businesses, locals and the event participants feel comfortable and safe.

Other Tournaments: Besides the Bassmaster Elite Series and the Toyota FLW Series, we are hosting 3 smaller tournaments. These are a bit easier to work with as they are smaller, later in the season and require less from the VCB and the City. At this time we are in communication with each of them and will adapt as needed.

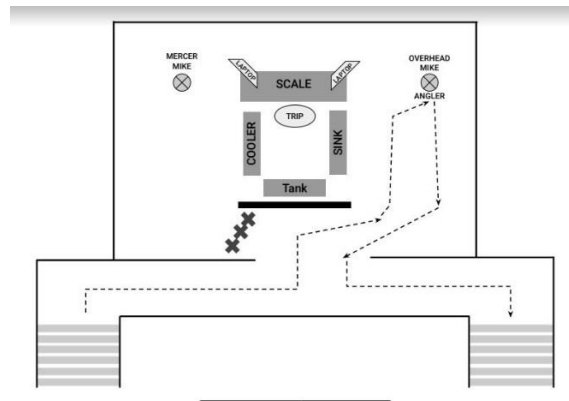
Marketing: Once the other pieces fall into place, we will execute our marketing efforts as outlined in the 2020 Adirondack Coast Marketing Plan while remaining sensitive to the situation and changing environment.

From Organizers:

Bassmaster has begun laying out their own guidelines and abilities including:

- No indoor meetings or enclosed areas at all
- Most all communication with pros via text
- Virtual tournament briefing to a link then staff will be available via text or phone to answer any questions
- Prior to the restart of their season (in the next several weeks) we will be sending out our guidelines to pro anglers which will follow those from the CDC

- Staff has ordered a multitude of various cleaning supplies, masks, gloves for staff.
- They will recommend or require (based on local and state regulations) anglers and marshals wear masks and or gloves.
- During weigh-ins anglers will use mesh bags to transport fish to the scales. After each angler weighs these bags they will be disinfected with peroxide prior to the next use. Peroxide is one chemical that is not harmful to fish. This effort is led by our Conservation Director and fisheries biologist Gene Gilliland.
- Postponement dates have been discussed and secured



FLW's Safe Operating Procedures and Key Environmental Factors for Reopening Field Operations:

- As an outdoor sport conducted on thousands of acres of water, tournament fishing allows for social distancing more than any other sport.
- Only pretournament meetings that can comply with social distancing guidelines will be conducted. All other rules and guidance will be communicated electronically to participants prior to each tournament.
- Participating anglers will be reminded not to participate if they have had a fever in the last 72 hours or have any symptoms or have been in contact with anyone exhibiting fever or symptoms or who is known to have been exposed to the coronavirus and has not yet been cleared by a doctor.
- Participating anglers will be asked to wear cloth masks.
- Participating anglers will check-in for weigh-in in flights that allow for social distancing.
- Weigh-in bag lines will be clearly marked with cones to maintain 6-foot spacing between anglers.
- A limited number of weigh-in bags will be distributed at any given time to provide for adequate social distancing at the weigh-in tubs. Tubs will be spaced so that anglers waiting to weigh their catch will always be at least six feet apart.
- Bass boats in FLW competition range from 16 to 23 feet in length, meaning that two anglers fishing in the same boat are 11 to 18 feet apart from each other while fishing on the front and rear decks of the boat as required by tournament rules.
- Bass boats have a beam of approximately 8 feet, meaning that even during the time anglers are seated in the boat for travel between fishing locations, they remain three to four feet apart.

Boats are open air, and seating in this position is limited duration while boats are moving 30 to 60 mph, providing significant airflow around both masked occupants.

- Cloth masks will be provided to all staff.
- Face shields will be provided to staff working with anglers at the weigh-in tubs.
- Gloves (non-latex) will be provided to anglers and staff for handling weigh-in bags.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided to anglers and staff.
- Prior to departure for the tournament, each staff member will check their own temperature. Any staff member exhibiting a fever will not be allowed to depart for the tournament and will be instructed to stay home.
- On tournament day, prior to the start of the tournament, the tournament director will check each staff member's temperature using a touch-free thermometer. Any staff member exhibiting a fever will not be allowed to work and will be instructed to isolate and contact their doctor.
- Staff checking anglers in and inspecting their fish at the weigh-in tubs (bump station) prior to weigh-in will wear gloves, a cloth mask and protective face shield.
- Anglers will place their fish on the scale to be weighed then step behind a 6-foot line while the tournament director weighs the fish. Anglers will then take their fish off the stage while the tournament director maintains a 6-foot distance.
- Each tournament director will use a dedicated mic.
- A second mic that is sanitized between uses will be provided for anglers who wish to give interviews. Otherwise no on-stage interview will be conducted.
- Weigh-in bag handles will be disinfected between uses.
- Weigh-ins will be restricted to anglers and staff only. Family and fans will be instructed to follow weigh-ins on FLW Live webcasts. No crowds will be allowed to gather until such time as CDC guidelines allow.
- Participating anglers who must complete a W-9 onsite for tournament winnings will be instructed to complete the form in their boat or vehicle to maintain social distancing.
- No two staff will be working closer than six feet from each other during event setup or teardown.

Contact Tracing: In the unlikely event that a tournament participant later tests positive for coronavirus, FLW is well equipped to assist with contact tracing as we have the address, cell phone number and e-mail address for every competitor in every tournament. We can assist with any notifications that may become necessary.