Our Historical Landscape; Subjective & Objective Approaches to Preservation

(The Negative Impact of the Proposed Edic to Fraser Power Line Project)

Michael L. Marmet
mlmarmet@aol.com
491 Richfield Hill Rd
Richfield Springs, NY
Ph. 315.868.7070

April 2015

Summary. This public comment promotes a two armed approach to developing a reasonable, calculated doubt as to the thought to be mitigated impact in the using of the existing corridor of the already built Marcy South Power Transmission line to solve the electrical energy transmission "bottleneck" that occurs north of the state's largest population density. The usage of subjective elements by presenting a narrative involving; vernacular architecture, local history, presumed positive externalities, heritage, community, a sense of place, a sense of self identity will be the first component addressed. Secondly, we will look into the concept of utility, using econometric analysis with a standard binary logit model, which produces a strong non-substitutability effect of historic structure and landscape which constitutes a public good. The struggle to develop an effective method with a balanced view of preserving our environment (both constructed, and natural) while dealing with inevitable change can be resolved when a contextual narrative is understood, and a utilitarian formula is used. These will allow a metric for dominant social paradigms to be understood, and a governing body to essentially create a decision within true utility constraints.

I.
Maple Hill Farm

In 2006, we received a Barn Grant from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. This grant was for the stabilization of a circa 1815 creamery building, passed through the generations by its colloquial name, the “Cheese House.” We quickly learned through the barn grant agents that the building thought to be worth preserving was in fact one of the most original intact examples of a creamery from the early 19th century in upstate New York.

The earliest part of our home was built in 1793, by Asa Young who was a Revolutionary War soldier from Chepatchet, Rhode Island. The Young family and several other pioneer families from Rhode Island settled the Northwest part of Otsego County. Houses, barns, mills, shops, a church, and a school soon followed in this small hamlet of Richfield Springs, NY. The Young family established a homestead with traditional lines of diverse agriculture present in the early 19th century. Cattle for beef and dairy, horses, sheep, swine, poultry, an orchard for apples, hay, small grains, vegetables, maple sugar & “maple molasses,” and hops were grown on our small farm. The 1850 NY Agricultural Census captured the following;

2 Horses
18 Milch (Milk) Cows
1 Swine
15 Bushels of Wheat
100 Bushels of “Indian” Corn
40 Tons of hay
170 Pounds of “Irish” Potatoes
40 Pounds of “Orchard Produce”
300 Pounds of Butter
8,000 Pounds of Cheese

Asa Young, the “founding father” of our farm, died in 1847 at age 93, just 3 years short of the agricultural census giving a glimpse of a mid 19th century pioneer farm. The 1875 Agricultural Census shows the transitioning of agriculture in New York State as the railroads carved deeper into the remote areas allowing fluid milk to be transported far distances to market. Our farm no longer directly produced 8,000 pounds of cheese, however the dairy herd was numbered at 26 cows. An orchard had grown wherein 4 barrels of cider, and 100 pounds of apples were pressed or harvested. 250 pounds of maple sugar, and 10 gallons of “maple molasses” (syrup) were sugared off. The story continues from Asa to his son Nathan, then Salathiel, then Floyd, to his two sons Morris Young, and Horace Young, who were the last original descendants to work the land.

Morris passed away in 1993 at the age of 97. As a boy, growing up a mile down the road in what was the local schoolhouse converted into a residence, Morris would tell me the names of the people, the places, and the stories of our farm going back to the late 1700s. I would ask, “Do you remember the year 1900?," and he would smile, then tell me about traditions, contra dances, traveling by horse pulled buggies, his reaction to the first automobile he ever saw come bouncing down the dirt path that is now the paved road to our farm. He would give sound to the first single cylinder primitive tractor in the neighborhood, and ultimately gave depth of character to names that now are a flat dimension chiseled into stone grave markers. Morris Young's narrative was a link to the past, the closest way I could travel in time to understand who we are as rural New Yorkers, as Americans. I cherish those memories, the knowledge he passed onto me, and the trust I feel to preserve our story, our place.

We purchased the farm in 2004. The buildings were run down, the house was unoccupied and unlivable. A decade of work followed to stabilize and restore this significant historical complex. Continued efforts to complete the restoration of the "Cheese House," and remaining dairy/horse barn will be made for many years to come. Due to the historical significance of the property as recognized by the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Maple Hill is eligible to be listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

II.
The Greater Community: 80 Miles of Undocumented History

The community of Chepatchet in the northwest corner of Richfield runs past the county line, into Herkimer County. The headwater of the Unadilla river starts at a small historic mill dam pond in a small hamlet called Miller's Mills. The water travels in a narrow river to a second mill dam. The water powered mills are no longer a part of the view, however a stone house stills remains. Perched into the hill overlooking where the mills once stood is a majestic house, locally referred to as the "Old Stone House." This property has a pending application to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

North of Maple Hill Farm in Herkimer County lies the aforementioned Millers Mills Community. In 1981 when the Marcy South Power Line was proposed, the people of Millers Mills united to tell their story, which I feel I am compelled to repeat.

Andrew Miller, born in the Kingdom of Bavaria in 1732, came to the hill country when he was in his in his 61st year. He had fought in the Revolutionary War in the Saratoga Region. His son, John, was a Lieutenant in Schuyler's Regiment of the New York Militia. John Miller, and his father served from 1778 to 1781. Andrew Miller found 250 acres of woodland centered around a small pond, that he recognized could be used to power a saw and grist mill. Andrew Miller leased the property for an annual quitrent. A dam was constructed, mills were built, and a small community flourished. During the 1860's the mills were purchased by William D. Gorsline. The last mill built in 1916 was a water powered turbine grist mill built by the same Gorsline family. Found in a dusty trunk on Maple Hill Farm was an account book from 1920, weekly can be found entries of cash paid out to William Gorsline;

Jan. 21, 1920 - Wm. Gorsline - grinding $0.92
Feb. 9, 1920 - Wm. Gorsline - grinding $1.24
Feb. 26, 1920 - Wm. Gorsline - grinding $0.47...

Entries and receipts can be found continuing for another decade. The milling of grain stopped around 1940 for lack of custom work, then the war came and the turbine, pulleys, and drive shafts were scrapped, the mill ceased all activities around 1950.

Although the mills were silenced long ago, two traditions continue from the 1790's to the present day; the annual ice cutting on the pond, and a Summer Ice Cream Social. These two events can be traced back without a break in annual tradition for over 200 years.

The continued traditions were considered unique, even by the standards of the Depression Era born generation. On February 28th 1974 the sleepy hamlet of Millers Mills was projected to TV screens across America. CBS reporter Charles Kuralt shared a story to America entitled, "Rituals of Winter in Millers Mills, New York, beautiful."

(Millers Mills New York) "Millers Mills cuts ice each winter and stores it for use in summer. Villagers look on ice cutting as a tradition. Villagers discuss tradition; something learned about agelessness and continuity in small town (America). At end of ice cutting, villagers spend evening together and discuss and compare ice cutting days in previous years."

The late Town of Columbia historian, Doris Huxtable, was integral in the effort to route the Marcy South Power Line around the historic village. The shape of the power line around the visual shed of Millers Mills is locally known as, "Dori's Curve." The particulars of what swayed the minds of the individuals in charge of project have been lost, however it was recognized then as it should be recognized at present that there are areas that the Marcy South corridor passes through that should be preserved.

One of the more interesting historical characters who lived in Burlington, near to the Marcy South Power Line corridor, was Jedediah Peck, b. 1748 d. 1821, farmer, surveyor, Revolutionary War Soldier, Soldier in the War of 1812, and a New York State legislator (Assembly 1798-1804, Senator 1804-1808). He is credited as being the founder of public schools, and a fierce opponent to the Federalists. Peck was arrested by Judge William Cooper, Cooper a stalwart Federalist, part of the new post Revolutionary War power elite, and of course, founder of "Cooper's-town." The arrest was for Peck's circulation of a petition against the Alien & Sedition Acts, a series of laws, one of which changed the citizen residency requirements in the United States, where most of the "citizens" were English, Scottish, or Irish born, the truth of the law was that it eliminated votes for people likely to support Thomas Jefferson. It was a self serving, politically motivated law that fooled no one, including Burlington's Jedediah Peck. Peck was a war hero paraded in chains which caused the local and regional population to rise up in protest, Peck was released and never sent to trial. The politically motivated component to the new law failed, Thomas Jefferson was elected president in the year 1800.

A schoolhouse site that is now a cluster of trees in Burlington is, to my thought process, still something worthy of historical note. Our Otsego County settler Jedediah Peck paved the legislative road to a public school in every hamlet in New York State. Peck's proposals in 1801, 1803, and 1804 led Governor Tompkins to appoint Peck to a board that wrote the "Act for the Encouragement of Common Schools," which passed in 1812. I encourage the reader or listener to this commentary to take a drive down a country road and search for that cluster of trees, or any space that a rural schoolhouse once occupied a small spot of land, look at its deliberate placement in context to the local community it served, and think of the man who after learning that his mother, father, sister, and three brothers died, scribbled on a piece of paper,

"*Days and times past when may father and Mother and all my bretherin and Sisters were about me in helth and prosperity but alas! trubel and Sorow hath Sorounded me and I am a poor Disconsolate Cretur. There is no place that Seemes to be home to me*."

Jedediah Peck did find a home in Burlington NY. A New York State Historical Marker along Route 80 in the Town of Burlington reads,

"*In memory of Hon. Jedediah Peck, a Revolutionary Patriot, who died Aug. 15, 1821, in the 74th year of his age. The annals of the State bear record of his public usefulness and the recollection of his virtues bear testimony of his private work*."

The above sign is, sadly, a short distance from the existing Marcy South Power Line. An interesting note to how we remember the individuals from our history.

Judge Cooper of Cooperstown is a well researched, a well preserved individual wherein we can weave a fabric with the volumes of information that exists. We can all agree on a fascination in both the refined, and oddly frontier crude elements Judge William Cooper possessed. Early America Historian Lyman H. Butterfield wrote a paper for the periodical *New York History* in 1954 titled, "Cooper's Inheritance: The Otsego Country and its Founders." In the biographical note, Butterfield states "Few regions have been more fortunate than the Otsego country in the abundance and quality of printed works relating to their history. The founder of Cooperstown himself wrote the best of all accounts of the country he settled. William Cooper's Guide in the Wilderness (Dublin, 1810)..."

Butterfield's praise for Cooper can be very succinctly summed in his opening sentence of the article, "OTSEGO COUNTY, which was largely settled through the efforts of that genius in land speculation William Cooper, and which was Fenimore Cooper's home in boyhood and later life and the setting for some of his best-remembered books, lies, buskin-shaped, in east central New York State." I assert that Butterfield's intrinsic, empirical qualities of a historian were modified with a buckskin romance by the "loudest voice" that remained in documentable evidence combined with America's "first" author. *History is written by the victors.*

Jedediah Peck has largely been forgotten to the everyday conversation about Otsego and New York history. He is a silent founding father of Otsego county who, aside his New York State Historical marker sign, has been given a large gray monopole with a sign that reads; New York Power Authority, in the area he inhabited in Burlington. Any individual in New York who enjoyed, or enjoys a public education can thank the beliefs and vision of Jedediah Peck, and pay respect through the preservation of what remains of the place he called home.

There are a limited number of surveys that have captured the historic resources that exist in the area to either side of the Edic Fraser path. The existing Marcy South corridor impacts approximately 80 lineal miles of properties. I contend that adding an additional power line suggests a high level of disregard to the already damaged cultural assets that have not been properly studied.

III.
Significant Shapes of Everyday Life

A category of architecture characterized by the regional or local needs, the materials available for construction, and a reflection of local heritage is a fairly succinct definition of Vernacular Architecture. This was never in itself a study or understanding in an academic view of architectural style or development, but has been created as our anthropological understanding of architecture in how we react to our environmental, and cultural constraints. This conversation has gained relevancy over the past five decades as we are increasingly put at odds with the need to construct new dwellings while the sensitivity to preserve the environment has become paramount to our sustainability. Academic concepts of architecture are referred to as "polite" architecture wherein elements of style and design are deliberately added for no other purpose than aesthetics, serving no function. Ronald Brunskill defines Vernacular Architecture as:

"...a building designed by an amateur without any training in design; the individual will have been guided by a series of conventions built up in his locality, paying little attention to what may be fashionable. The function of the building would be the dominant factor, aesthetic considerations, though present to some small degree, being quite minimal. Local materials would be used as a matter of course, other materials being chosen and imported quite exceptionally."

Traditional builders learn their trade through apprenticeship and by imitating admired models and artisans rather than through formal education. Rather than being called an architect, the designer of a house, barn, or bridge may have been called simply a builder, or craftsman. The recognition of this school of architectural study gives a visible face and functional core to local patterns, ethnic, and regional character.

Our home, Maple Hill Farm, is significant to the Vernacular Architecture of Otsego County during the Federal Period. The currently Marcy South Power Line runs on the East side of the farm. The Marcy South Power Transmission Line structures dominate the conversation that pertains to architecture and landscape, leaving only a sentence or two for the small farm that sits near to it.

While researching for the previously referenced barn grant, it was alarming that the level of academic study specifically devoted to our rural structures is entirely lacking when contrasted to scholarly forms of polite architecture. In developing an understanding, I was able to trace the origins of local barn builder tradition; English, Dutch, German, which was focused to particular nuances of the actual builder of each building. The ability to classify very specific “families” of barn beam joinery, hewn styles of squaring, bracing on bents, rafters set with notch and pin, or pinned to a ridge beam is still a documentable study in its infancy.

The relationship between structure and site location are critical in this understanding. They exist in a symbiotic relationship, each defining each other as an expression of a regional culture. People live in environments and not merely in buildings. We build our environments, and their relationship with other environments are important. Vernacular buildings often reflect an intention to conform to a micro climate, a particular topography, and usage of materials specific to a limited radius.

The legacy of community schools: of particular interest are the number of one room schoolhouses in close proximity to the right of way; late federal, greek revival, gothic revival. Various textures; 1840 cobblestone, quarried stone, wide face clapboard, novelty woodwork. None are pristine examples that will become the focus of polite architectural study, but all are fine examples to be surveyed in regards to the vernacular architecture of community schools during the 19th century.

Sixty-two places of historic architecture, and places that no longer stand, but are of historic environmental significance will be impacted in Otsego County;

Richfield: Young Homestead (NYS Barn Grant, oldest occupied home in Richfield), Arnold Farm site, Bargey Farm site, Shaul House, Cole Farm (2006 recipient of a NYS Barn Grant located on Scenic Route 20), Hitchins Farm, Wheeler Homestead, Schoolhouse No. 6, Mapleshade Farm, Barstow Homestead, Jones Farm, Owens Farm.

Exeter: Gates Farm, Caleb Huntley Farm, D.C. Huntley Farm(Greek Revival), Monk Homestead, Schoolhouse #7 (Cobblestone 1841 Architecture), Cole Homestead, Pratt Farm, Higgins Farm, D.C. Hollister Farm.

Burlington: Smith Homestead, Bliss Homestead, D. Stits Farm, Brady Farm, Telfer site, A. P. Bolton Sugar House site, Schoolhouse No. 5, Pratt Sawmill site, Schoolhouse No. 8, Hall Farm, Schoolhouse No. 11 site.

New Lisbon: J. P. Porter Homestead, Home Park site, S. Gardner site, Potter Homestead, Schoolhouse No. 5, Otego Creek, New Lisbon Cheese Factory, Schoolhouse No. 12 site, Eldred Homestead, Gilbert Lake.

Laurens: Naylors Cold Corner Spring, Whorton Valley Lodge, Elm Valley Farm, Whorton Creek, Dunbar Hop Kiln, Pleasant Creek, Brewsters Mills, Schoolhouse No. 8, Sherburne Turnpike, Harrison Creek.

Oneonta: Jenks Homestead, Otego River, Thayer Farm, Susquehanna River, Indian Cemetery, Quakenbush Farm.

Otego: Brower Farm, Marble Homestead, Thayer House, Perry Farm.

The list was taken from homes or cultural sites established prior to 1868 as referenced through the F. W. Beers Atlas of Otsego County NY. This would more accurately reflect homes built before access to outside materials (railroad influence) became abundant thus promoting stronger significance to their historical importance in multiple academic platforms of study.

IV.
Pre-European History

On February 15th 1894, a fire spread through a large brick building in Oneonta NY. Two horse drawn, steam powered fire engines raced up a snowy road to fight the fire in below freezing temperatures. The building was the Oneonta Normal School founded in 1889 to train teachers and expand public education. At 7:30PM the roof fell in, the destruction was complete, the building was a loss. The determined leadership and of Oneonta's leading citizens acted quickly, money was appropriated through the State Government, and by September of 1894 a search was made for contractors to rebuild the school that we now know as SUNY Oneonta.

What was not going to be replaced were the 1,500 Native American artifacts that was the at then larger part of the W. E. Yager collection housed in the destroyed structure. Perhaps the largest private New York region Native American collection in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Willard E. Yager was born in Oneonta, New York on December 19, 1855. As a boy, he was free to pursue his interests and after accidentally stumbling upon a Native American artifact in the woods near his home, he quickly became fascinated with archeology. This evolved into a deep sense of pride and curiosity concerning the Upper Susquehanna River Valley's prehistory. He continued his work as a gentleman scholar, and on his passing in 1929, left his remaining collection to Hartwick College. We will never know the entire context of what was lost through fire in regards to the aboriginal peoples legacy. We must act to ensure each time we disturb a potential Native American site, we take no further action in purging 3,500 years of human history

Stuart Blakely wrote a *History of Otego* in 1907. He stated:

"*In 1714 the Tuscaroras, returning from the South, joined the Five Nations, making the Six Nations. Through this region hunted Oneidas, Tuscaroras and subject Delawares.*"

"The Iroquois lived in small and shifting villages, around which small clearings had usually been made. Frequently cornfields and in later days apple-orchards were planted. Their camps were "temporary and determined by fishing and hunting advantages," and were usually near springs and the mouths of creeks. There were many Indian houses on the Susquehanna in 1770, but in 1779 General Clinton destroyed the Indian civilization. For many years after the Revolution straggling friendly individuals and parties would erect their wigwams, often on the sites of their former villages, and remain a variable time, fishing, making baskets and trinkets, drying apples and looking for mineral landmarks. As late as 1830 some Indians camped at the head of the West Branch. The main Indian trails ran along both sides of the river, the one on the north side being the more used."

At the mouth of the Otsdawa was a camp on both sides of creek and river. Both historic and prehistoric flints have been found just below William Van Name's, on the second terrace back from the river. Indian pottery and ovens have been found on the Day flats, and perfect pottery has been found near the village on the east bank of the Otsdawa. Just below the river road-bridge, on the south bank of the river, fragments of pottery have been picked up; on the other bank near the Borden ice-houses are clear evidences of Indian ovens, and a fine grainer has been found there. The rift just above this bridge is probably an old Indian weir where there was a shad-fishery.

"In his Aboriginal Occupation of New York Mr. Beauchamp marks a large camp two miles north of Otego, east of and near the creek. This was probably a winter camp, occupying about the location of the town water-works, a spot once covered with hemlock."

"Wauteghe was a rather large village of good buildings near the mouth of the Otego creek. The main clearing, east of the creek, extended up the north bank of the river about one mile."

In 1847, a speech was made by Peter Wilson, a Cayuga Chief, to the New York Historical Society. The reception of his words stirred little emotion to an American audience who would wait another 43 years before the Battle of Wounded knee would become the last large scale massacre of the native peoples, and create an end to the frontier expansion under the guise of God's burden to the European settler to conquer and civilize. *Manifest Destiny.* Highly intelligent, Peter Wilson's words were deliberate, his tone was passionate as he said:

"The Empire State, as you love to call it, was once laced by our trails from Albany to Buffalo – trails that we had trod for centuries – trails worn so deep by the feet of the Iroquois that they became your roads of travel, as your possessions gradually eat into those of my people. Your roads still traverse those same lines of communication which bound one part of the Long House to the other. Have we, the first holders of this prosperous region, no longer a share in your history! Glad were your fathers to sit down upon the threshold of the Long House. Had our forefathers spurned you from it when the French were thundering at the opposite gate to get a passage through and drive you into the sea, whatever has been the fate of other Indians, the Iroquois might still have been a nation, and I, instead of pleading here, for the privilege of living within your borders – I might have had a country."

In defense of the aboriginal peoples of Otsego County and the path of the proposed Edic Fraser path, a dedicated survey should be undertaken to ensure we will not destroy the limited resources that remain. The Oneonta and Otego area adjacent to the Marcy South corridor is known for Native American villages, and burial grounds. In Blakely's 1907 *History of Otego*, the author asserts that a naive railroad construction crew made flat a burial mound in the Otego area because to the best of their knowledge, it was a knoll that needed to be leveled to make way for progress. We have taken their country, let us not destroy their legacy. Centuries of deliberate destruction, and benign disregard for the remaining cultural assets of the Native American people of New York have set back the progress of understanding.

V.
The Rural Narrative

The narrative for the communities, homes, and people impacted by the addition of a second power transmission line is a sad one. The existing Marcy South Corridor will take you to homes with low level incomes, little education, low property tax bases, and many families living subsistently. One could conclude the level of vulnerability and lack of ability to oppose the destruction of our region, creates a perfect approach for a corporate entity to take advantage of.

Wendell Berry stated, "...I am talking here about the common experience, the common fate of rural communities in our country for a long time. The message is plain enough, and we have ignored it for too long: the great centralized economic entities of our time do not come into rural places in order to improve them... They come to take as much of value as they can take, as cheaply and as quickly as they can take it."

Otsego County has continually struggled to maintain economic viability. Our county is rural, deeply rooted in agricultural tradition, and one of the most vulnerable to forced change because of proximity, and our lack of preparedness to the well funded, well experienced corporate entities. Conversely, we are one of the most visited counties in New York State offering beautiful lakes, breath taking views, and a glimpse into a romantic ideal of beautiful rural countryside. We are a visual reminder to travelers that New York is lakes, woodlands, and valleys in addition to sky scrapers, concrete, and streets.

The level of poverty in rural New York is a known statistic. Rural New York that once prospered during the golden age of farming now suffers with one of the largest income disparities in the nation when contrasted to the New York City region. The bifurcation of rural upstate and urban down state New York can best be demonstrated through a close examination of

US Census data where core economic factors that include; upward mobility, job growth, median income, and income growth all rank below century long impoverished southern Appalachia.

Rose Harvey, Commissioner, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation stated in the 2015 to 2020 Preservation Plan, “Our relationship with family, friends, and colleagues are shaped by our environment. Our homes, our places of work and those places we learn and relax play hugely important roles in our daily lives. Every community is a combination of its parts; a streetscape, a park, a farm- and our perception of the totality of them creates our sense of place. If that streetscape, park, or farm is destroyed, we forever sever our connection to a part of the community that may have special meaning to us, diminishing our sense of place and the opportunity for that part of the community to enrich the lives of future generations.”

VI.
Utility: Non-Substitutability of Historic Structure & Landscape

Utility, as an economic definition, is an abstract concept rather than concrete, or an observable quantity. The units to which we assign an “amount” of utility, therefore are arbitrary, representing a relative value. In this case we understand the need to construct a second electrical power transmission line is a total utility or aggregate sum of satisfaction or benefit that a group will gain from consuming a given service. Although total utility usually increases as more of a service is consumed, marginal utility usually decreases with each additional increase in the consumption of a service. Lord Kelvin stated, “when you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is a meager and unsatisfactory kind.”

Where does this leave us in seeking a reasonable solution to the energy bottleneck with the onset of higher energy cost? Economists Kling, Revier, and Sable wrote a paper: Estimating the Public Good Value of Preserving a Local Historic Landmark, i.e. The Role of Non-Substitutability and Citizen Information. They state that the challenge of concretely estimating the benefits of a public good has been a major impediment to the consistent application of efficiency criteria to decisions about public projects, particularly when the benefits extend beyond “use values.” Because of the importance of such non use values in the case of the natural environment, and environmental quality, those areas have been the most frequent contexts for the application of a stated preference valuation, and related approaches which alone can capture both use and non use values. In this case in regards to the changing of an environment that modifies a historic contextual landscape, stated preference valuation can be applied to at risk rural architectural assets wherein the aesthetic and heritage aspects constitute a public good.

Historic preservation is equivalent to environmental preservation; although the environment is cultural and man made rather than natural, it typically involves both use and non use values that are analogous. Willingness to pay (WTP), and willingness to accept (WTA) are essential concepts that economists tend to favor as valuation constructs, based on well established models of individual preferences and rational decision making.

Willingness to pay (WTP) is defined as the maximum amount would willingly pay given their current income as well as current levels of market prices, and other background conditions, to receive a specified increment of public good. Conversely, willingness to accept (WTA) is the minimum amount of compensation one would willingly accept to forego a proposed increment (or to accept a threatened loss), under similar given conditions. Under standard assumptions, theory predicts marginal WTP and marginal WTA should be about equal, and should reflect a willing buyer matched to a willing seller with an agreed price if a true market for the good were feasible. The divergence of WTA and WTP will be effected by what is referred to as a substitution, as significant ranges in in WTA and WTP have been found when no income disparities exist. If there are private goods that are readily substitutable for the public good, there ought to be little difference between an individual's WTP and WTA for a change in the public good. However, if the public good has almost no substitute, the Adirondack Mountains, or Otsego Lake for example, there is no reason why WTP and WTA could not vastly differ. WTP could equal the individual's entire income (finite), WTA could be infinite as discussed by economist Haneman in his 1991 article in *American Economic Review.*

This is the basis of the "Non-Substitutability Effect." Non-substitutability will prevail in the evaluation of generally unique aspects of the natural environment, and cases of culturally built environment, i.e. one's heritage.

I suggest the willingness to pay a higher rate in downstate energy is prevalent due to a lack of acceptability in the destruction of a region used for unparalleled recreational activities by the downstate population; for the life, liberty, and enjoyment of future generations that do not have a voice. I firmly believe the legitimate metric has not been adequately demonstrated to foster overwhelming support to destroy our historical and natural resources. Multiple articles define to great detail the specific formulae in the Economic Valuation Method in the Environmental Impact Assessment which would be most applicable to this particular situation. An example valuation construct that has been directly defined and applied in multiple models that place a concrete metric to a historical environment is shown below.

$$\text{Mean WTP} = \frac{\beta_0 + (\Sigma + \beta_n X_n)}{-\beta_1}$$

There are variable sets of conditions to ensure a higher percentage of exactitude in the formulae that can be additionally provided, but are perhaps not appropriate at this level of commentary. Please review the references found at the end of this commentary if additional insight into econometric analysis applied to the preservation of historic environments is needed.

VII.
Culture of Conservation: Sustainable Future

Conserving a community or regional heritage is the responsibility, and challenge of everyone. As New York revitalizes, and rejuvenates local economies, we must focus on a balanced approach that does not sacrifice irreplaceable value under the misconception that such an action is utilitarian and ultimately for the public good. The loss of pastoral landscape, historic environments, and sense of community is not easily quantifiable, but can be quantified. The question is what we are "willing" to pay and accept. Rural environments provide an already unremunerated positive externality for the public as provided by land owners who purposefully choose preservation over development.

I was 12 years old when the Marcy South Power Transmission lines were strung up through our home. I personally have been impacted in continual sadness to a memory of what once was pristine, sadness to what is a permanent scar to our beautiful region. As a farmer, I can attest to the electrical hiss and crackle one hears when working beneath the wires, or a livestock fence that is always electrically charged with current absorbed through the air that has high level EMF. These are subjective components that although emotionally moving, are not as compelling as an econometric analysis that will provide a solid construct proving the un-substitutable value of our historic landscape.

Wendell Berry wrote that, "...the care of the earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope."

In the end, this is a story of many generations; revolutionary war soldiers, pioneers with calloused hands, law makers, farmers with hope, children's laughter, parent's sorrow, times of innocence, times of drought, times of harvest: lush green fields, sacred forests, clear water creeks. It's a story of who we all are; on a farm, in a town, in a county; seeking to preserve life over the destruction of an irreplaceable part of us.

In Frankfort NY, a meeting was held to discuss the proposed Edic Fraser Power Line with a public audience. At the meeting there was a logic expressed that the running of new lines would present less community resistance in areas that already have an existing visual and cultural impact. While in attendance of a meeting held in the Town of New Lisbon, it was presented that there will be "community mitigation" provided at a specific dollar amount per mile of line. In end, I see a disturbing concept of environmental ethics. There is a moral obligation to future generations that weighs above the dollar, above current conventional perceptions of what is deemed necessary environmental "collateral damage." In the paper presented by Routley & Routley, "Since the usual attempt to argue, in terms of value and benefit to humans, that natural areas and ecosystems should not be destroyed or degraded depends critically on introducing possible future humans who will suffer or be worse as a result of its destruction or degradation, it is plain that an environmental ethic will differ radically from such conventional positions. That is, the usual argument depends on the reduction of a value of a natural item to the interests of present and future humans, in which reduction *future* humans must play a critical role if conclusions not blatantly opposed to conservation are to be reached. As they continue, "There is an enormous *felt* or *emotive* difference between feeling that a place should be valued or respected for itself, for its perceived beauty and character, and feeling that it should not be defaced because it is valued by one's fellow humans, and provides pleasurable sensations or money convenience to them." There are two components of preservation presented here; a lengthy subjective component to evoke a sense of feeling, and an objective econometric analysis that equates to a logical end.

"For, in the final analysis, our most common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal." -JFK

It is our duty as stewards of New York, stewards for the generations to come, to be our best, to set politics aside, to be reminded that this is a permanent decision, a decision on an action that we hope will not make our epitaph an apology.

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