REMSEN-LAKE PLACID TRAVEL CORRIDOR

UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT /

FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL EIS

to the

1996 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor

Unit Management Plan /

Environmental Impact Statement

May 2016

CO-LEAD AGENCIES

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MAY 17 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Record

FROM: Basil Seggos

SUBJECT: Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor

The Amendment to the 1996 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan has been completed. The Adirondack Park Agency has found the Plan to be in conformance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

The Amendment is consistent with Environmental Conservation Law, and Department Rules, Regulations and Policies and is hereby approved and adopted.

Basil Seggos
Acting Commissioner
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Date: May 17, 2016

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NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Department of Transportation

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

MATTHEW J. DRISCOLL
Commissioner

Cathy Calhoun
Chief of Staff

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Record

FROM: Matthew J. Driscoll

SUBJECT: Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor

The Amendment to the 1996 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan has been completed. The Adirondack Park Agency has found the Plan to be in conformance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

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Matthew J. Driscoll
Commissioner
New York State Department of Transportation

Date: May 17, 2016

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NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Adirondack Park Agency

LEILANI CRAFTS ULRICH
Chairwoman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

RESOLUTION AND SEQRA FINDINGS
ADOPTED BY THE ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY
WITH RESPECT TO THE
REMSEN-LAKE PLACID TRAVEL CORRIDOR
UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

February 11, 2016

WHEREAS, section 816 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act directs the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to develop, in consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency (Agency), individual management plans for units of land classified as Travel Corridors in the Master Plan for Management of State Lands and requires such management plans conform to the guidelines and criteria of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, in addition to such guidelines and criteria, the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan prescribes the contents of unit management plans (UMPs) and provides that the Adirondack Park Agency will determine whether a proposed individual UMP complies with such guidelines and criteria; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Transportation adopted a Unit Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor which contained the preferred alternative for rail use along the entire length of the Corridor and encouraged the development of a parallel trail where feasible; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Transportation commenced the preparation of a UMP amendment for the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor, which now includes a new Corridor Management Alternative, Alternative 7, that proposes new management actions for the 119-mile-long railroad right-of-way; and

WHEREAS, the proposed alternative is listed as a Type I action pursuant to 17 NYCRR Part 15 for which the Department of Transportation is the lead agency and 6 NYCRR part 617 for which the Department of Environmental Conservation is lead agency and the Adirondack Park Agency is an involved Agency; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation and Department of Environmental Conservation as co-lead agencies filed a Positive Declaration finding the proposed action might result in a significant adverse environmental impact and that a

supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to the original plan would be prepared and thereafter filed notice of acceptance of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in the Environmental Notice Bulletin on June 10, 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation and Department of Environmental Conservation have prepared a UMP Amendment/Final Supplemental EIS dated February 2016; the Final Supplemental EIS was accepted and notice of acceptance was filed in the Environmental Notice Bulletin on January 27, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the UMP Amendment acknowledges that any proposed new development or use outside the Corridor must conform to Master Plan guidelines for State land and may require amendments to the existing UMPs for neighboring Forest Preserve units or the adoption of new UMPs; and

WHEREAS, specific improvements within the Corridor will be developed and reviewed in consultation with the Agency; and

WHEREAS, the Agency issued a press release on November 13, 2015 seeking public comment regarding the consistency of the proposed UMP amendment to the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Agency's public comment period on the proposed UMP amendment closed on December 18, 2015, and approximately 200 written comments were received; and

WHEREAS, the Adirondack Park Agency has reviewed the proposed Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor UMP Amendment/Final Supplemental EIS dated February 2016.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Section 816 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act, the Adirondack Park Agency finds the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor Management Plan amendment, dated February 2016, conforms with the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Adirondack Park Agency finds pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.11 that the management actions contained therein are intended to protect the travel corridor's natural resources, character and recreational use according to the provisions of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that consistent with the social, economic and other essential considerations required under ECL Article 8, from among the reasonable alternatives, the action approved is one which minimizes or avoids adverse environmental effects to the maximum extent practicable, including the effects disclosed in the Final Supplemental EIS; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Adirondack Park Agency authorizes its Executive Director to advise the Commissioners of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Conservation of the Agency's determination in this matter.

Ayes: Sherman Craig, Karen Feldman, Arthur Lussi, William Thomas, Dan Wilt, Brad Austin (DED), Dierdre Scozzafava (DOS), Robert Stegemann (DEC)

Nays: Richard Booth

Abstentions: None

Absent: Leilani Ulrich, Chairwoman

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Executive Summary

The Amended 1996 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor (Corridor[1]) Unit Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (1996 UMP/FEIS) governs the use of the 119-mile Corridor. The preferred alternative in the 1996 UMP/FEIS provided for rail use to be developed along the entire length of the Corridor and encouraged the development of a parallel trail where feasible. The 1996 UMP/FEIS concluded that "both the rail and trail potential of the corridor should be developed; no action should be taken to eliminate the rail potential of any segment of the corridor at this time." During the past nineteen years, the rail infrastructure has been upgraded to support passenger trains between Remsen and Big Moose and between Saranac Lake and the end of the line in Lake Placid. As envisioned by the 1996 UMP/FEIS, tourist rail excursion opportunities are being operated along these segments of the Corridor.

Based on a growing public interest to develop a long-distance recreation trail, the challenges of developing a parallel trail with the rail, and the interest to extend the scenic train, the Commissioners of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Department of Transportation (DOT) reached out to the public in 2013 to ask if the 1996 UMP/FEIS should be revisited to achieve the best future uses of the Corridor and maximize its rail and trail potential. In response to public input, the Commissioners agreed that the 1996 UMP/FEIS should be amended to consider the conversion of the Tupper Lake to Lake Placid segment to a recreation trail. A second round of public involvement in 2014 confirmed their decision to amend the 1996 UMP/FEIS to consider a new preferred alternative that would divide the Corridor into rail/trail and trail-only segments.

The 1996 UMP/FEIS presented six management alternatives. This 2016 Amendment to the 1996 UMP/FEIS (2016 UMP/SEIS Amendment) proposes an Alternative 7, which calls for dividing the Corridor into rail and trail segments. The rails would be retained within the Corridor from Remsen to Tupper Lake (Segment 1) and the rails would be removed within the Corridor from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid (Segment 2). In Segment 1, tracks would be improved from Big Moose to Tupper Lake, operating rail service would be extended 45 miles from the Big Moose Station to the Tupper Lake Station, connections to existing trail systems on neighboring public lands would be established and facilities such as engine houses and fueling facilities would continue to be supported where necessary. Segment 2 would be converted to a multi-use recreational trail. Snowmobiling would continue to be allowed along the entire length of the Corridor, both within Segment 1 and Segment 2. The entire length of the Corridor would remain in DOT ownership and classified by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) as a Travel Corridor.

An important aspect of the 2016 UMP/SEIS Amendment is connecting the Corridor to recreation opportunities on adjacent Forest Preserve and conservation easement lands. Recreational opportunities can be accessed seasonally by train south of Tupper Lake or

year-round by foot, bicycling, snowmobiling, snowshoeing or cross country skiing, north of Tupper Lake.

The 2016 UMP/SEIS Amendment provides that snowmobile use would continue along the entire length of the Corridor. In response to concerns raised about the impacts the rails have when they are exposed during the snowmobile season, the 2016 UMP/SEIS Amendment outlines conceptual alternatives to locate and construct snowmobile trail connections that do not rely on travel along the Corridor where rail service would continue. Some of the communities that would be connected along these alternative trails include Long Lake, Raquette Lake, Eagle Bay, Inlet and Beaver River. The 2016 UMP/SEIS Amendment also emphasizes that snowmobile trail connections would be encouraged from Tupper Lake through existing Forest Preserve and conservation easement lands to link with existing trail systems on the Tug Hill and in the western Adirondacks, consistent with the 1996 UMP/FEIS.

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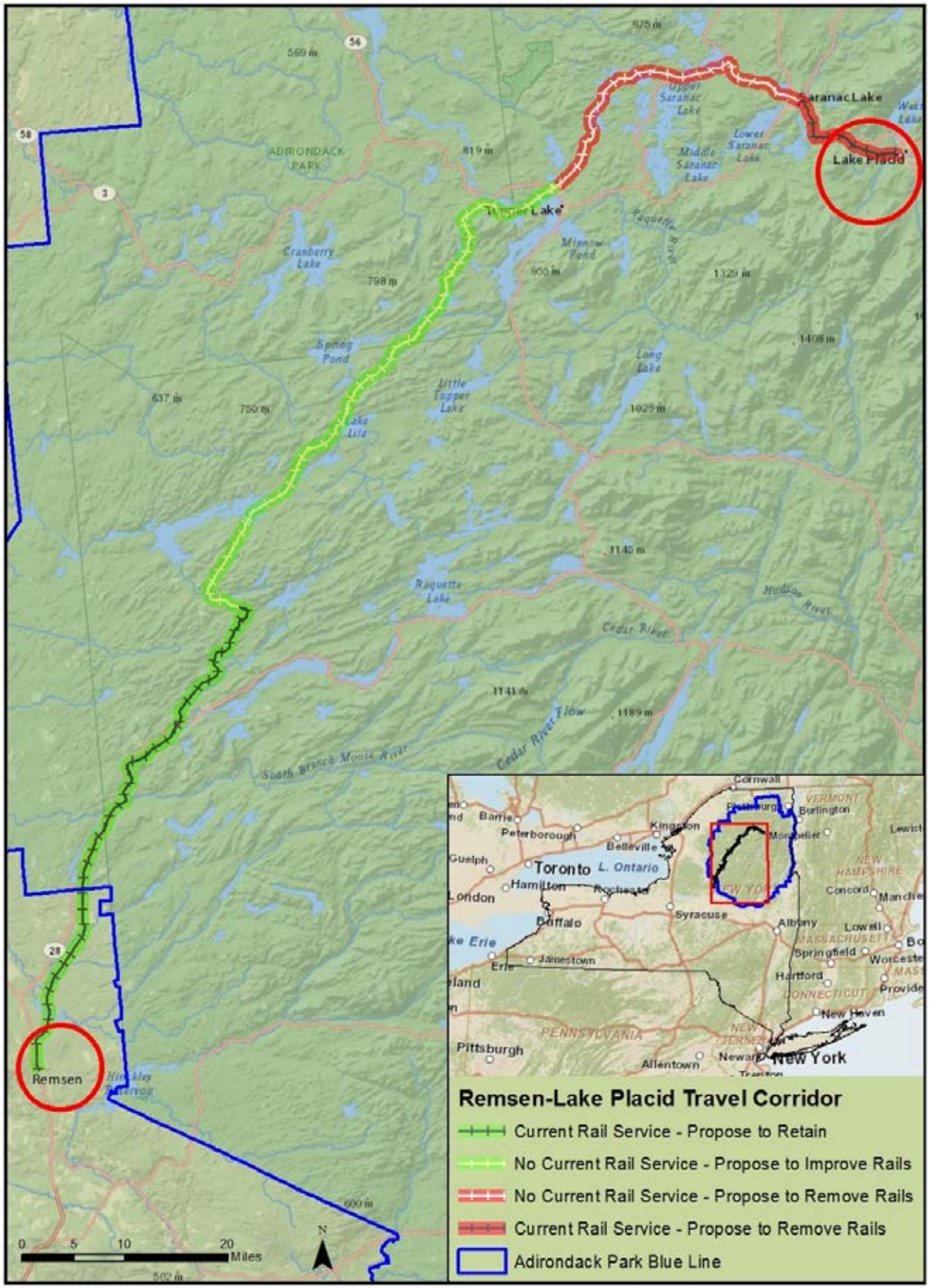
[1] The term “Corridor” used throughout this document applies solely to the State-owned land, approximately 119 miles long and generally 100 feet wide, which has existed as a railroad right-of-way since 1892.


Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor
Current Rail Service - Propose to Retain
No Current Rail Service - Propose to Improve Rails
No Current Rail Service - Propose to Remove Rails
Current Rail Service - Propose to Remove Rails
Adirondack Park Blue Line
Remsen
Lake Placid
Saranac Lake
Tupper Lake
ADIRONDACK PARK
Upper Saranac Lake
Middle Saranac Lake
Lower Saranac Lake
Cranberry Lake
Spring Pond
Lake Lila
Little Tupper Lake
Long Lake
Raquette Lake
Cedar River
Cedar River Flow
South Branch Moose River
Hudson River
Minnow Pond
Raquette River
Huckley Reservoir
0 5 10 20 Miles
N
Toronto
L. Ontario
Buffalo
Rochester
Syracuse
Albany
Burlington
Montpelier
Concord
Lowell
Springfield
Hartford
New Haven
New York
Pittsburgh
Allentown
Newark
Trenton
Jamestown
Erie
Hamilton
London
Guelph
Peterborough
Belleville
Kingston
Barrie
Cornwall
Plattsburgh
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS
CONNECTICUT
PENNSYLVANIA
NEW JERSEY

Segment 1. Remsen to Tupper Lake

The railroad currently operates on Segment 1 of the Corridor between Remsen and Big Moose Station. The 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS calls for existing rail use to be extended from Big Moose to Tupper Lake and facilitating a longer-term lease agreement with a train operator, as called for in the 1996 UMP/FEIS. In addition, it identifies a strategy to link DEC recreational facilities on adjacent Forest Preserve and conservation easement lands, as called for in the 1996 UMP/FEIS. See Section V.F.1 for maps that identify possible connections and recreation opportunities.

In order to facilitate railroad operation beyond Big Moose Station to the Tupper Lake Station, the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS calls for the rail infrastructure to Tupper Lake Station to be rehabilitated to support rail passenger service along this 45-mile segment.

The 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS would seek to bolster recreational-connectivity along the Corridor. For winter recreation, this would include exploring locations for snowmobile trails to communities along the Corridor that do not rely on travel on the Corridor rails. The 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS also recommends that hut-to-hut cross country-skiing be encouraged, starting at Beaver River and ending at the Horseshoe Lake station to the north. During times of year when the trains are operating, Beaver River can also serve as a launching-off point for paddlers and hikers heading to unique wilderness destinations on Forest Preserve lands adjacent to the Corridor. The establishment of trailheads and trails that link the Corridor to Lake Lila is a priority, coordinated closely with the railroad operator.

The 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS calls for enhancing the interpretation of historic assets along the Corridor. It also considers the option of rehabilitating historic assets within the Corridor for educational purposes and use as warming stations for the public year round.

Segment 2: Tupper Lake to Lake Placid

The preferred alternative in the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS calls for the removal of rail infrastructure between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid and converting Segment 2 to a recreation trail suitable for a range of recreation activities including walking, running, biking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and use by the Olympic Regional Development Authority and Olympic Training Center for biathlon and cross-country ski athletes. The Corridor without rail infrastructure is wide enough to accommodate multiple recreation activities, unlike a “rail with trail” development that would in places require a barrier to safely separate recreation activity within the Corridor from the train. For long-distance bicycling, the Corridor without rail infrastructure could be used to access roads south of Tupper Lake (Route 30), which are much more suited for safe bike riding than those (Routes 73 and 86) north of Tupper Lake.

Segment 2 traverses through communities that have some densely populated neighborhoods adjacent to the Corridor. In order to avoid conflicts with neighbors, the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS calls for common-sense measures including

establishment of time for day use of the corridor (7AM-10PM), speed limits, noise reduction and strict enforcement measures for snowmobiling. To accommodate events hosted by the Olympic Regional Development Authority, including cross-country skiing races and biathlons, the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS recommends the Corridor may be closed to other recreation activities during race events (and preparations for them) to make these events possible.

The 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS calls for DOT and/or DEC to establish partnerships and volunteer agreements with communities and recreation users to help maintain the recreation trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid.

The 1996 UMP/FEIS is supplemented herein by the discussion of potential environmental impacts and measures proposed to mitigate such impacts (see Appendix 1).

One of the basic purposes of SEQRA is to incorporate the consideration of environmental factors at an early stage of project development. This often means that an environmental impact statement (EIS) would be prepared before final detailed plans are available. As a general rule, the amount of detail regarding a specific impact in an EIS should depend on the magnitude and importance of the impact. Although final plans are not necessary, the EIS should contain enough detail on size, location and elements of the proposal to allow an understanding of the proposed action, the associated impacts and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation.

The adoption of this 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS would serve as a roadmap for obtaining all required permits for the proposed management actions, in coordination and consultation with all involved agencies. Detailed design and work plans would be shared and coordinated with other involved agencies as they are developed pursuant to the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS.

V. Description of Management Proposed (Proposed Action)

A. PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The 119-mile Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor (Corridor) is a unique public land resource. Its uninterrupted length, historical significance, and extremely gradual and low cumulative gradient set it apart from other public land resources in the Adirondack Park. Also, no other state land parcel intersects as many natural and human communities. From the remoteness of the Five Ponds Wilderness Area to the community centers it traverses, the Corridor connects Adirondack inhabitants and visitors alike with the landscape, allowing them to directly access core Wilderness and Wild Forest lands within the Adirondack Park.

The 1996 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan (1996 UMP/FEIS) has governed the use of the Corridor for 20 years. The 1996 UMP/FEIS provided for continuation and expansion of rail use along the entire length of the Corridor and prescribed the development of a parallel trail where feasible. The 1996 UMP/FEIS concluded that "both the rail and trail potential of the corridor should be developed; no action should be taken to eliminate the rail potential of any segment of the corridor at this time."

However, based on the growing public interest to expeditiously plan and implement a strategy for the Corridor that maximizes its full public benefit and the challenges of implementing the continuous rail-with-trail concept within the Corridor, the Commissioners of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Department of Transportation (DOT) reached out to the public in 2013 to ask if the 1996 UMP should be revisited to determine the best future uses of the Corridor. In response to public input, the Commissioners agreed that the 1996 UMP should be amended to consider the conversion of the Tupper Lake to Lake Placid segment to a recreational trail. A second round of public involvement in 2014 confirmed their decision to amend the 1996 UMP to consider a new preferred alternative that would divide the Corridor into rail and trail-only segments.

The 1996 UMP/FEIS identified 6 alternatives and selected alternative 6 (full rail development and parallel trail where feasible) as the preferred one. **This 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS proposes a new alternative, Alternative 7, which calls for bolstering rail service between Remsen and Tupper Lake (Segment 1) – *which includes the extension of operating rail service 45 miles from the Big Moose Station to the Tupper Lake Station* - and for the conversion of the Corridor between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid (Segment 2) to a 34-mile multi-use recreational trail.**

During the past 20 years, the rail infrastructure has been upgraded to support passenger trains between Remsen and Big Moose Station and between Saranac

Lake and the end of the line in Lake Placid. As envisioned by the 1996 UMP/FEIS, tourist rail excursion opportunities are being operated along these segments of the Corridor. Between Big Moose Station and Saranac Lake, numerous washouts have been repaired and the rail infrastructure has been restored such that it is passable with rail equipment, but it is not currently suitable for operation of passenger trains.

During the same 20 years, opportunities to develop a full-length, continuous parallel trail along the Lake Placid to Raybrook segment of the Corridor were investigated by the Town of North Elba and also examined by DEC, DOT and APA staff. Due to the existence of extensive wetlands along this segment and legal limitations for moving trail segments onto neighboring Forest Preserve lands, DEC has determined that the establishment of a parallel trail that avoids significant wetland impacts is not physically or economically feasible. The Trails with Rails Action Committee (TRAC), a local group from Tupper Lake, spent considerable time and effort developing a rail-with-trail proposal (see Appendix 3). The concept they proposed included extensive earth moving and filling, cantilevering and, while no formal cost analysis has been completed, the concept appears to be cost prohibitive, contains unacceptable impacts, and would not result in a flat, long-distance trail capable of safely accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians. Thus having “rails with trails” is no longer considered a viable option on much of the Corridor.

As was the case in 1996, there continues to be a strong interest in ensuring that the Corridor is managed to yield the greatest benefit to the people living, working, and visiting along the Corridor. The Corridor continues to have public support for rail services. The rail services that have been developed and enhanced since 1996 along segments of the Corridor bring visitors to the Park for a unique experience during certain seasons of the year. Many support the expansion of this service. At the same time, there has been a variety of recreationists, including bicyclists and cross-country skiers advocating for conversion of the Corridor to a multi-use recreational trail. Removal of the rail infrastructure has also been a desire of the snowmobiling community for many years. This community contributes significantly to the winter economy in the Adirondack region. Local support for conversion from rail to trail is especially great in the Tri-Lakes region communities of Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake, and Lake Placid. Regardless of the perspective, public and private interests all agree on virtually one thing; the Corridor is currently underutilized and there are significant opportunities for enhancement of both the rail and recreational trail potential of the Corridor.

With this 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS comes maximum public benefit - with minimum environmental impact - including the expansion of a unique wilderness excursion train, as well as the development of a long-distance, safe, low-gradient, multi-use, multi-age, and multi-ability recreational trail.

The positive features of this 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS, along with its potential negative effects and the measures that would be taken to mitigate them, are described in detail in the following sections.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

1. Physical

The Corridor would be retained in its present, uninterrupted form from Remsen to Lake Placid. It will keep its “Travel Corridor” classification under the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP.)

In accordance with the proposed action, the Corridor would be developed and maintained under the following guidelines:

a. Rail infrastructure would remain in place between Remsen and the Big Moose Station.

b. Rail infrastructure between Big Moose Station and Tupper Lake would be rehabilitated as necessary to meet rail service operating requirements.

c. Rail infrastructure would be removed between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, and this segment of the Corridor would be converted to a recreational trail.

d. Adverse impacts on historic resources as a result of the implementation of the 2016 RLPTC Unit Management Plan Amendment would be mitigated through consultation in accordance with the Article 14.09 process. Detailed design and work plans would be shared and coordinated with other involved agencies as they are developed.

e. Appendix 4 is a Transition Plan that takes into account the timing of the removal of the rails from Lake Placid to Saranac Lake and the upgrade of the rails from Big Moose to Tupper Lake.

f. The rehabilitation and maintenance of rail infrastructure would conform to applicable Federal Railroad Administration safety standards.

g. Many miles along the Corridor bisect or share a border with Forest Preserve and conservation easement lands and thereby intersecting - or coming in close proximity with - many existing or proposed recreational trails along its course:

- Within the segment of the Corridor between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake, connections to existing trail systems neighboring the Corridor would be made and, where necessary, travel within the Corridor could serve to provide connections to trails that cross the Corridor at various points.
- Within the segment of the Corridor between Tupper Lake and Remsen, where rail infrastructure would remain, connections to existing trail systems on neighboring lands would be established and serve as “flag stops” along the rail during the months when the train is in operation.

The number, location, design and procedure for use of such ‘flag stops” at rail crossings shall be subject to public input, review and discussion among DOT, DEC, and the rail operator (when selected). In cases where travel within the Corridor is necessary or desired to provide connecting trails that exist within the Corridor for short or long distances, these “rail with trail” purposes would be allowed, depending on site conditions and conformance with management plans for the neighboring areas. This minor “rail with trail” use would be established within standard operating procedures that minimize environmental impacts, such as erosion and sedimentation controls, and only when it is possible to ensure the safety of train patrons and recreationists alike by utilizing safety structures as deemed necessary for each situation. Any such use would be subject to review by both DOT and DEC.

2. Operational

Rail services and recreational uses in the Corridor would be managed to provide a wide range of benefits to the public. Segment 1 would be managed by DOT; Segment 2 would be managed by DEC. The following would be consistent with all safety requirements:

a. The rail developer would enter into a lease agreement with the State. DOT would prepare and issue a Request for Proposals to solicit a rail developer to lease, operate and maintain rail infrastructure in Segment 1 between Remsen and Tupper Lake. The RFP would include a commitment from the State to bring track, structures and grade crossing signal systems up to a State of Good Repair for operation at not less than FRA Track Class 2 passenger train speeds prior to the start of the lease.

b. Rail services on Segment 1 may include scheduled passenger and tourist excursion services, and may, after careful consideration of the consequences, include freight services should the need ever present itself. The RFP would include the level of operating and maintenance commitments to be required of the respondent to the RFP.

c. Recreational trail construction and use within the Corridor property would be coordinated with existing and planned off-Corridor trail systems and uses. The locations where recreational trails cross the tracks in Segment 1 of the corridor would be identified in discussion with DOT and DEC. The number and location of proposed “connecting trails” in corridor Segment 1 would be subject to approval by DOT.

d. Local governments, and snowmobile and other outdoor recreation organizations would be canvassed to establish partnerships for management of trail facilities in the Corridor, in order to more effectively maintain and enforce applicable regulations and to provide trail stewardship.

e. Public use of All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) will continue to be prohibited within the Corridor.

3. Costs and Revenues

a. Rail Service Options

DOT has estimated that the cost of rail restoration between Big Moose and Tupper Lake, a distance of approximately 45 miles, is $250,000 a mile, or $11 million. This estimate is based on the railroad achieving a Federal Rail Administration (FRA) Class 2 standard that allows passenger train speeds of 30 mph, the current situation on the existing Saranac Lake to Lake Placid train. Estimates have been based on DOT's Pay Item Catalog, the RE Means Heavy Construction Cost Data and DOT's historic involvement in this and other rail rehabilitation projects.

	Big Moose – Tupper Lake *45 miles*	
	$1,000's / mi	*Cost*
Track Rehabilitation	*$250*	*$ 11.0 m*
TOTAL RAIL REHAB	*$ 11.0 million*	

b. Recreational Trail

The State has estimated, based on experience with other rail\trail conversions, that the cost of construction of a recreational trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, a distance of approximately 34 miles, is about $200,000 a mile, or $6.7 million. This is an order of magnitude estimate and consistent with other estimates from the Town of North Elba, Regional Economic Development Councils, the Rails to Trails Conservancy, and the New York Parks and Trails Association. Final decisions about the width of the trail and the surface would affect final costs. Additional costs related to the development of a recreational trail include the potential payback to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of up to $2.3 million in costs incurred in the development of the rail between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid, and trail planning between Lake Placid and Ray Brook.

Whether a reimbursement is ultimately required would be the focus of follow-up discussions between the State and FHWA. Also, it is estimated that the costs of the rail infrastructure removal would exceed the potential salvage value of these materials by $1.1 million, thus the estimated total costs for the development and construction of the approximately 34-mile recreational trail is estimated at $7.8-10.1 million, depending on payback.

	Tupper Lake – Lake Placid *34 miles*	
	$1,000's / mi	*Cost*
Trail Construction	*$200*	*$6.7 m*
Net Salvage Value	*($34)*	*$ 1.1 m*
FHWA Payback	*($68)*	*$ 2.3 m*
TOTAL TRAIL COST	*$7.8 - 10.1 million*	

c. Maintenance

Annual Maintenance costs are estimated to be similar for either an active rail or a recreational trail: about $1,500 a mile. This estimate is consistent with DOT's actual maintenance costs, which has included reimbursement of maintenance expenditures made by the Adirondack Scenic Railroad and cost estimates prepared by others, including the Rails to Trails Conservancy in Washington, DC. Costs include those for vegetative management, beaver control and emergency washout repairs. Efforts would be made to reach out to ORDA, the Town of North Elba, villages of Lake Placid, Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake and non-profit recreational groups to help DEC in the maintenance of the trail, a common feature in other recreational trail developments in New York and around the country.

4. Economic Impacts

It is important to note that, while important, economic considerations are not the single critical factor in the decision by the State to move forward with this Amendment.

The primary economic impacts of full Corridor development would come from the direct expenditures for the rehabilitation and operation of the rail line from Remsen to Tupper Lake, conversion of the Corridor to a recreational trail

between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, and from spending by the people attracted to the area because of its services and recreational opportunities.

a. Camoin Associates Economic Study

In 2015, Empire State Development (ESD) contracted Camoin Associates of Saratoga Springs to perform an economic impact analysis of various options for rail/trail development in the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor. Camoin Associates has provided economic development consulting services to municipalities, economic development agencies, and private enterprises since 1999. They specialize in economic and fiscal impact studies, including tourism projects, large-scale residential, commercial, industrial and mixed-use developments. Camoin Associates is a “pre-qualified” consultant to ESD and has performed well on other projects. Camoin Associates has presented on the subject of economic and fiscal impact analysis at various events and has authored a white paper titled, “The Importance of Fiscal Impact Analysis in Economic Development & Planning.” Through the services offered, Camoin Associates has had the opportunity to serve local and state governments from Maine to Texas; corporations and organizations that include Lowes Home Improvement, FedEx, Volvo (Nova Bus) and the New York Islanders; as well as private developers proposing projects in excess of $600 million. Camoin Associates’ reputation for detailed, place-specific, and accurate analysis has led to projects in twenty states and garnered attention from national media outlets including Marketplace (NPR), Forbes magazine, and The Wall Street Journal.

Camoin Associates examined the economic impacts of the proposed action versus two other scenarios. The three scenarios analyzed in that report are:

1. Rail from Remsen to Lake Placid – as the current management of the Corridor under Alternative 6, with rehabilitation of remaining out-of-service segments and rail use, plus snowmobile use in winter;
2. Recreational trail from Remsen to Lake Placid – removal of all rail; infrastructure and conversion of the entire Corridor to a recreational trail
3. Rail from Remsen to Tupper Lake and Recreational Trail from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid (as described herein as Alternative 7).

Camoin developed a detailed series of assumptions regarding visitor spending and utilization of an expanded rail excursion and a multi-use recreational trail in order to project the amount of “net new” (from out-of-State) tourism spending that would be added to the economy of Franklin & Essex Counties (the Study Area) each year as a result of either scenario. This new spending was then entered into the input-output model

developed by Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. to calculate the total estimated spending, jobs and earnings that would be generated in the Study Area as a result of either project.

Camoin Associates counted tourism originating from out-of-State only because it was assumed that in-State residents would be spending their money within the State regardless of the options evaluated in this amendment, and thus, provide no net economic gain to New York State.

While that assumption may be valid from a 'new economic development' perspective, many in-State residents would use the rail and the trail. The availability for local use of the trail by residents contributes to the enhanced quality of life many are looking for in decisions about where to reside. Both the extension of rail service and the establishment of a long distance recreation trail may also draw visitors from within New York State who currently travel out of state for long distance trail or tourist rail experiences.

The full study concludes that Alternative 7 is projected to provide the greatest positive economic impact to New York State. The findings are summarized in the table below.

SCENARIO COMPARISON

Annual Economic Impact of Scenario 1: All Rail			
	Direct	Indirect	Total
Spending	$ 1,339,113	$ 1,312,863	$ 2,651,976
Jobs	$ 17	$ 8	$ 25
Earnings	$ 496,894	$ 477,019	$ 973,913
Annual Economic Impact of Scenario 2: All Trail			
	Direct	Indirect	Total
Spending	$ 1,136,125	$ 1,162,443	$ 2,298,568
Jobs	$ 15	$ 7	$ 22
Earnings	$ 411,298	$ 419,524	$ 830,822
Annual Economic Impact of Scenario 3: Combination			
	Direct	Indirect	Total
Spending	$ 1,365,215	$ 1,454,389	$ 2,739,881
Jobs	$ 17	$ 8	$ 25
Earnings	$ 497,944	$ 497,944	$ 995,887

Source: Camoin Associates

b. <u>Tourism - Recreational Trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid</u>

This segment is approximately 34 miles and comprised of what is referred to as the "Tri-Lakes" region. Compared to other parts of the Corridor, there are relatively short distances between communities in this segment. Lake

Placid to Saranac Lake is about 9 miles, Saranac Lake to Lake Clear is about 7 miles, and Lake Clear to Tupper Lake is about 18 miles. These communities offer many shopping, dining, and lodging options and could draw large numbers of tourists. Camoin Associates predicts (they refer to this segment of the Corridor as, "Northern Segment"):

> *""The northern segment is likely to attract leisure hikers and cyclists interested in a shorter-distance excursion. A cyclist traveling at a very leisurely speed of 10 mph could make the trip from Lake Placid to Tupper Lake in about 3 ½ hours and would be able to make a return trip the same day if desired. A round-trip ride from Lake Placid to Saranac Lake would take just 2 hours. Hikers and runners would more likely take short-distance, half-day- or-less round trips leaving from the tourist hubs of Lake Placid and Saranac Lake."*

Camoin Associates interviewed trail advocates and tourism professionals and the results indicated that visitors of all types would likely utilize the trail, from families with small children to "empty nesters" to expert cyclists. To determine the potential number of cyclist users of the trail, Camoin Associates reviewed 19 studies of multi-use trails located throughout the United States for their similarity to the recreational trail proposed in this amendment. Of the 19 trails studied, 6 trails had similar characteristics to the proposed trail in Segment 2. Based upon the average use of these trails, Camoin projects an estimated 73,215 annual users of the proposed trail, as shown in the table below.

Total Trail Users: Lake Placid to Tupper Lake Segment	
Average Monthly Users Per Mile Per /Month*	269.17
Segment Miles	34
Heavy Use Months	8
Total Annual Trail Users, Segment	73,215

*Based on average for six similar trails nationwide.

It is worth noting, however, that this study is based on "Net New" Trail Users. This means that Camoin Associates went forward with the assumption that recreationists have other options elsewhere in the Adirondack Park and that they would be using another trail system in the State if the proposed trail did not exist. Therefore, only out-of-State cyclists were considered in the study.

From this analysis, as the table below shows, Camoin Associates determined that trail users could annually contribute $791,357 to the New York State economy.

Net New Spending by Trail Users – Tupper Lake to Lake Placid	
Total Annual Trail Users	73,215
Percent Cyclists*	56%
Percent of Users from Out-of-State†	49%
Net New Trail Users	20,090
Half-Day Spending per Visitor†	39.39
Net New Visitor Spending	791,357

Source: Camoin Associates

† 2013 Essex County Leisure Travel Study

c. Tourism - Operation of Rail Services between Remsen and Tupper Lake

Camoin Associates also analyzed the potential rail ridership from Remsen to Tupper Lake, and under this scenario, they determined that an increase in riders can be expected as a result of the Adirondack Scenic Railroad (ASR) operation being extended from its current terminus at Big Moose to a new terminus at Tupper Lake. They also factored out the ridership that would be lost by elimination of existing service between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid.

Passenger-Trip Projections – Utica to Tupper Lake		
	Current (2014)	Projected
Excursions from Utica	41,265	67,000
Excursions from Thendara	12,194	16,800
New excursions to/from Tupper Lake	-	10,500
Placid/Saranac excursions	16,434	-
Total FRA Ridership	69,893	94,300
% Return trips‡	15%	15%
Unique Passenger-Trips	59,409	80,155
Change in Ridership		20,746

‡Current and projected counts presented in accordance with the reporting system of the Federal Railroad Administration. A passenger on a round-trip excursion is counted twice if he/she gets off and then reboards train. ASR estimates that 15% of passengers are double- counted.

C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The preferred alternative would be implemented in accordance with the following conditions:

1. **A long-term operations and maintenance agreement would be necessary to attract a stable rail developer and provide assurance for the rail developer's financing and long-term investment in the Corridor.**

   Because a large investment would be required for the restoration of rail infrastructure between Big Moose and Tupper Lake and to maintain rail services between Remsen and Tupper Lake, potential rail developers would need to be assured of a long-term commitment from the State. The continuation of the current practice of management through 30-day permits could jeopardize the goal of full rail service development.

   - DOT would prepare and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit a rail developer to lease, operate and maintain Segment 1 between Remsen and Tupper Lake.
   - The coordination of all rail activities on Corridor Segment 1 would be the responsibility of a single developer to insure the efficient implementation of the final Corridor management plan and the safety of all Corridor users.
   - The approved rail developer would be given freedom to make the daily business decisions necessary to assure success of the rail development venture in conformance with the Plan.
   - DOT would require Corridor Segment 1 development to proceed within the guidelines of the Plan, as determined through a program of regular monitoring.
   - If any Corridor development activity is determined by the State to exceed the scope of the Plan, the activity would not be implemented unless the Plan is revised and a supplemental environmental impact statement prepared.

2. **Economics do not support the use of freight service in the Corridor at this time.** Furthermore, hauling freight would involve obtaining "common carrier" status for the railroad. This change in status would mean that the Corridor would have to remain open to train use in the winter, and consequently may preclude snowmobile use in the winter. These consequences would be considered by the State should an interest in freight service arise in the future.

3. **DEC would be responsible for implementing the recreational trail component of the final 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS.**

   - The rail infrastructure would be removed within Corridor Segment 2 between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid and a recreational trail for hiking, biking, running, walking, skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and Olympic training would be established. The details of recreational trail development between

Tupper Lake and Lake Placid would be developed pursuant to the APSLMP and all applicable law, regulations, policy and guidance.

- Active participation of local governments, snowmobile and trail advocates and ORDA would be essential to construction and long-term maintenance of the proposed recreational trail and management guidelines along Corridor Segment 2.
- Trail development would be implemented using funding from a variety of sources.

4. Snowmobiling will continue to be allowed along the entire length of the Corridor.

Snowmobiling is a popular recreational activity throughout the Adirondack region. The yearly influx of snowmobile enthusiasts brings significant economic benefits to local communities. Within the Adirondacks, the Corridor has been identified as one of the most important long-distance snowmobile trunk trails.

- Snowmobiling within Segment 2 of the Corridor leads riders through communities that include some densely populated neighborhoods. Common-sense measures would be implemented to avoid conflicts with neighbors. These include limiting the time of day-use of the Corridor within Segment 2 to the hours of 7 AM through 10 PM and a 35 mile-per-hour speed limit within areas of Segment 2 where riders traverse through populated areas. Snowmobile use within Corridor Segment 1 will continue to be allowed between December 1 and April 30 each year. The railroad operator may propose rail operations on Segment 1 of the corridor between December 1 and December 31. Any such proposal shall describe the physical limits and schedule of rail operations, projected ridership and coordination with snowmobile use. The proposal would be reviewed by DOT and DEC, assessed through public comment, and if accepted by mutual agreement of these agencies, permits for use of the corridor would be adjusted as necessary to accommodate rail use through December 31st.

D. POTENTIAL FUNDING

Funding to implement any of the alternatives could come from private, public or a combination of public and private sources or in-kind services such as labor.

1. Private Sources

The DEC has a proven track record working with volunteer organizations to manage State trails. An example is the Adirondack Mountain Club's 90-year relationship with the State in maintaining the 122-mile Northville-Lake Placid Trail. Experience with the Adirondack Scenic Railway Preservation Society and the NYS Snowmobile Association also demonstrate that volunteers can provide a

great deal of labor to maintain the Corridor. Philanthropic, volunteer, and outdoor recreational organizations would be actively pursued by DEC to manage the recreational trail segment between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake on Corridor Segment 2, and by DOT between Tupper Lake and Remsen on Corridor Segment 1.

2. Public Sources

Public funds from local, State and federal sources have been used for improvement on the Corridor. Future public funding would be pursued.

a. Local Funds: DEC would work with affected local governments to help with the tasks of maintaining the recreational trail between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake on Corridor Segment 2. DOT would work with affected local governments to help with the railroad maintenance between Tupper Lake and Remsen on Corridor Segment 1.
b. State Funds: Within budgetary guidelines, DEC and DOT would seek relevant funding sources.
c. Federal Funds: In the event that federal funding would be sought to support the proposed management actions, the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 need to be satisfied, as well as other applicable federal regulations, including Buy America, Davis Bacon. Federal Highway funding from the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), administered in New York by DOT, may be used for recreational trail construction. Under current federal law, DOT is prohibited from using TAP funds on projects administered directly by DOT. TAP funds must be passed on by DOT to project sponsors (State Agencies, municipalities, authorities or pre-qualified not-for-profits), who are responsible for compliance with all applicable federal regulations.

   DOT and DEC would discuss with FHWA prior Federal investments in rail infrastructure and recreational trail planning, to identify steps necessary to limit or eliminate any reimbursement to FHWA.

E. OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF THE CORRIDOR

1. Ownership

Title to the Corridor will remain under the jurisdiction of the DOT. Any leases or other agreements that would allow others to use, operate, or control the Corridor would be constructed to allow the State to reassign or regain full control of the Corridor if those persons allowed an interest are deemed to be in default of a clearly defined set of goals, or are otherwise acting contrary to the public interest.

2. Responsibility for Past Facilities Alterations

All at-grade road crossings have been updated since the 1996 UMP/FEIS. The State would ensure that all crossings will be visible and safe along the entire length of the Corridor.

In the case of private parties encroaching on the right-of-way, DOT's normal practice would be followed. If it is not possible to have the encroachment permitted, the encroaching party would be required to remove the encroachment.

In the case of grade crossings of the State highway system that have been altered, no binding commitment is being given to providing funds for crossing restoration. To assure funds for such an activity, the funds would need to be "obligated" so that they could be used for no other purpose. This is an inappropriate action while the nature of any rail activity is uncertain. When a rail operator is identified, the level of commitment to highway dollars for grade crossing restoration would be negotiated based on the commitments of the operator.

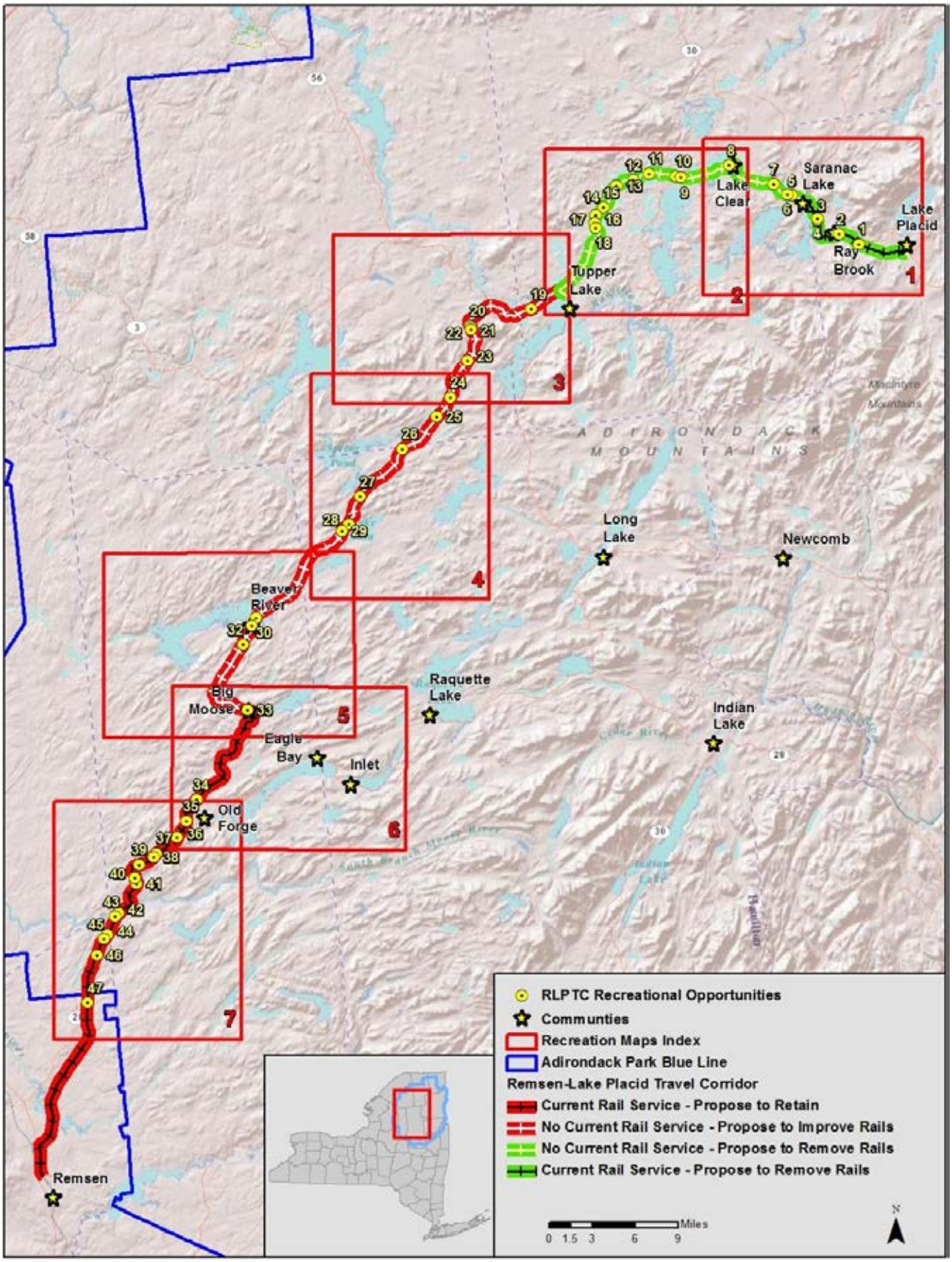
F. FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND REMOVAL

1. Recreational Access

The Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor provides unique recreational access in the Adirondacks. Its length, arrow-straight sections, and gradual gradient present recreational opportunities like no other trail in the region. Regardless of where rail infrastructure would remain and where it would be removed from the Corridor, many such opportunities exist, or could exist, along its relatively flat course. The Big Moose to Tupper Lake stretch can provide opportunities for remote hunting, fishing, paddling, camping, and hiking and additional trail connections to remote areas. For example, the Corridor runs right along the eastern side of the Five Ponds Wilderness Area to places only accessible from trailheads much farther away. Opportunities exist for traditional train station stops or flag stops along this segment, and these opportunities are often in close proximity to the Corridor, such as at Lake Lila and the Boy Scout Camp at Sabattis. In winter, the Corridor would continue to provide access for snowmobiling, as well as expedition camping via cross country-skiing and snowshoeing during the same time period allowed for snowmobiles on Segment 1. This wilderness-access train could potentially serve as a means by which people of all ages and abilities can access remote areas they would otherwise never see.

The Tupper Lake to Lake Placid segment would provide in-Corridor recreation, such as hiking, biking, running, roller skating, roller skiing, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling, but also new opportunities for hunting, fishing, camping, paddling, and hiking on adjacent State lands, since multiple state trail connections would be made. This route can also serve as an environmentally-friendly way for local residents to commute safely between communities, and local residents and tourists alike to recreationally enjoy the Corridor by biking, hiking, running or skiing.

For new developments outside the Corridor, existing UMPs for neighboring Forest Preserve units would need to be amended or new UMPs created. The following map provides an index of a subsequent seven-map series (at a more localized scale), that helps detail the recreational access potential along the Corridor.


Lake Placid
Ray Brook
Saranac Lake
Lake Clear
Tupper Lake
Long Lake
Newcomb
Raquette Lake
Indian Lake
Beaver River
Big Moose
Eagle Bay
Inlet
Old Forge
Remsen
ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
RLPTC Recreational Opportunities
Communities
Recreation Maps Index
Adirondack Park Blue Line
Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor
Current Rail Service - Propose to Retain
No Current Rail Service - Propose to Improve Rails
No Current Rail Service - Propose to Remove Rails
Current Rail Service - Propose to Remove Rails
Miles
0 1.5 3 6 9

Lake Placid to Tupper Lake (Corridor Segment 2)

The 1996 UMP/FEIS noted that this section of the Corridor would serve the following recreational purposes: bicycle route, fitness path, tourism and dinner train possibilities between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid. Removal of the rail infrastructure in this location would enable all the original recreational possibilities to remain except for the "tourism and dinner train". In addition to the original recreational opportunities noted in the 1996 UMP/FEIS, a variety of opportunities for families with small children, as well as for people of all ages and abilities would be established along the recreation trail, pursuant to the unit management planning process for neighboring public lands, as appropriate.

a) Lake Placid to Saranac Lake Area (Recreation Map 1)
SARANAC LAKES WILD FOREST

(1) Trail Connection: **Prison-Waterline Truck Trail** *– this half-mile unpaved State road in Saranac Lakes Wild Forest links to Route 86 in Ray Brook and serves as another access point along the Corridor.*

(2) Trail Connection: **Scarface Mountain Trail -** *this offers approximately a 3.5 mile hike from the railbed. The lower portions of the trail are open to mountain bike riding.*

(3) Trail Connection: **Turtle Pond Trails** *and* **Oseetah Lake Trails -** *these trail systems connect with the Corridor, however although nothing in this proposal enhances them since Route 86 already intersects these trails at this location.*

(4) Trail Connection: **Jack Rabbit Trail.**

b) Lake Colby Area (Recreation Map 1)
SARANAC LAKES WILD FOREST

(5) There is potential for a trail network and water access north of the Corridor, on the east side of Lake Colby.

(6) There is also access to the water on the Corridor along the Lake Colby causeway.

(7) Trail Connection: **Lake Colby Bypass -** *this is a trail that goes around the north end of Lake Colby and leads to the former D&H rail bed, which connects with communities to the north.*

c) Lake Clear Area (Recreation Map 1)
SARANAC LAKES WILD FOREST

(8) Old woods roads exist that could be improved to provide non-motorized access to the small beach area for swimmers. The trail would be about 0.4 miles from the rail bed.

d) Rat Pond Area (Recreation Map 2)
SARANAC LAKES WILD FOREST / SAINT REGIS CANOE AREA

(9) *Trail Connection:* **Rat Pond Road.**

(10) *Fishing/Water access to Rat Pond.*

e) Hoel Pond and Long Pond Area (Recreation Map 2)
SARANAC LAKES WILD FOREST / SAINT REGIS CANOE AREA

(11) *Trail Connection:* **Hoel Pond Beach Path -** *access to a small beach.*

(12) *Trail Connection:* **Hoel Pond Trail -** *this trail leads to a few campsites and a fishing/water access site.*

(13) *Trail Connections:* **Long to Track Carry** *and* **Track Pond Trail.**

(14) *Trail Connection:* **Floodwood to Long Carry Trail -** *this provides access to a water access site at Floodwood Pond.*

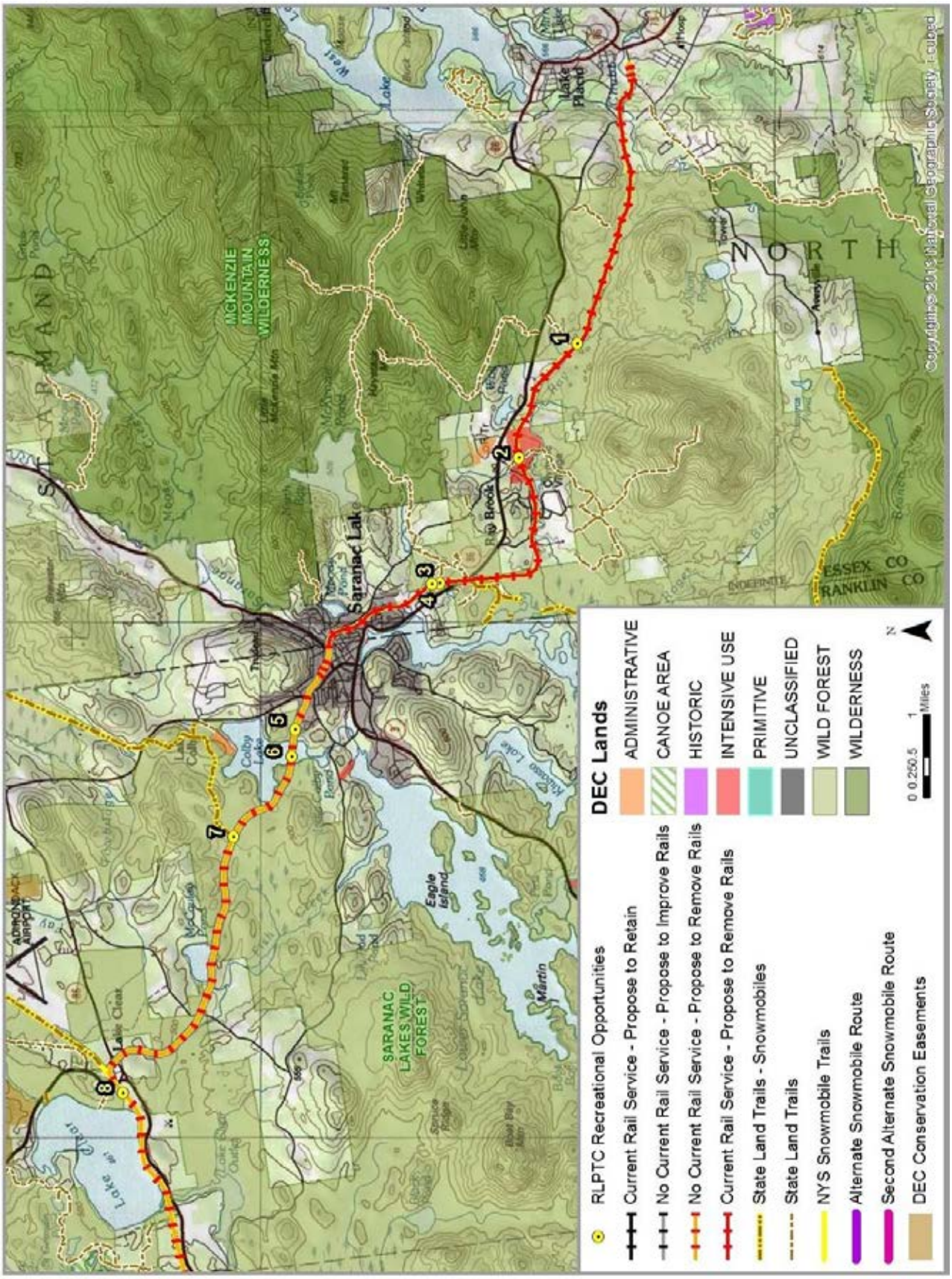
f) Rollins Pond & Fish Creek Campgrounds Area (Recreation Map 2)
SARANAC LAKES WILD FOREST

(15) *Could connect to Corridor, but would need a major bridge built.*

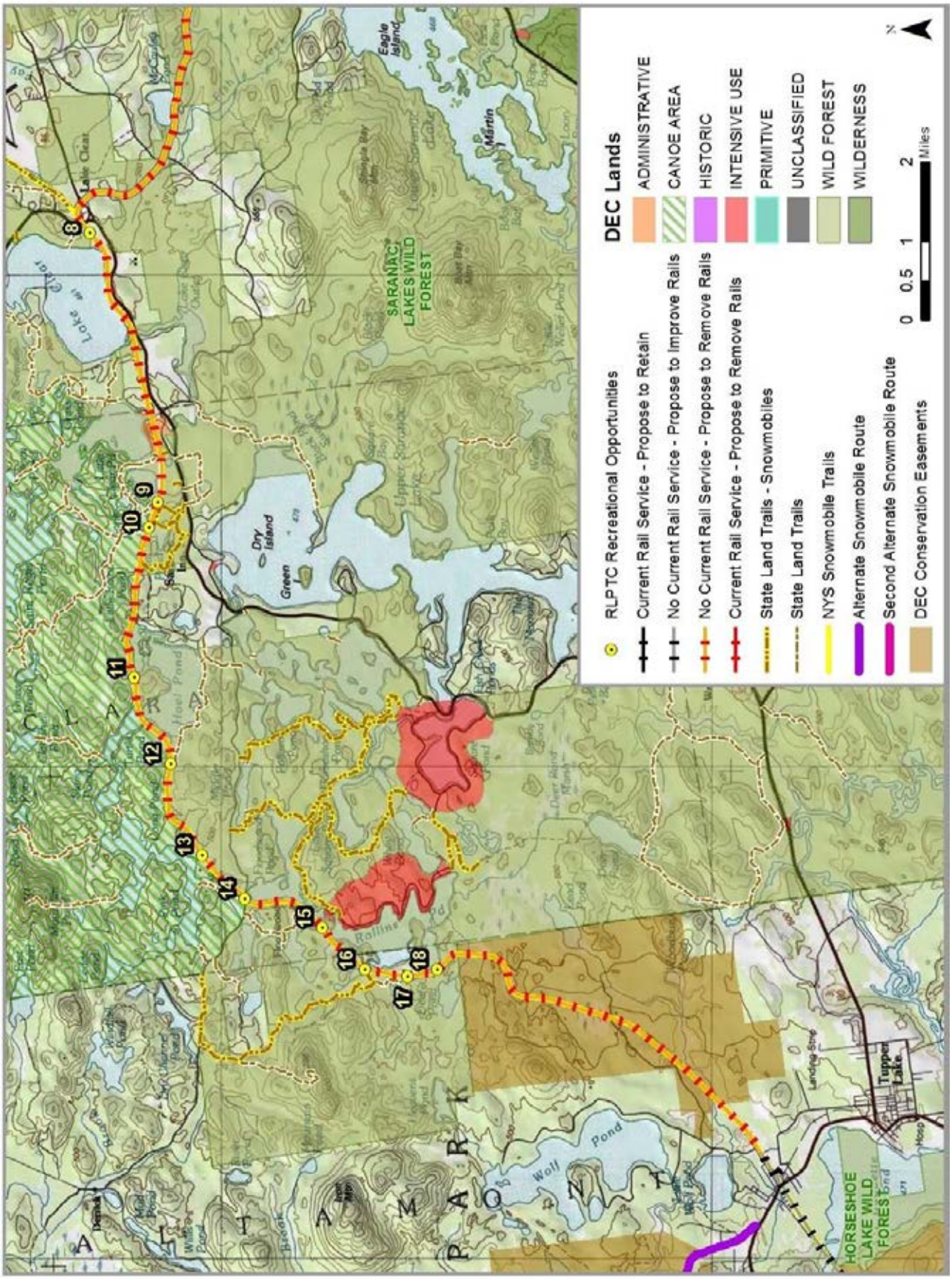
(16) *Trail Connection:* **Floodwood Scout Trail -** *this could be used to reach Floodwood Mountain, but it would be a long hike, about 3.5 miles (one way), from the railbed.*

(17) *Trail Connection:* **Heaven's Pond Trail.**

(18) *Trail Connection:* **Rollins to Deer Pond Canoe Carry.**



Recreation Map #1: Lake Placid to Lake Clear



Recreation Map #2: Lake Clear to Tupper Lake

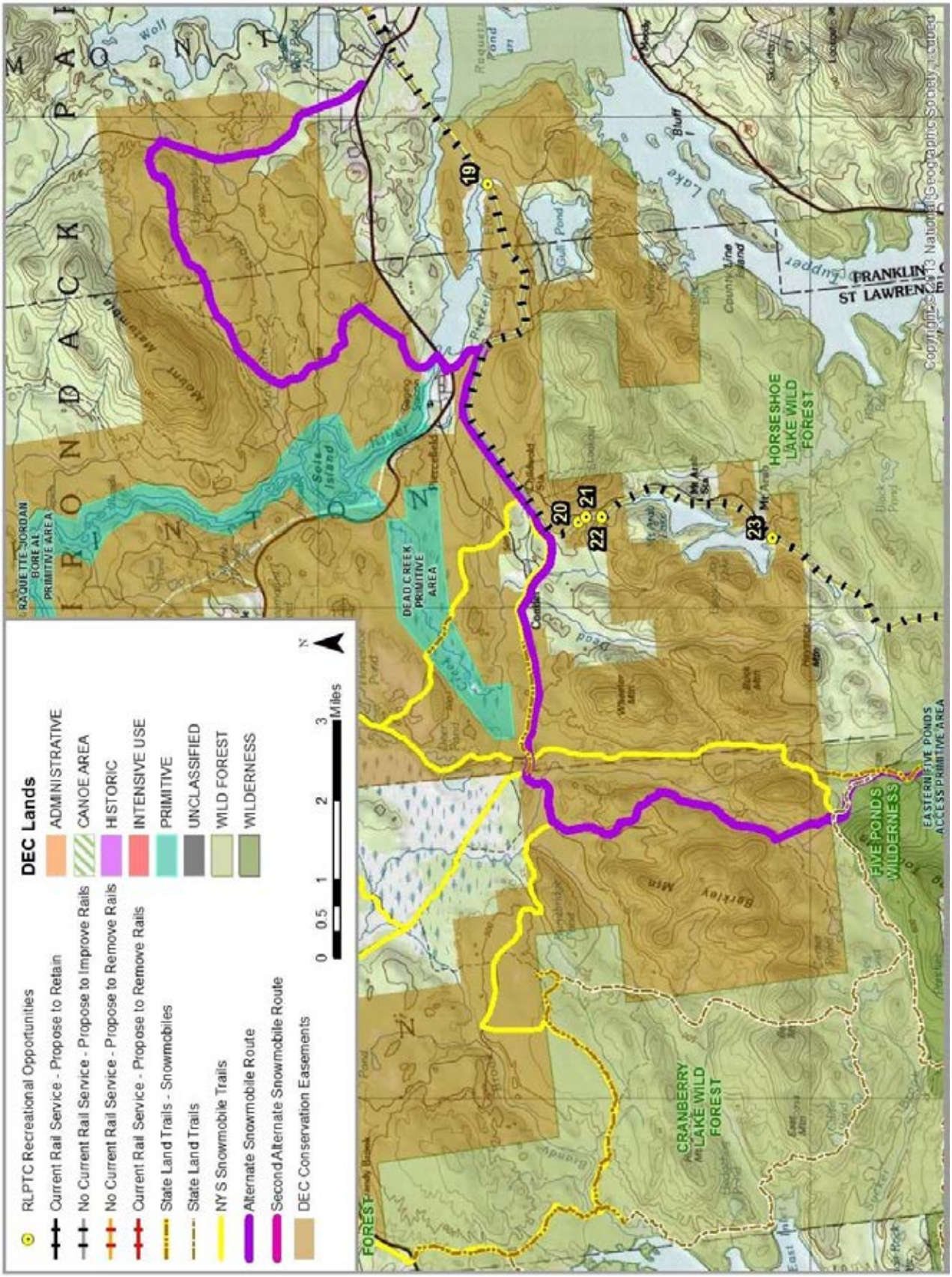
Tupper Lake to Remsen (Corridor Segment 1)

Passenger train service from Remsen to Big Moose will continue and be developed from Big Moose to Tupper Lake. This rail service offers fantastic potential for recreationists to access remote sections of the Forest Preserve via trail connections, station-stops, and potential flag-stops.

Recreation: *Snowmobiling, Fitness/Training, Hiking, Hunting, Fishing, Camping, and Skiing*

g) Piercefield Flow Area (Recreation Map 3)
CONSERVATION EASEMENT – IP PHASE 1A – PIERCEFIELD FLOW
(19) Fishing/Water Access along this bay (there is a lean-to on north side waterfront, on easement).

h) Conifer Area (Recreation Map 3)
CONSERVATION EASEMENT – CONIFER-EMPORIUM
(20) Potential hunting/camping access.
(21) Potential Trail Access to Mt. Arab Mountain Fire Tower.
(22) Potential future mountain bike access/routes (west side of corridor, on easement).
(23) Potential hunting/camping access.



Recreation Map #3: Tupper Lake to Horseshoe Lake

i) Horseshoe Lake Area (Recreation Map 4)

HORSESHOE LAKE WILD FOREST / EASTERN FIVE PONDS ACCESS PRIMITIVE AREA / ROUND LAKE WILDERNESS

(24) Trail Connection: **Otter Brook Trail/Otter Brook Road.**

(25) Potential water access (paddling/fishing) and future potential mountain biking access.

j) Sabattis Area (Recreation Map 4)

ROUND LAKE WILDERNESS / CONSERVATION EASEMENT – LYME EASEMENT B – ROBINWOOD TRACT

(26) Trail Connection: **Sabattis – C7B Snowmobile Trail.**

k) Lake Lila Area (Recreation Map 4)

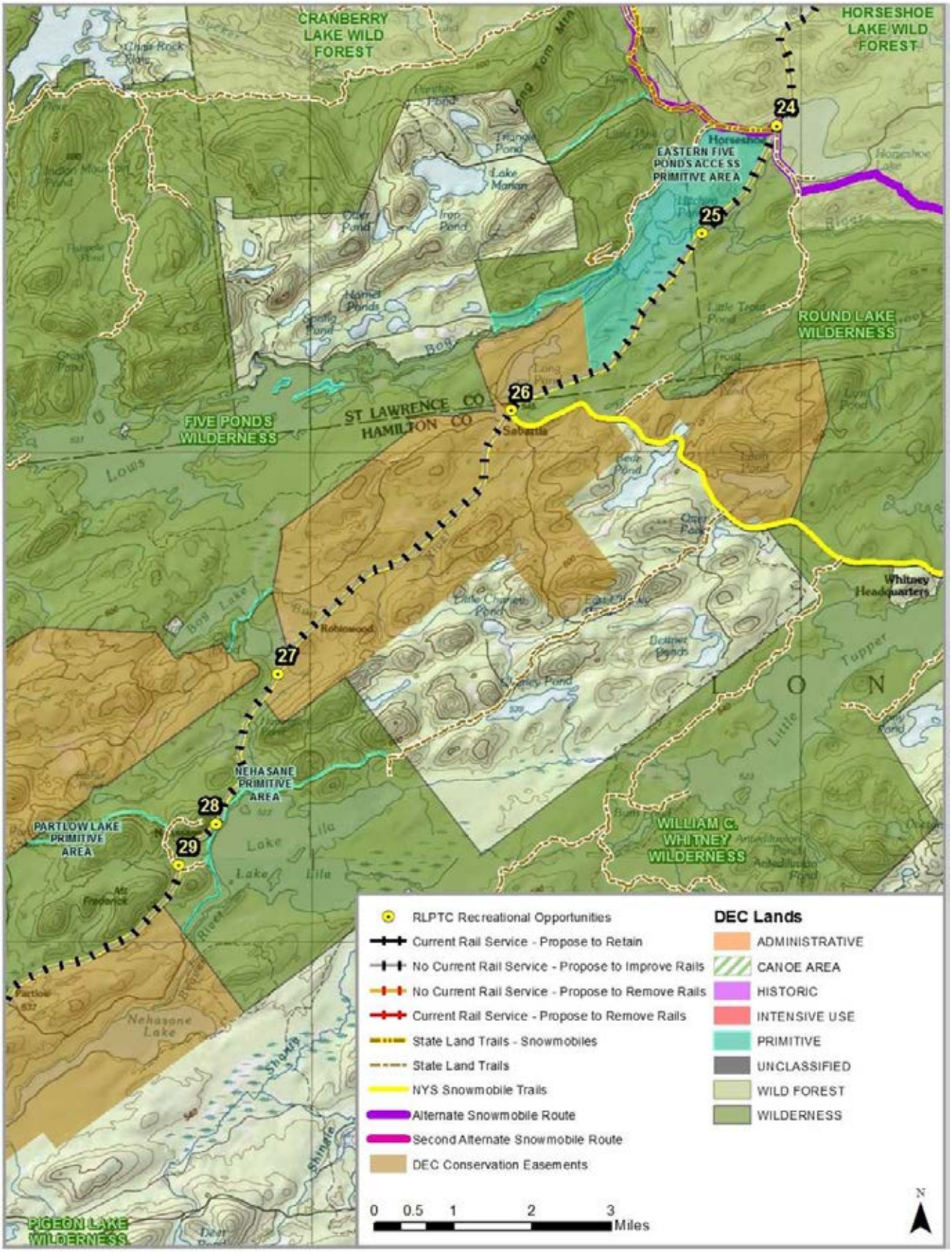
FIVE PONDS WILDERNESS / CONSERVATION EASEMENT – LYME EASEMENT B – ROBINWOOD TRACT

(27) Paddling/Fishing Access - from the Corridor, it is possible to paddle from Harrington Pond, down Harrington Brook and into Lake Lila.

FIVE PONDS WILDERNESS / WILLIAM C. WHITNEY WILDERNESS

(28) Canoe Drop-Off to Lake Lila.

(29) Trail Connection: **Frederica Mountain Trail.**



Recreation Map #4: Horeshoe Lake to Nehasane Station

l) Beaver River Area (Recreation Map 5)
INDEPENDENCE RIVER WILD FOREST

(30) Beaver River Community - Canoe Access to Stillwater Reservoir and Campsites.

(31) Trail Connections: **Beaver River – S86 Snowmobile Trail** *and* **Twitchell Lake Norridge Trail.**

INDEPENDENCE RIVER WILD FOREST / PIGEON LAKES WILDERNESS

(32) Good Access for Hunting and Trapping in this remote area.

m) Big Moose Area (Recreation Map 6)
FULTON CHAIN WILD FOREST

(33) Trail Connections: **Big Moose – C8 Snowmobile Trail** *and* **Safford Pond Trail** *(hiking, fishing) access to Safford Pond area.*

n) Old Forge/Thendara Area (Recreation Map 6)
FULTON CHAIN WILD FOREST

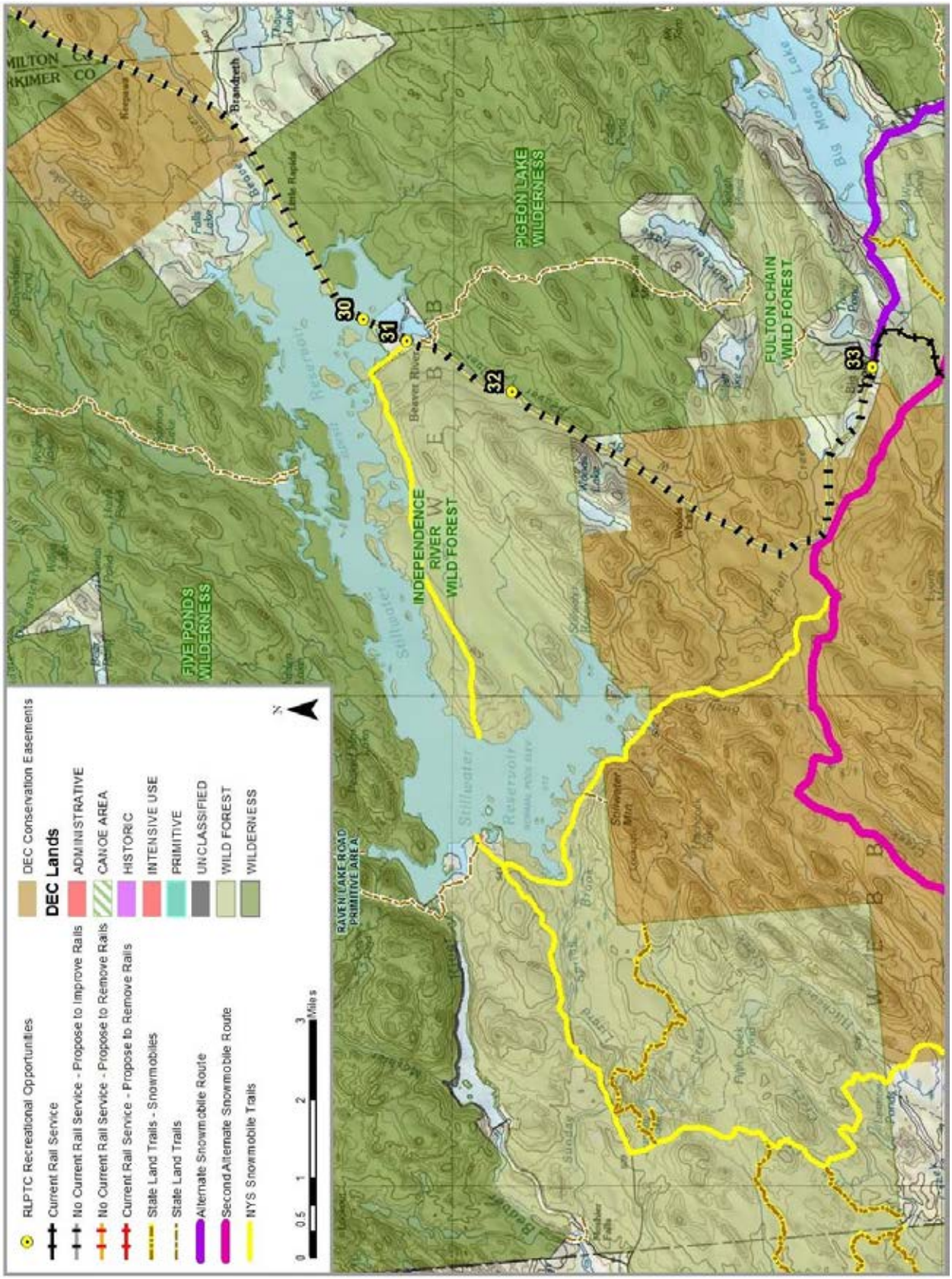
(34) The segment of the North Branch of the Moose River that runs parallel to the Corridor north of Old Forge offers excellent flat-water opportunity for a summer canoe trip. Purchase of the appropriate property (or an easement) for a flag-stop would link the Corridor with the river, perhaps near Moulin Mountain. This, combined with the currently operating train, provides access for canoeing down the North Branch to its intersection with the Middle Branch in Old Forge, then down the Middle Branch to the Thendara Station parking lot. This is an easy trip with enough water for summer paddling, with one portage below the Thendara Golf Course at a rapid which would likely have insufficient water.

HA-DE-RON-DAH WILDERNESS AREA

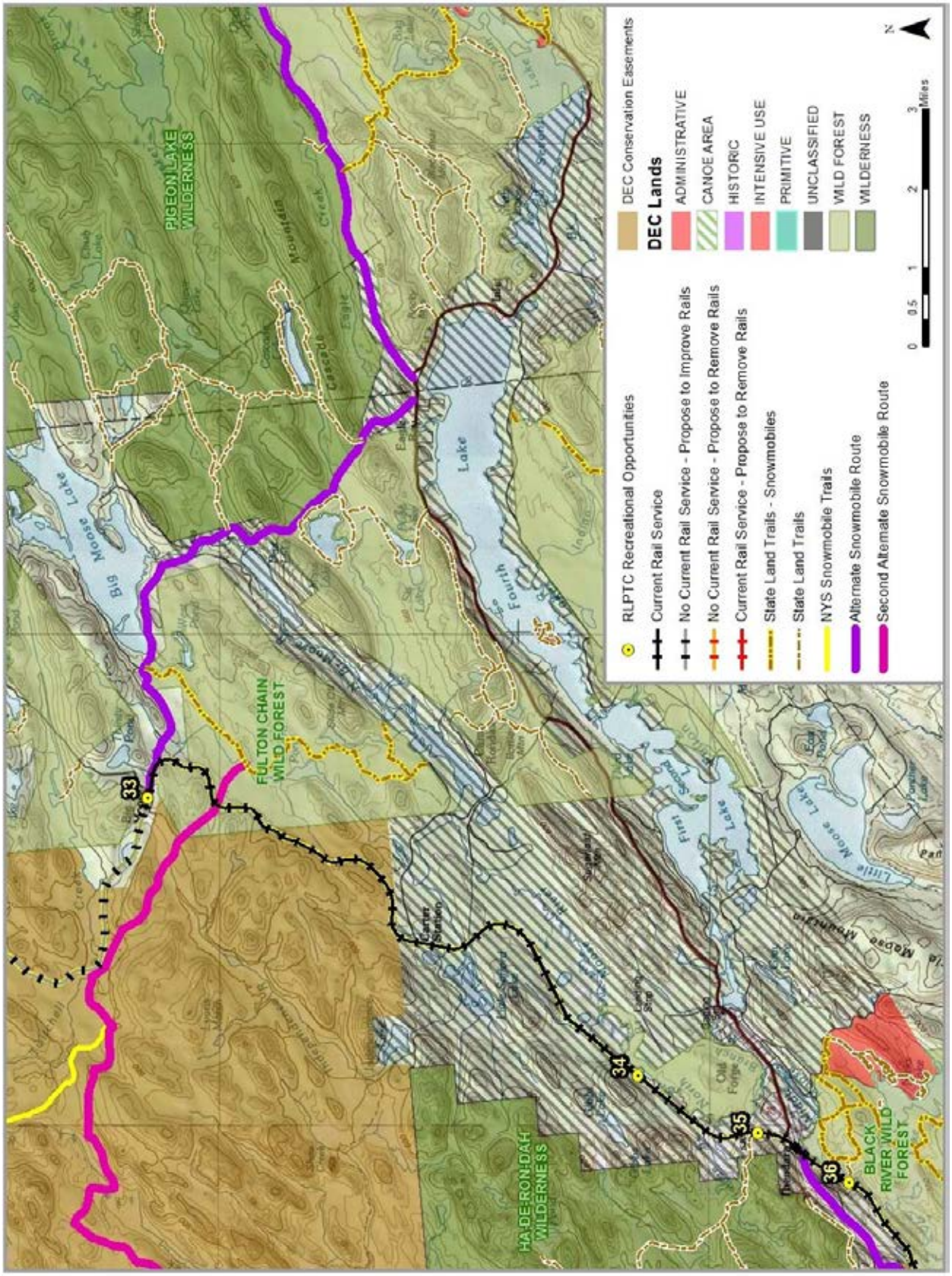
(35) Trail Connection: **Old Road/Eastpond-Lost Creek Trail/ Herreschoff (a.k.a. Tower Road)***. It should also be noted that instead of turning to the left (east) to access the Ha-De-Ron-Dah Wilderness Area, the Town of Webb's snowmobile trail system (which becomes a mountain biking trail network in the summer) can be accessed by proceeding north (straight). See* *http://www.oldforgeny.com/recreation.html*

BLACK RIVER WILD FOREST

(36) Trail Connection: **Lock n Dam Trail***, and dam site canoeing/kayaking, fishing, hunting, and hiking.*



Recreation Map #5: Nehasane Station to Big Moose area



Recreation Map #6: Big Moose area to Old Forge/Thendara

o) Minnehaha Area (Recreation Map 7)
BLACK RIVER WILD FOREST / CONSERVATION EASEMENT – FLATROCK MOUNTAIN

(37) Trail Connection: **Onekio Road** *- Historical site, fishing, hunting, hiking, and potential biking opportunities (on adjacent Flatrock CE).*

(38) Trail Connection: **Big Moose – Flatrock Mountain Snowmobile Trail.**

(39) Currently a popular paddling pick-up site.

p) Nelson Lake Area (Recreation Map 7)
BLACK RIVER WILD FOREST

(40) Trail Connection: **Nelson Lake Road (Unpaved).**

(41) Tracks generally parallel to Moose River along this section of Corridor with the potential for numerous recreational opportunities.

q) McKeever Area (Recreation Map 7)
BLACK RIVER WILD FOREST

(42) Trail Connection: **Wolf Lake Landing Road** *- hiking, biking, close access to the Moose River (fishing, paddling).*

(43) Trail Connection: **John Brown Track Snowmobile Trail.**

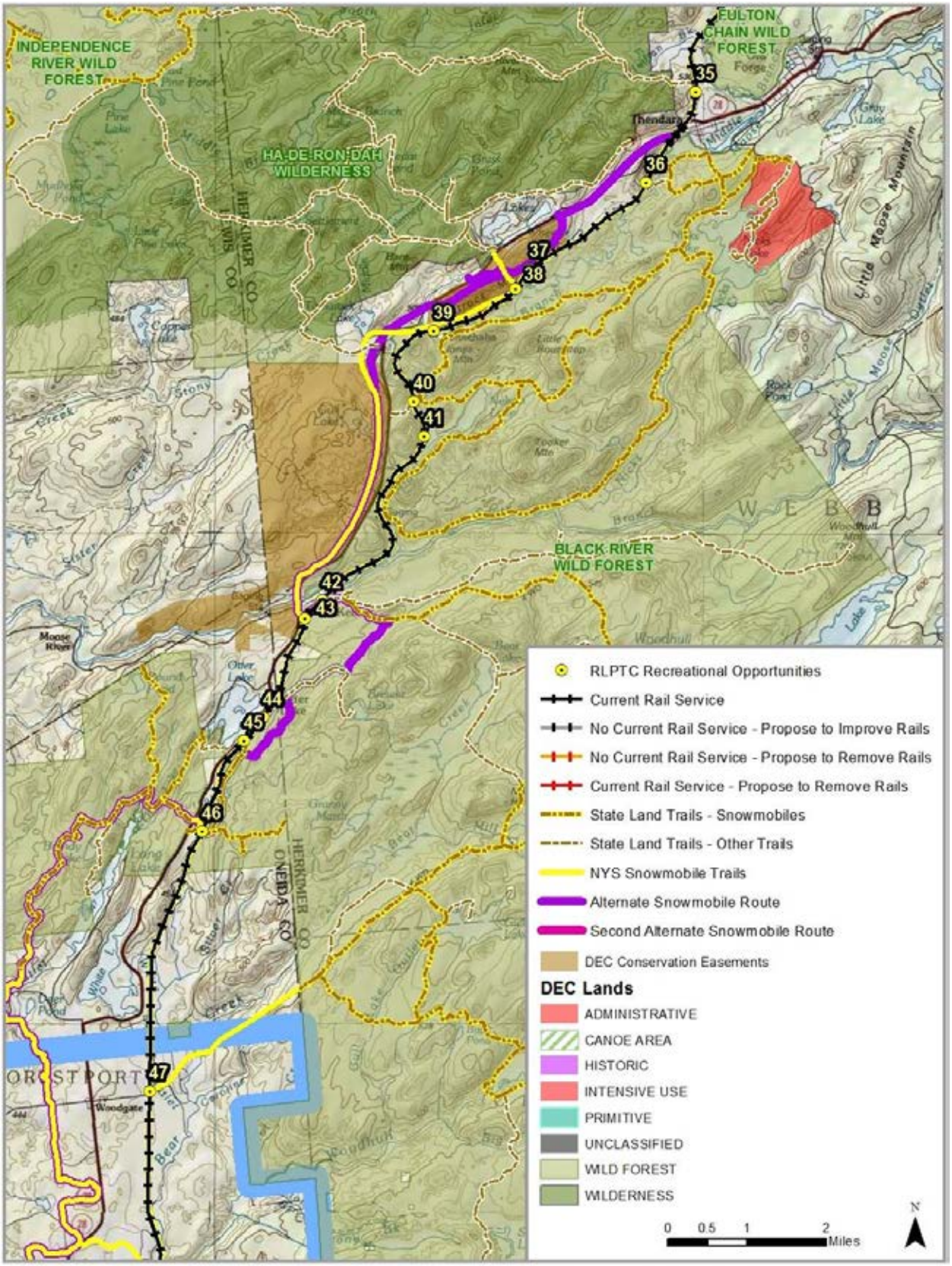
r) Otter Lake Area (Recreation Map 7)
BLACK RIVER WILD FOREST

(44) Trail Connection: **Brewer Lake Trail***- trail to Brewer Lake approximately 2 miles.*

(45) Trail Connection: **Overlook Road.**

(46) *Trail Connection:* **Brandy Lake trailhead** / **Cohen Road** *- access to hiking, camping.*

(47) Trail Connection (outside Adirondack Blue Line): Access to Mill Creek Road (~2 miles away) - hiking, biking, fishing, and camping.



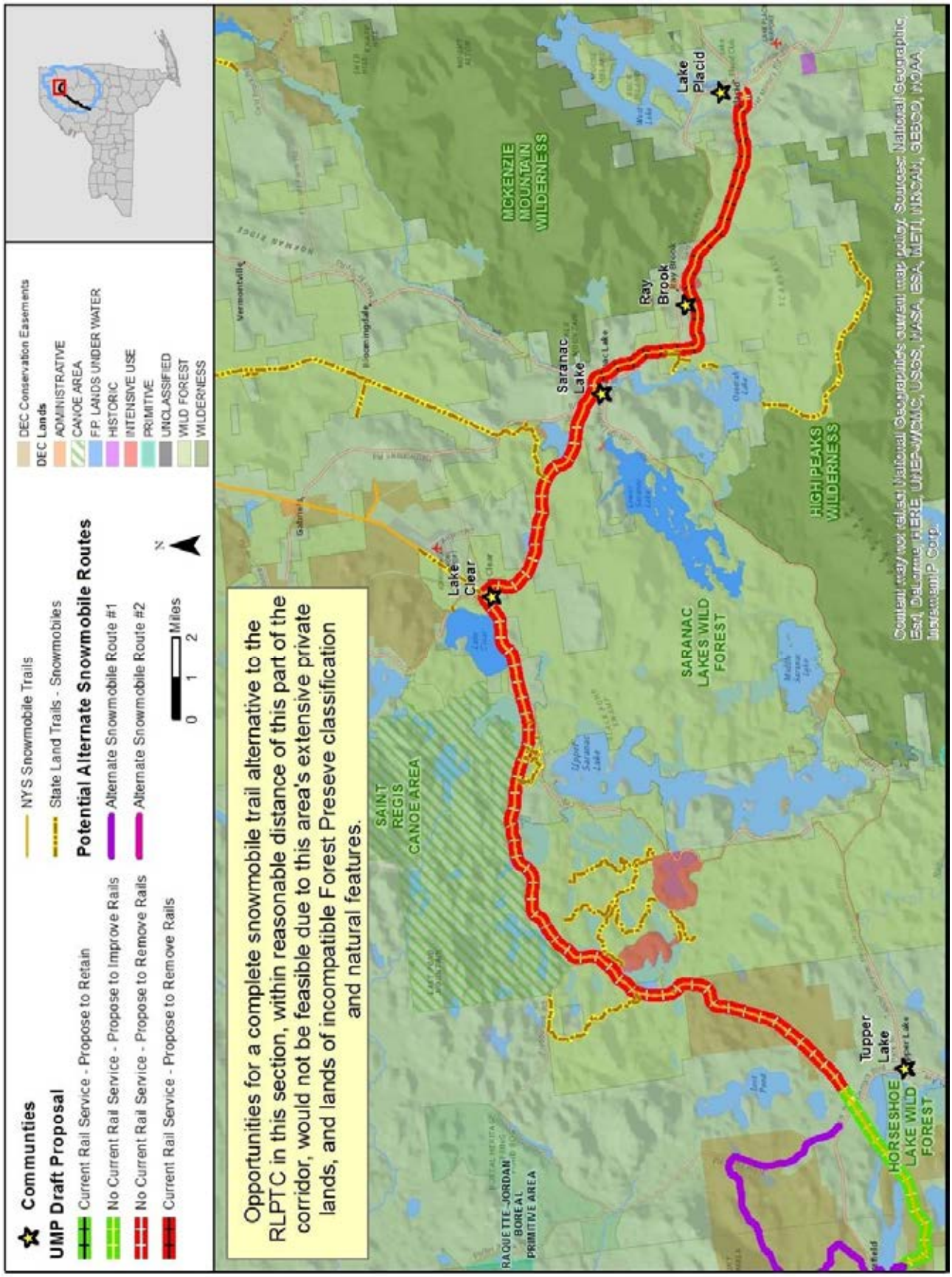
Recreation Map #7: Old Forge/Thendara to outside the Adirondack Blue Line

2. Alternative Snowmobile Routes

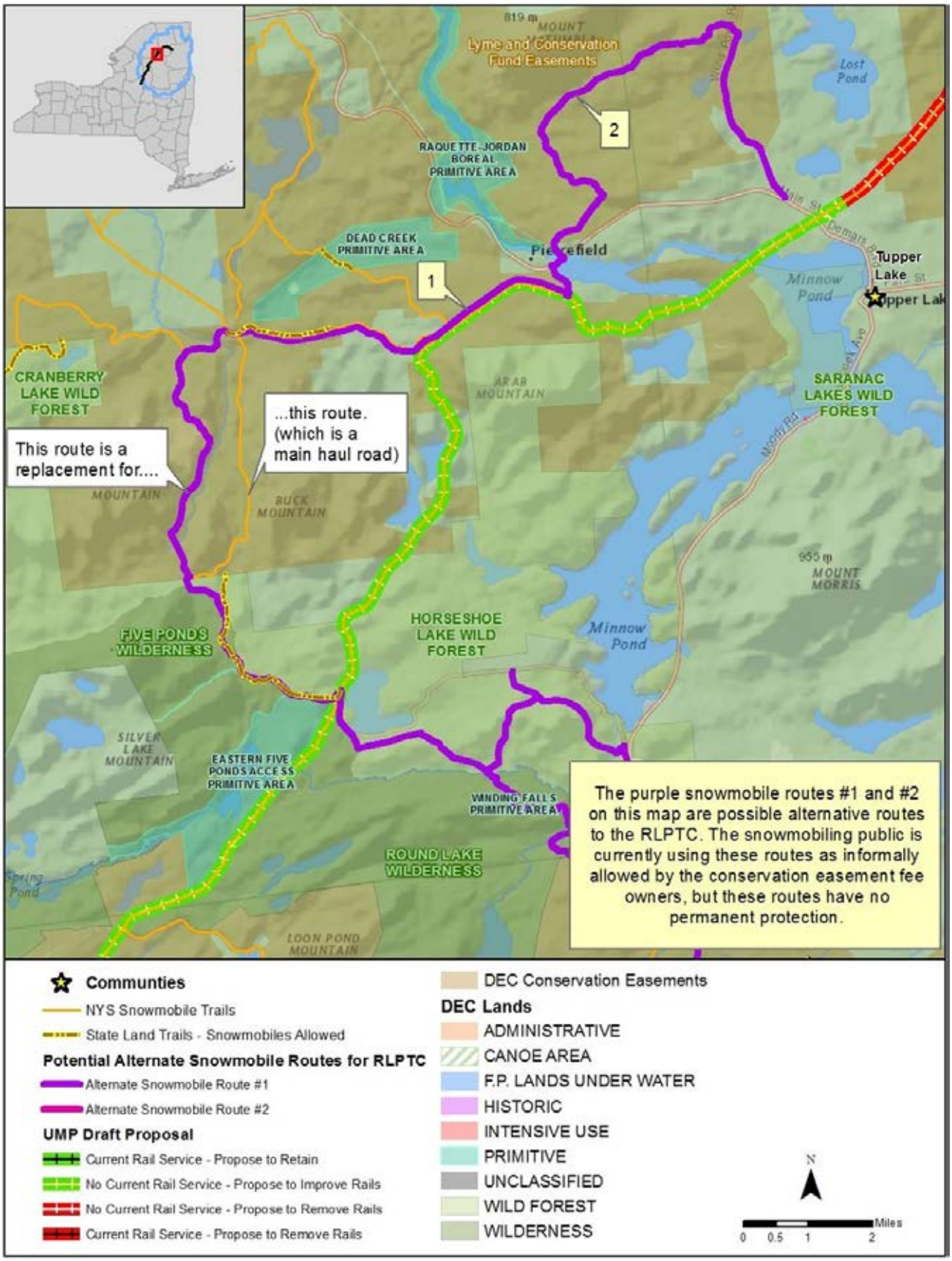
Snowmobile recreation contributes significantly to local economies in the Adirondacks. The Corridor serves as a snowmobile trail, but it is far from ideal for two main reasons. One is that it takes a considerable amount of snow to cover the rails when compared to surrounding areas. Exposed rails can damage snowmobiles and many snowmobilers avoid the corridor for that reason. Secondly, once the rails become exposed, the sun can heat up and melt the snow faster in the immediate proximity of the rails when compared to snow directly adjacent to the rail bed. For these reasons there is generally a shorter snowmobiling season within the Corridor compared to trails in other areas.

Determining snowmobile routes that can serve as alternatives to the Corridor over the geographic extent of the Corridor is a challenge along many stretches. Lake Placid to Tupper Lake has too much private land and incompatible State land classification for providing realistic alternative routes in that area. Along the Corridor south of Tupper Lake, much of the State land is classified as Wilderness, so alternative routes must swing significantly wide of the corridor. These wide swings, however, have the benefit of connecting local communities, and thereby could contribute favorably to the economies of those communities along and outside of the Corridor.

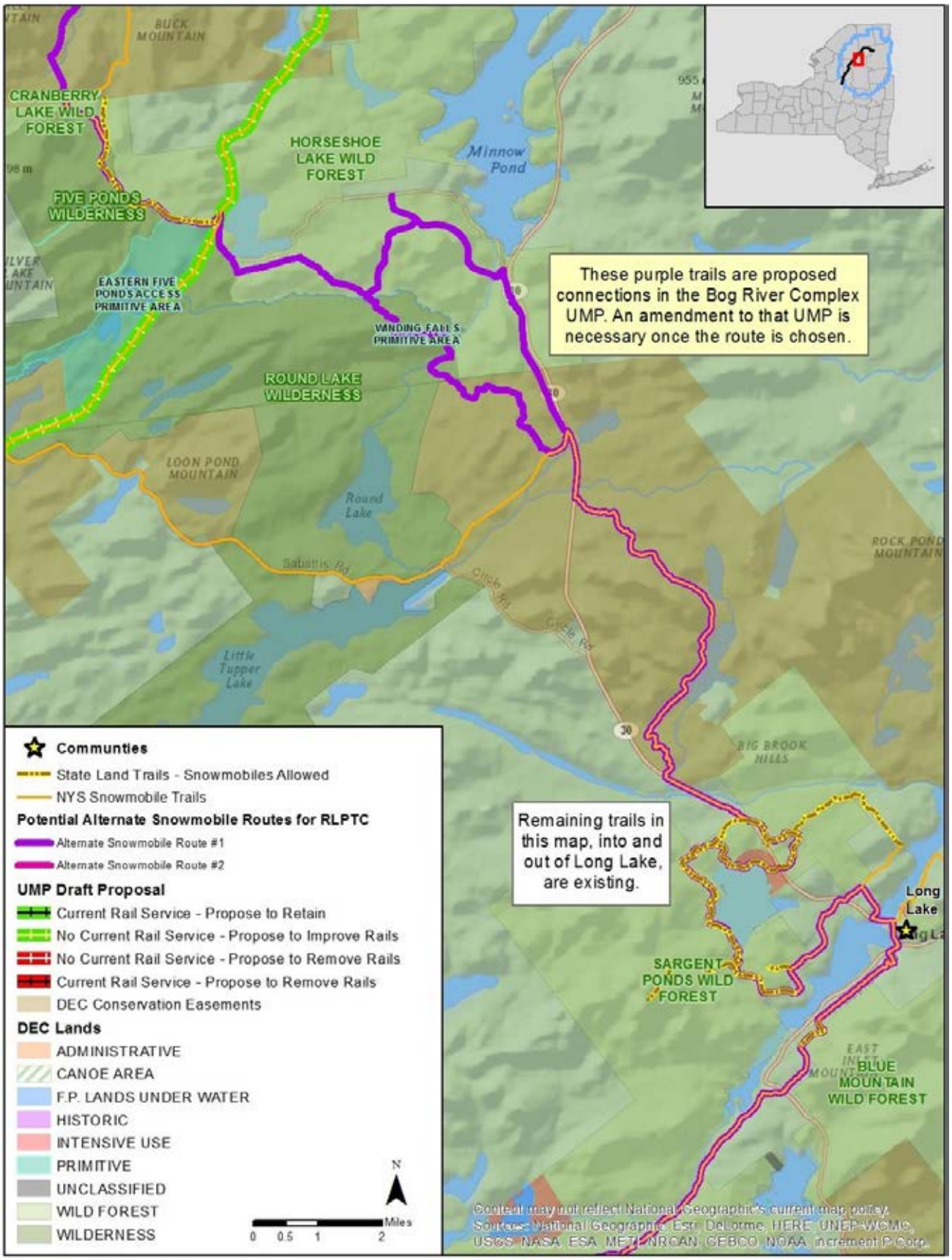
The alternative routes depicted on the following maps either already exist as snowmobile trails, are proposed in Unit Management Plans (UMP's), are approved in UMP's but not yet implemented, or are allowed by the private land owners or Conservation Easement land owners for informal use by the public for snowmobiling. In many cases, UMP's for relevant units would need to be amended, and in the case of Conservation Easements and private lands, permanent protection should be sought.



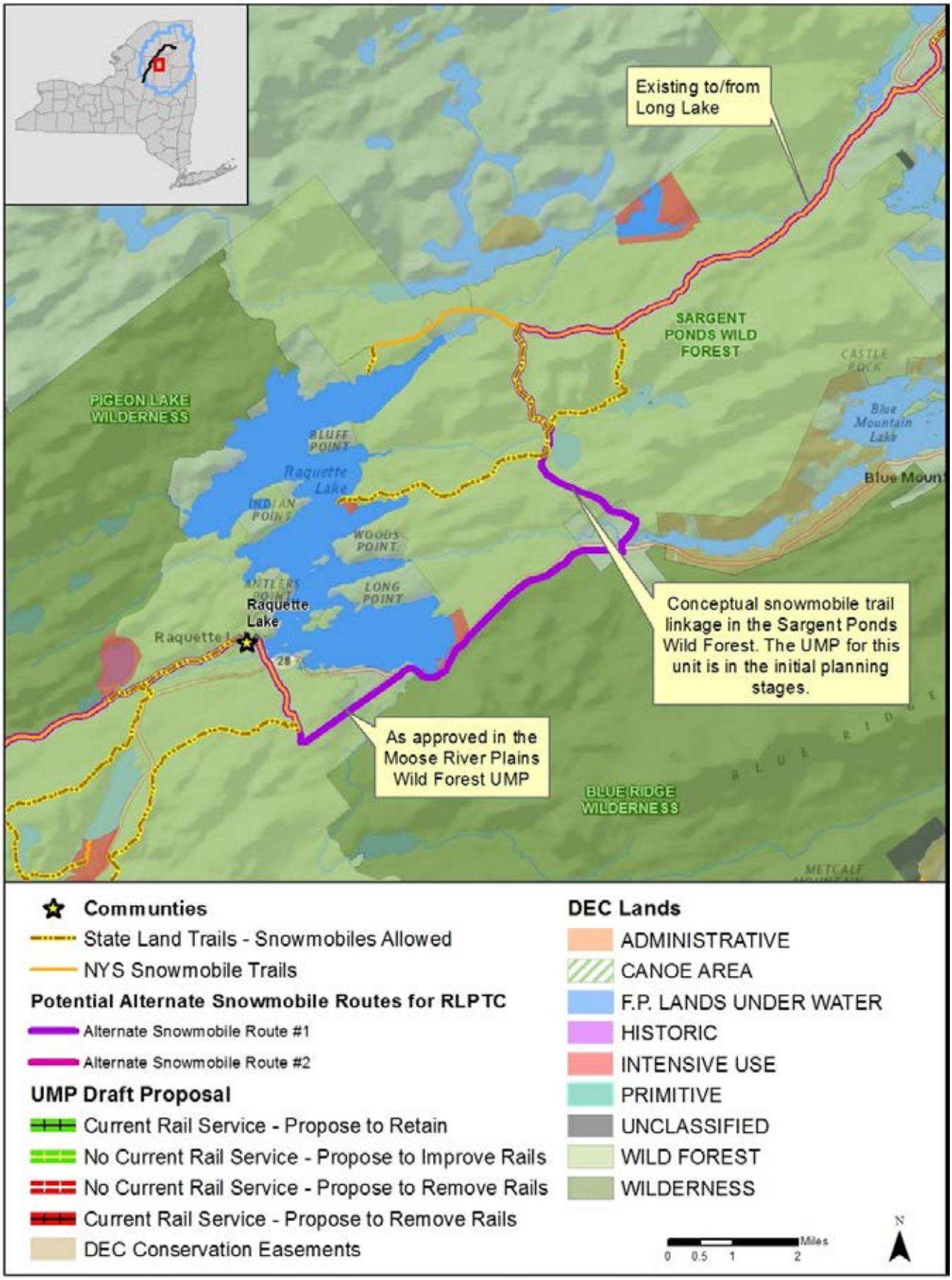
Snowmobile Trail Alternative Map #1: Lake Placid to Tupper Lake



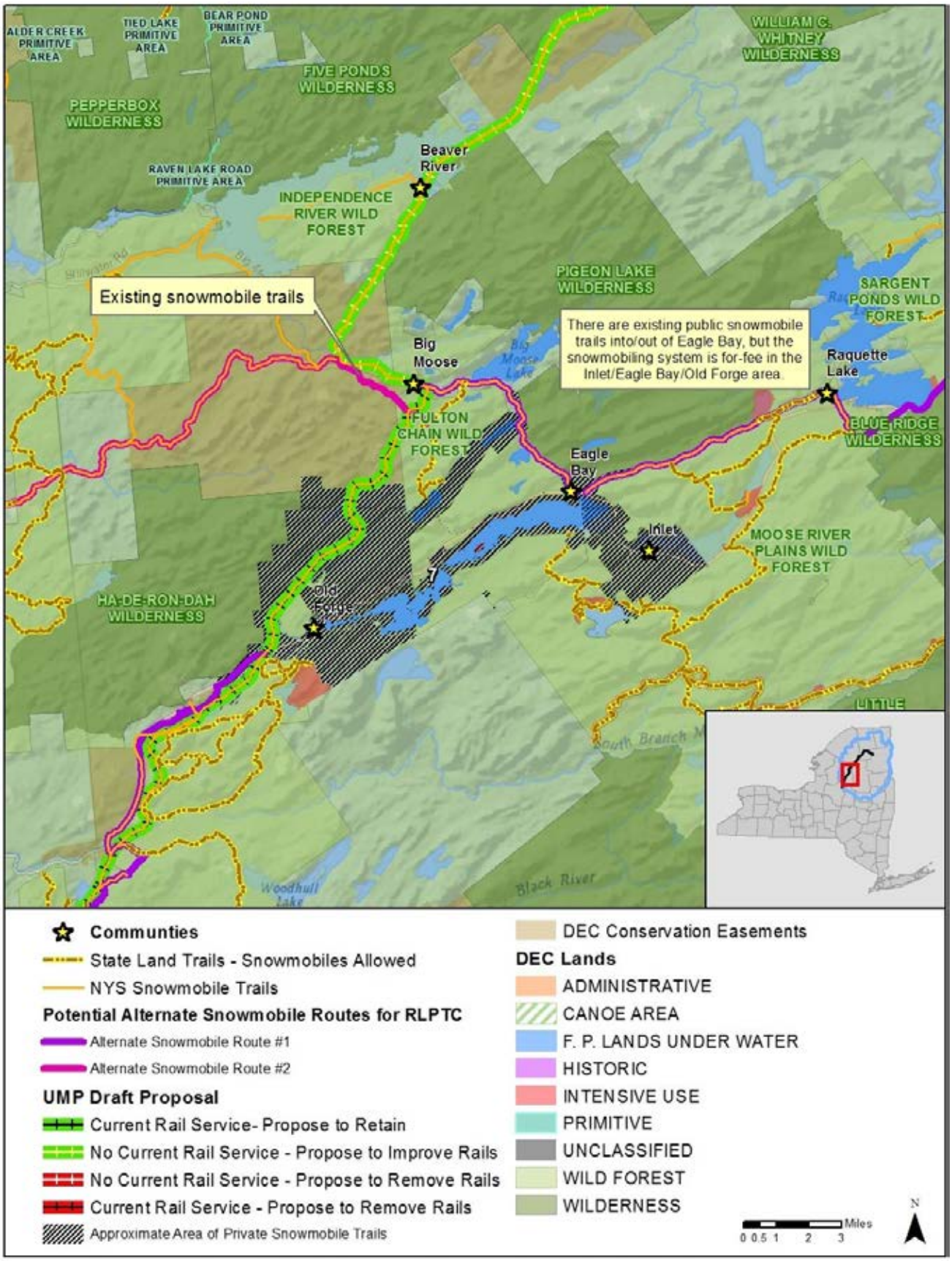
Snowmobile Trail Alternative Map #2: Tupper Lake to Horseshoe Lake area.



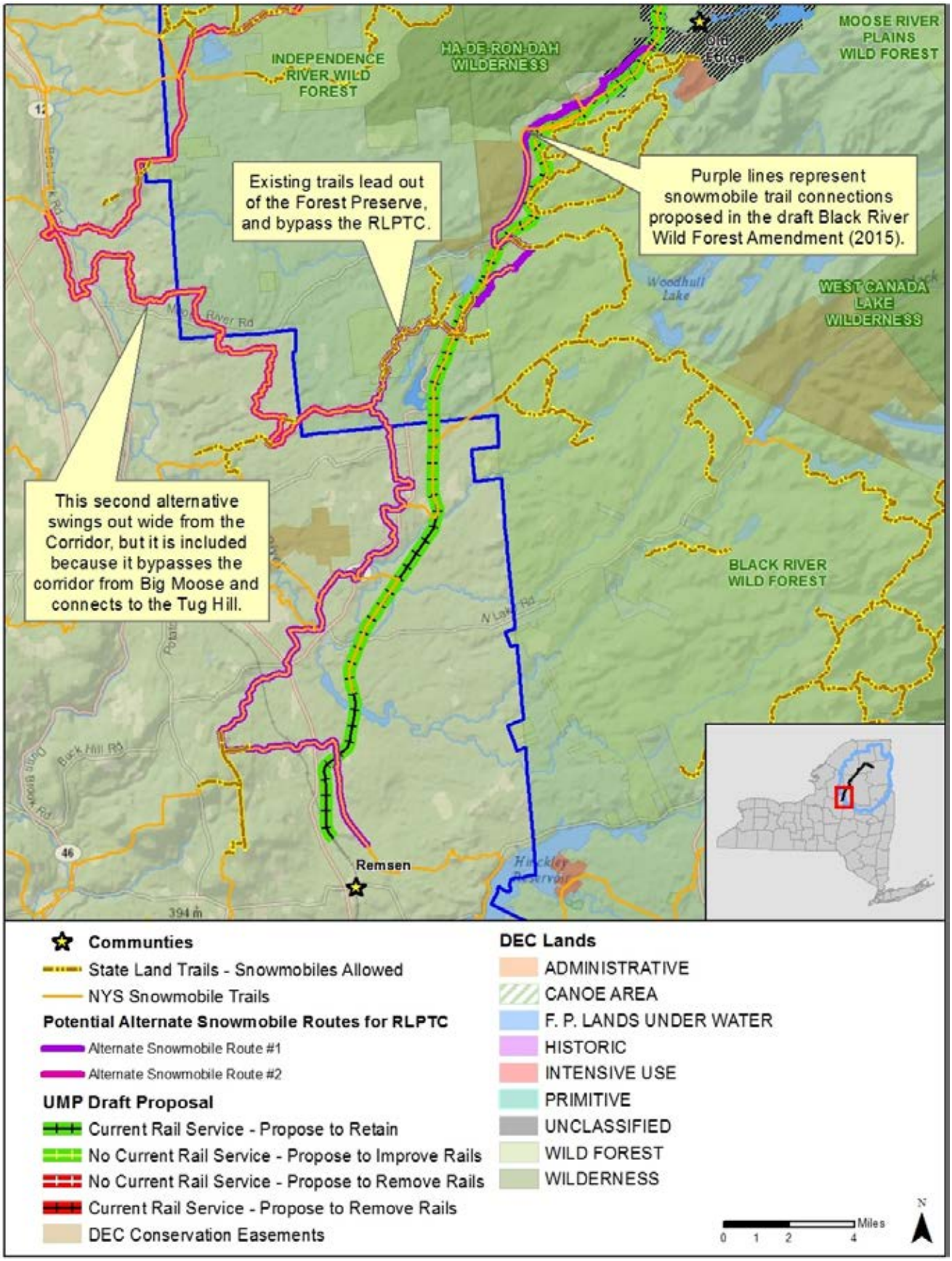
Snowmobile Trail Alternative Map #3: Horseshoe Lake to Long Lake areas.



Snowmobile Trail Alternative Map #4: Long Lake to Raquette Lake areas.



Snowmobile Trail Alternative Map #5: Inlet/Eagle Bay/Old Forge/Big Moose.



Snowmobile Trail Alternative Map #6: Inlet/Eagle Bay/Old Forge/Big Moose to outside the Blue Line.

3. Trackage

For the most part, the railroad infrastructure consists of the earthworks, structures and track that are commonly associated with a railroad. The Corridor already includes a “railroad” that is substantially sound, although extensive repairs are required in a number of locations.

4. Stations

Passenger station buildings and parking infrastructure currently exist at Thendara, Remsen, and Tupper Lake in Segment 1. They are functional and adequate for passenger service between Remsen and Tupper Lake.

Passenger station buildings and parking infrastructure currently exist at Saranac Lake and Lake Placid in Segment 2. With the removal of the track, passenger train service at these stations would cease.

The Village of Saranac Lake recently cancelled their lease of the Saranac Station from DOT and ARPS continues to use the facility under the terms of a separate Use & Occupancy Permit for the building. Upon removal of the tracks, it is assumed that ARPS would vacate the building and DOT and DEC would solicit new tenants.

5. Regional Highways

Rail passenger services must be supported by an adequate system of roadways. Although the establishment of passenger and excursion services on the Corridor could lessen highway use in the region, the reduction would be small. Care would need to be taken to insure the local road system is adequate at station areas.

6. Flag Stops

The establishment of flag stops is a possibility, but this is a complex issue in which the DEC and DOT must explore, discuss and agree on specific locations. Each individual location would have unique facts and circumstances associated with it. The number, location, design, and procedure for use of such “flag stops” at trail crossings would be subject to public input, review and discussion among DOT and DEC, and the rail operator (when selected). The operating railroad’s Special Instructions for each location should be developed between the rail operator and DOT and would provide the train operating personnel with guidance as to speed of approach, distances, signals to stop, etc.

7. Signage

Appropriate signage would enhance user experience and safety on both segments of the Corridor. The APSLMP notes that a comprehensive plan for all signing within travel corridors should be prepared by the APA jointly with DEC and DOT (at minimum). One of the goals of this policy document, as outlined in the APSLMP, should be to provide:

> *"…a comprehensive visitor information program designed to inform the travelling public of the availability of state and private services and facilities, which minimizes the need for the erection of additional signs along travel corridors and ensures compliance with the [APA's] private sign standards."*

This Corridor is unique among travel corridors in the Park, reinforcing the need for DOT and DEC to develop acceptable and appropriate signage in consultation with APA, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and local governments, and consistent with Adirondack-Catskill Sign Law. Moderately sized kiosks and rustic-style signs could be used at trailheads and road-crossings to inform the recreating public about the direction and distance to popular destinations. Small maps may be incorporated as well, as could informative signs with educational narratives highlighting natural, historic, and other unique features along and within the Corridor. Signs would be constructed so that they are in harmony with the character of the Park, and would not be excessive in size or number.

8. Facilities Considerations for Persons with Disabilities

The continuation of excursion passenger rail services between Remsen and Big Moose and the extension of excursion and passenger rail services to Tupper Lake offers a means to afford persons of all ages and abilities a unique opportunity to travel through the remote interior of the Adirondack Park. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 would be used as a guide in insuring that trains and station facilities are accessible.

The conversion of the Lake Placid to Tupper Lake section of the Corridor to a recreational trail would involve assessing opportunities for access onto and along the trail for persons of all ages and abilities. All trails and facilities constructed on the corridor would comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The 2013 Outdoor Developed Areas Accessibility Guidelines, issued by the U.S. Access Board, would be used to provide the technical standards for trail and trail facility accessibility.

G. PUBLIC USE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROLS

1. Trespass

Although experience with other recreational trails shows that a travel corridor with extensive public use deters illegal trespasses, education of the user public about the need to respect the rights of private landowners is important to prevent trespass on private land as much as possible. Gates would be placed at un-gated locations with the potential for illegal access. As with hiking trails on other State land, signs would be posted at all junctures and private roads and trails, indicating the adjacent property is private and access is not permitted.

It is the intent of the State to monitor user counts and trespass. The issuance of an annual Corridor snowmobile permit, will continue. If documented misuse becomes substantial and illegal intrusion onto adjacent land is verified, the permit would be revoked.

It is necessary to provide a mechanism of law enforcement for those law enforcement personnel involved with this unique linear parcel of State land, especially when it is not adjacent to existing Forest Preserve land. In order to promote more effective enforcement and maintenance, the State would seek the active participation of local governments and snowmobile clubs. As has been noted, ATV use is prohibited throughout the entire Corridor.

2. Controlled Access to the Forest Preserve

It is readily apparent that recreational opportunities abound along the Corridor. It is unusual that concern for State land over-use can be alleviated and that perceived impacts can be mitigated as in the scenario of public recreational access by train. The ease of controlled access offered by recreationists traveling to the backcountry by rail is an enviable land management advantage. Maximum visitor limits to any given area accessible from the Corridor can be easily set and controlled by ticket sales and destination regulation through determinations made in the unit management planning process. This would prevent environmental degradation as well as provide for a quality Forest Preserve experience, especially in wilderness situations.

It is also anticipated that the public would stay on the trail along the Lake Placid to Tupper Lake segment. Experience with other trail systems has demonstrated this. Opportunities to enter neighboring Forest Preserve areas would be appropriately signed and trailheads at these locations would be established.

3. Rail/Trail Safety

The dangers posed by railroads to pedestrians and motorists are well known. While there are a number of places across the country where trails share rights-of-way with operating railroads, such partnerships have succeeded because various measures have been taken to protect trail users. On the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor, safety considerations would play a major part in the process of determining what segments are suitable for construction of connections to recreational trails.

Even though rail traffic may be limited during the period of initial rail development on the Corridor between Remsen and Tupper Lake (Segment 1), rail and trail uses would not be allowed to occupy the rail bed concurrently. Physical dangers exist on the rail bed even when trains are not running. Bridges unprotected by deck planking or safety rails would be off limits. Such restrictions are imposed with the safety of the public in mind.

On Corridor Segment 1 where connections to recreational trails would be constructed, they would be developed in such a way as to emphasize the separation of rail and trail. Where physical barriers would be necessary to prevent trail users from entering the active track area, fences would be erected and appropriate warning signs would be posted. The design of any such fence would consider the Adirondack Park setting and avoid introduction of a hazard to snowmobile users.

4. Snowmobile Use within Corridor Segment 2

Snowmobiling within Segment 2 of the Corridor leads riders through communities that include some densely populated neighborhoods. Common-sense measures would be implemented to avoid conflicts with neighbors. These include limiting the time of day-use of the Corridor within Segment 2 to the hours of 7 AM through 10 PM and a 35 mile-per-hour speed limit within areas of Segment 2 where riders traverse through populated areas.

5. Shared Use of the trail within Corridor Segment 2

To accommodate events hosted by the Olympic Regional Development Authority, including cross-country skiing races and biathlons, areas within Segment 2 of the Corridor may be closed to other recreation activities during and immediately prior to race events to make these events possible.

H. FISH AND WILDLIFE

1. Fisheries Management

From a fisheries perspective, the primary benefit of opening and maintaining the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor to public use would be to provide access to the remote waters in Forest Preserve units adjacent to the line.

Supplemental inventory data and recommended fisheries management can be found in unit management plans for adjacent Forest Preserve units.

2. Wildlife Management

The habitat on and near the Corridor will always be conducive to beaver occupancy. Although population densities in this corridor may vary, occasional problems with beavers must be expected. At the same time, the presence of beavers at some locations may be tolerated.

Based on the assumption that preservation of the existing rail bed is basic and desirable, it is clear that washouts must be prevented. In order to accomplish this objective, culverts must remain open to allow the passage of water. Upstream and downstream impoundments must be monitored and removed as necessary to prevent washouts of culverts and embankments.

This is a task in itself because many of the culverts are too small to accommodate snow melt and torrential spring through autumn rainfalls. The situation is aggravated with the accumulation of fallen leaves, sticks, branches and trees in culvert passageways.

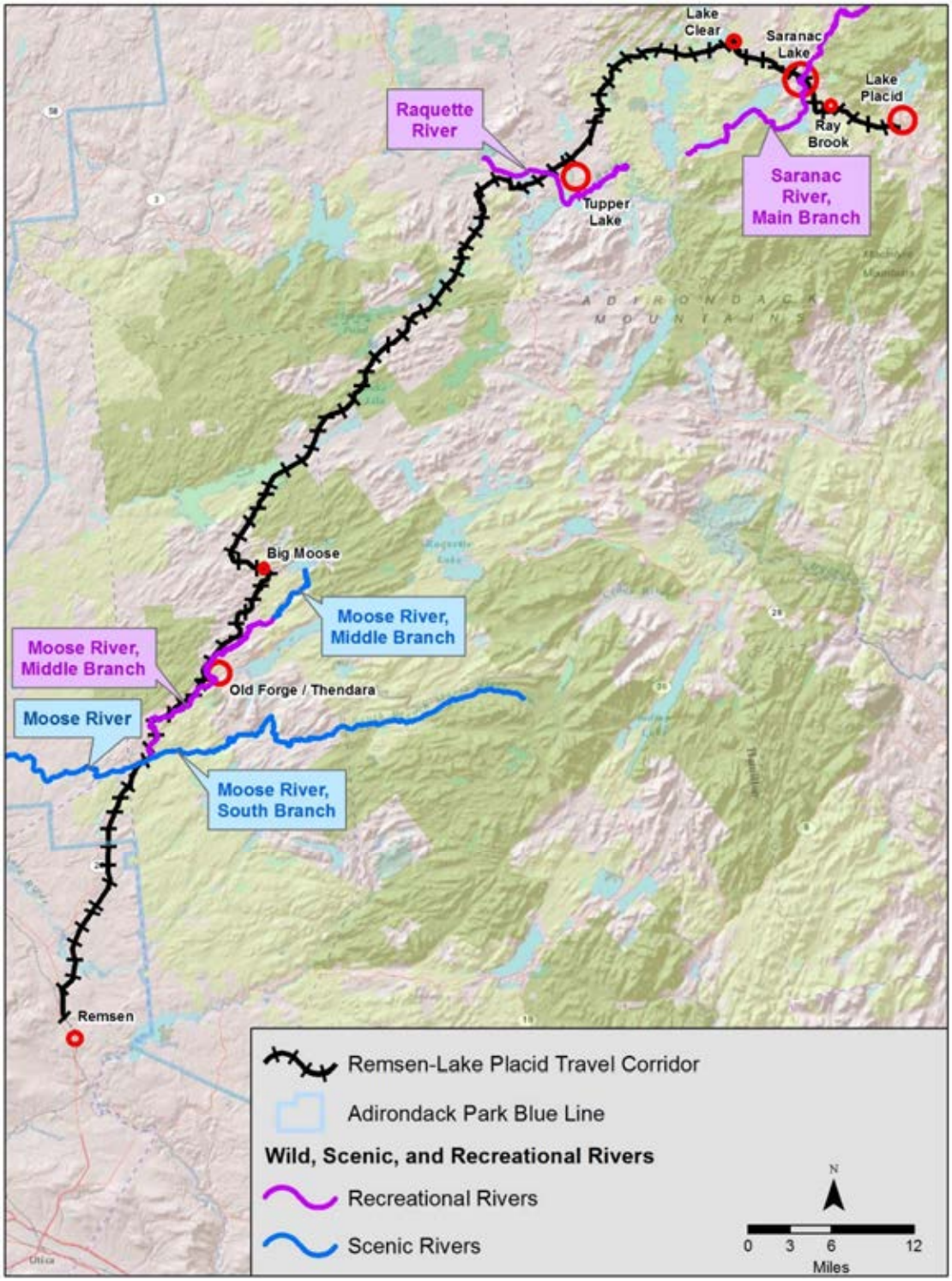
Preventing beaver problems from occurring must be an integral part of managing beavers along the line. Control of beavers in Segment 1 would be a track and structure maintenance issue under control of the rail developer. DEC would provide the rail developer with the necessary permits and other authority to either trap or kill beavers which threaten the stability of the railroad roadbed, bridges, culverts or other drainage structures. Control of beavers in Segment 2 would be a maintenance issue under control of the DEC or the trail sponsor. DEC would undertake itself, or provide the necessary permits or other authority, to trap or kill beavers which threaten the stability of the trail roadbed, bridges, culverts or other drainage structures.

It is noted that permission from private landowners to implement any control technique on their land would be required.

I. WILD, SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RIVERS

The classifications of those rivers adjacent to the Corridor under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act (Article 15, Title 27 of the Environmental Conservation Law) are listed in Appendix 11). Guidelines for the various river classifications are specified in the Adirondack Park State Land Management Plan.

As shown in the map below, there are five named river sections that intersect the Corridor that are classified under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act. Three of the rivers are classified as Recreational: the Main Branch of the Saranac River, the Main Branch of the Raquette River, and the Middle Branch of the Moose River (which is classified as Scenic farther upriver of the Corridor). Two of these river sections are classified as Scenic: the South Branch of the Moose River, and the main stem of the Moose River.


Lake Clear
Saranac Lake
Lake Placid
Ray Brook
Raquette River
Tupper Lake
Saranac River, Main Branch
ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS
Big Moose
Moose River, Middle Branch
Moose River, Middle Branch
Old Forge / Thendara
Moose River
Moose River, South Branch
Remsen
Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor
Adirondack Park Blue Line
Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers
Recreational Rivers
Scenic Rivers
N
0 3 6 12
Miles

J. ADMINISTRATION

The existing DOT/DEC planning team would continue to serve as the State representatives responsible for the continuing administration of the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor.

K. FOREST PRESERVE INTERPRETATION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Corridor has the potential of being an excellent aid to education about the environment, history and social value of the Adirondack Park. Signage and kiosks along the recreational trail between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake can provide information about the value of the Forest Preserve to the people of the State of New York.

L. LAND ACQUISITION

Recreation-oriented public use of certain areas of the Corridor may be enhanced by the acquisition of sufficient adjacent acreage to allow “connecting trail use” in Segment 1 concurrently with the running of trains. Any properties available for sale that would improve access to the Corridor for specific purposes, or which would enhance the Corridor’s recreational potential, should be acquired expeditiously as funds allow, and consistent with the State Open Space Conservation Plan.

M. ADIRONDACK PARK STATE LAND MASTER PLAN (APSLMP)

The absence of rail uses from the Tupper Lake to Lake Placid segment of the Corridor would increase its value as a long-distance snowmobile, bicycle, and foot trail. Because a multi-use recreational trail is important to the North Country’s tourism and economics, it is not desirable to allow the Corridor to revert to the classification of adjacent Forest Preserve units. There is a need to preserve the possibility of reactivating it for rail purposes should the need arise at some time in the future. Thus, the existing classification of the Corridor as a “Travel Corridor” by the APSLMP will be retained, and the management guidelines for this classification will apply.

VI. Update - Inventory of Existing Natural Resources

With regard to the inventory of natural and cultural resources along the proposed segments that make up the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor, the 1996 UMP/FEIS provides a thorough discussion of the physical, biological, man-made facilities, land use, economic profiles, cultural resources and community character that occur along the 119-mile Corridor (refer to 1996 UMP/FEIS Section VI and Appendices 1, 2, 6 10, 11, 12, 13, 24 and 27). The following information on natural resources, including wildlife and visual character of the Corridor supplements the 1996 UMP/FEIS.

Information that has been developed since the 1996 UMP/FEIS was issued includes the April 1, 2015 listing of the northern long-eared bat as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is noted that the nearest proposed improvement to a known bat hibernaculum is at least more than twenty miles away from the Corridor. The following is an update on bat species and their status in New York.

Cave Bats
All six species of New York's cave bats spend the winter hibernating in caves and mines where they live off stored fat reserves. However, during the summer they live in a variety of places, including bridges, buildings, rock crevices, beneath loose bark, or in cracks or crevices in trees. Cave bats are identified by the lack of fur on their tail membranes and their rather plain brownish coloring. Indiana bats are more greyish and Pipistrelle bats can be nearly reddish yellow. Cave bats in New York have been devastated by White Nose Syndrome.
Northern long-eared Bat *(Myotis septentrionalis)*

- Federally threatened (4d)
- Once widely distributed in NY
- Population has declined 98-99% because of White Nose Syndrome (WNS)

Little Brown Bat *(Myotis lucifugus)*
- Severely affected by WNS
- Less than 10% of the population from pre-WNS time is left

Indiana Bat *(Myotis sodalist)*
- Federally endangered
- State of NY endangered
- Severely affected by WNS with less than 10% of the population left in NY

Eastern Pipistrelle (*Perimyotis subflavus)*
- Population has declined by 98-99% in New York due to WNS

- Potential to be listed as threatened or endangered in NYS

Small-footed Bat (*Myotis leibii)*

- Was proposed to be listed by USFWS as either threatened or endangered but listing was determined to be not warranted
- New York State population has not declined like it has in other northeastern states
- Therefore, New York is the only state in the Northeast not to list this species

Big Brown Bat *(Eptesicus fuscus)*

- Largest and now the most common cave bat in NY
- Rarely show signs of WNS
- Increasing population trend

Tree Bats

As the name suggests, tree bats live year round in trees. They are more colorful than the generally brown cave bats, and red bats and hoary bats have distinct dark and tan wing membranes. Tree bats have fully furred tail membranes which they can curl up around their bodies like a blanket. Because tree bats do not typically enter caves or mines or form large colonies, these species are harder to study. It is known that red bats and hoary bats roost alone from branches, hiding among leaves, and silver-haired bats form small colonies and use crevices and hollows in trees. While most cave bats have one young per year, hoary bats and silver-haired bats typically have two; red bats as many as three or four. All three species fly south in winter to where warmer temperatures make finding a meal more reliable. Tree, or migratory, bats don't seem to be affected by WNS. DEC has seen no declines in these species over the last four years of monitoring.

Red Bat *(Lasiurus borealis)*

- Uncommon in New York
- More common in warmer southern states

Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus)*

- Uncommon in New York
- Most abundant in Adirondacks

Silver-haired Bat *(Lasyionicterius noctivagans)*

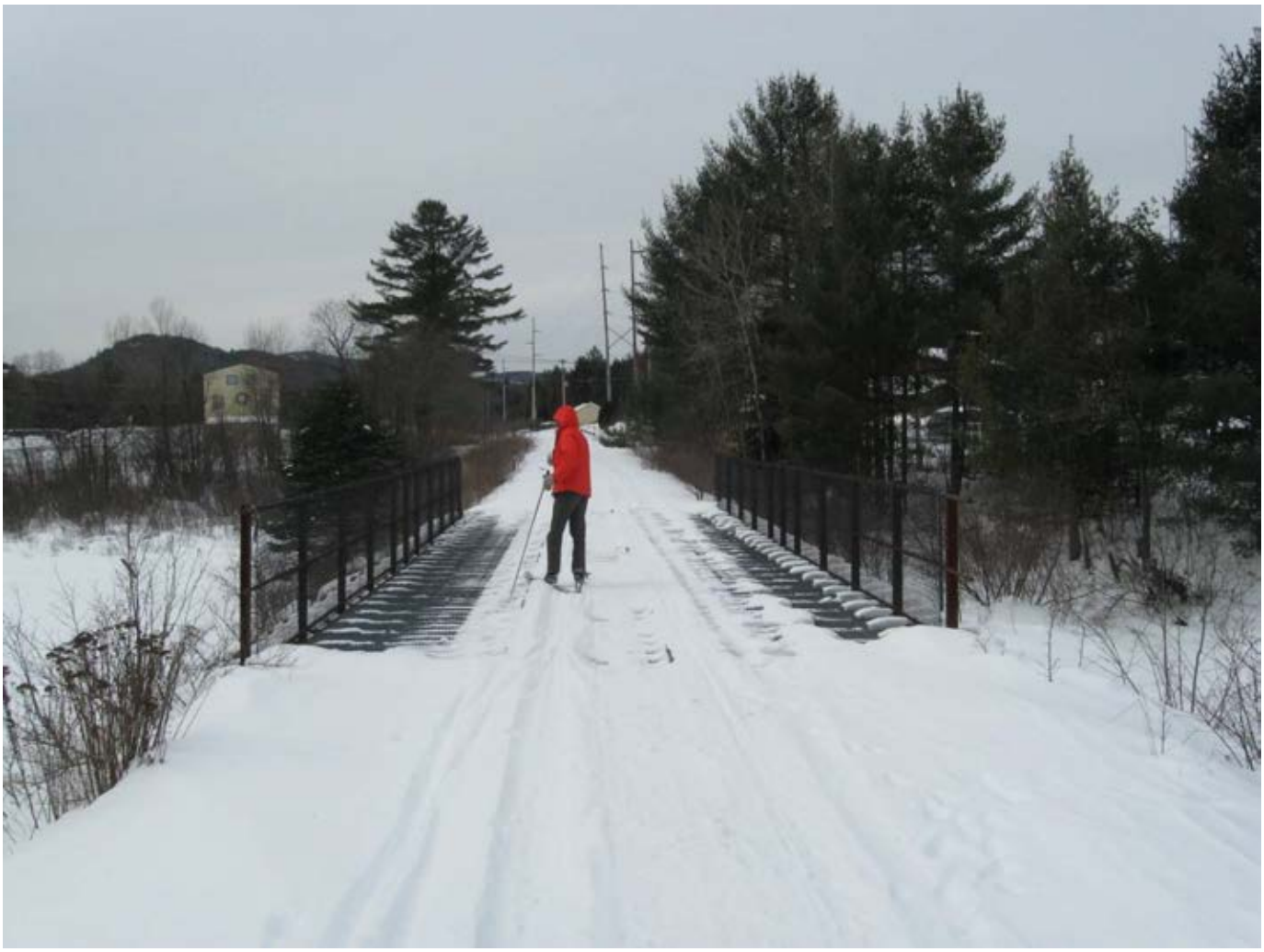
- Least common bat in NY and the northeast

In terms of updates to the inventory of existing natural resources, since the 1996 UMP/FEIS was issued it should be noted that there has been an increase in the moose

population within the Adirondack Park and lands adjacent to the Corridor, so moose is now included in the list of common mammals present in the project area.

Existing Visual Character of the Travel Corridor

Photographs of some key elements of the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor are provided in the attached figures and show the nature of the Corridor in both summer and winter months. Key vantage points include intersections for at-grade crossings, views available to people riding the trains, scenes of existing simultaneous use of railroad Corridor by cross-county skiers and snowmobilers, river crossings from railway bridges, and existing train stations.



Typical Corridor bridge, 17’ between fences, 20’ tip to tip across timbers, with open metal grate. Located just west of Lake Placid station

Skiers and Snowmobilers on the Corridor near the Jackrabbit Trail, south of Saranac Lake

Corridor view of Saranac River looking south at the crossing in the village of Saranac Lake

View west down the Lake Colby causeway

Exposed rails at an existing causeway over an open wetland between Lake Clear and Lake Colby

View of St. Regis Mountain taken from the Corridor, looking across Lake Clear

Trestle at Raquette Pond just south of Tupper Lake

View of Hitchins Pond/Bog River area from Corridor

Nehasane Station

View from existing railroad bridge over the Beaver River

Bridge over Beaver River

Corridor intersection with Routes 72/73 in Forestport

XV. Corridor Management Alternatives

D. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

7. DIVIDE THE CORRIDOR INTO RAIL/TRAIL AND TRAIL ONLY SEGMENTS

A. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE 7

1. The Corridor would be retained in its present uninterrupted form from Remsen to Lake Placid. The entire length of the Corridor would retain its “Travel Corridor ” classification pursuant to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) in order to maintain its integrity as a long-distance route and to preserve the possibility of reactivating it for rail purposes should the need arise at some time in the future. The Corridor would be divided into two segments. Segment 1, from Remsen to Tupper Lake, would retain its rail infrastructure (which would be improved as necessary) and would continue to be open to rail uses and snowmobiling. All of Segment 1 would continue to be the management responsibility of DOT. Segment 2, from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid, would have its rail infrastructure removed and would be converted to a multi-use recreational trail. Segment 2 would become the management responsibility of DEC. The terminus of the rail segment at Tupper Lake would allow rail excursion services into what is recognized as the Tri-Lakes Area of the Park (Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake and Lake Placid.) Snowmobiling would continue to be allowed along the entire length of the Corridor.

Segment 1: Rail with Compatible Trail Uses

Location
From Snow Junction, just north of Remsen, to a point to be determined just north of the station in Tupper Lake, about 85.5 miles. The railroad needs to be extended a short distance north of the station for operational purposes. A short stretch of rail-with-trail can provide connectivity to the station.

Physical
Segment 1 would be developed and maintained by DOT in accordance with the concepts outlined in Section V of the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS (Description of Management Proposed).

Operational
Segment 1 would be managed in accordance with the concepts outlined in Section V of the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS (Description of Management Proposed).

Segment 2: Multi-Use Recreation Trail, no rail

Location
From a point to be determined just north of the station in Tupper Lake to the end of the line in Lake Placid, about 34 miles.

Physical
Segment 2 would be developed and maintained by DEC under the same guideline given for Alternative 4. Subparagraph b., Future Rail Options Eliminated – Remove the Rails and Ties, in the original 1996 UMP/FEIS (see Section XV CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES, Paragraph D DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES, Alternative 4, subparagraph b, page 131).

Operational

- Segment 2 would be managed by DEC. The DEC would reach out to Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA), local governments, and non-profit recreational groups to help in the maintenance of the trail and enforce applicable regulations.
- Snowmobiling within Segment 2 of the Corridor leads riders through communities that include some densely populated neighborhoods. Common-sense measures would be implemented to avoid conflicts with neighbors. These include limiting the time of day-use of the Corridor within Segment 2 to the hours of 7 AM through 10 PM and a 35 mile-per-hour speed limit within areas of Segment 2 where riders traverse through populated areas.
- To accommodate events hosted by the Olympic Regional Development Authority, including cross-country skiing races and biathlons, areas within Segment 2 of the Corridor may be closed to other recreation activities during race events (and preparations for them) to make these events possible.

B. PRINCIPLE ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL and ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The range and magnitude of rail development impacts on the rail segment (Segment 1) and trail development impacts on the trail segment (Segment 2) could be similar to those detailed in the description of the preferred alternative in the original 1996 UMP/FEIS.

Environmental Impacts: Implementation of Alternative 7 could lead to minor pollution of surface waters and minor disturbance of wetlands related to trail construction and maintenance. Because the recreational trail would be constructed in the existing Corridor, no removal of vegetation is anticipated. Minor negative effects on fish and wildlife populations related to trail construction and maintenance activities are anticipated. In addition, implementation of Alternative 7 could cause a minor increase in highway use and traffic congestion in communities where trailheads and support facilities are located.

Social: Implementation of Alternative 7 could lead to a moderate increase in the public use of neighboring Forest Preserve lands with subsequent moderate increase in the need for law enforcement, fire protection and search and rescue services. Noise levels are not anticipated to be significantly more noticeable than that generated by existing uses and are discussed in more detail below in order to supplement earlier planning documents. A potential increase in snowmobile traffic within Segment 2 and associated noise levels could occur when the rail infrastructure is removed. Implementation of Alternative 7 could lead to a minor increase in the likelihood of trespass onto neighboring private lands and related new costs to State agencies and taxpayers associated with management of the Corridor. Some traffic congestion could occur in affected hamlet areas from use along the entire length of the Corridor.

Economic Impacts: It is important to note that, while important, economic considerations are not the single critical factor in the decision by the State to move forward with this Amendment.

The elimination of rail service and conversion of the Corridor to a recreation trail from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid on Segment 2 could lead to regional economic growth and is expected to provide increased recreational opportunity. The continued operation of tourist excursion rail services on Segment 1 could lead to regional economic growth and increased recreational opportunity.

Projected Increase in Visitation

	Current Visitation	Projected Visitation	Change
Rail Riders	59,409	80,155	20,746
Trail Users	-	73,215	73,215
Snowmobilers	30,931	61,863	30,931
Total	90,340	215,233	124,892

Source: Camoin Associates

The primary economic impacts of segmented rail and trail development would come from the direct expenditures for the rehabilitation and operation of the line, and from spending by the people attracted to the area because of its services and recreational opportunities. Camoin Associates, in their 2015 economic report on several Corridor scenarios, estimated the annual economic impact of implementing the Alternative 7 scenario as shown in the table below.

Annual Economic Impact of Alternative7

	Direct	Indirect	Total
Spending	$ 1,365,215	$ 1,454,389	$ 2,739,881
Jobs	17	8	25
Earnings	$ 497,944	$ 497,944	$ 995,887

Source: Camoin Associates

1. Maintenance

Annual Maintenance costs are estimated to be similar for either an active rail or a recreational trail: about $1,500 a mile. This estimate is consistent with DOT's actual maintenance costs.

2. Tourism

The increase in regional tourism that could be expected to result from the expansion of excursion services into Tupper Lake is substantial. Bolstering rail service could be expected to bring in about 80,155 passengers per year between Utica and Tupper Lake, an increase of over 20,000 riders from current conditions between Utica and Big Moose, according to a 2015 study by Camoin Associates based on data provided by the Adirondack Scenic Railroad. This same study predicts approximately 73,215 recreationists would annually use the recreational trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid. Camoin Associates estimates that Alternative 7 would bring in 17,324 more users than an all-rail scenario, and 50,100 more users than an all-trail scenario for the Corridor.

C. COSTS and REVENUES

(1) Rail Service Options – Segment 1 – Remsen to Tupper Lake

DOT has estimated that the cost of rail infrastructure restoration between Big Moose and Tupper Lake, a distance of approximately 45 miles, is $250,000 a mile, or $11 million. This estimate is based on the railroad achieving a Federal Rail Administration (FRA) Class 2 standard that allows passenger train speeds of 30 mph, the current situation on the existing Saranac Lake to Lake Placid train. Estimates have been based on DOT's Pay Item Catalog, the RE Means Heavy Construction Cost Data, and DOT's historic involvement in this and other rail rehabilitation projects.

(2) Recreational Trail Uses: Segment 2 – Tupper Lake to Lake Placid

On the portion of the Corridor that would be unoccupied by rail service, costs would be incurred for construction to improve that portion for trail use and installation of deck planking and safety rails on existing railroad bridges.

The State has estimated, based on experience on other rail\trails that the cost of construction of a recreational trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid (approximately 34 miles) is about $200,000 a mile, or $6.7 million. This is an order of magnitude estimate and is consistent with other estimates from the Town of North Elba, Regional Economic Development Councils, the Rails to Trails Conservancy, and the New York Parks and Trails Association. Assumptions about the width of the trail and the surface would affect final costs.

Additional costs related to the development of a recreational trail include the potential payback to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of up to $2.3 million in costs incurred in the development of the rail between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid, and trail planning between Lake Placid and Ray Brook. Whether a reimbursement is ultimately required, should the final decision be made to build a recreational trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, would be the focus of follow-up discussions between the State and FHWA.

Also, it is estimated that the costs of the removal of rail infrastructure would exceed the potential salvage value of these materials by $1.1 million; thus the estimated total cost of the development and construction of approximately 34 mile recreational trail is estimated at $7.8-$10.1 million, depending on payback. To the extent that salvage materials are retained by the State for use in upgrading Segment 1, it would increase the cost of removal but reduce the track rehabilitation cost and may mitigate FHWA payback, if any. Any serviceable rail, joint bars, tie plates and ties removed from Segment 2 would be provided to the selected rail developer for continued maintenance of the track in Segment 1. Any excess fit material may be transferred for use in other publicly-owned rail corridors at DOT's sole discretion.

Should any portion of the trail segment be paved, there would be an additional cost for such a trail surface. Any paving would have to account for snowmobile use and any paved sections would need to have enough room in the Corridor for snowmobile users to ride on unpaved areas safely and with no unreasonable environmental impact.

Because it is not anticipated that fees would be charged for recreational trail uses of the Corridor, the State would receive no direct revenues from the implementation of the trail component of the Corridor management plan.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE 7

Alternative 7 would concentrate on the continuation and expansion of rail services on Segment 1, where existing tourist attractions and services would benefit from tourist rail development. Rail services would provide a means for large numbers of people to gain access with minimal environmental impact to the scenic open space and recreational resources of the Adirondack Forest Preserve. The access and educational opportunities provided by rail development would be especially important to the physically challenged, the elderly and others who would not be able to enter the backcountry otherwise.

In terms of economic benefits, Alternative 7 would be superior to all of the previous alternatives. The development of excursion rail services to Tupper Lake and the establishment of a recreation trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid would likely lead to increases in summer and fall tourist populations in affected hamlets.

The Corridor and its associated features are listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The National Register application, from 1993, identifies 10 station buildings, 17 contributing bridges, 13 other buildings, and the railroad right-of-way, including tracks and ties (which are counted as a single structure), all of which

contribute to the National Register listing. While this preferred alternative calls for the removal of rail infrastructure between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, the Corridor itself would remain intact. All the stations in public ownership would remain and/or be interpreted as deemed appropriate through consultation with New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office would be undertaken to consider measures to mitigate adverse impacts on the integrity and character of the Corridor Segment 2 to the fullest extent practicable. The work proposed for Segment 1 would rehabilitate track structures in order to restore train service to Tupper Lake from its current terminus at Big Moose. This would preserve the integrity and character of the historic property.

When fully implemented, the 2016 UMP/FEIS Amendment would result in the railroad operating on approximately 85.5 contiguous miles (as opposed to its currently disconnected 51 mile operation) nearly doubling its usable length and consolidating it into one continuous operation from Remsen to Tupper Lake.

Although it is acknowledged that there would be some demand for rail use between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid for more extensive tourist excursions, rail removal on that segment is being pursued because of the significant increase in demand, especially from the communities along this segment of the Corridor, for environmentally compatible recreational trail uses. With the tracks removed, Segment 2 would be in optimum condition for trail uses. The elimination of rail activity and the removal of the rail infrastructure would allow Segment 2 to be managed for more intensive recreational trail use than would be possible under the preferred alternative from the original 1996 UMP/FEIS (Alternative 6).

As part of this alternative, it is recommended that the “Travel Corridor” classification be retained along the entire 119-mile length of the Corridor to assure that the integrity of the Corridor be maintained for future travel needs and current recreational uses. There is a need to preserve the possibility of reactivating it for rail purposes should the need arise at some time in the future. There is continued support for allowing the Corridor to be used as an essential link in a long distance snowmobile trail system. The existing classification would also preserve the potential for creating a long-distance bicycle trail along the Corridor.

Since it would lead to rail development on Segment 1 and recreation trail development on Segment 2, Alternative 7 would go a long way toward realizing the Corridor’s potential. It is also important to recognize that, while the devotion of Segment 2 to trail uses would eliminate rail uses on that segment, the occupancy of a rail in Segment 1 by trains would not necessarily exclude trail connections and “connecting trail” uses in Segment 1.

Conclusion

BOTH THE RAIL AND TRAIL POTENTIAL OF THE CORRIDOR SHOULD BE DEVELOPED.

Appendix 1

Potential Environmental Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures

I. MITIGATION BY DESIGN

The 1996 UMP/FEIS presents six management alternatives. This 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS proposes Alternative 7, dividing the corridor into two segments. Segment 1 from Remsen to Tupper Lake proposes to retain the rails and improve the tracks and support facilities such as engine houses and fueling facilities where necessary and continuing to be open to rail and snowmobile use. Segment 1 includes the extension of operating rail service approximately 45 miles from the Big Moose Station to the Tupper Lake Station. Segment 2, from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid, is the section where rails would be removed and the Corridor becomes a multi-use recreational trail. Within Segment 1, connections to existing trail systems on neighboring lands would serve as stops along the rail and would be established in conformance with management plans for these units of state land.

The potential beneficial and adverse impacts, and measures proposed to mitigate such impacts, of continued use of Segment 1 of the Corridor, including those related to the extension of service from Big Moose Station to the Tupper Lake Station, are documented in the 1996 UMP/FEIS and are incorporated herein by reference (see Sections Summary, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII and XIV). This section supplements that information.

The establishment of a multi-use recreational trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid on Segment 2 would occur within the existing Corridor, so alternative trail locations are not required to be assessed.

Because the Segment 2 multi-use trail is located in an existing cleared Corridor, tree cutting would not be required. After removal of the rail infrastructure, the surface would need to be graded and some rocks and boulders may need to be removed. Bridges would be retrofitted to accommodate the appropriate trail surface. Drainage improvements may also be necessary. These improvements would occur in accordance with applicable law, regulations, policy and guidance.

Wetlands would be avoided to the greatest extent possible. When wetlands crossings or trail locations adjacent to wetlands are proposed, the trail would be designed to minimize potential adverse impacts. Any activity in a wetland or that may impact a wetland would be undertaken with prior consultation with the APA and with recognition of Army Corps of Engineers' permit requirements.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF 2016 UMP AMENDMENT/SEIS IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURES PROPOSED TO MITIGATE SUCH IMPACTS

SEQRA requires an objective description of potential significant environmental impacts, to the degree possible and include both quantitative and qualitative information to determine how likely it is that an impact would occur, how large the impact would be, how important the impact would be and the time frame in which the impact is anticipated.

One of the basic purposes of SEQRA is to incorporate the consideration of environmental factors at an early stage of project development. This often means that an EIS would be prepared before final plans are available. As a general rule, the amount of detail regarding a specific impact in an EIS should depend on the magnitude and importance of the impact. For instance, in terms of ground disturbance, the EIS should use accepted methods of calculating the area of ground disturbance, identify the structural and non-structural best management practices (BMP's) for minimizing ground disturbance and identify the approximate location and size of structures. Although final plans are not necessary, the EIS should contain enough detail on size, location and elements of the proposal to allow an understanding of the proposed action, the associated impacts and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation.

With regard to assessing the potential impact to updated information on bats and moose, there are no known bat hibernaculum within more than at least twenty miles of the Corridor, and research indicates that the frequency of traffic did not seemingly affect the average percent of moose active, or the number of moose present in study areas. Snowmobile traffic did displace moose to less favorable habitats in at least one study, yet some analyses suggested that moose are only minimally affected by increasing snowmobile activity. Given the nature and use of the existing Corridor and its existing use by snowmobiles, no significant impacts on wildlife is anticipated as a result of the implementation of the proposed management action.

In order to allow the full range and magnitude of the environmental, social and economic impacts which could result from the adoption of the proposed management actions, the descriptions of the impacts given below reflect the assumption that the alternative is fully implemented.

In terms of beneficial impacts which are foreseen as a result of the implementation of the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS, it is anticipated that there may be a minor reduction in the level of public use and associated impacts in other areas of the Forest Preserve as new recreational trails are provided. Adoption of the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS in coordination with management plans for neighboring Forest Preserve lands would provide an opportunity for a significant expansion of the regional economy, a substantial increase in trail-based recreational and educational opportunity and the improved utilization of a public resource.

In terms of potential adverse impacts, adoption of this 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS in addition to management plans for neighboring Forest Preserve lands could lead to

minor pollution of surface waters and minor disturbance of wetlands related to trail construction and maintenance. Because the recreational trail would be constructed in an existing Corridor, no removal of vegetation is anticipated to be required. Minor negative effects on fish and wildlife populations related to trail construction and maintenance activities are anticipated. In addition, implementation of the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS could cause a minor increase in highway use and traffic congestion in communities where trailheads and support facilities are located. There may be a moderate increase in the public use of neighboring Forest Preserve lands with subsequent moderate increase in the need for law enforcement, fire protection and search and rescue services. Noise levels are not anticipated to be significantly more noticeable than that generated by existing uses and are discussed in more detail below in order to supplement earlier planning documents. Adoption of the 2016 UMP/FEIS Amendment could lead to a minor increase in the likelihood of trespass onto neighboring private lands and related new costs to State agencies and taxpayers associated with management of the Corridor.

Potential Historic Impacts and Mitigation

The Corridor is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Resources as the New York Central Railroad, Adirondack Division Historic District. The existing rail corridor was constructed prior to the development of modern environmental and ecological concerns. It was constructed along natural water courses and through wetland areas in order to take advantage of the generally low relief and minimal elevation changes that are characteristic of such areas. These lands would have been considered marginal for human use at the time of construction. Today these wetland areas are protected by state and federal law and the surrounding state land is forest preserve.

The nature of the region that the rail corridor passes through makes the routing and proposed construction of an alternate trail that would fulfill the project goals extremely difficult. An organization called Trails with Rails Action Committee (TRAC) spent considerable time and effort developing a conceptual alternative parallel trail in the Corridor from Tupper Lake to Saranac Lake. The TRAC alternative is recognized as the best conceptual design for a potential parallel trail along this segment of the Corridor. However, the TRAC route would result in significant impacts to wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands. Portions of the TRAC route would utilize state highway corridors. In addition, existing Adirondack forest preserve land classification would preclude the use of snowmobiles (for example) on portions of the TRAC route. Finally, while the TRAC proposal would preserve the rails in place it would still have significant effects on the historic property due to the construction of parallel berms, fences and cantilevering structures from bridges and other structures.

The details of the issues associated with the construction of the TRAC alternative can be found in Appendix 3. While the total cost of construction for the TRAC alternative has not been estimated, the cost would be significant. Cost, coupled with significant adverse wetland, natural resource, and historic impacts as well as not meeting the project goals leads the State to conclude that the preferred alternative is the only prudent and feasible means of achieving the project goals.

The preferred alternative would involve impacts to the State and National Register listed property due to the removal of the rails and ties which are identified as contributing elements to the listed property. Therefore, any proposed improvements to the existing Corridor and support facilities within Segment 1, including the extension of railway service from Big Moose Station to the Tupper Lake Station, would require consultation with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) by NYSDEC and NYSDOT as required by the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA)(PRHPL Article 14). The removal of rail infrastructure in Segment 2 and reuse of this section of the Corridor as a multi-use recreational trail would be an adverse impact on the Historic District and is subject to the review under SHPA. Consultation among NYSDEC, NYSDOT and OPRHP is ongoing and includes discussion and development of measures that should minimize and/or mitigate any impacts. Meetings with OPRHP have taken place and coordination of planning efforts with that agency are on-going. It appears that the proposal to use the historic Corridor as proposed can be fully implemented as long as required mitigation measures, including documentation of the historic nature of the Corridor, provision of interpretive exhibits, and public education efforts, are completed. The adoption of this planning document would serve as a roadmap for obtaining all required approvals and permits for the proposed management actions, in coordination and consultation with all involved agencies.

Adverse impacts on historic resources as a result of the implementation of the 2016 RLPTC Unit Management Plan Amendment/SEIS would be mitigated through consultation in accordance with the Article 14.09 process. Detailed design and work plans would be shared and coordinated with other involved agencies as they are developed.

In the event that Federal Highway Administration funding becomes available to support the proposed management actions, the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 need to be satisfied.

Supplemental Information on Potential Operational Phase Noise Effects

In Segment 2 of the Corridor, note that the sound of train locomotives would no longer be heard during the typical rail operation season. Snowmobiles currently operate in the Corridor during the winter months and it is anticipated that this use would increase moderately as a result of the implementation of this Plan.

A literature review of studies of noise from snowmobiles and its' effects on people and wildlife relevant to the project has been done. With regard to the effects of snowmobile noise on people and wildlife, as stated in the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association Snowmobiling Fact Book (2013), since 1974, sound levels for snowmobiles have been reduced 94%. At full throttle, pre-1969 snowmobiles were noisy and emitted sound levels as high as 102 dB(A) from a distance of 50 feet. Snowmobiles produced since February 1, 1975 and certified by the Snowmobile Safety and Certification Committee's independent testing company emit no more than 78 dB(A) from a distance of 50 feet while traveling at full throttle. Snowmobiles manufactured after June 30, 1976

(and similarly certified) emit no more than 73 dB(A) at 50 feet while traveling at 15 mph. For comparison purposes, normal conversation at three feet produces approximately 70 dB(A). Note that illegal modification of a snowmobile exhaust system can produce excessive noise levels.

Other examples of decibel levels are as follows:

Sound	dB(A)
75-Piece Orchestra	130
Car Horn, Snowblower	110
Blow-dryer, Diesel truck	100
Electric Shaver, Lawn Mower	85
Garbage Disposal, Vacuum	80
Alarm Clock, City Traffic	70
Dishwasher	60
Leaves Rustling, Refrigerator	40

In a paper written by Greg Davis and Neil Marietta of Michigan Technological University, tests were performed comparing sound emissions of production trail-ridden snowmobiles to that of other everyday vehicles that travel by road such as passenger cars, motorcycles and semi-tractor/trailers. The test show in many cases, snowmobiles are noticeably quieter. A snowmobile under full throttle emits the same sound level as a truck pulling a camper or an off-road Jeep traveling at constant highway speeds applying very little throttle. In the worst case scenario, a snowmobile leaving a stop sign and applying full throttle, the noise produced is still about the same as a very common vehicle simply cruising down the road.

Now, for relative comparison, some motorcycles accelerating and applying nearly full throttle produces nearly 6 times the noise to your ear that a snowmobile driving the same way produces. In a more common example, a logging truck pulling a loaded trailer down the highway traveling at 45 mph would produce twice the noise of a snowmobile applying full throttle. A 4X4 pickup truck pulling a boat on a trailer at a constant speed makes more noise than a snowmobile. Other vehicles have been tested and noted in the paper."

Operated in a normal, considerate manner, snowmobiles are barely audible from inside a home. From a distance of 50 feet, snowmobiles generate between 68—73 dB(A) at 15 mph. Since doors and windows are almost always closed in winter, snowmobiles operating outside at a distance of 50 feet only create an interior sound level between 41 and 47 dB(A). From a distance of 200 feet, snowmobiles produce an interior sound level between 29 and 35 dB(A), This is well below the average evening household sound level of 47 dB(A).

Natural sound barriers, careful trail planning and reduced speed limits in residential areas further reduce snowmobile noise. Snowbanks or trees can cause a 20 dB drop in sound levels if they are between the machine and listener.

U.S. Forest Service researcher Robin Harrison reported that under usual wildland conditions, snowmobile operation is undetectable to the human ear at distances of more than 750 feet. He reported that snowmobiles were barely detectable above normal campground sound levels at a distance of 400 feet.

Per the Fact Book, “Dr. Andres Soom participated in the University of Wisconsin's comprehensive three-year study on the effects of snowmobile sound levels on deer and cottontail rabbits. His report, titled Emission, Propagation and Environmental Impact of Noise from Snowmobile Operations, concluded that "only minor reactions were noted in the movements of cottontail rabbits and white-tailed deer to moderate and intensive snowmobiling activity." He stated that it had not been possible to determine sound levels at which there is a clear reaction on the part of the deer "because snowmobiles must be so close to deer to generate the higher levels that other factors such a visible presence…are likely to be more important."

The Wisconsin study also compared the reaction of deer to the presence of cross-country skiers. When cross-country skiers replaced snowmobiles on the test trail systems, the deer moved away from the trail more frequently.

A three-year study, Response of White-Tailed Deer to Snowmobiles and Snowmobile Trails in Maine, conducted by wildlife scientists for the Maine Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife revealed that *"Deer consistently bedded near snowmobile trails and fed along them even when those trails were used for snowmobiling several times daily. In addition, fresh deer tracks were repeatedly observed on snowmobile trails shortly after machines had passed by, indicating that deer were not driven from the vicinity of these trails…The reaction of deer to a man walking differed markedly from their reaction to a man on a snowmobile…This decided tendency of deer to run with the approach of a human on foot, in contrast to their tendency to stay in sight when approached by a snowmobiler, suggests that the deer responded to the machine and not to the person riding it."*

In a study entitled Snow Machine Use and Deer in Rob Brook, conducted by the Forest Wildlife Biologists of White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, snowmobile operations and deer movement were monitored. A summary of the study indicated that deer travel patterns were not affected by periodically heavy snowmobile use. In addition, continued use of established snowmobile trails was recommended.

The University of Minnesota issues a study by Michael J. Dorrance entitled Effects of Snowmobiles on White Tailed Deer which found no meaningful difference in the deer's home range during periods of snowmobile use and non-use.

Addressing the subject of snowmobile operations in Yellowstone National Park, Jack Anderson, a former Superintendent of Yellowstone commented, *"We found that elk, bison, moose, even the fawns wouldn't move away unless a machine was stopped and a person started walking. As long as you stayed on the machine and the machine was running, they never paid any attention. If you stopped the machine, got off and started*

moving, that was a different story. The thing that seemed to be disturbing to them was a man walking on foot."

Because the use of snowmobiles is limited to a narrow defined Corridor and is sporadic, intermittent and isolated, no significant adverse long-term impacts on sound are anticipated from snowmobile use on the Corridor. The existing use by snowmobiles and the limited extent of snowmobile trails within the Corridor and on adjacent management areas limits the potential for adverse impacts.

Mitigation Measure Proposed for Construction Phase Impacts on Topography, Soils and Drainage

It is anticipated that there would be minor, temporary impacts to soils and slopes during construction. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) utilizing best management practices (BMP's) would be in place and maintained on-site during Segment 2 trail construction.

The trail plan lays out the location of trail modification, bridges, water bars and other trail structures. This SWPPP designates the procedures and BMPs to be used in construction of these structures. The SWPPP is an integral part of the trail project plans.

Water is by far the worst enemy of a sustainable trail. Through proper layout the trail is designed to avoid or minimize developed drainage devices. Using water bars, broad-based dips, trail hardening and other trail building methods, water would be diverted off the trail tread and minimize down-trail water travel to reduce erosion and sedimentation and create a sustainable trail tread. New construction where possible would be built in a method that results in water being shed to the side of the trail, preventing "trail rutting." Bench-cut areas would be out-sloped to encourage lateral shedding of water.

Soils:
Most soils in the Corridor were modified by the construction of the railway. Underlying soils are derived from glacial deposits that have been moved and deposited as glaciers advanced and retreated and are thus, quite different from the bedrock beneath them. These soils are divided into two broad categories: those derived from glacial till and those derived from glacial outwash, or eskers and moraines. The predominant soils underlying the Corridor are those in the Becket, Tunbridge, and Lyman series, comprising approximately 75% of soils on the unit and found mostly at the middle elevations. Becket series consists of very deep, well-drained loamy soils, formed in glacial till. Tunbridge series consists of moderately deep, well-drained soils that formed in loamy glacial till. Lyman series consists of shallow, somewhat excessively drained soils formed in glacial till. Because soils in these three series are well-drained, they are appropriate for trail development.

Along Segment 2, trail construction would consist of removal and salvage of rail infrastructure and installation of final surface material. Minor surface modification and installation of erosion control best management practices would occur. Terrain modification and installation of water control devices performed by the mini excavator

would be another step of the trail construction process. During this process the mini excavator would make one planned trip along the trail length. This trip would allow for terrain modification in select locations consisting of bench cuts, rearrangement of specific rocks, installation of water bars, and repair of any eroded portions of pre-existing Corridor.

Water/sediment control structures would be installed at locations of terrain modification locations as required to minimize any potential sources of erosion or sedimentation. When active work is complete, disturbed portions of this trail would be seeded and mulched and any temporary erosion and sediment control structures would be left in place until the site is stabilized.

It is expected that railroad tracks and related materials would be removed, followed by installation of water/erosion/sediment control structures as necessary for terrain modification and trail construction. Then trail segments would be completed with various portions being put to bed, with seeding and mulch as they are individually completed. Temporary drainage/erosion/sediment control structures would remain in place until the areas have stabilized.

Description of the minimum erosion and sediment control practices:
All erosion and control practices would be installed during the terrain modification or trail construction phases of the project. Areas targeted for ground manipulation or rehabilitation and subject to erosion would be identified and control practices would be installed to avoid, minimize, or repair erosion hazards. All temporary practices would remain in place until the areas have stabilized.

The following sedimentation and erosion control practices would be utilized in implementation of this work plan:

- **DRAINAGE**

  - Proper drainage would carry the water either over the trail, under the trail, or would intercept the water before it crosses the trail.
  - Surface runoff which is intercepted by erosion-control measures must be collected by drainage ways and discharged in stabilized areas or sediment basins.
  - The drier the terrain, the more stable the trail, which keeps potential erosion problems at a minimum, and also minimizes the need to perform maintenance.
  - Examine topography, surface flow patterns, soils, and the water table to help determine the area's potential wetness, preferably during the wettest months of the year, to help prevent future erosion problems.
  - The ideal trail would be located on soil which has a seasonal high water table of two to four feet below the surface.

- Poor drainage is the primary cause of a majority of trail maintenance problems which can be avoided with proper planning.
- Cross-drainage techniques, such as swales, and water bars should be utilized to divert water off of the trail as soon as possible.
- Attempts should always be made to maintain natural drainage patterns.

Outsloping

- Outslope would be used on bench cuts and other locations prescribed in the work plan.
- Outsloping is a process where the trail surface is sloped in the same direction (with) as the slope on which it is located
- Outsloping is appropriate in areas where the grade of the slope is relatively high and in areas where the amount of water flow is relatively low.
- Be sure to maintain the slope pitch at approximately 1-2%.
- No intermittent or perennial streams should cross over the trail.
- No drainage ditches should be laid on the upslope side of the trail.
- Make sure the water is not being diverted towards streams or other bodies of water. If water drainage is unavoidable in areas adjacent to streams, make sure there are vegetative buffers.
- If water flow is more extensive than outsloping can control, larger structures such as diversion ditches may be necessary.

Swales, Dips and Berms

- These features constitute a depression constructed across a slope, above and in conjunction with an earthen berm.
- These features are used in areas where surface runoff might create erosion problems running across a trail.
- These features are used on slopes which have a trail grade less than 10%.
- Install swales at the top of any slope and at proper spacing along sloping sections of the trail.
- The swale can be as shallow or as deep as necessary, taking into consideration the expected trail use and the conditions.
- Soil should be removed from the swale and transferred to the downhill side to form the berm.

- The swale should be constructed at a 30-45 degree angle downslope from a line perpendicular to the direction of the trail.
- The downhill end of the swale should extend far enough to disperse the water flow away from the trail.
- If erosion is a potential problem at the outlet (downhill end) of the swale, riprap or other velocity dissipaters should be utilized.
- The uphill end of the swale should extend far enough beyond the trail in order to fully intercept the flow of water.
- Alternative water drainage techniques may be required if the swales are consistently becoming filled or breached.
- The frequency that the swale and the berm may need to be cleaned or restored depends on the amount of sedimentation which occurs.
- A broad-based dip is the recommended practice on trails where distinct bumps pose an erosion problem.

Water Bars

- These features consist of a rock, earthen, or log barrier, or excavated channel, angled across a trail to divert the runoff water off of a trail.
- In general, the greater the slope and the higher the velocity or volume of water, the greater the need for water bars as opposed to other drainage techniques.
- Earthen water bars would be the preferred method of construction.
- Place each rock or log solidly into the ground, preferably using flat rocks or rot-resistant logs.
- Water bars would be installed at locations prescribed and as needed in other locations to prevent erosion of the trail tread.
- All water bars prescribed in the work plan would be constructed according to New York State Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality 2011 Edition.
- All water bars prescribed within 100 feet of a stream would have a catchment basin/rock trap to prevent sedimentation of the stream.
- Install water bars at the top of slopes and at steep sections of the trail as needed.
- The water bar should be constructed at a 30-45 degree angle downslope from a line perpendicular to the direction of the trail.
- Extend the outlet end of the water bar beyond the edge of the trail and place rocks or logs there to filter the water.

- Construct the water bar so that it extends at least 12 inches beyond both sides of the trail.
- As a minimum, the water bar should drain at a 3% outslope.
- In a rock water bar, each rock should overlap the rock below it and be overlapped by the rock directly above it.
- A log water bar should be constructed with peeled logs at least 10 inches in diameter.
- Log water bars should be held in place with large stones.
- Observe the trail during a rainstorm to more accurately determine the need for water bars.
- The channel created by the water bar outlet and the water bar itself can be lined with stone to reduce erosion.
- Tree species appropriate for log water bars include spruce, hemlock, beech and oak.
- Consider using box culverts where the bumps caused by water bars pose a problem.

Spacing for Water Bars

Road/Trail Grade (percent)	Spacing Between Water Bars (feet)
2 %	250 ft.
5	135
10	80
15	60
20	45
30	35

Open Top Culverts

- Open top culverts constructed of 4”x4”s would be used where small drainages and seeps cross high traffic sections of the trail.
- Open top culverts would be in place before machinery crosses small drainages.
- Larger drainage crossings would follow BMP guidelines appropriate for the site.
- Crossing streams prior to bridge construction would follow BMP guidelines.
- Open top culverts can be constructed of either stone or sawn timber, depending on the availability of materials.

- Log culverts may be constructed with two 6-10" logs set into the trail and pinned to prevent movement.
- Line the base of the culvert with riprap and install spreaders if necessary.
- Sawn timber open-top culverts are usually constructed of two 3" x 8" planks set on a 3" x 12" plank, spiked at the bottom. This would create a water flow area 8" deep x 6" wide.
- Open-top culverts are most appropriate when water runoff is light.

➢ SEDIMENT BARRIERS

Silt Fences

- Silt fences would be used around all bridge foundations where possible to keep sediment from entering the stream. Silt Fences would remain in place until the area is firm and stable. After the area has stabilized the silt fence can be removed.
- The filter fabric should be purchased in a continuous roll and cut to the length of the carrier to avoid the use of joints. When joints are unavoidable, filter cloth should be spliced together only at a support post, with a minimum of a six-inch overlap, and sealed.
- When wire support is used, a standard-strength filter cloth may be used. When wire support is not being used, extra-strength cloth should be used.
- The fabric should be stapled or wired to the fence and a minimum of 4 inches of the fabric should be extended into the trench.
- The trench should be backfilled and the soil compacted over the filter fabric.
- Inspect bales and barriers after heavy rains.
- Sediment deposits should be removed when the level of deposits reaches one-half of the height of the bale or the silt fencing.
- Barriers should be removed when the area has revegetated and the barriers are no longer needed. The sediment should be removed or graded out before removal.
- Straw (weed free) barriers require more maintenance than geotextiles due to the permeability of the bales being less than that of silt fencing.
- Silt fences should be removed when they have served their useful purpose, but not before the upslope area has been permanently stabilized.

➢ STABILIZATION

Mulching and Seeding

- Upon completion of the trail, the area would be seeded with a DEC approved conservation mix and mulched with straw to stabilize the trail tread. Disturbed areas outside of the trail tread may also be additionally mulched with woody debris from on site to aid in stabilization.
- Active work areas would not require mulch, until work in the area is completed.
- Seed would be non-invasive grass species.
- Seeded areas should be inspected periodically and after heavy rain events to check for erosion and loss of vegetative cover.
- Areas that have lost mulch prior to establishment of vegetation would be re-established.

Water Crossings

- Water crossings are a major concern in the construction and use of trails because of the potential for large amounts of sediment to enter a stream.
- Existing Corridor water crossings would be utilized. Decking would be added to allow use by mountain bikes and snowmobiles.
- Erosion and sedimentation-control devices should be utilized whenever trail construction occurs in or near a wetland, stream, or water body.

Corduroy

- Corduroy is a structural unit composed of a series of logs or other material placed perpendicular on the trail to provide a method of crossing wet areas.
- Corduroy can be used as a temporary means of stabilizing a wet area of a trail until more extensive construction can be arranged.
- Corduroy can be used on winter-use trails to protect wet areas which are usually frozen but may soften occasionally during the winter months.
- Lay a mat of green brush, posts, or small logs parallel to the direction of the trail.
- Use geotextile fabric or other appropriate bedding if needed.
- Cover the mat with a series of logs laid side by side, perpendicular to the trail.

- The corduroy should be removed in the spring to prevent damage to the area and should be left in place during the summer until drainage problems can be corrected or until trail rerouting can be completed.
- Cover logs with gravel or native material to create the treadway.
- An alternative to constructing corduroy is geotextiles with gravel cover.

Temporary Culverts

- Temporary culverts consist of a metal, plastic, cement, or wood pipe placed under a trail to permit crossing an intermittent or active stream.
- Temporary culverts are used on trails where water consists of small or intermittent flows that have not been bridged before winter.
- In general, cross-drainage culverts are more effective for drainage areas under ten acres.
- Culverts should be of a size appropriate to carry potential maximum water flow. The minimum size recommended is 12" to facilitate cleaning with a shovel.
- The culvert should extend one foot beyond the base of the trail on either side.
- Culverts should be sloped at least 6% to produce water velocities that would prevent the pipe from becoming unduly silted.
- It may be necessary to construct a berm across the side ditch to assist in water removal.
- Stream alignment should be straight at the point of crossing and of uniform profile so as not to obstruct the flow of water.
- For larger water flows, a corrugated metal culvert is recommended.
- Seat the pipe, backfill to half the diameter with clean fill, and tamp.
- Then fill over and around the culvert with snow and tamp at six inch intervals to pack in, add strength to the pipe, and to prevent seepage along the pipe. Cover the pipe with 12” of snow.

Temporary and Permanent Soil Stabilization Plan:

All water/sediment control structures would be installed on the first pass of the mini excavator. When active work is complete on the trail, it would be mulched and seeded. Installation of water/erosion/sediment control structures or other terrain manipulation would take place when soil conditions permit and would be stabilized section by section as work is completed. Upon completion of the trail, temporary water/erosion/sediment control structures can be removed once the trail has become firm and stable.

Maintenance Inspection Schedule:
Maintenance inspections would be carried out by DEC personnel on a weekly basis and after significant rain events and after the spring thaw. After completion, the trail would be inspected seasonally.

Pollution Prevention Measures:

- All equipment and machinery would be maintained in accordance with manufacturer's maintenance recommendations.
- All equipment would be inspected for leaks.
- Care would be taking during refueling of equipment to avoid spills.
- Refueling would be done at least 100 feet from wetlands and streams.
- A spill kit would be available on site in case of fuel spills.
- Carry it in, carry it out. All materials and litter not used in construction of the trail or trail structures would be removed from the site.
- Work areas would be inspected for litter at the end of each day.

Conformance with New York State Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control:
All proposed structures are in conformance with required standards.

IMPACTS OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

• Short-Term Impacts
The immediate short-term impact of implementing the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS would be in the form of increased DEC staff time and materials necessary to plan and construct the trails. Similarly, the communities would spend staff and volunteer time as well as materials to plan and construct the trail connections to merge with recreational facilities in the individual towns.

• Long-Term Impacts
Long-term impacts include a possible increase in overall levels of foot, bike, cross-country ski, snow shoe, horseback and snowmobile traffic, with an attendant increase in economic benefit to local communities. Increasingly stringent EPA emissions standards for snowmobiles should mitigate any increase in emissions and impacts to air quality. Shifting of recreational traffic to the periphery of Forest Preserve units and along transportation corridors should decrease user conflicts and wildlife impacts. Adherence to established trail construction and maintenance guidance should reduce potential soil and water quality impacts.

• Cumulative Impacts
Full implementation of the entire 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS would occur over a number of years.

Further, due to the many points of access to the multi-use trail system, the increase in use would be dispersed throughout the communities to be connected by the trail system. Therefore, significant impacts to any one area are not likely.

While the anticipated increase in snowmobile traffic within the Adirondack Park may increase exhaust emissions above what they would be without implementing the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS, stricter emissions standards would reduce the overall impact of this increase. In particular, the EPA regulations call for a three-phase reduction in snowmobile emissions. By 2006, emission levels were required to be reduced to 70 percent of levels permitted in 2002. By 2010, emissions were required to be reduced to half of 2006 levels, and by 2012 emissions were allowed to amount to only 30 percent of 2006 levels.

Increased education and law enforcement efforts are anticipated to reduce unauthorized use of both public and private lands. Utilization of trail siting guidelines should result in reduced potential for trespass onto private lands and wilderness areas. These measures would partially mitigate the anticipated minor increase in need for DEC enforcement efforts.

The overall impact of snowmobiles on wildlife is anticipated to decrease as a result of implementing the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS. Snowmobile and bike traffic is likely to be somewhat reduced in interior areas and would be shifted to the existing Corridor where motor vehicle traffic already exists.

The UMP process includes SEQR analysis of the alternatives for trail alignment and provides for public input. The environmental impacts of re-designating trails or developing additional trails are evaluated through this process. Elements considered within this process include but are not limited to:
• Soils/Wetlands
• Drainage
• Vegetation
• Fish/Wildlife
• User Conflicts
• Relationships with adjacent landowners and other public lands
• Tourism/Economic impacts.

The evaluation considers both short and long term impacts. Short term impacts would primarily relate to those associated with the construction of new trails and functions related to the operation and maintenance of the trail system, as noted above.

III. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Multi-use trail siting and design is accomplished using established guidance documents and inherent in the process is the avoidance of valuable natural resources such as

wetlands and wildlife habitat and use of appropriate slopes, avoidance of trees and rocks and reuse of the existing Corridor. This approach results in mitigation by design to avoid potential significant environmental impacts.

During the trail construction process, resources including staff time and materials would be utilized. Grading would occur as deemed necessary and soils and surface water resources would be subject to short term impacts. Because the existing Corridor is being used for Segment 2, the recreational trail, no significant removal of vegetation is anticipated. Construction of the recreation trail would require the removal of the rail infrastructure. Consultation with NYS OPRHP would be carried out in accordance with Section 14.09 to mitigate adverse impacts on the historic railroad corridor.

IV. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

The planning, development and implementation of this 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS would involve irreversible and irretrievable commitments of public funds in the form of time, labor and materials. Also, there is a commitment to the long-term maintenance of a multi-use trail system for the Adirondack Park. This commitment would be made by all state agencies, local municipalities, snowmobile groups/clubs and private landowners involved in the administration of this trail system.

V. GROWTH INDUCEMENT

SEQRA requires that public need and other social, economic and environmental benefits of the project be weighed and balanced against identified environmental harm. Implementation of the 2016 UMP Amendment/SEIS may result in increased snowmobile use as well as other users of the multi-use trails throughout the region. These community connector trails are meant to link Adirondack communities that offer travelers services such as food, lodging, fuel, repair service and other support services. The creation of community connector trails may increase the Adirondack Park's attractiveness to the touring market as well as increase the local recreational enthusiasts' territory. This would bring positive, on-going, economic impacts to the Adirondack communities. Impacts would be in the form of increased business investment in the community, increased tax revenue, and possibly more year-round business and employment opportunities.

The Corridor is also likely to be used heavily by local residents, who would find this asset a good place for family-based recreational activities, and as an alternative-transportation route for commuting between Tri-Lakes communities.

VI. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Taking no action at this time would result in the potential positive economic impacts from both improved and expanded rail service and establishment of a long distance recreation trail in the region not accruing to the local communities.

Appendix 2

Response to Public Comments

Rails WITH Trail – Parallel Trail

COMMENT: *Why can't the State fulfill Alternative 6 of the 1996 UMP, specifically the recreational trail parallel to the Corridor, alongside the railroad bed?*
RESPONSE: During draft stages of the 1996 UMP, a large number of public commenters encouraged the State to embrace the construction of a recreational trail parallel to the train tracks, where feasible. This solution became a part of the Final 1996 UMP as Alternative 6. It is understandable why so many in the public support such an approach; it would seemingly accommodate all outdoor enthusiasts while preserving the train. However, in the 20 years that have transpired, attempts by many, including the Town of North Elba, DOT, DEC, and APA, to design and construct such a parallel trail in the Lake Placid to Ray Brook to Saranac Lake area, have failed.

People generally envision a railroad corridor as wide, dry, and flat. Most railroad corridors across the country are indeed like that. Many, if not most, of the current commenters that have requested this solution for the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor, may not realize that flat, wide, and dry are by far the exceptions along this Corridor, not the rule. The Right-of-Way (ROW) itself is at least 100 feet wide for most, if not all, of the Corridor, which would be sufficient for most rail corridors throughout the country, but the surrounding landscape this Corridor traverses embodies significant wetlands, open water (causeways), ledge, and fluctuating topography along its entire length. The bed is raised above the surrounding landscape for most of its course from Lake Placid to Big Moose. A safety fence to separate a train from other uses adds significantly to the expenses, and cantilevering, fencing, and wetland filling arguably alters the historic character of the Corridor more so than removal of rails.

The rail-bed in this Corridor is not conducive for a recreational trail alongside it. Such a trail has been attempted. The Town of North Elba received grant funds to build it. The Town applied to the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) for permits to construct a parallel trail. While the APA ultimately permitted the Town to build this trail, the USACOE took issue with the analysis of wetland impacts and identified the need to augment existing engineering documents. Following this USACOE determination, North Elba abandoned the construction of the parallel trail because the town concluded it would be cost prohibitive. Subsequently, the town passed a resolution supporting the removal of the rails to allow the construction of a multiple use recreational trail (See Appendix 5).

Rails WITH Trail – Combination Parallel Trail with Off-Corridor Bypasses, as Needed (T.R.A.C. proposal)

COMMENT: *Can additional space be acquired for the ROW through land exchange, such as the instance on the 2013 ballot for land exchange between New York State and NYCO Minerals?*
RESPONSE: No authority currently exists to authorize a land exchange with adjoining property owners.

COMMENT: *Various entities have spent a great deal of time and effort developing a design to accommodate both rails and trails. Why does the State ignore these proposals?*
RESPONSE: Through the original 1996 UMP, the State put forth a plan with the best intentions to create a recreational trail alongside the train tracks in the Corridor. DEC recognizes that this is a preferred option, however, in the time that has transpired since the adoption of the 1996 UMP, efforts to design and implement a trail alongside the rail have proven to be impractical. As noted in the previous section, a trail running the entire length of the Corridor that is parallel to the tracks entirely within the Right-of-Way (ROW) is not feasible because of the terrain limitations.

Other proposals have attempted to design a recreational trail that starts within the Corridor ROW and runs parallel to the rails along suitable stretches, and when terrain with constraints are encountered, the recreational trail would move off the ROW and onto existing trails or public roads. Such a design attempts to loop around obstacles and return the trail back to the Corridor ROW.

As recently as 2014, DOT put forth a trail design that would avoid wetland impacts. The design of this trail, however, would result in off-Corridor impacts to adjacent Forest Preserve lands in a manner that is contrary to Forest Preserve standards, and is therefore unacceptable to the State.

Trails with Rails Action Committee (TRAC) is an organization that has spent considerable time and effort developing an alternative trail plan for the Corridor between the communities of Tupper Lake and Saranac Lake. DEC acknowledges the time and effort put forth on this design. However, after extensive internal review, the State has determined that the designs were not feasible because they are out of character with the best public use for the Corridor. DEC offers the following reasons why TRAC's proposal is not a viable solution (maps that highlight specific examples of these points are in Appendix 3):

A) TRAC's design does not provide the type of trail being sought by the public. The State has determined, based on years of substantial public input, that the Corridor is underutilized and the public would prefer a wide, relatively flat, family-oriented trail (i.e., baby strollers and kid's bicycles), and a more snowmobile-friendly trail in lieu of the train tracks in the Tri-Lakes Region. This comment on the Amendment sums up the predominant public sentiment in the Tri-Lakes Region:

"There are many hundreds of miles of foot trails in the [A]dirondacks, but one would be hard pressed to find a trail where you could push a stroller or a baby jogger, run a [wheelchair], or take my 83 year old mother for a walk. We have it all here in the Adirondacks except for a rail trail: a well graded, relatively level, safe, scenic pathway free of vehicle traffic that can be enjoyed via multiple forms of human powered conveyance."

B) TRAC's off-Corridor spur trails that currently exist on the ground are already being used by the public and do not currently offer a new way to travel the direction of the Corridor without having to get back onto the Corridor at regular intervals. Once the public is dropped back onto the Corridor ROW, according to TRAC's plan, the same limitations exist that prohibit the strict parallel trail as noted in section one above. TRAC's proposed trail sections 'along the Corridor' do so in many unsuitable segments. Their own maps bear out the extensive wetlands they propose to run a trail through. The large wetland complex just west of Lake Colby is a perfect example of a location that would need cost-prohibitive cantilevering and fencing, or result in unacceptable environmental impacts from the filling in of wetlands, triggering potential federal and State wetlands permitting regulations

C) Several of TRAC's proposed routes utilize the shoulder of state highways. This conflicts with one of the core reasons why local communities want this trail. The proposed trail in the Amendment purposely avoids highways (except at crossings) in order to provide a safe route of travel for alternative modes of transportation (e.g., bicycle commuting between Tri-Lakes communities), family recreation, and recreation for people with disabilities.

D) Snowmobiles would be prohibited on several of TRAC's proposed routes due to Forest Preserve classification (e.g. TRAC's proposed route in the St. Regis Canoe Area).Cantilevering, fencing, and wetland filling arguably alters the historic character of the Corridor more so than removal of rails.

E) DEC is in initial planning stages of developing recreation locations along the Corridor for people with disabilities. There appears to be excellent potential for disabled access along the Corridor for fishing, wildlife viewing, paddling, and camping. TRAC's alternative routes conflict with the most conducive locations for such projects, such as bypassing the Corridor at Lake Clear and Lake Colby.

See Appendix 3 for examples of the limitations of TRAC's design proposal.

Other Trail Alternatives

COMMENT: *This is one of the last railroads in the Adirondacks. Why remove the rails?*
RESPONSE: After years of public input (formal and informal) and attempts at implementing Alternative 6 of the original 1996 UMP, the State has determined that removing the rails from Lake Placid to Tupper Lake and creating a multi-use trail – unlike any other trail in the Adirondacks – is the best possible public use of this part of the Corridor. There is still a railroad in this Corridor. The Remsen to Big Moose segment is currently used for scenic train rides and would be extended to Tupper Lake, making it one of the longest scenic railroads in the lower 48 states.

COMMENT: *If the tracks were removed, could a road go in its place?*
RESPONSE: The current plan does not propose the construction of a road in the right of way. DEC intends to construct a multiple use trail between the communities of Lake Placid and Tupper Lake where the rails are removed.

COMMENT: *Why can't the rails in the trail segment be covered with gravel or trail material instead of removing them?*
RESPONSE:

DOT estimates that if the rails were covered with trail material the trail surface would be raised by about 1 foot (See Figure 1). In raising the profile, the side slopes or embankment would also need to be widened to avoid potential problems with stability and/or settlement. This would result in significant fill outside the current footprint of the railbed and require culverts to be extended, and therefore introduce the same environmental impacts to the Corridor as described in the previous sections regarding side-by-side and on/off Corridor trails (See Appendix 3).

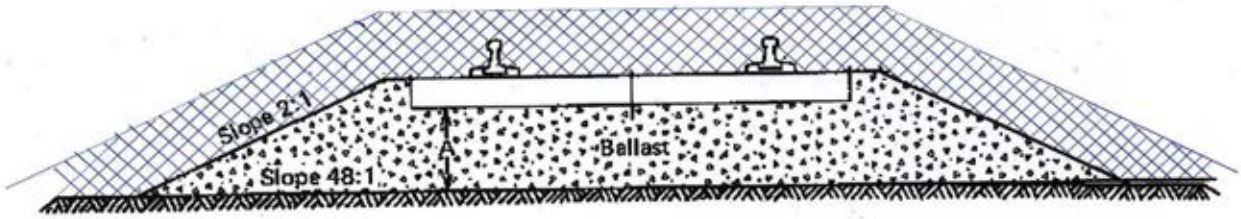


Figure 1: Schematic depicting fill on rail bed with widened footprint (not to scale)

APA wetland maps and aerial imagery show that the Corridor between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid is intersected by over 7 miles of wetlands and about a mile of open water (causeways, such as at Lake Colby). Filling these wetlands and open waters with this material, even if ultimately permitted, would be expensive and alter the historic nature of the Corridor while resulting in unacceptable damage to wetlands and open waters.

Aside from the high cost of covering the rail and ties with fill material, this action will greatly increase the deterioration rate of the very facilities that it was meant to preserve. The rails will likely rust quickly, thus eliminating any future potential for rail reactivation

or possible salvage value. DOT estimates that building the recreational trail on top of buried rails would increase the projected cost by approximately $5.5 million, as the revenue from salvage of the rails would not be available to offset trail construction costs, and there would be an increase in the amount of fill material needed.

For these reasons, any method of burying the rails with trail material is not a viable option and has been rejected for this Amendment.

COMMENT: *Couldn't a recreational trail be built that would be a loop, instead of a continuous trail as envisioned in the preferred alternative?*
RESPONSE: Recreational advocates want a flat, long distance trail capable of accommodating wheel chairs and baby strollers. Construction of a loop trail would almost certainly require using adjacent forest preserve properties with difficult topography not suitable for the required level of development. A long distance recreational trail that links communities is what the public in this portion of the Corridor have asked for, and similar trail systems in communities around New York and the country have proven very popular.

COMMENT: *What about the rail bikes operated by Rail Explorers USA, from Saranac Lake to Lake Clear?*
RESPONSE*:* The initial popularity of railbikes is a welcome sign to how popular a multiple use recreational trail is likely to be. While this entrepreneurial use of the Corridor is to be commended, it is still not the best public use of the Corridor. According to the Rail Explorers USA website, their railbikes depart Saranac Lake four times a day, travel one way at a time, have limited seating (12 bikes) per tour, must keep pace with each other, and charge a fee to riders. A multiple use recreational trail, on the other hand, is open year-round, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week. The public can travel it in both directions and in unlimited numbers. Most importantly, it is free to everyone. Individuals or groups are welcome to use it at their own pace, whether they are walking, running, biking, rollerblading, skiing, sitting in a wheelchair, walking with a walker or crutches, pushing a baby stroller, riding on a snowmobile, or taking leashed-pets. They can carry a fishing rod and cast in Lake Colby, and not have to worry about impacting anyone else's enjoyment of the trail. The Corridor south of Tupper Lake, which is to have rails improved, would be an excellent place for the fun and exciting use of railbikes, which add to recreational diversity in the Corridor without impeding public use of the recreational trail north of Tupper Lake.

Additionally, multiple other local businesses stand to benefit with implementation of the trail. For example, there should be an increase in demand for ski and bicycle rentals.

Historic

COMMENT: *The Corridor and associated features are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. If a trail is constructed by removing some of the railroad tracks, will the Corridor be removed from the National Register?*

RESPONSE: When fully implemented, the new UMP would result in the railroad operating on 85.5 miles (as opposed to its current 51 mile operation, disconnected) nearly doubling its usable length and consolidating it into one continuous operation from Remsen to Tupper Lake. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office would ensure that the Corridor remains on the National Register.

COMMENT: *What needs to be done to address the Historic nature of the Corridor?*
RESPONSE: Consultation with the NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is being carried out in accordance with Section 14.09 of the NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law to consider the potential impacts (beneficial or adverse) of any action that would cause changes to contributing features of the NY Central Railroad Adirondack Historic District, and any reasonable mitigation measures to address such impacts

Accessibility

COMMENT: *Is removing train service and creating a recreational trail discriminating against the elderly or people with disabilities, since they can no longer ride the train?*
RESPONSE: People with disabilities would not lose access to the scenic train. This amendment provides more than 100 miles for travel by passenger train and in addition, our goal is to provide one or more trail segments to allow a safe, user-defined-pace trail experience for older adults, families with small children, and individuals with disabilities.

COMMENT: *The Train is American Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible. Will the trail be ADA accessible?*
RESPONSE:
Commenters have encouraged DEC to take advantage of this opportunity to provide an accessible trail which allow universal access for all visitors. The Corridor is owned by the People of the State of New York and should be enjoyed by all, regardless of their physical capabilities or age. A full demographic range of public have commented upon how difficult it is to bike, rollerblade, and even walk along the public road system in the Tri-Lakes region, and how this recreational trail would now enable them to get low-impact exercise and fresh air. All trails and facilities constructed on the corridor would comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The 2013 Outdoor Developed Areas Accessibility Guidelines, issued by the U.S. Access Board, would be used to provide the technical standards for trail and trail facility accessibility.

Existing Trails

COMMENT: *There are already miles of trails in the Adirondack Park, why do we need another trail?*
RESPONSE: The recreational trail proposed in this UMP Amendment would be like no other trail in the Park. It would have a much more gradual elevation change, it would be wider, and - most importantly - it would connect local communities in the process. This

would be a community and family-based trail the likes of which does not exist anywhere else in the Park.

COMMENT: *What about the current trail converted from rail, the Bloomingdale Bog Trail?*
RESPONSE: The Bloomingdale Bog Trail is an old rail-bed that was converted to a trail. It starts over a mile outside of the Village of Saranac Lake and heads north and away from communities. The Bloomingdale Bog Trail is not the character of trail requested by the public during any of the comment periods, provides no community or asset destinations to attract users, and more importantly, it does not address the question at hand which is: what is the best public use of the underutilized Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor?

Recreational Trail Attributes

COMMENT: *Who will maintain the recreational trail?*
RESPONSE: The DEC would be responsible for managing the trail from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid. DEC would seek partners (i.e. municipalities, citizen groups, etc.) to assist with the construction and maintenance of the trail. The Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) has expressed an interest in partnering with DEC for this responsibility.

COMMENT: *If the preferred alternative of constructing a recreational trail is approved, will there be new parking areas, sanitary facilities, and service areas?*
RESPONSE: Yes, over time. Planning for the multiple use trail would include an analysis of all possible uses by the public. The State would work closely with the affected municipalities and citizen groups to develop visitor amenities as needed.

COMMENT: *What will be the surface of a recreational trail?*
RESPONSE: At this time, the State is weighing possible alternatives for trail surface which could include a stone dust, pervious pavement, asphalt, or a combination of these types. Final decisions would be made after consultation with the local affected governments and other stakeholders when developing different work-plans for different segments of the Corridor.

COMMENT: *What will a recreational trail do to property values along the Corridor?*
RESPONSE: While it is impossible to forecast precisely what would happen to property values after the creation of the trail, studies have shown that converted rails to trails have resulted in positive, economic impacts to adjacent property values.

"The majority of studies examined indicate that the presence of a bike path/trail either increases property values and ease of sale slightly or has no effect. Studies have shown that neighbors of many bike paths/trails feel that the quality of life of their neighborhood has been improved, that the trails were a good use of open space, and in the case of abandoned railways were an improvement from before the trails went in. " [1]

[1] "Project Report for Property Value/Desireability Effects of Bike Paths Adjacent to Residential Areas", prepared for : Delaware Center for Transportation and The State of Delaware Department of Transportation, David P. Racca and Amardeep Dhanju, November 2006.

At the very least, the adjoining property would no longer experience the visual, noise and vibration impacts associated with a passing train.

Illegal Use of the Corridor

COMMENT: *The Corridor passes through some populated areas. Who will be responsible for enforcement against trespass on adjacent private property?*
RESPONSE: Trespass from this Corridor would be vigorously enforced against. A network of enforcement agencies, including DEC, and the affected towns and villages would work together to deter trespass. It is not expected that a recreational trail would experience more trespass than currently happens in the Corridor. Trains currently pass between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake relatively infrequently, with virtually no railroad use in the remaining portion to Tupper Lake. Experience with other trail systems has shown that trespass is not an insurmountable problem, and that when an abandoned corridor is opened for public use, more people use the resource, which helps to discourage trespass.

COMMENT: *Will public use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Side-by-Side Utility Task Vehicle (UTVs), or any motorized vehicles other than snowmobiles be allowed in the Corridor?*

RESPONSE: No.

COMMENT: *If part of the Corridor becomes a recreational trail, will it be more susceptible to illegal ATV use?*
RESPONSE: ATVs are physically capable of illegally using the corridor with rails intact today, so illegal ATV use of the Corridor could continue. As with the previous trespassing question, ATV use on this Corridor would be enforced against, and increased public use of the Corridor is expected to severely discourage illegal activity since more 'eyes and ears' would be more frequently utilizing the resource. DEC would

post signs to inform users of the prohibition of ATV use, and public outreach would include information relating to uses that are allowed and prohibited.

COMMENT: *If part of the Corridor becomes a recreational trail, will it be more susceptible to criminal activity?*
RESPONSE: As with ATV usage and trespassing, there is no evidence that rail to trail would increase crime rates in the vicinity of the Corridor. In fact, studies have shown that there is actually a decrease in illegal activity along converted rail-trails. DEC anticipates the Corridor would be used more by members of the public as a trail than as a rail corridor. Studies have shown that trails provide a more effective deterrent against crime:

"Compared to the abandoned and forgotten corridors they recycle and replace, trails are a positive community development and a crime prevention strategy of proven value."[2]

[2]Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in Cooperation with National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, *Rail-Trails and Safe Communities, the Experience on 372 Trails.* Washington, DC, 1998.

Future Use of the Corridor

COMMENT: *Don't railroad right-of-ways revert to adjacent landowners when they are abandoned?*
RESPONSE*:* The State acquired fee title to the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor from the Penn Central Corporation through the power of eminent domain. This action extinguished any reversionary property rights in the Corridor which may have existed under Penn Central's ownership.

COMMENT: *Many in the public have questioned why the State would remove rails when they might be needed in the future to serve a vital transportation function.*
RESPONSE: Creating a recreational trail is a way for the public to get outside and enjoy the environment, and travel between communities while using human-power, which is an opportunity that does not currently exist in the Tri-Lakes communities. All of the affected municipalities on the portion of the Corridor that is proposed for a recreational trail have supported this idea. The proposal also calls for the Corridor to remain intact, and the ASLMP classification to remain a Travel Corridor. Therefore, if in the future there was a desire or need to re-establish the railroad or another form of energy-efficient, cost-effective transportation, it could be accommodated without having to re-establish the Corridor.

COMMENT: *Can the railroad be used for freight service?*
RESPONSE: During the past 40 years, no freight use or demand has been identified. As discussed in the original 1996 UMP, "…freight service was continued with decreasing frequency until 1972 when this [service] stopped." Should an emergency or a change in demand for freight occur in the future, Federal authorization to operate as a 'common carrier' would need to be obtained by the railroad operator. This status change would mean that snowmobiles would not be allowed to continue using the Corridor.

Should this unlikely change in demand for freight railroad service occur, a full analysis of the impacts would need to be undertaken.

COMMENT: *Can the recreational trail accommodate equestrian uses?*
RESPONSE: The State does not anticipate allowing equestrian uses on the trail at this time. However, depending on final trail design, this potential use could be reconsidered.

Economics

COMMENT: *What are the estimated costs of the preferred alternative?*
RESPONSE: It is important to note that, while important, economic considerations are not the single critical factor in the decision by the State to move forward with this Amendment. There are many other factors that have been considered, including the best public use of a public resource, and quality of life issues as brought forward time and again by the local population in the Tri-Lakes region. The State has estimated, based on experience on other rail-trail conversions and its work to date repairing the rails in the portions of this Corridor that now operate as a railroad, that the construction cost of a recreational trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, a distance of approximately 33.5 miles, is about $200,000 a mile, or $6.7 million. This is an order of magnitude estimate and consistent with other estimates from the Town of North Elba, Regional Economic Development Councils, the Rails to Trails Conservancy, and the New York Parks and Trails Association. Assumptions about the width of the trail and the surface would affect final costs. Additional costs related to the development of a recreational trail include the potential payback to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of up to $2.3 million in costs incurred in the restoration of the rail service between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid, and trail planning between Lake Placid and Ray Brook.

Whether a reimbursement is ultimately required if the final decision is made to build a recreational trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid will be the focus of follow up discussions between the state and FHWA.

Also, it is estimated that the costs of the tie and rail removal would exceed the potential salvage value of these materials by $1.1 million, thus the estimated total costs for the development and construction of the 33.5 mile recreational trail is estimated at $10.1 million. The State also acknowledges that some of these materials could be recycled and used on the rail improvements between Big Moose and Tupper Lake. Despite losing the salvage for those materials if that scenario were to take place, the cost of construction materials would correspondingly decrease in the Big Moose to Tupper Lake section and may reduce the potential payback to the Federal Highway Administration.
DOT has estimated that the cost of rail restoration between Big Moose and Tupper Lake, a distance of approximately 44 miles, is $250,000 a mile, or $11 million. Thus, total costs for the rail rehabilitation called for in the preferred alternative is about $11 million. This estimate is based on the railroad operating on Federal Rail Administration (FRA) class 2 track that allows train speeds of 30 mph, the current situation on the

existing Saranac Lake to Lake Placid train. If higher speeds are decided necessary, a higher track class would need to be obtained at a higher restoration cost, with the primary difference being the replacement of a greater proportion of the ties. Estimates have been based on DOT's Pay Item Catalog, the RS Means Heavy Construction Cost Data and DOT's historic involvement in this and other rail rehabilitation projects.

Annual Maintenance costs are estimated to be similar for either an active rail or a recreational trail, about $1,500 a mile. These estimates are consistent with DOT's actual maintenance costs, which has included reimbursement of maintenance expenditures made by the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, and cost estimates prepared by others, including the Rails to Trails Conservancy in Washington, DC. Costs include those for vegetative management, beaver control and emergency wash out repairs. Should the decision be made to construct a recreational trail on the Tupper Lake to Lake Placid segment, efforts would be made by the State to reach out to ORDA, the Town of North Elba, villages of Lake Placid, Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake and non-profit recreational groups to help in the maintenance of the trail, a common feature in other recreational trail developments in New York and around the country.

COMMENT: *Is the Camoin study adequate to address the economics of this Amendment?*
RESPONSE: There have been concerns raised about the Camoin study. The concerns ranged from railroad advocates indicating that continued development of the train to Lake Placid would generate more tourism, to snowmobile and trail advocates indicating that the study undercounts use of the Corridor if the tracks are removed. The Camoin study was an economic analysis of the economic contributions that three possible scenarios would bring: all rail, all trail, and a trail from Lake Placid to Tupper Lake with the railroad upgraded to allow passenger excursions to Tupper Lake. The study concluded that all three scenarios would have positive economic outcomes. Camoin was selected through a competitively based procurement process by Economic State Development (ESD) because the organization demonstrated its ability and knowledge of the study area in question. It conducted a thorough review of the pertinent studies already undertaken on this issue, interviewed tourism officials, railroad advocates, snowmobile advocates and trail advocates. It based its assumptions on future railroad use directly on the estimates and assumptions provided by the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, snowmobile use from surveys conducted previously by the State Snowmobile Association and trail use by reviewing studies from the Rails to Trails Conservancy, Adirondack Action and the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Camoin study confirmed that the Corridor is an important engine of economic growth and that all three scenarios resulted in economic benefits to the region.

COMMENT: *Is Tupper Lake a suitable last stop for the railroad, economically speaking?*
RESPONSE: Economic considerations are only part of the analysis for this Amendment. Tupper Lake businesses, citizens, and elected officials have largely favored the Village of Tupper Lake becoming the last stop for both the railroad and the multi-use recreational trail. Much of this enthusiasm is in anticipation of a better snowmobile trail coming in from Lake Clear, Saranac Lake, and Lake Placid. Tupper

Lake already has a tourist business base, and excellent infrastructure, with the potential to grow further as a premier train and trail tourist destination.

Snowmobiles

COMMENT: *Why is snowmobiling such a high consideration in decision-making along this Corridor?*
RESPONSE: Snowmobiling is a strong economic engine in the Adirondack Park in a time of year when tourism opportunities are reduced compared to other seasons. State snowmobiling guidance stresses connecting Adirondack Park communities by snowmobile trail, and the Corridor offers very high potential to directly connect the Tri-Lakes region with Beaver River and the Town of Webb's extensive snowmobile trail network. Otherwise, riders are forced to travel far out of their way to connect with these destinations. While this may not seem like much of a hardship to a non-snowmobiler, the reality is that, as noted by commenters, snowmobilers do indeed skip visiting Tupper Lake, for example, because they can get somewhere else, or must stay local, to stay on their schedule.

COMMENT: *Is the continued use of snowmobiles in the Tupper Lake to Lake Placid segment of the Corridor in jeopardy once rails are removed as a result of this Amendment?*
RESPONSE: No. The Corridor is under the jurisdiction of DOT and serves as a railroad right of way – this railroad right of way is classified by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) as a Travel Corridor and it has historically, and will continue to be, managed as such pursuant to the guidelines in the APSLMP. This is no different than many other similar Travel Corridors under DOT jurisdiction in the Adirondack Park. Train, bicycle, snowmobile, pedestrian, and many other modes, are legitimate forms of transportation.

COMMENT: *Will the permitted time of year for snowmobiles (December 1st to April 30th) change with this Amendment?*
RESPONSE: Snowmobile use within Corridor Segment 1 will continue to be allowed between December 1 and April 30 each year. The railroad operator may propose rail operations on Segment 1 of the corridor between December 1 and December 31. Any such proposal shall describe the physical limits and schedule of rail operations, projected ridership and coordination with snowmobile use. The proposal would be reviewed by DOT and DEC, assessed through public comment, and if accepted by mutual agreement of these agencies, permits for use of the corridor would be adjusted as necessary to accommodate rail use through December 31st.

COMMENT: *Will snowmobiles be allowed in Lake Placid if the preferred alternative is built?*

RESPONSE: No. The village of Lake Placid currently has an ordinance in place banning snowmobiles from the village. The State will honor that ordinance and work closely with the village to enforce it.

COMMENT: *How will snowmobiles safely coexist with other trail users on the Lake Placid to Tupper Lake segment?*
RESPONSE: Details as to the surface and construction of the trail are still being analyzed, as is the safety protocol for mixed-uses. One solution being contemplated is developing lanes of travel – one for snowmobiles and one for non-motorized uses – that can be divided with a soft-flagging boundary. Just as bicycles and motorists coexist on public highways, so can snowmobiles and cross-country skiing. With proper signage and clear right of way protocol, a high margin of safety and enjoyment can be established for all users.

COMMENT: *How will snowmobile safety and courtesy be handled with respect to residents and other trail users?*
RESPONSE: Snowmobile clubs and organizations have a very good reputation for a respectful and safety conscience membership. They have been very successful policing themselves when it comes to snowmobile activity in the Adirondack Park. The State would ensure that these clubs/associations work with local municipalities to establish geographically appropriate restrictions on time of day, speed, and noise. If these privileges are abused, prohibition/restrictions of snowmobiles on section(s) of the corridor may be warranted.

Forest Preserve/Article XIV

COMMENT: *Can you explain where the railroad is covered by the Article XIV? Article XIV states Forest Preserve cannot be leased. Does the Corridor apply? Will conversion to a trail be considered a "new use" according the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP)? Once the rails are gone, will the Right-Of-Way have to be left alone and revert to natural forest succession?*
RESPONSE: The Corridor is under the jurisdiction of DOT and serves as a railroad right of way – this railroad right of way is classified by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) as a Travel Corridor and it has historically, and will continue to be, managed as such pursuant to the guidelines in the APSLMP. This is no different than many other similar Travel Corridors under DOT jurisdiction in the Adirondack Park. Train, bicycle, snowmobile, pedestrian, and many other modes, are legitimate forms of transportation.

General

COMMENT: *Are the comments sent in during the comment period for this Amendment tallied to quantify support and opposition for the proposed actions?*
RESPONSE: All comments received during the comment period, and listening sessions conducted in 2014, have been reviewed by DOT and DEC staff. While the comment period was not a vote, and while staff did not tally support and opposition, it was a chance for the public to submit comments about issues that they felt needed to be addressed in the Amendment. The comments have helped inform the State's decision-making on this important and complex issue.

COMMENT: *Wouldn't the removal of rails result in more automobile congestion?*
RESPONSE: No. The current train is an excursion train, which requires people to drive to either Lake Placid or Saranac Lake to partake in the train ride, the operation of which does not diminish automobile traffic. The preferred alternative does not affect the operation of the current train from Remsen to Big Moose. It is possible that the construction of a recreational trail would result in people walking or biking between the communities of Lake Placid, Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake, reducing some automobile trips. Some commenters noted the advantages of being able to commute on this Corridor, by bike or otherwise, to work between these communities without having to get into their car.

COMMENT: *Can a longer term lease be put in place for the operator of the train?*
RESPONSE: One of the goals of the preferred alternative is to encourage a longer term lease. A revised contract between an operator and DOT, which manages the Corridor, must be approved by DOT and the Office of State Comptroller, which has approval authority over such matters.

COMMENT: *If a recreational trail is built on the Lake Placid to Tupper Lake segment, it will travel through many remote areas. Will this hamper emergency response and law enforcement?*
RESPONSE: DEC has much experience with remote area search and rescue, and law enforcement. Many trails in the State trail system are far more difficult and remote for emergency response personnel and law enforcement, and there is always a 'use at your own risk' factor when people utilize the State trail system. Specifically with regard to this Corridor, as remote as some sections might be, there are many road crossings that facilitate the ability of emergency personnel to access this trail. Increased public use of the Corridor would also result in more eyes and ears on the Corridor, which would also help reduce the time period to respond to emergencies. Rescue protocols with neighboring municipalities would be explored.

COMMENT: *Many have questioned why the State would get rid of a viable transportation use.*
RESPONSE: A long distance recreational trail is also a viable transportation use and appreciated by the many communities that are developing them. It is a healthy form of outdoor recreation, recognized by many health advocates as a positive addition to

communities. A long distance recreational trail is unlike the hundreds of miles of hiking trails in the Adirondacks, which for the most part, do not accommodate bicycles, wheel chairs and baby strollers. The preferred alternative includes improving the train from its current terminus in Big Moose to Tupper Lake, a distance of 44 miles. Thus, this proposal, if adopted, would result in a continuous train that operates on 88.5 miles of the Corridor, with a long distance trail that traverses 33.5 miles, connecting the Tri-Lakes area.

COMMENT: *With an increase in recreationists taking the train into remote areas, there will be an increase in environmental, enforcement, and emergency response impacts. Will the State implement a permit system?*
RESPONSE: Train ridership offers an opportunity to manage use of remote areas adjacent to the Corridor. If problems of overuse occur, a permitting or quota system may be warranted.

COMMENT: *If there is a long-term lease implemented for a future railroad operator, and the railroad struggles or fails, will it "tie-up" the Corridor and leave it once again in its current underutilized condition?*
RESPONSE: A long-term lease agreement for the Corridor can be crafted such that controls are in place to assure that the State can move forward with utilizing the Corridor, should the active operator experience hardship beyond established performance thresholds.

COMMENT: *What happens if the current railroad company that owns and controls the section of tracks between Utica and Snow Junction fails or decides it needs more money for track usage fees from the Corridor railroad operator than they can afford?*
RESPONSE: The railroad from Utica to Snow Junction (Remsen) is not in State ownership, and therefore beyond the scope of this UMP Amendment. The present rail operator of the Remsen – Lake Placid Corridor has negotiated a private contract with the owner of the Corridor south of Remsen for access under mutually beneficial terms. It is a risk that would need to be assumed by any rail operator embarking on a lease of the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor.

COMMENT: *What if Lake Placid wins a bid for the Winter Olympics sometime in the future? Isn't the railroad all the way to Lake Placid an important part of transportation infrastructure?*
RESPONSE: Should the Olympics return to the Lake Placid area, the Travel Corridor classification and Corridor status would still be in effect, and the railroad could be restored and upgraded as necessary.

COMMENT: *In an effort to boost local communications infrastructure, can a high-speed fiber-optic line be buried in the Corridor for the communities that it connects?*
RESPONSE: The Corridor is under DOT jurisdiction. It is possible to install underground utilities assuming that permits are able to be obtained pursuant to State and local land use regulations (e.g. setbacks and wetland disturbance, etc.).

COMMENT: *Can rail improvements include upgrade to allow Class II passenger operations (top speed 45 mph)?*

RESPONSE: DOT believes that operation at Class II speeds (30 mph maximum allowable speed) is the minimum level of service necessary in this Corridor. Class III operation (60 mph maximum speed) would be considered based on operational needs and funding availability.

COMMENT: *Railroad to Tupper should be a priority for DOT and brought up to FRA standards immediately.*
RESPONSE: The Transition Plan found in Appendix 4 of this document identifies the steps necessary for both trail implementation and rehabilitation of the rail Corridor between Big Moose and Tupper Lake. DOT would implement its responsibilities with respect to the plan as expeditiously as resources would allow.

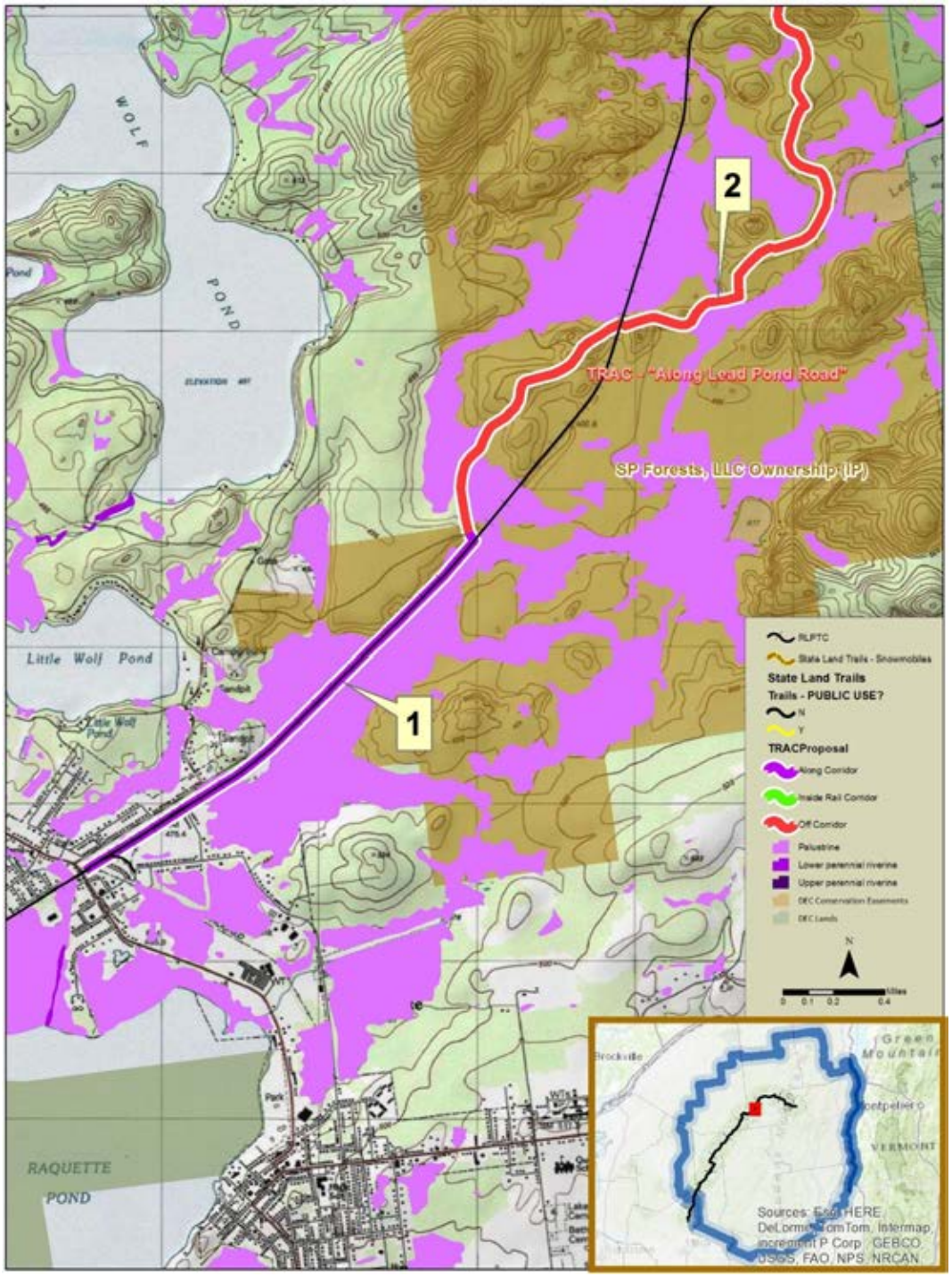
COMMENT: *Modifying the rail bed between the tracks, such as is done on snowmobile trail networks in other states like New Hampshire, a safer, more user-friendly snowmobiling experience could be created.*
RESPONSE: DOT is not familiar with the measures described in the comment and therefore takes no position at this time. However, DOT would consider allowing installation of measures that would not interfere with the operation and maintenance of the rail infrastructure.

COMMENT: *Is there an alternative to using the train whistle in the remote areas of the Corridor?*
RESPONSE:
Use of the locomotive horn at grade crossings is mandated by federal regulation (49 CFR Part 222). The regulation includes a provision for the establishment of “Quiet Zones” by localities, who must first install supplemental safety measures at each “quiet” crossing to mitigate the increased risk caused by the absence of the horn.

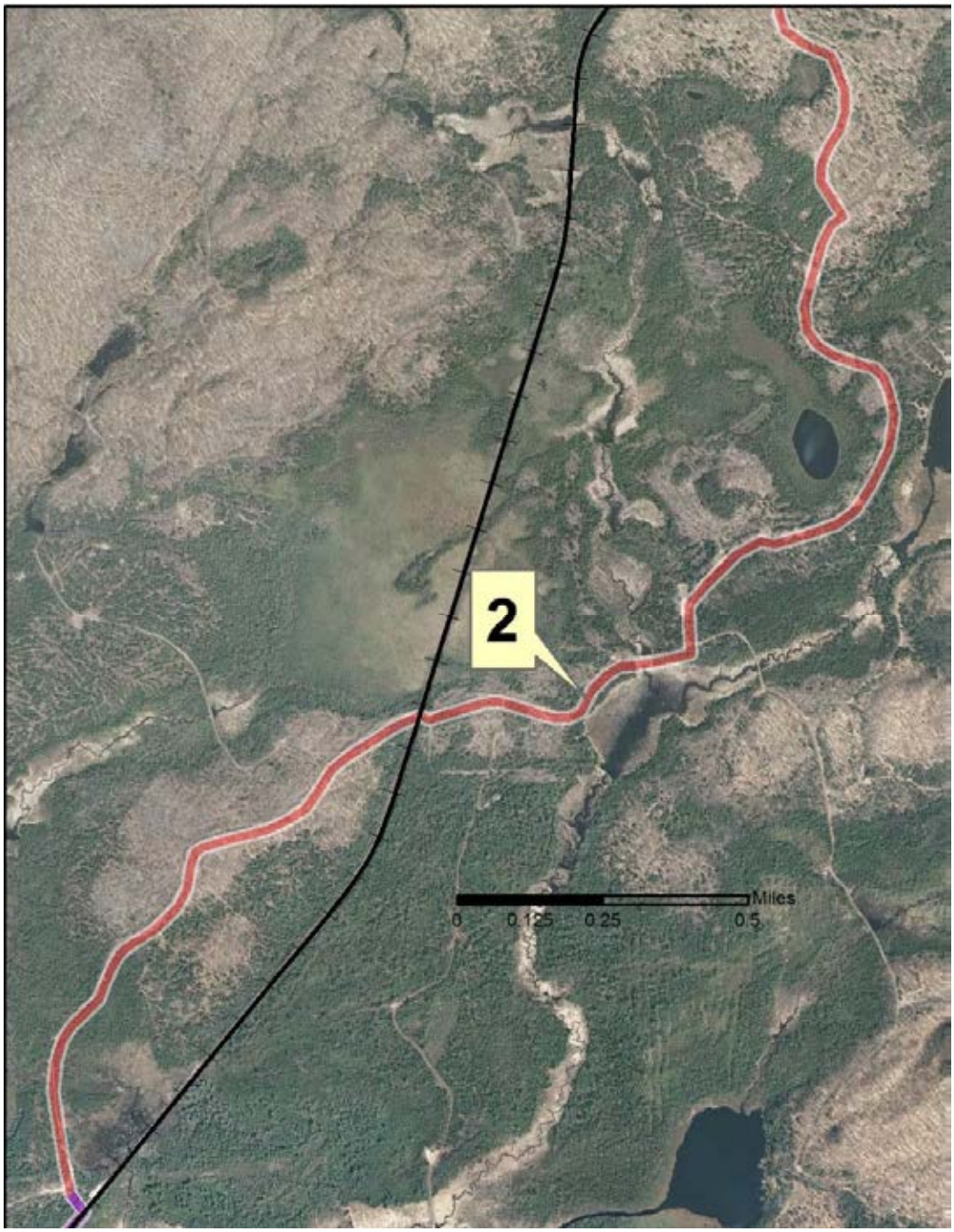
Appendix 3

Review of Rails-With-Trail Design Proposal by Trail with Rail Action Committee (TRAC)

TRAIL SECTION:
Tupper Lake, International Paper Conservation Easement

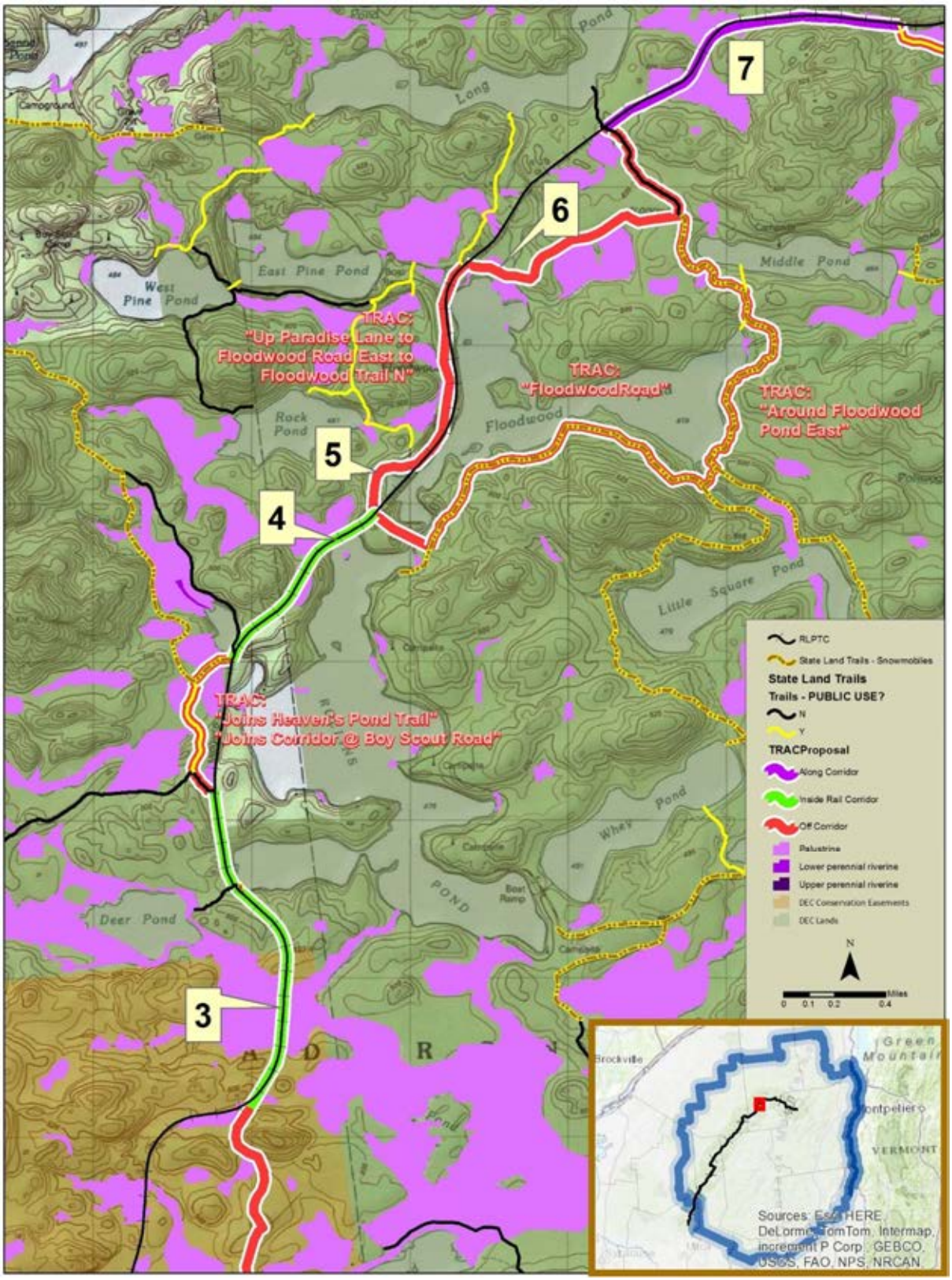


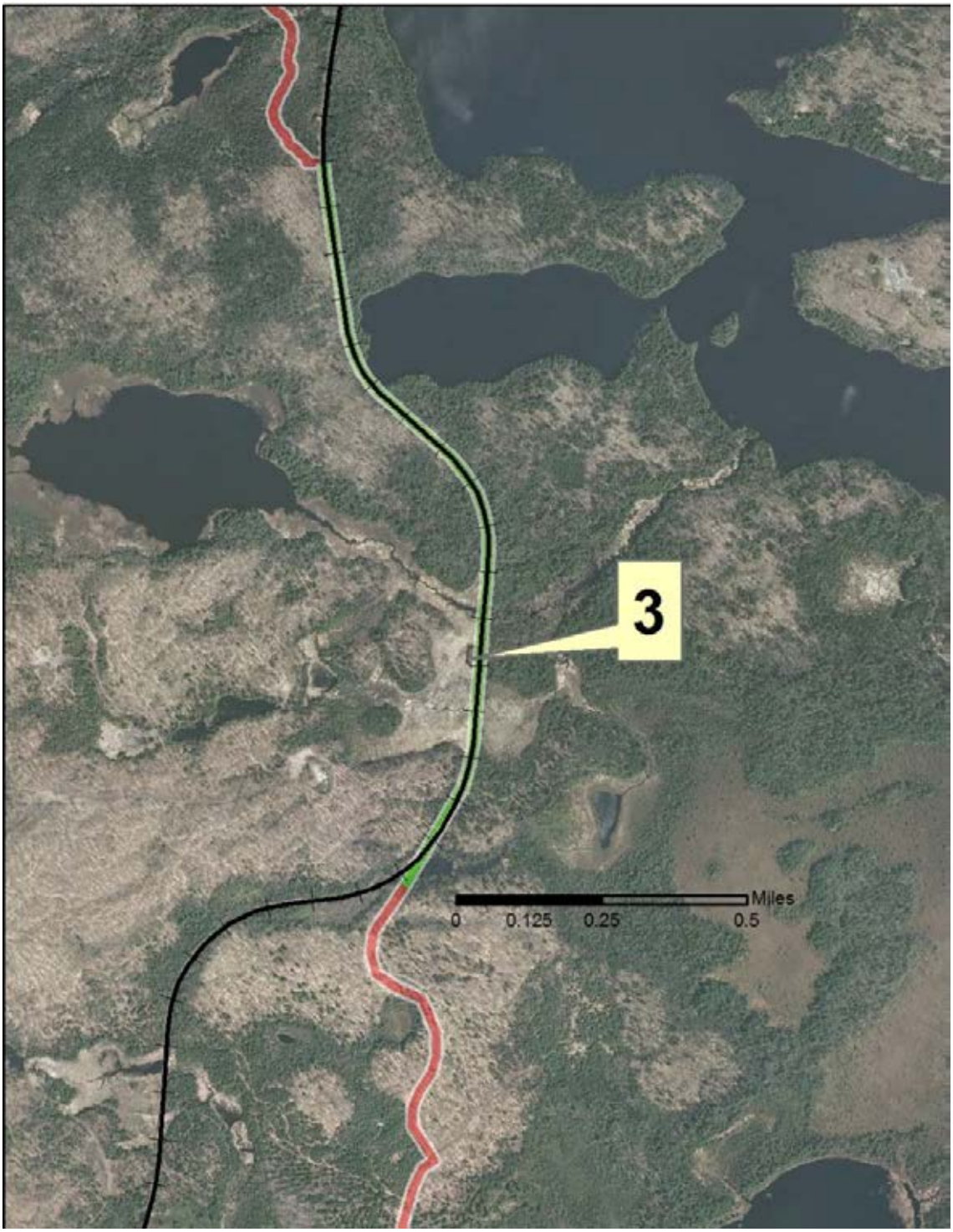
TRAC proposes to route the public “Along the Corridor” (**Map Label #1**), where an estimated 1 mile of potential wetlands would need to be filled-in to complete a parallel trail. This segment is located between Tupper Lake and the start of TRAC’s alternative route off the Corridor on the conservation easement.



TRAC's suggested route off the Corridor in this segment (**Map Label #2**), could potentially become a public trail. The route shown uses logging/skid roads and traverses some very wet areas. There is potential to re-route TRAC's route through drier areas on this easement. It is important to note that the roads/trails on this property are shared with leased hunting camps and logging operations, so safety and user experiences relating to this must be taken into consideration. Snowmobiling and biking could both be theoretically possible off the Corridor in this easement.

TRAIL SECTION:
International Paper Conservation Easement to Rollins Pond





The segment of trail “Inside the Rail Corridor” TRAC proposes in the vicinity of **Map Point #3** passes through significant wetlands that would need to be filled-in, for an estimated 1/3 of a mile.

Map Point #4, a stretch that TRAC proposes to go “Inside the Rail Corridor”, there is a significant causeway at a rail bridge with Rollins Pond on one side and a large wetland on the other, making it too narrow for a rail and parallel trail.

Map Point #5 shows the vicinity of Paradise Lane. This part of TRAC's alternative is probably not feasible because that road is mostly privately-owned, and therefore would require private landowner permissions.

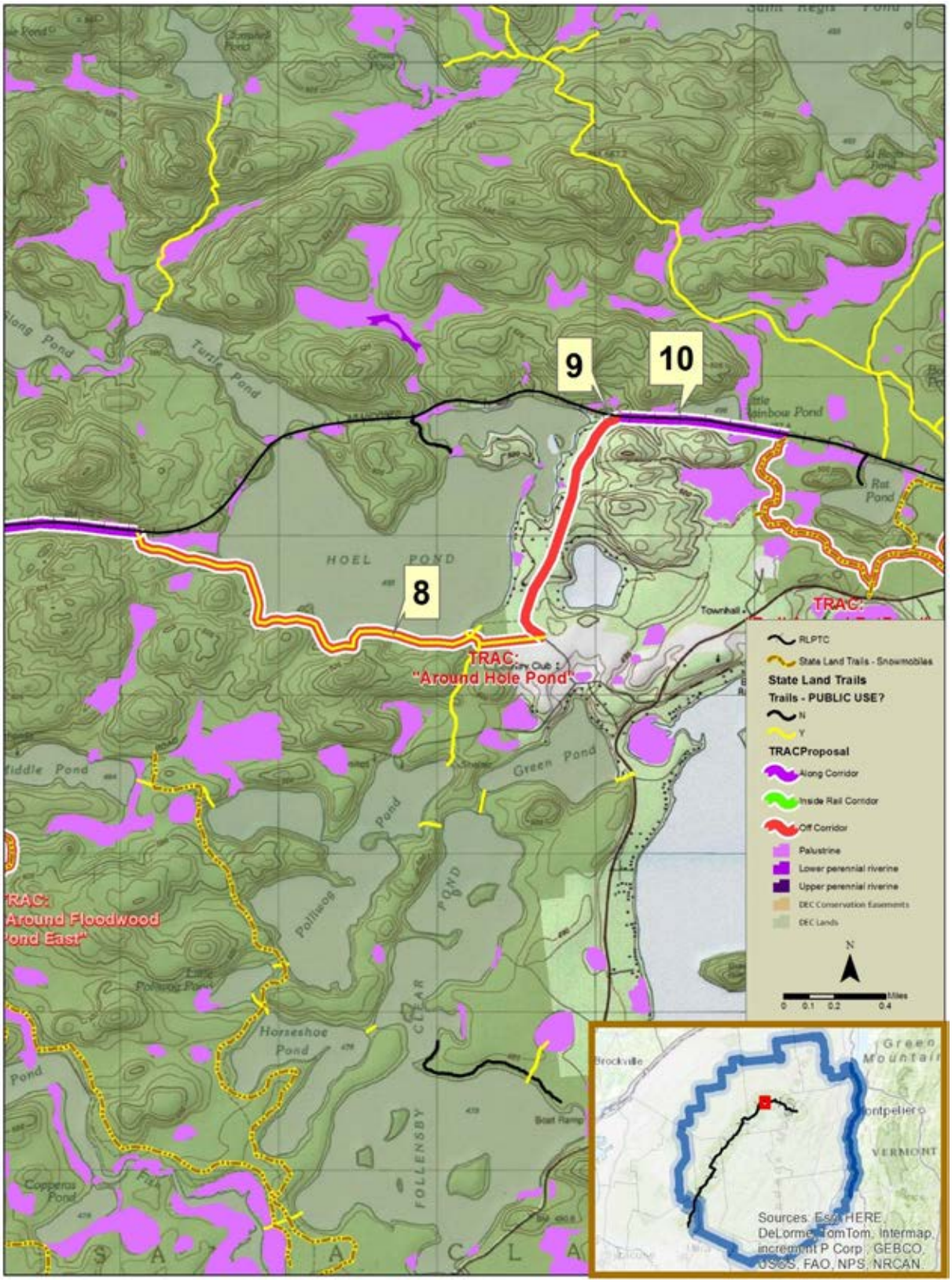
Map Point #6 notes where a significant bridge would need to be built at the Rollins Pond outlet, in order for this alternative to be feasible. This bridge is highly desirable

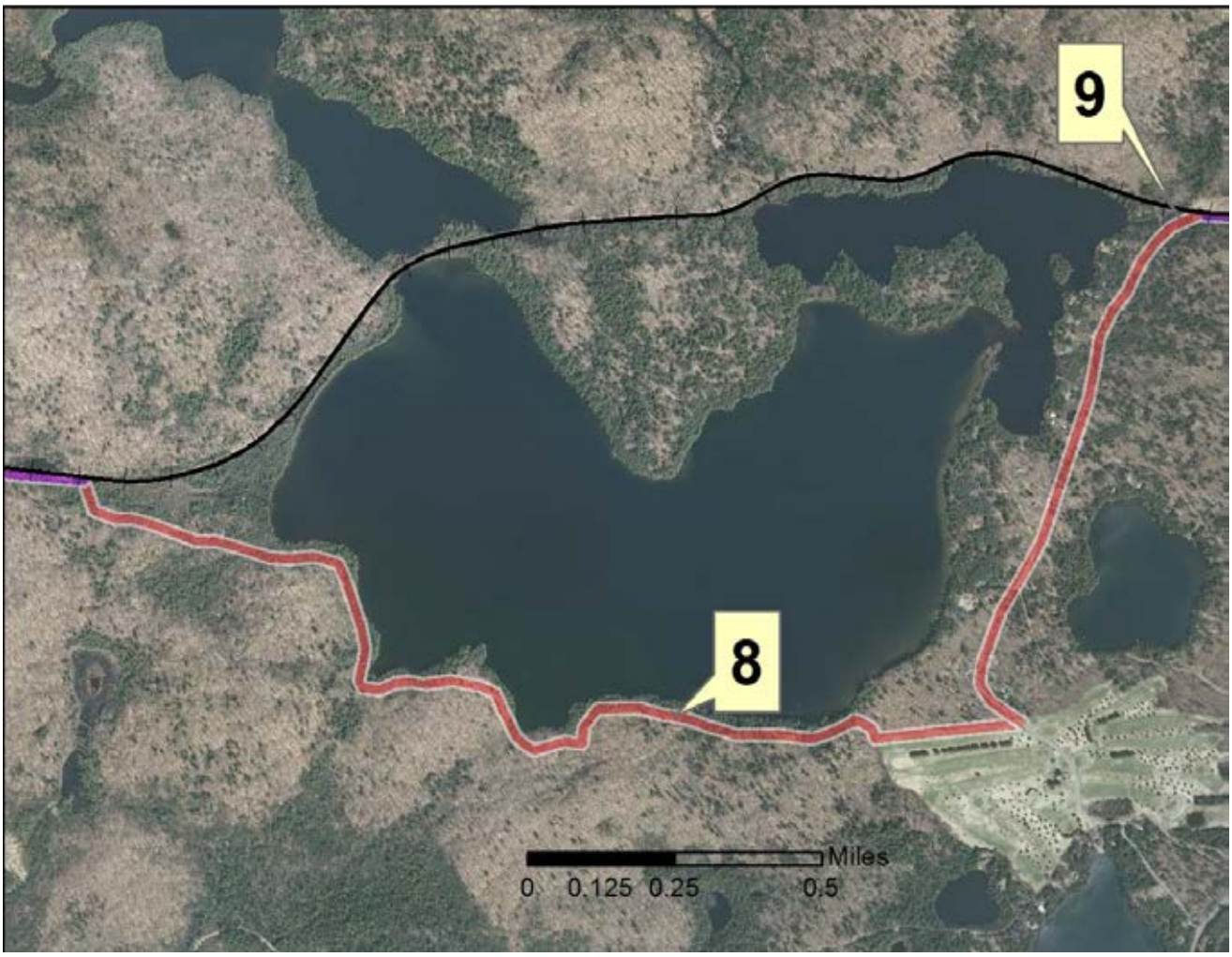
from a DEC perspective for trail connections with the Rollins Pond/Fish Creek Campgrounds. That would make TRAC's Floodwood Road route possible. Some sections of TRAC's Floodwood Road loop would need to be improved and opened to public use.

Map Point #7 shows where TRAC proposes a segment approximately 0.5 miles "Along Corridor", which would result in adverse impact or loss of regulated wetlands.

TRAIL SECTION:

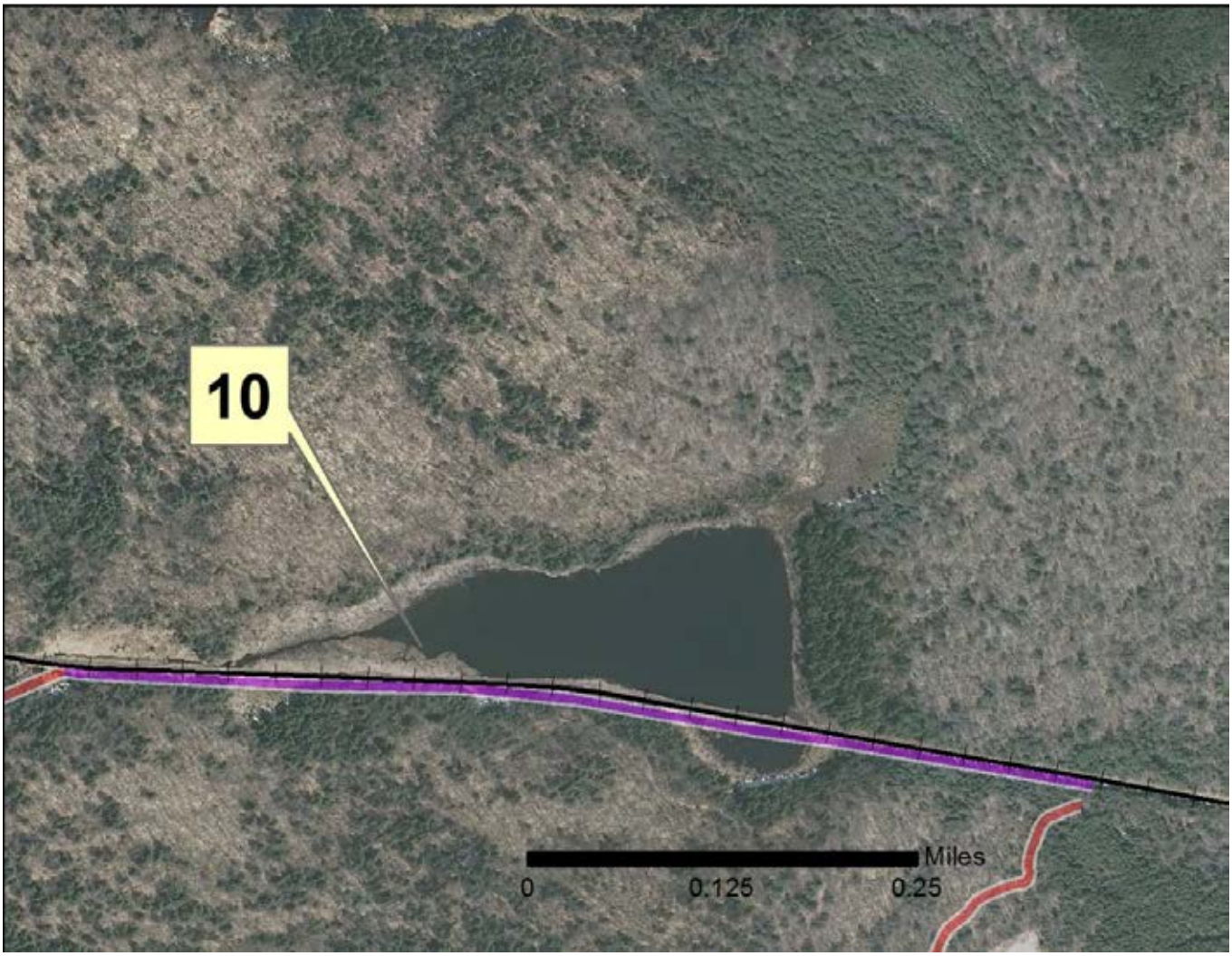
Hoel Pond





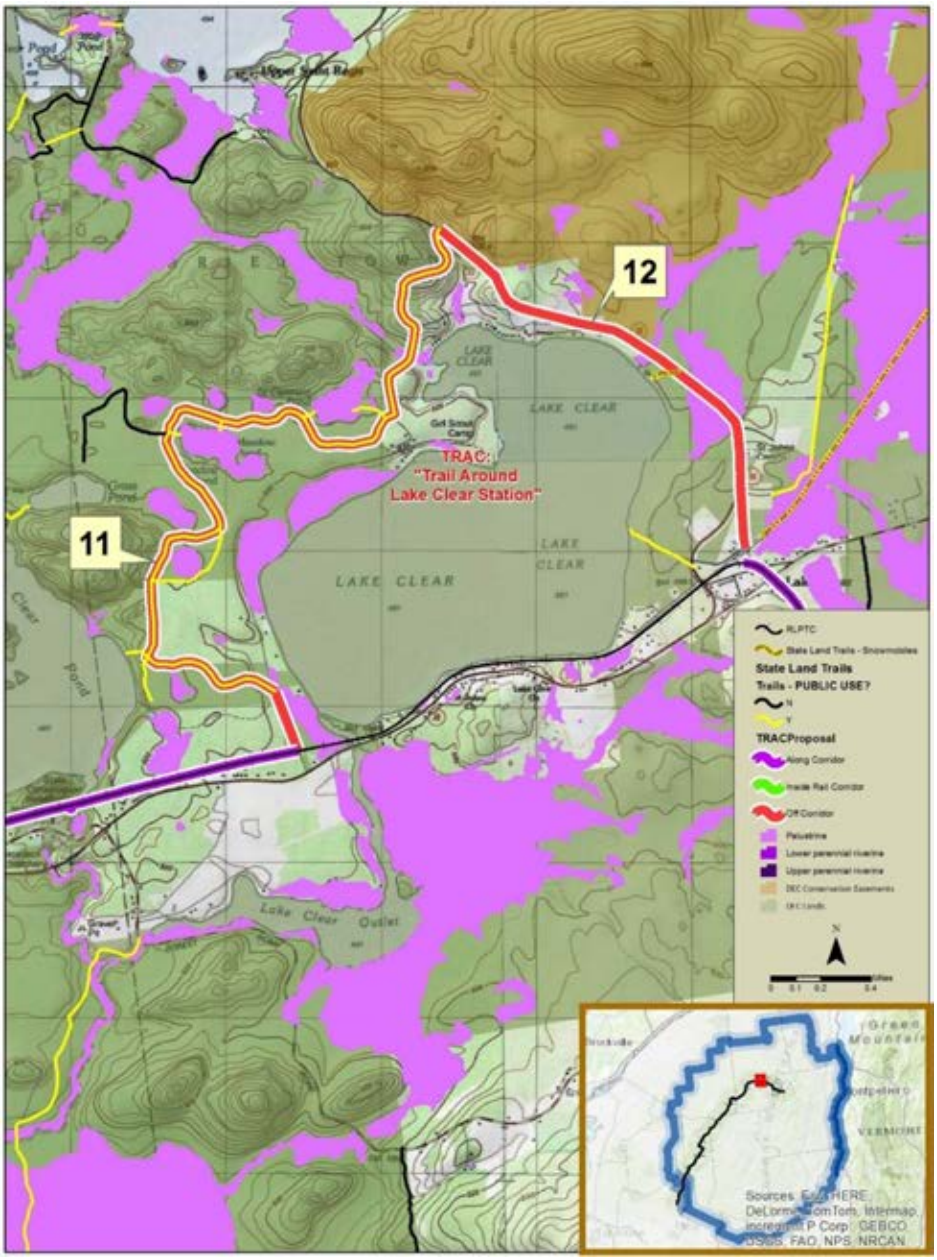
TRAC's suggested route in this map, at **Map Point #8**, goes around Hoel Pond. It starts as a herd path on the southeast side of the pond, and diminishes going west, where there are currently some primitive campsites. It is feasible that this trail system can be upgraded. This proposed segment, however, bypasses potential future access locations for people with disabilities. The Corridor offers easier water-access potential than the Hoel Pond loop.

At **Map Point #9**, shows the town road being utilized as an alternative route in the TRAC proposal, heading north from the country club, has private property at the end. Any connection to the Corridor from this road would need to be negotiated with the private landowner.



At **Map Point #10**, TRAC's "Along Corridor" segment goes through wetlands and over an open water causeway, making this proposed segment infeasible.

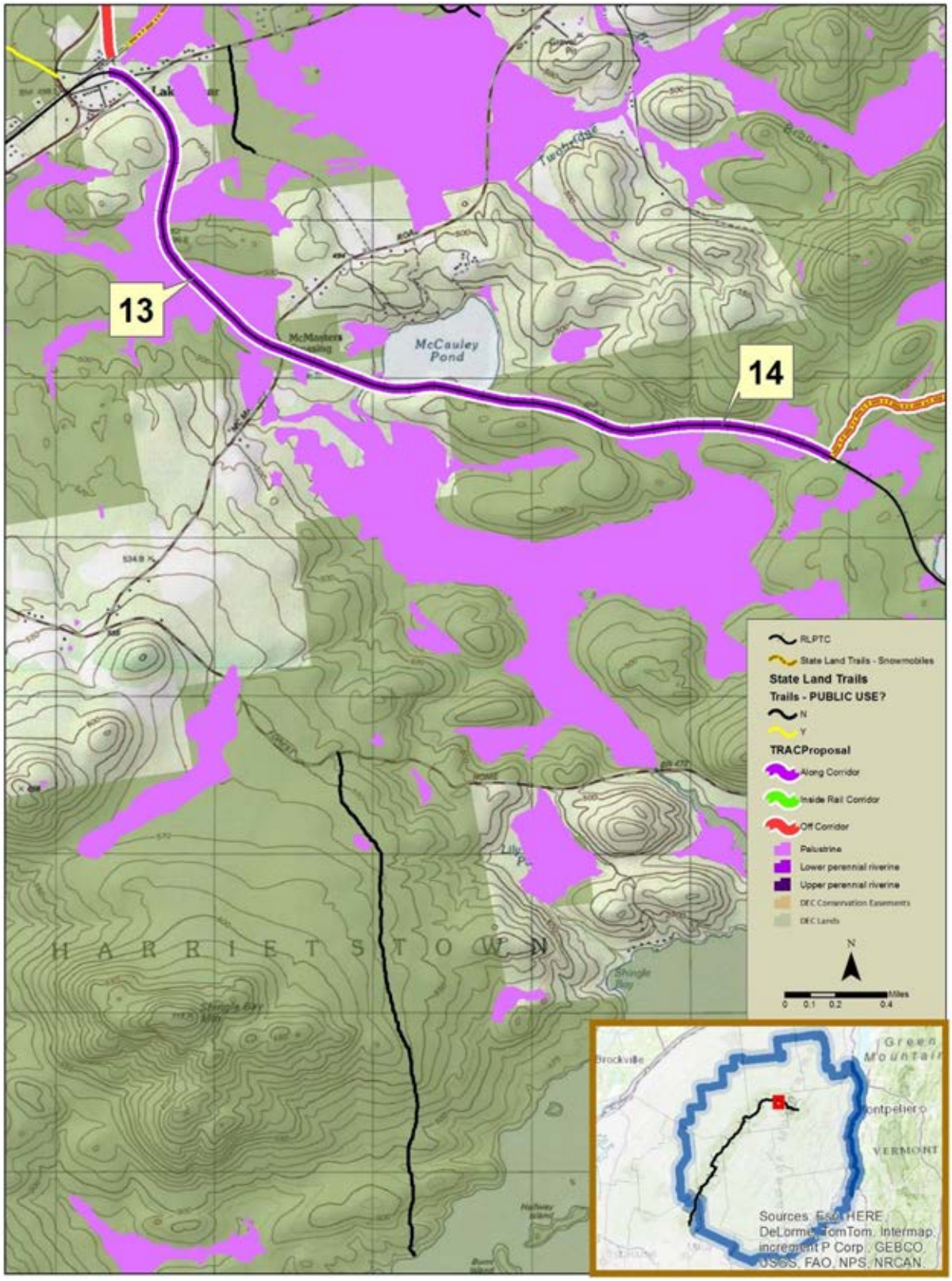
TRAIL SECTION:
Lake Clear (no aerial photo maps needed)

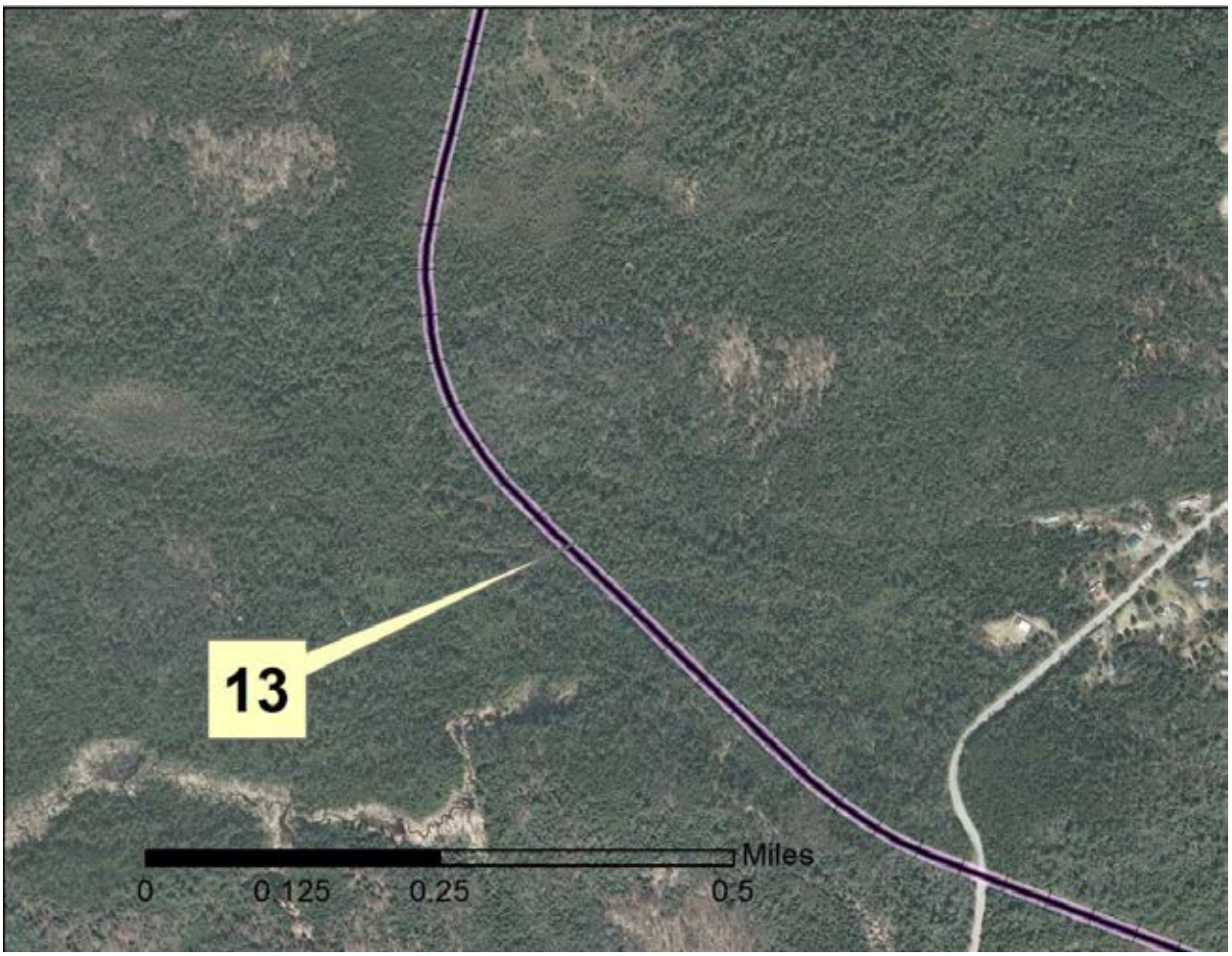


Map Point #11 - Snowmobiles and bikes are prohibited, by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, in the Canoe Area.

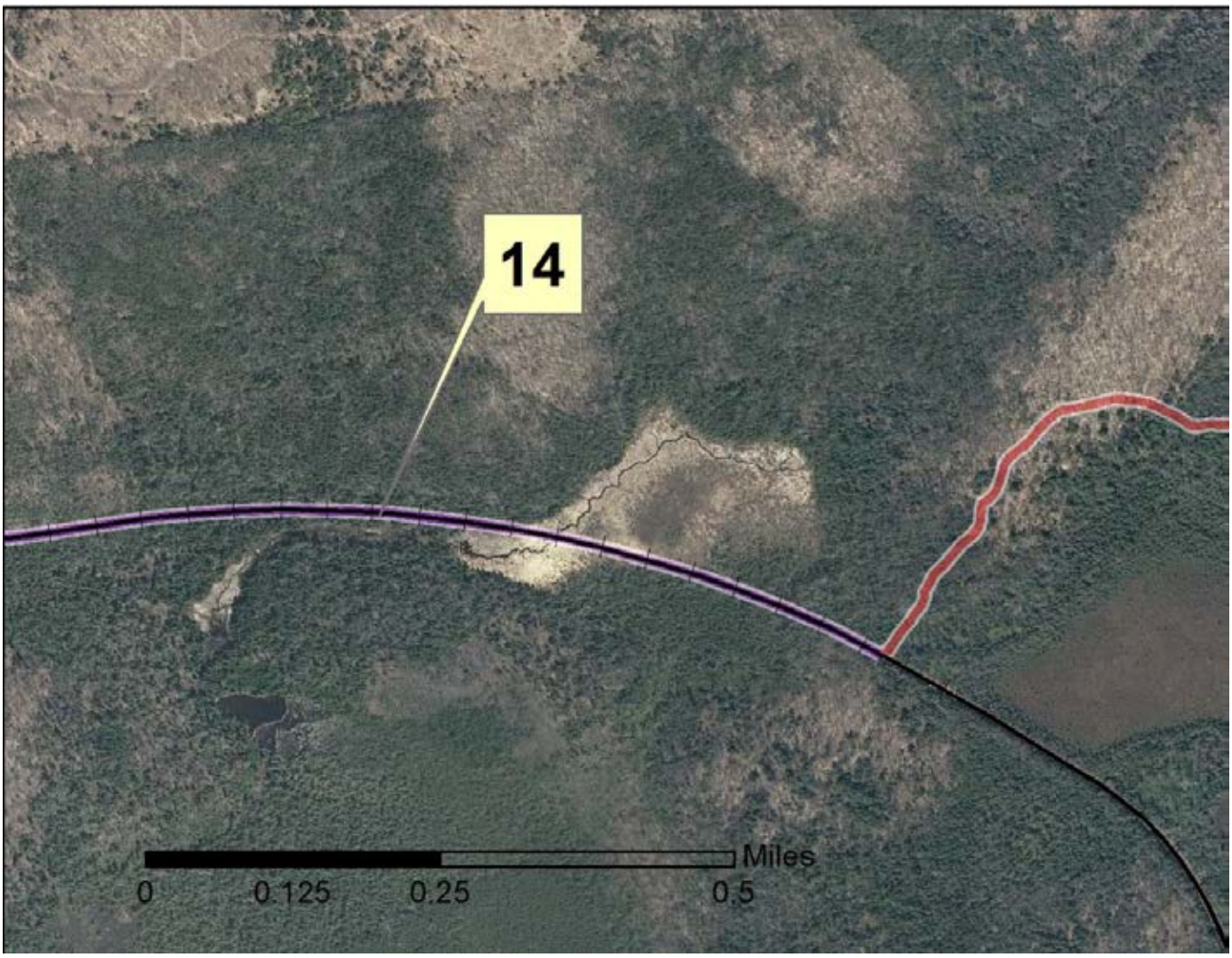
Map Point #12 shows TRAC's segment along Route 30 which is not recommended for safety reasons, and would most likely reduce or eliminate family-oriented recreation. A possible alternative to that segment is on the north side of that road, on conservation easement land, but a crossing of Route 30 is not recommended for safety reasons, as well. Additionally, a trail on that easement would need to detour north, around significant wetlands.

TRAIL SECTION:
McCauley Pond





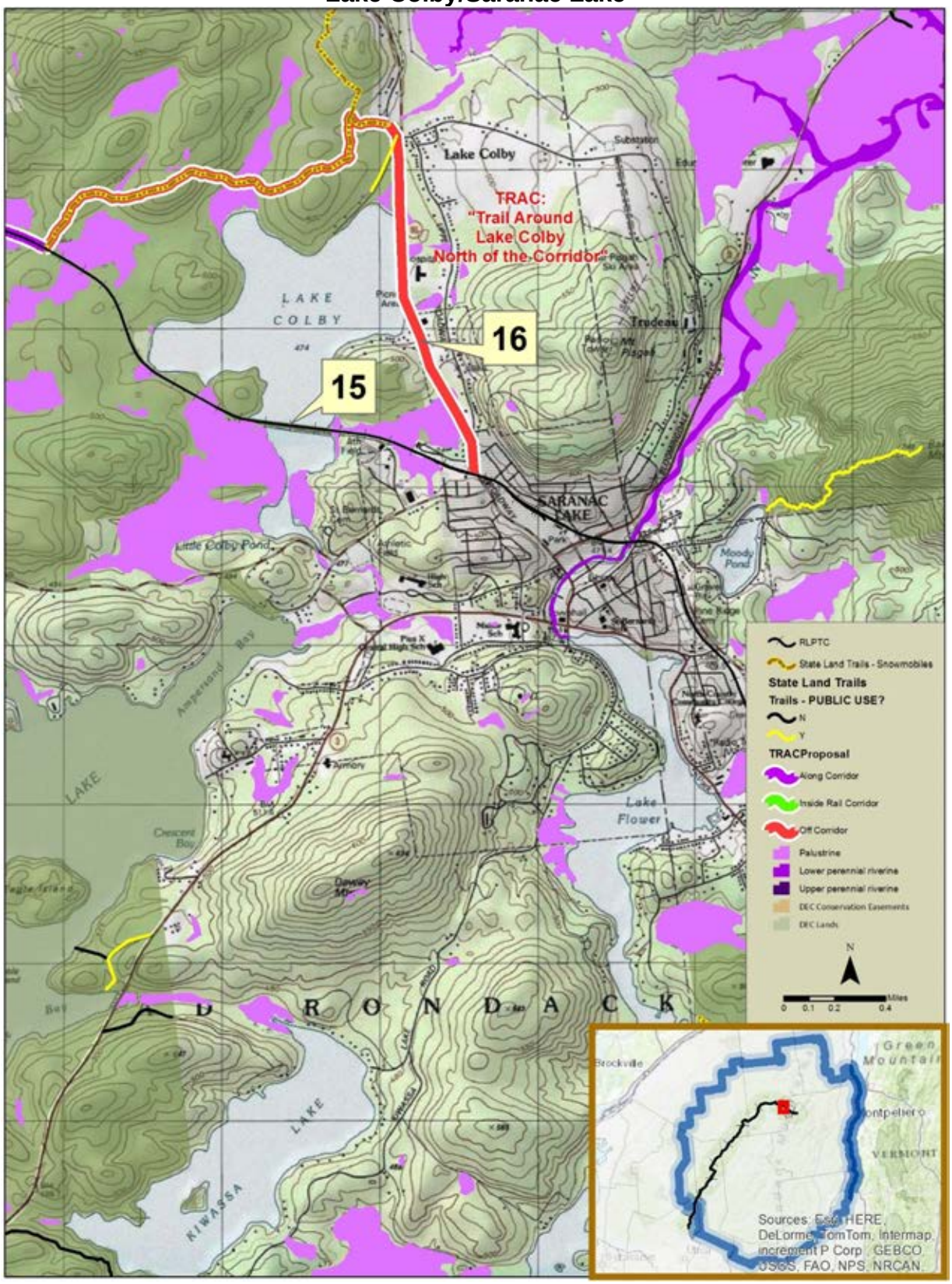
Map Point #13 shows where TRAC proposes a segment approximately 1 mile “Along Corridor”, which would result in adverse impact or loss of regulated wetlands.

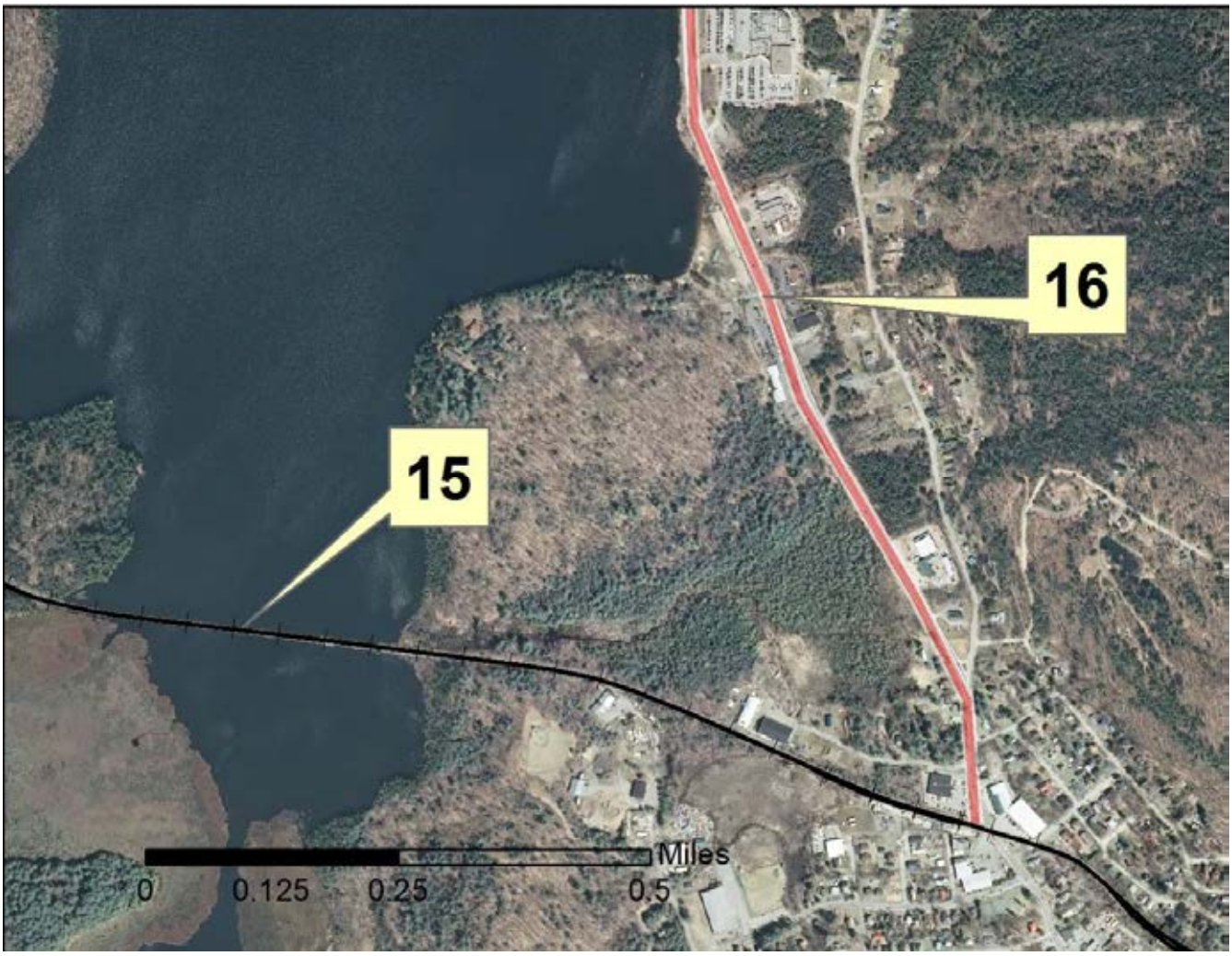


Map Point #14 shows where TRAC proposes a segment approximately 0.7 mile “Along Corridor”, which would result in adverse impact or loss of regulated wetlands.

TRAIL SECTION:

Lake Colby/Saranac Lake





TRAC's route around Lake Colby bypasses the Lake Colby causeway (**Map Point #15**), which has potential to become fishing and paddling access for people with disabilities.

Routing the trail along Route 86 (**Map Point #16**), despite a wider shoulder than other segments of this State road, is not recommended for safety reasons, and would most likely reduce or eliminate family-oriented recreation.

Appendix 4

Transition Plan

This plan provides for an orderly transition from rail use to trail use of the Corridor between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid and implementation of the Big Moose to Tupper Lake rail line. Rail service shall not be terminated north of Tupper Lake until November 30, 2016 after final approval of this amendment to the Unit Management Plan.

In addition, DEC and DOT recognize that there are a number of steps that must be taken to implement the UMP. These steps may begin as soon as this Amendment to the Unit Management Plan is approved.

A) Funding:

- DEC to identify funding for implementation of trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid.
- DOT to identify funding for rehabilitation of rail line between Big Moose and Tupper Lake.
- DOT and DEC to discuss with FHWA prior federal investments in rail infrastructure and recreational trail planning, and steps necessary to limit or eliminate reimbursement to FHWA.

B) Design Features

- DOT to determine railroad operational needs at Tupper Lake to establish transition point between rail and trail use.

C) Environmental Reviews & Permitting

- DEC to adopt SEQR Findings after completion of an FEIS for trail construction, as necessary
- DEC to obtain necessary construction permits for trail construction
- DOT to adopt SEQR Findings after completion of an FEIS for rail rehabilitation, as necessary
- DOT to obtain necessary construction permits for rail rehabilitation
- DOT to amend the Memorandum of Agreement between the Federal Highway Administration, the New York Department of Transportation and the New York State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding the Rehabilitation and Reactivation of the Remsen/Lake Placid Travel Corridor.

D) Maintenance & Operations Agreements:

- DOT and DEC execute Corridor stewardship agreement covering issues including, but not limited to:
  - Indemnification
  - Bridge Inspection & Maintenance Responsibility
  - Law Enforcement
- DEC and 3rd Parties execute Corridor maintenance agreements. To the extent that DEC would delegate development and day-to-day maintenance of the

Corridor and any obligations contained in the DOT/DEC Stewardship Agreement to, including but not limited to, local communities and/or not-for-profit organizations.

E) Saranac Lake Station

- DOT and DEC issue RFP for future rail/trail related use of the Saranac Lake station building.

F) Use & Occupancy Permits

Upon completion of items A thru D, above, DOT would

- Issue 30-day Termination Notice to the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society for their current Use & Occupancy Permit for the entire Corridor.
- Issue 30-day Termination Notice to the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society for their current Use & Occupancy Permit for the Saranac Lake station building.
- Issue 30-day Termination Notice to the New York State Snowmobile Association for their current Use & Occupancy Permit for the entire Corridor.
- Issue new Use & Occupancy Permit to the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society for Remsen to Lake Placid effective May 1, 2016 thru November 30, 2016.
- Issue new Use & Occupancy Permit to the New York State Snowmobile Association for Remsen to Lake Placid, effective December 1, 2016 thru April 30, 2017.
- Issue new Use & Occupancy Permit to the Department of Environmental Conservation for Tupper Lake to Lake Placid.

DOT would issue a Request for Proposals for a permanent rail operator upon completion of the rail rehabilitation between Big Moose and Tupper Lake. Should that work not commence within one year of the termination of rail service north of Tupper Lake, DOT may reconsider the timing of the RFP.

Appendix 5

TOWN OF NORTH ELBA

Rail Corridor Resolution
September 10, 2013

The Town of North Elba has long supported having a bike path using the NYS Recreational Corridor. For over ten years the Town worked to engineer a bike path next to the railroad tracks, and has applied for and received grant monies to construct a trail which would allow the corridor to be used both by the tourist train, and as a recreational trail.

It has now become evident that the dual use of the transportation corridor is not financially feasible given a change in federal wetland regulations. Recently, we were informed by the Army Corps of Engineering that the project will be subject to full review and an expansion of projected engineering which will prove cost prohibitive.

Given this inflexible decision, the North Elba Town Council now fully endorses a conversion of the Lake Placid to Saranac Lake portion of the NYS travel corridor from its current use as a railroad corridor to a more appropriate use as a recreational trail. This is not a change in our position which has always been to use the corridor for recreational purposes; however this is acknowledgment that in order for the corridor to be used as a bike path, the rails will need to be removed.

It is our opinion that a bike path from Lake Placid to Saranac Lake will be used and enjoyed by a future diversity of users including local residents and tourists alike which will help generate recreational enthusiasm and expand economic opportunities throughout our entire region.

The North Elba Town Council therefore respectfully requests that Governor Cuomo, DEC Commissioner Martens, and DOT Commissioner McDonald amend the Remsen to Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan and allow for the removal of the in-place rails so that a recreational trail can be built in its place.

Robert T. Politi, Supervisor

Bob Miller, Councilman

Derek Doty, Councilman

Jack Favro, Councilman

Jay Rand, Councilman