

# REMSEN-LAKE PLACID TRAVEL CORRIDOR

## FINAL MANAGEMENT PLAN /

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

MARCH, 1996

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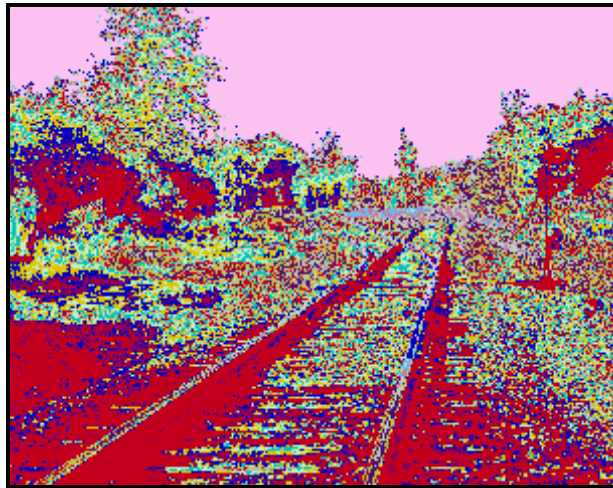
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**SNOW JUNCTION...circa 1992**  
**...The Beginning**



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In Memory of...

Harris Dexter, Founding Member of the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society  
Who Passed Away on September 8, 1995

And

John Albert, New York Snowmobile Coordinating Group...  
Who Passed Away on March 23, 1995



This is a Map

**REMSEN-LAKE PLACID TRAVEL CORRIDOR**  
**FINAL MANAGEMENT PLAN /**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**SUMMARY**



## I. INTRODUCTION

The Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor is a railroad right-of-way approximately 119 miles long and generally 100 feet wide. Constructed in 1892 by William Seward Webb, the line was operated continuously by the New York Central Railroad, and then the Penn Central Railroad, until freight service ceased in 1972. In 1974, the Corridor was purchased by New York State. In 1977, the State leased the line to the Adirondack Railway Corporation. After the bankruptcy of the lessee, and following a long period of litigation, the State acquired the remainder of the lease in 1991.

Later in 1991, an Interdepartmental Task Force (or planning team) composed of representatives of the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) was formed to develop a management plan for the 119-mile Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor. Three public forums were held in October of that year to assess public opinion regarding the Corridor's future. More than five hundred individuals attended the forums and nearly one hundred of them gave spoken comments. The written and spoken comments were overwhelmingly in support of:

- ! Resumption of full rail service between Remsen and Lake Placid.
- ! Recreational use of the Corridor, particularly by snowmobiles.

Following the forums, the Commissioners of DOT and DEC appointed a twenty-four member Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to consult with the Task Force in the development of the plan. Membership of the CAC included representatives of each of the counties crossed by the Corridor, members of the business community, landowners, sportsmen, environmentalists, railroad interests and recreationists.

The Planning Team completed the Draft Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan/EIS in consultation with the Citizen Advisory Committee in September, 1994. Following public review, the Final Plan was completed in September of 1995.

## II. MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES CHOSEN FOR ANALYSIS

After several meetings with the CAC, the Task Force identified six alternatives which represent the full range of feasible options for the use and management of the Corridor.

1. **DISMANTLE THE CORRIDOR**
2. **MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE CORRIDOR, CONDUCT NO MAINTENANCE, ALLOW NO PUBLIC USE**
3. **MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE CORRIDOR, CONDUCT MINIMAL MAINTENANCE, ALLOW PUBLIC USE BY SHORT-TERM PERMIT ONLY**
4. **OPEN THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR TO COMPATIBLE RECREATIONAL TRAIL USES, ALLOW NO RAIL USES**
5. **DIVIDE THE CORRIDOR INTO RAIL/TRAIL AND TRAIL-ONLY SEGMENTS**



-|- SUMMARY -|-

**6. PERMIT RAIL USES OVER THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR,  
ENCOURAGE COMPATIBLE RECREATIONAL TRAIL USES**

**III. MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

The following issue questions were developed to highlight the areas of concern which could affect or be affected by the disposition and management of the Corridor. The issues were addressed as part of the analysis of the management alternatives which led to the selection of the preferred alternative.

- ! How much public support would the alternative have?
- ! Would passenger and freight rail service on the Corridor be economically feasible?
- ! Would the alternative represent the form of Corridor management which would confer the greatest benefits to the Corridor region and the State?
- ! Would the economic and social benefits of the plan outweigh the associated environmental impacts?
- ! What would be the best method of implementing the alternative?

**IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE PROPOSED FOR  
ADOPTION**

The process of analyzing the six management alternatives resulted in the selection of Alternative # 6 as the preferred alternative which reflects public comment and the opinions expressed by the members of the CAC.

The major features of the alternative are:

- ! **THE TITLE TO CORRIDOR LANDS WILL REMAIN WITH THE STATE. THE CORRIDOR WILL RETAIN ITS "TRAVEL CORRIDOR" CLASSIFICATION.**
- ! **RAIL TRACKAGE WILL REMAIN IN PLACE OVER THE ENTIRE 119 MILE LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR DURING A RAIL MARKETING PERIOD. THE RAILS ON THE CORRIDOR WILL NOT BE REMOVED PRIOR TO REVISION OF THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN/EIS.**
- ! **PRIVATE ENTERPRISE WILL BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP TOURIST EXCURSION, PASSENGER, AND FREIGHT RAIL SERVICES ALONG THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR. RAIL DEVELOPMENT WILL LARGELY DEPEND UPON PRIVATELY SECURED FUNDING SOURCES BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE POTENTIAL PUBLIC SOURCES, GOVERNMENT FUNDING AVAILABILITY CAN NOT BE GUARANTEED.**
- ! **DEC WILL PURSUE THE MAXIMUM DEGREE OF RECREATIONAL TRAIL DEVELOPMENT ON THE CORRIDOR, INCLUDING HIKING, BICYCLE,**

**AND SNOWMOBILE TRAILS, WHICH IS COMPATIBLE WITH RAIL USES AND HARMONIOUS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT. STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO DETER TRESPASS ON ADJACENT PRIVATE LAND AND TO MINIMIZE MISUSE OF THE CORRIDOR.**

On those Corridor segments temporarily not required for rail services, recreational trail uses could be accommodated within the rail bed. Minor construction projects, such as installing deck planking and safety rails on railroad bridges, could be undertaken to increase the suitability of available Corridor segments for trail purposes and to ensure the safety of trail users.

On segments occupied by rail services, parallel recreational trails could be constructed within the boundaries of the Corridor property, but safely separated from the rail bed. Trails could be developed on segments of the Corridor to be used as links to local or regional trail systems outside the Corridor. However, because the Corridor is flanked in some areas by extensive wetlands and in others by rugged topography, the potential for the development of a continuous parallel trail within the Corridor is severely limited.

DOT and DEC will pursue rail development on the Corridor by making a request for proposals from private companies and organizations. In order to attract the level of investment required, the State will assure potential rail developers of its intention to enter into long-term agreements with rail developers whose proposals were approved. At the end of the rail marketing period, Corridor segments not included in rail proposals approved by the State will be committed to trail development. In effect, alternative 5 would be implemented. In the event that no viable rail service proposals were received during the marketing period, the State would implement alternative 4. No rails will be removed without revision of the Management Plan/EIS. It is recommended that alternatives 3, 2, or 1 **not** be implemented under any circumstances.

**V. POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS**

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

**A. Beneficial Impacts**

1. Environmental

- a. Restoration of rail services on the Corridor will afford a great interpretive opportunity useful in constituency building for the Forest Preserve concept. A train has the ability to show an otherwise remote area of the Adirondacks to large numbers of people without the environmental impacts usually associated

-|- **SUMMARY** -|-

with those numbers. As demonstrated by the Adirondack Centennial Railroad (now the Adirondack Scenic Railroad) at Thendara, (see Section VII.D.) the interpretive value of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor should not be overlooked. The tourist line near Old Forge has revealed Adirondack beauty along the Middle Branch of the scenic Moose River to over 200,000 people without any impact on that picturesque 4 1/2 mile section. A short on-board narrative has educated the passengers about the history and value of the Adirondack Park.

- b. A minor reduction in the level of public use and associated impacts in other areas of the Forest Preserve as new areas of the Preserve are made accessible from the Corridor.

2. Social and Economic

Adoption of the plan will provide an opportunity for:

- a. A significant expansion of the regional economy.
- b. A substantial increase in rail-and trail-based recreational and educational opportunity.
- c. The preservation of the Corridor as an important historic resource.
- d. The development of new public transportation and freight services.
- e. Substantial revenue to State agencies in proportion to the degree of Corridor development.
- f. A significant improvement in safety conditions on the Corridor and an associated reduction in the liability exposure of State agencies.
- g. The improved utilization of a public resource.

**B. Adverse Impacts**

1. Environmental

Adoption of the plan could lead to:

- a. Minor pollution of surface waters related to Corridor construction and maintenance and waste water discharges from trains.
- b. A minor disturbance of wetlands related to parallel trail construction and Corridor maintenance.
- c. The removal of a substantial amount of vegetation related to Corridor construction and maintenance activities.
- d. Minor negative effects on fish and wildlife populations related to Corridor construction and maintenance activities, and corridor uses.
- e. A substantial increase in highway use and traffic congestion in communities where train stations or trailheads are located.

- f. A moderate increase in the public use of neighboring Forest Preserve lands.
- g. A moderate increase in the need for law enforcement, fire protection and search and rescue services.
- h. The potential creation of significant safety hazards.
- i. A moderate increase in noise levels in areas surrounding the Corridor.
- j. A minor increase in the visual impact of the Corridor on surrounding areas.

2. Social and Economic

Adoption of the plan could lead to:

- a. A moderate increase in the likelihood of trespass onto neighboring private lands.
- b. Moderate new costs to State agencies and taxpayers associated with Corridor management.

## VI. **MITIGATION MEASURES PROPOSED**

In order to eliminate or minimize the effects of adverse impacts related to the implementation of the preferred alternative, a number of measures will be taken, as summarized below.

### A. **Environmental Impacts**

1. Water Quality and Sedimentation

- a. Filter fabric, silt fences and hay bales will be installed where necessary to minimize sedimentation.
- b. The problem of repeated damming of culverts by beaver will be addressed.
- c. The Corridor will receive regular monitoring and maintenance.
- d. All trains with sanitary facilities will be required to have self-contained systems.
- e. Rail operators will be required to prevent discharge of petroleum and other pollutants.
- f. Public education and the proper location of facilities will minimize water pollution related to hiking and camping use.

2. Disturbance of Wetlands

Parallel trail construction will not involve the placement of fill in wetlands. Herbicides will not be applied in or near wetlands.

-|- SUMMARY -|-

3. The Removal of Vegetation

- a. Vegetation existing within the Corridor right-of-way will be retained, and where appropriate new vegetation will be established, in visually sensitive areas.
- b. On Corridor segments where the rail bed will be used only for recreational trail purposes, vegetation will only be removed in a swath of the minimum width necessary.

4. Effects on Fish and Wildlife Populations

- a. Appropriate measures will be taken to protect fish and wildlife habitat during Corridor construction and maintenance activities.
- b. In order to allow wildlife to move freely, fencing will be erected only where necessary for public safety.

5. Localized Increases in Highway Use and Traffic Congestion

- a. Adequate parking capacity will be provided at all train stations and trailheads.
- b. Appropriate traffic control devices will be installed and facilities constructed.

6. Increased Use of Adjacent Forest Preserve Lands

- a. The locations of Corridor trailheads, trail linkages and train flagstops (predetermined locations other than existing stations where backcountry users could board a train) will be carefully selected.
- b. Corridor management will harmonize with unit management plans for adjacent Forest Preserve lands.

7. Increased Need for Law Enforcement, Fire Protection and Search and Rescue Services

- a. The need for law enforcement services will be minimized through the posting of informational signs and educational outreach.
- b. Fire potential will be reduced by: (a) removing vegetation on rail segments; (b) enforcing laws and regulations pertaining to railroad fire safety; and (c) educating Corridor maintenance crews and the public.
- c. The need for search and rescue services will be minimized by: (a) educating trail users; (b) providing trail maps; and (c) marking intersecting roads and trails.

8. Safety Hazards

- a. Rail operations will conform with the safety regulations of the Federal Railroad Administration.
- b. Parallel trails will be safely separated from the rail bed. Fencing will be erected where needed to assure safety. The safety of canoeists will be considered when fencing or other means of separating use are implemented. Provision for safe crossing by water, or appropriate space when necessary to portage, must be integrated into general safety concerns.
- c. Educational efforts will be made.
- d. The danger of collision between snowmobiles will be minimized by providing a trail surface of adequate width, by clearing sufficient vegetation from the trail to provide adequate sight distances and by posting speed limits.
- e. Safety rails will be installed on railroad bridges open to trail uses.

9. Noise Impacts

- a. Rail developers will be required to conform with Federal regulations about locomotive noise and will only sound horns when required.
- b. New York State law regarding noise emissions from snowmobiles will be enforced. Snowmobiles and therefore the sources of snowmobile noise, will largely be confined within the Corridor.

10. Visual Impacts

- a. Vegetation within the Corridor right-of-way will be retained and tree screens will be planted in visually sensitive areas.
- b. The Corridor's historic appearance will be preserved in all construction and maintenance activities.
- c. Rail developers will be required to keep the Corridor free of construction and demolition debris.

**B. Social and Economic Impacts**

1. Increased Likelihood of Trespass onto Adjacent Private Lands

- a. Informational signs will be posted and educational outreach will be conducted.
- b. The locations of Corridor trailheads, trail linkages and train flagstops will be carefully selected.
- c. Law enforcement presence and monitoring counts of use and trespass will be increased.

-|- **SUMMARY** -|-

2. New Costs

- a. Although appropriate funding levels will be a function of the Legislative process, State costs related to rail development will be minimized by largely relying upon private enterprise to fund Corridor rail rehabilitation and development projects. Revenues will be realized as a condition of agreements with rail developers.
- b. The costs to the State of trail construction and maintenance will be reduced through partnerships with private trail organizations and volunteer assistance.
- c. The costs to State agencies related to increased enforcement, fire protection and search and rescue services will be minimized through the measures listed in VI.A.7. above.

# **REMSEN-LAKE PLACID TRAVEL CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. THE FOLLOWING INTRODUCTION PRECEDED THE DRAFT REMSEN-LAKE PLACID CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN/EIS (SEPTEMBER, 1994.)**

The Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor is classified in the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) as a Travel Corridor. Although Forest Preserve unit management plans are not mandatory for this classification, a joint decision was made by former Commissioners Thomas Jorling, Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), and Franklin White, Department of Transportation (NYSDOT.) In light of the unusual circumstances of this Travel Corridor, because of the desirability of public input and in recognition of the Corridor's importance as a State land resource within the Adirondack region, it seemed judicious to prepare a management plan. The Commissioners directed an inter-agency planning team to accomplish that goal. The planning team was formed in late 1991. They held their first meeting at the DEC sub-office in Herkimer on October 18 of that year. A second meeting occurred in Herkimer on December 18. These meetings generated some early accomplishments including the formation of a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC.) (See page ix., Section IV., and Appendices 8. and 25.)

This "Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement" contains natural resource, cultural and public use inventories; historical data and descriptions of proposed management options and actions. The unique character and complex resource structure of this unusual property requires a document of management direction entailing State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) compliance. Ultimately, this document will guide the basic management of the Corridor for the ensuing five year period. It is not all-encompassing, rather its purpose is to set the parameters for future management of the Corridor. The plan is conceptual and the details of implementation will be contained in the lease agreement with any future developer. It is intended that this plan will give guidelines specific enough to direct the future public bid process and any agreement resulting from it. During the planning process and the ensuing public bid period, public input and possibly a committee of CAC members will be involved with the planning team in setting standards such as development sequences and time frames. The details will be worked out in the public bid process.

In late 1991, the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor planning team rode the rails in a NYSDOT high rail van to view the subject of the management plan they had been charged to complete. The tour underscored the seriousness of the Corridor's degeneration and the great expense needed to restore it. It also instilled in the team members the realization that one thing is certain. Whether the travel corridor ultimately becomes a railroad, a recreational corridor, or a combination of both, the right-of-way of the old Adirondack Railroad is a valuable asset



to the People of the State of New York. Like the Adirondack Park of which it is a part, the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor is a treasure most worthy of proper management.

The following pages reflect the stewardship to attain that end...

**B. ADDENDUM TO THE INTRODUCTION...FINAL REMSEN-LAKE PLACID CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN/EIS**

During the public review period for the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Draft Management Plan/EIS many issues were raised, (see Appendix 25) some a reiteration of points brought up by the Citizen Advisory Committee. These matters were resolved by the interagency Planning Team as reflected throughout this Final Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan/EIS as follows;

**! Funding Sources**

One issue regarded the Draft Plan's failure to fully consider public funding sources. ISTEA's application to historic railroads has been included in the final plan as well as the option to pursue any other applicable public funding that is legislated. The availability of funds will also determine the level of State effort to manage and maintain the Corridor, including the implementation of activities required to carry out the policies stated in this management plan. (See page 33.)

**! Removing the Rails**

The final plan has been adjusted to indicate that the rails on the Corridor will not be removed within the five year period covered by the initial Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan. At the time of five-year revision, the planning process will be re-opened. Revision to the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan/EIS will be considered and drafted with public involvement before any decision is made to remove the rails. If no rail proposals are received during the period of this plan, emphasis thereafter will lean heavily on recreational proposals. The viability, or preferably the actuality, of an operating northern tourist rail operation will, of course, have an impact on final retention of the rails. (See page 31.)

**! Snowmobiles in the Central Section**

Motorized use of the central section of the Corridor was opposed by some respondents due to the Forest Preserve classification of those State lands adjacent to that part of the Corridor, as Wilderness, Primitive or Canoe areas. There were also concerns about protecting adjacent private land from trespass. Additional consideration of these issues is reflected on pages 40 and 104.

**! Rail Connection with Utica, N.Y.**

The NYS Departments of Transportation and Environmental Conservation realize that the City of Utica and Union Station provide connection with the Mohawk, Adirondack & Northern Railroad, NYS Thruway, Conrail, Amtrak, Adirondack Trailways, Greyhound Bus Lines and Utica Transit Authority. Many statements during the recent public review period for this management plan indicated that the Corridor could be the largest economic development tool that the City of Utica and the Mohawk Valley area of Oneida County have seen in many years. Comments were also made relative to the creation of jobs, economic growth, the preservation of history, and access to the beauty of the Adirondack Region. The Planning Team feels that these comments have merit, but their viability will best be proven by the request for proposals process. The trackage between Snow Junction and Utica is not in State ownership and although the owners thereof have indicated a cooperative spirit and interest in the restoration of rail service on the Corridor, the details of a documented understanding seem inappropriate for this management plan. Prospective developers are certainly encouraged to include viable specifics for a Utica-Remsen connection in a corridor development proposal to the State. The merits of these specifics will be considered along with the rest of the proposal to the ultimate end of selecting an operator. That process is the first phase of implementation for Alternative Six of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Final Management Plan/EIS.

**! Warning Devices**

An attempt was made to clarify the language relative to safety at Corridor crossings. This is addressed in the Safety Hazards Section on page 101.

**! Responsibility for Past Facility Alterations**

During the CAC and public hearing process for the Draft Plan, a number of comments were received that took issue with the Plan for not defining the parties responsible for correcting past alterations to rail facilities. This information can be found on page 36.

**! Bicycle Tourism**

The lack of sufficient emphasis in the document regarding recreational bicycling was raised during public review of the Draft Plan. This cited rapidly expanding family-oriented outdoor recreational activity is further addressed in this Final Management Plan/EIS on pages 16, 28, 59 and 77.

**! Winter Rail Use**

There were objections to the Draft's exclusion of winter rail use. Clarification of this issue is addressed on pages 17 and 30.



**WOODGATE STATION...circa 1992**

## II. DESCRIPTION OF THE CORRIDOR

The Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor is a dormant railroad right-of-way in northern New York State. Formerly owned and operated by the New York Central Railroad, then the Penn Central Railroad, the property is now owned by the State of New York.

The Travel Corridor is approximately 119 miles long, generally 100 feet wide and extends from Snow Junction near Remsen northeasterly to Lake Placid. The Corridor traverses the following six counties and ten towns:

Oneida - Remsen and Forestport  
Herkimer - Webb  
Hamilton - Long Lake  
St. Lawrence - Piercefield and Colton  
Franklin - Altamont, Santa Clara and Harrietstown  
Essex - North Elba

The old railroad right-of-way parallels two major State highways at the southern and northern ends of the property. Part of the southerly portion generally parallels NYS Route 28 for 29 miles between Remsen and Thendara. To the north, it somewhat parallels NYS Route 86 between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid.

Proceeding from south to north, the travel corridor is found on the following U.S.G.S. topographic maps. All are new 7.5-by-15 minute metric maps, except for those indicated by asterisks, which are the older 7.5-minute series.

Remsen	(*)	Wolf Mountain	(*)
Forestport	(*)	Little Tupper Lake	
McKeever		Piercefield	
Thendara		Tupper Lake	
Old Forge		Upper Saranac Lake	
Eagle Bay		Saranac Lake	
Beaver River		Lake Placid	

The APSLMP classifies the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor as a "travel corridor" under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Transportation. A travel corridor is defined in that document as *"that strip of land constituting the roadbed and right-of-way for state and interstate highways in the Adirondack Park, the Remsen to Lake Placid railroad right-of-way and those state lands immediately adjacent to and visible from these facilities."*

About 38 percent of the length of the Corridor is flanked on at least one side by State Forest Preserve lands. These lands are significant because they are decreed "forever wild" by the New York State Constitution and natural processes are allowed to take place with minimal disturbance. From Old Forge to Tupper Lake, the route passes through some of the most remote territory in New York

State. It forms part of the bounds of the Pigeon Lake and Five Ponds Wilderness Areas. It traverses the Lake Lila and Hitchins Pond Primitive Areas and forms the southern border of the St. Regis Canoe Area. The remaining areas of Forest Preserve which adjoin the route are in the "wild forest" classification. These Forest Preserve units are the Black River, Fulton Chain, Independence River and Saranac Lakes Wild Forests. Each land classification (wilderness, primitive, wild forest, etc.) is defined and described in the APSLMP.

The rail corridor between Remsen and Lake Placid is characterized by moderate curves and typically modest railroad grades of from 1 to 1 1/2 percent. The right-of-way generally features dense vegetation approaching and in some cases, invading the rail bed.

Although 87 percent of the line is within the Adirondack Park, only a total of roughly 46 miles is bordered by State Forest Preserve land. A majority of the Corridor lies on private, remote and physically inaccessible land holdings. Access to most of the line is prohibited through posting by paper companies, private fish and game clubs, and the owners of large estates. Considering the rugged nature of the area, it is not surprising to find a low human population density. The exceptions of course, are a few hamlets including most of the largest centers of population within the Adirondack Park; Old Forge, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake.



**FORESTPORT STATION...circa 1992**

### **III. HISTORY OF THE CORRIDOR**

In the interest of brevity, the fascinating history of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor will not be covered in any great detail within this report. The bibliography lists some of the many excellent books on the Adirondacks and its historical railroads.

#### **A. NY CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY**

In the early 1890's, a wealthy businessman by the name of William Seward Webb financed a railroad into the Adirondack wilderness. His interest was honed as he bought land for his Nahasane Park and envisioned the value of a rail line running northerly through the Adirondacks from Herkimer. When he was refused a right-of-way by the State, he bought land himself for the route and financed construction of the first main transportation route in the mountains. Construction on the Adirondack Division began in 1890 with service beginning in 1892. Scheduled passenger service was terminated by New York Central in 1965. The 1968 merger of the New York Central and the Pennsylvania Railroad created Penn Central. Under Penn Central's ownership, freight service was continued with decreasing frequency until 1972 when this also stopped.

In 1974, the Department of Transportation acquired the Remsen-Lake Placid rail line from Penn Central in order to preserve the right-of-way until the best use could be determined. Through 1974 and 1975, that Department worked with other State agencies, local governments and citizens groups to explore the feasibility of various uses of the rail line. An Advisory Committee recommended in late 1975 that the line be restored for rail service. This recommendation was based on three major points: (1) a study by the Technical Assistance Center at the State University at Plattsburgh that showed that the line could be operated profitably; (2) studies that showed that operation of the line would bring \$6.5 million annually in local benefits; and (3) a DOT estimate of \$3.7 million for track rehabilitation. The Department accepted the Advisory Committee's recommendation on the condition that State funds would not be used for the rehabilitation work.

#### **B. THE ADIRONDACK RAILWAY CORPORATION**

Throughout 1976, the Department of Transportation worked with the Advisory Committee and three regional economic development districts to secure funding and to find an operator. At the same time, the Adirondack Railway Corporation (ARC) was formed and, in conjunction with local interests, began preparing a proposal to rehabilitate and operate the line. Initial inquiries about funding received negative responses from State and Federal agencies. However, conversations continued with the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) which eventually agreed to receive an application.

DOT then sent letters to several shortline railroads offering the line for development and soliciting proposals. Very few responses were received and none of the ensuing conversation

proved fruitful. The only group interested in pursuing the project continued to be the Adirondack Railway Corporation.

At the end of 1976, ARC presented a proposal to rehabilitate and operate the line. It called for the operation of charter, excursion and scheduled passenger trains, as well as freight service on an as needed basis. It was estimated that a profit would be realized in the second year of operation. The proposal also projected rehabilitation costs of \$1.75 million for the same work the State had estimated at \$3.7 million. ARC and Technical Assistance Center defended the lower cost estimate on grounds of lower local labor and material costs. (See Appendix 3.)

Throughout 1977, the State went through the required steps to secure EDA funds for the rehabilitation work and negotiated with the Adirondack Railway Corporation for both rehabilitation and operation of the line. In November 1977, an agreement was signed formally with ARC and six months later EDA approval was received. The EDA grant provided \$1.645 million which the State matched with \$105,000 in rail bond funds.

The 18 month delay between the time the Adirondack Railway Corporation made its estimate of rehabilitation costs and the time that work actually began provided a period of time for additional deterioration to occur. In several places, new washouts appeared and the damage at old ones increased in severity. Two miles of ties and rail were stolen.

A trackwork program was instituted which would permit passenger service between Utica and Lake Placid during the 1980 Winter Olympics. This involved additional work not originally contemplated, so an additional \$850,000 in State funds was obligated. Operation began in November, 1979.

The railroad however, shortly began to experience financial problems. Continued operations were jeopardized by safety problems which were then forcing the railroad to face an impending shutdown by Federal and State rail safety officials. Accordingly, the State agreed to provide another \$100,000 to correct these safety deficiencies so that ARC could continue to operate. In spite of this support, the railroad continued to experience derailments and in late summer of 1980, operations between Utica and Lake Placid were ordered suspended. Limited operations were permitted during the fall foliage season between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid, but these ceased in November of 1980.

Following a thorough examination of the company's business practices and project reporting systems and a determination that it could not complete scheduled rehabilitation within budget, the State cancelled ARC's lease in February of 1981. On April 1 of the same year, the company filed for bankruptcy in Federal court in Utica, N.Y.

**C. FURTHER RAILROAD ATTEMPTS**

In the spring of 1981, DOT made plans to find a new operator for the line. It was estimated that it would cost \$3.1 million to complete the rehabilitation work and an application was made to EDA for supplemental funding in that amount. It was rejected. In April 1981, requests for proposals to complete the rehabilitation work and operate the line were sent out to almost 40 railroads and individuals. (See Appendix 4.) While there was a certain amount of initial interest, only two incomplete proposals were received by the July 31st deadline.

Since no operator had been found, the State decided to salvage the track materials on the line and use them elsewhere in the State's extensive rail program. The jurisdiction over the property was to be transferred to the Department of Environmental Conservation.

In late 1981, Transportation Commissioner Hennessy agreed to delay salvage operations until April 1982, to provide opportunity for interested groups to show reasonable progress towards a viable proposal. It was made clear that no further State funding would be available through DOT. That Department had already invested \$1,055,000 in the property's rehabilitation. No group met the deadline of April 1st and it was subsequently extended to October 1, 1982.

During this period, DOT reviewed preliminary information with a group called Adirondack Rails. On October 1st, 1982, a proposal was received from Adirondack Rails, Inc. calling for the phased rehabilitation and operation of various parts of the line for freight and passenger service.

As viewed by DOT, the proposal contained several major flaws.

1. Revenue from railroad operations were overstated and corresponding operating costs were underestimated, leading to a distorted financial picture. The projected five year accumulated loss of \$700,000 appeared too low.
2. Adirondack Rails proposed to do the rehabilitation work, which the DOT estimated at \$3.2 million, for substantially less money.
3. The railroad suggested using depreciation as a way of generating tax losses to attract potential investors, even though the ownership of the assets would rest with others.
4. The proposal showed no commitment on the part of others to contribute to the company's \$6 million capital requirement and suggested that the State contribute to that requirement.



For the period April 1981 to February 1991, control of the line's lease was the subject of a protracted litigation. Finally, the State Departments of Transportation and Environmental Conservation regained control of the railroad when the State was the successful bidder at the auction of the line's lease and when court settlements were concluded. During 1990 the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) commissioned Northwest Engineering, Inc. to conduct a railroad feasibility study and prepare a business plan for the rail line. This study concluded that approximately \$30 million would be required to implement a full program of rail service restoration. This figure included improvements to Union Station in Utica and the purchase of the Utica-Lyons Falls line. According to the study, the rehabilitation of the rail bed between Remsen and Lake Placid would cost about \$17 million. (See Appendix 5.)

#### **D. BEAVER ACTIVITY - A CONTINUING CONCERN**

Without question, this corridor crosses some of the best beaver habitat existing in northern New York State. Historically, beaver have always occurred in the area, but they were nearly extirpated in the late 1800's. With reintroduction and conservation practices, the harvesting of beaver has been allowed for the past six decades. Reported harvest figures from trappers in counties and towns throughout the State have been maintained since 1965. Analysis of 1975-76 to 1979-80 harvest for the six counties and ten towns indicates a stable and in most cases, increasing population (See Appendix 1). The assumption is made that harvest is an indicator of population trend. It is impossible to determine the number of beaver annually removed by trapping along this line.

Beaver activity along the Corridor has resulted in flooding of the Corridor that if left unattended could result in the destruction of the Corridor's earthworks with detrimental effects to the environment, particularly fish habitat. Beaver trapping is regulated by DEC permit. Both DEC and APA have developed alternatives to trapping as a means of beaver control. These methods involve creative solutions that allow controlled levels of flooding when not destructive to adjacent land use. These methods, when successful, can reduce maintenance efforts. The APA regulates activities in wet lands.

During its long existence prior to the recent litigation hiatus, the Corridor has required a variety of annual maintenance activities. One of these activities has involved the removal of beaver structures (dams and lodges) or in some cases, removal of the animals themselves. Depending on railroad ownership and operations, one or more individuals have handled problems associated from the activity of beaver. There are places where beaver have existed in close proximity to the railroad bed without causing conflict or damage. For more than two decades, Wildlife Unit personnel from Regions 5 and 6 have provided temporary remedial action at numerous points along the line where beaver have caused serious damage.

## -|- HISTORY OF THE CORRIDOR -|-

References to a "1982 Adirondack Railroad Corridor Beaver Site Inventory Project" and a 1975 report entitled "Adirondack Branch P.C.R.R. Remsen to Lake Placid-Beaver Control Assistance D.E.C. Region 6 in Cooperation with D.O.T." can be found in Appendix 1.

### E. FIRE HISTORY

The fire history along the Adirondack Division is both extensive and colorful. During the early 1900's, railroads were deemed to be the major cause of forest fires in the Adirondacks. In 1903 and 1908, forest fires caused by sparks from passing locomotives destroyed a total of 830,000 acres in the State with the greatest majority of this acreage being in the Adirondack Mountains. The New York Central and Hudson River Railroad, the company that ran the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor at the time, contributed to the problem. The largest fire along the line occurred in September of 1908 at Sabattis, or Long Lake West. This fire burned from Robinwood to Horseshoe along both sides of the tracks. It consumed an estimated 28,000 acres of pine forest and logging slash and totally destroyed the hamlet of Long Lake West. Foundations and charred timbers were all that remained of the doomed settlement which consisted of a railroad station, a store, a schoolhouse, Low's electric powerhouse, two blacksmith shops, an icehouse, the Moynihan house and office and a half-dozen cottages. The fires in both '03 and '08 spread rapidly due to extremely dry conditions and a proliferation of slash left behind by poor logging practices. Transportation and communications were so poor and labor was so scarce that fire control efforts during that period were reactive rather than proactive. Efforts were often limited to protecting buildings and other improvements rather than attempting to control and extinguish large fires.

In 1912, the legislature created the New York State Forest Ranger force, doing away with the cumbersome system of fire wardens and fire patrolmen which was funded by the individual towns. This new fire control organization included six locomotive inspectors to deal with railroad matters.

Since railroads were considered the major cause of forest fires, most of the fire prevention legislation passed related to railroads and railroad caused fires. The legislation required railroads to take a number of safety measures which continue to be standard operating procedure for modern railroads. Such measures include equipment and right-of-way inspections, fire patrols and right-of-way clearing. The law also established the fact that any fire occurring on the ROW was prima facie evidence that the fire was caused by the railroad company. Many thousands of dollars have been collected over the years from various companies to cover fire suppression costs. This is still a valid tool used by DEC forest rangers to recover suppression costs from railroad companies.

The laws enacted were designed to deal with steam locomotion as that was the method of the day. With the reintroduction of steam locomotives on "recreational" railways, these laws are still valid and applicable. Many are misguided by the notion that once steam was replaced

by diesel power, the fire problems would automatically disappear. This is far from the truth. While steam engines had problems relating to ash pans, front ends and spark arresters, diesels entered the scene with a number of problems unique unto themselves. Hot carbon, wheel slippage, hot brake shoes and the operation of large trains on rights-of-way designed for much smaller ones all contribute to present day fire problems.

Treatment of the rights-of-way was dealt with annually to reduce the number of forest fires. Unless exempted by the Conservation Commission and later the Conservation Department, railroads were required to clear the right-of-way of all brush and other debris and to either burn or deposit it at a distance of 25' beyond the edge of the such right-of-way. In some instances, the right-of-way was actually burned to eliminate flammable materials. The last recorded occasion of such a practice was in 1964 on the Carthage Division.

Railroad fire patrols were also a requirement. The Department mandated such patrols on the Adirondack Division up until the time when all service was discontinued. Fire patrol personnel in either a speeder or a high-railed vehicle followed the train at a reasonable distance in order to detect and extinguish fires caused by the train. These patrols were generally limited to periods of high fire danger in the spring and again in the fall. If extreme conditions occurred during the summer months, a patrol could be required then as well.

The last fire patrol on the Adirondack Division was operated by the Adirondack Railway Corporation in the spring of 1980. Reports at that time indicated that the patrol extinguished no less than a dozen fires caused either by equipment problems or the indiscriminate disposal of smoking materials. DEC Forest Rangers and local fire departments responded to five fires that year which were caused by Adirondack Railway Corporation trains between Forestport and Beaver River Station. Inspections of the right-of-way by DEC personnel revealed that at least three other fires had occurred between Beaver River and Sabattis Station. These fires went undetected and burned themselves out. The last fire to occur on the right-of-way was on September 25, 1992.

## **IV. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

Former Governor Cuomo, in assigning the task of developing a plan for the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor to DOT and DEC, was assured of public involvement in the plan's development.

### **B. PUBLIC MEETINGS**

DOT and DEC approached this assignment in a comprehensive manner. Before any work plans were developed, three public scoping meetings were held to ask the public what they felt were appropriate uses of the railroad corridor.

A total of five hundred individuals attended the three meetings held in Saranac Lake, Old Forge and Utica in October 1991. Ninety people stepped to the rostrum to share their suggestions for the Corridor's use with the audience.

### **C. TASK FORCE**

A technical task force of DOT and DEC staff was assembled to develop the plan. Individuals represent various talents and expertise, as well as the various DOT and DEC offices having jurisdiction over the Corridor. The task force has met once or twice each month as needed to keep the planning process on schedule.

### **D. CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Commissioners of DOT and DEC appointed a twenty-four member Citizen Advisory Committee to work with the task force in developing a plan. Members to the committee include representatives of each county through which the rail line runs, local officials, the business community, landowners, hunting and fishing advocates, railroad interests, recreationists and environmentalists. (See Page ix.)

The committee has worked directly with the planning team as the plan took shape. By providing direct input to the writers on a step-by-step basis, all the various interests represented by the CAC members could be expressed and considered. The opinions of committee members on the issues being discussed provided important guidance in the plan's development. (See Appendix 8.)

Following the first meeting, held on January 7, 1992 at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake, N.Y, the advisory committee met nearly every month. An orientation of the Corridor for committee members was provided, including a narrated slide program, a video and a photolog.

The First Draft Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan/EIS was presented to the Citizen Advisory Committee at their Seventh Meeting with the planning team in Utica N.Y. on October 14, 1993. Comments were duly noted and appropriate changes to the document were effected. The Final Draft Plan incorporating the work of the Committee was completed and available for distribution for public review and comment in September, 1994. Public hearings on the draft plan were held in Lake Placid, Old Forge and Utica, NY. Considerations and input from the hearings were prepared following the public meetings and incorporated into the Final Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan/EIS, then distributed to the CAC and others. The Final Plan was presented to Governor George E. Pataki and was reviewed and released by the Governor in September of 1995. In November of the same year, the Adirondack Park Agency determined the plan to be in compliance with the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. The Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan/EIS was then approved and adopted by the Commissioners of the Departments of Transportation and Environmental Conservation.



McKEEVER STATION...Circa 1992

## **V. DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT PROPOSED (PROPOSED ACTION)**

### **A. PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED**

Because of its continuity and length, its land classification, its historical significance and the setting in which it is located, the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor is a unique State land resource. Clearly, there is a need to provide for its proper management. As public land, the Corridor should be managed to yield the greatest benefit for the people of the Corridor region and the State. Although the Corridor had not been active as a railroad for many years before the running of the Adirondack Centennial Railroad in 1992, there has been continuous public support for the position that the restoration of rail services would bring recreational and economic benefits to the communities in the Corridor region. In addition, outdoor recreation advocates have pointed out the potential importance of the Corridor as a long-distance recreational trail. Now that the Corridor is no longer encumbered by the long process of litigation which was recently concluded, this management plan is being prepared in order to determine what disposition of Corridor lands, and what types of Corridor uses, will best serve the public interest.

The preferred alternative, which has been selected as the culmination of the planning process to date, has been identified as the choice that will most fully realize the goal of securing the greatest number of public benefits while minimizing environmental impacts. The positive features of the preferred alternative, along with its potential negative affects, and the measures which will be taken to mitigate them, are described in detail in the sections following the description of the proposed action.

### **B. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

#### **1. Physical**

The Corridor will be retained in its present uninterrupted form from Remsen to Lake Placid. It will keep its "travel corridor" classification under the APSLMP.

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

- a. Rail trackage will remain in place over the entire 19-mile length of the Corridor.
- b. Trackage will be rehabilitated as necessary to meet rail service operating requirements over time. The rehabilitation and maintenance of trackage will conform to applicable Federal Railroad Administration safety standards. Rehabilitation will proceed in phases, at a rate to be specified in a lease agreement between the State and the rail developer.

- c. On Corridor segments active for rail service operations and important for recreational uses, a recreational trail will be constructed within the boundaries of the Corridor property. An example will be the section of Corridor between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid, recreationally important as a bike path to alleviate bicycling on a high congestion highway. Recreational trails are important as tourism attractions. The development of multi-use trails, including bicycle and walking paths, is especially suited to the tourism climate in the North Country. NYSDEC's Open Space Plan and NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's Statewide Plan both cite the Corridor as among New York State's most significant trailways for public access and transportation.

In addition to the economic costs, the environmental impacts which would be caused by the construction of trails over wetland areas are considered to be excessive. Therefore, parallel trails will not be constructed where long trail segments will have to span wetlands. As a consequence, because the Corridor is flanked by many extensive wetlands, as well as areas of rugged topography, the potential for the development of an unbroken parallel trail within the Corridor is severely limited. Nevertheless, it will be possible to develop parallel trails on strategic segments of the Corridor to link with local or regional trail systems outside the Corridor. To aid in the development of the Corridor's trail potential, additional collaborative planning and promotional activities are needed in the form of a public/private partnership between NYSDEC, Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA), APA, NYSOPRHP and regional and local planners, ANCA, ARPS and the tourism industry. The rate of implementation of the trail component of the Corridor management plan will be tied to the development of rail services.

- d. On segments where parallel trails are constructed, rail and trail uses will be safely separated. Where the trail and the rail bed can not be separated by a distance sufficient to assure the safety of trail users, the trail will be separated from the rails by fences or differences in elevation.
- e. On those Corridor segments temporarily not required for rail service operations, recreational trail uses could be accommodated within the rail bed. Minor construction projects, such as installing deck planking and safety rails on railroad bridges, will be undertaken to increase the suitability of available Corridor segments for trail purposes and to ensure the safety of trail users. All construction projects will be subject to review by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

**-| DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT PROPOSED -|**

**2. Operational**

The Corridor will be managed to provide a wide range of benefits to the public and the Corridor region from rail services and recreational uses, consistent with all safety requirements for those uses and the following direction:

- a. The rail developer will enter into a lease agreement with the State.
- b. Rail services could include scheduled passenger, freight, and tourist excursion services.
- c. It would not be realistic to expect that rail service operations would occupy the full length of the Corridor immediately. Instead, a phased development sequence, most likely beginning with small-scale tourist excursion services on the Thendara and Lake Placid segments, will be encouraged. Rail services will be required to expand to a point of full Corridor utilization in accordance with a sequence of performance standards to be specified in the lease agreement. The schedule of Corridor development progress will be established in recognition of the fact that the amount of capital available for investment in trackage rehabilitation will depend upon the profitability of initial operations and the levels of funding forthcoming from various sources.
- d. Over the entire length of the Corridor, approved rail use will supersede recreational trail use on the rail bed, subject to the next statement (e.). Trail use on the rail bed will be encouraged, but only on those Corridor segments or during those seasons when trains were not running.
- e. While rail use of the Corridor will receive high priority in Corridor management decisions, recreational trail use will also be recognized as an important Corridor management goal. On segments of the Corridor temporarily unoccupied by rail services and where parallel trails have not been constructed, trail uses allowed on the rail bed will become established over time. Therefore, the review of all rail use proposals will involve an analysis of the proposal's importance in furthering the full development of the Corridor's rail potential in light of its impact on recreational trail uses occupying the rail bed. Some rail proposals could be denied as a result of such an analysis. An example would be a proposal for winter rail use which would entail one or two train trips per week, providing that this scenario would represent minor economic or interpretive benefit as compared with that to be gained from a full length snowmobile trail. This would not be considered a sufficient cause to eliminate the use of the Corridor as a snowmobile trail. On the other hand, rail use that increased economic gain to localities and furthered winter recreational opportunities, would be considered a priority. An example of this would be "ski/snowmobile" trains, of sufficient



frequency, that would transport recreationists to established off-corridor opportunities.

- f. Parallel recreational trail construction and use within the Corridor property will be coordinated with existing and planned off-Corridor trail systems. Ideally, local governments, snowmobile and/or hiking clubs, etc. will actively participate in order to more effectively maintain the Corridor and enforce applicable regulations. On segments where the construction of a parallel trail within the Corridor is not feasible because of extensive wetlands or rugged terrain, appropriate trail routes on adjacent Forest Preserve lands and trail easements on adjacent private lands will be pursued. Any proposal to construct a parallel trail in wetlands will be reviewed by the APA, who will determine whether a wetlands protection permit will be required. Trail uses deemed compatible with each other and with surrounding land uses will be encouraged.
- g. In consultation with the Citizen Advisory Committee (see Description of Alternative 4 in Section XV and Appendix 9), the planning team decided that the following trail uses will be allowed on the rail bed on Corridor segments not occupied by rail service:

<u>Summer</u>	<u>Winter</u>
Pedestrian	Pedestrian (includes
Horse	skiing, snowshoeing)
All-Terrain Bicycle	Snowmobile

- h. On Corridor segments occupied by rail service, the following trail uses will be allowed on the parallel trail:

<u>Summer</u>	<u>Winter</u>
Pedestrian	Pedestrian (includes
Horse	skiing, snowshoeing)
Horse and Wagon *	Snowmobile
All-Terrain Bicycle	
Touring Bicycle **	

\* Use by horse and wagon will require a sufficiently wide trail.

\*\* Use by touring bicycle will require a hardened trail surface.

Because of their incompatibility with other uses, it was decided that all-terrain vehicles (ATV's) will not be allowed on the Corridor. The use of the Corridor

**-|- DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT PROPOSED -|-**

in winter by dogsleds was considered inadvisable because of the Corridor's popularity for snowmobile riding.

**3. Costs and Revenues**

**a. Rail Service Options**

The following is an estimate of the range of costs and revenues, for the development of the types of rail services which could be initiated if the full length of the Corridor were available for rail operations. It was prepared by NYSDOT with reference to a 1990 report prepared for the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) by Northwest Engineering, Inc. (See Appendix 5.) This estimate is a summary of the range of options for rail development detailed as options I, II and III in Appendix 22. A brief description of each option is provided here for convenience. It is important to note that these options reflect a range, from minimal initial service to fully developed services over the full length of the Corridor. Options II and III were considered to be logical stages in an incremental development plan.

**OPTION I** - REHABILITATE THE ENTIRE LINE. UPGRADE TRACKAGE TO A LEVEL SUFFICIENT TO PERMIT SAFE OPERATION OF PASSENGER SERVICES AT 60 MPH AND FREIGHT SERVICES AT 40 MPH (FRA CLASS III). OPERATE FREIGHT, PASSENGER AND TOURIST SERVICES OVER THE FULL LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR.

**OPTION II** - REHABILITATE TRACKAGE BETWEEN THENDARA AND BEAVER RIVER (25.3 MILES) AND BETWEEN TUPPER LAKE AND LAKE PLACID (35.5 MILES), A TOTAL LENGTH OF 60.8 MILES. UPGRADE TRACKAGE TO A LEVEL SUFFICIENT TO PERMIT SAFE OPERATION OF PASSENGER SERVICES AT 40 MPH AND FREIGHT SERVICES AT 30 MPH (FRA CLASS II). OPERATE TOURIST SERVICES ONLY.

**OPTION III** - REHABILITATE TRACKAGE BETWEEN REMSEN AND BEAVER RIVER, A LENGTH OF 50 MILES. UPGRADE TRACKAGE TO A LEVEL SUFFICIENT TO PERMIT SAFE OPERATION OF PASSENGER SERVICES AT 40 MPH AND FREIGHT SERVICES AT 30 MPH (FRA CLASS II). OPERATE ON-DEMAND FREIGHT AND TOURIST SERVICES.

TABLE I. Costs and Revenues for Options II and III

Option	Capital Costs		Operating Revenues	Operating Costs	Net Income/ Loss
	Rehab.	Equipment			
I	\$15,000,000 to \$17,400,000	\$2,640,000	\$1,020,000 to \$2,245,000	\$1,465,000 to \$1,947,000	(\$927,000) to \$780,000
II	\$7,100,000 to \$7,800,000	\$ 840,000	\$ 868,000 to \$1,300,000	\$ 768,000	\$ 100,000 to 668,000
III	\$4,900,000	\$1,020,000	\$ 524,000 to 800,000	\$ 781,000	(\$257,000) to 19,000

Fully mature operation was assumed in generating projected cost and revenue figures. As seen in the "Net Income/Loss" column of the preceding table, projected revenues could cover operating costs, but probably would not be sufficient to repay capital costs. It is possible that the railroad will require an operating subsidy during the start-up period.

The 1994 report, Economic Analysis of the Remsen-Lake Placid Railroad Operation, prepared for ANCA by Freight Services Inc. (FSI), presented a different approach to the development of the Corridor:

- (1) Expand the Thendara excursion operation to the station at Big Moose. Upgrade trackage to FRA Class II.
- (2) Establish an excursion operation between the Lake Placid and Saranac Lake stations. Upgrade trackage to FRA Class II.
- (3) Institute passenger and freight service between Utica and Lake Placid. Upgrade trackage to FRA Class III.

Estimates from the FSI report of track rehabilitation costs and net operating revenues are given in Table II.

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**TABLE II. Track Upgrading Costs and Projected Revenues for Stages in Full Corridor Restoration (From Exhibit 1, FSI Report)**

Start-Up Year	Option	Track Up-Grading Cost	Net Operating Revenue (In \$000's)				
			1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
1992	A. Thendara-Minnehaha	None	74	77	78	79	80
1995	B. Big Moose Expansion	\$ 945,000	(16)	15	37	59	69
1996	C. Lake Placid-Saranac Lake Excursion and Dinner Train	1,308,000	--	(82)	42	116	274
1997	D. Utica-Lake Placid Excursion (Low Ridership)	8,956,000	--	--	(436)	(1,045)	(841)
1997	E. Utica-Lake Placid Excursion (High Ridership)	8,956,000	--	--	(440)	(668)	(309)
	Both Short Distance Excursions (B & C)	2,254,000	(16)	(67)	79	175	443
	All Excursions (B,C, & E)	11,211,000	(16)	(67)	(361)	(494)	134

The cost of upgrading the line between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid includes approximately \$417,000 to upgrade the segment between Remsen and Saranac Lake. That would be the minimum cost of elevating the condition of the track sufficiently to allow the safe passage of locomotives and rail cars to the north end of the line. Though it would not be enough to bring the track up to FRA Class I standards, this expenditure would be considered as an early step in the full rehabilitation of the Corridor.

As shown in Tables I and II, the estimate by Northwest Engineering, Inc. for the cost of track rehabilitation over the entire Corridor is much higher than the FSI estimate. The difference is explained in the FSI report. The Northwest Engineering estimate referred to a "full rebuilding" of the line from Utica to Lake Placid, including a number of improvements beyond FRA Class III requirements. By comparison, FSI considered only the track from Remsen to Lake Placid,

and presented only the costs of the minimum amount of work that would be required to achieve FRA Class III safety standards.

Besides cost, there is another significant difference between the two approaches to upgrading the line. When discussing FRA standards, it must be noted that they are "condemning limits." That is, they represent the minimum conditions required to permit safe operation at a given speed. Under the FSI approach, the condition of the track after the initial upgrade would not far exceed the target FRA class standards. As a consequence, a developer would have to show a high level of commitment to maintenance from the outset in order to assure that the track would continue to be in compliance with safety standards.

The basic conclusions of the FSI report largely corroborated those of the planning team. FSI shared the view that, while profits would not be sufficient to recover the initial costs of track rehabilitation, both the Thendara and Lake Placid excursion operations could be profitable. The consultant differed, however, in the endpoints chosen for the two segments. Citing the lack of sufficient passenger and freight markets and the relative inefficiency of longer excursion runs, FSI did not recommend either extending the Thendara segment beyond Big Moose to Beaver River, or extending the Lake Placid operation beyond Saranac Lake to Tupper Lake.

In the FSI report, an analysis of the costs and revenues associated with the operation of passenger service over the full length of the Corridor concluded that the operation could begin to break even after a few years. However, the projection relied on the assumptions that a vigorous marketing effort could draw an average annual ridership of at least 40,000 passengers, and that the ledger of the full-length operation would be bolstered by the relatively lucrative Thendara and Lake Placid excursions.

While it was the position of FSI that a rail developer would benefit by taking advantage of freight service opportunities once the line had been rehabilitated for passenger service, the potential demand for freight service on the Corridor was considered to be much less than sufficient to justify an investment in track rehabilitation with the sole purpose of establishing freight service. This conclusion confirmed the belief of the planning team.

b. Recreational Trail Uses

On those Corridor segments which will be temporarily unoccupied by rail service, NYSDEC will be responsible for costs that are incurred for construction which will be done to improve the rail bed on those segments for trail use. This will

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include the construction of bridges at washouts and the installation of deck planking and safety rails on existing railroad bridges. Because the locations of segments available for trail uses can not be known in advance, detailed cost figures are not given here. Representative costs are shown in the description of Alternative IV starting on page 126.

On the segments of the Corridor where trains will be running, trail uses will have to be moved from the rail bed to a parallel trail. The cost of parallel trail construction will depend on the type of work to be done, which most often would include tree cutting and grading.

Detailed cost estimates for given Corridor segments will require close examination of the terrain through which the trail will run. Northwest Engineering, Inc. has provided general estimates for parallel trail construction along the entire Corridor and has broken down the total into costs for the three key segments of the Corridor (See Appendix 23).

Total trail construction costs for:

**ENTIRE CORRIDOR IF DONE AS A SINGLE PROJECT**

(119 miles) ..... **\$2,490,000**

**SNOW JUNCTION TO THENDARA AND SARANAC LAKE TO LAKE PLACID**

(39 miles) ..... **\$860,000**

**THENDARA TO BEAVER RIVER AND TUPPER LAKE TO SARANAC LAKE**

(45 miles) ..... **\$920,000**

**BEAVER RIVER TO TUPPER LAKE**

(35 miles) ..... **\$705,000**

These estimates include the cost of spanning the extensive wetland areas which are adjacent to the Corridor in many areas. However, the monetary cost of constructing a trail across extensive wetland areas would be exceedingly high. The added consideration of the environmental cost associated with the loss of wetland area which would result from such a project has led to a determination

**not to promote the placement of fill as a method of constructing parallel trails.** For discussion purposes, the monetary costs of trail construction in wetlands are given below.

The central and northern sections of the Corridor pass through the most extensive wetland areas. Extending a trail across wetlands may be done either by building wooden bridges or walkways over limited distances, or by hauling in and packing fill material. In providing for the widest range of trail uses, filling would be the most cost-effective method over the long run. Nevertheless, the cost would be substantial.

Assuming a trail width of eight feet and an average depth of fill of four feet, the cost of placing fill in wetland areas would be:

Crusher-run gravel - delivered:  
\$ 5.50- 6.00 per cubic yard  
Spreading and packing:  
\$15.00-19.00 per cubic yard

**TOTAL COST ..... \$20.50-25.00 per cubic yard**

At 1.2 cubic yards per lineal foot,

**TOTAL COST PER FOOT ..... \$24-30**  
**TOTAL COST PER MILE ..... \$127,000**

The cost of the construction of wooden trailways, the only alternative to the placement of fill in wetland areas, would be at least twice as much. The addition of the high annual costs of maintenance would also put the use of wooden structures to span extensive wetlands beyond consideration.

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.

c. Staffing

In order to perform adequate maintenance of the rail bed and to remove brush and blowdown, a full-time year-round DEC trail crew will be hired, consisting of a labor supervisor and three laborers. Approximate annual costs for the trail crew are:

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Salaries plus benefits	\$90,000
Supplies and materials	5000
Average bridge replacement	
cost, materials	5,000
Vehicle costs	<u>3,000</u>
	<b>\$103,000</b>

The figure given represents the approximate cost of maintaining a completed parallel trail running the entire 119-mile length of the Corridor. In reality, since the Corridor passes through two DEC regions, it is likely that two or more existing trail crews responsible for Forest Preserve trails will be expanded and will add the Corridor to their maintenance duties. A single crew is used here to simplify cost calculations. The cost will be reduced in proportion to the length of the Corridor remaining undeveloped and the amount of volunteer labor available.

4. **Regional Economic Impacts**

The primary economic impacts of full Corridor development will 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. A brief assessment of the estimated levels of these impacts follows:

a. Rail Rehabilitation and Parallel Trail Construction

Based on the estimates of Northwest Engineering, Inc., a range of \$4.9 million to \$17.4 million for rail rehabilitation and up to \$2.5 million for parallel trail construction would be expended over several years. The rail rehabilitation work would generate as many as 100 temporary jobs during the life of the project.

While the estimates of expenditures for rail rehabilitation given in the FSI report were more modest, ranging from \$945,000 to \$11,200,000, the prediction that 93 one-time jobs would be created agreed closely with the figure proposed by Northwest Engineering. Parallel trail construction could create another 75 short term jobs.

Depending on the timing and methods used, the regional economic impact could range from a very small portion of total expenditures if contractors from outside the region were used, to perhaps half the total expenditures if local contractors were to participate in the work.

b. Operation of Rail Services and Trail Maintenance



As detailed in the Northwest Engineering Report (see Appendix 5), the operation of full rail services could generate as many as 24 full-time and 13 part-time jobs directly, or a payroll of up to \$450,000 annually. The extension of DEC trail maintenance responsibilities to the Corridor would require that up to 4 full-time jobs be created with a total of \$90,000 in salaries and benefits.

The FSI report projected the creation of 77 jobs directly related to the operation of excursion and full-length passenger services by the end of a five-year Corridor development period. Most of the jobs would be seasonal. The anticipation of relatively few permanent jobs reflects an assumption that full length passenger service through the winter months would not be profitable. The consultant did not indicate that any jobs would be created as a result of the establishment of freight services on the Corridor.

c. Tourism

In the Northwest Engineering report, the maximum projected rail ridership associated with full Corridor development was estimated at about 128,000 annually (see Appendix 22). Out of that total, 120,000 trips were credited to the Thendara and Lake Placid excursions, and 8,000 to long-distance passenger service. The FSI report was more optimistic, projecting an annual total for both excursions of almost 177,000 and between 20,000 and 35,000 full-length passengers by 1999.

The number of tourists actually directly attributable to the availability of rail services and the number of those who would stay overnight cannot be estimated accurately. It is clear however, that visitors attracted to the Corridor region for extended vacations by the existence of railroad services would make a much more significant contribution to the economic activity of the area than either those who would only spend the day, or longer-term vacationers who would have chosen to stay in the area anyway. According to standard estimating guides used by organizations such as the Central Adirondack Association (CAA), a vacationing family of four spends about \$200 per day and the average expenditure per day for a single tourist is about \$75.

The FSI report estimated that as many as 20 percent of the riders of the Thendara excursion would be visitors who would not have chosen to vacation in the area if not for the train. After an extension of the Thendara operation to Big Moose, FSI predicted that the existence of the excursion opportunity would account for an increase of nearly 26,000 visitor days per year in the Old Forge area by 1999. Similarly, the establishment of an excursion operation in Lake Placid would increase tourism in the area by 12,500 visitor days per year. Though the FSI report did not translate visitor days into dollars, useful estimates can

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be generated. Assuming that one visitor day would involve an overnight stay, \$50 would be a conservative estimate of the total daily expenditure per visitor day. Multiplying that figure by the increase in visitor days attributed by FSI to the excursion operations alone, the total annual

economic impact would be \$1,300,000 in the Old Forge area and \$625,000 in the Lake Placid-Saranac Lake area.

FSI went on to maintain that the total regional economic impact which would result from the excursion operations would be substantially augmented by the operation of full-length passenger service. Even though the annual number of long-distance passengers would be less than half the number expected to ride the Thendara excursion, the additional time involved in a trip from Utica to Lake Placid would make a long-distance passenger more inclined to spend more time in the region. Therefore, according to FSI estimates, the establishment of passenger service from Utica to Lake Placid would add as many as 36,000 visitor days per year to regional tourism. Again applying the figure of \$50 per visitor day for purposes of illustration, the annual regional economic impact which would result from the addition of full-length passenger service is calculated to be \$1,800,000. Adding the dollar figure calculated for the Thendara and Lake Placid excursions to the figure for full-length passenger service would give an estimated regional economic impact from tourism of nearly \$4,000,000 per year. It should be noted, however, that the FSI projection of up to 35,000 long-distance passengers by 1999 far exceeded the estimate of 8,000 riders given by Northwest Engineering.

Estimates of the number of jobs that would be created in the Corridor region as a result of the restoration of rail services were also given in the FSI report. Full Corridor development would ultimately result in the creation of more than 100 jobs in retail, restaurant, and hotel businesses throughout the region.

Speaking about the Adirondack Centennial Railroad in 1992, Robert D. Hall, Executive Vice President of the Central Adirondack Association said "Conservatively, this rail operation added approximately two million dollars (\$2,000,000) to the economy of the area during 1992; a recessionary, cold, wet season...one business nearby would have closed its doors and laid off 20 workers. Other stores, gift shops, and restaurants have reported as much as a 50% increase in business because of the train...Motels even reported increases...Rehabilitation of the line north and south will improve the economy of the north country from Utica to Lake Placid."

In correspondence with John C. Egan, former NYSDOT Commissioner, dated October 25, 1993, Robert Hall said, "Old Forge and the Central Adirondacks have been the greatest beneficiaries of the Adirondack Centennial Railroad. To date, since it opened in 1992, more than 135,000 visitors from all over the United States, Europe and Asia have taken the ride, shopped in the area, patronized restaurants, motels and other services. The number of visitors and

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tour groups who have been introduced to the area because of the railroad are returning to shop and enjoy the attractions they missed on their previous visit. Newcomers to the area are leaving with a positive impression of the railroad operation and the surrounding communities." He continued, "both Herkimer County and New York State have and will continue to benefit from the sales tax generated by these visitors. One of our largest stores reports October '93 will be the best October ever, mainly because of the traffic generated by the railroad operation." He continued, "it is difficult to project the economic impact this project could have on all the towns and villages along the line, but seeing what it has done for this area, there is a real optimism that all would benefit."

In addition to rail customers, as many as several thousand recreational trail users would traverse various segments of the Corridor each year. They would add to the demand for food, fuel, lodging and supplies in nearby communities. Considering snowmobile use specifically, it is possible to generate useful economic impact figures. According to the "New York State Snowmobiling Assessment," by Chad Dawson, the average trip-related expenditure for a snowmobiler in the state in 1990 was \$30. Using an estimated total of 20,000 snowmobile trips on the Corridor during the winter of 1991-1992, snowmobiling gave an economic benefit of \$600,000 to businesses in the Corridor region.

Timothy Holmes, co-author of the Bicycle Master Plan for the Adirondack Region of New York State, indicates that bicycle recreation on the entire Corridor could generate an additional \$3.5 million in expenditures to the Corridor area. (Holmes - Personal correspondence, 1995)

C. **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

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

**! DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THE BASIS OF THEIR ABILITY TO PROVIDE RECREATION-ORIENTED PASSENGER SERVICES; PROVISION OF FREIGHT SERVICES WILL NOT BE REQUIRED AND IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE A MAJOR FACTOR IN EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS.**

Preliminary investigations have indicated that the hauling of freight on the Corridor is not likely to be profitable.

**! THE STATE WILL NEGOTIATE A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE APPROVED DEVELOPER. THE LEASE TERMS, INCLUDING THE**

**LENGTH OF THE LEASE WILL BE NEGOTIATED TO MEET INVESTORS' NEEDS FOR A LONG TERM COMMITMENT.**

Because a large investment will be required for the restoration of the fixed rail facilities over the entire length of the Corridor, potential rail developers will need to be assured of a long-term commitment from the State. The continuation of the current practice of management through 30-day permits would jeopardize the goal of full rail service development.

- ! IF A RAIL PROPOSAL FOR THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR IS APPROVED, THE STATE WILL ONLY ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH A SINGLE DEVELOPER, WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR COORDINATING ALL RAIL ACTIVITIES ON THE CORRIDOR. THE DEVELOPER WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN A NEGOTIATED LEVEL OF INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR CORRIDOR LIABILITY.**

Requiring the coordination of all rail activities on the Corridor to be the responsibility of a single developer will insure the efficient implementation of the final Corridor management plan and the safety of all Corridor users. In the case of a rail agreement only covering one or more segments of the Corridor, the developer would be responsible only for the segment(s) covered by the agreement. The developer will be required to indemnify the State against personal injury and damage liability related to rail operations. In effect, this means that the developer will share liability with the State, the developer being more responsible for rail operations while the State will be more responsible for recreational trail uses.

- ! WHILE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE AND AN APPROVED DEVELOPER WILL ALLOW FLEXIBILITY IN DEVELOPING SERVICES ON THE CORRIDOR, IT WILL ALSO REQUIRE THAT ALL CORRIDOR OPERATIONS CONFORM WITH THE FINAL CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

The approved developer will be given the freedom to make the daily business decisions necessary to assure the success of the rail development venture; such details will not be prescribed in the final Corridor management plan. However, Corridor development will be required to proceed within the guidelines given by the plan, as determined by the State through a program of regular monitoring. If any Corridor development activity is determined to exceed the scope of the plan, the activity could not be implemented until the plan were revised and a supplemental environmental impact statement prepared.

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**! DEC WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RECREATIONAL TRAIL COMPONENT OF THE FINAL CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

The details of recreational trail development on the Corridor will unfold only after rail operations had become established. It would be inadvisable to invest in the costly development of a parallel trail on any Corridor segment before it could be confirmed that rail operations would be viable on that segment.

On Corridor segments important for trail purposes, but where physical limitations such as wetlands or rugged topography would make parallel trail construction impossible, alternative locations will be sought to allow the construction of trails on adjacent private lands through the acquisition of trail easements, or on neighboring Forest Preserve lands. Potential trail construction on Forest Preserve lands will be addressed in unit management plans for the affected areas.

Trail development will be implemented using State funding and personnel, supplemented by various outside sources. NYSDEC will seek the active participation of local governments, snowmobile and/or hiking clubs, etc. to promote more effective maintenance and enforcement on the Corridor.

**! AN APPROVED RAIL DEVELOPER WILL BE REQUIRED TO ACCOMMODATE THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF RECREATIONAL TRAILS ON THE CORRIDOR.**

**! IF AN ANALYSIS OF THE APPROVED DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL RESULTS IN A DETERMINATION THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF A LONG-DISTANCE SNOWMOBILE TRAIL WILL EXCEED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CORRIDOR FOR WINTER RAIL USE IN TERMS OF ECONOMIC AND INTERPRETIVE BENEFIT, RAIL OPERATIONS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO OCCUPY THE CORRIDOR BETWEEN DECEMBER 1 AND MAY 1 OF ANY YEAR. ALTERNATIVES TO BE ADOPTED COULD INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT OF A PARALLEL SNOWMOBILE TRAIL WHERE NEEDED AND PRACTICAL, AND INTEGRATION OF RAIL TRANSPORTATION FOR SNOWMOBILERS TO IMPORTANT DESTINATIONS.**

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. The State planning team, as well as the two consultants employed by ANCA, have concluded that winter rail

potential on the Corridor is limited. Safety considerations preclude the simultaneous occupation of the rail bed by rail and trail users. Therefore, the approved Corridor development proposal will be analyzed to determine the extent to which the success of the rail venture will depend upon winter rail operations. Winter rail operations will be allowed on a particular Corridor segment only if: (1) the rail developer can assure the managing agencies that the potential for winter rail operations will be sufficiently important to displace snowmobile use from the rail bed; (2) the potential for winter rail operations will not be sufficiently important to displace snowmobile use, but it will be feasible to establish a parallel trail for snowmobiles, and its location and manner of construction will meet environmental standards.

**In light of the foregoing conditions, the implementation of the preferred alternative will proceed in accordance with the following steps after the plan is approved:**

- ! DOT and DEC will prepare a public bid package offering the opportunity for development of the Corridor and operation of rail services consistent with the Corridor Management Plan. Proposals for all or segments of the Corridor will be accepted.
- ! Throughout the public bid process, the short term permit procedure being used to manage the Corridor property will continue.
- ! DOT and DEC will evaluate the proposals received with assistance from the Citizens Advisory Committee. Selection criteria will focus on the viability of the proposed operations, soundness of the funding and implementation plan, projected benefits to the area and the State of New York, and conformance to the Renssen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan.
- ! If one or more proposals are selected, DOT and DEC will negotiate a lease agreement(s) with the selected developer(s). The terms will be negotiated to be attractive to private investment to the extent possible.
- ! The public bid process will continue up to a maximum of five years. In the event that no approvable rail use proposals result from the public bid process, the Corridor planning process would be re-opened prior to removing the rails. Removal of the rails would constitute substantial change in the character of the Corridor. Such change would not be made without public involvement and further consideration of issues related to the SLMP, SEQR, and historic preservation. Therefore, the rails will not be removed from the Corridor within the five year period covered by this management plan, unless it is revised. If approved in a revised Renssen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan/EIS, the process would be started for requesting bids to remove the rails and ties from those segments of the Corridor where no permit or other agreement requiring them is in place.

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Rail removal would facilitate the development of those segments for recreational trail use and eliminate the safety concerns associated with unauthorized use of the tracks. Any revenue from the salvage operations would be used for trail development. Before taking any formal action to salvage the line, the planning team will report to the Citizens Advisory Committee and the public on the efforts undertaken to secure a developer for those segments.

! Alternatives 3, 2, or 1 will not be implemented under any circumstances.

! The Final Corridor Management Plan will be reviewed and updated by the Interdepartmental Planning Team at five-year intervals.

**D. POTENTIAL FUNDING**

Funding to implement any of the alternatives could come from private, public or a combination of public and private sources.

**1. Private Sources**

Private sources to fund improvements in the Corridor have, in the past, been limited to investments by individuals for railroad improvements. Owners of the former Adirondack Railway Company contributed substantial sums for equipment purchases and refurbishment.

Voluntarism would fall under the category of private sources. Though the availability of volunteer labor can significantly improve the bottom line of a railroad operation, it is impossible to predict the level and continuity of volunteer participation. The experience of the Adirondack Centennial Railroad and the Adirondack Preservation Society indicates a substantial volunteer work force can be mobilized for railroad work on the Corridor. In addition, snowmobilers acting under the guidance of the New York Snowmobile Coordinating Group have provided volunteer resources for trail grooming, signing and other activities. There may be volunteer support for other recreational trail uses of the Corridor as well.

During this planning process there has been no formal identification of private sources of funding other than volunteer labor.

**2. Public Sources**

Public funds from local, State and Federal sources have been used for improvement on the Corridor. Future public funding can be pursued, of course, if the proposed



use meets the funding criteria. A current review of these funding sources reveals the following:

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a. Local Funds

Local funding from towns, villages and counties for Corridor improvements have been limited to some trail grooming activities and for donations of materials and equipment for railroad bed maintenance. Local funding could be provided for future improvements but it is doubtful that if taken alone, any substantial capital improvements could be made. Local funding could be used to offset railroad operating losses by subsidizing operations.

b. State Funding

! The NYS Legislature passed provisions in the 1993-94 State Budget to provide \$400,000 for stabilization of the Corridor, \$50,000 for a rail feasibility study; and an additional \$400,000 for 1995-96. The Snowmobile Trail Fund, supported by an add on to the snowmobile registration fee, is available for recreational trail development and maintenance.

! REDS Grant - Regional Economic Development Partnership Program administered by the New York State Department of Economic Development (NYSDED). A small amount of funding is available to assist in implementing projects with significant economic development impact. Projects must be sponsored by not-for-profit or government agencies.

c. Federal Funding

! The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (referred to as ISTEA) - ISTEA funds can be used for "rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities including historic railroad facilities";

! The Symms National Recreational Trails Act created under ISTEA, authorizes funding for trail improvements. New York State is allotted funds for program expenditures from 1992 through 1997 under this program. For fiscal 1993, New York State was allocated \$226,136. A match of 20% is required for the federal funds. This match can come from State, local or private sources.

! The developer would also be eligible for other applicable federal funding sources, i.e. grade crossing funds, etc.

## E. OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF THE CORRIDOR

### 1. Ownership

It is recommended that title to the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor remain with the State of New York. Any leases or other agreements that would allow others to use, operate or control the Corridor should 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.

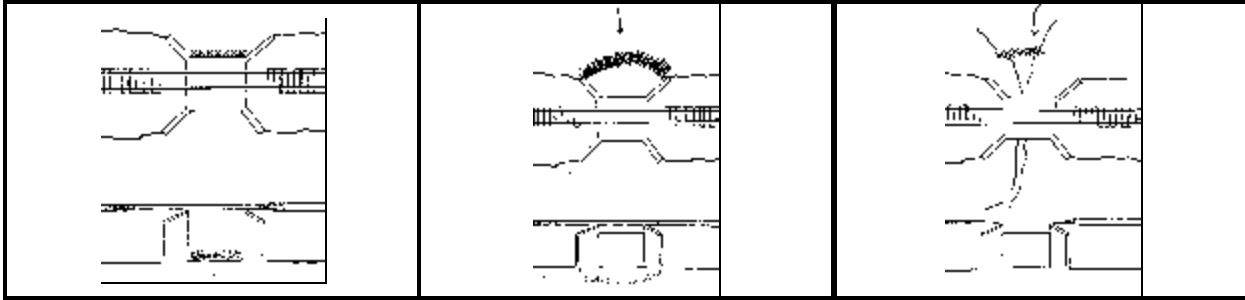
### 2. Control

It would be premature to entertain or discuss alternative management organizations until the solicitation process has been completed. Any new organization would require a source of revenues to fund its operation. The Corridor is not generating revenue at this time and it would be a burden on the solicitation process to impose any governmental overhead up front. In addition, the effort required to put together a consensus on the nature of such an organization would be significant. At the same time, it would not be directly productive to achieving real economic development actions along the Corridor. Although this is an addition to demands on the time of involved personnel, the existing joint management of the Corridor by NYSDOT and NYSDEC has worked well. The following options are available at the appropriate time.

- a. **State Agency** - Management entirely by the New York State Department of Transportation and/or Environmental Conservation.
- b. **Local Government** - Management entirely by a panel of local government officials for the counties in which the Corridor lies (County and/or Town).
- c. **State-Local Government Mix** - Management by a local board or other body under the authority and control of a State entity.
- d. **Privatization** - Management entirely by an individual, group, corporation, etc. from within the private sector under State control.
- e. **Public Benefit Corporation** - Management by an entity charged with securing the necessary funding and actively pursuing the development of the Corridor, as directed by the final Corridor Management Plan. This management body comprised of members chosen by the Commissioners of DEC and DOT, would be accountable to the State. The body could be created by the Legislature

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as a public authority or public benefit corporation and would have the authority to execute



EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2

EXAMPLE 3

contracts, issue permits, conduct enforcement activities, collect fees, and sell bonds.

## F. EXISTING FACILITIES - MAINTENANCE AND REHABILITATION

Policy during the planning process allowed maintenance of the entire Corridor to prevent its further deterioration. Maintenance which returned the railbed to its former condition was allowed while not favoring any single use over another. It seemed prudent in the light of past developments to allow for upgrading of the central segment to the minimum level to permit the movement of railroad rolling stock.

### 1. Corridor Culvert Work

During the planning process, DOT requested advice from the Adirondack Park Agency regarding the need to obtain Agency wetlands permits for the removal of beaver dams or debris from culverts. The APA determined that permits would not be required in most cases. The three examples below were given to guide decisions about the need to consult the APA in planning maintenance work.

- a. In Example 1, the blockage occurs entirely within the culvert. The relatively recent debris or dam is creating artificially high water levels behind the culvert. Removal of the blockage would restore the original invert elevation of the railroad drainage culvert. No wetlands permit is required in this case.
- b. In Example 2, the culvert wing walls define the blockage or beaver dam. The dam location in this situation is so close that the bottom of the culvert will control the water levels behind it. This type of blockage is also creating artificially high water levels behind the structure. No wetlands permit is required in this instance, but water levels must be reduced gradually to minimize downstream sedimentation.
- c. In Example 3, the debris or dam is located some distance from the culvert. In this case, a Freshwater Wetlands Act Permit might be required and the Agency should be consulted. An inspection would be necessary to determine the degree

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of impact to the wetland or if removal of the dam would drain a wetland upslope or if removal would constitute excavation in a wetland.

**2. Washouts**

Present major washouts are listed below. Other minor washouts occur on the Corridor in addition to beaver floodings.

MP 59.2 - 80'X15'	Indian Brook near Thendara (Repaired 11/92 by ARPS utilizing funds derived from the Adirondack Centennial Railroad's 1992 tourist operation.)
MP 83.1 - 30'X 6'	Alder Brook (Repaired 10/94 by ARPS utilizing funds derived from the Adirondack Scenic Railroad's tourist operation.)
MP 87.5 - 175'X35'	Near Nahasane
MP 100.6 - 80'X15'	Near Horseshoe Lake
MP 110.7 - 200'X20'	Gull Pond Outlet
MP 120.0 - 60'X15'	Near Rollins Pond

**3. Responsibility for Past Facilities Alterations**

Railroad Law and Highway Law place the responsibility for providing and maintaining grade crossings on the railroad. In the event that a railroad fails to maintain a grade crossing, the highway authority, after giving notice, can cause the repairs to be carried out and charge the railroad for the work.

Numerous grade crossings were paved over during the period of prolonged litigation. It was appropriate for municipalities to pave over grade crossings to provide an acceptable crossing surface for highway users. NYSDOT will not make any claim for damages where the grade crossings were paved over. In these cases, it is expected that the track lift normally associated with grade crossing repairs will bring the track to the elevation of the adjacent pavement.

There are at least two grade crossings of public, non-state highways where the highway has been raised or lowered making the railroad inoperative. NYSDOT will recognize that absent written permission, no municipality had the right to alter the grade over a highway. Any rail operator is required to coordinate the restoration of grade crossings with the local authorities. The cost of restoring the approaches to the grade crossings shall rest with the municipalities. New York State will work with local groups to facilitate a solution with the least economic impact.

In the case of private parties encroaching on the right-of-way, DOT's normal practice will be followed. If it is not possible to have the encroachment permitted, the encroaching party will be required to remove the encroachment. In the short term, DOT does not anticipate allocating resources to this effort. It is anticipated that the duties associated with encroachment control will be assigned to the corridor operator.

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 one or more candidate rail operators are identified, the level of commitment to highway dollars for grade crossing restoration could be negotiated based on the commitments of the operator.

## **G. FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND REMOVAL**

### **1. Parallel Trail Development and Waterway Access**

Limited parallel trails will be developed by priority. Parallel trail development will link with local trail systems outside the Corridor and provide access to Forest Preserve destinations. It may prove desirable to build new trails leading to some ponds from the Corridor for canoeing, camping, or fishing purposes. Issues such as public use and fisheries management of nearby Forest Preserve ponds will be addressed in the unit management plans to be prepared for those Forest Preserve units affected. Studies like the Bicycle Master Plan for the Adirondack Region of New York State cite bicycle tourism as a rapidly expanding, family-oriented outdoor recreational activity to which the Corridor is particularly suited.

### **2. 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.

### **3. Stations**

Passenger rail service, especially tourist excursion trains, require adequate station facilities. It must be recognized that some of the rail stations that formerly supported passenger rail service are no longer owned by the State. Proposals to use the station buildings which are now in private hands, or to establish new station facilities, will only be pursued if the lands and buildings can be leased or acquired through negotiated purchase.

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Traditional rail passenger service is less dependent on the larger rail station facilities, such as Thendara. Basic engine house and fueling facilities will need to be constructed, however. Fuel services can be as simple as pumping fuel directly into fuel tanks. If summer-only operations develop, engine houses can be located off the Corridor. The locations and construction details of these facilities will be determined as rail services develop.

The construction and operation of station facilities that might result from the implementation of the Corridor management plan would require modest increases in the use of local energy, telephone, and water resources. Due to the concentration of people that excursion trains tend to create at station facilities, impacts on sewage systems could be created. The assessment of such impacts will be included in the overall review of individual proposals to refurbish existing station facilities or establish new ones. All applicable health and environmental regulations will be followed in the review of station development proposals.

The details of Corridor development will depend in part upon the intentions of the selected developer and the availability of funding. Consequently, the location and scale of station facilities such as engine houses and fueling installations can not be determined in advance. For the purposes of determining the cumulative effects of the infrastructure needs on the environment, we have assumed that each village and hamlet has the potential for locating a station facility the size of which would vary with the tourist potential of the area.

The following guidelines have been established to assist in the review of proposals to develop station facilities:

- a. The State's power of eminent domain will not be exercised to take lands or buildings. If needed, lands and buildings will only be acquired through negotiated purchase from willing sellers.
- b. The development of all buildings and facilities except bridges and rail/highway crossings, (as well as other State-owned facilities) will be subjected to local planning laws.
- c. Development proposals will be required to conform with all applicable Federal, State, and local regulations.
- d. It will be required, to the extent practicable, that the design of new structures or modifications to existing structures will conform to appropriate architectural styles.





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4. **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 will need to be taken to insure the local road system is adequate at station areas.

5. **Flag Stops**

Because an interest has been expressed and a potential does exist for "flag" or "whistle stop" drop off points in remote areas, these needs must be considered. Drop off areas will only be allowed where the likelihood of trespass onto private lands adjacent to the Corridor will be low. Sites will be selected near Forest Preserve trailheads and navigable waterways that can support the infusion of people as determined by DEC. Through negotiations with an approved developer, appropriate practices will be instituted to insure the safety of those approaching flagstop locations on foot. For instance, flagstop sites will have good views of approaching trains and maximum train speeds for all trains will be limited to 10 mph within a quarter mile of each site. Walkways will be created if necessary to safeguard against erosion, especially near shorelines. Depending on anticipated levels of public use, privy type sanitary facilities may be required. If so, DEC specifications and guidelines will be used.

6. **Facilities Considerations for Persons with Disabilities**

As detailed Corridor development plans evolve, there will be a need and desire to consider the requirements of the disabled. The very establishment of excursion and passenger rail services on the Corridor offer a means to afford people with impaired mobility a unique opportunity to travel through the remote interior of the Adirondack Park. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 will be used as a guide in insuring that trains and station facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities.

7. **The Draft Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan**

The Draft Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (nearing completion by NYSDEC) includes the following recommendations relative to the Corridor:

"Nelson Lake Road - Access to the Moose River and Nelson Lake section from NYS Route 28 should be improved to provide for the excellent canoeing which the area offers. Extension and improvement of the Nelson Lake Road and utilization of the Adirondack RR bridge over the Middle Branch of the Moose River would give better ingress to the Nicks Lake-Nelson Lake snowmobile and foot trail systems. (This would need to be compatible and in conjunction with recommendations in the

Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan which is being prepared.) Establish a new ten (10) car parking area in the old pit just across the railroad tracks near the Moose River. Replace the current gate with a new gate located a little closer to Rt. 28. Leave the gate open or closed depending on the Forest Ranger's assessment of the condition of the entire road." While there is rail use of the Corridor, it would not be desirable to create an unsafe crossing. The parking area recommended above should not be constructed unless the possibility of rail use is eliminated. If trains are using the Corridor, only rail-based recreation should be considered at this location.

## H. PUBLIC USE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROLS

### 1. Snowmobiles in the Central Section

The railroad corridor has been classified in the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan as a travel corridor. Snowmobiles are a means of travel, and they represent a winter economic advantage to communities along the Corridor. As the entity responsible for the management of the adjacent State land, the Department of Environmental Conservation does realize the value of the central section as a large, roadless area. Although believing it is important to perpetuate this area's wild character, the Department does not endorse the integration of all classifications into one large wilderness area at this location. The Department's goal is to protect not only wilderness, but also to ensure the benefits provided by a public and private mix of classifications. Further guidance for the region will be provided by individual Forest Preserve unit management plans, as well as State planning efforts of a broader scope.

### 2. TRESPASS

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. It is concluded that a small percentage of users actually knowingly trespass from the Corridor onto private lands and education of the user public is imperative. Two gates will be placed at access points near Lake Lila and any other un-gated locations with the potential for illegal access. Appropriate signing at Corridor access points and intersections will be a deterrent to inappropriate use (see Appendix 26.) As with hiking trails on other State land, signs will be posted at all junctures with private roads and trails, indicating the adjacent property is private and access is not permitted. Forest Rangers and Conservation Officers have, and will continue to enforce illegal access from the Corridor. As with other areas of State land, the first line responsibility for enforcement of the misuse of State land rests with the Forest Ranger and incidents should be reported to the local ranger. Patrol of the few known access points to private lands should frustrate illegal ingress. It is the intent of the State to monitor counts of use and trespass. The issuance of an annual Corridor snowmobile permit, in the absence of substantial

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winter train activity, will continue on a trial basis. If documented misuse becomes substantial and illegal intrusion onto adjacent land is verified, the permit will 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 will seek the active participation of local governments and snowmobile clubs.

Documentation of the many private crossings on the Corridor is needed to determine those that are not validated by either a permit or by deed reference.

### **3. Controlled Access to the Forest Preserve**

It is readily apparent that recreational opportunity abounds along the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor. It is unusual that concern for State land overuse can be so easily alleviated and that perceived impacts can be so easily 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. This will prevent environmental degradation as well as provide for a quality Forest Preserve experience, especially in wilderness situations.

### **4. 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 Corridor, safety considerations will play a major part in the process of determining what segments are suitable for parallel trail construction.

Even though rail traffic may be limited during the period of initial rail development on the Corridor, rail and trail uses will not be allowed to occupy the rail bed concurrently. Physical dangers exist on the rail bed even when trains are not running. The public will not be allowed to pass where washouts have not been repaired or suitable alternate routes established. Bridges unprotected by deck planking or safety rails will be off limits. Such restrictions are imposed with the safety of the public in mind.

On Corridor segments where parallel 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 protect trail users, fences would be erected and appropriate warning signs would be posted. In the Adirondack Park setting, the use of rustic looking fences or hedges on the Corridor might be preferred, especially in residential areas where aesthetic considerations are important, but some designs would pose a danger to trail users. For example, post-and-rail fences should not be installed where the fence could be struck at an acute angle by a snowmobile because the rail could act as a lance.

For the most part, agricultural type stock fence would be adequate to separate rail from trail use. Appropriate signs would be posted along the fence. There would be areas, however, where more substantial fencing would be needed to protect snowmobilers from hazards such as bridges and rock cuttings.

According to State law, fences and other fixed objects must be kept a minimum of distance of eight and one half feet from the center line of the track. Even though there are numerous public roadways that run very close to railroads without barriers to separate them, such unprotected proximity is undesirable. The existence of undesirable situations is not an excuse to create more of the same.

To consider the safety of canoeists when fencing or other means of separating use are implemented, provision for safe crossing by water, or appropriate space when necessary to portage, will be integrated into general safety concerns.

The sharing of bridges and causeways is not out of the question, but the construction that would be required to accommodate both rail and trail uses would be expensive. Therefore, alternatives such as by-pass trails and separate trail bridges would be seriously considered. The development of a given bridge or causeway for rail or trail sharing would not be undertaken until the importance of the facility for rail or trail uses had been established.

It is possible that on segments of the Corridor where parallel trails would be constructed, physical constraints would force the trail to cross from one side of the rail bed to the other. To the extent possible, existing underpasses would be used even if some modifications were necessary. Where necessary to make the crossings at grade, locations with good views of approaching trains would be sought. Crossings would be designed to funnel trail users and to encourage trail users to stop, look and listen.

When considering trail/rail crossings, it must be borne in mind that, if rail use is successful, the trail crossings would become more hazardous. They would only be allowed if automatic warning devices were provided or if the crossings were grade separated. It might be determined that a regulatory hearing would be necessary before any such crossing would be allowed. NYSDOT has a long history of being very conservative

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when considering the safety issues associated with "at-grade" crossings. For these reasons it might be best to avoid "at-grade" crossings when designing trails rather than be faced with re-design in the future or with the provision of expensive automatic warning devices.

### **I. FISH AND WILDLIFE**

#### **1. Fisheries Management**

From a fisheries perspective, the primary benefit of opening and maintaining the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor to public use will 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 summary of the 1982 special report by Sr. Wildlife Biologist Gary B. Will entitled "Managing Beaver Activity on the Adirondack Railroad" makes the following points relative to wildlife management. The habitat on and near the route will always be conducive to beaver occupancy. Although 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.

Over the years a variety of control measures have been developed to minimize damage from the activity of beavers. Implementation of either individual or any combination of techniques will depend on the desired future use and degree of rail corridor preservation. Currently, beavers are presenting a problem to the continuity of the Corridor. The cost of immediate remedial action to insure the preservation of the railbed requires a multiple year minimal maintenance objective and projects an annual cost exceeding \$9,000. Even at a minimum level it is a major commitment of money and staff time. Currently, it would be most difficult for NYSDEC's Wildlife Unit to adequately accommodate this task with existing personnel and planned program goals.

Future use of the railway and rail bed will determine the degree of maintenance needed. For example, return of the train will necessitate more maintenance than if the rail bed were used for a snowmobile trail system. No maintenance would be required if the line were abandoned and treated as State-owned Forest Preserve Lands. Once the final use of the Corridor is determined, it will be easier to design a more detailed maintenance schedule.

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. 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.

At some locations culverts are not involved, yet beaver activity can result in higher water levels, saturation of the rail bed, inundation of the line and eventual washout. Although saturation of the bed should not necessarily demand immediate action, this situation must be monitored. Water levels within a foot of the railroad ties would call for immediate remedial action. In order to be realistic, a certain level of beaver problems must be expected annually and then acted upon accordingly. In past years, a minimum of five conflicts were annually maintained.

Various beaver control techniques were adequately discussed in the Gotie Report (1975). These included live trapping, electric fences, culvert modification and out of season kill trapping. In a personal communication (January 1982) with Region 9 Wildlife Biologist Michael Ermer, it was learned that modifications to electric fences and bleeders have proven beneficial. In addition, biologist Ermer suggested that the construction of fences upstream from a culvert would force beavers to build dams away from the rail bed.

Since 1975, a few chemical repellents have been developed with reportedly limited success, but Wildlife Unit personnel currently have not used these. Dynamite however, has been used successfully by regional staff to discourage beaver activities including the removal of dams and in some cases, their lodges. In most situations, beavers will not rebuild a dam after one or two explosions of the flooding structure. Furthermore, destruction of the lodge can be accomplished without killing the occupants if timed appropriately. The use of dynamite would probably be the most cost effective technique in minimizing beaver conflicts with the previously stated objective in mind. It must be remembered that these various control techniques whether used individually or collectively, are not absolutely effective.

Special trapping seasons do not appear as viable alternatives because of limited access, inability to delineate a recognizable boundary and the magnitude and proximity of adjacent beaver habitat. On the other hand, the trapping of beavers along the railway must be promoted.

Preventing beaver problems from occurring must be an integral part of managing beavers along the line. Replacement of small culverts with larger ones, or with bridges, are

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preventive measures. Rehabilitation of washouts with larger fill material will provide a stronger, more lasting base.

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

### **J. 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.

### **K. FIRE MANAGEMENT**

#### **1. Fire Plan**

A rail developer will be required to prepare a fire plan for the segments of the Corridor to be occupied by rail services. The plan will address the potential for forest fires, especially in the more remote areas where the containment of even a small fire can require a major effort. The following considerations should be included in the plan:

#### **2. Right-of-Way Clearing**

The Corridor right-of-way must be maintained in a manner that is consistent with existing law. Although DEC no longer requires the clearing of a right-of-way as a fire prevention measure, it does require that any brush cut along the right-of-way be treated in an acceptable manner pursuant to Section 9-1105 (4.) of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) which reads;

*"In any of the fire towns, or in any town included in the fire district as defined in subdivision 2 of Section 9-1109, brush, logs slash or other inflammable material shall not be left or allowed to remain on land within 25 feet of the right of way of a railroad..."*

The rail developer may decide to clear most of the width of the right-of-way for purposes of maximizing visibility and protecting the rail bed. On Corridor segments where trains would not be running, the width of the clearing needed to maintain the bed for trail purposes would be less.

Cut material must be dealt with in a manner that addresses both fire prevention, environmental, and aesthetic issues. Available options regarding brush treatment are



to remove the brush as the law requires or to chip the material, being careful to deposit it as uniformly as possible and not in large piles. This will lower the flammability of the material, thus dramatically lessening the likelihood of a fire.

If APA, DEC and DOT concerns can all be addressed, the use of chemicals for stump treatment and possibly a foliar follow up application should be considered.

3. **Fire Patrol**

A fire patrol behind trains operating during periods of high fire danger is a must, especially in the more remote areas. Such a patrol can consist of an observer in a speeder or a high-rail vehicle with forest fire control equipment available. Such patrols must operate at a distance behind the train that will insure that all fires will be easily detected and suppressed. Training for railroad personnel can be received from the local DEC Forest Ranger.

4. **Fire Suppression**

According to ECL 71-0715, "The fact that a fire originates upon the right-of-way of a railroad shall be prima facie evidence that the fire was caused by the negligence of the railroad company." The law can be used to recover the costs of fire suppression from a railroad operator or contractor.

L. **ADMINISTRATION**

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

M. **STAFFING**

Additional DOT and DEC staff will be needed to meet ongoing Corridor maintenance and law enforcement responsibilities. DOT position needs will include persons experienced in engineering, design and inspection.

Additional DEC Bureau of Preserve Protection and Management staff will be required to handle daily administration of the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor in addition to existing Forest Preserve management responsibilities. Additional personnel will be needed to supplement existing ranger districts commensurate with the increase in law enforcement requirements. In order to perform adequate trail maintenance and to remove brush and blowdown, a full-time year-round DEC trail crew will be needed, consisting of a labor supervisor and three laborers.

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The Bureau of Fish and Wildlife presently has a diverse and challenging plan of action that will benefit wildlife resources and the People of the State of New York. In essence, every potential workday is planned, including days for assisting landowners, businesses, governmental agencies, institutions and other citizens in resolving conflicts with wildlife and for the handling of nuisance beavers. Based on past records of performance it is unlikely an additional maintenance operation with the dimension of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor could be handled without causing severe public discontent. It is recommended that additional permanent or temporary staff be committed to handle this workload. The land use objective and degree of bed preservation desired will determine the number of people needed and length of employment period.

**N. FOREST PRESERVE INTERPRETATION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION**

The Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor has the potential of being an excellent aid to education about the environment, history and social value of the Adirondack Park. Through a combination of viewing the Corridor from a train with on-board audio or from a snowmobile with access to educational brochures, a message about the value of the Forest Preserve to the people of the State of New York can be provided.

1. The slogan for the Forest Preserve's 1985 centennial was "Heritage of the Past...Stewardship for the Future". A large part of that stewardship responsibility is to educate the public who owns nearly half of this vast park. To inform the people of the State of New York about the Adirondack Park's intrinsic values is a moral obligation to our forefathers and to our grandchildren. Those not physically able to get into the back country are penalized by their inability to enjoy their heritage. The rest of us should provide a way for them to do so. This is a moral obligation to the elderly and to the disabled.

The Adirondack backcountry is a State treasure without equal and it should be seen to be fully appreciated. Maintaining a large, informed constituency for the Park is imperative to the continuation of this wonderful heritage. If people aren't aware of the Park's significance, they won't support it, either conceptually or financially.

It is true however, that multitudes of people will destroy the very values of the wilderness that they seek, just by their numbers. An expanding population has placed great demands on the Park and in some areas, it is literally "being loved to death". If it becomes a reality, the Adirondack Railroad would be a means by which large numbers of people could see wild lands and not destroy them in the process. The train could give many folks a view of how special the Adirondack Park is without any effect on the environment. This should instill in them a desire for its continued protection. The value of a tourist train has been demonstrated locally by the Adirondack Centennial Railroad (now the Adirondack Scenic Railroad.) Over 200,000 people heard about

the Park and its railroad from an on-board narrative. Tourist lines in other parts of our great nation have also shown the ability of a train to be a low-impact means of educating many people who otherwise could not see the striking beauty of the Adirondacks firsthand.

When Dr. William Seward Webb built his railroad into the mountains in 1892, he was providing a tool for a better comprehension of New York State's natural treasure. What better way for multitudes of people to experience the Adirondack Park without an adverse impact. What better way to build a larger constituency in support of "forever wild"? What better way to improve the tourism-based economy of areas near the railway than by round-trip recreational packages similar to the ski trains back in the old days?

Trains in the wilderness are steeped in history. The Adirondack Railroad existed when the Adirondack Park was created in 1892 and long before some of the areas that it runs through were classified as wilderness. We should think about the interpretive opportunity offered by a train ride through the interior backcountry. A re-vitalized Adirondack Railroad would be an asset to the Forest Preserve concept and a tool to its perpetuation.

2. From the standpoint of the management of Corridor use, it is also important to law enforcement efforts to post informational signs along the Corridor and to delegate those organizations representing Corridor user groups to educate their members and to patrol the Corridor. Educating trail users on safe backcountry travel, making sure that good maps of the Corridor and surrounding areas are available with intersecting roads and trails clearly marked, will minimize the occurrence of search and rescue incidents. Suggested wording for Corridor signs can be found in Appendix 26.

**O. LAND TITLES AND/OR SURVEYS NEEDED**

Survey needs will be an integral part of the documentation process cited above.

**P. LAND ACQUISITION**

Recreation-oriented public use of certain areas of the Corridor would be enhanced by the acquisition of sufficient adjacent acreage to allow trail use 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.

Acquisition of any historic structures now in private ownership should be initiated with willing sellers. A detailed acquisition plan will not be prepared until after the full rail development potential of the Corridor is realized.

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**Q. SLMP TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS**

The existing classification of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor as a "travel corridor" will accommodate the types of development included in the preferred alternative, including a variety of recreational trail uses. DOT, DEC, and APA currently support the retention of the travel corridor classification. In the event that an acceptable rail proposal is not received for some segments of the Corridor during the rail marketing period, the issue of Corridor classification would become important.

The absence of rail uses from the Corridor would increase its value as a long-distance snowmobile, bicycle, and foot trail. Because a multi-use recreation trail is important to North Country tourism and economics, it would not be desirable to allow the Corridor to revert to the classification of adjacent Forest Preserve units. It is likely that reclassification would result in wilderness designation for a number of Corridor segments. Since the use of snowmobiles and bicycles is prohibited in wilderness areas, the Corridor's unique value as a major snowmobile and bicycle trail would thereby be destroyed.

The description of the travel corridor classification in the APSLMP refers to the railroad right-of-way in terms of a mass transit situation similar to roads and highways rather than a recreational facility. The travel corridor description should be amended to more clearly reflect the recreational theme of the management that would be pursued on the Corridor if rail options fail to materialize. As an alternative, another classification should be added to the APSLMP to reflect recreational use of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor instead of major transportation use.



THENDARA STATION...IN THE OLD DAYS



## **VI. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING (INCLUDING AN INVENTORY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND FACILITIES)**

### **A. NATURAL RESOURCES**

#### **1. Physical**

##### **a. Geology and Soils**

Geologists explain that the Adirondacks were formed approximately 1 100 million years ago during the Precambrian period. Dynamic geological processes such as submergence beneath the sea, sedimentation and crustal sagging, volcanism, metamorphism of pre-existing rocks, deep erosion and re-submergence were all involved in forming the Adirondacks. Intense pressure and high temperatures caused re-crystallization of rock into metamorphic types, including granite, the common bedrock in the area.

During the ice age, approximately one-half million years ago, a moving ice mass ground and scoured the bedrock, eventually shaping the mountains and forming u-shaped grooves or valleys in between. As the ice retreated northward approximately 9000 years ago, it left behind an irregular cover of rock rubble. Sand and stone settled out and formed natural dams as the ice receded and when these filled with melt water, newly-formed lakes and ponds dotted the Adirondack landscape. Since this early structuring of the Adirondacks, vegetation has gradually reclaimed the land and has helped evolve the present forest ecosystems, including the contribution of humus to today's soil structures.

The glacial ice deposited a heterogenous mixture of stone, gravel, sand, silt and clay which is called glacial till. Common minerals include quartz, feldspar, mica and hornblende.

More specifics about the geology and soils in areas adjacent to the Corridor can be found in management plans for adjoining Forest Preserve units.

##### **b. Terrain**

The Adirondack Railroad was constructed through several familiar habitats of northern New York State. Track was laid on exposed bedrock as well as sandy shallow soils. In some instances, 36 inch or smaller pieces of culvert pipe have supported the tonnage and at the same time allowed slow moving streams to flow. Still, in other instances bridges were built to allow a train to cross larger streams and rivers. In many other situations tons of gravel, cinders and rock were used to provide a base through wetland areas.

c. Water

The lakes and ponds located adjacent to or near the travel corridor offer scenic variety as well as opportunities for canoeing and fishing. There are 53 ponded waters with surface areas greater than five acres within one-quarter mile of the old rail line. Of these 34 may be accessible from the Corridor, either by canoe from intersecting navigable streams, by road, trail, or bushwhack across Forest Preserve lands, or because their shoreline lies within the Corridor's boundaries. Appendix 10 gives ponded water access and ownership characteristics. Some of the waters which are technically accessible are wholly within private ownership and their accessibility to the public is a subject of ongoing legal controversy.

The rolling country through which the Corridor passes is interlaced with numerous rivers and streams. A number of them cross the Corridor or follow it for a while, revealing striking scenery. As discussed later, several of the low-gradient streams near the Corridor have been dammed by beaver. Though the expansive flows thus created open attractive vistas through the forest, beaver activity has led to washouts which continue to threaten the physical integrity of the Corridor.

A number of the streams which cross the Corridor or run near it have been designated as parts of the New York State Wild, Scenic and Recreational River System. (See Appendices 11 and 12). In some cases, a stretch of river has received a less restrictive designation because of its proximity to the Corridor.

Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan guidelines for the management of scenic and recreational rivers and their delineated corridors will be adhered to in the management of affected sections of the travel corridor.

d. Wetlands

A railroad must take a route with minimum rise and fall. In Adirondack country, the areas most likely to be truly level are often occupied by wetlands. Naturally therefore, a large proportion of the Corridor was built through the extensive wetlands which are abundant in the western Adirondacks. The character of these wetlands ranges from the broad, open expanses of sedge meadows to the densely forested spruce-fir swamps, many of which serve as deer wintering areas.

The Corridor passes through wetlands which typically possess great ecological, aesthetic, recreational and educational value. In their capacity to receive, store and slowly release rainwater and meltwater, wetlands protect surface water

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resources by stabilizing water flow and minimizing erosion and sedimentation. Many natural and man-made pollutants are removed from water entering wetland areas. Because they constitute one of the most productive habitats for fish and wildlife, wetlands afford abundant opportunities for fishing, hunting, trapping and wildlife observation and photography. They serve as important habitat for a number of wildlife species. For the traveler, the expansive open wetland areas adjacent to the Corridor provide wide vistas in contrast to the dense forest lands through which the Corridor passes for most of its length. Therefore, although water levels along the Corridor must be controlled in order to protect the rail bed, control activities must be performed with sensitivity to wetland values.

The Adirondack Park Agency has mapped the wetlands in the parts of Essex and Hamilton Counties within the Adirondack Park. In general, all wetlands at least one acre in size were mapped and smaller wetlands were included if they were contiguous to streams or ponds. The maps are available for reference in the formulation of management decisions for the sections of the Corridor which pass through those counties. For the rest of the Corridor within the Park, wetland photo-enlargements are available as a preliminary reference.

DEC has regulatory jurisdiction over wetlands more than 12.4 acres in size along the section of the Corridor outside the Park. The wetlands of Oneida County, which entirely encompass that section, have been mapped and are available for reference in DEC Region 6 offices.

A large number of the wetlands adjacent to the Corridor have been created or augmented by the activity of beaver. The maintenance of the rail bed requires clearing of culverts plugged by beaver. Ponds which threaten the rail bed need to be lowered by removing beaver dams, some of which are located off the Corridor on private or Forest Preserve lands. Whenever the draining of ponded waters is contemplated for the maintenance of the rail bed, the Adirondack Park Agency will be consulted for permit requirements and wetland protection recommendations.

In attempting to accommodate both rail and non-rail uses of the Corridor, one alternative to allowing foot traffic on the rail bed concurrently with an approved rail use is to construct a trail parallel to the rails and separated a safe distance from it (ideally at least 10 feet). Unfortunately, one of the major impediments to such construction is the proximity of wetlands to the rails. There are few Corridor sections of any length where a trail could be located that would not require the construction of dry tread facilities such as bridges or boardwalks, or the deposition of large amounts of fill material. While small wet areas may



be bypassed by routing the trail off the Corridor and onto adjacent Forest Preserve lands, such opportunities on private lands may be limited by the unwillingness of landowners to accommodate trail users. In any case, the abundance of wetlands in the vicinity of the Corridor presents a major challenge to the prospect of parallel trail construction.

## 2. **Biological**

### a. Vegetation

In the past, vegetation surrounding the Corridor has existed in forms varying from lowly lichens and mosses to hardwood and softwood tree species. During the 1800's, portions of the forest cover type along the Remsen to Lake Placid line was altered by fire caused by both nature and man. The area was beset by lightning and spark-producing locomotives. The inflammable debris and slash that was left in the wake of logging added sufficient fuel to cause a severe fire hazard in some sections. Accordingly, many areas are presently in the early stages of forest succession. These stands contain trembling aspen *Populus tremuloides*, black cherry *Prunus serotina*, white birch *Betula papyrifera* or white pine *Pinus strobus*.

Sub-climax to climax forest cover along the Corridor consists of typical Adirondack forest types composed of a mix of American beech *Fagus grandifolia*, sugar maple *Acer saccharum*, red maple *Acer rubrum*, black cherry, yellow birch *Betula alleghaniensis*, red spruce *Picea rubens*, hemlock *Tsuga canadensis*, tamarack *Larix laricina*, northern white-cedar *Thuja occidentalis* and balsam fir *Abies balsamea*. The percentage of softwood component increases at lower elevations and along stream banks. Alders, willows and marsh grasses commonly occur in floodplain and swampy areas in the vicinity of the line.

Forest cover types as identified by the Society of American Foresters are described in Appendix 2.

Timber management occurs only on private land within the Park due to the New York State Constitution's prohibition of tree cutting in the Forest Preserve.

The New York Natural Heritage Program maintains records of rare plants, animals and natural communities within the State. According to Natural Heritage records, an occurrence of Pickering's reedgrass (*Calamagrostis pickeringii*) was found at one location within one-half mile of the Corridor near the hamlet of Big Moose. Pickering's reedgrass is classified as rare on New York's list

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of protected native plants. No other plants on New York's list of protected native plants, nor any plants federally classified as endangered or threatened are known to exist within one-half mile of the Corridor.

b. Wildlife

Typical central Adirondack wildlife species inhabit the forest community adjacent to the Corridor, presumably at levels consistent with other areas of the park. Specific species occurrences can be found in appropriate unit management plans for adjacent Forest Preserve Units. A general listing of mammals in the area is as follows:

Common Mammals

Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>
White-tailed deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>
Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>
Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>
Otter	<i>Lutra canadensis</i>
Beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>
Mink	<i>Mustela vison</i>
Varying hare	<i>Lepus americanus</i>
Red squirrel	<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>
Eastern chipmunk	<i>Tamias striatus</i>
Porcupine	<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>

Less Common Mammals

Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>
Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Gray fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>
Muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>
Fisher	<i>Martes pennanti</i>

Some of the many species of birds that occur along the route are listed below:

Common Birds

Ruffed grouse	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>
American woodcock	<i>Scolopax minor</i>
Wood duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>
American black duck	<i>Anas rubripes</i>

Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Common loon +	<i>Gavia immer</i>
Great blue heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>

Less Common Birds

Gray or Canada jay ++	<i>Perisoreus canadensis</i>
Turkey vulture ++	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Northern raven +	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Osprey *	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>

Abundance Unknown

Marten	<i>Martes americana</i>
Moose	<i>Alces alces</i>
Bald eagle **	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>

Special concern species - NYS +  
Scarce ++  
Threatened \*  
Endangered species - NYS and USDI \*\*

Aspen, birch, beech, maple, alder, balsam fir and hemlock are some of the species that have been used by wildlife, especially beavers for food, dam and lodge construction. Although timber cutting on State land in the Park is Constitutionally prohibited, the manipulation of land and forests on private land is considered beneficial for beavers.

c. Fisheries

Detailed inventories of the lakes, ponds and streams along the old rail line can be found in the various management plans for the adjacent Forest Preserve units. These inventories list the waters by name and number and detail water quality, fish species present and fisheries management considerations for those waters within the unit.

d. Endangered and Threatened Species, Species of Special Concern, and Other Unique Species

The records of DEC's Bureau of Wildlife and the New York Natural Heritage Program were consulted for the purpose of identifying listed species near the Corridor. The search was confined to a zone defined as the area within one-half

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mile of the Corridor on both sides. Following are the only species for whom records of occurrence within that zone were found:

! **Endangered Species**

The **round whitefish** found on the New York State Endangered Species List is known to inhabit a pond which is adjacent to the Corridor. The bald eagle is classified as endangered by both the U.S. Department of the Interior and New York State. Although no bald eagle nesting sites are known to exist near the Corridor, eagles are known to winter on a lake adjacent to the Corridor.

! **Threatened Species**

The **osprey** is a threatened species which has been found close to the Corridor. Although the osprey population in New York State declined along with other raptors in past decades, it now appears to be rising naturally. According to information gathered during DEC's ongoing annual osprey surveys, four nest sites within one-half mile of the Corridor were active in 1994. Another four sites within one-half mile were active in the past.

The **spruce grouse** is another threatened species which may occur nearby. It was last spotted within one-half mile of the Corridor in the Town of Long Lake in 1979.

The New York Breeding Bird Atlas (see Appendix 13) indicates that the **northern harrier** was a confirmed breeder, and the **red-shouldered hawk** was a probable breeder within the sample blocks through which the Corridor passes. It is not known whether these threatened species have actually nested within the one-half mile zone.

! **Species of Special Concern**

The **common loon** is a species of special concern that nests in the vicinity of the Corridor. In 1978 and 1979, researchers from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and DEC conducted an extensive loon survey. DEC performed a follow-up study in 1984 and 1985. The Adirondack Loon Preservation Project, a volunteer monitoring program sponsored by the Audubon Society and the Adirondack Council, gathered data from 1983 to 1985. According to information compiled in the three projects, loons have nested on 13 lakes and ponds that are

either located within one-half mile of the Corridor or, though they are farther away, are linked to the Corridor by navigable water. More recent information about the breeding status of loons near the Corridor is not available.

New York Breeding Bird Atlas records reveal that the **common raven**, **Cooper's hawk**, and **eastern bluebird** were confirmed breeders within the sample blocks which include the Corridor. The **grasshopper and vesper sparrows**, the **black tern** and the **common nighthawk** are probable breeders.

Except for the bald eagle, none of the species mentioned above are federally classified as endangered or threatened.

e. **Significant Habitats**

Areas within one-half mile of the Corridor which have been identified as important wildlife habitats and are on file with the Bureau of Wildlife include:

- ! **Deer Wintering Areas** - The Corridor passes through twelve deer wintering areas.
- ! **Osprey Nesting Areas** - Four active and four historic osprey nesting sites have been discovered on ponds near the Corridor.
- ! **Common Loon Nesting Areas** - Thirteen ponded waters near the Corridor have supported breeding loons.
- ! **Spruce Grouse** - The Corridor passes through stands of tamarack known to be important to the survival of this threatened species.
- ! **Round Whitefish** - This endangered species inhabits a pond adjacent to the Corridor.

3. **Unique Areas**

The Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor is considered unique because it passes through the diverse landscapes of the western Adirondacks. The scenic, ecological and recreational attributes of this panorama are enriched by an abundance of lakes, ponds, streams and wetlands. Although relatively narrow, the Corridor provides natural aesthetics unique to the varied ecosystems along its 119 mile length. The composite is striking due to the sum of its parts.

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## **B. MAN-MADE FACILITIES**

### **1. Trackage**

The rail on the Corridor primarily consists of 105 pound (per yard) steel stock from Remsen to Saranac Lake (109 miles). Ninety (90) pound rail runs between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid. All of the rail is at least 60 years old. There are approximately 360,000 railroad ties on the Adirondack line. Ties on the route average 30 years of age with the exception of the 29,700 ties installed between 1978-1980.

### **2. Stations**

Old railway stations which are currently in State ownership are the Nehasane, Ray Brook and Saranac Lake stations. The others that still exist are in private ownership. The Thendara Station is leased as a base of operations for the Adirondack Scenic Railroad. It is also used for a museum (Adirondack Park and Railroad), gift shop and volunteer lodging. The Lake Placid Station is owned and operated by the Essex County Historical Society for museum purposes. Efforts are underway to set up a museum at the Saranac Lake Station also.

See Appendix 6 (Consolidated Structure Inventory Listing) for locations of stations and other buildings on the Corridor.

### **3. Bridges**

Bridges on the route range in length from 16 feet to 250 feet. See Appendix 6 for locations of these bridges and a multitude of culverts. Most of the bridges are original structures and are generally in good condition for their age. (See ANCA report for detailed information).

### **4. Crossings**

There are many public and private crossings ranging from individual driveways to private land to highways traversing the Corridor. Some of these are active under permit from NYSDOT, others are lacking permits or are not being used. Some are major highway crossings where the tracks have been removed from the highway right-of-way during past maintenance. See Appendix 6 for locations of these crossings.

## **C. PUBLIC RECREATIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES**

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The following are suggested desirable recreation opportunities which could be considered for integration with rail options during the Request for Proposals process included in the Preferred Alternative.

### 1. **Forest Preserve Unit Management Plan Recommendations Regarding the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor:**

#### a. Horse Trails

Equestrian use of the railroad has a couple of interesting possibilities. First, sections of the Corridor itself have value as a horse trail system. Second, the Ha-De-Ron-Dah Wilderness Revised Unit Management Plan states "There is also interest in possible future connection with the Otter Creek Horse Trail complex and the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor."

#### b. Recommendations From Forest Preserve Unit Management Plans

- (1) As stated previously, recommendations from the Draft Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan include extension and improvement of the Nelson Lake Road (approximately .3 mile) and utilization of the Adirondack Railroad bridge over the Middle Branch of the Moose River to give better ingress to the Nicks Lake-Nelson Lake snowmobile and foot trail systems and for canoe access to the Moose River.

### 2. **Snowmobiling**

In addition to the Corridor's cited value as a long distance snowmobile route, there is concern for construction of a parallel snowmobile trail from Big Moose to the hamlet of Beaver River. This would alleviate difficulty regarding early winter access to residents of the hamlet of Beaver River. This historic problem involving public snowmobiling and access to an isolated community has been discussed in the past, but has not been resolved. The Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan recommends that DEC explore, with the Town of Webb, the possibility of connecting their snowmobile trail (#2) which runs parallel to NYS Route 28, with the Nelson Lake Trail System utilizing existing woods roads and the railroad corridor.

### 3. **Bicycling and Multi-Use Trails**

The Bicycle Master Plan for the Adirondack North Country Region of New York State indicates that bicycle transportation use of the Corridor would be significant in the Lake Placid-Saranac Lake-Tupper Lake area, where bicycle routes are confined primarily to high traffic volume roads. Recent ISTE funding will provide for renovation of the Saranac Lake Union Depot as a regional recreation/ transportation center.



This facility could operate as a ticket center for rail travelers, and enhance existing pedestrian, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobile trails. The Depot Station is the core of a Scenic Byway system in northern New York. From Lake Ontario on the west to Lake Champlain on the east and from the Mohawk Valley to the Canadian border, the North Country scenic byway system offers residents and visitors enjoyment and satisfaction in peaceful surroundings. Scenic byways intersect the rail line in at least four locations, providing significant tourism promotion potential.

#### 4. **Additional Recreational Opportunities**

Specific recreational opportunities, in addition to hunting and fishing, between Remsen and Lake Placid that could benefit from rail access are numerous. The possibility exists for expansion of the existing Adirondack Scenic Railroad in both directions. Timing with scheduled trains could offer unique possibilities for controlled camping and point to point or loop trip canoeing, biking and hiking. Ticket sales would offer a means to regulate any current or future overuse situations. Options include the following:

- a. **Granny Marsh** (hiking, interpretive) BLACK RIVER WILD FOREST (BRWF) - approx. 2 1/2 miles, currently bushwack (Cohen Rd.)
- b. **Brewer Lake** (hiking, fishing) BRWF - trail to Brewer Lake per Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan per above - approx. 2 miles.
- c. **McKeever Trail** (hiking, bicycling) BRWF - Old McKeever Truck Trail (South Branch Trail in Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan) provides access to several miles of hiking opportunities per BRWF Unit Management Plan, including Remsen Falls on the South Branch Moose River.
- d. **Nicks Lake-Nelson Lake Trail Complex** (hiking, canoeing, camping, Nicks Lake Campsite) BRWF - Several miles of loop trail hiking opportunities on the Nicks Lake - Nelson Lake snowmobile and foot trail systems per above. A short bushwack north of the Iron Bridge would need layout and construction to tie in with the Nicks Lake system.
- e. **Lock 'N Dam** - PRIVATE (Historic and Forest Preserve interpretive site, possible day use picnic area) - This locally historic site is immediately adjacent to the Corridor across the Moose River from the Black River Wild Forest - Acquisition of this parcel if it becomes available is recommended. This is consistent with recommendations in the Final Black River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan.
- f. **Big Otter Trail** (Equestrian, hiking, camping) HA-DE-RON-DAH WILDERNESS - Recommendations in the Ha-De-Ron-Dah Wilderness Revised Unit Management Plan per above regarding expanded horse trail connections. Opportunities also exist for "wilderness" hiking and camping.

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- g. The segment of the **North Branch of the Moose River** that runs parallel to the Corridor north of Old Forge offers excellent flatwater opportunity for a summer canoe trip. Purchase of the appropriate property (or an easement) for a flagstop would link the Corridor with the river, perhaps near Moulin Mountain. This, combined with an operating train, would provide 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.
- h. **Safford Pond** (hiking, fishing) FULTON CHAIN WILD FOREST  
Access to Safford Pond area - approx. 5 miles.
- i. **Big Moose to Buck Pond to Carter Station** (Interpretive, tourism, hiking, fishing, possible bicycle trail)
- j. **Norridge Trail** (hiking, camping) PIGEON LAKE WILDERNESS  
Wilderness hiking and camping - Beaver River to Twitchell Lake, approx. 3.75 miles.
- k. **Stillwater Reservoir** - FIVE PONDS WILDERNESS - INDEPENDENCE RIVER WILD FOREST (designated camping, canoeing, fishing)
- l. **Partlow Area** (Hiking, Camping) FIVE PONDS WILDERNESS -  
Possible wilderness hiking opportunities in the Mt. Electra area.
- m. **Nehasane-Lake Lila-Mt. Frederica** - LAKE LILA PRIMITIVE AREA (Interpretive, hiking, camping, canoeing) Dr. Webb's private railroad station - Possible canoe trip down the Beaver River to Stillwater and on downriver to the vicinity of Croghan.
- n. A portage between the Bog and Beaver River watersheds would be possible with the purchase of property (or an easement) to connect the Corridor to Bog Lake and preferably, Clear Pond. From the Corridor, it would be possible to paddle from Harrington Pond, down Harrington Brook and into Lake Lila.
- o. **Hitchins Pond Vicinity** - HITCHINS POND PRIMITIVE AREA -  
Canoe access from the intersection with Bog River, upstream to Lows Lake to upper Oswegatchie through system of rivers and portages to Cranberry Lake.
- p. **Horseshoe Lake Area** - HORSESHOE LAKE WILD FOREST (Canoeing, camping, fishing) - a short hike to Arab Mt. offers a scenic vista. - A 2 1/2 mile carry to Bridge Brook Pond from the Horseshoe Lake Outlet gives access by canoe to Tupper Lake and connection to Raquette River. The Corridor also crosses the Raquette River just south of the Hamlet of Tupper Lake.
- q. **Floodwood-St. Regis Area** - ST. REGIS CANOE AREA - SARANAC LAKES WILD FOREST (canoeing, fishing) the only classified

Canoe Area in the Forest Preserve. Rail access could offer a means to control overuse of this ultimate canoeing opportunity in a wilderness setting.

- r. **Lake Placid-Saranac Lake** - Bicycle route, fitness path, tourism and dinner train possibilities between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid.

#### D. **TRANSPORTATION LINKS**

The southern terminus of the Corridor is at a location near Remsen, N.Y. known locally as Snow Junction. At this point, the Corridor intersects with an active branch of the Mohawk, Adirondack and Northern Railroad system which runs between Utica and Lyons Falls. There are no other rail connections with the Corridor. NYS Routes 12 and 28 are State highways from which the southern segment of the Corridor is accessible. NYS Routes 3, 30 and 86 intersect the Corridor's northern reaches. Route 421 leads to the Corridor at Horseshoe Lake. With a few exceptions, the region traversed by the Corridor's central segment is inaccessible by public highway. For the hamlet of Beaver River, the Corridor constitutes the only reliable winter access.

#### E. **LAND USE AND ZONING**

Most of the Corridor property is located within the Adirondack Park. According to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, the segment of the Corridor lying within the Park is classified as a "travel corridor." The Adirondack Park Agency continues to consider the classification to be appropriate and regards the operation of a railroad as a desirable use of the Corridor property. The recreational trail uses proposed for the Corridor, especially long-distance snowmobile use, are also compatible with the travel corridor classification.

Maps showing various State and private land classifications within the Adirondack Park in the vicinity of the Corridor are found in Appendix 15.

#### **! Local Planning**

As indicated in Table III, eleven out of the fourteen communities which include a part of the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor have engaged in the development of a local plan. Almost all of the communities also have some form of land use regulation. Towns that have not developed a plan either contain only a small section of the Corridor, or have population centers located at some distance from the Corridor.

There appear to be no major conflicts involving the Corridor identified in the planning efforts of those communities active in planning where the Corridor passes through more developed areas. It should be recognized that while local planning efforts have been going on for more than 12 years, uncertainty about the future disposition of the

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Corridor has resulted in passive treatment of it in local plans. As opportunities have presented themselves, local governments have responded. For example, planning documents for the Herkimer County Town of Webb in 1985 make relatively few references to the Corridor. The Town Planning Board however, has permitted the short run Thendara operation. The Village of Saranac Lake Plan (circa 1980) identifies recreational trail opportunities along the Corridor.

ANCA has been granted a New York State ISTEPA Grant for a Transportation Enhancement Program with the Village of Saranac Lake as the sponsor. The proposal involves setting up a transportation/recreation center at the Saranac Lake Union Station.

**TABLE III. LOCAL PLANNING PROGRAM STATUS SUMMARY**

COUNTY	TOWN OR VILLAGE	PLAN	SUBDIV. ZONING	REG.	OTHER	NOTES
ESSEX	Lake Placid (V)	X	X	X		N.A.
	North Elba	X	X	X		
	St. Armand					
FRANKLIN	Saranac Lake (V)	X	X	X	X	Recreation Use
	Harriestown	X	X	X		N.A.
	Santa Clara					
	Altamont	X	X	X		
	Tupper Lake (V)	X	X	X		
ST. LAWRENCE	Piercefield	X		X		N.A.
	Colton	X	X	X		
HAMILTON	Long Lake					
HERKIMER	Webb	X	X	X		
ONEIDA	Forestport	X			X	
	Remsen	X				

Given the sparse reference to the Corridor in local plan documents, there is also fairly passive treatment of the Corridor area in terms of zoning districts. Further, local plans have not documented potential impacts associated with a reactivated Corridor. However, the Corridor management plan will address such impacts, and the development of the Corridor will be conducted in consultation with local governments, all of which are represented on the Citizen Advisory Committee.

## F. **COMMUNITY SERVICES**

The following community services are both supportive of and are supported by public use of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor.

### 1. **Law Enforcement Services**

Law enforcement agencies in the areas adjacent to the Corridor include the State Police and County Sheriffs. Both have offices throughout the Adirondacks. The New York State Police have 24-hour dispatchers at New Hartford **(315) 736-0121** and at Ray Brook **(518) 897-2000**. Village police are available within the bounds of the various hamlets. DEC Environmental Conservation Officers and Forest Rangers round out the list of associated law enforcement personnel.

### 2. **Fire Protection Services**

Fire protection is the responsibility of DEC Forest Rangers, paid municipal firemen or volunteer fire fighters outside of the hamlets.

### 3. **Search and Rescue Services**

Search and rescue activities in the area are coordinated by DEC Forest Rangers. DEC offices that have jurisdiction along the Corridor are as follows:

NYSDEC Region 5 Headquarters  
Route 86,  
Ray Brook, N.Y. 12977 (518) 897-1300

NYSDEC Region 6 Sub-Office  
225 N. Main St.  
Herkimer, N.Y. 13350 (315) 866-6330

Contact the Forest Ranger's Emergency Dispatch Center which is operational from 8 AM to Midnight at: 1-518-891-0235 (If no answer, contact the State Police.)

### 4. **Recreational Facilities**

In addition to the Corridor itself which offers potential for diverse recreational opportunity, adjacent Forest Preserve lands provide for varying types of land and water-based primitive or unconfined recreational pursuit as discussed throughout this management plan.

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Camping and hiking opportunities abound on Forest Preserve lands adjacent to the Corridor. Many excellent trail guides describing places to hike can be found in local bookstores. Boating, canoeing, kayaking and other water based sports are available either from private marinas within the area or on public waters accessible from public land including the Corridor. Other recreational opportunities include hunting, fishing, horseback riding, rock climbing, swimming and white-water rafting.

Snowmobiling is provided in the Forest Preserve on designated snowmobile trails located on public lands classified as Wild Forests. Snowmobiling opportunities exist locally near Old Forge where Town of Webb Snowmobile Trail System Permits are available from the Old Forge Tourist Center. Snowmobiling is also active in the Tupper-Saranac-Lake Placid area.

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing can be found on state land, many town-maintained trails and at the Visitor Interpretive Centers at Paul Smiths (nordic skiing) and Newcomb (snowshoeing). The Jackrabbit Trail connecting Keene with Lake Placid and Saranac Lake offers 25 miles of groomed ski trails. Downhill skiing is offered near Lake Placid, Tupper Lake and Old Forge.

Developed facilities in nearby hamlets include the Enchanted Forest in Old Forge, the Olympic facilities operated by the Olympic Regional Development Authority in the Lake Placid area including Mt. Van Hoevenberg and the Intervale Ski Jumps and the Whiteface Mt. Ski Area and Memorial Highway.

In addition to full time residents, the hamlet areas along the Corridor are a source of many second homes for non-residents who spend leisure time in the Adirondack Park. These hamlet areas also offer many tourist accommodations such as restaurants, motels, shops, libraries and museums including the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.

### 5. **Volunteer Services**

DOT surveyed numerous tourist railroads and railroad museums to find out about their experience with attracting, utilizing and retaining volunteers. The factors which seem to indicate healthy voluntarism include not-for-profit status, presence of a professional volunteer coordinator, proximity to either population centers or a popular vacation region and the extent to which the organization emphasizes the historic aspects of its equipment and operations.

The for-profit operations unanimously rejected the use of volunteers for train operations or running maintenance of equipment and track. The primary reasons were liability insurance problems and unreliable attendance.

The not-for-profits did not report these problems to be significant. However, both types of organization reported that the most common use of volunteers was for restoration of historic equipment and buildings, or as tour guides. The largest difference of opinion was regarding train operation personnel. Some use nearly all volunteers, others discourage or outright ban them. On the Adirondack Centennial operation, the regular locomotive engineer has been the only non-volunteer member of the operating crew.

The survey of volunteer turnout at various tourist railways and museums showed a wide variety in use of volunteers as a resource. Under any railroad plan alternative for the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor, three of the factors identified above may or may not be present depending on the details of the organization contemplated, but the Corridor does have proximity to the Adirondack vacation region. None of the factors appear to be inherently precluded. It would appear therefore, that a conservative estimate of 1,000 volunteer hours per year could be expected to be sustainable in the long term for the sort of tourist train operations contemplated under this alternative. Aggressive management could increase that number by several fold, but only under ideal conditions. (See Appendix 20).

## 6. **Utilities**

Systems for delivering power and communication utilities to population centers within the Adirondack Park and beyond its boundaries ordinarily are confined to existing travel corridors and utility rights-of-way. Limited segments of the Corridor are currently used for utility transmission. Although the potential for the development of utility transmission along the Corridor has not been assessed, its characteristic of continuous linear ownership would make it uniquely suitable for consideration in future planning.

## G. **ECONOMIC PROFILES OF CORRIDOR COUNTIES**

The following economic profiles are included in this management plan to give insight into the economics of the Corridor counties to assist in determination of impacts.

### **ESSEX COUNTY**

#### **Population**

Essex County had a population of 37,152, in 1990, up from 36,175 in 1980. All of the county is within the Adirondack Park and much of it is within the State Forest Preserve. As a result, it is sparsely settled with a population density of only 20 persons per square mile. Following are the principal communities in the county followed by their population:

-|- ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING -|-

Ticonderoga (Village) .....	2,770
Lake Placid (Village) .....	2,485
Port Henry (Village) .....	1,263



**Income**

According to the 1990 Census of Population, median family income in the county was \$29,809 and 12.3 percent of all county residents were below the poverty level.

**Economic Base**

Following are the leading sources of employment in the county by economic sector:

Services .....	4,043...28.7%
Government .....	3,800...27.0%
Retail Trade .....	2,691...19.1%
Manufacturing .....	1,541...10.9%
All Other .....	2,003...14.2%
 TOTAL	 14,078...100.0%

Following are some of the major private sector employers in the county:

- International Paper Company
- The Uihlain Mercy Center, Inc.
- Moses Ludington Hospital
- Lake Placid Hilton

Tourism and recreation are major activities in the county, as reflected in the identification of the service sector as the leading employer. Government employment includes the sports facilities operated by the Olympic Regional Development Authority and a number of State mental health and correctional facilities.

**Economic Trends**

The seasonal nature of tourism and recreational activity results in substantial fluctuations in unemployment from the summer to the winter months. However, growth of winter sports activities in recent years has helped to dampen this pattern to some degree in recent years. Following are annual average rates of unemployment for the past seven years:

1985... 9.6%	1988... 6.6%	1991... 10.9%
1986... 10.3%	1989... 7.9%	
1987... 7.0%	1990... 7.5%	

-|- **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING** -|-

From 1980 to 1990, employment in the county rose by 3,242 jobs to 14,078, a gain of 29.9 percent. Following are the employment changes in the key economic sectors that contributed to this growth:

Services .....	+ 684
Government .....	+ 1,314
Retail Trade .....	+ 737
Manufacturing .....	+ 19

**FRANKLIN COUNTY**

**Population**

Franklin County had a population of 46,540 in 1990, up from 44,929 in 1980. With the southern two-thirds of the county within the Adirondack Park, it is quite sparsely settled with a density of only 28 persons per square mile. Following are the principal communities:

Malone (village) .....	6,777
Tupper Lake (village) .....	4,087
Saranac Lake (village) .....	5,377 (Partly in Essex County)

**Income**

According to the 1990 Census of Population, median family income in the county was \$26,328 and 17.7 percent of all county residents were below the poverty level, one of the highest ratios in Upstate New York.

**Economic Base**

Following are the leading sources of employment in the county, by economic sector:

Government .....	5,846...37.0%
Services .....	4,025...25.5%
Retail Trade .....	2,705...17.1%
Manufacturing .....	1,422...9.0%
All Other .....	1,813...11.5%
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>15,811...100.0%</b>

Following are some of the leading private sector employers in the county:

- OWD, Inc.
- Tru-Stitch Moccasin Corp.
- Paul Smiths College
- Ames Department Stores

-|- ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING -|-

In addition to the above, a number of state correctional and mental health facilities are major sources of employment in the county. Agriculture is important to the local economy, particularly in the northern part of the county, with dairying the major activity. In 1989, there were 575 farms and 154,700 acres of farm land.

**Economic Trends**

Franklin County suffers from chronically high unemployment, due in part to the seasonal nature of employment in tourism and recreation. Following are annual average unemployment rates for the last seven years:

1985... 9.5%	1988... 7.8%	1991...10.8%
1986...10.6%	1989... 9.8%	
1987... 9.4%	1990... 7.4%	

From 1980 to 1990, employment in the county rose by 4,325 jobs or 37.7 percent. Following are the employment changes in the key economic sectors:

Government .....	+1,710
Services .....	+1,452
Retail Trade .....	+ 942
Manufacturing .....	+ 32

**HAMILTON COUNTY**

**Population**

Hamilton County had a population of 5,279 in 1990, the smallest in the State, up from 5,034 in 1980. The county is entirely within the Adirondack Park and a large proportion is state-owned land within the State Forest Preserve. The overall population density is three persons per square mile, but the small population is clustered in a few hamlets and the only incorporated community is the Village of Speculator, which has a population of 400.

**Income**

According to the 1990 Census of Population, median family income in the county was \$27,284 and 8.7 percent of all county residents were below the poverty level.

**Economic Base**

Following are the leading sources of employment in the county:

Government .....	743... 42.5%
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-|- REMSEN-LAKE PLACID CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN/EIS -|-

Services .....	376...	21.5%
Retail Trade .....	342...	19.5%
Construction .....	152...	8.7%
Manufacturing .....	76...	4.3%
 TOTAL .....	 1,750...	 100.0%

There are no large private employers in the county and much of the employment is highly seasonal, being dependent on tourism and recreation, particularly in the summer months.

**Economic Trends**

Because of the high level of dependence on tourism and recreation, unemployment is relatively low in the June - September period, but at double-digit levels in remaining months. Following are annual average unemployment rates in recent years:

1985...11.8%	1988... 8.7%	1991...10.9%	1986...12.0%	1989...11.0%
1987...10.0%	1990... 8.5%			

From 1980 to 1990, employment in the county rose from 1,339 to 1,750, a gain of 30.7%. Following are the employment changes over the decade in the key economic sectors:

Government .....	+135
Services .....	+101
Retail Trade .....	+101
Construction .....	+ 92
Manufacturing .....	- 25

**HERKIMER COUNTY**

**Population**

Herkimer County had a population of 65,797 in 1990, down slightly from 66,714 in 1980. Its density is 46 persons per square mile and population is concentrated in the Mohawk River Valley in the southern part of the county. Following are the largest communities:

Ilion (village) .....	8,888
Herkimer (village) .....	7,945
Little Falls (city) .....	5,829
Mohawk (village) .....	2,986

-|- ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING -|-

Frankfort (village) ..... 2,673

**Income**

According to the 1990 Census of Population, median family income in the county was \$28,718 and 13.1% of all county residents were below the poverty level.

**Economic Base**

Following are the leading sources of employment in the county by economic sector:

Manufacturing . . . . .	5,535...	30.2%
Government . . . . .	4,476...	24.4%
Retail Trade . . . . .	3,433...	18.7%
Services . . . . .	2,881...	18.7%
All Other . . . . .	2,007...	10.9%
 TOTAL . . . . .	 18,332...	 100.0%

Following are some of the leading private sector employers in the county:

- Chicago Pneumatic Corporation
- Daniel Green Company
- Remington Arms Company
- The Union Fork & Hoe Company
- Little Falls Hospital
- J. E. Morgan Knitting Mills, Inc.

In addition to local sources of employment, many residents of the county commute to jobs outside the county, particularly in and around the cities of Utica and Rome in neighboring Oneida County. According to the 1990 Census, nearly 40 percent of employed residents of the county work outside the county.

Agriculture is a major land use in the county and dairy farming, a major activity. According to the 1987 Census of Agriculture, sales of farm products in the county exceeded \$47 million.

**Economic Trends**

The county has experienced chronically high unemployment, in part because of long term declines in some of its basic industries, and in part because of the highly seasonal nature of employment in the northern portion of the county where tourism is an important activity. Following are annual average unemployment rates for recent years:

1985...9.2%	1988...5.6%	1991...8.3%
1986...9.8%	1989...6.7%	
1987...6.8%	1990...5.6%	

From 1980 to 1990, employment in the county declined by 693 jobs to 18,332, a loss of 3.6%. Following are the employment changes over the decade for the key economic sectors:

-|- ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING -|-

Manufacturing .....	-3,334
Government .....	+ 292
Retail Trade .....	+ 888
Services .....	+ 958

**ONEIDA COUNTY**

**Population**

Oneida County had a population of 250,836 in 1990, down from 253,466 in 1980. Its density is 205 persons per square miles, but the heaviest concentration is along the Mohawk River Valley in the south central part of the county. Following are the largest communities:

Utica (city) .....	68,637
Rome (city) .....	44,350
New Hartford (town) .....	21,640
Whitestown (town) .....	18,985

**Income**

According to the 1990 Census of Population, median family income in the county was \$32,557 and 11.9% of all county residents were below the poverty level.

**Economic Base**

Following are the leading sources of employment in the county, by economic sector:

Government .....	25,151...	23.9%
Services .....	23,480...	22.3%
Retail Trade .....	18,920...	18.0%
Manufacturing .....	18,124...	17.2%
All Other .....	19,478...	18.5%
 TOTAL .....	 105,123...	 100.0%

Following are some of the leading private sector employers in the county:

- General Electric Company
- Utica Mutual Insurance Company
- Oneida Limited
- Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
- Utica Corporation



St. Lukes Memorial Hospital  
St. Elizabeth Hospital  
New York Telephone Company

In addition, Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome is a major source of jobs and accounts for government's large share of total employment.

Agriculture is an important activity, with 1,295 farms and 283,000 acres of farmland in 1989. The county ranks fourth in the State in milk production.

**Economic Trends**

The county has a history of chronically high unemployment, but jobless rates have held below statewide averages during most of the recent recession. Following are annual average unemployment rates:

1985...6.9%	1988...4.5%	1991...6.7%
1986...6.3%	1989...5.0%	
1987...5.0%	1990...4.3%	

From 1980 to 1990, employment in the county rose 16,448 to 105,123, a gain of 18.5%. Following are the job changes over the decade by major economic sector:

Government .....	+5,477
Services .....	+6,339
Retail Trade .....	+4,406
Manufacturing .....	-3,582
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate .....	+1,938

**ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY**

**Population**

St. Lawrence County had a population of 111,974 in 1990, down from 114,347 in 1980. The county has the largest land area of any county in the state, 2,768 square miles. The population density is 40 persons per square mile. Most of the population is concentrated in the northern and western parts of the county. Following are the largest communities:

Ogdensburg (city) .....	13,521
Massena (village) .....	11,719
Potsdam (village) .....	10,251

-| - ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING -| -

Canton (village) .....	6,379
Gouverneur (village) .....	4,604

**Income**

According to the 1990 Census of Population, median family income in the county was \$29,004 and 17.2 percent of all county residents were below the poverty level, one of the highest ratios in Upstate New York. This is due in part to the concentration of college students in the county.

**Economic Base**

Following are the leading sources of employment in the county, by economic sector:

Government	10,244...	28.3%
Services	7,651...	21.2%
Retail Trade	7,631...	21.1%
Manufacturing	6,040...	16.7%
All Other	4,591...	12.7%
TOTAL	36,157...	100.0%

Following are some of the leading private sector employers in the county:

- Aluminum Company of America
- Reynolds Metals Company
- Acco International, Inc.
- Clarkson College
- St. Lawrence University
- American Computer Assembly, Inc.
- General Motors Corporation

In addition to the two colleges listed above, the importance of the public sector as a source of jobs is bolstered by two branches of the State University of New York, the St. Lawrence Power Project (operated by the New York Power Authority), and a number of correctional and mental health facilities.

Agriculture is an important activity with 1,660 farms and 52,300 acres of farmland in 1989. St. Lawrence leads all other counties in the State in milk production.

**Economic Trends**

Unemployment in the county has remained high even during the boom years of the 1980's. Following are the annual average unemployment rates for the most recent seven years:

**-| ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING -|**

1985... 8.2%	1988... 7.7%	1991... 9.8%
1986... 8.6%	1989... 9.9%	
1987... 7.5%	1990... 7.4%	

From 1980 to 1990, employment in the county rose by 5,035 jobs, or 16.2 percent. Following are employment changes in the key economic sectors:

Government	+1,411
Services	+1,632
Retail Trade	+2,825
Manufacturing	-1,242

## H. CULTURAL RESOURCES

### 1. Visual Resources

Looking out from the Corridor, an interesting mosaic of mountains, hills, lakes, ponds, woodlands and wetlands is visible. The variety of interspersed ecosystems provides for a diverse panorama, ranging from the more open landscapes in the vicinity of the Mohawk Valley to the dense forests in the proximity of the High Peaks Wilderness. The route passes through some of the most remote territory in New York State.

The Corridor itself has been a feature of the Adirondack landscape for more than 100 years. Though generally well screened from surrounding areas by forest vegetation, it is visible from various elevated vantage points along its winding course. Corridor uses would be especially visible in the hamlet areas served by the line.

Trains have not been seen on most of the Corridor for more than 14 years. But because the Corridor has been used as a snowmobile trail without interruption during that time, snowmobiles have been a common sight during the winter months.

### 2. Historic Resources

On November 5, 1993, the "NY Central RR Adirondack Division Historic District, Remsen vicinity to Lake Placid" was listed on the **State** Register of Historic Places by the Commissioner of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The property was listed on the **National** Register of Historic Places on December 23, 1993. The historic value of this Corridor and its appurtenant structures adds further significance to its merit as a source of unique recreational opportunity while serving as a prime method of interpretation for the Adirondack Forest Preserve and its historic railroad. (See Appendix 27)

## -|- ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING -|-

Any Federal or State undertaking that could affect the Corridor will be reviewable under the National Historic Preservation Act or New York State Historic Preservation Act. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), who is the Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation will determine whether the essential historic nature of the property would be impacted. It is not anticipated that track work, even where modern materials and components are substituted, would result in a determination of adverse effect. All proposed actions however, including any changes to bridges, buildings or other features, would be subject to review.

### 3. **Sound Environment**

The ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Corridor are relatively high near State highways; such as Route 28 in the south and Routes 3, 30 and 86 along the northern reaches, and around hamlet areas like Old Forge, Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake and Lake Placid. By comparison, the stretches between the more developed areas, most notably the segment between Stillwater Reservoir and Horseshoe Lake, pass through large areas of land where evidence of human presence is rarely heard.

The lack of unnatural sounds is an important part of the sense of solitude which is prized by visitors to the areas of Forest Preserve land which flank the Corridor in many places. While the sound environment of the Corridor would be less important to those using rail services and motorized trail vehicles, the sounds of nature, as well as the absence of artificial sounds, would be considered a positive attribute of the more remote segments of the Corridor by those who would use it for non-motorized recreation.

Although the Corridor passes through a number of communities, it usually does not come into close contact with residential areas. Only in the village of Saranac Lake are there more than a few residences in close proximity to the rails. There are several dwellings in Beaver River which are located close to the Corridor, most of which are second homes.

Outside the hamlets, the Corridor passes through areas with a resident population of very low density, so that relatively few residences would be close enough to the Corridor to be significantly affected by the noise of trains and snowmobiles. The majority of the people likely to be affected by Corridor noise on interior segments would be recreational visitors to adjacent Forest Preserve units. The greatest concentrations of visitors to the Preserve would be found during warm season weekends on and around popular bodies of water, such as Stillwater Reservoir, Lake Lila, Horseshoe Lake and the lakes and ponds of the Saint Regis Canoe Area and the Saranac Lakes Wild Forest.



## **VII. PUBLIC USE OF THE CORRIDOR**

The following sections address public use that has occurred on the Corridor since State acquisition and some basic considerations for future use.

### **A. CORRIDOR RECREATION**

Recreationists visit public lands adjoining the Corridor for camping, boating, fishing, hunting, trapping, snowmobiling and hiking pleasures. Natural resource management and recreation are the major land uses in the vicinity of the Corridor.

The proximity of the Corridor to navigable streams presents a number of opportunities for canoeists to use the Corridor as an alternative access route. Appendix 12 gives access characteristics of navigable streams near the Corridor.

The Corridor's grade makes it ideal for recreational bicycling, a family-oriented sport which is gaining in popularity across the Nation. The recently completed *Bicycle Master Plan for the Adirondack North Country Region of New York State* (BMP) indicates that a bicycle trail and fitness path along a significant portion of the Corridor could create a facility rivaling any in the country for health, aesthetics, environmental education, history and available tourism amenities. It recommends aggressive development and implementation of a Recreation Trail Management Plan on the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor. It further suggests a collaborative effort between NYSDEC and NYSDOT, NYSOPRHP, regional and local planners, ANCA, ARPS and with the tourism industry in developing the Corridor as a bicycle/hiking trail and an excursion/passenger rail line. This document should serve the function of the suggested recreation management plan.

### **B. SNOWMOBILING**

Snowmobilers have used the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor for many years since the absence of operating trains. The route was approved for snowmobiling during the 1991-92 season by permit and permits have been granted for the 1992-93 through the 1994-95 seasons. Snowmobilers interested in winter use and persons promoting the Adirondack Centennial/Scenic Railroad's summer use have cooperated in Corridor maintenance by eliminating invading brush and clearing plugged culverts along the route, demonstrating the compatibility of rail and trail uses.

The Final State of New York Snowmobile Trail Plan/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement was completed by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in October, 1989. The implementation of this conceptual plan calls for designation of corridor and secondary trails and future development of additional connecting trails and necessary ancillary facilities. The implementation of the plan is contingent on the development of three-year local plans which detail the trail systems of existing and proposed trails. The local plans must also include necessary environmental reviews.



Snowmobiles have been used in upstate New York for well over 20 years. In the early days, snowmobiles were small, sometimes loud sleds capable of speeds of about 40 miles per hour. Modern snowmobiles are larger, more powerful, faster, and quieter. The new machines are often used for trips of 100 miles or more in length. Many riders using these new machines find the relatively level and straight, open railroad corridor ideal for their use. During the winter, snowmobilers provide valuable support to businesses who cater to tourism and recreationists. For example, there are 500 miles of snowmobile trails at Old Forge, New York and this adds considerably to the winter economy of the area.

Snowmobile maps produced by various clubs and divisions of government indicate areas where new routes are needed. Many of the needs can be satisfied by using the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor.

- ! *The Adirondacks Snowmobile Map* published jointly by the seven-counties defines existing trails from Tupper Lake to Malone and Lake Placid. The portions between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid and from Beaver River to Thendara are on the Corridor right-of-way.
- ! *The Old Forge & Central Adirondack Trail Map* indicates a portion of the railroad being utilized as a snowmobile trail.
- ! *The Snowmobile Map* published by the Lost Trail Snowmobile Club, Boonville, N.Y. clearly defines area trails that could link with a trail on the railroad corridor, with appropriate acquisitions.
- ! The Long Lake Snowmobile Club with the aid of Town and County officials, has developed a trail that will connect to the railroad corridor at Sabattis, New York and proceed via roads and marked trails to Long Lake, New York.
- ! The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's *State of New York Snowmobile Trail Plan* proposes use of the rail corridor as an important segment of a north-south, Quebec to Pennsylvania snowmobile route listed therein as Trail #7. Trail #7 is one of the main artery routes listed in the OPRHP plan which interconnects the statewide snowmobile trail system. Proposed trail #7 is shown on the *Map of New York State Snowmobile Corridor Trails, 1995-96* published by OPRHP's Bureau of Marine and Recreation Vehicles. (See Appendix 16)

### C. **ADIRONDACK RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

The Adirondack Railway Preservation Society was founded on October 13, 1988 by Harris and Nancy Dexter, Paul and Sally Smith, and Spartacus DeLia. ARPS was incorporated on April 14, 1992 and became a non-profit tax exempt 501(C)3 on November 3, 1993.

During 1990, in coordination with an ANCA sponsored feasibility study, and with the help of Northwest Engineering of Tidioute, Pennsylvania, ARPS applied to have the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor placed on the New York State and National Historic Registers. This occurred

-|- **PUBLIC USE OF THE CORRIDOR** -|-

with the State Register on November 3, 1993, and for the National Register, on December 23, 1993. Currently, ARPS is an organization chartered and incorporated in New York State with an eighteen member board of directors, including professionals from many varied fields. Present membership exceeds 1100 persons and organizations.

ARPS played a significant role in joining forces with the Utica & Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society to start an excursion train from Thendara to Minnehaha in 1992 (see next Section.) The Chapter had a permit from NYSDOT to operate the excursion train, and ARPS was granted a permit to perform stabilization projects in order to keep the physical infrastructure from further deterioration, including damages from washouts. In 1994, the U&MV Chapter turned the excursion operation over to ARPS who spent considerable time further developing the excursion train and providing corridor maintenance projects.

During 1992 through 1994, the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society, in cooperation with the U&MV Chapter, ANCA and the NYSCG expended 35,270 accountable personhours for both operation of the tourist train and maintenance of the Corridor. Also, \$174,068 from ticket revenues was directly spent for maintenance and stabilization. Another \$30,000 was sponsored in the form of a corporate donation by Plumley Engineering of Baldwinsville, NY. In addition, Senator William Sears provided \$450,000 through a legislative appropriation managed by ANCA. This appropriation funded a \$230,000 Gradall brushcutter/ excavator, a feasibility study and various bridge repair work projects. A \$900 donation by Niagara Mohawk and an additional \$42,770 in materials (fuel, ballast, landscaping, labor, services and equipment) has been donated to ARPS to further Corridor rehabilitation. In the spring of 1994, ARPS continued stabilization work and spent almost \$80,000 derived from fare-box or donations in Corridor infrastructure repairs and stabilization to protect this unique and historic New York State asset.

Stabilization projects throughout 1992 through 1995 have included embankment and bridge repairs, washout filling, and brushcutting (both manually and with the Gradall.) During the fall and winter, brushcutting was permitted lacking sufficient snow for snowmobiling or other winter sports purposes. ARPS continued Gradall brushcutting, eventually clearing heavy brush from Remsen to Thendara, thereby enhancing Corridor safety and contributing to maintenance and stabilization projects.

Significant past ARPS Corridor improvement projects include;

- ! A joint effort by ARPS and the Chapter in filling the Indian Brook washout north of Thendara.
- ! Filling in the hazardous washout at Alder Brook north of Beaver River in 1994 with assistance from the New York Snowmobile Coordinating Group (NYSCG).

- ! Repair of track to handle deadhead movements from Snow Jct. to MP 86 at Nehasane, a distance of about 60 miles.
- ! Repair of track structure from MP 58.3 to MP 53.6 (4.7 miles) to minimum Class 1 standards for revenue passenger train operation.
- ! Cutting of heavy brush and growth from Snow Junction to Thendara (28.8 miles.)
- ! Cutting of brush for access and inspection purposes from Lake Placid to Saranac Lake (9.5 miles.)
- ! Patrolling and safety monitoring to prohibit illegal speeder and other trespasser activity.
- ! Re-installation of removed track structure in Saranac Lake.
- ! Posting of washout areas as safety hazards.
- ! Professional surveying of washouts and development of repair workscopes.
- ! Inspection of bridge and culvert structures, and stabilization/safety repair
- ! In-progress repair of Kayuta Bridge and a box culvert at MP 40.97 to meet safety standards.
- ! Monitoring culverts and other drainage to prevent damage to the corridor and adjacent lands.

#### **D. EXPERIENCE OF THE ADIRONDACK CENTENNIAL RAILROAD**

In the spring of 1992, the Utica & Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society (U&MVNRHS) proposed to operate a four-mile tourist excursion as a celebration of two centennials; the railroad and the Adirondack Park. Application to the Department of Transportation (DOT) was made on February 6 and a permit was approved on April 15. During the same period the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society (ARPS), having received another DOT permit for certain maintenance activities on the Corridor, coordinated with NRHS to work together on activities necessary for start up of the tourist train.

Within Herkimer County, the four miles selected extend south from the Thendara station (privately owned and the base of operations) to a point called Minnehaha. In addition to the availability of the Thendara facilities at no charge, this section was chosen for its lack of any grade crossings or bridges. Also no major washouts occurred between Thendara and the connection to the active railroad system at Snow Junction (Remsen).

The NYSDOT permits required that the four miles of track be brought into at least Class I condition (the minimum Federal Railroad Administration standard for passenger operations) and that before any equipment could be moved into Thendara, all bridges had to be inspected and certified by a licensed Professional Engineer. Some bridges required repair work to satisfy this condition.

NRHS hired W. J. Riegel & Son, Inc. to perform the necessary track work (including filling of a minor washout at Minnehaha) and Rig-All, Inc. for bridge work. Many ancillary tasks

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were performed by volunteers or donated services. While the contracted track work was completed in mid-June, volunteer work (mostly brush cutting) continued through the summer.

Two locomotives and two coaches were leased at a rate of \$3,000 per year each. They were brought to Thendara without incident and the equipment was inspected by DOT in early July.

Start up of public excursions was on July 4, with four round trips daily except Tuesdays. The day off on Tuesdays is used for inspection and maintenance of the track and equipment. Ridership quickly showed the need for more capacity and two more round trips per day were added within a few days of start up. Soon thereafter it was decided to acquire more coaches. Two coaches from the same source as the first two arrived in August. Rather than being leased, these two cars were purchased for \$11,000 each by NRHS with revenues earned to date.

Fares were \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children. About two to three adult tickets are sold for each child ticket sold. There was no advertising or promotion other than posters distributed in the Old Forge area and coverage by newspapers and television news reports. NRHS stated that post-Labor Day ridership was expected to be less than it could have been if there had been time to make arrangements for fall tour groups. Such groups comprise a significant portion of the seasonal tourism market in the autumn and most tours are set up and booked by the previous March.

The operation was conducted by a paid staff of two, along with four to twelve volunteers at any one time (out of a larger pool of volunteers). The general manager and station master were paid through a contract with P.C. Collins & Co. for \$3,000 per month, plus housing in the Thendara Station at no charge. NRHS volunteers worked 2,000 hours through September 7, 1992 as train conductors, flag persons, gift shop clerks and brush cutters, etc. This was in addition to work associated with start up which included cleaning and painting of the Thendara Station.

Other operating expenses included 55 to 60 gallons per day of fuel oil and liability insurance at 8 to 12 percent of gross ticket revenue. The track rehabilitation work was done by Riegel for \$25,000, which was paid by a grant from the Samuel Freeman Charitable Trust. NRHS estimates that the value received from Riegel was approximately \$40,000. The difference was considered to be a donation by Riegel.

Through September 7, ARPS volunteers worked some 4,500 hours, mainly on brush cutting and clearing culverts. ARPS estimated that about one third of this work directly benefitted the operation of the tourist train at Thendara. ARPS used loaned or donated equipment including chain saws, boats and hi-rail vehicles, as well as the Town of Webb's chipper. About \$1,000 was spent by ARPS on gasoline.

In addition to the Freeman Grant, NRHS raised start up funds through a \$30,000 private loan at no interest, a \$5,000 loan specifically to stock the gift shop and \$5,000 of NRHS' own money. Thus, the total start up capital available has been \$65,000. (See Appendix 17.)

The NRHS permit ran through the end of November, 1992 with the total season ridership reaching 62,525. NRHS applied to NYSDOT for a permit to run again in 1993 with the ride extended south for a short distance to afford passengers a view from the bridge over the Moose River. They also requested permission to store equipment over the winter at Thendara on adjacent private property and to fill the washout at Indian Brook, just north of Thendara. This would allow rail-mounted mechanized brush cutting equipment to reach the area between there and Beaver River. That work was subsequently accomplished.

On May 8, 1993, the second Adirondack Centennial Railroad year began under permit from NYSDOT and this season was also very successful. The volunteer turnout was exceptional and much new talent was tapped to make 1993 a record breaking year.

A major track program was initiated in May. This contract work which consisted of changing out 1500 crossties, rail changeouts, ballasting and surface work was performed by Frank Tartaglia, Inc. of Syracuse, NY. For the second season, the Adirondack Centennial Railroad expanded operation for another 1700 feet to the south. Passengers were very favorably impressed with the view from the Moose River Bridge and the railroad received many compliments.

During Columbus Day weekend, almost 7,000 passengers rode the train, creating a three day weekend record which included a daily record of 2,613 persons. During this weekend, the operation performed very smoothly, but the volunteers were exhausted at the end of the day. In November when it was over, the record was broken...76,841 people had taken the ride to Minnehaha during the second year.

In 1993, the Adirondack Centennial Railroad increased passenger train miles (calculated by multiplying the number of passengers hauled in a month by the number of miles hauled) by 38.5% over 1992. Even taking into account the fact that operations started two months earlier in 1993, all months showed increases over 1992. A strong push was made to promote the November weekend trips and Santa Claus Specials in the last weekend of November and this proved very successful in greatly increasing the November ridership figures.

All aspects of revenue increased substantially in 1993 versus 1992, showing a strong performance by the operation in a time of economic recession. Closing of Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, N.Y., a weak economy in the surrounding region, and a moderate tourist season in the Adirondacks heightened the importance and marketability of the excursion railroad.

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In 1994, the Centennial Railroad became the Adirondack Scenic Railroad under direction of ARPS. Ridership figures through July of the third season ran about parallel to 1993 for the same period. Compared to the previous season, ridership moderated during the fall of 1994, but the season passenger total was still a substantial 59,525 passengers. During the 1994 season, a total of 14,163 labor man-hours were volunteered, devoted to Corridor maintenance and tourist excursion operation. During a year when local business was off 5-28%, the rail excursion continued a strong ridership. In fact, revenues were at record levels. The operating season continued with the popular Santa Claus trains in the last week of November, proving the train is capable of a tourist draw from the Syracuse/Mohawk Regions even in the "off season", strengthening tourism and extending the tourist season to a certain extent. ARPS expanded the Adirondack Scenic Railroad's tourist operation to Carter Station for the 1995 operating season, opening an additional 6 miles of the Corridor to tourist operation.

**E. TRESPASS**

The laws of New York State regarding trespass onto railroads extend back to the early part of this century. With little exception, it is considered trespass to enter onto railroad property.

Section 83 of the Railroad Law has been interpreted as prohibiting the creation of a public way along the tracks even if desired by the railroad. These requirements would be satisfied only if the railroad were physically separated from the trail. Section 2404 (c) of the Vehicle and Traffic Law prohibits ATV operation on the track or the right-of-way of an operating railroad. The State through its membership in Operation Lifesaver makes a considerable effort to warn the public of the dangers of being on or near a railroad. Nationwide, accidents involving trespassers and private crossings are surpassing the number of accidents at rail-highway crossings. Too often, these accidents are a result of seemingly innocent activities such as strolling along the tracks.

**F. CURRENT MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND USE OF THE CORRIDOR**

Interim management of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor is under the direction of NYSDOT, Regions 1, 2 and 7, and NYSDEC, Regions 5 and 6. The planning process and necessary decisions are effected by an interdepartmental planning team. Currently, public use of the Corridor is by permits issued by DOT.

**1. Use of the Corridor by Permit or License**

The Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor is traversed by a number of public and private roadways. The public rail/highway crossings have been established pursuant to Railroad Law and alteration to these crossings is regulated by the DOT. Farm crossings, which

include forestry access roads, are also governed by Railroad Law. Reasonable access must be provided to farms divided by a railroad. In the case of public and farm crossings, the law treats an active and an inactive railroad in the same manner.

Private rail/highway crossings may also be provided to industry, individuals, farms and other users of adjacent lands. These crossings are provided by license or permit from the railroad. In the case of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor, the State of New York in absence of an operator, is the railroad as well as the owner. The State will continue to administer crossing permits after an developer is selected.

In addition to highways, there are numerous pipes, cables and wires that traverse the Corridor (See Appendix 7). These crossings should be the subject of license agreements between the railroad and the owner of the service line. Fees may be due the State as a result of some of the license agreements.

At the time of this writing, the State of New York does not have a good record of services that exist by valid license. It is known that some public and private crossings have been modified without appropriate approval. These items will need to be addressed by Corridor managers.

During the time of the protracted litigation involving the Corridor, there was no effective method of administering permits, and the use of the Corridor was not monitored to safeguard against encroachment. By accident or design, a number of encroachments occurred. Some of these encroachments have been deemed to be of no immediate concern, and 30-day revocable permits have been issued to temporarily allow the uses. Of these permits, those that allow access across the track are perhaps the permits that have to be most seriously reviewed. As rail and/or trail uses are to develop, some mechanism must be devised to assure that potentially hazardous situations are controlled.

A current permit allows rail transportation of a student between Beaver River and Big Moose. This permit was granted for the convenience of the student. The issuance of the permit caused no use conflicts on the affected segment of the Corridor, since no other use was allowed on that segment at the time. This permit should not be viewed as developing any right of access for the community of Beaver River along the Corridor nor as an exemption from any existing railroad operating rules. It is clear that a trail along this portion of the Corridor would be most beneficial to the residents and businesses at Beaver River and an effort should be made to incorporate such a trail into the land management plans for adjacent units.

A permit has been issued to allow snowmobile use along most of the Corridor. A permit has also been issued to allow a tourist train to operate from Thendara to Carter (See Parts B. and D. of this Section). These permits were issued in response to signifi-

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cant public support but only after careful consideration. In both instances, safety was a prime concern and appropriate restrictions and safeguards were written into the permits. As has been the case in all of the permits issued since the establishment of the DOT/DEC Planning Team, the effect on other land use proposals was also considered before issuing the permits. The effectiveness of the permits is constantly monitored.

The Adirondack Railway Preservation Society has been issued a permit to perform limited maintenance of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor. Because of the efforts of the ARPS, the risk of further deterioration of the rail bed has been reduced or arrested. The initial rationale for granting the permit was to safeguard the waterways rather than to increase rail and trail opportunities. As part of the ARPS permit, tree and brush cutting was allowed within nine feet of each rail. This is the practical minimum for the safe passage of rail-mounted vehicles. Track repairs such as the filling of wash-outs are approved by the task force on an individual basis. Track repairs that improve access for maintenance and do not seriously interfere with potential non-rail Corridor uses are allowed.

The physical changes resulting from maintenance efforts will remain, even if the ARPS' maintenance permit is for some reason revoked. Therefore, because the current planning effort encompasses all potential Corridor uses, proposed maintenance activities are carefully analyzed to assure that no type of use would be favored over another.

As a result, the maintenance efforts along the Corridor must be carried out under a set of rules which can seem restrictive to a volunteer group. In addition to DOT requirements, the Adirondack Park Agency and DEC may also set restrictions on how activities must be carried out. A high level of cooperation has been shown by ARPS to comply with these requirements, which include environmental safeguards.

### 2. **Wetland and Similar Maintenance Issues - Additional Permits Required**

General maintenance of the Corridor can be carried out under the authority of DOT. However, there are activities that require DEC and APA approval. This approval can take two forms; either an agreement that the permit process does not apply or initiation of a formal permitting process. It is appropriate to the permitting process that DEC and APA ensure that alternative maintenance methods are evaluated for environmental impact and that adequate environmental safeguards are put in place when executing a project.

Following a survey of the flooded areas along the Corridor by DOT and APA staff, it was determined that most of the flooding along the Corridor is caused by beaver blocking bridges and culverts. Some of the most serious flooding along the Corridor



is caused by beaver activity at some distance from the Corridor. In these instances, the APA deemed it appropriate that control activities be governed by permit.

In addition to environmental safeguards, the permit process will ensure that the massive amount of water dammed by beaver is safely released. It is not anticipated, at this time, that APA permits will be required for restorative efforts such as the filling of minor washouts. However, it has been determined that we should assume that permits will be required if unlicensed borrow pits in the park are used as a source of fill.

In addition to APA and DEC permits, there are federal permits that must be considered. Under a Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit, certain maintenance activities in wetlands are allowed.

DOT has experience in erosion and pollution control. DOT designs of capital projects incorporate environmental safeguards to address typical cases. Usually, these specifications will satisfy the needs of the permit process. The specifications will be a part of all maintenance and restorative efforts even if permits are not required.

### 3. **DOT Management Initiatives**

In August 1991, the New York State Department of Transportation took measures to warn the public of unsafe conditions and to discourage people from trespassing on the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor.

This was to be accomplished by the placement of barriers and signs at bridges and washout sites to alert and protect anyone traversing the Corridor. As a measure to discourage people from trespassing on the abandoned track for recreational purposes, the Department suggested that each regional maintenance jurisdiction place black-on-white "**NO TRESPASSING PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**" signs on the railroad right-of-way in each direction at all public and private access points.

As barriers to ensure that dangerous areas were not traversed, DOT personnel were assigned the task of installing flexible mesh orange plastic snow fencing fastened to sign posts and stretched across the track. This highly visible flexible barrier was chosen for not only its visibility, but also for its soft texture in case a trespasser for one reason or another might run into it.

These barriers were to be placed 50 feet before washouts and at each bridge site. Additionally, black-on-yellow "**STOP AHEAD**" signs were installed 350 feet ahead of the barriers and white-on-red "**BARRIER AHEAD**" signs 700 feet before the barrier.

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The Department also placed black-on-white "**BRIDGE CLOSED**" signs on the barriers at each bridge site. This was supplemented with another black-on-yellow "**BRIDGE CLOSED 700 FT**" sign.

In summary, the Department of Transportation barricaded and signed all of the bridges and washout areas and placed "NO TRESPASSING" signs at certain access points along the Corridor. NYSDOT has continued this practice during the planning period in an effort to curb trespass and promote safety. (See Appendix 14.)

G. **SUMMARY OF ADIRONDACK RAILROAD TOURISM POTENTIAL** -Prepared for the Citizen Advisory Committee by James B. McKenna, Lake Placid, New York -December 1992

Current trends in tourism, market potential and the Adirondack product are all favorable for the restoration of the Adirondack Railroad. The Railroad can provide a travel experience unparalleled in the Northeastern United States. James B. McKenna of the Lake Placid Visitor's Bureau feels that a for-profit entity provided with a restored railroad corridor utilizing short line and full line operation can realize a reasonable return on investment. This entity would have to be prepared with an aggressive marketing plan concentrating on the Adirondack experience and packaging it to a destination resort. The marketing effort would be supported by numerous other Adirondack marketing groups and private sector business along the Line. This should allow the Railroad to capture a sufficient share of existing markets as well as penetrate new ones.

A restored line would also provide incentive for appropriate tourism facilities and activities growth within the hamlets along the Line. The Railroad is a unique opportunity to enhance the economy within the Park in an environmentally friendly way. Tourism and especially the eco-tourism markets can prove to be the most compatible industry for the Park. The unanswered question concerns securing funding to restore the Corridor. With the current attention being given to job creation by Public Works Projects at the Federal and State level, the timing seems appropriate for a coordinated effort at the Federal, State and County level to pursue the restoration of the line. The jobs created by a short line operation and a full line operation would prove to be substantial. In closing, it is Mr. McKenna's educated opinion that substantial markets exist for a properly managed and marketed Adirondack Railroad. (See Appendix 21.)



## VIII. SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Until the operation of the four-mile rail excursion at Thendara in 1992, trains had not traveled the Corridor for more than a decade. However, the Corridor was operated as a railroad continually from its opening in 1892 until 1972. Active attempts to find a new operator resulted in the resumption of full-length operation by the Adirondack Railway Corporation from 1979 through 1980. Although rail activity did not resume until the Adirondack Centennial Railroad in 1992, the Corridor has not been officially abandoned as a railroad. Therefore, the purpose of evaluating the significant environmental impacts which could result from the adoption of the preferred alternative, the Corridor's character as a railroad is considered to be its base condition.

The descriptions of the impacts given below reflect the additional assumption that the preferred alternative will be fully implemented. The assumption was made in order to allow the full potential range and magnitude of the impacts to be considered. However, because the funding available for the development of the Corridor might prove to be limited, the implementation of the plan ultimately could result in only partial Corridor development. For instance, it may happen that only certain segments of the Corridor will become activated for rail uses. Partial development would result in a reduction in the number and level of the adverse environmental impacts which would affect the segments remaining inactivated, as well as a decrease in the social and economic benefits for the Corridor region.

### A. **BENEFICIAL IMPACTS**

#### 1. **Environmental**

##### a. **A major reduction in public use impact is made possible by rail tourism.**

Rail tourism can show the Adirondack backcountry to large numbers of people without the environmental impact usually associated with those numbers. This interpretive opportunity is useful in constituency building for the Forest Preserve concept which could also lower physical impact by educated users.

##### b. **A minor reduction in the level of public use in other areas of the Forest Preserve as new areas of the Preserve are made accessible from the Corridor.**

By providing access to new recreational opportunities on presently inaccessible areas of the Forest Preserve, both through the establishment of new trail linkages and flagstop service by the rail developer, use pressure on other more heavily used areas of the Preserve could be relieved.

#### 2. **Social and Economic**

Adoption of the plan will provide an opportunity for:

a. **A significant expansion of the regional economy.**

In addition to the creation of new jobs directly related to Corridor construction, maintenance and operation, the full development of the Corridor's rail and trail potential will lead to a substantial increase in the demand for tourist services and attractions in communities throughout the Corridor region. (See page 25.)

b. **A substantial increase in rail-and trail-based recreational and educational opportunity.**

The development of tourist excursion rail services will provide a unique opportunity for people from throughout the State to enjoy the scenic, ecological and historic resources of a part of the Adirondack Park which would be otherwise nearly inaccessible. Rail services will provide access to the region for large numbers of people, especially those with impaired mobility, who would not be inclined or able to visit the area by other means. Through an encounter with the beauty of this area of the Adirondacks, an experience which could be enhanced by educational programs offered by the rail developer in cooperation with various educational organizations, passengers will acquire a better appreciation of the values of the Adirondack Park's expansive mix of Forest Preserve lands and working forests.

By opening the Corridor to a number of trail uses in all seasons, trail users will be provided access to a variety of recreational activities on land and water in areas of the Forest Preserve adjacent to the Corridor (see page 60.) New York State will gain an essential link in a long-distance snowmobile trail network.

As stated before, recreational trails are important as tourism attractions. The development of multi-use trails, including bicycle and walking paths, is especially suited to the North Country's tourism climate. NYSDEC's Open Space Plan and OPRHP's Statewide Plan both cite the Corridor as among New York State's most significant trailways for public access and transportation.

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- c. **The preservation of the Corridor as an important historic resource.**  
The Corridor was constructed in 1892 and it served as one of the first means of transportation to the Adirondack region. It is listed on the Federal and State Registers of Historic Places. The implementation of the preferred alternative will preserve the earthworks, buildings, and other structures, as well as the Corridor's character as a working railroad. All proposals to do work on the Corridor will be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Officer to determine whether the work will impact the historic nature of the Corridor.

- d. **The development of new public transportation and freight services.**

Approved rail service proposals could involve the reestablishment of passenger and freight services on the Corridor. Full-length rail service could provide a rail connection between the communities along the Corridor and the rest of the State. There might also be a market for shorter distance commuter services between Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake and Lake Placid. The 1994 report by FSI, Inc. considered an annual ridership figure approaching 35,000 passengers to be a reasonable goal for a fully restored and aggressively marketed line from Utica to Lake Placid. FSI also identified a potential freight business of 1,700 carloads per year.

- e. **Substantial revenue to State agencies in proportion to the degree of Corridor development.**

An agreement with an approved rail developer could include conditions regarding the payment of use fees by the developer to the State. Fees will not be charged for trail use. Such direct revenues would be substantially augmented by indirect revenues in the form of the increased sales taxes which would be collected by business establishments serving Corridor users. Because the amount of sales tax revenue would depend upon the level of business generated by Corridor development, it cannot be predicted. However, it is clear that a substantial increase in tourist business has been generated by the operation of the Adirondack Scenic Railroad in Thendara. The boost to the economies of other areas of the Corridor region that would be affected by expanded Corridor development would bring the State further increases in sales tax revenue.

- f. **A significant improvement in safety conditions on the Corridor and an associated reduction in the liability exposure of State agencies.**

By providing for investment in the restoration of Corridor facilities and the removal of safety hazards, the implementation of the preferred alternative will improve

safety conditions for Corridor users. In addition, the unauthorized use of the Corridor will be deterred.

The likelihood that the State will have to engage in costly damage suits will be reduced by the improved condition of Corridor facilities and the enforcement of prohibitions against unauthorized public use.

g. **The improved utilization of a public resource.**

The adoption of the Corridor management plan will commit the State to a program of active management which will allow the Corridor to be developed in a way that will afford the highest public benefit.

**B. ADVERSE IMPACTS**

This section contains a list of the adverse impacts that could result from the implementation of the preferred alternative. Descriptions of the nature and severity of the impacts, and general statements about the extent to which they can be mitigated, are given here. Details about the measures that will be taken to mitigate the listed impacts are detailed in section IX., starting on page 97.

**1. Environmental**

Adoption of the plan could lead to:

a. **Minor pollution of surface waters related to Corridor construction and maintenance and waste water discharges from trains.**

Corridor construction and maintenance activities, such as the restoration of rail bed washouts and the removal of obstructions in culverts, could cause sediment to be deposited in streams, ponds and wetlands. Waste water discharges from trains not equipped with self-contained sanitary systems could enter surface water and groundwater. However, these potential impacts could be effectively mitigated.

b. **A minor disturbance of wetlands related to parallel trail construction and Corridor maintenance.**

Along Corridor segments where the rail bed will be occupied by trains, a recreational trail might be constructed beside the rail bed. Because the Corridor traverses extensive wetland areas, parallel trail construction could involve construction in wetlands. Wetland vegetation could be affected by herbicides

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used during Corridor maintenance. Proposed mitigation measures would eliminate these potential impacts.

**c. The removal of a substantial amount of vegetation related to Corridor construction and maintenance activities.**

On Corridor segments devoted to rail uses, the safety of rail operations and the maintenance of the rail bed will require that woody and herbaceous vegetation be removed from the full width of the right-of-way. Herbicides might be used to minimize the long-term costs of vegetative removal.

Along some Corridor segments where trains would be running, a recreational trail might be constructed beside the rail bed. If vegetation within the bounds of the Corridor had not been entirely removed by the rail developer, vegetation might be removed during the construction and maintenance of parallel trails.

One plant species classified as rare by New York State has been found within one-half mile of the Corridor. This and other important wetland plants could be affected by Corridor vegetation management activities. However, mitigation measures will minimize the impacts of vegetation management on protected native plants.

**d. Minor negative effects on fish and wildlife populations related to Corridor construction and maintenance activities and Corridor uses.**

The maintenance of the Corridor rail bed will require that beaver dams be removed in order to lower adjacent water levels. Where Corridor maintenance efforts were severely hampered by beaver activity, it might become necessary to take action to reduce the beaver population. Nevertheless, because the beaver population throughout the Adirondack Park has risen to record levels, beaver control efforts in the area of the Corridor will not have a significant effect on regional beaver populations.

Sedimentation related to washout restoration and culvert maintenance could reduce the quality of fish spawning habitat. This potential impact could be effectively mitigated.

The endangered round whitefish, which is found in a pond adjacent to the Corridor, could be affected by angling as a result of increased access from the Corridor. However, other bodies of water containing this species sustain



substantial fishing pressure and are adequately protected by existing regulations which prohibit the taking of the species.

The operation of trains might lead to instances of collision with wildlife. However, because of the relatively low frequency of train passage during the warm seasons, the relatively low speeds at which they would be travelling, and the likelihood that trains will not be running in the winter (a time when deer and moose are inclined to use a plowed railway as a travel lane), wildlife mortality due to collisions with trains will be rare.

It might be thought that the presence of the rail bed or the passage of trains and trail users will interfere with diurnal and seasonal patterns of wildlife movement. According to the DEC Bureau of Wildlife however, there are no indications that an active Corridor will pose a significant barrier to the movement of wildlife.

While wildlife populations will not be significantly affected by the physical existence of the Corridor, the passage of trains or trail users could disturb the breeding activity of birds, especially ospreys and loons. The noise of passing trains will have relatively minor impact, since wildlife tend to grow accustomed to the repetition of innocuous sounds. Visual contact, especially with people on foot or in boats, would be more likely to cause disturbance.

The greatest potential for Corridor use to have an effect on breeding success will come from those who use the Corridor to gain boating access to ponds and lakes where loons or ospreys are breeding. Because both loons and ospreys nest within, or adjacent to the shores of ponds and lakes, water-borne intruders will be more threatening than those who approach by land. With their nests typically on shore, loons will be more vulnerable than ospreys, who usually nest high in trees.

A substantial increase in the use of ponds adjacent to the Corridor could lead to some reduction in the numbers of breeding pairs at those locations. Interior ponds made accessible through the construction of new trails leading from the Corridor could also be affected, depending upon how likely visitors would be to carry boats in with them. However, proposed mitigation measures would minimize the impact.

- e. **A substantial increase in highway use and traffic congestion in communities where train stations or trailheads are located.**

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The establishment of tourist excursion rail services based in local communities and the construction of trailhead facilities, could lead to increases in automobile traffic on the highways leading to those destinations, especially during warm season weekends. Localized traffic congestion could occur as well. Effective mitigation measures will be taken.

**f. A moderate increase in the public use of neighboring Forest Preserve lands.**

By opening the Corridor to public use, areas of Forest Preserve land previously remote from public access points will become more accessible and increased use might result. Flagstop service offered by rail developers could also lead to increased use. Increased access opportunity might lead to increases in the levels of use sustained by waters accessible from the Corridor. Problems of trespass across private lands to nearby waters might increase. On Forest Preserve waters, such increased use might reduce the level of solitude available to visitors and cause increases in fishing pressure and shoreline impacts related to camping activity. Concentrations of visitors could cause damage to the physical resources of Forest Preserve lands and might reduce the level of solitude available, especially at potentially popular destinations such as ponds and lakes.

Increased public use of adjacent Preserve lands might also have impacts on fish and wildlife populations, including endangered and threatened species and species of special concern. For example, boating activity on remote ponds and camping along their shores could disturb the breeding activity of loons and ospreys.

Because the amount of use currently sustained by the Forest Preserve areas accessible from the Corridor is generally low, the additional use anticipated to result from opening the Corridor to the public will not be excessive. In addition, the impacts related to such use could be effectively managed.

**g. A moderate increase in the need for law enforcement, fire protection and search and rescue services.**

Opening the Corridor to public use could lead to moderate increases in the incidence of legal violations, fires and lost persons, which might lead to increased demands on State and local services. Proposed mitigation measures will greatly reduce these impacts.

**h. The potential creation of significant safety hazards.**

Opening the Corridor to various rail and trail uses could pose a number of safety hazards to Corridor users. Some danger of collision will exist wherever the Corridor crosses public highways. For recreational trail users, there will be some danger on Corridor segments used by trains where a parallel trail has been constructed adjacent to the rail bed. Within the trail, the existence of two-way snowmobile traffic will present a danger of collision. The threat to human safety which will result from the opening of Corridor lands to the public will not be excessive and could be largely mitigated.

i. **A moderate increase in noise levels in areas surrounding the Corridor.**

The passage of trains and snowmobiles along the Corridor will cause increases in noise levels in the lands adjacent to the Corridor. The overall significance of the noise impact related to rail operations, especially along interior reaches of the Corridor, will be relatively low because of the low frequency at which trains will pass a given point. It is expected that on segments not used for short tourist excursion runs, trains will not pass more than two or three times per day.

The frequency of train passage will be higher along the segments on which tourist excursion services are active. The areas surrounding the segments likely to be so affected (because of their elevated ambient noise levels related to the proximity of population centers and highways) will generally be less sensitive to the effects of noise than the more remote interior segments.

Although the level of sound emitted by an individual snowmobile constructed to meet modern noise emission standards is relatively low, the frequency at which snowmobiles will pass a given point on the Corridor during the winter season could be relatively high. The frequency of passage will generally decrease with the distance from the population centers at either end of the Corridor. Extensive interior segments will only be traversed by a relatively small number per day who are engaged in long-distance riding.

The sound of snowmobiles using the interior segment of the Corridor will affect the sense of solitude available to visitors of adjacent Forest Preserve lands. However, because the number of visitors is much lower in winter than during the warmer seasons, relatively few will be present to be affected by snowmobile noise.

j. **A minor increase in the visual impact of the Corridor on surrounding areas.**

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Considered in historical perspective, the visual character of the Corridor will not be changed by the preferred alternative. In the context of the past 10 years, the sight of passing trains will be considered a change from current conditions. Additional visual effects which will result from the implementation of the alternative will be the clearing of the vegetation which has grown within the right-of-way since its last operation as a railroad and the passage of pedestrians. Snowmobiles have been allowed to use the Corridor as a trail for several years.

The clearing of vegetation for rail and trail purposes could make rail and trail uses, as well as the Corridor itself, slightly more visible from surrounding areas.

Some consider the sight of trains and snowmobiles incompatible with Forest Preserve wilderness values on those stretches of the Corridor which pass through or are adjacent to wilderness or primitive areas. In many instances however, especially in hamlet areas where trains will be seen by the greatest number, people will react positively to the passage of trains. Trains will be seen as a welcome sign of the revitalization of this traditional railroad route.

**2. Social and Economic**

Adoption of the plan could lead to:

**a. A moderate increase in the likelihood of trespass onto neighboring private lands.**

After the Corridor is opened to public recreational trail use, it will be likely that some trail users might stray onto adjacent private lands. Rail flagstop service could increase the potential for trespass. The incidence of trespass could be kept within reasonable limits.

**b. Moderate new costs to State agencies and taxpayers associated with Corridor management.**

The development of rail and trail services on the Corridor might increase costs to DOT and DEC. Both agencies will need to hire new staff to handle the administration of Corridor programs. DEC will be responsible for funding the trail development component of the plan.

There will be additional costs to State agencies related to the increased enforcement, fire protection and search and rescue services which will be required.

New costs to government agencies will mean either new costs to taxpayers or a commensurate reduction in other government services. In addition, to the extent that Federal and State government grants will be forthcoming for the restoration of Corridor facilities, the implementation of the preferred alternative will result in further costs to taxpayers.

## IX. **MITIGATION MEASURES**

In order to eliminate or minimize the effects of adverse impacts related to the implementation of the preferred alternative, a number of measures will be taken, as detailed below.

### A. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

#### 1. **WATER QUALITY AND SEDIMENTATION**

The threat of surface water sedimentation related to Corridor construction and maintenance activities will be minimized through the use of appropriate sediment control measures including the installation of filter fabric, hay bales and silt fences. The water impounded behind culverts dammed by beaver will be released at a controlled rate, and beaver dams will be removed. The need for repeated beaver dam removal at places subject to repeated damming will be reduced by installing dam-proofing devices. Where appropriate, stream protection permits will be acquired from DEC and wetlands protection permits from APA.

The most significant construction activity to be undertaken on the Corridor will be the restoration of segments of the rail bed which have been washed away. Once existing washouts have been restored, the potential for future washouts will be minimized through a program of regular monitoring and maintenance.

In instances when mitigating measures do not succeed in preventing sedimentation, sediment deposited in streams and wetlands might be removed. APA and DEC will determine whether to require the removal of sediment deposited as a result of Corridor construction and maintenance activities.

All trains with on-board water supplies and sanitary facilities will be required to have self-contained systems. No discharges of waste water will be allowed within the bounds of the Corridor property. Rail operators will be required to prevent discharges of petroleum products and other pollutants to ground and surface waters during the maintenance of locomotives, rolling stock, and other railroad equipment.

As excursion rail services expand, areas along the Corridor might be developed to accommodate gatherings of train passengers for picnicking or educational programs. Privies will be provided and suitably located. Opening the Corridor to public use might lead to increases in the levels of use sustained by waters accessible from the Corridor. Master Plan guidelines and DEC regulations already exist which require campsites and privies in the Forest Preserve to be located at least 150 feet from surface water. Educational efforts will stress the importance of minimum-impact camping.

## 2. **DISTURBANCE OF WETLANDS**

In order to minimize the impact of parallel trail construction on wetlands, trail construction methods will not include the placement of fill. Instead, wooden bridges and elevated walkways will be constructed where short sections of the trail will have to cross wetlands. APA wetlands protection permits will be issued as required. Where a long segment of the parallel trail will have to span a wetland area, the segment will not be constructed unless it could be routed around the area.

Herbicides used in Corridor maintenance will not be applied in or near wetlands.

## 3. **THE REMOVAL OF VEGETATION**

Vegetation within the bounds of the Corridor will be retained where practicable to screen the Corridor from view where it passes in close proximity to lakes and ponds, to wild, scenic, or recreational rivers and to residential homes. On segments where the rail bed is used only for recreational trail purposes, vegetation will only be removed in a swath of the minimum width necessary to protect the rail bed and to provide adequate sight distances on curves.

Herbicide applications made to remove vegetation will only be performed by certified applicators in accordance with all applicable laws. No applications will be made in wetlands or within 100 feet of wetland boundaries.

During parallel trail construction, vegetation will only be removed in a swath of the minimum width necessary to make the trail useable and as required to protect trail users. No herbicides will be used during trail construction and maintenance.

Pickering's reedgrass (*Calamagrostis pickeringii*) was found at a location within one-half mile of the corridor. The species is classified as rare on New York State's list of protected plants. No other plants included on the list are known to have been found on or adjacent to the Corridor. Should any other listed species exist in the vicinity of the Corridor, it is likely that it will be found in adjacent wetlands. Because no herbicides will be used in or near wetlands and appropriate measures will be taken to minimize the potential for sedimentation resulting from maintenance and construction activity, it is not likely that protected plants will be significantly affected by the implementation of the preferred alternative.

## **-|- MITIGATION MEASURES -|-**

### **4. EFFECTS ON FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS**

Beaver dams removed as part of the maintenance of the rail bed will not be removed between mid-October and mid-November, a time when beaver make preparations for winter. Where culverts and small bridges are subject to repeated damming by beaver, dam-proofing devices will be installed in order to minimize the fluctuation of water levels. Besides preserving the rail bed, the devices will protect fish, wildlife and wetland values as well. Where Corridor maintenance efforts are severely hampered by beaver activity, it might become necessary to take action to reduce the beaver population. Harvesting during regular trapping seasons would be encouraged in the vicinity of the Corridor. Extraordinary measures to eliminate beaver will be taken only as a last resort.

In order to minimize the impact of Corridor construction and maintenance activity on the quality of fish spawning habitat, sedimentation will be contained and work in sensitive areas will be scheduled so as not to coincide with spawning seasons. In cases when sediment is deposited in spawning habitat despite containment measures, DEC and APA will determine whether to require that the sediment be removed.

The incidence of collisions between trains and wildlife will be reduced through the clearing of vegetation from segments of the Corridor where trains will be running. Vegetative clearing will allow animals and approaching trains to see each other well in advance of a potential collision. In addition, trains will sound their horns in warning. In order to assure that the existence of the Corridor will not hinder the movement of wildlife, fencing will only be erected in the relatively few places where it is considered necessary for public safety.

To protect fish and wildlife populations on adjacent lands, no location along the Corridor will be selected for flagstop service where use by the public is expected to lead to unacceptable levels of disturbance. In addition, no new trails connecting the Corridor with a destination on Forest Preserve lands will be constructed until the unit management plan for the affected area has been completed or amended, as appropriate. Unit management planning for affected units will address the potential impacts of new trail construction on fish and wildlife.

DEC will continue to monitor fish and wildlife populations, with special attention to species classified as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern. When necessary, DEC will take appropriate management actions to protect fish and wildlife from human disturbance.



**5. LOCALIZED INCREASES IN HIGHWAY USE AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

The existing highway system is capable of accommodating the increases in automobile traffic which are anticipated as a result of the implementation of the preferred alternative. To alleviate the potential for increased traffic congestion near train stations and trailheads, adequate parking capacity will be provided. Traffic lights and other appropriate traffic control devices will be installed, and highway improvements, such as turning lanes, will be constructed where needed. It is probable that local governments will accept increased traffic levels as an inevitable part of increased tourist business activity.

**6. INCREASED USE OF ADJACENT FOREST PRESERVE LANDS**

The impacts related to the increased use of adjacent Forest Preserve lands which could result from the opening of the Corridor to the public will be minimized by managing access. Trails linking the Corridor with adjacent Forest Preserve units will be constructed only where recommended in individual unit management plans approved for those units. Should rail developers choose to provide "flagstop" service for backcountry users, flagstop locations will only be established where approved by DEC and DOT land managers. The numbers of people entering the Forest Preserve at flagstops also will be subject to control.

In areas of the Preserve where improved accessibility from the Corridor results in increased public use, DEC will manage such use through the unit management planning process for the Corridor and other affected units.

**7. INCREASED NEED FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE PROTECTION AND SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES**

The need for law enforcement services related to the opening of the Corridor to recreational trail uses will be minimized through:

- a. The posting of informational signs.
- b. Educational outreach. Specifically, organizations representing user groups will be called upon to educate their members and patrol the Corridor.

Fire potential will be addressed by:

- a. Requiring rail developers to remove and properly dispose of vegetation within the Corridor on segments devoted to rail use, thereby reducing the likelihood that passing trains will start fires.

## **-|- MITIGATION MEASURES -|-**

- b. Ensuring that rail developers install appropriate safety devices on all rolling stock.
- c. Requiring rail developers to conduct fire patrols during periods of high fire danger.
- d. Educating volunteer organizations performing Corridor maintenance, as well as the general public, to observe fire laws and employ appropriate fire safety practices. In addition, once the Corridor is cleared of vegetation, it could aid in limiting the spread of fires originating in the heavily forested areas surrounding it by serving as an effective fire break.

Additions to the responsibilities of search and rescue workers will be minimized by:

- a. Educating trail users about safe backcountry travel.
- b. Making sure that good maps of the Corridor and surrounding areas are available.
- c. Clearly marking all roads and trails intersecting with the Corridor.

## **8. SAFETY HAZARDS**

All railroad operations on the Corridor will be subject to the safety regulations of the Federal Railroad Administration. As required by those regulations, the maximum speeds at which trains can travel will be set in relation to the conditions of the track and rail bed, which will be determined through a program of regular inspections.

At places where the Corridor crosses public highways, rail developers will be required to employ NYSDOT approved warning devices and safety measures. The warning devices will be subject to the inspection and operational restraints set by the FRA. Where automatic flashing lights and gates are not required, "stop and flag" or other special train operations will be ordered by NYSDOT through the Regulatory process. Train movements could be subject to "stop and flag", "stop and proceed" or "prepared to stop" orders issued by NYSDOT.

Train operations at private and farm crossings will also be subject to regulatory review by NYSDOT. If necessary, the cost of automatic warning devices could be made a condition of use at private crossings. Other possibilities for private crossings include the use of STOP Signs and instructional training for users. The cost of making farm crossings safe will rest with the rail operator. If necessary, special train operations such a "stop and flag" will be ordered.

The rail operator will be required to work with NYSDOT and the local highway authorities to close unnecessary rail/highway crossings. The rail operator will also

be required to identify private and farm crossings which can be closed. Pedestrian crossings are regulated in the same fashion as rail/highway crossings.

The danger of collisions between trains and users of parallel trails will be minimized by assuring that there will be an adequate distance between the trail and the rail bed, by constructing the trail either significantly higher or lower than the rail bed or by separating the trail and the rail bed with fencing. The speeds of motorized vehicles using both rails and trails will be limited.

Within the trail, the danger of collision between snowmobiles will be minimized by providing a trail surface of adequate width, by clearing sufficient vegetation from the trail to provide adequate sight distances and by posting speed limits where appropriate. On segments of the rail bed open to trail use, safety rails will be installed on railroad bridges.

Efforts will be made to educate the people in the Corridor region about railroad safety. "Operation Life Saver" is an international program nationally sponsored by Operation Lifesaver, Inc. which can be useful in education, especially to teach children in area schools. In New York State this program is administered by a group composed of interested organizations, operating railroads and government agencies. More information can be obtained from NYS Operation Lifesaver, Inc., Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, Empire State Plaza, Albany, N.Y. 12228.

## 9. NOISE IMPACTS

The noise emitted by the engines of locomotives on the Corridor will be limited in accordance with Federal regulation. While train whistles and horns must be loud to be effective, their sound will be localized and of relatively short duration. Except to warn a person or an animal close to the tracks, they will only be sounded between the time when a train approaches within one-quarter mile of an intersection with a public highway or other "traveled way" and when the train has passed through the intersection.

New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Law requires that snowmobiles operating within the state be equipped with adequate muffler systems. The law will be enforced on the Corridor. Because snowmobiles will not be allowed to leave the Corridor to enter adjacent Forest Preserve lands except on designated trails, the sources of most snowmobile noise will be confined within the Corridor.

The policy of removing the minimum amount of vegetation necessary within the Corridor will help confine the noise of rail and trail uses. (See next section.)

**-|- MITIGATION MEASURES -|-**

**10. VISUAL IMPACTS**

Though vegetation will have to be cleared from the Corridor for maintenance and safety purposes, vegetation within the right-of-way will be retained where practicable to screen the Corridor from view where it passes in close proximity to lakes and ponds, to residential homes and to wild, scenic, or recreational rivers. In addition, where existing vegetation is not sufficient to screen the Corridor from sensitive areas, tree screens will be planted.

On Corridor segments where the rail bed will be used only for recreational trail purposes, vegetation will only be removed in a swath of the minimum width necessary to protect the rail bed and to provide adequate sight distances on curves. Along some segments where trains will be running, if vegetation had not been entirely removed by the rail developer, vegetation might be removed during the construction and maintenance of parallel trails. Again, vegetation will only be removed in a swath of the minimum width necessary to make the trail useable and as required to protect trail users.

The maintenance of Corridor facilities will be conducted in the interest of preserving the Corridor's historic appearance in the context of its Adirondack Park setting. For instance, any restoration and painting of bridges and station buildings will be reviewed by OPRHP and APA.

As another measure to maintain the appearance of the Corridor, rail developers and contractors will be required to remove old ties and other construction and demolition debris from the Corridor property and to dispose of it in an approved manner.

**B. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC**

**1. INCREASED LIKELIHOOD OF TRESPASS ONTO ADJACENT PRIVATE LANDS**

In order to minimize trespass problems which could result from the public use of the Corridor, signs will be posted at regular intervals along the Corridor to inform trail users of their responsibility to stay on the trail and respect private land, along with signs giving clear directions and distances to trail destinations. No Corridor segments will be devoted to trail use unless they link either with other trail systems outside the Corridor, with public highways or with suitable recreational waters. Organizations

representing trail user groups will be encouraged to educate their members and patrol the Corridor. The various law enforcement agencies will include the Corridor within their jurisdictions, as appropriate.

The rail services which become established on the Corridor might include dropping off and picking up hikers, hunters and canoeists at "flagstops." Flagstop locations will be selected so that the threat of private land trespass will be minimized.

## 2. NEW COSTS TO STATE AGENCIES AND TAXPAYERS

State costs related to rail development on the Corridor will be minimized by relying largely upon private enterprise to fund rail rehabilitation and development projects. Costs will be offset by revenues which will be realized by the State as a condition of agreements with rail developers, as well as sales tax revenues generated by the increase in regional economic activity that result from the development of the Corridor.

The cost to DEC of implementing the trail development component of the preferred alternative will be reduced to the extent that private trail organizations and volunteers will assist in trail construction and maintenance. DEC trail development costs will also be reduced by the amount of any Federal grant money that can be secured.

The costs of enforcement, fire protection and search and rescue services will be minimized through the measures to be taken to reduce the need for such services, as discussed in section "H." above.



**THENDARA STATION...circa 1992**

## X. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The implementation of the preferred alternative will open a new avenue of rail and trail access to areas of the Forest Preserve which currently are reached by other access routes. Over time, the availability of access from the Corridor could increase the levels of public use impacts on the land and water resources of the Preserve beyond the levels which would be reached if the Corridor were not available as an access route. Because the cumulative public use impacts engendered by the opening of the Corridor can be effectively managed, they will not be excessive.

For most prospective visitors, the accessibility of Forest Preserve destinations from the Corridor will depend upon the existence of a trail, road, or waterway. For those destinations such as ponds that are not presently accessible from the Corridor, the unit management planning process for the appropriate Forest Preserve unit will determine the desirability of constructing a new trail to the destination. A decision to construct a trail will only be made if it is determined that the potential increase in public use impacts will not exceed the capacity of the area to withstand the added use.

Increased accessibility from the Corridor to canoe routes such as the Bog River could lead to increases in use along the waterway, with attendant reductions in the degree of solitude available to boaters, increases in the social and physical impacts related to camping, and impacts to wildlife.

On the positive side, the opening of the Corridor to rail and trail uses will add a unique recreational opportunity to the existing array of Adirondack tourist attractions which provide substantial support to the regional economy.



**NAHASANE STATION...circa 1992**

## XI. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

The preferred alternative if implemented, will cause some adverse impacts which might not be completely mitigated.

### A. **Environmental Impacts**

1. Vegetation will be removed as part of Corridor maintenance. However, the removal will constitute a restoration of the Corridor to the condition which prevailed during its long operation as a railroad.
2. Beaver will be displaced from the areas adjacent to the Corridor as a result of Corridor maintenance. The impact on the burgeoning Adirondack beaver population will not be significant.
3. Trains will collide with some wildlife, but collisions will be rare.
4. Some increase in traffic congestion will occur in communities where train stations or trailheads are located, mostly during warm season weekends.
5. Minor increases in the use of adjacent Forest Preserve lands will result. Some popular travel routes and destination spots could sustain relatively heavy use.
6. Some increase in the need for law enforcement, fire protection and search and rescue services will occur. The need for law enforcement is likely to be the greatest.
7. The operation of trains and snowmobiles on the Corridor will present safety hazards, both within the Corridor and at its intersections with public highways, which would not exist if the Corridor were not opened to public use. Proposed safety measures will minimize hazards.
8. The clearing of vegetation and the occurrence of rail and trail uses will cause noise and visual impacts on surrounding areas. Though such impacts will be considered significant by some users of adjacent Forest Preserve lands, they will not be out of character for a traditional travel corridor.

### B. **Social and Economic Impacts**

1. Some trespass onto private lands will occur.

XII. **IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES**

Physical resources that will be irreversibly and irretrievably committed to the project site during construction and rehabilitation will include:

- ! Building materials for station repairs
- ! Rail, ties, culverts, and other building materials for the repair of tracks and bridges
- ! Parts, equipment, fuel, and lubricating oils for equipment operation
- ! Sand, gravel, and stone used in the repair of washouts
- ! Lumber, culverts, fencing, and other building materials used in trail construction

The implementation of the plan will lead to an irreversible commitment of DOT and DEC staff time and costs related to the administration of Corridor management programs.



**LAKE CLEAR STATION...circa 1992**



XIII. **GROWTH-INDUCING ASPECTS**

The implementation of the preferred alternative could result in a significant increase in the economic activity of Corridor communities. Over the long term, a total of 41 (Northwest Engineering) to 77 (FSI) full-and part-time jobs directly related to rail operations could be created. There might be four additional jobs in trail maintenance. The establishment of tourist-oriented rail services, as well as new recreational trail opportunities, could lead to a significant increase in business activity for restaurants, lodging facilities and a number of other establishments that cater to tourists in the Corridor region. Increased business activity could lead to some expansion of existing establishments and the creation of new enterprises. According to the FSI report, more than 100 jobs in regional hotel, restaurant, and retail businesses could result from the full development of the Corridor. As a consequence of increased employment, there could be a moderate increase in the demand for housing and community services in affected areas. The growth that might result from Corridor development would harmonize with existing local land use plans and would be welcomed by local governments.



**RAY BROOK STATION...circa 1992**

XIV. **EFFECTS ON THE USE AND  
CONSERVATION OF ENERGY RESOURCES**

If State-owned station buildings within the Corridor are rehabilitated for use, the electrical and heating needs of existing State-owned buildings will be reviewed. In conformance with the historical context of the buildings and depending upon the availability of capital, energy efficient systems will be installed.

The maximum anticipated diesel fuel consumption by rail locomotives has been estimated at approximately 400,000 gallons per year. Operating rules will prohibit unnecessary idling of engines and other fuel-wasting procedures.



**SARANAC LAKE STATION...circa 1992**

## **XV. CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES**

When considering the best way to manage a land resource, it is useful to envision the full spectrum of possible uses to which the resource could be devoted. Within the range of potential dispositions of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor lie several options, from dismantling it to developing it fully for intensive rail transportation use. To aid in the process of selecting a management alternative for the Corridor which would receive substantial public support and be reasonably attainable, the planning team consulted with the citizens advisory committee and identified six major alternatives which warranted evaluation.

Section A, below lists the legal and physical constraints that limit the potential range of alternatives to be considered. The process of analysis which resulted in the selection of the preferred alternative was conducted in the context of a number of important issues which serve to frame the analysis, including social, economic, environmental and administrative criteria. These issues are also listed in section A. (For a general comparison of the potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of the alternatives, refer to Appendix 19.) Section B describes the various ways in which public support for the alternatives was expressed. Section C addresses alternative corridors. Finally, in Section D, the six alternatives are described and analyzed. As determined through the process of analysis, the alternatives are listed in order from the least suitable to the preferred alternative.

### **A. MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS AND ISSUES**

#### **1. Constraints Affecting the Planning Area**

The Corridor planning process interfaces with several existing New York State laws, plans and policies which define the range of management actions that may be contemplated. In addition, the Corridor's physical characteristics impose certain use limitations. The management decisions which will be reached during this process will fall within the bounds of these established planning constraints.

##### **a. Law and Policy Constraints**

The management of the Corridor must conform to a number of constitutional, legislative, planning and policy constraints, including:

- (1) The Adirondack Park Agency Act and the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.
- (2) All laws, rules, regulations and policies of the New York State Department of Transportation.
- (3) The Environmental Conservation Law, the rules and regulations pertaining thereto and the policies of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

## **-| CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES -|**

- (4) The legal requirements resulting from the determination by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation that the Corridor is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- (5) The State Environmental Quality Review Act.
- (6) The New York State Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act.
- (7) The jurisdiction of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

### **b. Physical Constraints**

The following physical characteristics of the Corridor present limitations and challenges for management planning:

- (1) Because the Corridor makes its way through mountainous terrain, at many places it turns with a degree of curvature which would severely limit the speed at which trains could travel. Tight curves would also affect the safety of Corridor users by limiting sight distances.
- (2) The limited width and varied topography of the Corridor would make it relatively difficult and expensive to construct a trail parallel to the rail bed and within the bounds of the Corridor.

## **2. Issues Requiring Management Attention**

The identification of the issues which are to serve as criteria for an analysis of management alternatives is an essential part of the development of a planning strategy for the Corridor. Management issues may be put in the form of questions to be answered for each alternative.

The following questions highlight the various areas of concern which may affect or be affected by the disposition and management of the Corridor. The planning team has answered these questions as completely as possible and has used the answers as the basis for preparing section D, Analysis of Corridor Management Alternatives.

### **a. Public Support**

Public support must be a primary consideration throughout the process of selecting a management strategy for the Corridor. How much support would the alternative have among the people of the Adirondack region and across New York State?

### **b. Public Need**

When considering the feasibility and desirability of using the Corridor for rail transport, several factors should be considered. Rail use of the Corridor should

provide an efficient option for the movement of people and goods. Consideration must be given to the current capacity and condition of available transportation as well as transportation accessibility. Also the cost to provide a transportation service on this corridor must be evaluated against available resources from public and private sources.

What is the importance of the Corridor in providing benefits to local communities and the people of the State through the re-establishment of commercial rail service whether passenger, freight, tourist recreation, or a combination of the above? Does that importance justify the continued management of the Corridor as a railroad over its full length or on certain segments, to the extent that rail interests would supersede trail interests on the rail bed? What types of rail use should be permitted?

What is the importance of the Corridor as a recreational trail? Does the importance of the Corridor as a potential recreational trail route exceed its importance as a commercial railroad over its full length or on certain segments, to the extent that trail interests would supersede rail interests on the rail bed? What types of trail use should be permitted and where?

c. Economic Benefits

What are the extent and magnitude of the economic benefits which the alternative would bestow within the Corridor region and across the State?

d. Environmental Impacts

What environmental impacts would be caused by the alternative and to what extent can they be mitigated?

e. Infrastructure Needs

What existing facilities will need to be restored and maintained and what new facilities constructed in order to implement the alternative?

f. Costs and Revenues

What will be the start-up and operating costs associated with the alternative and who will bear those costs? What revenues will accrue and who will receive them? Will the alternative require an ongoing government subsidy?

g. Funding

## **-|- CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES -|-**

What sources of public and private funding will be available to implement the alternative?

### **h. Administration**

If the alternative is implemented, what entity will be charged with Corridor management responsibility? Will it be State government, local government, a private organization, or a combination of the above? How much authority will the chosen entity have over Corridor operation and how will decisions be made? Who will be responsible for law enforcement on the Corridor?

### **i. Liability**

What personal injury and physical damage liability will the State incur as the owner of the Corridor if the alternative is implemented?

## **B. PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVES**

Public support for the various options presented for future corridor use have taken many forms since the initiation of the planning process. These can be grouped into the following categories:

1. Public Information Meetings
2. Letters of Support and Resolutions
3. Newspapers
4. Public Funding Initiatives
5. Adirondack Centennial Tourist Run
6. Volunteer Maintenance

### **1. Public Information Meetings**

The State held three public information meetings in 1991. Located at Ray Brook, Old Forge and Utica the hearings were attended by over 450 people from the six county area and beyond. Of the 80 speakers who made statements, over 80% strongly favored reactivating the railroad corridor for railroad use. This use would be exclusively railroad or in combination with some form of recreational trail activity. Most speakers favored public retention of the property and some form of permanent maintenance of the Corridor.

Three public hearings were held in December of 1994 to receive comments on the Draft Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan/EIS. Thirty-two people spoke

at these meetings which were held in Utica, Old Forge and Lake Placid. Fifty-one responses (including petitions with 641 signatures) were received during the public review period which ended on January 20, 1995.

2. **Letters of Support to the Governor, Legislature, State Commissioners and the Interagency Planning Team**

Letters supporting some form of reinstatement of rail service, combined with other recreational activities along the Corridor, have been submitted by private citizens, public interest groups, public officials and elected government bodies. These support actions were in addition to those included by members in the Citizen Advisory Committee. They included resolutions from the Towns of Forestport, Altamont and Piercefield. Also included were resolutions from the Intercounty Legislative Committee of the Adirondacks and the Mayor of Utica. The Adirondack Railway Preservation Society submitted 450 postcards supporting rail restoration. A petition with 8,000 signatures submitted by Sally Smith of Big Moose and ARPS, promoted "Preserving the Adirondack Division of the New York Central (M&M Railroad) as an Historic Landmark."

Forty-seven form letters to the Planning Team favored removing the tracks and allowing only non-motorized use.

Resolutions in support of rail rehabilitation of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor have been received as follows;

- 1988 - Hamilton County Board of Supervisors, New Hartford Town Board
- 1990 - Franklin Co. Board of Legislators
- 1991 - Intercounty Legislative Committee of the Adirondacks (representing Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties.); Hamilton County Board of Supervisors; Towns of Forestport, Piercefield, Remsen.
- 1993 - Herkimer County Board of Legislators; Towns of Altamont, Harriestown, Webb; City of Utica; Central Adirondack Association; New York Snowmobile Coordinating Group.

Resolutions supporting the restoration of the Corridor by the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society have been received as follows;

- 1994 - Franklin County Legislature; North Elba, Piercefield Town Board, Town Board, Lake Placid Board of Trustees, Village of Saranac Lake.
- 1995 - Essex County Board of Supervisors.

3. **Newspapers**

**-| CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES -|**

Articles have appeared periodically in local newspapers and in the Albany Times Union noting the current activities of the railroad corridor planning process or with the Centennial Tourist news. The articles generally reported the favorable reaction the public exhibited at the public information meetings. These were chronicled in the Adirondack Daily Enterprise, the Utica Observer Dispatch, the Rome Sentinel and the Saranac Press Republican.

The Utica Observer Dispatch published an editorial questioning the need for expending \$31 million to rehabilitate the railroad. Accompanying this editorial was a political cartoon that illustrated another perspective to the Adirondack Railroad issue. (See Appendix 18.)

**4. Public Funding Initiatives**

On October 25, 1992 the State received an application to fund rehabilitation of 55 miles of the Remsen-Lake Placid Line from Remsen, Oneida County to the Herkimer-Hamilton County line north of Beaver River. The \$6.0 million rehabilitation request was for railroad work only and was submitted by Senator William Sears for consideration under the New York State Jobs Bond Act which subsequently did not receive voter approval. That application included the following breakdown:

Corridor Rehabilitation . . . . .	\$4.9 M
Utica Station Access Improvements for trains and passengers . . . . .	\$0.5 M
Equipment . . . . .	\$0.3 M
Contingency . . . . .	\$0.3 M

The request was essentially consistent with the figures developed by the DOT/DEC Task Force studying Corridor alternative uses.

The NYS Legislature passed two items in the State Budget for 1993-94 relative to the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor. Voting favored a \$400,000 fund for stabilization of the Corridor from Remsen to Lake Placid and a provision of \$50,000 to do a profitability-feasibility study.

There are no other records of any additional public or private funding initiatives other than those associated with the volunteer initiatives described elsewhere in this report.

**5. Adirondack Railway Preservation Society and Adirondack Centennial and Scenic Railroad Tourist Trains**



See Sections VII.C. and VII.D.

## 6. **Volunteer Maintenance**

Two significant actions have allowed volunteers to perform maintenance on the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor. These actions were consistent with the goal of preserving the Corridor during the planning process.

A permit was issued to the New York Snowmobile Coordinating Group which allowed snowmobiles access to most areas of the Corridor. In addition to providing recreational access, the permit also allowed the snowmobiling organization to perform maintenance commensurate with their winter activities.

On May 5, 1992 a permit was issued by the DOT to the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society for the purpose of maintaining the Corridor to prevent further deterioration. Also included was maintenance to remove or warn of hazards. Working under the scrutiny of the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Park Agency, this volunteer organization has performed thousands of hours of basic maintenance on the Corridor (See Section VII.C.) Their presence and activities were also instrumental in assisting the Railway Historical Society in their effort to institute a scenic rail service as part of the Adirondack centennial.

## C. **ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL CORRIDORS AND CORRIDOR TRAILS**

The communities of any region depend upon highways and railroads for their connection with the outside world. In an area like the Adirondacks, the destinations of major travel routes largely were determined by the locations of natural resources and population centers. In turn, some communities came to be only after the railroad had been built. To get to their destinations, the early railroads and highways that now compose most of the system of major Adirondack travel corridors had to take the best available routes through the mountains. Today, as a close look at a map of the Adirondack Park will show, Adirondack topography combines with the extensive patchwork of constitutionally protected Forest Preserve lands to leave few opportunities for establishing new travel corridors.

More than 100 years ago, in determining the best course for a railroad throughout the central Adirondacks, Mr. Webb analyzed alternative routes and chose what is now the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor as the one most practical. Certainly, there were other possibilities, but none as good to serve the purposes for which it was built. Through the years, the Corridor has continued to have value as a long-distance connection between the communities which it serves. Today, if the Corridor were officially abandoned as a railroad, the high cost, general physical impracticability, and numerous legal obstacles involving the exercise of eminent domain over private lands and the conversion of Forest Preserve lands would make the creation of an alternative railroad route virtually impossible. Therefore, the analysis of

## **-| CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES -|**

alternatives in this plan does not encompass a detailed comparison of alternative railroad routes.

When considering recreational trail use, the issue of alternative long-distance corridor trail routes can be seen in a similar light. As with a railroad, a given corridor trail is unique in providing access to a particular region and serving the communities through which it passes. Consequently, when considering snowmobile use on the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor, it would seem more appropriate to consider other trail routes through other regions of the Adirondacks as additional recreational and economic opportunities to be analyzed on their own merits rather than as alternatives to the Corridor. Accordingly, this plan does not include a detailed analysis of alternative snowmobile corridor trail routes in other parts of the Adirondack Park.

The consideration of alternatives in relation to trail use in general, and specifically the use of snowmobiles on the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor would more appropriately focus on the use of other routes that would pass through the same region and connect the same communities. However, a look at a map of the Adirondack Park clearly shows that, while other hypothetical routes linking Old Forge with Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake, and Lake Placid could be found, they would all involve some combination of private lands and Forest Preserve wilderness areas. The Corridor has a substantial advantage over the hypothetical alternatives because the many hurdles of assembling a continuous route across many ownerships already have been overcome.

One approach to an alternative snowmobile route involves the placement of long segments of the trail within State highway rights-of-way. At present, while snowmobiles may be used within the right-of-way on segments of State highways where their use is specifically permitted, safety concerns compel the Department to refrain from granting such permission in nearly all cases. The Route 28 segment in the Town of Webb where snowmobiles are allowed is unique in that a broad, level path safely separated from the highway was already in place. An additional consideration especially pertinent to corridor trails is that, besides giving access to existing destinations, they provide opportunities for a unique form of recreation that make the trails destinations in themselves. The desirability of a given route for many recreationists depends more upon the quality of the recreational experience than where the trail starts and ends. Therefore, though perhaps it would be physically possible to construct a trail segment within a state highway right-of-way, the experience for trail users would probably not be of sufficiently high quality to hold much attraction.

Because the Corridor is the only existing continuous long-distance travel route currently available for use as a snowmobile corridor trail, and because of the many obstacles presently in the way of relocating any segment of the trail, a detailed investigation of alternative routes has not been undertaken here. In the event that a viable rail service proposal should include winter operations, or future State planning efforts determine that snowmobile use would

not be appropriate on all or parts of the Corridor, a detailed exploration of alternatives would be justified.

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**D. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES**

The discussion of each of the six management alternatives has been arranged in two sections:

!     Description of the Alternative

The alternative is described with reference to its physical and operational characteristics, estimates of associated costs and revenues, and primary environmental, social, and economic impacts.

!     Analysis of the Alternative

The alternative is analyzed with reference to the list of issue questions. Advantages and disadvantages are noted. The analysis is followed by a concluding statement about the suitability of the alternative.

The analysis of the alternatives strongly reflects the interests of the citizens of the six-county Corridor region as expressed at the public information meetings held in October 1991. It also incorporates the views of the members of the Citizens Advisory Committee appointed to aid in the development of this plan. Finally, it represents the judgments of the members of the interdepartmental planning team.

Although the order in which the alternatives have been listed can be seen as a series of steps toward full rail development, the order is more importantly a sequence of increasing suitability for Corridor management, as determined through the process of analysis. Therefore, when viewed in reverse, the alternatives are listed in the order of Corridor management implementation. In other words, if full rail development as envisioned in the preferred alternative fails to materialize, alternative 5, (see page XV.) as the next most suitable alternative, would be implemented. After alternative 5 would come alternative 4, and so on. However, the planning team does not consider the implementation of alternatives 3,2, or 1 to be advisable under any circumstances.

When reviewing the alternatives, it should be borne in mind that they are described in their fully-implemented state. Such a description allows them to be compared for their long-term planning implications. In reality any of the alternatives, if implemented, would develop over an extended period of time. The amount of time needed would be determined by the availability of public and private staffing and funding resources.

It must be recognized that, although Alternative 6 has been selected for implementation as a result of this planning process, a number of factors outside the control of the managing agencies will affect the progress and direction of Corridor development. This plan should

be considered a living document which may be modified when deemed necessary by the managing agencies, who will continue to monitor the development of the Corridor through the coming years.

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## 1. **DISMANTLE THE CORRIDOR**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE 1**

The "travel corridor" classification of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor would be rescinded. Corridor lands would either be sold or State agency jurisdiction over them would be transferred.

After consideration and action by APA, OPRHP and SEQOR, the rails, ties and other structures within the Corridor would be removed, though the possibility of preserving one or more of the existing historically important station buildings would remain. Those Corridor segments which adjoin private lands and are deemed inessential to resource protection or public use needs would be sold. Jurisdiction over those segments which adjoin or otherwise complement existing Forest Preserve lands would be transferred to DEC. The action could be accomplished within five years.

### **Principal Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts**

Dismantling the Corridor would open the way to the future consolidation of existing Forest Preserve lands and the reclassification of some Forest Preserve lands to wilderness. The sense of remoteness available on nearby Forest Preserve lands would be protected from the noise and visual impacts which might be associated with Corridor use. The environmental effects which could accompany construction and maintenance activity would be eliminated. The potential for use-related impacts on adjacent Forest Preserve lands, as well as trespass onto private lands, would be reduced.

On the other hand, the work involved in the removal of the rails, ties, bridges, and culverts from the Corridor could cause some sedimentation of streams, ponds, and wetlands. Most importantly, this alternative would prevent the realization of the substantial economic, recreational, and educational benefits which could accrue from retaining the Corridor and developing its rail and trail potential.

### **Costs and Revenues**

The sale and rededication of Corridor lands which would result from the implementation of this action would make moderate demands on State personnel until the project

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was completed. An additional staff person could be hired to administer the disposal of Corridor assets. Costs could be incurred to litigate legal challenges to the break up of the Corridor.

Revenue could be realized through the salvage of the rails and the sale of station buildings and Corridor lands.

### **! Salvage**

Assuming that the rails and associated hardware would be sold as scrap iron, an operation to sell and remove the rails and ties probably would generate little if any revenue for the State. However, if a buyer could be found who was interested in relaying the rails on another railroad, the sale of the rails and associated hardware could bring the State a net revenue of up to \$3.5 to \$4.0 million. Subtracted from that would be a cost of approximately \$375,000 to remove the ties (Landrio, personal contact 1992). Nevertheless, it is unlikely that a buyer interested in a substantial amount of Corridor rail for relay purposes could be found at any given time.

### **! Real Estate**

The State of New York acquired the Corridor property in 1974, ultimately paying \$11.0 million. It would be reasonable to assume that more total revenue could be realized by selling a number of smaller parcels than by conveying the Corridor as a whole. Precise revenue figures for the sale of Corridor lands can not be given, especially in light of the uncertainty about which Corridor segments would be retained by the State under this alternative.

### **Regional Economic Impacts**

The dismantling of the Corridor would bring few economic benefits to the Adirondack region. The potential for the economic benefits which could result from the rehabilitation of Corridor facilities and the establishment of tourist excursion, passenger, and freight train service and recreational trail use would not be realized.

### **Analysis of Alternative 1**

Undoubtedly the dismantling of the Corridor would result in certain benefits. The elimination of the "travel corridor" classification would open the way to the consolidation of existing Forest Preserve lands, and the removal of the prospect of rail and trail uses would eliminate the potential for associated impacts to adjacent lands, both public and private. In addition, the State would be relieved of management responsibility

for the Corridor and the costs associated with management, maintenance, and liability. Indeed, the salvage of the rails and the sale of Corridor lands could generate some income for the State. However, such benefits would only be gained at the cost of eliminating all future opportunities to realize the Corridor's potential for significant recreational, educational, and economic benefits.

Both as a railroad and as a recreational trail, the Corridor is believed to have great promise as a tool for the economic development of the communities of the western Adirondacks. It could provide a unique form of public access to the open space and recreational resources of an otherwise remote section of the Adirondack Forest Preserve. Looking into the future, the Corridor could become even more important as a travel corridor should unforeseen developments in the national economy, environmental regulations and transportation technology emerge. If the Corridor were dismantled, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to respond to such future developments by attempting to reassemble it.

The importance of the Corridor for its ability to provide for an array of possible uses and benefits is augmented by its historic value as one of the first railroad routes through the Adirondack region. The Corridor, with all appurtenant railroad facilities, has been listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Finally, the public strongly supports the position of retaining the Corridor intact.

#### Conclusion

BECAUSE THE REMSEN-LAKE PLACID CORRIDOR IS UNIQUE AS A HISTORIC ADIRONDACK TRAVEL CORRIDOR WHICH HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL FOR RAIL AND TRAIL USES, BECAUSE CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT COULD FOSTER SUBSTANTIAL REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND BECAUSE THERE IS STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR RETAINING IT, THE CORRIDOR SHOULD NOT BE DISMANTLED.

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**2. MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE CORRIDOR,  
CONDUCT NO MAINTENANCE, ALLOW NO PUBLIC USE**

**DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE 2**

State ownership of the Corridor in its present uninterrupted form from Remsen to Lake Placid would be retained. No maintenance of the rail bed or other Corridor facilities would be conducted. No use of Corridor lands would be allowed, either as a railroad or a recreational trail.

The Corridor would retain its "travel corridor" classification under the APSLMP. It would be posted against trespass. Limited Corridor use by individuals for gaining access to otherwise inaccessible private lands and the extension of current occupancy arrangements would be allowed by permit only. All rail and non-rail options of future use would be preserved.

**Principal Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts**

The prohibition of Corridor use would eliminate the impacts to adjacent Forest Preserve and private lands which could result from Corridor use. The retention of the Corridor and its "travel corridor" classification would preserve the potential for the future realization of rail and trail development benefits on the Corridor.

On the other hand, the retention of the "travel corridor" classification would prevent the consolidation of existing Forest Preserve lands under a single classification and the potential reclassification of some Preserve lands to wilderness. Without maintenance, Corridor facilities would deteriorate. Drainage structures would eventually fail, leading to rail bed washouts and the sedimentation of streams, ponds, and wetlands. In addition, this alternative would prevent the immediate realization of the economic, recreational, and educational benefits which could accrue from the development of rail services and recreational trail uses on the Corridor.

**Costs and Revenues**

Minimal State agency staff time would be required to implement this alternative. Since no maintenance of Corridor facilities would be done, costs associated with maintenance and management would be minimized. However, any future efforts to open the Corridor to rail and non-rail uses would cost more than if Corridor facilities had received regular maintenance. Costs could be incurred to litigate damage suits. As "attractive nuisances," un-maintained Corridor facilities could be implicated in Corridor accidents despite the prohibition against use.



The State would receive minimal revenue for access and occupancy permits.

### Regional Economic Impacts

A decision to retain the Corridor but allow no use would bring no economic benefits to the Adirondack region. The potential to create jobs associated with the rehabilitation of Corridor facilities and the operation of rail services would not be realized. The growth in economic activity among regional tourist businesses and other commercial enterprises which could be induced by the establishment of excursion, passenger, and freight train service and recreational trail use would not materialize. The prospect of future rail use would become progressively less attractive as the physical condition of Corridor facilities continued to deteriorate.

### ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE 2

This alternative is similar to alternative 1 in that the absence of Corridor maintenance, construction, and rail and trail uses would assure that adjacent Forest Preserve and private lands would not be subjected to the impacts related to those activities. Although the retention of the "travel corridor" classification would prevent the technical consolidation of existing Forest Preserve lands, in practical terms the prohibition against use would have many of the beneficial environmental effects of dismantling the Corridor. The travel corridor classification would not impede the management of large blocks of private and Forest Preserve lands on either side of the Corridor for wilderness, wildlife, forest products and other open space values.

In addition, while the first alternative would completely destroy the Corridor, alternative 2 would allow it to remain intact, thus preserving future Corridor use options while minimizing short-term State costs. The Corridor's value as a facility of unique historic importance would not be completely destroyed.

On the other hand, alternative 2 would delay the realization of the potentially significant recreational, educational, and economic benefits which would result from the development of the Corridor's rail and trail potential. The continued deterioration of Corridor facilities would make the ultimate reactivation of the Corridor increasingly costly. Rail advocates, recreational interests, environmental groups and the public in general would strongly support a decision to take immediate steps to open the Corridor to rail and recreational trail uses.

### Conclusion

ALTHOUGH THIS ALTERNATIVE WOULD PRESERVE THE CORRIDOR FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, IT WOULD DELAY INDEFINITELY THE

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REALIZATION OF THE CORRIDOR'S CURRENT POTENTIAL FOR RAIL AND TRAIL USES AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS. THEREFORE, A MORE ACTIVE COURSE OF CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY PURSUED.

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**3. MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE CORRIDOR, CONDUCT MINIMAL MAINTENANCE, AL LOW PUBLIC USE BY SHORT-TERM PERMIT ONLY (THE "NO ACTION" ALTERNATIVE)**

**DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE 3**

**! Physical**

State ownership of the Corridor in its present uninterrupted form from Remsen to Lake Placid would be retained. The rail bed would be maintained in its present condition, but no maintenance of Corridor structures such as rails, ties, and bridges would be conducted by the State.

The Corridor would retain its "travel corridor" classification under the APSLMP. All rail and non-rail options of future use would be preserved. The Corridor would be posted against trespass. Though no attempt would be made by the State to upgrade the condition of the rail bed by restoring the washouts which presently exist, the Corridor would be continually monitored and work would be done as necessary to prevent new washouts from occurring. Upgrading of the rail bed and Corridor structures by permittees would be allowed in accordance with established standards.

Because it is conceivable that under this alternative the full range of Corridor uses, from no public use to full rail service with a parallel recreational trail could be established through a permitting process (see "Operational" description, below), the physical description sections for alternatives 2, 4, 5 and 6 should be referred to for details.

**! Operational**

Rail or recreational trail use of Corridor lands would be allowed by short-term permit only. Permits would be issued to organized groups capable of obtaining liability insurance coverage for the permitted use. The planning process could be used as a basis for deciding which organizations would be eligible for permits

on given Corridor segments by determining compatible uses. Permit applications would be reviewed and permits issued by existing State personnel. This in effect, is the "no action" alternative and could be implemented immediately.

Theoretically it is possible that a wide range of uses and a substantial degree of development could occur on the Corridor under the current system of management by permit. However, this system is considered to be appropriate only as a way to allow some maintenance and use of the Corridor until the planning process is completed. The operational description sections for alternatives 2, 4, 5 and 6 give more details about the varying levels of potential Corridor development conceivable under this alternative.

#### Principal Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts

Because all the types and levels of use encompassed by alternatives 2, 4, 5 and 6 would be possible under this alternative, the discussions of environmental impacts for those alternatives are referred to here.

#### Costs and Revenues

See the cost and revenue discussions for alternatives 2, 4, 5 and 6.

#### Regional Economic Impacts

See the economic impact discussions for alternatives 2, 4, 5 and 6.

### **ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE 3**

Under alternative 3 the State would be required to commit minimal funding and staffing to the management and maintenance of the Corridor. Because organizations permitted to engage in rail and trail uses would be required to obtain liability insurance, the State's liability exposure would be minimized. Unlike alternatives 1 and 2, a substantial degree of rail and trail development would be possible, though such development would depend largely upon the efforts of private organizations and volunteers. Private funding could be supplemented by grants from various funding sources, such as the federal Symms Act, REDS and ISTEA, thereby allowing the Corridor to be improved without relying heavily upon the use of State funds.

Depending upon the scale of rail and trail uses permitted, alternative 3 would impart some regional economic benefits, and allow some recreational opportunities. The Corridor's historic value would be better preserved than in the previous alternatives, because the maintenance of the rail bed would prevent further deterioration. As a

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result, should a more active approach to management be adopted in the future, the cost of rail restoration would be less than if the rail bed had received no maintenance. However, because rail and trail uses and some maintenance of the Corridor would be allowed under alternative 3, adjacent Forest Preserve and private lands would be subjected to noise, visual, water quality, and fish and wildlife impacts related to those activities. Opening the Corridor to trail use would introduce the possibility of trespass onto adjacent private lands.

Despite the potential for rail and trail development that would exist under alternative 3, its implementation would, in effect, promote a passive approach to Corridor management. Adoption of this alternative would only partially realize the Corridor's potential as a recreational trail and as a tool for the economic development of the Corridor region. The State would be responding to individual permit applications rather than seeking to implement an active and comprehensive approach to Corridor management. Applications would be reviewed and permits monitored by State agencies with insufficient staffing and complex bureaucracies. Because permits would be issued only for limited periods of time, few private organizations or companies would be motivated to invest in rail enterprises which by their nature require several years to mature. The alternative would be seen by the public, especially rail and recreational trail advocates, as only a partial commitment to the development of the Corridor.

### Conclusion

**RATHER THAN ALLOWING THE PRESENT SITUATION OF CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT BY SHORT-TERM PERMIT TO CONTINUE, A MORE ACTIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE PURSUED.**

\*\*\*\*

## **4. OPEN THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR TO COMPATIBLE RECREATIONAL TRAIL USES - ALLOW NO RAIL USES**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE 4**

Two variations of this alternative are possible. In the first, the rails and ties are retained; in the second, the rails and ties are removed.

a. Future Rail Options Preserved - Retain the Rails and Ties

Physical

State ownership of the Corridor in its present uninterrupted form from Remsen to Lake Placid would be retained. The Corridor would retain its "travel corridor" classification under the APSLMP. The rails and ties would remain in place over the full length of the Corridor in anticipation of the eventual restoration of rail service. The rail bed would be continuously maintained in its present condition.

In order to increase the suitability of the Corridor for trail purposes and to ensure the safety of trail users, a number of minor construction projects would be undertaken, including constructing bridges at washouts and installing deck planking and safety rails on existing railroad bridges. Assuming that funding would be available, such construction could be completed within 5 years.

With rails and ties intact, the suitability of the rail bed for trail purposes could be maximized by covering the rails and ties to provide a smooth trail surface. However because such an action, besides its high cost, would greatly increase the deterioration rate of the very facilities which it was meant to preserve, it is considered very unlikely that a decision to cover the rails and ties would ever be desirable.

Operational

The entire length of the Corridor would be opened to all compatible public recreational trail uses within the width of the rail bed and no rail uses would be allowed. The development of the Corridor as a trail would be coordinated with existing and planned trail systems intersecting and surrounding the Corridor.

The issue of the compatibility of different types of trail use has received much attention during the planning process. In consultation with the citizens advisory committee it has been decided that, because the Corridor is unique as a long-distance trunk trail which has special attraction for all types of trail users, a number of possible uses should be accommodated on the Corridor (see Section V.B.2.g and Appendix 9. According to this variation, the following trail uses would be allowed to simultaneously occupy the rail bed:

Summer - Pedestrian, horse, all-terrain bicycle, horse and wagon \*

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Winter - Pedestrian (includes skiing, snowshoeing), snowmobile, touring bicycle \*

\* Use by horse and wagon would only be feasible if the rails and ties were covered. For use by touring bicycles, the surface of the fill material would have to be sufficiently hardened.

Under this variation, it would be possible to restrict certain trail uses to specific Corridor segments. The option of trail use segmentation most likely to be considered would be the recommendation by some environmental groups to prohibit motorized vehicle use, including snowmobiles, on parts of the segment between Beaver River and Lake Clear Junction.

### Principal Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts

The retention of the "travel corridor" classification would prevent the consolidation of existing Forest Preserve lands and the potential reclassification of some Forest Preserve lands to wilderness.

Current permitted and unpermitted uses of the Corridor have led to occasions of trespass onto adjacent private lands and motorized vehicle intrusion into adjacent primitive and wilderness areas. Opening the Corridor to public trail use could increase the incidence of such problems, along with use-related impacts on nearby Forest Preserve lands and waters. The use of motorized vehicles on the Corridor could affect the sense of remoteness available in wilderness and primitive areas near the Corridor. Construction and maintenance activities on the Corridor could have an effect on streams, wetlands and wildlife. The potential impacts would not be severe and could largely be mitigated.

### Costs and Revenues

Once the decision were made to open the Corridor to recreational trail uses, costs would be incurred for the construction which would be done to improve the Corridor for those uses. The following cost figures for various trail improvement measures are preliminary estimates for planning purposes. Accurate cost figures for budgeting and contract purposes can not be obtained before detailed engineering is done on each project.

#### (1) Bridges at Washouts

The streams crossing the Corridor at existing washout locations are fairly small. Bridges with unsupported spans between 20 and 40 feet long,

substantial enough to support snowmobiles and a snow load, would be constructed. The following cost estimates assume that the bridges would be built by a private contractor and include no special costs for transporting materials to bridge sites.

<u>Bridge Span</u>	<u>Estimated Cost Range</u>
20 feet .....	\$3,500- 4,500
30 feet .....	5,000- 7,000
40 feet .....	9,000-11,000

Considering that there are seven washouts along the Corridor which would require bridges and assuming that the typical situation would require a 30-foot bridge, the total cost of bridges on the entire length of the Corridor would be:

Typical bridge span: 30 feet  
 Cost of 30-foot bridge: \$5,000-7,000  
 Number of bridges needed: 7  
 Total cost of bridges: **\$35,000-49,000**

Costs at bridge locations would be increased where filling and grading would have to be done to construct a trail connection between the rail bed and the bridges.

(2) Deck Planking and Safety Rails on Existing Railroad Bridges

Many of the existing bridges on the Corridor must be planked and provided with safety rails to be suitable for most non-rail uses. There are a number of bridge types of varying lengths, each of which poses unique design requirements. For instance through-girder bridges have steel side rails which would not have to be supplemented in order to be safe for trail uses. The following table incorporates a figure of \$12-15 per foot for materials needed for planking eight feet wide and a full safety rail. Labor would add another \$10-15 per foot. The railing component is estimated at \$3 per foot for materials and \$3 per foot for labor.

<u>Mile Post</u>	<u>Bridge Description*</u>	<u>Estimated Cost of Improvement</u>
H 33.7	240 feet, four deck girder sections 30 feet, one deck truss of 92 feet	\$4,600-6,300

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H 35.7	54-foot through truss	1,200-1,600
H 39.9	96-foot deck truss	2,100-2,900
H 40.5	65-foot through girder	1,000-1,600
H 49.6	246 feet, three 82-foot deck girder sections	5,400-7,400
H 50.9	19-foot deck girder	400 - 600
H 52.8	78-foot through girder	1,200-1,900
H 53.7	83-foot deck truss	1,800-2,500
H 58.1	40-foot deck girder	800-1,200
H 71.5	194-foot three-span deck girder	4,300-5,900
H 81.9	93-foot two-span through girder	1,500-2,200
H 98.5	48-foot through girder	800-1,200
H 112.8	121-foot through truss	2,600-3,600
H 113.5	24-foot deck girder - two tracks	600 - 800
H 129.9	40-foot deck girder	900-1,300
LP 9.7	34-foot deck girder	700-1,000
LP 9.6	100-foot two-span deck girder	2,200-3,000
LP 8.5	25-foot deck girder	600 - 800
LP 5.5	20-foot deck girder	400 - 600
LP 2.4	17-foot deck girder	400 - 500
LP 2.2	18-foot deck stringer	400 - 500

**TOTAL: \$33,900-47,400**

\* Deck truss, through truss, deck stringer, deck girder - Requires Safety Rail Through girder - Does not require safety rail

(3) Covering Rails and Ties

In the event that the decision is made to improve the Corridor for trail uses while preserving the potential for rail reactivation, gravel could be placed over the rails and ties. The following cost estimate is based on a trail surface width of eight feet, six inches and a fill depth of six inches.

Crusher-run gravel, delivered:	\$ 5.50- 6.00 per cubic yard
Spreading and packing:	\$15.00-19.00 per cubic yard
Total cost:	\$20.50-25.00 per cubic yard

At 850 cubic yards per mile,  
Total cost per mile: \$17,425-21,250  
Total cost for 35 mile stretch



from Stillwater Reservoir to  
Tupper Lake (sample project): **\$610,000-744,000**

Total cost for entire 119-mile  
Corridor: **\$2,074,000-2,529,000**

(4) Staffing

Additional State personnel would be hired to meet ongoing Corridor maintenance and law enforcement responsibilities. In order to perform adequate maintenance of the trail bed and to remove brush and blowdown, a full-time year-round DEC trail crew would be hired, consisting of a labor supervisor and three laborers. Approximate average annual costs total \$103,000 (see page 24.) This represents the approximate cost of maintaining the entire 119-mile length of the Corridor as a trail. As an alternative, since the Corridor lies within two DEC regions, it is likely that two or more existing trail crews responsible for Forest Preserve trails would be expanded and would add the Corridor to their maintenance duties. A single crew is used here to simplify cost calculations. The cost would be reduced in proportion to the amount of volunteer labor available.

Regional Economic Impacts

By opening the Corridor to recreational trail uses, the implementation of this alternative would promote tourism in nearby communities by providing additional recreational opportunities throughout the year. Although the number can not be predicted, undoubtedly the opening of the Corridor as a trail would attract new visitors to communities along the Corridor. As a result, it is likely that local merchants would realize an increase in purchases of food, lodging, supplies and fuel.

Considering snowmobile use specifically, it is possible to generate useful economic impact figures. According to the "New York State Snowmobiling Assessment," by Chad Dawson, the average trip-related expenditure for a snowmobiler in the state in 1990 was \$30. Using an estimated total of 20,000 snowmobile trips on the Corridor during the winter of 1991-1992, it was calculated that snowmobiling gave an economic benefit of approximately \$600,000 to businesses in the Corridor region.

b. Future Rail Options Eliminated - Remove the Rails and Ties

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### Physical

As in the first variation, State ownership of the Corridor and its "travel corridor" classification would be retained. The rails and ties would be removed over the full length of the Corridor. Existing railroad bridges and culverts would be left in place and maintained. The rail bed would be continuously maintained in its present condition. In other words, while the grade of the rail bed would not be restored at existing washouts, grading and stabilization work would be done to make the rail bed suitable for trail purposes and to prevent future wash-outs.

With the rails and ties gone, the rail bed would be in optimum condition for trail purposes. The same construction projects would be undertaken to increase the suitability of the Corridor for trail purposes and to ensure the safety of trail users as in the first variation, including constructing bridges at washouts and installing deck planking and safety rails on existing railroad bridges. Assuming that funding would be available, such construction could be completed within 5 years.

### Operational

Jurisdiction over the Corridor property would be transferred to NYSDEC. In other respects, the operational details would not differ from the first variation.

### Principal Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts

The impacts related to the two variations of this alternative would be similar, with one notable difference. The removal of the rails and ties would prevent the realization of the economic, recreational, and educational benefits which could accrue from the development of rail services on the Corridor. In addition, the work involved in the removal of the rails and ties and the preparation of the rail bed for trail purposes could cause some sedimentation of streams, ponds, and wetlands.

### Costs and Revenues

As in the first variation, additional DEC staff would be hired to meet trail maintenance and law enforcement responsibilities, and costs would be incurred for the construction which would be done to improve the Corridor for trail use, including the construction of bridges at washouts and the installation of deck planking and safety rails on existing railroad bridges. One potentially substantial cost which would not be incurred with this option is covering the rails and ties.

**! Paving the Rail Bed \***

For any segment which would be devoted to use by touring bicycles, the cost of paving the trail surface would be added.

Trail Width	Cost Per Mile			Total Cost for Segment from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid (36 mi.)
	Gravel and Grading	Asphalt	Total	
8 feet	\$5,000	\$14,000	\$19,000	\$684,000

\* Landrio

**! Salvage**

Revenue could be realized through the salvage of the rails (see page 120.)

**Regional Economic Impacts**

While the two variations would confer similar economic benefits to the Corridor region, the removal of the rails and ties would make the Corridor much more attractive as a trail than if the rails and ties were to remain in place. Therefore it is likely that the economic benefits imparted to nearby communities by the second variation would be greater. Though the option of covering the rails and ties discussed under the first variation would practically eliminate the difference between the two variations, such an action is considered unlikely because of its excessive cost and its deleterious effect on the rails and ties.

**ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE 4**

According to alternative 4, the recreational trail potential of the Corridor would immediately begin to be developed. This alternative would create a unique long-distance trunk trail that could provide public access to the open space and recreational resources of the Adirondack Forest Preserve, provide trail linkages with remote Adirondack communities and local trail systems, and thereby impart economic benefits to the region by attracting trail users. By providing a new avenue of access to an otherwise remote area of the Preserve, opening the Corridor as a trail would help to relieve other Preserve areas of recreational use pressures.

Because trail uses would be promoted while rail uses would be postponed or eliminated, alternative 4 would require less funding from the State and other sources for Corridor construction and maintenance than would be necessary for the implementation of the

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alternatives involving rail restoration. Compared to alternatives 1 and 2, the State's liability exposure would be reduced through the improvement of safety conditions on the Corridor and an active program of deterring unauthorized use.

There are two versions of this alternative:

### **1. Retain the Rails and Ties**

In the first version the rails and ties would be retained, with the intention of reactivating rail services at some time in the future. Though preferable from the standpoint of preserving options of future use, as well as the Corridor's historic value, the retention of the rails and ties would make this version less desirable from the perspective of recreational trail use. Covering the rails and ties with gravel to provide a more suitable trail surface would be prohibitively expensive and would lead to the much more rapid deterioration of the very structures the action would be intended to preserve.

From the perspective of restoring rail services, it would appear illogical to retain the rails for possible future rail reactivation while taking a position not to accept serious rail service proposals which might be viable now.

### **2. Remove the Rails and Ties**

In the second version, the rails and ties would be removed from the Corridor, under the assumption that rail service would never be reactivated. The condition of the surface of the rail bed for trail uses would thereby be optimized. The State would be relieved of management responsibility for the Corridor as a potential transportation facility and from associated management and liability costs. But the potentially significant benefits of rail development would not be realized.

Despite the intended elimination of rail potential under this version, it is suggested that the "travel corridor" classification not be rescinded, in order to assure the integrity of the Corridor for future travel needs and current recreational uses. There is strong support for allowing the Corridor to be used as a link in a long-distance snowmobile trail system. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's **State of New York Snowmobile Trail Plan** indicates that corridor trail #7, which runs through New York from Quebec to Pennsylvania, is the state's most important snowmobile corridor trail and that the Remsen-Lake Placid travel corridor right-of-way is the trail's most critical link. There is no other practical long-distance trail route through the Adirondack Park for snowmobiles. Therefore, because the removal of the "travel corridor" classification could lead to the reclassification of some segments

of the Corridor to "wilderness," in which snowmobiles would not be permitted, snowmobile interests would prefer the retention of the existing classification. And because wilderness classification would preclude the use of bicycles as well, those interested in the creation of a long-distance bicycle trail on the Corridor would also wish to see its travel corridor status maintained.

On the other hand, because much of the Corridor segment between Beaver River and Horseshoe Lake is flanked by Forest Preserve lands with wilderness or primitive classifications, the elimination of motorized vehicle use on that segment would protect the area's wilderness character. Therefore, the conversion of the central segment to appropriate Forest Preserve classifications would be strongly supported by those who favor wilderness consolidation. It is important to note, however, that motorized vehicle use could be eliminated from parts of the Corridor without removing the travel corridor classification.

Outdoor recreation advocates would strongly support alternative 4, especially the version eliminating the rails and ties. To those interested in recreational trail opportunities it would be preferable to all other alternatives. Although owners of lands adjacent to the Corridor are concerned that trespass problems would result from opening the Corridor to recreational trail uses, with proper management and sufficient law enforcement presence, trespass problems would not be significant. However, because the alternative would either postpone or prevent rail reactivation, the alternative would be strongly opposed by rail advocates and perhaps a large proportion of the general public.

Other factors have a bearing on the analysis of this alternative. From the perspective of use, it is difficult to objectively compare rail and trail potential with enough certainty to decide that one type of use should take precedence over the other. In this case, it should not be assumed that the Corridor is so important for recreational trail purposes that the elimination of the Corridor's rail potential would be justified. While the Corridor has been identified as an important snowmobile trail, it is not certain how popular it would be for other trail uses.

Most railroad corridors which are the subjects of recreational trail planning efforts have been abandoned as railroads, and decisions about use are not complicated by considerations of rail use potential. In the case of the Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor however, rail use remains in the eyes of many not only the most appropriate use of a facility originally created as a railroad, but a viable use with a real potential to provide recreational, educational, and economic benefits.

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In addition it is important to consider that, while rail reactivation on the Corridor would displace trail uses from the rail bed, it would not necessarily eliminate them from the Corridor. On suitable Corridor segments a recreational trail constructed within the bounds of the Corridor but off the rail bed, possibly linking with off-Corridor trail segments, could accommodate trail users at the same time trains were occupying the rails. And because anticipated rail services would most likely not involve winter operations, snowmobile use would continue to be allowed on the rail bed. Clearly then, this important winter trail use would remain viable without a parallel trail.

In short, effective recreational trail use of the Corridor would not depend upon the elimination of rail operations.

### Conclusion

WHILE RECREATIONAL TRAIL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A MAJOR GOAL OF CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT, TRAIL USES SHOULD BE ACCOMMODATED WITHOUT ELIMINATING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE IMMEDIATE DEVELOPMENT OF RAIL OPERATIONS.

## **5. DIVIDE THE CORRIDOR INTO RAIL/TRAIL AND TRAIL-ONLY SEGMENTS**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE 5**

The Corridor would be retained in its present uninterrupted form from Remsen to Lake Placid. The Corridor would be divided into three segments, one on each end which would continue to be open to rail uses and one in the interior from which rail uses would be excluded. The termini of the rail segments given here were chosen in recognition of the need to allow rail excursion services in the Thendara and Lake Placid areas to have the flexibility required for full development.

Segment 1: Rail with trail

Segment 2: Trail, no rail

Segment 3: Rail with trail

The entire length of the Corridor would retain its "travel corridor" designation in order to maintain its integrity as a long-distance trunk trail and to preserve the possibility of reactivating it for travel purposes should the need arise at some time in the future.

a. Rail with Compatible Trail Uses

Segment 1: From Snow Junction to the end of the causeway over the Stillwater Reservoir at Beaver River: 50 miles.

Segment 3: From the bridge over the Raquette River at the village of Tupper Lake to the end of the line at Lake Placid: 36 miles.

Physical

Segments 1 and 3 would be developed and maintained under the same guidelines given for the preferred alternative (see page 15.)

Operational

Segments 1 and 3 would be managed in accordance with the same direction given for the preferred alternative (see page 15.)

b. Trail Use Only, All Rail Use Excluded

Segment 2: From the end of the causeway over the Stillwater Reservoir at Beaver River to the bridge over the Raquette River at the village of Tupper Lake: 33 miles.

Physical

Segment 2 would be developed and maintained under the same guidelines given for alternative 4. b., Future Rail Options Eliminated - Remove the Rails and Ties (see page 131.)

Operational

Segment 2 would be managed in accordance with the same direction given for alternative 4. b. (see page 129), with an additional consideration. Although it is thought desirable to retain the "travel corridor" classification for segment 2 in recognition of its importance as a snowmobile trunk trail, it would be possible to rescind the "travel corridor" classification for the interior segment in order to remove it as an obstacle to Forest Preserve consolidation. Under this version of the alternative, snowmobiles could be prohibited on parts of segment 2.

Principal Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts

The retention of the "travel corridor" classification would prevent the consolidation of existing Forest Preserve lands and the potential reclassification of some Forest

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Preserve lands to wilderness. While the elimination of rail use and rail facilities from the interior segment would make the Corridor more compatible with surrounding Forest Preserve lands, the noise from the passage of snowmobiles could affect the sense of remoteness available in nearby wilderness and primitive areas. Trail uses on the Corridor could lead to problems associated with trespass onto adjacent private lands and use-related impacts on nearby Forest Preserve lands and waters. Corridor construction and maintenance activities could affect streams, wetlands and wildlife.

The operation of tourist excursion rail services on segments 1 and 3 could lead to regional economic growth and increased recreational opportunity. Some traffic congestion would occur in affected hamlet areas. The range and magnitude of rail development impacts on the rail segments would be similar to those detailed in the description of the preferred alternative. However in this alternative the noise and visual impacts of rail use would not affect the remote interior segment of the Corridor. The environmental impacts associated with this alternative would not be severe and could largely be mitigated.

### Costs and Revenues

#### (1) Rail Service Options

The following is an estimate of the range of costs and revenues for the development of the types of rail services which might be initiated within Corridor segments 1 and 3. The estimate was prepared by NYSDOT with reference to a 1990 report prepared for ANCA by Northwest Engineering, Inc. As described below, the rail service development schemes for these segments correspond to rail service options II and III, presented in Appendix 22. A brief description of each option is provided here for convenience. It is important to note that these options reflect a range from minimal initial service to fully developed services over the full length of the described rail segments.

OPTION II - REHABILITATE TRACKAGE BETWEEN THE NDARA AND BEAVER RIVER (25.3 MILES) AND BETWEEN TUPPER LAKE AND LAKE PLACID (35.5 MILES), A TOTAL LENGTH OF 60.8 MILES. UPGRADE TRACKAGE TO A LEVEL SUFFICIENT TO PERMIT SAFE OPERATION OF PASSENGER SERVICES AT 40 MPH AND FREIGHT SERVICES AT 30 MPH (FRA CLASS II). OPERATE TOURIST SERVICES ONLY.



OPTION III - REHABILITATE TRACKAGE BETWEEN REMSEN AND BEAVER RIVER, A LENGTH OF 50 MILES. UPGRADE TRACKAGE TO A LEVEL SUFFICIENT TO PERMIT SAFE OPERATION OF PASSENGER SERVICES AT 40 MPH AND FREIGHT SERVICES AT 30 MPH (FRA CLASS II). OPERATE ON-DEMAND FREIGHT AND TOURIST SERVICES.

**TABLE IV - Costs and Revenues for Options II and III**

Option	Capital Costs		Operating Revenues	Operating Costs	Net Income/ (Loss)
	Rehabilitation	Equipment			
II	\$7,100,000 to 7,800,000	\$ 840,000	\$ 868,000 to 1,300,000	\$ 768,000	\$ 100,000 to 668,000
III	\$4,900,000	\$1,020,000	\$ 524,000 to 800,000	\$ 781,000	\$ (257,000) to 19,000

Fully mature operation was assumed in generating projected cost and revenue figures. As seen in the "Net Income/Loss" column of the table, projected revenues could cover operating costs, but probably would not be sufficient to repay capital costs. It is possible that the railroad would require an operating subsidy during the start-up period.

The 1994 report, Economic Analysis of the Remsen-Lake Placid Railroad Operation, prepared for ANCA by FSI, proposed a staged development plan for the Corridor. The first two stages presented for analysis, which generally correspond to Option II, were:

- (a) Expand the Thendara excursion operation to the station at Big Moose. Upgrade trackage to FRA Class II.
- (b) Establish an excursion operation between the Lake Placid and Saranac Lake stations. Upgrade trackage to FRA Class II.

Estimates from the FSI report of track rehabilitation costs and net operating revenues for the two excursion stages are given in Table V.

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**TABLE V. Track Upgrading Costs and Projected Revenues for Corridor Segments  
(From Exhibit 1, FSI Report)**

Start-Up Year	Option	Track Upgrading Cost	Net Operating Revenue (In \$000s)				
			1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
1992	A. Thendara-Minnehaha	None	74	77	78	79	80
1995	B. Big Moose Expansion	\$ 945,000	(16)	15	37	59	69
1996	C. Lake Placid-Saranac Lake Excursion and Dinner Train	\$1,308,000	--	(82)	42	116	274
	Both Short Distance Excursions (B & C)	\$2,254,000	(16)	(67)	79	175	443

The cost of upgrading the line between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid includes approximately \$417,000 to upgrade the segment between Remsen and Saranac Lake. That would be the minimum cost of elevating the condition of the track sufficiently to allow the safe passage of locomotives and rail cars to the north end of the line. However, in keeping with the key provision of this alternative--that the rails and ties be removed from the central segment of the Corridor, such an expense would have to be considered a one-time cost of delivering rolling stock. Despite its high cost, such a measure might prove to be the only feasible means of transporting a large locomotive to the Lake Placid area.

Because different Corridor segments were chosen for analysis, the estimates of the costs of track rehabilitation made by Northwest Engineering, Inc. and FSI are not directly comparable. However, the Northwest Engineering estimates are generally much higher than those given by FSI. The difference, as explained in the FSI report, is that the Northwest Engineering estimate referred to a "full rebuilding" of the restored segments, while FSI considered only the costs of the minimum amount of work that would be required to achieve FRA Class II safety standards.

Under the FSI approach, the condition of the track after the initial upgrade would not far exceed the target FRA class standards. As a consequence, an operator would have to show a high level of commitment to maintenance from the outset in order to assure that the track would continue to be in compliance with safety standards.

The basic conclusions of the FSI report largely corroborated those of the planning team. FSI shared the view that, while profits would not be sufficient to recover the initial costs of track rehabilitation, both the Thendara and Lake Placid excursion operations could be profitable. The consultant differed, however, in the endpoints chosen for the two segments. Citing the lack of sufficient passenger and freight markets and the relative inefficiency of longer excursion runs, FSI did not recommend extending the Thendara segment beyond Big Moose to Beaver River, nor going from Lake Placid beyond Saranac Lake to Tupper Lake.

Option III was proposed by the planning team as a way to link the area between Beaver River and Thendara with the Conrail system in Utica. Such a link would provide an opportunity for passenger and freight services to develop along the southern end of the line. However it was the opinion of the team that, while a rail developer would benefit by taking advantage of freight service opportunities once the line had been rehabilitated for passenger service, the potential demand for freight service was much less than sufficient to justify an investment in track rehabilitation with the sole purpose of establishing freight service. This conclusion was supported by the FSI report.

## 2. Recreational Trail Uses

### Segments 1 and 3

On those portions of the rail segments which would be temporarily unoccupied by rail service, costs would be incurred for the construction which would be done to improve that portion for trail use, including the construction of bridges at washouts and the installation of deck planking and safety rails on existing railroad bridges.

On those portions of the rail segments where trains would be running, trail uses would have to be moved from the rail bed to a parallel trail. The cost of parallel trail construction would depend on the type of work to be done, which most often would include tree cutting and grading.

Detailed cost estimates for given Corridor segments would require close examination of the terrain through which the trail would run. Northwest Engineering, Inc. has provided estimates for parallel trail construction along the entire Corridor and has broken down the total into costs for the three key segments of the Corridor, two of which would apply under this alternative (See Appendix 23).

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**Total Trail Construction Costs For:**

**Snow Junction to Thendara and  
Saranac Lake to Lake Placid (39 miles): \$ 860,000**  
(Approx. \$22,000/mile)

**Thendara to Beaver River and  
Tupper Lake to Saranac Lake (45 miles): \$ 920,000**  
(Approx. \$20,000/mile)

**Total for segments 1 and 3: \$1,780,000**

These estimates include the cost of spanning the extensive wetland which are adjacent to the Corridor in many areas. The monetary cost of constructing a trail across extensive wetland areas would be exceedingly high. The added consideration of the environmental cost associated with the loss of wetland area which would result from such a project has led to a determination **not to promote the placement of fill as a method of constructing parallel trails**. Estimates of the costs of trail construction in wetlands are given in the description of the preferred alternative (see pp. 28).

Segment 2

On the interior trail segment of the Corridor, the same types of construction would be done to improve the Corridor for trail use as for alternative 4. b. (see page 131), as well as details given for alternative 4.a., (see page 127.) Differences are noted below.

a. Bridges at Washouts

There are five washouts within segment 2 which would require bridges. Arbitrarily assuming that the typical situation would require a 30-foot bridge, the total cost of bridges on segment 2 would be:

Typical bridge span: 30 feet  
Cost of 30-foot bridge: \$5,000-7,000  
Number of bridges needed: 5  
Total cost of bridges: **\$27,000-35,000**

b. Deck Planking and Safety Rails on Existing Railroad Bridges

Only two major railroad bridges lie between the Stillwater Reservoir causeway and the through-truss bridge over the Raquette River at Tupper Lake.

Mile Post	Bridge Description*	Estimated Cost of Improvement
H 81.9	93-foot two-span through girder	\$1,500-2,200
H 98.5	48-foot through girder	800-1,200
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$2,300-3,400</b>

\* Through girder bridges do not require safety rails

c. Paving the Rail Bed

If the trail segment were to be devoted to use by touring bicycles, the cost of paving the trail surface would be added.

Trail Width	Cost Per Mile (Landrio, 1992)			Total Cost for Segment 2 (34 mi.)
	Gravel and Grading	Asphalt	Total	
8 feet	\$5,000	\$14,000	\$19,000	\$646,000

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.

d. Staffing

Additional DEC law enforcement staff would be hired, along with a trail crew with responsibilities for the entire Corridor (see page 131.)

e. Salvage

Revenue could be realized through the salvage of the rails within segment 2. While the State would receive little or no revenue if the rails and associated hardware on the interior segment were sold as scrap iron, a net revenue of up to \$1 million could be realized if the rails were purchased to be re-laid on another railroad.

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Subtracted from this would be a cost of approximately \$107,000 to remove the ties (Landrio, personal contact 1992). Nevertheless, it is unlikely that a buyer interested in a substantial amount of Corridor rail for relay purposes could be found at any given time.

### **Regional Economic Impacts for Alternative 5**

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. In general, the economic benefits to the regional economy that would result from this alternative would be less than full-length rail development would confer. A brief assessment of the anticipated impacts follows:

#### **1. Rail Rehabilitation and Parallel Trail Construction**

According to the estimates of Northwest Engineering, expenditures for rail rehabilitation on segments 1 and 3 would range from \$4.9 million to \$7.8 million over several years and could generate 150 to 240 jobs during the life of the project. Up to \$1.8 million would be spent for parallel trail construction, generating another 54 jobs. Partly because shorter segments were proposed for rehabilitation, the estimates of expenditures for rail rehabilitation given in the FSI report were more modest, ranging from \$945,000 to \$2,254,000. FSI predicted that 26 one-time railroad construction jobs would be created.

Depending on the level to which segment 2 were improved for trail uses, a substantial additional amount would be spent for trail construction on the interior segment. The regional economic impact could range from a very small portion of total expenditures if contractors from outside the region were used, to perhaps half the total expenditures if local contractors were to participate in the work.

#### **2. Operation of Rail Services and Trail Maintenance**

The FSI report projected the creation of 44 jobs directly related to the operation of excursion services on the Thendara-Big Moose and Lake Placid-Saranac Lake segments by the end of a five-year development period. Most of the jobs would be seasonal. The consultant did not indicate that any jobs would be created as a result of the establishment of freight services. The extension of DEC trail maintenance responsibilities

to the Corridor would require that up to 4 full-time jobs be created with a total of \$90,000 in salaries and benefits.

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### **3. Tourism**

The increase in regional tourism which would result from the development of excursion services in the Thendara and Lake Placid areas would be substantial (see discussion under preferred alternative, page 30. In the Northwest Engineering report, the maximum projected rail ridership associated with the development of tourist excursion services at each end of the line was estimated at about 120,000 annually (see Appendix 23.)

The FSI report was more optimistic, projecting a total for both excursions of almost 177,000 per year by 1999. FSI also gave estimates of the number of jobs that would be created in the Corridor region as a result of the establishment of rail services on selected Corridor segments. According to the report, the development of excursion services in the Thendara and Lake Placid areas would ultimately result in the creation of up to 47 jobs in retail, restaurant, and hotel businesses throughout the region.

Though the increase in regional tourism that would result from the development of segmented excursion services would be significant, the full potential of the Corridor would not be realized under this alternative, according to FSI (see discussion of full-length service, (see page 29.)

### **ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE 5**

Because it is widely believed that there is more potential on the Corridor for tourist-related rail enterprises to be profitable than for a traditional passenger and freight business, alternative 5 would concentrate on the development of excursion services on the segments of the Corridor where existing tourist attractions and services could benefit and be benefitted by tourist rail development. The establishment of 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 back country otherwise. From the standpoint of access for the general public, alternative 5 would be preferable to alternative 4. In terms of economic benefits, alternative 5 would be superior to all of the previous alternatives. Benefits to the State in the form of revenue from lease agreements and sales taxes generated by increased economic activity in Corridor communities would also exceed the levels anticipated under the previous alternatives. The State would share liability for Corridor uses with rail developers.



On the other hand, the development of excursion rail services would lead to increases in summer and fall tourist populations and associated traffic congestion in affected hamlets. The partial dismantling of the Corridor would compromise its integrity as a historic resource.

Although it is acknowledged that there would be some demand for rail use of the interior segment for more extensive tourist excursions, the abandonment of that segment would be pursued under the assumption that its importance for environmentally compatible recreational trail uses and Forest Preserve values would exceed its importance for rail development. It would be possible to retain the tracks long enough to allow rolling stock to be transported to the Lake Placid area from the south. Once the tracks had been removed, the interior segment would be in optimum condition for trail uses. On the rail segments, trail opportunities would exist on parallel trails and, during the winter, on the rail bed. The elimination of rail activity and the removal of the rails and ties would allow the central segment to be managed for more intensive recreational trail use than would be possible under the preferred alternative. In this way alternative 5 would represent a workable compromise whereby rail development would be allowed on two segments where it would be viable, while trail uses would be encouraged where they would enhance existing opportunities on adjacent Forest Preserve lands.

As part of this alternative, it is recommended that the "travel corridor" classification be retained on the interior segment in order to assure that the integrity of the Corridor be maintained for future travel needs and current recreational uses. As mentioned in the discussion of alternative 4, there is strong 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. Nevertheless, another perspective merits consideration. The removal of the travel corridor classification from the central segment would clear the way for the elimination of motorized vehicle use and the consolidation of Forest Preserve lands in the area of the Corridor where wilderness values are greatest. Therefore, the conversion of the central segment to appropriate Forest Preserve classifications would be strongly supported by those who favor wilderness consolidation. It is important to note, however, that motorized vehicle use could be eliminated from parts of the Corridor without removing the travel corridor classification.

Because it could lead to full rail development with concurrent trail uses on 86 miles of the 119-mile Corridor and provide unique recreational trail opportunities on the remote interior segment, alternative 5 would go a long way toward realizing the Corridor's potential. However, the alternative would not afford an opportunity for the full development of that potential. Although it is difficult to predict to what extent private enterprise would succeed in developing the local and long-distance rail service possibilities of the Corridor, it is certain that the immediate elimination of future rail use in any segment

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of the Corridor would permanently prevent such development and isolate the segments to the north from outside rail connections. Rail experts have given evidence to support the belief that rail operations using the entire length of the Corridor would be feasible. It is also important to remember that, while the devotion of the interior segment to trail uses in the manner contemplated by alternative 5 would eliminate rail uses, the occupancy of a rail segment by trains would not necessarily exclude trail uses, as noted in the discussion of alternative 4.

Finally, if tourist excursions of relatively short duration should prove to be the only rail uses destined to succeed on the Corridor, alternative 5 would be effectively realized at some future time as a result of the natural evolution of Corridor development, even though the full-rail alternative had been implemented. But should full rail development be precluded by a decision to make any Corridor segment unavailable for rail uses now, such a decision would prevent the attainment of the Corridor's potential for maximum economic, recreational and educational benefits.

### Conclusion

**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.**

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## **6. PERMIT RAIL USES OVER THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR - ENCOURAGE COMPATIBLE RECREATIONAL TRAIL USES**

### Description of Alternative 6

**This is the preferred alternative.** (See Section V.B.)

### Analysis of Alternative 6

By providing an opportunity for the full development of the Corridor's rail potential, alternative 6 will afford the widest array of benefits to the people of New York State and the Corridor region. Of all the alternatives analyzed, this alternative has the greatest economic impact on the communities of the western Adirondacks, both in terms of jobs created and income generated. Besides the potential increase in economic benefits to local tourist operations, making the full length of the Corridor available for more extensive excursion, passenger, and freight services will give rail operators more flexibility

to develop those services, both within the Corridor and in connection with other rail systems. Consequently, in comparison with alternative 5, larger numbers of people could gain access, with limited environmental impact, to more of the scenic open space and recreational resources of the Adirondack Forest Preserve. For the physically challenged, the elderly and others who have no other means to observe and explore the Corridor area, alternative 6 will maximize their access and educational opportunities. Therefore, although the Corridor will be less available for use as a recreational trail than it would be under alternatives 4 and 5, its value as an avenue for recreational excursions into the Adirondack landscape will be maximized.

Alternative 6 has a number of other advantages. The State will receive more revenue than the other alternatives would produce, both directly in the fees collected from rail operators and indirectly through taxes collected as a result of the increased economic activity enjoyed by tourist-related businesses. Because the entire Corridor will be maintained and operated as a railroad, its value as a historic structure will be most fully protected by this alternative. Corridor liability will be shared with rail developers, as in alternative 5. Because parallel trails will not be constructed across wetlands, and the rail bed will be monitored to assure that washouts are prevented, the potential impacts associated with construction and maintenance activities that will result from the implementation of this alternative will be less severe than those caused by the other alternatives.

On the other hand, alternative 6 will require more substantial funding than the other alternatives. Because trains will occasionally pass through the central segment of the Corridor, there will be noise and visual impacts on nearby private and Forest Preserve lands that would not occur under the other alternatives. However, regarded in the context of the Corridor's long operation as a railroad, such impacts would not be unacceptable. Compared to alternative 5, the increases in summer and fall tourist populations and traffic congestion in Corridor communities that would be caused by the establishment of full rail services could be slightly greater.

While full rail restoration will prevent the consolidation of surrounding Forest Preserve lands under a single classification and the potential reclassification of some existing Preserve lands to wilderness, it will be possible to manage the existing patchwork of private and Forest Preserve lands on either side of the Corridor for a combination of wilderness, wildlife, forest products and other open space values.

Among the alternatives presented, alternative 6 has received the strongest support from the public and a wide range of interest groups. Even ardent trail advocates have expressed interest in seeing viable rail services restored to the Corridor. Support for the return of the railroad has been qualified by the concern that rail development may no longer be feasible on the Corridor. The question of feasibility has been a subject

## **-| CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES -|**

of controversy throughout the planning process. One strong indication of the potential for the successful development of tourist rail operations is the Adirondack Scenic Railroad. The unexpected success of this venture has already attracted the attention of a number of prospective investors interested in continuing and expanding the operation. It is recognized, however, that this four-mile operation, conducted by a nonprofit organization staffed mostly by volunteers, might not be a fair test of operating feasibility.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION REGARDING THE RAIL POTENTIAL OF THE CORRIDOR MAY RELATE TO THE ISSUE OF SEGMENTATION. BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF PREDICTING THE EXTENT TO WHICH DIFFERENT TYPES OF RAIL OPERATIONS MIGHT EVOLVE, IT WOULD APPEAR INADVISABLE AT THIS TIME TO MAKE A PERMANENT MANAGEMENT DECISION TO ELIMINATE RAIL POTENTIAL FROM ANY CORRIDOR SEGMENT. BESIDES ELIMINATING ENTIRELY CERTAIN TYPES OF RAIL OPERATIONS, SUCH A DECISION COULD COMPROMISE THE POTENTIAL FOR THE FULL DEVELOPMENT OF RAIL SERVICES ON THOSE SEGMENTS REMAINING OPEN TO THEM. INSTEAD, THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A PRACTICAL TEST OF THE CORRIDOR'S TRUE POTENTIAL WILL BE PROVIDED BY ALLOWING RAIL OPERATIONS TO DEVELOP OVER THE FULL LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR, AND BY ACTIVELY PROMOTING THE ATTAINMENT OF FULL RAIL AND TRAIL DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

### Conclusion

**BECAUSE THE FULL REALIZATION OF THE CORRIDOR'S RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE AND THE CORRIDOR REGION, RAIL USES SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO EXPAND OVER THE FULL LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR WHILE ALL COMPATIBLE RECREATIONAL TRAIL USES ARE ACCOMMODATED AND ENCOURAGED.**

**THIS IS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.**



**Image Not  
Available**

**LAKE PLACID STATION...circa 1992  
...The End**



## **XVI. GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

ADCR	Adirondack Centennial Railroad
ADCX	Adirondack Scenic Railroad
ANCA	Adirondack North Country Association
APA	Adirondack Park Agency
APSLMP	Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (provides legal guidance to DEC in managing Forest Preserve lands)
ARPS	Adirondack Railway Preservation Society
BMP	Bicycle Master Plan for the Adirondack North Country Region of New York State
ARC	Adirondack Railroad Corporation
ARHS	Adirondack Railway Historical Society
C of C	Chamber of Commerce
CAA	Central Adirondack Association
CAC	Citizens Advisory Committee
CNRHS	Central New York Railway Historical Society
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FP	Forest Preserve State owned (public) lands within the Adirondack Park
MA&N	Mohawk, Adirondack & Northern Railroad
NRHS	National Railway Historical Society
NYC	New York Central Railroad
NYSCG	New York Snowmobile Coordinating Group
NYSDEC or DEC	New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation
NYSDED or DED	New York State Dept. of Economic Development
NYSDOT or DOT	New York State Dept. of Transportation
NYSOPRHP or OPRHP	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
ORDA	Olympic Regional Development Authority
PCRR	Penn Central Railroad
PLANNING TEAM	The committee of NYSDOT, NYSDEC and APA (representatives working as a team to develop the Corridor Management Plan.)
R.O.W	Right-of-way
RLPCMP/EIS	Remsen-Lake Placid Corridor Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement
RR	Railroad
SEQR	State Environmental Quality Review Act





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