



44 CENTRAL AVENUE  
ALBANY, NY 12206-3002  
518-462-5658  
FAX 518-462-5684  
WWW.PRESERVENYS.ORG

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November 7, 2014

Raymond F. Hessinger, Director  
NYS Travel Corridor  
NYS DOT Freight and Passenger Rail Bureau  
50 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12232

Re: New York Central Railroad Adirondack Division Historic District

Dear Mr. Hessinger,

I write on behalf of the Preservation League of New York State to express our support for the preservation of the New York Central Railroad Adirondack Division National Register Historic District in Adirondack Park.

The 1996 Remsen Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan addresses treatment of this National Register-designated historic resource. We understand the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) are considering an amendment to that UMP, which calls for keeping the existing railroad tracks in place, with a system of trails winding inside and outside the corridor.

The Adirondack Recreational Trail Advocates are promoting a plan to eliminate the railroad tracks along this National Register Historic District, creating a recreational trail along the old track bed from Lake Placid to Old Forge. The railroad tracks are a contributing feature of the National Register Historic District.

The Trails With Rails Action Committee has proposed a multi-use trail within this railroad corridor, while keeping the railroad tracks in place for ongoing train use. This plan is in-keeping with the existing Remsen Lake Placid Travel Corridor UMP and preserves the railroad tracks.

We encourage NYS DOT and NYS DEC to follow NYS Regulation Section 14.09 Part 428, regarding State Agency Activities Affecting Historic or Cultural Properties (<http://nysparks.com/shpo/environmental-review/state-regulations.aspx?p=428>). Revision of the UMP to allow for destruction of the railroad tracks in New York Central Railroad Adirondack Division National Register Historic District would mandate a review under this Section 14.09 as the action would cause an adverse change to the *“quality of ... registered property in the project impact area. For purposes of this Part a change includes but is not limited to; ... any action which might lead to the destruction or alteration of all or part of the property.”*

Section 428.8 of NYS Section 14.09 states that, *“To the fullest extent possible it is the duty of every State agency to avoid or mitigate the adverse impacts of its undertakings on eligible or registered properties. To protect these irreplaceable assets and meet their legal obligations, agencies must make every effort to reconcile their programs with the public policy of the State regarding historic preservation by finding a feasible and prudent means*

*to avoid or mitigate any adverse impact of the undertaking identified by the commissioner.”*

Currently, the Adirondack Scenic Railroad operates between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake, bringing tourists and economic benefits to those two communities. This operating railroad needs use of the tracks from Saranac Lake to Tupper Lake as well. Allowing the Adirondack Scenic Railroad to remain in operation is a clear prudent and feasible alternative to the railroad track destruction sought by Adirondack Recreational Trail Advocates.

We support the Trails With Rails Action Committee’s proposed multi-use recreational corridor and urge NYS DOT and DEC to follow the NYS preservation regulations and preserve the railroad tracks within the New York Central Railroad Adirondack Division National Register Historic District.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 518-462-5658 with any questions concerning this letter.

Sincerely,



Jay A. DiLorenzo  
President

cc: Steven Engelhart, Executive Director, Adirondack Architectural Heritage  
Amy Catania, Executive Director, Historic Saranac Lake