

TRAILS and RAILS

The win-win solution

The Trails with Rails Action Committee proposes to preserve the rails, save train service, and promote a park-wide trail system. This is a win-win solution that holds the most economic promise for Saranac Lake and the greater region.

Why preserve the rails?

- The rail infrastructure is a valuable economic asset with potential as yet not fully realized.
- The rail infrastructure is a valuable transportation asset that once removed will never be replaced.
- The 118 miles of rail line, from Remsen to Lake Placid are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The New York Central Railroad Adirondack Division Historic District encompasses 23 buildings and 18 structures, including the tracks and ties. As a National Register property, the Adirondack Railroad receives protection from the effects of federal and or state agency sponsored, licensed or assisted projects.

Why support train service?

- Train service provides options for recreation activities, as well as economic development, to residents and visitors alike of all ages and conditions, all along the corridor.
- The railroad is an existing operation that generates business in the region. Lake Placid Mayor Craig Randall declined to vote against it for that reason.
- The railroad delivers customers to businesses in Saranac Lake. Saranac Lake Mayor Clyde Rabideau and many local businesses have noted the influx of customers when the train arrives.
- The rail system can coexist with an augmented the trail network park-wide as well as in the corridor. This is a win-win achievable within a comparatively short time.

Why support a combined rail and trail system rather than a 'trail only' system?

The trails we propose have a number of strengths:

- They will be just as wide if not wider than the proposed "rail-trail"
- They are more attractive by not being just one straight shot from point a to b.
- They are more easily accessible and usable by being connected to the rail system
- They allow for the continuation of rail service, which is historically and economically important.
- They will be quicker to implement, and can begin to be developed now. We estimate costs to be cheaper than the proposed rail-trail. With the rails in place, the train can be used to help build the adjacent trail, critical in road-less, remote areas. Converting the tracks to a rail trail will be expensive and involve long time delays due to historic listing, disposal regulations, abandonment proceedings, and cost of demolition and construction.