



**Built to Lead**

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GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

**GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES PLAN TO CREATE 119-MILE TRAVEL CORRIDOR TO BOOST TOURISM BETWEEN REMSEN AND LAKE PLACID**

***Plan is part of long-term strategy to create multi-use recreation trails and scenic railways***

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the final plan to govern the use of the 119-mile travel corridor from Remsen to Lake Placid. The final plan, signed by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Transportation will maximize the use and economic benefits of the corridor. The state will also immediately invest in the implementation of the plan, including \$15 million to upgrade the rail line between Big Moose and Tupper Lake and \$8 million to build a multi-use trail between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid. The rail line will be rehabilitated and the trail will be built within the next three years.

“From Tupper Lake to Lake Placid, the Adirondacks is home to unparalleled natural beauty, and today we are building on what makes this region so special,” **Governor Cuomo said.** “By rehabilitating the railway and building a scenic trail, we are better utilizing the corridor and its surrounding lands to create more economic and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. I am proud the state is moving forward on this important project and this is yet another example of our commitment to ensuring the Adirondacks remain a first-class tourism destination for generations to come.”

The funds committed to implement the final plan will enable the scenic railroad to expand continuous operations for 45 miles on fully restored rails. Additionally, the plan calls for a longer-term lease for the scenic railroad operator. The scenic railway will continue operations on the Tupper Lake to Lake Placid segment through November 2016. The removal of the tracks and the development of the 34-mile community connector trail will begin after November 2016.

“We commend the Adirondack Park Agency Board for determining that this proposal is compliant with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, and are excited to release this final Unit Management Plan amendment,” **said DEC Acting Commissioner Seggos.** “This is a unique public land resource that will afford New Yorkers and visitors many new and thrilling recreational opportunities in the Adirondack region.”

“This proposal will strengthen the existing excursion railroad from Utica and extend its operation to Tupper Lake—a distance of more than 100 miles,” **said DOT Commissioner Driscoll.** “At the same time, we will work to mitigate impacts and to

preserve the character of communities along the rail corridor.

The plan will strengthen connections to the communities, Forest Preserve, and conservation easement lands along the Corridor to fully optimize regional economic development benefits. The array of enhanced outdoor recreation opportunities will be accessible from the train and from the long distance multi-use recreation trail.

“We thank Governor Cuomo for his leadership and commend our colleagues at the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Transportation for preparing a comprehensive travel corridor plan,” **said Adirondack Park Agency Chairwoman Leilani Ulrich.** “This plan represents over two years of extensive public outreach and regional planning. It maximizes public recreational opportunities in a way that minimizes environmental impacts. The Adirondacks benefit immensely when we come together and find solutions which result in the greatest possible good for the greatest number of individuals.”

“This long-distance, multi-use recreation trail between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake will complement our facilities like no other here in the Olympic Region,” **said Ted Blazer, President and Chief Executive Officer of Olympic Regional Development Authority.** “Families, elderly people and a wide range of outdoor enthusiasts will be able to safely and easily bike, walk or ski between the Tri-lake communities. The trail will not only provide economic growth for the region, but can also be used to educate users about the history and culture of the communities and the corridor. Those using the trail will also observe and learn about the wonders of the Adirondack Forest Preserve.”

Other actions called for in the 2016 Unit Management Plan Amendment include:

- Providing for snowmobile use, under permit by DOT, to continue along the entire length of the Corridor, starting December 1 of each year;
- Developing snowmobile community connector trails between Tupper Lake and Old Forge on Forest Preserve and conservation easement lands;
- Encouraging the development of snowmobile trails that connect with existing trail systems on the Tug Hill and Western Adirondacks;
- Bolstering the recreation-connectivity along the Corridor;
- Link Lake Lila to active rail Corridor;
- Establishing railway stops in adjacent communities for visitors and recreationists;
- Constructing snowmobile trails connecting adjacent communities with the local system; and
- Evaluating and possibly develop Hut-to-Hut cross-country ski trail between Beaver River and Horseshoe Lake; and
- Continuing consultations with the State Historic Preservation Office to examine mitigation measures to address the impacts of removing the rails with regards to the Corridors listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The preferred alternative of the 1996 Unit Management Plan which governs the use of the 119-mile Remsen-Lake to Placid Travel Corridor called for rail use to be developed

along the entire length of the Corridor and encouraged the development of a parallel trail where feasible. However, in recent years many individuals, recreation groups, and municipalities along the corridor expressed an interest in re-examining the Unit Management Plan and evaluating the development of a long distance multi-use recreation trail. At the same time, the attempt to develop a trail parallel to the rail between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake was determined to be infeasible, as it would necessitate excessive disturbance of sensitive wetlands.

In 2013, DEC and DOT sought public input to re-assess the best future uses of the Corridor. After further evaluation, DEC and DOT in 2015 provided a draft Unit Management Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement for public review and comment, which proposed converting the segment of the corridor between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake into a long distance multi-use recreation trail. It also proposed improving the railway between Big Moose and Tupper Lake to provide for a scenic railway between Utica and the Tri-Lakes area.

During the nearly three year public review process, DEC and DOT held ten public meetings in communities from Lake Placid to Utica, met with numerous stakeholders, received thousands of comments and undertook a number of studies. This process demonstrated strong local support for a long distance, flat, wide, multi-use recreation trail in the northern segment of the corridor, and the scenic railway in the southern segment.

Based on public input and expert evaluations, DEC and DOT determined the optimal use of the Corridor in the final Unit Management Plan will benefit the local economies of communities along the Corridor, provide superb recreation opportunities on the Corridor and protect the natural resources of adjacent Forest Preserve and private lands.

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