

Lake Placid–Saranac Lake Recreation Pathway – 2007 Update

For many years residents of Lake Placid and Saranac Lake have talked about building a pathway to connect their two communities. The New York State-owned railroad corridor, 100 feet wide and managed for developed recreational use, provides an opportunity to bring that dream to reality.

The Town of North Elba and the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) began working on the pathway project in 2001. In 2002 the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) awarded \$796,575 to the Town of North Elba to build the first stage of the pathway beside the railroad tracks between Old Military Road in Lake Placid and the Scarface trail in Ray Brook. Stage 2 of the project, continuing the path on into Saranac Lake, received \$1.4 million in DOT funding in 2007.



Cost estimates indicate the total DOT funding will cover about 60 percent – or \$2.25 million – of the projected \$3.7 million cost to build a paved pathway ten feet wide linking Lake Placid and Saranac Lake. The remainder of the cost will need to be raised through local fund-raising efforts, supplemented with grant funding when possible. ANCA is committed to assisting the Town of North Elba in collecting the necessary funds for linking the two communities with a pathway.

Full-time and part-time residents, vacationers, and athletes can all contribute to bringing the two communities closer together. Foot by foot, mile by mile, every dollar that is donated moves the pathway further down the corridor.



All interested state and federal agencies have agreed on many of the particular details involved with the siting and construction of a nine-mile pathway next to a railroad line seasonally used by a tourist train. In 2007 a permit application for Stage 1 will be submitted to the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) for approval.

Following is a summary of the pathway design characteristics of most interest.

- Distance from the Rails: NYSDOT manages the railroad corridor and has determined that nine feet is the preferred minimum distance from the edge of the pathway to the closest rail for clear passage of trains. The pathway will be at least twelve feet from the rails on average except where wetlands and other considerations require it to be closer.



- Fencing: Vegetative barriers are preferable to fencing. A short post and cable fence will be installed near road and rail crossings to help mark the public use area.



- Width and Surface: A paved width of ten feet will accommodate a variety of recreational uses as well as facilitate handicapped access and allow for the passage of an emergency vehicle.
- Wetlands: The pathway is designed to avoid or minimize wetland impacts to the greatest extent possible; however, construction of the pathway will affect some wetland areas in the corridor. The project's wetland mitigation plan describes wetland improvements that will be completed around the Lake Placid snow dump area adjacent to the Chubb River.



Through a formal agreement with the Town of North Elba, ANCA manages a restricted fund for the Pathway project. Chuck Damp is fundraising chairperson. All donation checks made out to the

ANCA Pathway Project can be mailed to ANCA at 28 St. Bernard Street, Saranac Lake, NY 12983. Rick Preston is also collecting donations as part of the 2007 Ironman/Janus Charity Challenge.

Contact ANCA for more information at 518-891-6200, anca@northnet.org, or www.adirondack.org. Donation forms are available for download at bikeadirondacks.org/newtrails.html. Make donations online at www.januscharitychallenge.com until July 15 by searching on athlete Rick Preston or charity "ANCA" under **Make a Donation**.