

# FOREST PRESERVE DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

**Fiscal Year 2024**  
**Project # 2024-RB-010; CO 343**

<u>Region</u> 5	<u>Project Title</u> Adirondack Rail Trail Construction, Phase 3
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<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Town(s)</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Management Unit</u>
New Construction	Tupper Lake and Santa Clara	Franklin	Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor, Adirondack Rail Trail

Description of Desired Condition(s) for Project

Construction of the Adirondack Rail Trail - Phase 3:

Per the approved 2020 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan Amendment (UMP) and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) (page 25), a 10-foot-wide trail with a minimum 2.5-foot shoulder width on each side (total minimum cleared width of 15 feet) will be constructed between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid. The total distance of all phases of the trail will be 34 miles.

Construction of the Adirondack Rail Trail will be done in stages. As each stage is completed, that portion of trail will open to the public and be managed according to the 2020 UMP Amendment. See attached map for location of trails construction phases.

This work plan covers the third phase of rail trail construction, which includes the following activities:

Trail tread construction from Floodwood Road in the Town of Santa Clara to the jurisdictional line with the Department of Transportation (DOT) Railroad Corridor in Tupper Lake (approximately 8.1 miles).

The Adirondack Rail Trail will be designed to add a new, unique experience on the Forest Preserve. Unlike the more primitive trails that make up the majority of Forest Preserve opportunities, the rail trail utilizes an existing man-made corridor suitable for train travel and will be designed to accommodate larger numbers of people recreating simultaneously over a long distance. The Travel Corridor classification, combined with existing infrastructure which was designed to withstand heavy use and sustain a flat grade, provides a unique opportunity to allow a diverse array of recreational uses while minimizing new impacts to natural resources. Furthermore, the Adirondack Rail Trail in many locations runs parallel to other Forest Preserve classifications and a variety of natural settings, providing a great opportunity for education, interpretation, and appreciation of the Forest Preserve and the value of these resources.

Well-designed and strategically located parking and access are essential to maximizing the benefit of the Adirondack Rail Trail. Parking areas will be adjacent or in close proximity to major highways and/or populated places. Where possible, previously cleared and/or established parking areas will be utilized. Where tree cutting is required, they will be cut and dispersed in a manner to minimize visual impacts.

Terrain modifications and soil disturbance will be minimized, and the final parking area design will allow for safe ingress and egress from public highways, and safe pedestrian access to the trail.

Four major trail user groups were identified by the NYSDEC and Stakeholder Group which includes walkers, bicyclists (including Class I e-bikes), cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. The proposed trail and associated attributes and amenities shall be designed to best accommodate these four user groups.

### Description of Project Specifications

Phase III of this project will be completed along a section of the railbed which has been without consistent use since the 1908's. As a result, transitioning this section of abandoned railroad to a safe and sustainable travel corridor requires limited modifications to enable the finished trail to meet accessible trail standards with proper drainage. Additionally, as more fully described below,

As expected, the existing railbed is made up completely of fill (or ballast). Any modifications to the railbed will be altering a previously-disturbed landscape for the purpose of establishing a sustainable trail surface. With the possible exception of the rest areas, no terrain alteration will be occurring on native forest soil. The existing rail-bed in this phase will be resurfaced with crushed stone and finished with stone dust to provide a uniform, firm, and stable trail tread for trail users.

There are 10 locations where the finished grade of the trail surface must be raised by for a few hundred feet. The reason for the elevation changes is to install the trail subbase and the top course material in a manner which avoids long sections of flat trail. Long sections of flat trail without slight variations can hold rainwater which can form puddles and lead to erosion. These slight elevation changes allow for water to efficiently shed from the trail surface, thereby minimizing the erosion and damage to the trail surface. These variations are designed to maintain accessibility standards throughout the trail.

To provide a consistent trail width, some sections of the existing railbed may be lowered, while others may be built up using additional crushed stone. Fill will be used to stabilize side slopes (max slope steepness of 1:2). Fencing will be installed for safety where the slope is greater than or equal to 1:3 and a drop of 4 feet or more. If these conditions are present, but there is side trail vegetation that will act as a barrier, no fence will be installed.

All work will be done within the travel corridor. This will limit the impacts to the surrounding forest and focus all impact to historically cleared and manipulated terrain from the historic railroad footprint. Keeping impacts within the previously disturbed area minimizes impacts to the Forest Preserve while also providing the ability to construct a sustainable recreational facility.

### Description of Measures Taken to Avoid, Mitigate and Minimize Impacts to Natural Resources

The development of the Adirondack Rail Trail inherently minimizes the impacts to the natural resource by utilizing the existing man-made corridor. As mentioned previously, the trail corridor will be maintained to a minimum of 15 feet cleared width, thus avoiding impacts to the surrounding area.

The number of trees planned to be removed is higher than the previous phases of rail trail construction. This is likely due to regular train service ending in the fall of 1980. This segment of trail went without train use until 2000, therefore the maintenance it received was minimal. The Adirondack Scenic Railroad operated from 2000 to 2016 as a summer attraction between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake. The section from Tupper Lake to Saranac Lake was used primarily as a pass through to get the train to Saranac Lake in the spring and return the train to Old Forge in the fall. This lack of maintenance under the previous ownership allowed a significant amount of vegetation grow in on this section of trail.

As a result of the many years of unfettered growth, this work plan includes vegetation management required for both construction and to maintain the long-term safety and integrity of the corridor. Up to 1,036 trees three inches or larger in diameter at breast height (DBH), and 4,867 trees less than three inches in DBH will be removed from Forest Preserve lands to maintain the desired width of the trail corridor (see tree tally below).

Though the tree counts are higher than the previous two phases, work will take place within the historically clear width of the corridor that was utilized by the railroad. Ensuring work will remain within the existing man-made disturbance area of the railroad corridor will ensure the surrounding forest will remain intact and unchanged by this construction. To further improve the habitat, invasive honeysuckle is being hand pulled to open up the available growing space for native species to reestablish themselves.

### State Land Tree Tally

Project: Adirondack Rail Trail Phase 3

State Land Unit: Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor, Adirondack Rail Trail

County: Franklin

Tupper Lake and Santa Clara

Date Tallied: 12/15/2023

Tallied By: Keith Carrow

Species	Diameter														Total
	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	
	4867														4867
fir, balsam		400	66	10	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	478
pine, white		170	55	15	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	246
pine, Scotch		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
pine, red		0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Larch		105	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	112
hemlock		22	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
birch, gray		60	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	63
birch, white		24	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
birch, yellow		7	4	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
maple, sugar		16	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
maple, red		31	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38
beech, American		2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0a	0	0	0	3
aspen		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	4867	841	147	32	7	4	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5903

As explained in more detail above, some segments of the rail require grading to improve drainage and minimize erosion. These disturbed areas outside of the trail tread will be planted with native grasses and will be mowed on an annual basis to maintain line of sight and reduce risk of injury to users by vegetation encroachment. Due to the remote nature of this area and the lack of road access to interior sections, six equipment turnarounds will be constructed to facilitate construction. After construction, three of these will be converted into pedestrian rest areas and will be up to 20-feet-wide and 35-feet-long. The remaining three will be converted to snowmobile rest areas up to 10-feet-wide and 60-feet-long. Areas have been selected due to the limited excavation and benefit to the future trail users.

This project is located on the former railbed of the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor. The location and design of the rail trail were determined through the development of the 2020 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor UMP Amendment/SEIS. As part of the UMP process, several alternatives were considered for the travel corridor (See attached UMP pages 103-108). Alternative 7, which includes construction of the rail trail from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid was the preferred alternative.

The project will impact State and Federally regulated wetlands and will occur within the half-mile corridor of the Saranac River, a designated Recreational River under New York State's Wild, Scenic, Recreational Rivers Act (WSRR). The construction project will be undertaken utilizing best management practices and will be subject to conditions included in a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), wetland permits from the Adirondack Park Agency and Army Corps of Engineers, a Water Quality Certification - Under Section 401 - NY Clean Water Act (Permit ID 5-1646-00404/00001), and Wild, Scenic & Recreational Rivers Permit - Under Article 15, Title 27 (Permit ID 5-1646-00404/00002).

New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) collects and stores location, population, and habitat information about rare plants, animals, and natural communities in New York. There are no known occurrences of rare, threatened, or endangered species within 0.25-mile of the project location. However, the NYNHP shows a Balsam Flats community bordering the rail corridor in this area.

The cutting of trees and construction of the rail trail will not affect the Natural Heritage occurrences. The improvement will only be within the footprint of the historic rail line, therefore sensitive areas are buffered/protected from disturbance.

#### Analysis of Project Location and Design Alternatives

This project is located on the former railbed of the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor. The location and design were determined through the development of the 2020 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor UMP Amendment/SEIS. As part of the UMP process, several alternatives were considered for the travel corridor (See attached UMP pages 103-108). Alternative 7, which includes construction of the rail trail from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid was the preferred alternative.

#### Description of Use of Motorized Equipment and/or Motor Vehicles (if any)

The trail will be constructed primarily using motorized equipment and motor vehicles. All motor vehicle and equipment use will be confined to the Travel Corridor. Access may also occur over existing administrative roads that intersect with the rail corridor.

Description of Applicable Standards for Accessibility by People with Disabilities

This trail is designed and will be constructed to meet current accessible standards for rail trails.

Other Relevant Considerations

None

Prepared by (Name & Title): Keith Carrow  
Phone: (518) 897-1336

Date: 3/7/2024

Approvals:

Comments:



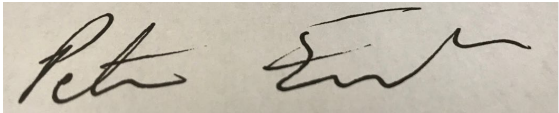
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Regional Program Manager  
Date: 3/14/2024



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Regional Director  
Date: 8/19/2024



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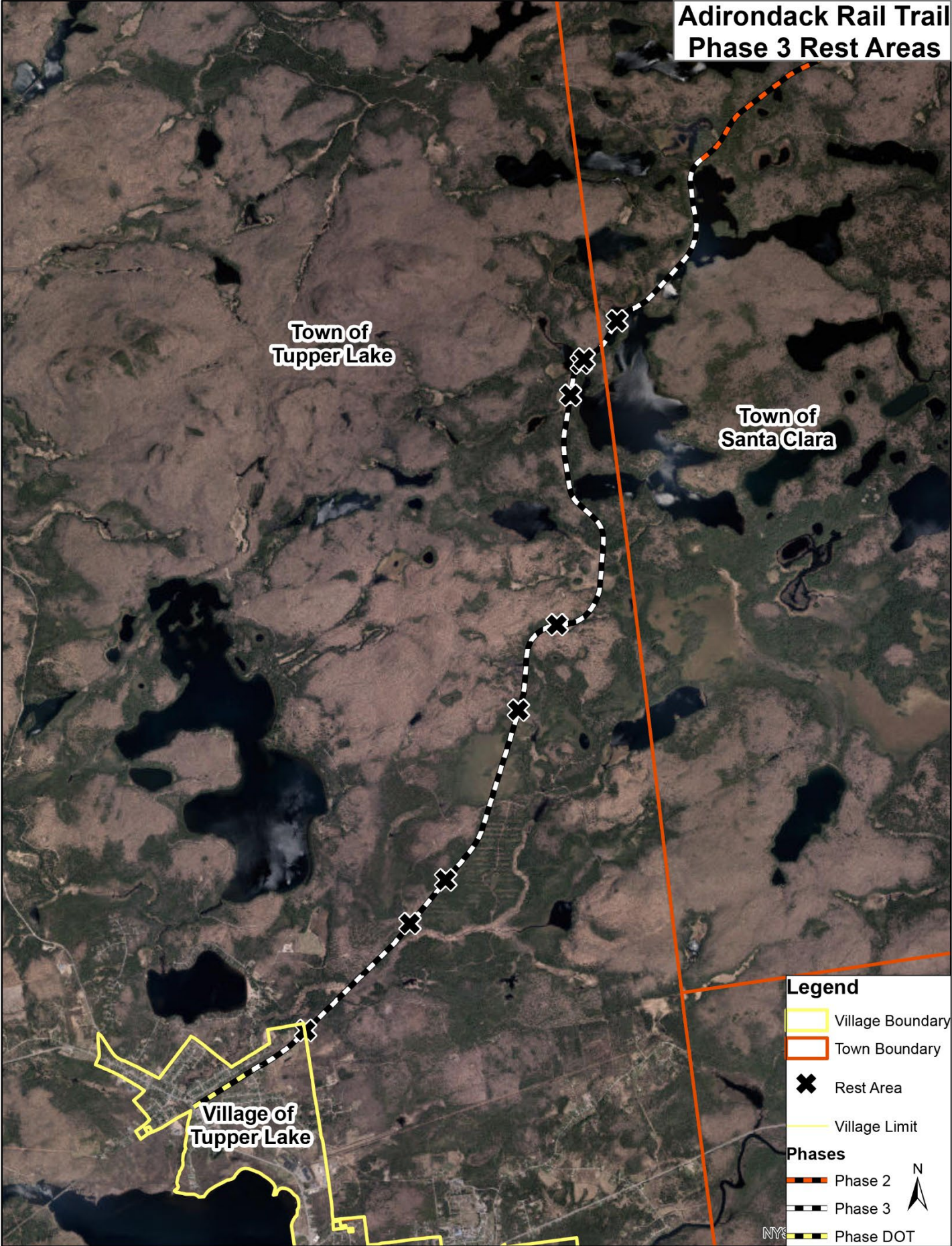
Division Director  
Date: 8/16/2024

**REGULATORY CLEARANCE CHECKLIST – STATE LANDS and CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROJECTS**

PROGRAM	PERMIT	REQUIRED		SECURED BY	COMMENTS
		YES	NO	(NAME)	
Air Resources	Restricted Burning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mineral Resources	Mining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Materials Management	Solid Waste Mgt. Fac.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Water	Dam Safety Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Const. in Flood Hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Public Water Supply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	SPDES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Spills Management	Petro. Bulk Storage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Lands and Forests	Unit Management Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor, May 2020
	Tree Cutting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		To be permitted through the approval of this plan
	Protected Native Plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Historic Preservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Fish and Wildlife	Freshwater Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Wild Scenic & Rec. River	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Compliance Services	Other Protection of Waters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Permit 5-1646-00404/00002
	EAF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Negative Declaration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Env. Impact Statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Water Quality Cert.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Permit 5-1646-00404/00001
DEC (other)	CP-17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Commissioner (aircraft, motorized equipment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Flight Request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Contract Clearance Sh.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	DOB Exemption	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Other Agencies	APA MOU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	APA Wetlands Permit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		#2021-0256
	Corps. of Engineers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		# NAN-2021-00269-UCO
	Building Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Local Permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Easements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Highway Enter DOT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Wastewater Disposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		



# Adirondack Rail Trail Phase 3 Rest Areas



**Adirondack Rail Trail  
Phase 3 Construction  
Tree Cutting**

