



**NC Regional ED Councils**

**June 27, 2012**

**Tupper Lake, Franklin County**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

First speaker:

- Strong support for rail service to ensure economic development;
- Upgrade railroad to carry passengers trails and build a recreational trail along side;
- Building both will result in maximum economic benefits;
- Tourism is strong facet of North Country economic foundation, need to work together to realize rail and trail system;
- OWD went out of business partly due to the lack of rail system to transport materials and goods;
- Depot Building in Tupper Lake is strong asset and Next Step Tupper Lake concept is important component of Tupper Lake tourism infrastructure;
- Need to offer wide array of tourism activities to ensure economic prosperity.

Second Speaker:

- Council please consider reviewing rail corridors based on their specific assets;
- All corridors are not equal, the Adirondack corridor would better serve as a trail corridor due to its deteriorated conditions and natural resource constraints combined w/ it's very unique recreational opportunities;
- Time to consider the Adirondack Corridor as a recreational trail.

Third Speaker:

- Supporter of Adirondack Recreational Corridor;
- Collected over 1000 signatures in support of a recreational trail;
- Offered examples of tourists he encountered over the last year who were in support of the recreational trail;
- Bigger return on State's investment.

Fourth Speaker:

- Tupper Lake residents for 30 years, Tupper Lake Business owners;
- Support Adirondack Recreational Trail;
- Discussed local reaction for being opposed to train use as very supportive;
- Has petition w/ 400 signatures in support.

Fifth Speaker:

- Lake Placid Snowmobile and resident of Lake Placid;
- Referenced 1990 study of NYS DOT study that indicates between Beaver River and Forest Port counted over 225,000 snowmobile riders w/ significant economic impacts;
- Need two feet of snow to be safe in rail corridor;
- Sleds cost \$14,000 and people are unwilling to ride on rail corridor due to concerns their equipment will be damaged;
- Snowmobile industry in Old Forge is #1 sale tax in Herkimer County;
- Need more snowmobilers in Adirondacks;
- Corridor season is limited due to rails;
- Trail only option has best return on investment, opined trail would be self sustaining

Sixth Speaker:

- Local real estate professional, ARISE founder;
- ACR is a transformational project, but is on hold due to litigation;
- Strongly disparaged the Article 78;
- ARISE will be running Big Tupper Ski Area on a volunteer basis, has lost 30K over last three season;
- Looking to create local LDC to assist local businesses;
- Opined that the lawsuit is having negative impacts on businesses.

Seventh Speaker:

- Resident of Saranac Lake, runs an invest company;
- Cited studies that compared economic outlays to restore rail with economic returns;

- Focus on efforts that would maximize profits;
- Strong support for trail only option.

Eighth Speaker:

- Proposed their Wild Walk project for consideration as a priority project;
- Wild Walk is an important infrastructure component.

Ninth Speaker:

- Local elected official and businessman;
- Appreciate support of ACR;
- Appreciate support of restoration of rail line;

Tenth Speaker:

- Local newspaper and Chairman of Next Stop Tupper Lake;
- Goal of project was to recreate 1850 station and is testament to the hard work of volunteers;
- 4 million building project;
- Focus now is restoring train line w/ new campaign "On Track to Saranac", includes fundraising efforts;
- Group wants it all, functioning rail and by its side a multi-use recreational trail;
- Long range plan includes restoration to Old Forge;
- Cited economic studies in support of rail and trail project; (Stone Consulting)
- Rail/ trail that ferries multi use recreationists to distant locations is the best option.

Eleventh Speaker:

- Reference Stone Consulting study would attract an additional 7,000 tourists a year;
- If tracks were removed 260,000 new visitors would be attracted to the area;
- Side by Side would be ideal but physical limitations of corridor do not allow for this option;
- APA would not allow filling in Lake Clear to accommodate side by trail;
- Meandering off corridor would diminish the overall experience for the majority of people who would be attracted to this corridor;
- Having both is impossible;
- Benefits of recreational trail to Tupper Lake are potentially enormous, major infusion of capital and tourism dollars;
- Would benefit ACR w/ world class trail system;

- Have significant impacts to wide range of users groups;
- Tupper Lake Train Station would still have valuable and serve multiple uses;
- Rail Train is perfect fit for priority project funding;
- Wilderness Rail train through the biggest Park in the lower 48;
- Can still preserve rail bed for future use through Rail Banking;
- Advocates propose Mr. Douglas resign as Chair due to position on Rail corridor.

Twelfth Speaker:

- Mayor of Tupper Lake;
- Public Sewage is needed, ACR will have one on-site system when developed;
- Tupper Lake system has capacity to handle ACR;
- Proposal to combine broadband and sewage will be submitted for areas along Route 30;
- Request for replacement of second sewage system back on ACR;
- Raquette Pond/Tupper Lake Beach proposal redevelopment waterfront facility to include sport field lighting and beach;
- Wood Co-gen facility study for Sunmmont;
- Grant program to provide rebates for wood pellet stoves which would reduce community energy costs;
- Located @ former OWD site;
- Rail position is mixed, way to do a rail and trail option;
- Opined that the Gov has already made a decision to keep tracks.

Thirteenth Speaker:

- Relocated to Tupper Lake but is disappointed in lack of rails to trails opportunities;
- Supports rail to trail option, need safer places to ride bikes;
- Important option for children and elderly.

Fourteenth Speaker:

- Took offensive to Gary Douglas's opening remarks;
- Does not see rail and trail as economically feasible;
- Does not see ridership increasing;
- 90 mile trail is a destination ride and will attract people to our region;
- Challenges Council to determine whose numbers are accurate.

Fifteenth Speaker:

- Submitting proposals for sewage facilities

Sixteenth Speaker:

- Tupper Lakers are doers! Discussed Tupper Lake vision statement, cited the Wild Center as an example of a component of this vision that came to fruition;
- Working on other components of community revitalization plan;
- New program for brownfield sites;
- In partnership w/ ANCA and communities along the 90 miler route (Blue Ways) Website to attract paddlers;
- Tupper Lake recreation is underutilized, conducting a marketing plan to support the business community;
- Need to look at very small communities to identify what businesses will succeed.

Seventeenth Speaker:

- Supports Rail to Trail;
- Provided antidote examples of successful rail to train systems and one unsuccessful rail w/ trail system;

Eighteenth Speaker:

- 12 years of Lake Placid train has not generated economic impact to Lake Placid;
- Created a few part time jobs, not worth the subsidy;
- Pointed out mountain biking initiative and trail building efforts;
- 12 years to get it off the “track” is enough time;
- Not gonna be a rail w/ trail.

Final Comments:

- DOT is important stakeholder and stated they have no interest or resources to amend UMP to change use of corridor;
- Need DOT in the room to have this debate.