



ANCA Secures \$1.2 M in DOT Funding to Begin Rec Path Construction

Project will create multi-use path within rail corridor from Lake Placid and eventually to Saranac Lake

A \$1.2 million grant awarded to the Adirondack North Country Association will go toward completing a long-anticipated recreational path from Lake Placid to Saranac Lake within New York State's Department of Transportation's rail corridor.

The Federal Highway Administration grant is awarded to ANCA through the New York Department of Transportation for projects under the National Scenic Byways Program. ANCA worked with Essex County Office of Community Resources, Holmes & Associates, and the Town of North Elba to submit the grant application.

The grant will be used for the first phase of the Olympic Byway Recreational Path project: An 8-to-10-foot-wide multi-use path to be built along existing rail tracks connecting the Village of Lake Placid with the hamlet of Ray Brook. Once complete, it will allow access for outdoor enthusiasts - including hikers, bikers, runners, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers - throughout four seasons.

"The Olympic Byway Lake Placid Recreation Path project represents the culmination of a vision for alternative, multi-modal transportation facilities in the Lake Placid-Saranac Lake area that has been proposed in a number of regional transportation plans. With permits in hand and considerable community support, the Town of North Elba is committed to managing this important project," said North Elba Supervisor Robert Politi.

Recreation benefits

"Facilities like the proposed recreation path have consistently proven themselves to be extraordinarily beneficial to the health, quality of life and economic viability of the places they exist in. The rec path is a smart investment towards ensuring that our region can continue to compete as a world-class recreation destination, as well as being a great place to live," said Garrett Dague, Deputy Director of Essex County Office of Community Resources and Planning, which assisted with the application.

Rec path overview



Phase 1, Lake Placid to Ray Brook:

Phase 1 is essentially shovel-ready, as it has been through the necessary permitting process and was only delayed through a shortage of funding.

Phase 2 Ray Brook to Saranac Lake:



Map of the Recreation Path

This segment of the Olympic Scenic Byway - Route 86 - connects Lake Placid and Saranac Lake, two of the largest communities within the Park, and lies within the Olympic region, a popular destination for visitors. In addition, the rec path presents a safe alternative to biking on Route 86, which is heavily used by motorists throughout the year.

"I'm happy to know that we will soon have a safe place where a family of all abilities can simply go out and enjoy a bike ride together without the risk of traffic. Having grown up with the Stowe rec path and the Burlington rec path over in Vermont, I know first hand how valuable this type of resource can be in our communities," said Matt McNamara, Junior Planner for Essex County and founder of Barkeater Trails Alliance (BETA).

Byways funding

In 2004, DOT approved a plan created by ANCA that defines the future of the 170-mile Olympic Scenic Byway route, which runs on Routes 3, 86 and 9N from Lake Champlain to Lake Ontario. The recreation path project upholds the Olympic Byway's goals for transportation, safety and recreation as well as building community linkages that better connect towns and villages.

"The Byways Program allowed us to secure \$1.2 million dollars to launch the long-awaited construction for a significant project that will support tourism and enhance and complement what the region has to offer. ANCA continues to look for ways to support the extension of the Recreation Path into the Village of Saranac Lake and make rail corridor improvements for Tupper Lake," said ANCA Executive Director Kate Fish.

Alternative Transportation

ANCA Board President Steve Erman said "The Adirondack North Country Association remains fully committed to the concept of a recreational trail linking Lake Placid and Saranac

In 2007, the Town was awarded \$1,198,619 for Phase 2 construction, which will complete the path from Ray Brook to Saranac Lake.

Olympiad Support

The project has written support from several local Olympic athletes:

"It is our communities' ability to offer opportunities for recreation that allows the region to be such a compelling place to travel to and to live. In addition to providing a viable route for recreation and transportation, a safe path would provide training opportunities for the many current and future Olympians that live in and travel to our area," he said.
 -- Nordic Skier **Billy Demong**, 2010 Olympic Gold and Silver Medalist

"Besides being a huge asset to locals, a recreational path would be a strong draw for tourism to the area, especially considering that no other path exists like this in the Olympic region. ... Such a path would greatly benefit not only

Lake alongside an active rail line. The true multi-modal use of this rail corridor will have significant economic benefits to the region. ANCA appreciates the ongoing commitment of the Town of North Elba to this proposal and to the State and federal governments for their funding support."

The northernmost portion of the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor, a 119-mile route that is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places, is currently used for seasonal scenic rail tours by the Adirondack Scenic Railway. The train enables visitors, including those with mobility impairments, to view Adirondack wild lands, a key factor in ensuring accessibility to all who come here.

Once visitors arrive in Lake Placid, they can use free trolley transport at the depot to get around the Village and to access several Olympic venues, allowing for carless touring options.

Funding source

The grant is one of three [Scenic Byways grants](#) awarded to New York State, and among \$16 million in all recently announced [DOT funds awarded Statewide](#). Nationally, the Federal Highway Administration received more than 1,800 applications, requesting more than 30 times the funds available.

The National Scenic Byway Program is providing Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act funding through the NYS Department of Transportation's Scenic Byway Program.

local athletes such as myself, but the entire community as well."
-- **Tim Burke**, two-time winter Olympian in the sport of biathlon

"Right now we have the opportunity to create the path that our communities need and greatly enhance the Olympic Scenic Byway. ... Making the Lake Placid recreation path a reality would add an extraordinarily valuable resource to our communities that would pay for itself many times over through economic return, and by improving the health and quality of life for byway travelers and locals alike."

-- **Lowell Bailey**, two-time Olympian in the sport of biathlon

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