



PRESS RELEASE

November 10, 2017

Three shipments of used oil tankers have been transported to the Adirondacks for indefinite storage

Still no action from the Department of Environmental Conservation and Adirondack Park Agency, despite Governor's Opposition to Oil Tanker Storage

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Over the past month, three shipments of used out-of-service oil tanker railcars have been transported to the Adirondack Park by Iowa Pacific Holdings for indefinite storage on its dead-end, 30-mile-long Sanford Lake Railway line that it owns between North Creek and the Tahawus Mine in Newcomb. As of Thursday November 9th, used oil tankers were found in three locations.

Iowa Pacific Holdings owns and operates the Saratoga & North Creek Railway, which runs a tourist train, on tracks in the Warren County and Saratoga County, which it leases from Warren County and the Town of Corinth. This section of track is approximately 40 miles and runs from Saratoga to North Creek. Under the terms of its leases no railcars can be stored on the rail lines in Warren and Saratoga counties, but the company claims it can transport out-of-service rail cars through these counties to the Sanford Lake Railway, which begins in North Creek and runs through the north end of Warren County, into Hamilton County and Essex County.

Iowa Pacific Holdings has brought three shipments to the Adirondack Park of used out-of-service oil tanker railcars. The first contained 28 cars, the second 25, the third 12. The first two loads of cars filled more than a half mile of siding track along the Boreas River. Iowa Pacific only has three areas of siding track (areas where two sets of track run in parallel); these are located along the Boreas River in the Town of Minerva in Essex County, south of the Tahawus Mine in the Town of Newcomb in Essex County, and along the Hudson River and Route 28 outside of North Creek in the Town of Johnsburg in Warren County, where 22 hopper cars have been stored for more than one year. All told, Iowa Pacific is now storing approximately 87 railcars along all three sections of siding track where it owns a conservation easement for the rail line.

Protect the Adirondacks!
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“Protect the Adirondacks opposes the use of the Adirondack Park for storage of out-of-service rail cars. The Sanford Lake Railway runs for 30 miles from Newcomb to North Creek and Iowa Pacific Holdings says it can store more than 2,000 railcars along the line, a hundred or so on siding track, the rest on the main line. The Adirondack Park should not be used as a junkyard. These railcars are being stored indefinitely and we run a great risk that the rail cars on the dead-end Sanford Lake line will end up as a 30-mile-long graveyard of decaying oil tankers,” said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

This week, Iowa Pacific brought 12 more oil tankers north, but as of Thursday November 9th, had only transported them as far as the Barton Mines manufacturing plant in North River. These 12 oil tankers are presumably on their way to the siding track south of the Tahawus Mine in Newcomb.

The three areas of siding track are all governed by different state laws depending on whether lands are private or public Forest Preserve. Private lands are governed by the Adirondack Park Agency Act depending on the land use classification. Right now railcars are on track that traverses private lands within the Rural Use lands in North River and Resource Management lands south of the Tahawus Mine. The lands near the mine classified as Resource Management are also part of a Rivers Act corridor for the "Wild" Opalescent River. The Adirondack Park Agency governs uses on private lands under the Rivers Act. Protect the Adirondacks believes there are significant legal questions around storage of out-of-service railcars under the APA Act and Rivers Act on private lands in the Adirondacks.

The Rivers Act also pertains to the public Forest Preserve. The railroad is also storing used oil tankers within the "Scenic" Boreas River corridor on track that traverses the Forest Preserve. Rivers Act lands in the Forest Preserve are governed by the Department of Environmental Conservation. There are serious Rivers Act issues that must be examined for Forest Preserve lands.

“Protect the Adirondacks also believes that there are significant legal questions around the change in use of the Sanford Lake Railway once the siding track is full and the main line is used for storing railcars. Use of the track for storage is different than use for transportation. This rail line was created expressly for the purpose of hauling minerals from the Tahawus Mine. The change in use of the railroad from transportation of minerals from the mine to storage is a significant change that we think violates the purposes for why that railroad was created during World War II,” said Peter Bauer. Once the Sanford Lake Railway ceases use for transportation of minerals it must revert back to the original owners, the biggest being the State of New York for Forest Preserve lands. So far the company has not stored cars on the main line, but if it keeps bring railcars to the Adirondacks on a weekly basis it will start clogging the main line soon.

To date, Governor Andrew Cuomo has expressed his opposition to the plans of Iowa Pacific Holdings, but neither the Adirondack Park Agency or the Department of Environmental Conservation have intervened to stop this plan, to force the company to submit an application for review, or to order the removal of these railcars.

See pictures of the oil tankers at these three locations here:
<http://www.protectadks.org/2017/11/three-shipments-of-used-oil-tankers-have-been-transported-to-the-adirondacks-for-indefinite-storage/>

Protect the Adirondacks

Protect the Adirondacks, Inc. (PROTECT) is a privately funded, IRS-approved not-for-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park in northern New York. PROTECT was formed through the merger of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and the Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks in 2009. PROTECT pursues its mission to protect the Adirondack Park and defend the public "forever wild" Forest Preserve through citizen advocacy, grassroots organizing, education, research, and legal action. PROTECT is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. PROTECT maintains an office in Lake George. For more information see www.protectadks.org.

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