



PRESS RELEASE

May 9, 2018

Last Oil Tanker Railcars on their Way out of Adirondacks

24 oil tankers stored all winter on the banks of the Opalescent River, south of the Tahawus Mine in Newcomb, were hauled to North Creek depot on May 8th, en route to another destination

Iowa Pacific Holdings, the faltering operator of the Saratoga & North Creek Railroad, has stopped its \$18,000 monthly payments to Warren County and Town of Corinth

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The last 24 oil tanker railcars that were stored all winter on a remote rail line in the central Adirondacks on the banks of the Opalescent River were hauled 30 miles south to the North Creek Depot on May 8, 2018. Just under 100 oil tankers were stored all winter in the Adirondacks. These tanker railcars are en route to another destination outside the Adirondack Park. Widespread opposition from state and local leaders, including Governor Andrew Cuomo and Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, and an array of environmental organizations, last fall stopped storage of oil tankers at just under 100. The railroad company, Iowa Pacific Holdings, which stored the oil tankers in the Adirondacks, is faltering and announced in March that it would no longer pay Warren County and the Town of Corinth the \$18,000 monthly payments it is obligated to pay under a contract to lease the 50-mile railroad between North Creek and Saratoga Springs.

Iowa Pacific Holdings owns the Sanford Lake Railway, which runs 30 miles from North Creek to the Tahawus Mine in Newcomb, and leases the Saratoga & North Creek Railway, which runs from North Creek to Saratoga Springs. The North Creek to Saratoga railroad track and corridor is owned jointly by Warren County and the Town of Corinth. Iowa Pacific owns the track and the easement for the Sanford Lake Railway. This 30-mile railway is scheduled to return to private landowners, including the State of New York, if it ceases to function as an active rail line used to haul minerals from the Tahawus Mine. No minerals have been hauled in the last two years.

“Storage of oil tankers along the Boreas and Opalescent Rivers was an insult to the Adirondack Park and local communities. Iowa Pacific Holdings has failed and is now in default of its financial obligations to local governments. The removal of these oil tankers

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from the Adirondacks closes a sad chapter in Adirondack history and showed a corporation that cared little about the concerns of local communities and the Adirondack Park,” said Peter Bauer, executive director of Protect the Adirondacks.

Iowa Pacific also faces legal opposition from the Cuomo Administration, which has filed a petition with the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) to decertify the Sanford Lake Railway between North Creek and Newcomb, arguing that Iowa Pacific has failed to live up to its agreements when the line was opened in 2010. Protect the Adirondacks was the lone voice that opposed certification of the Sanford Lake Railway in 2010, arguing that the line was defunct and should be returned to private landowners. The company is in dire straits as it is in default on its leased rail line and has the State of New York working to end its operations on the Sanford Lake Railway.

“Protect the Adirondacks encourages local leaders in Warren and Saratoga counties to look at alternative uses for the railroad corridor from Saratoga to North Creek for a multi-use public recreation trail. Iowa Pacific has failed in all its efforts to operate a tourist train, snow train, commuter rail line, among other things. It’s time to look at a new chapter for this rail line that could enhance the quality of life for local residents and create a new regional tourist amenity by creating a multi-use public trail,” said Peter Bauer.

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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