

## **Appendix E: TRAC Rail-with-Trail Proposal and Analysis**

The Trails with Rails Action Committee (TRAC), a local group from Tupper Lake, developed a rail-with-trail proposal. The proposal included extensive earth-work and engineering and expects trail users to leave and re-enter the Corridor to avoid obstacles in the Corridor.

General comments on the plan are below, followed by a section-by-section review of TRAC's proposal demonstrating the impracticality of implementing this plan.

- A) **TRAC's design does not provide the type of trail being sought by the public.** The State has determined, based on years of substantial public input, that the Corridor is underutilized, and the public would prefer a wide, relatively flat, family-oriented trail (i.e., baby strollers and kid's bicycles), and a more snowmobile-friendly trail in lieu of the train tracks in the Tri-Lakes Region. This comment during a prior public input sums up the predominant public sentiment in the Tri-Lakes Region:

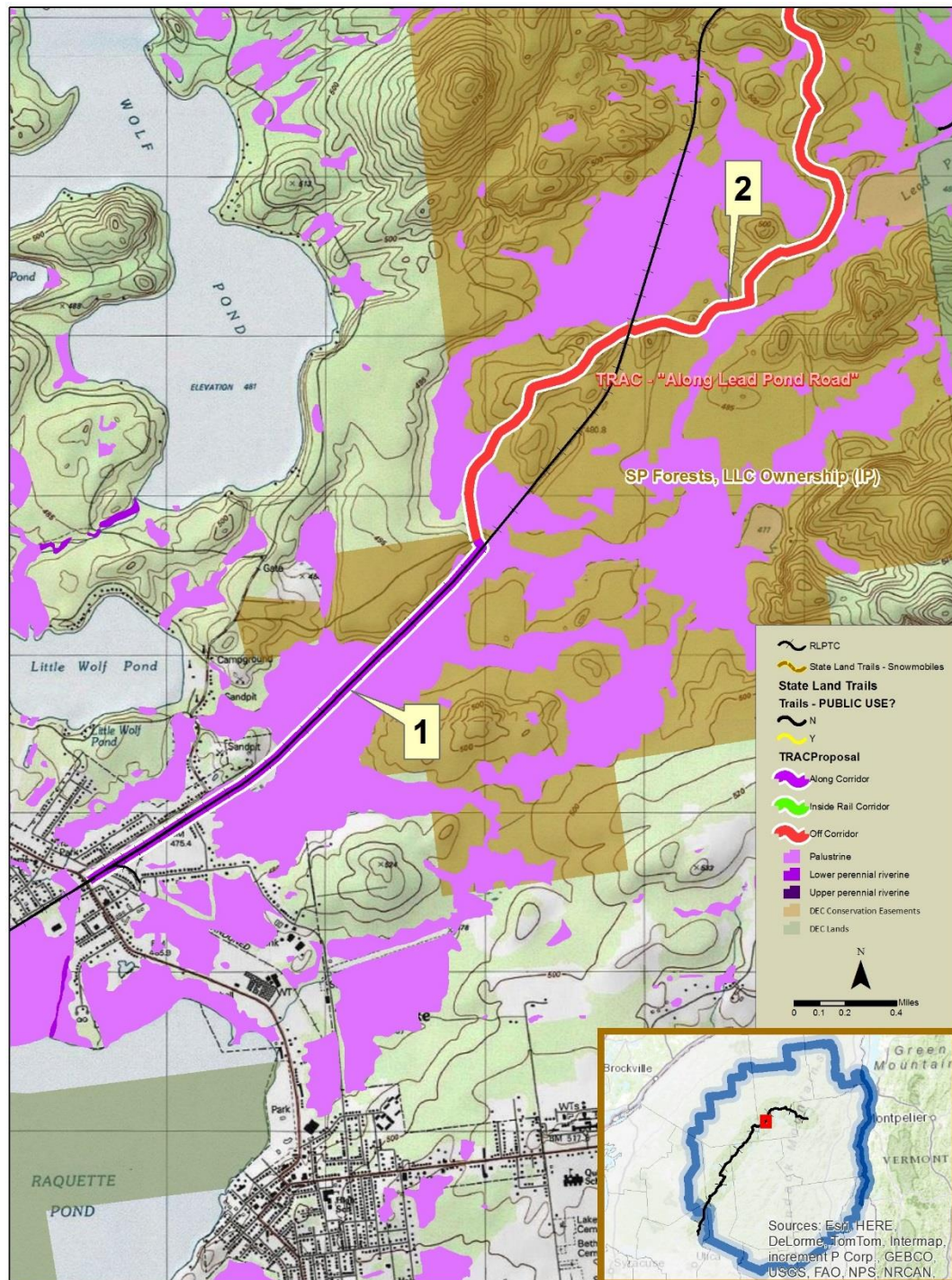
*"There are many hundreds of miles of foot trails in the [A]dirondacks, but one would be hard pressed to find a trail where you could push a stroller or a baby jogger, run a [wheelchair], or take my 83 year old mother for a walk. We have it all here in the Adirondacks except for a rail trail: a well graded, relatively level, safe, scenic pathway free of vehicle traffic that can be enjoyed via multiple forms of human powered conveyance."*

- B) TRAC's off-Corridor spur trails that currently exist on the ground are already being used by the public and do not currently offer a new way to travel the direction of the Corridor without having to get back onto the Corridor at regular intervals. Once the public is dropped back onto the Corridor ROW, according to TRAC's plan, the same limitations exist that prohibit the strict parallel trail as noted in section one above. **TRAC's proposed trail sections 'along the Corridor' do so in many unsuitable segments.** Their own maps bear out the extensive wetlands they propose to run a trail through. The large wetland complex just west of Lake Colby is a perfect example of a location that would need cost-prohibitive cantilevering and fencing, or result in unacceptable environmental impacts from the filling in of wetlands, triggering potential federal and State wetlands permitting regulations
- C) **Several of TRAC's proposed routes utilize the shoulder of state highways.** This conflicts with one of the core reasons why local communities want this trail. The proposed trail in the Amendment purposely avoids highways (except at crossings) in order to provide a safe route of travel for alternative modes of transportation (e.g., bicycle commuting between Tri-Lakes communities), family recreation, and active-recreation (as opposed to passive-recreation) for people with disabilities.
- D) **Snowmobiles would be prohibited on several of TRAC's proposed routes due to Forest Preserve classification (e.g. TRAC's proposed route in the St. Regis Canoe Area).** Cantilevering, fencing, and wetland filling arguably alters the historic character of the Corridor more so than removal of rails.
- E) DEC is in initial planning stages of developing **recreation locations along the Corridor for persons with disabilities.** There appears to be excellent potential for disabled access along the Corridor for fishing, wildlife viewing, paddling, and camping. **TRAC's alternative routes conflict with the most conducive locations for such projects, such as bypassing the Corridor at Lake Clear and Lake Colby.**

# Review of Rails-With-Trail Design Proposal by Trails with Rail Action Committee (TRAC)

## TRAIL SECTION:

### Tupper Lake, International Paper Conservation Easement

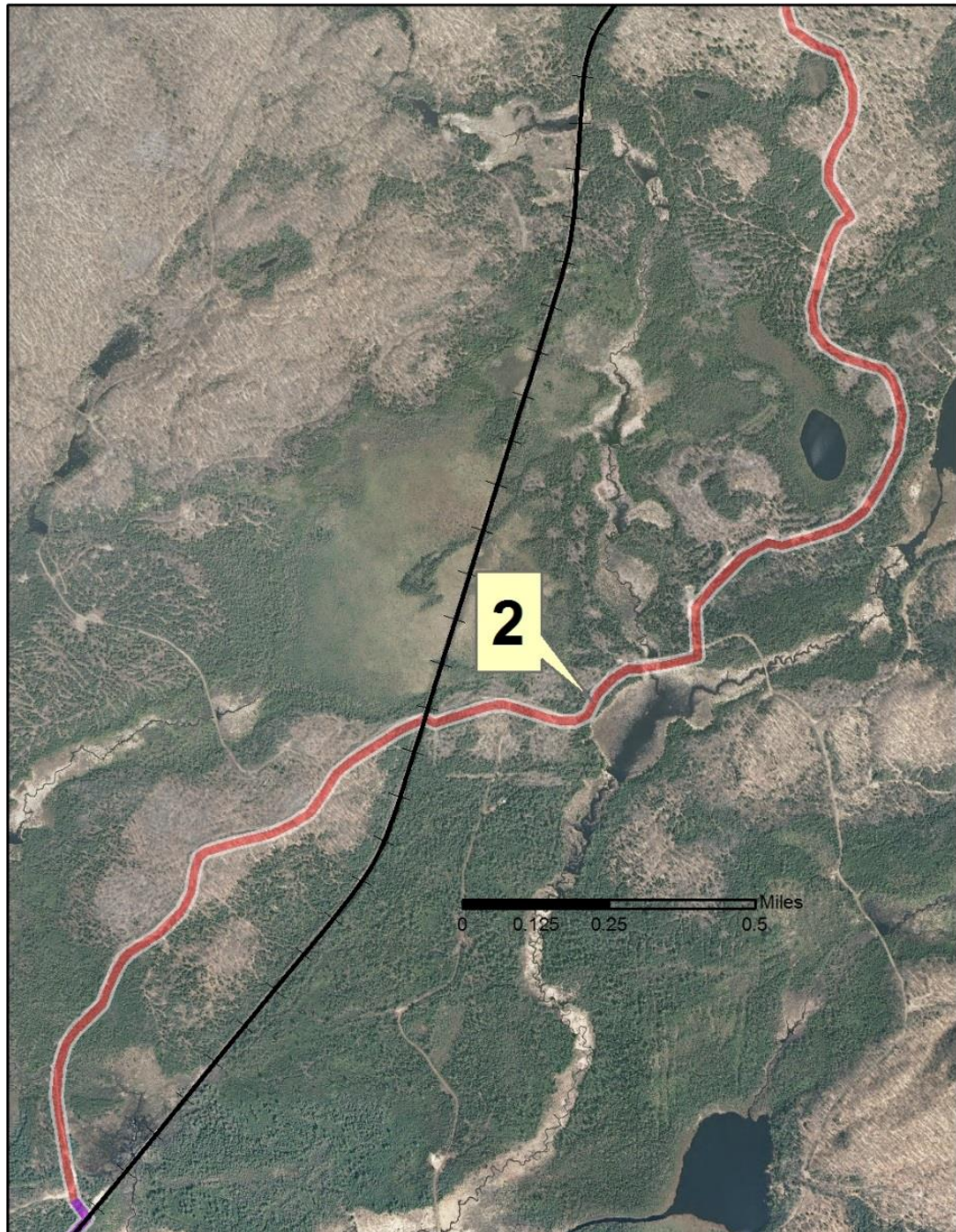






TRAC proposes to route the public “Along the Corridor” (**Map Label #1**), where an estimated 1 mile of potential wetlands would need to be filled-in to complete a parallel trail. This segment is located between Tupper Lake and the start of TRAC’s alternative route off the Corridor on the conservation easement.

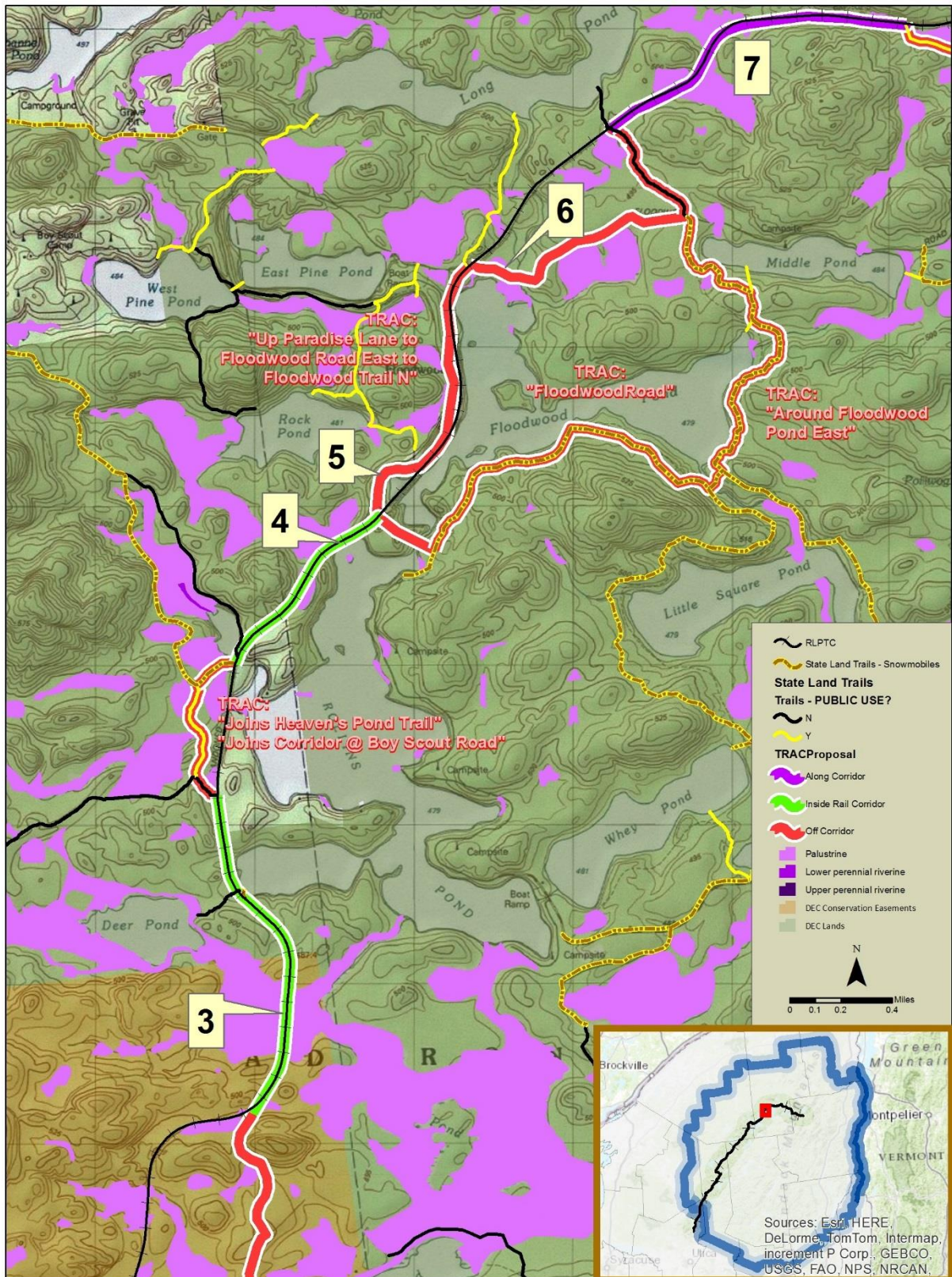




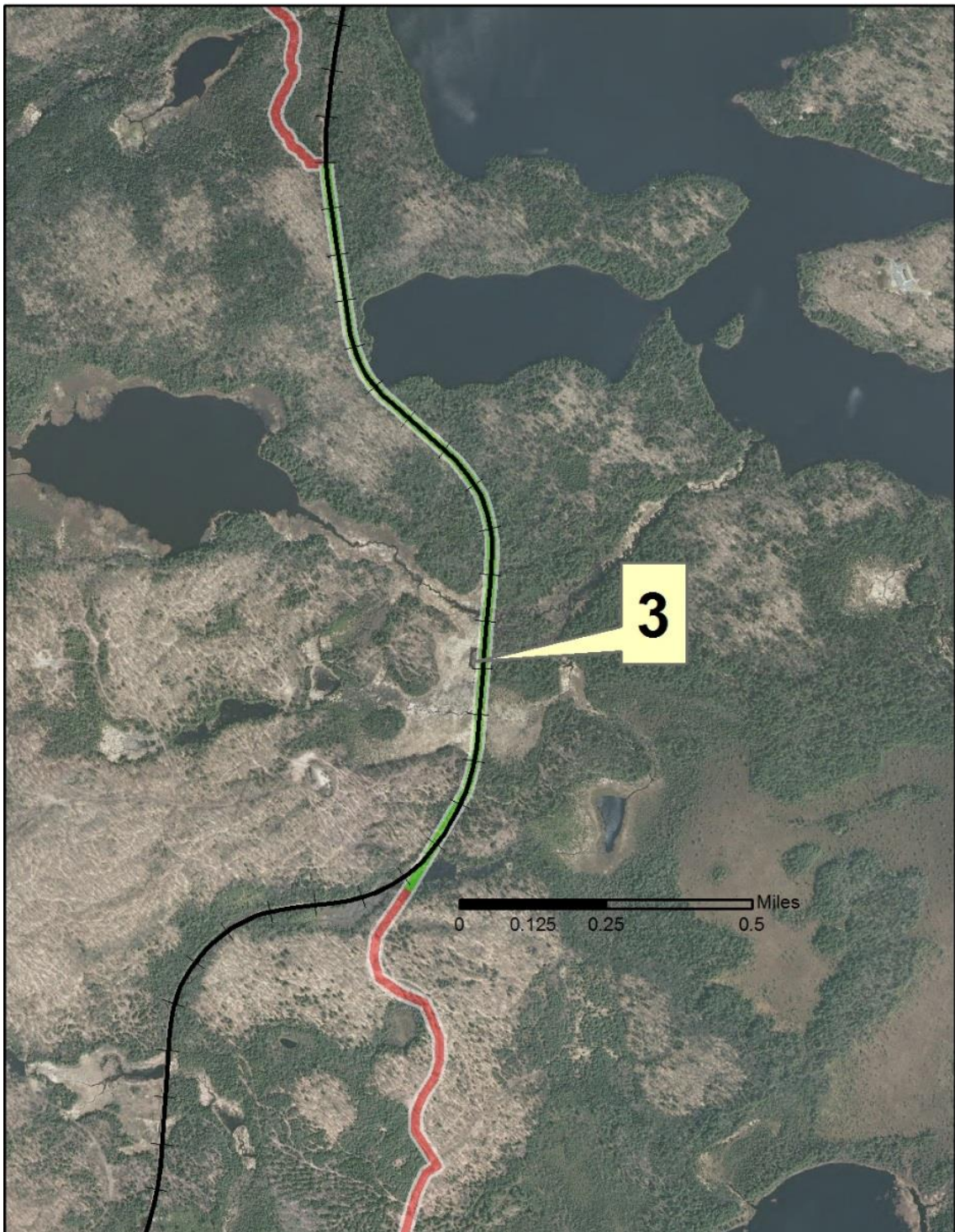
TRAC's suggested route off the Corridor in this segment (**Map Label #2**), could potentially become a public trail. The route shown uses logging/skid roads and traverses some very wet areas. There is potential to re-route TRAC's route through drier areas on this easement. It is important to note that the roads/trails on this property are shared with leased hunting camps and logging operations, so safety and user experiences relating to this must be taken into consideration. Snowmobiling and biking could both be theoretically possible off the Corridor in this easement.



# **TRAIL SECTION: International Paper Conservation Easement to Rollins Pond**

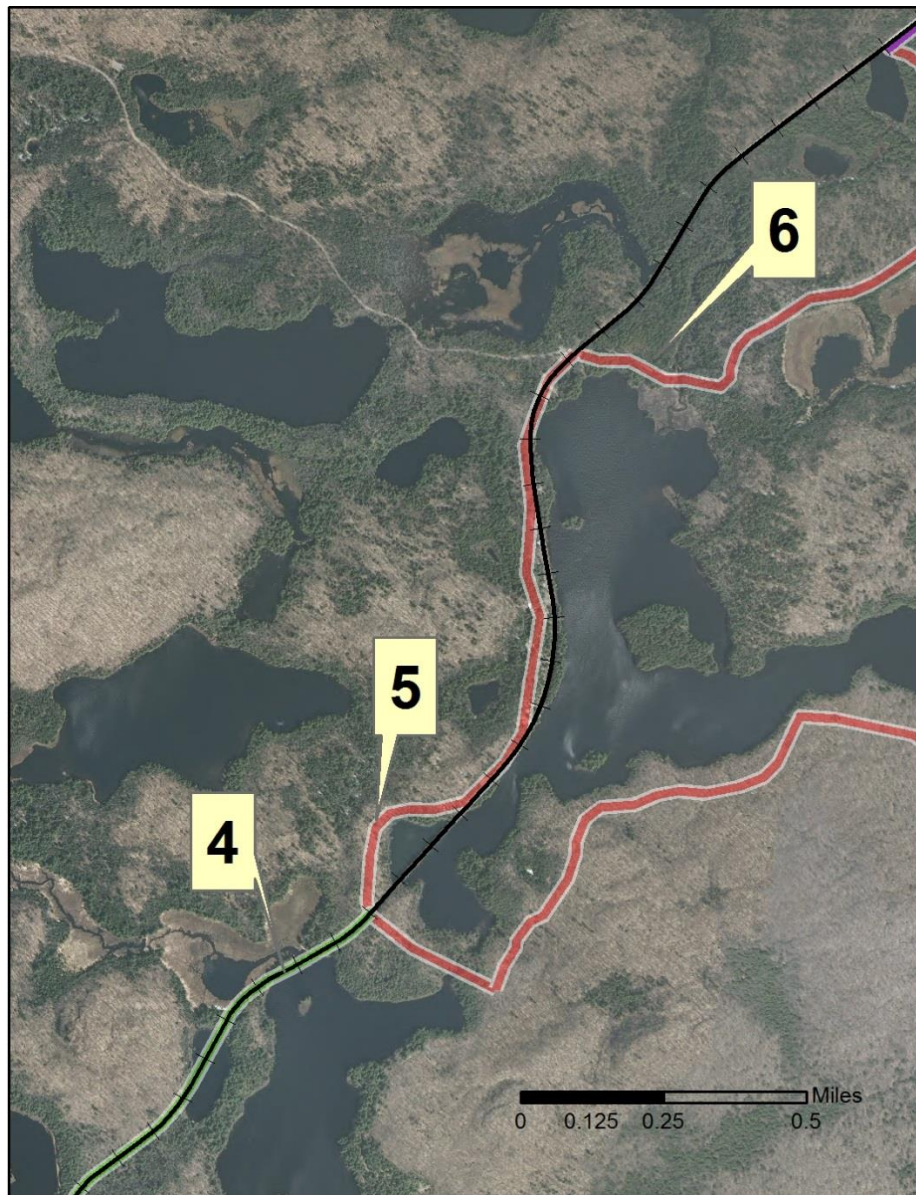






The segment of trail “Inside the Rail Corridor” TRAC proposes in the vicinity of **Map Point #3** passes through significant wetlands that would need to be filled-in, for an estimated 1/3 of a mile.





**Map Point #4**, a stretch that TRAC proposes to go “Inside the Rail Corridor”, there is a significant causeway at a rail bridge with Rollins Pond on one side and a large wetland on the other, making it too narrow for a rail and parallel trail.

**Map Point #5** shows the vicinity of Paradise Lane. This part of TRAC's alternative is probably not feasible because that road is mostly privately-owned, and therefore would require private landowner permissions.

**Map Point #6** notes where a significant bridge would need to be built at the Rollins Pond outlet, in order for this alternative to be feasible. This bridge is highly desirable from a DEC perspective for trail connections with the Rollins Pond/Fish Creek Campgrounds. That would make TRAC's Floodwood Road route possible. Some sections of TRAC's Floodwood Road loop would need to be improved and opened to public use.

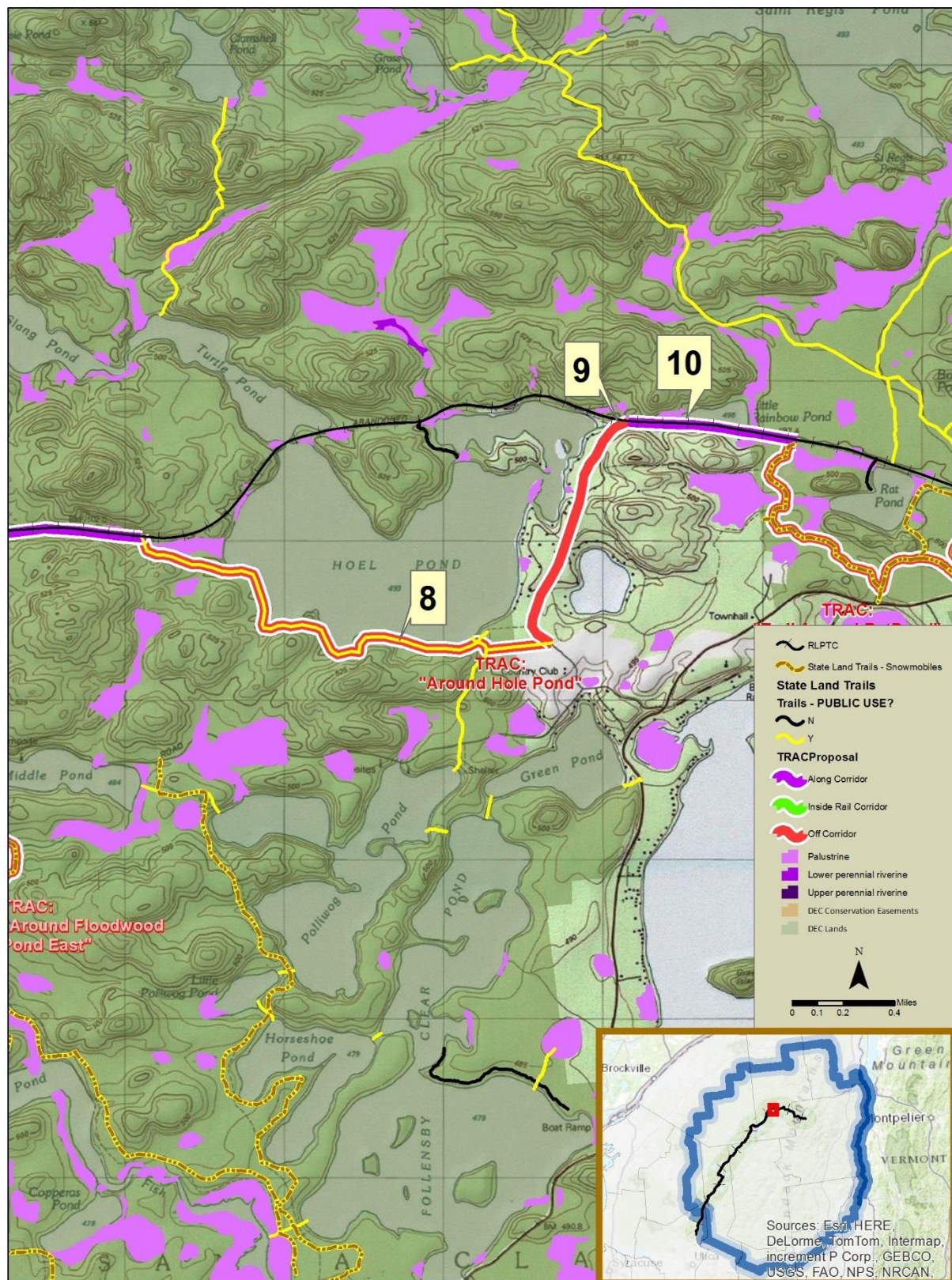




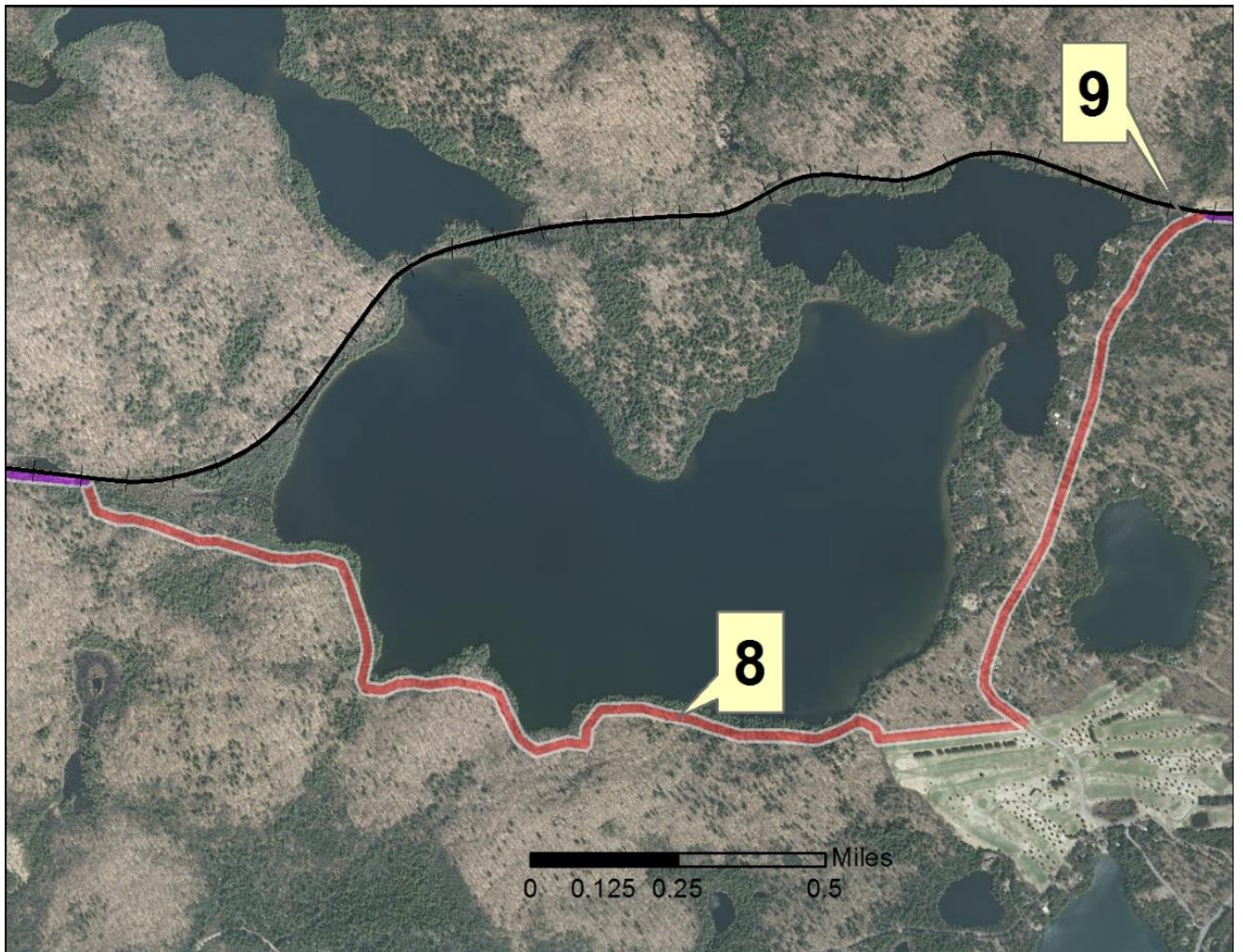
**Map Point #7** shows where TRAC proposes a segment approximately 0.5 miles “Along Corridor”, which would result in adverse impact or loss of regulated wetlands.



## TRAIL SECTION: Hoel Pond



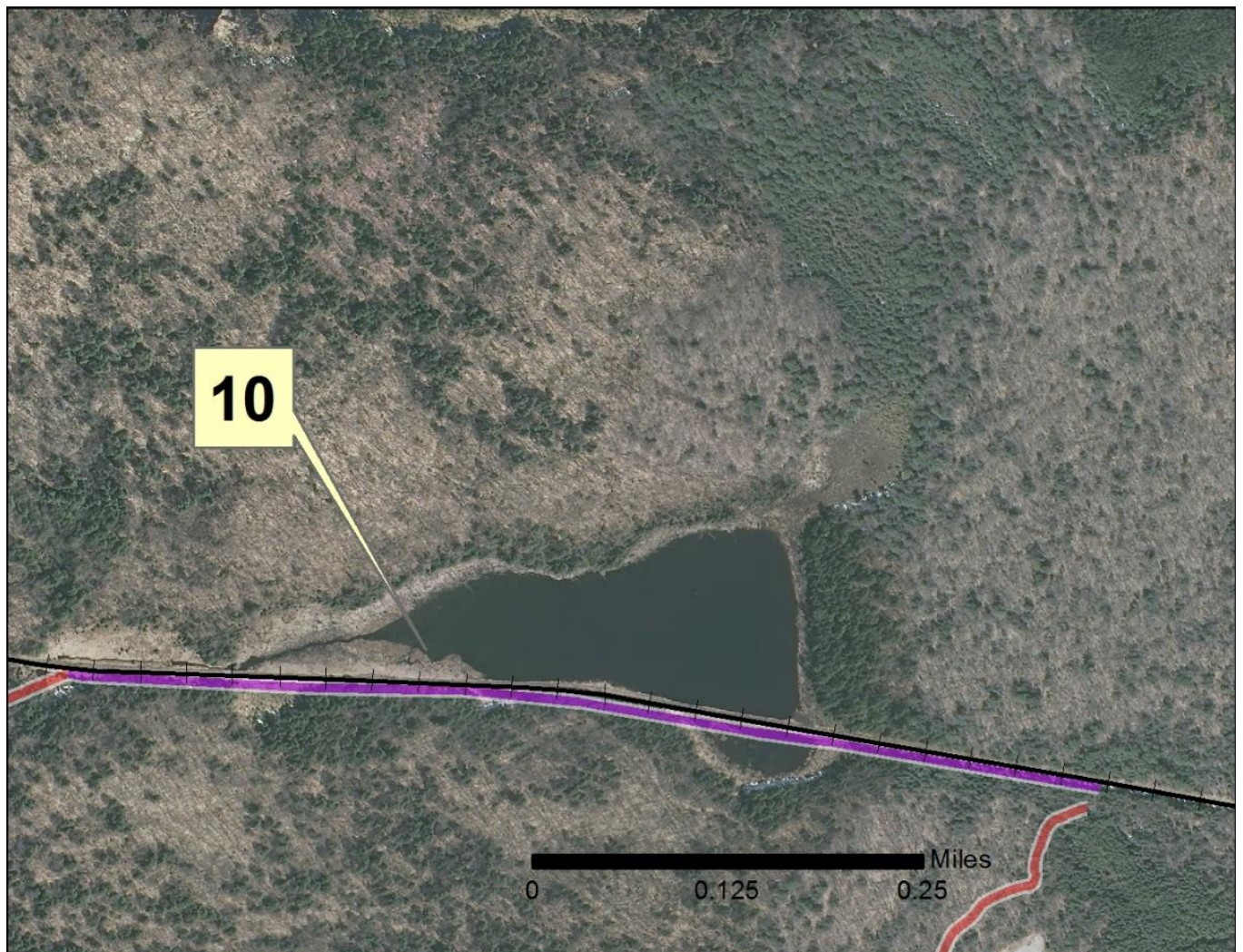




TRAC's suggested route in this map, at **Map Point #8**, goes around Hoel Pond. It starts as a herd path on the southeast side of the pond, and diminishes going west, where there are currently some primitive campsites. It is feasible that this trail system can be upgraded. This proposed segment, however, bypasses potential future access locations for people with disabilities. The Corridor offers easier water-access potential than the Hoel Pond loop.

At **Map Point #9**, shows the town road being utilized as an alternative route in the TRAC proposal, heading north from the country club, has private property at the end. Any connection to the Corridor from this road would need to be negotiated with the private landowner.

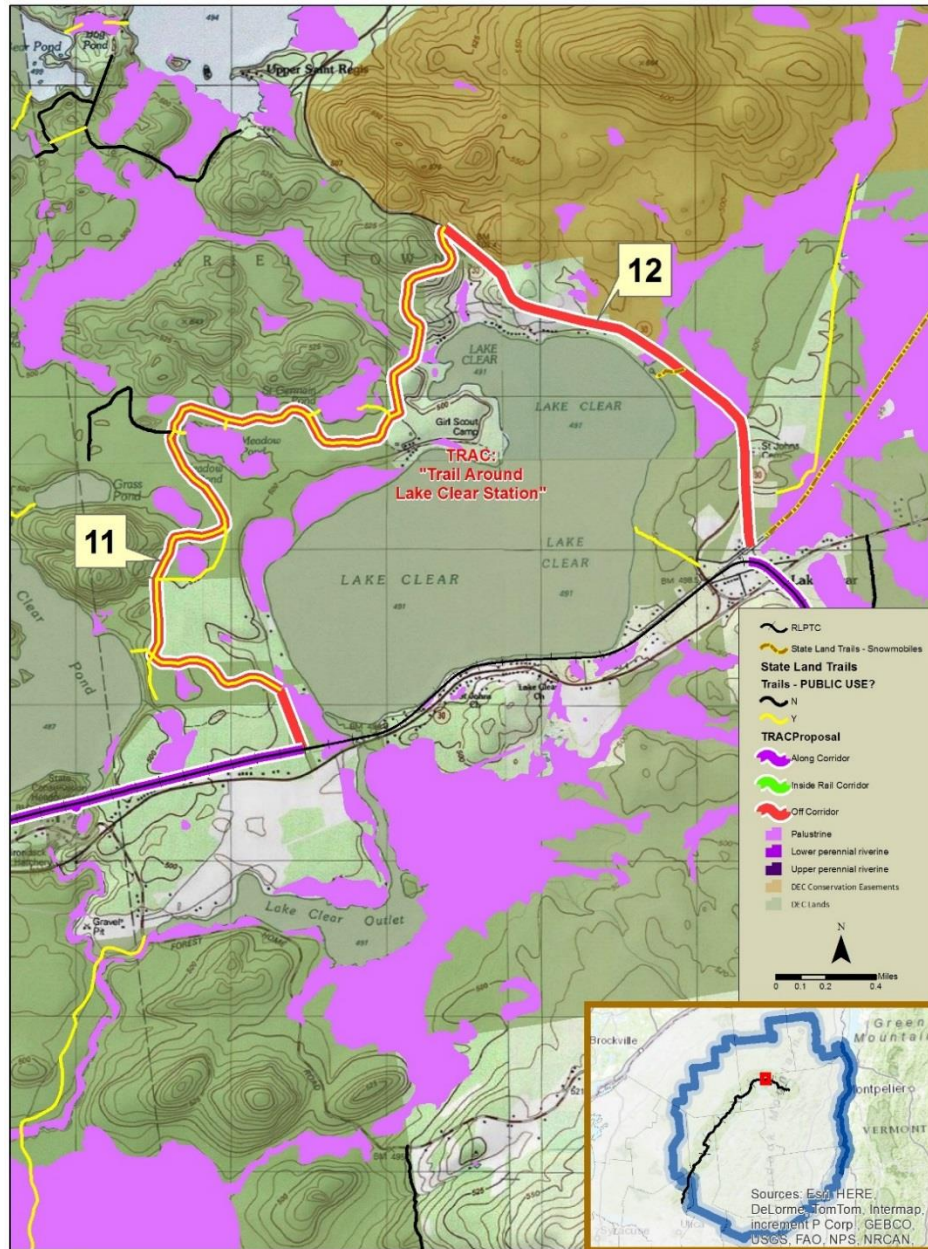




At **Map Point #10**, TRAC's "Along Corridor" segment goes through wetlands and over an open water causeway, making this proposed segment infeasible.



**TRAIL SECTION:**  
**Lake Clear (no aerial photo maps needed)**

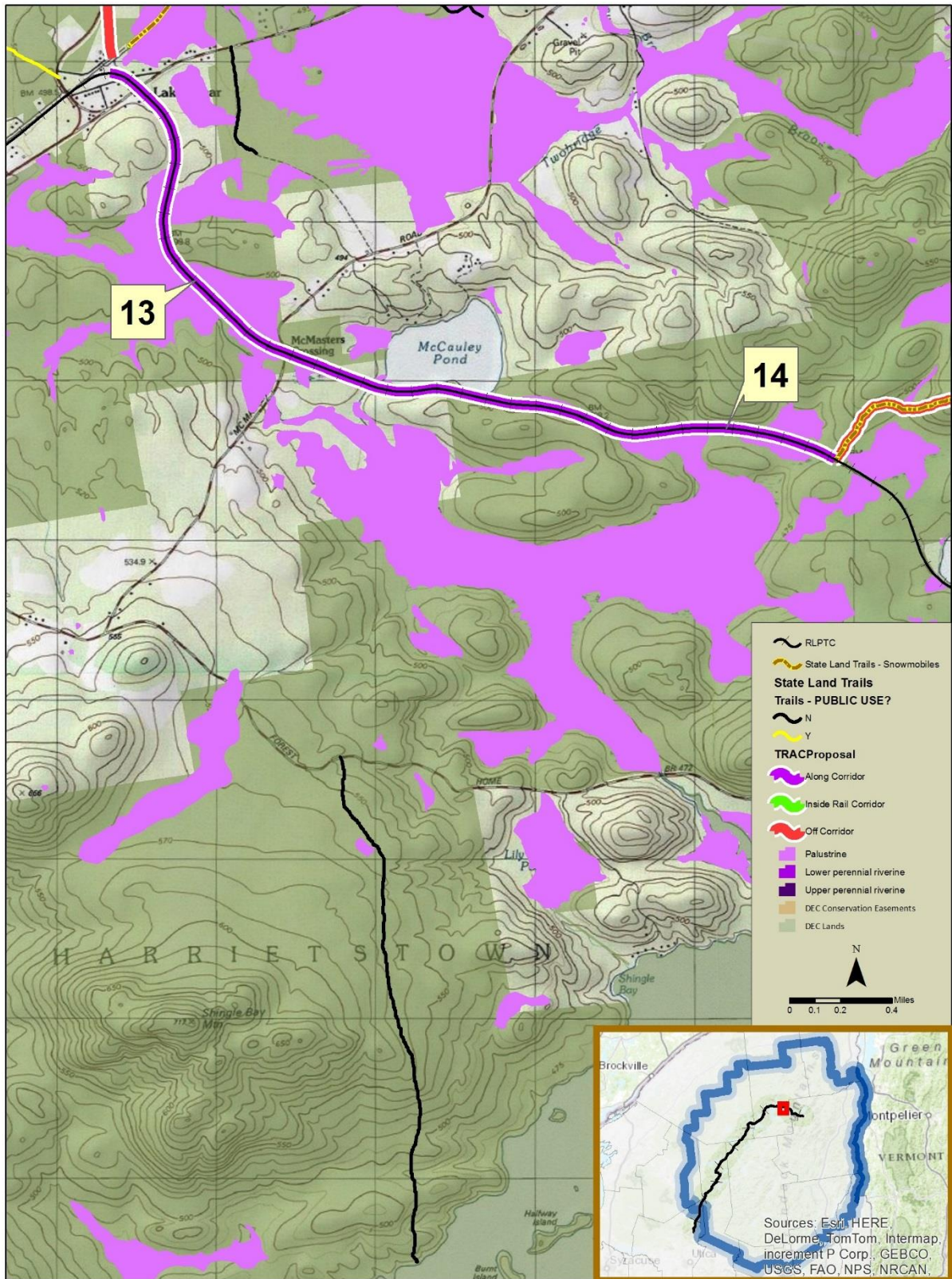


**Map Point #11** - Snowmobiles and bikes are prohibited, by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, in the Canoe Area.

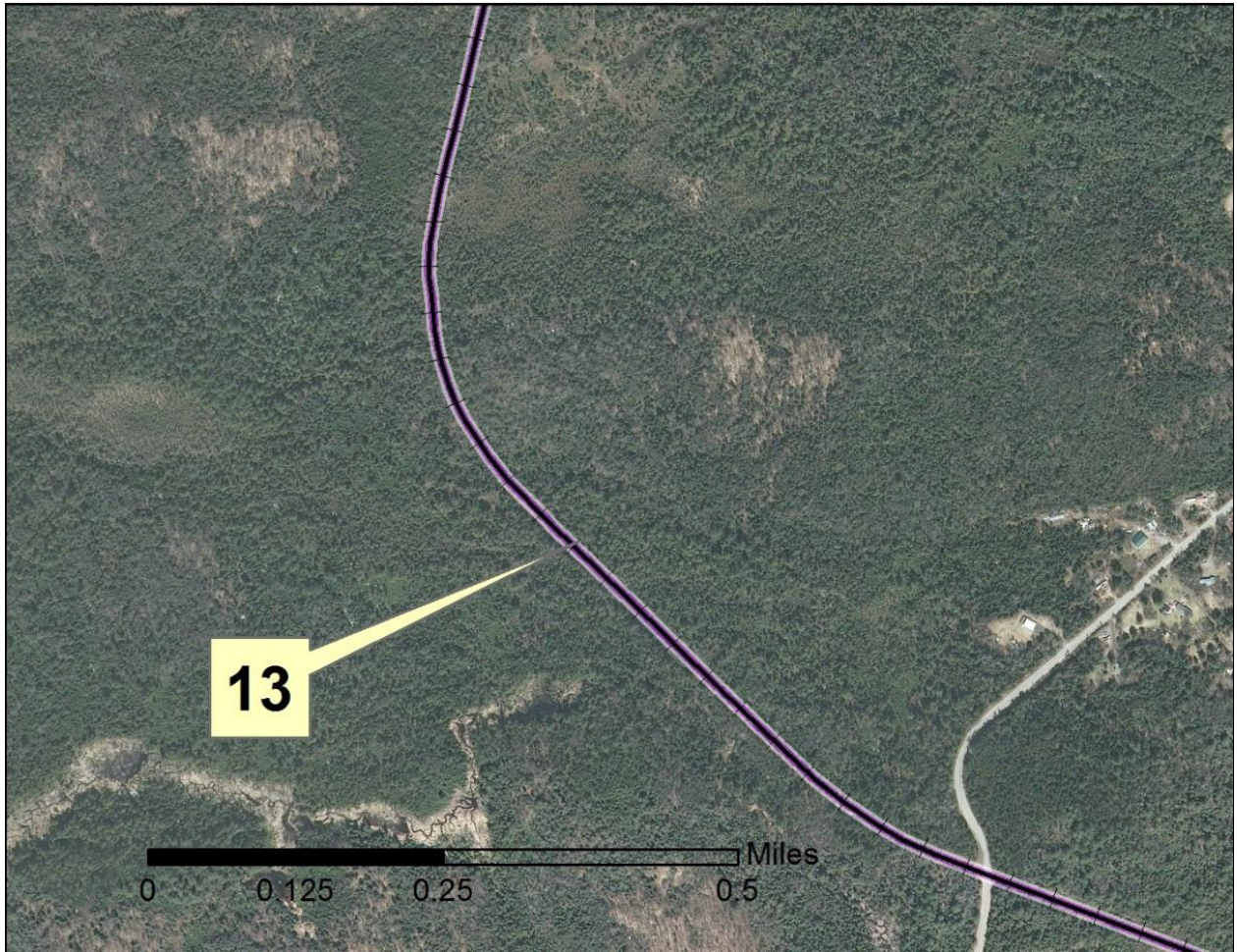
**Map Point #12** shows TRAC's segment along Route 30 which is not recommended for safety reasons, and would most likely reduce or eliminate family-oriented recreation. A possible alternative to that segment is on the north side of that road, on conservation easement land, but a crossing of Route 30 is not recommended for safety reasons, as well. Additionally, a trail on that easement would need to detour north, around significant wetlands.



# **TRAIL SECTION: McCauley Pond**

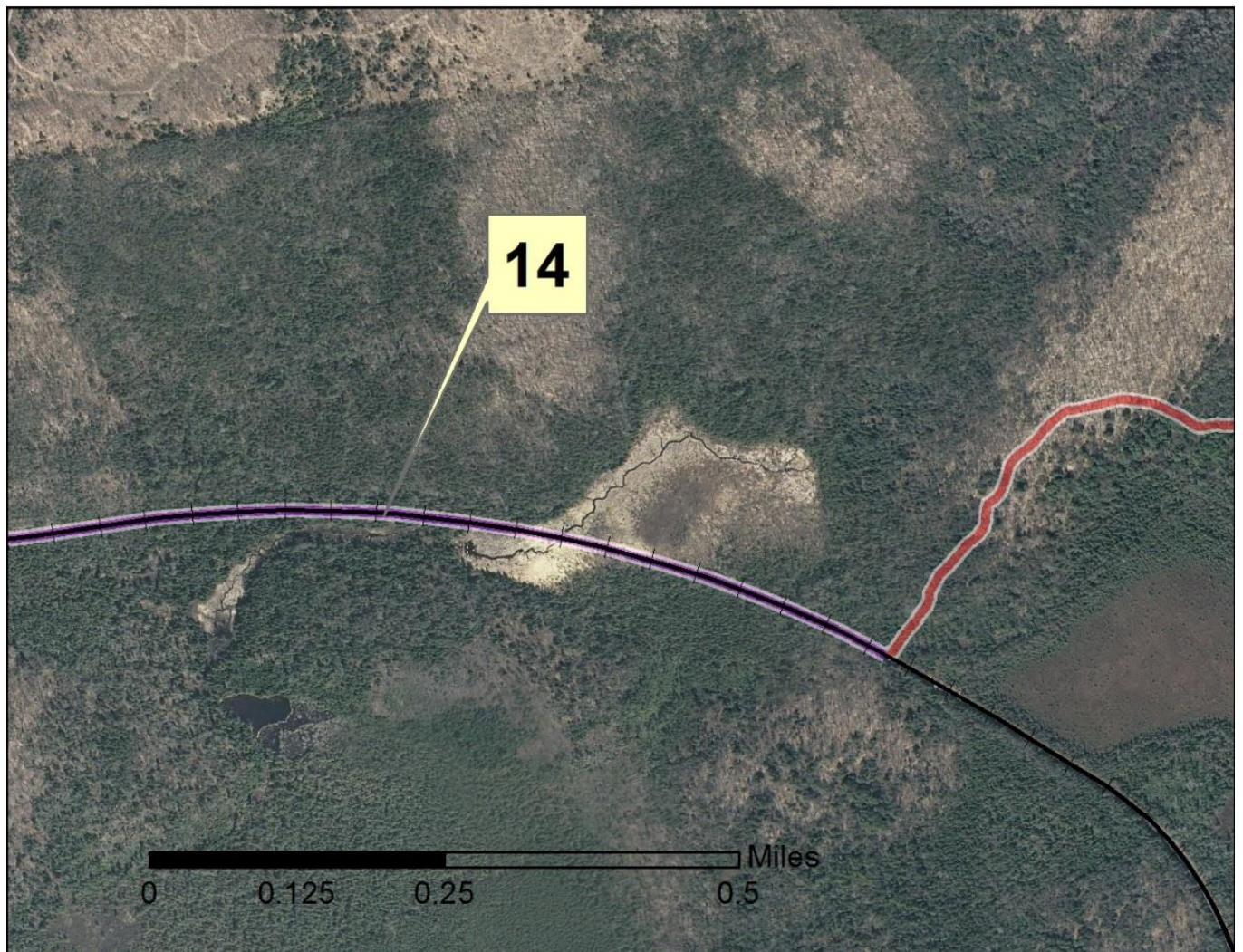






**Map Point #13** shows where TRAC proposes a segment approximately 1 mile “Along Corridor”, which would result in adverse impact or loss of regulated wetlands.



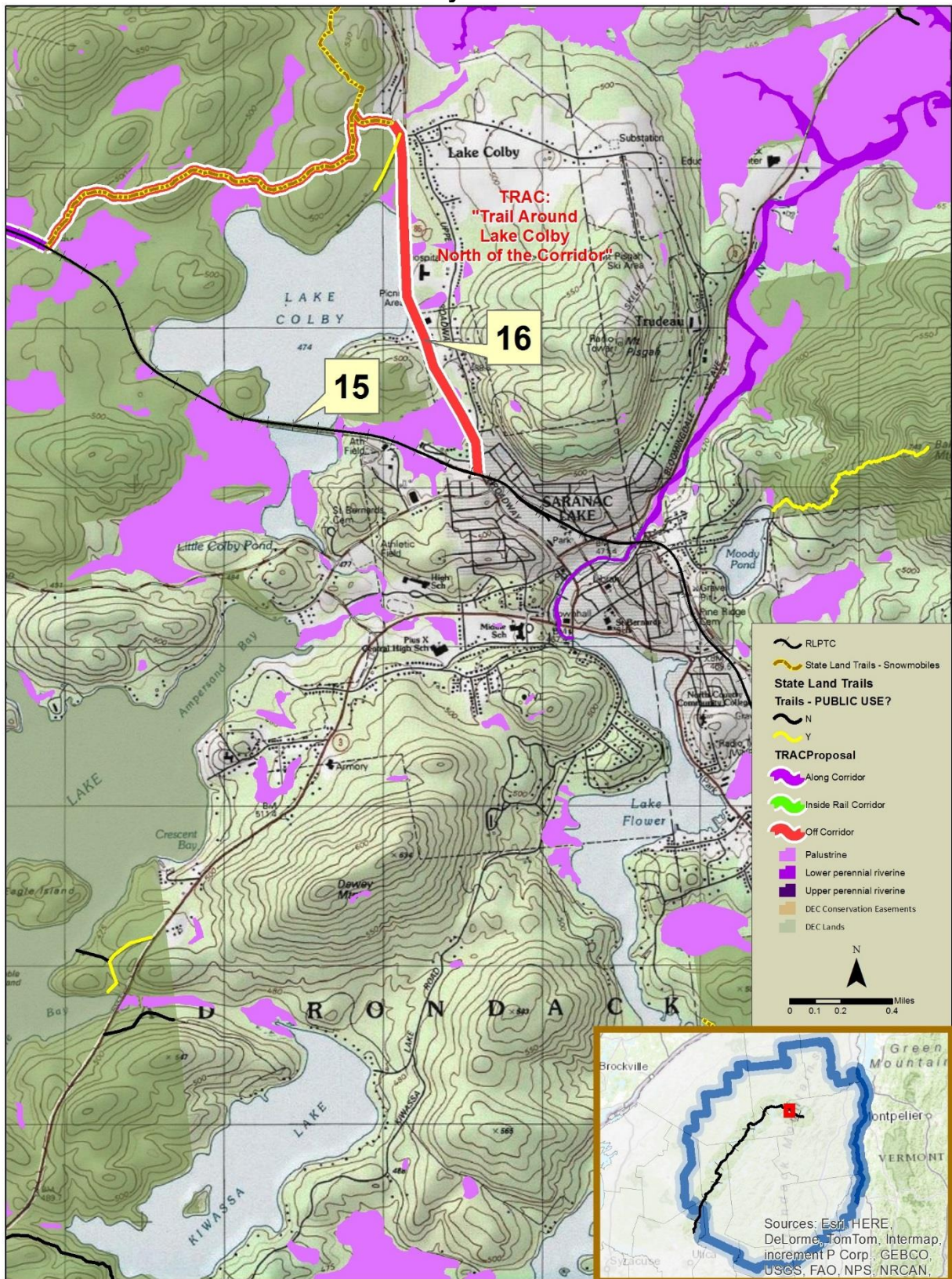


**Map Point #14** shows where TRAC proposes a segment approximately 0.7 mile “Along Corridor”, which would result in adverse impact or loss of regulated wetlands.

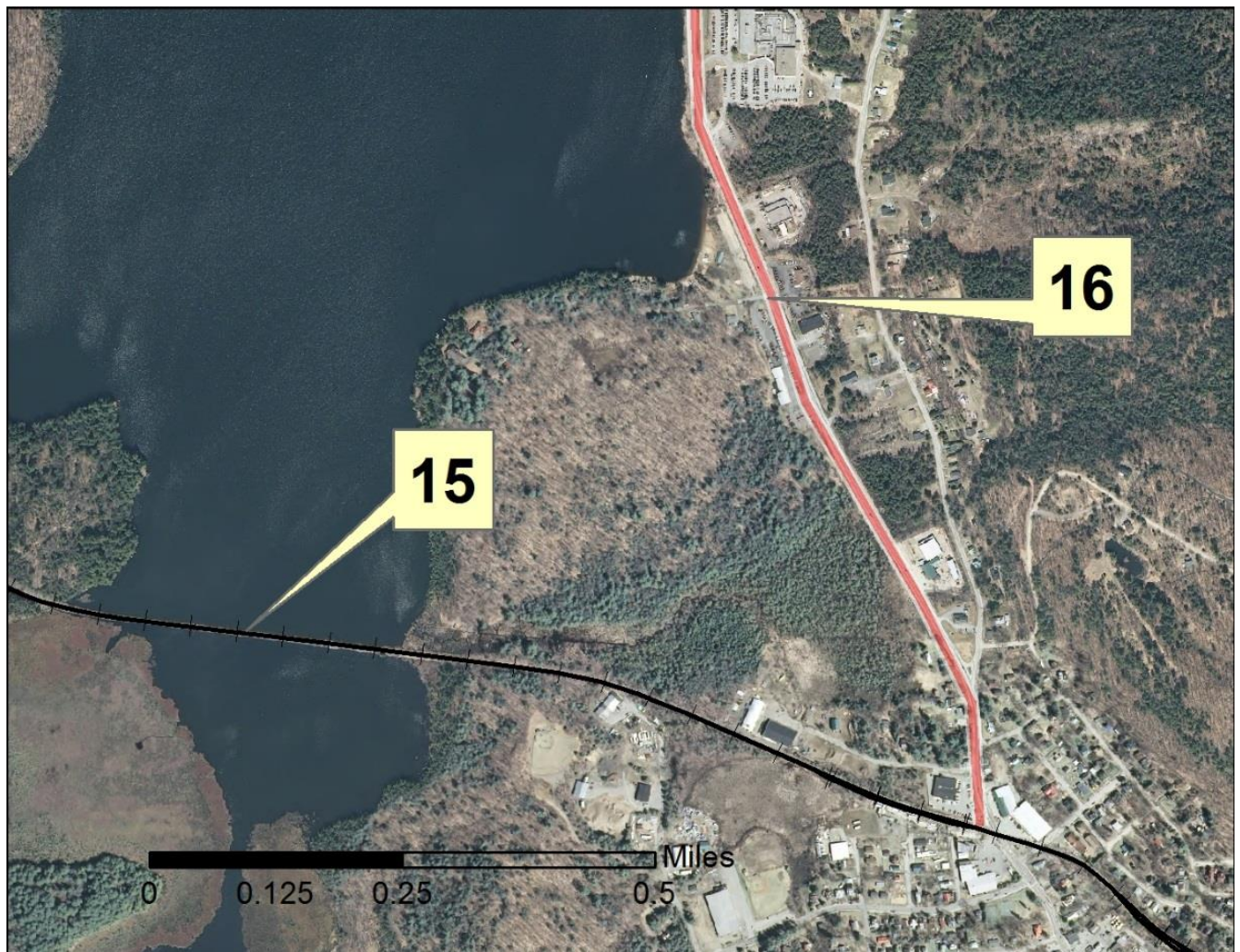


# TRAIL SECTION:

## Lake Colby/Saranac Lake







TRAC's route around Lake Colby bypasses the Lake Colby causeway (**Map Point #15**), which has potential to become fishing and paddling access for people with disabilities.

Routing the trail along Route 86 (**Map Point #16**), despite a wider shoulder than other segments of this State road, is not recommended for safety reasons, and would most likely reduce or eliminate family-oriented recreation.