# The Hamlets In Focus

The settlements of the four participating counties are listed on the next several pages. Arranged in alphabetical order, the hamlet names are in bold type with the county in which they are located identified by: (C) Clinton, (E) Essex, (H) Hamilton, or (SL) St. Lawrence. Included for each hamlet is some type of graphic representation of the village: a photograph, plan diagram, or perspective drawing of a section of the community that captures its essence.

Accompanying the image is a short one or two sentence statement identifying some outstanding characteristics or circumstances which are the predominant elements of the community's personality.

This section has been included for a very important reason. Even though the groupings suggested emphasize collections of hamlets and the shared characteristics of the group, each village, in the final analysis, is a unique and special entity which cannot be

forgotten in any form of developmental or marketing strategy. While geographic, functional, or physical groupings might prove valuable in pursuing investment or developing improved marketing approaches, each hamlet is a special and important part of the Adirondack region with loyal inhabitants and unique histories rooting the community to its soil. Future planning approaches will have to address the needs and aspirations of each of these individual hamlets.

As a small, isolated hamlet in the southern region of the Park, **Arietta (H)** exhibits many of the characteristics of numerous tiny Adirondack communities bypassed by time and progress.
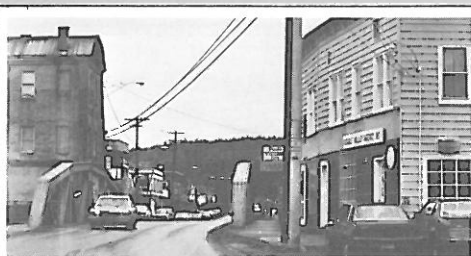
From an early flourishing milltown **Ausable Forks (C/E)** has become a more peaceful sub-regional service center. The low visual quality of the hamlet's central core, seasonal flooding, and the need for improvements in the community's sewage system are among its major problems today.

Benson (H), although of some importance in early Hamilton County history, is today a tiny, sparsely settled, woodland hamlet.

Bloomingdale (E) is a fine example of a well-maintained bedroom community. Situated in the Saranac River Valley, the attractive hamlet displays good visual quality enhanced by outstanding views to distant peaks.

Blue Mountain Lake (H) typifies an outstanding example of the lake-oriented Adirondack hamlet with the Adirondack Museum providing the economic base and a major tourist draw for the community. Physically the village core lacks the attractive identity presented by the community as a whole.


Chazy Lake (C) represents the isolated, mountain, lakeshore development including subdivisions of small cottages, but having no identifiable core.

Located along a busy tourist access route into the Park, **Childwold** (SL) is a linear settlement with no central area. Its economy is largely dependent on seasonal traffic.

Located in a shallow river valley, **Clayburg** (C) is a small and rather remote hamlet serving a community of permanent residents.
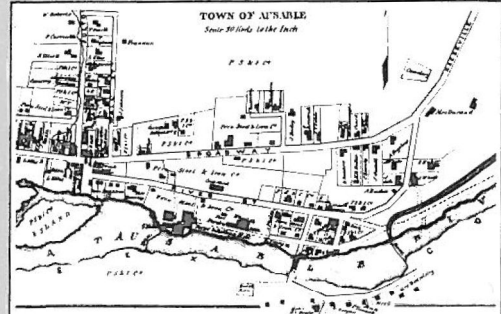
Though once a thriving and well laid out milltown, **Clintonville** (C) has evolved into a declining strip community exhibiting low visual quality.

Located near the Park, **Colton** (SL) enjoys the waterfront and forest amenities of many Adirondack hamlets. This year-round bedroom community contains several interesting and architecturally significant structures.

Conifer (SL) typifies the old company town in a remote location. Having lost its industry, the community now struggles without a local economic base.


An attractive lakeshore village, **Cranberry Lake** (SL) is a summer home for many retired persons. Tourism based on the outstanding lake setting could be further developed.

Crown Point Center (E) exhibits many of the characteristics of a 19th Century farm service community. Remnants of the general prosperity of the once-thriving hamlet are still visible in scenic green areas throughout the village.

As an historic Lake Champlain community **Crown Point** (E) serves its mainly year-round residents and farming concerns in the surrounding area. A local beautification program is currently underway to maintain the handsome community with its many fine older homes and quaint village green.

Dannemora (C) is a community dominated by an institution, both through the economic prosperity which the Clinton Correctional Facility provides for the residents and the visual dominance which the prison affords the central area of the village.
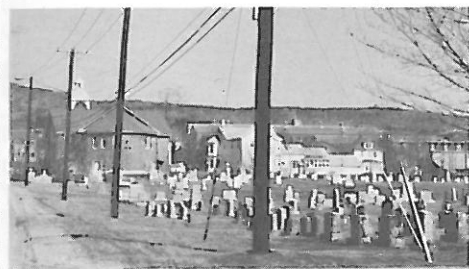

Elizabethtown's (E) role as county seat is identified by the imposing lawns and structures housing the county government. While containing many attractive homes, wide streets and scattered settlement patterns give the community a sprawling, open character lacking human scale.

Essex (E) is a small, historic hamlet which appears to have been "frozen in time". Its center is outstanding both in scale and architectural quality and enjoys a unique relationship to Lake Champlain in welcoming ferry traffic to New York.

As a quaint, farm service community **Ellenburg Center's (C)** central core achieves good human scale as contrasted to the open farmland surrounding the village. While located in the Park, Ellenburg Center is more similar to other northern farming communities than to most Adirondack hamlets.
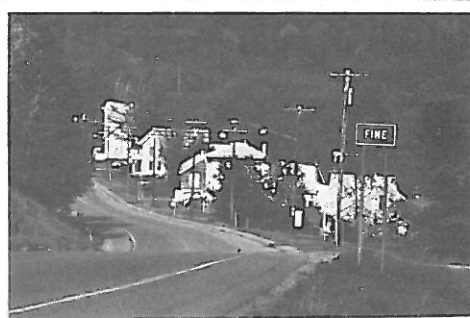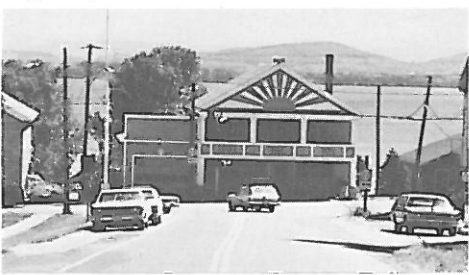
Fine (SL) is a small, remote village which serves as a bedroom community for nearby industries. A number of deteriorated roads, sidewalks and buildings need attention.

As an isolated strip development with minimal economic base, **Hoffmeister's (H)** scattered structures project an almost frontier-like character.

Hope (H) is a tiny Sacandaga River hamlet with an outstanding setting but minimal population and commercial activity.
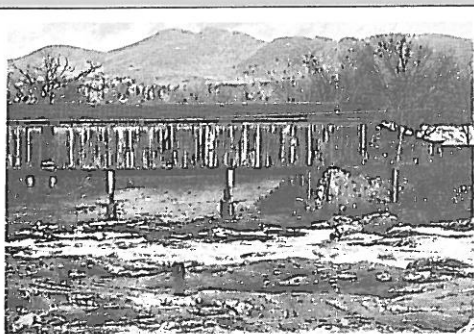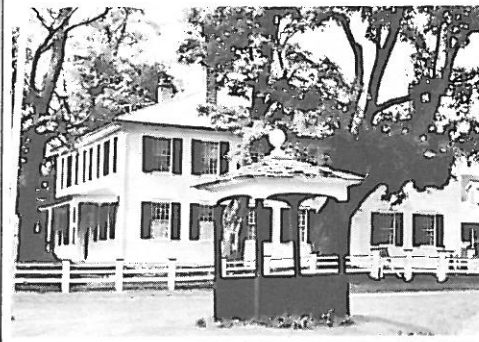

An agricultural economic base and landscape setting distinguish **Hopkinton (SL)** from the majority of Adirondack hamlets. Strip development diffuses the community focus from the "village green".

As a central Adirondack crossroads community, **Indian Lake (H)** is unusual in ignoring its close proximity to Lake Adirondack. The village shows the domestic landscape of many small American communities with a strong village center.

Although its appearance could be improved, **Inlet's (H)** central core is outstanding in character. The recreational base of the village should be expanded in any development plans.

Ironville (E) is an attractive museum community in a rather remote location. Its presence should be more widely marketed.

Keene (E) is a river valley community enroute to Lake Placid with many beautiful homes in the surrounding countryside complementing historic structures within the village.

An old covered bridge and an attractive village green give **Jay (E)** a very New England character. This close-knit community charm should be preserved.
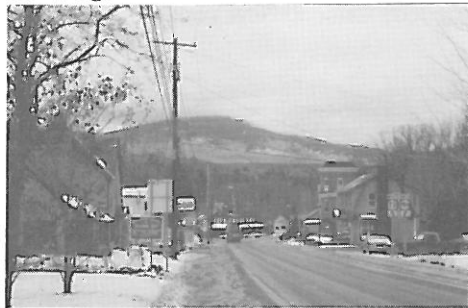
As a linear river hamlet **Keene Valley (E)** contains some architecturally interesting buildings. The settlement is well-defined and yet has no perceivable nucleus.

Keeseville (C/E) exemplifies a community evolving from an old milltown into one with a diversified economic base. The village center needs to be strengthened including the upgrading of public areas.

Lake Placid (E) is a prosperous, European-like community, site of the 1932 and 1980 Olympics, and destination of many park visitors. The strong main street and picturesque setting should be reinforced.

The attractive county government buildings in **Lake Pleasant** (H) serve as a focal point for the otherwise loosely organized, linear hamlet. The community has strong potential for recreational and industrial development.

Lewis (E) typifies the classic crossroads community enhanced by distant views and marked by consistent but undistinguished architecture. Growth potential exists with future mining of wollastonite deposits.
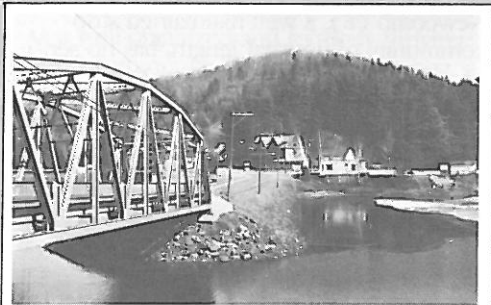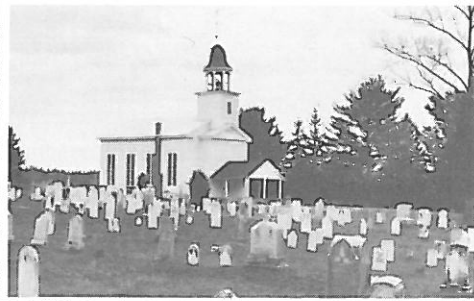
As one of the Adirondack Wilderness Outpost hamlets, **Long Lake** (H) enjoys a beautiful natural setting. The community should continue to develop its recreational assets.

Lyon Mountain (C) exists as the perfect example of an industry-deserted mining town. Workers' housing and neglected mines present dramatic images in a community where people are experiencing fewer services on a minimal economic base.

Minerva (E) is a small, peaceful community with the quality of being from another time. An old hotel and some vernacular architecture contribute to the village's charming character.
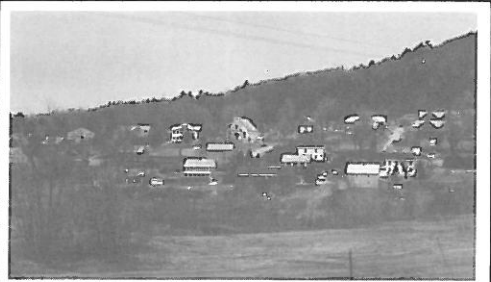
The starkness of the workers' homes and the deserted mining structures of **Mineville/Witherbee** (E) accentuate the unique town plan of this once bustling industrial center. The separation of neighborhood units poses unusual planning problems.

Morehouse (H) is a small, scattered highway settlement in an attractive woodland setting.
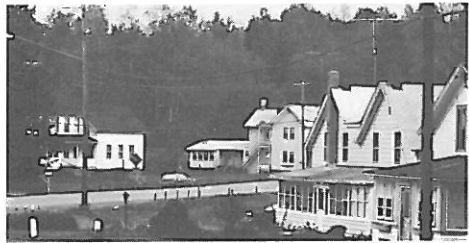
Nestled in a river valley, **Moriah Center** (E) is a small hamlet at the junction of several roads. The closing of mines has left vacant store fronts and buildings in disrepair.

As a characteristic hamlet of the eastern foothills, **Moriah Corners** (E) has a distinguished looking general store and well-maintained residences overlooking the Champlain Valley.

Newcomb (E), a well-maintained strip community of unusual length, has no sense of village center. Although it enjoys a remote high peaks location, the community's economy is jeopardized with the future of industries, forests and mining, in question.

Nicholville (SL) is an agriculturally oriented hamlet at the park's edge, which has been physically altered by highway construction. It combines field and forest landscapes.

As an early settlement on the Oswegatchie Trail, **Oswegatchie (SL)** suffered from highway relocation which bypassed the community. The hillside residential area is isolated from the highway commercial development.

North Hudson (E) has seen its Route 9 oriented tourist business fade with the construction of the Northway. Its major tourist business, Frontiertown, survives through prominent Northway visibility and ready accessibility, though the future viability of this theme park depends on the ability of its new owner to identify and capitalize on the tastes and interests of the 1980's market.

As an old-time, lake-oriented resort community **Paradox (E)** exists with a minimal economic base.

Newton Falls (SL) is an outstanding example of a company town actually focusing on the mill itself. The unique physical layout of the hamlet defines a sense of arrival and several focal points.
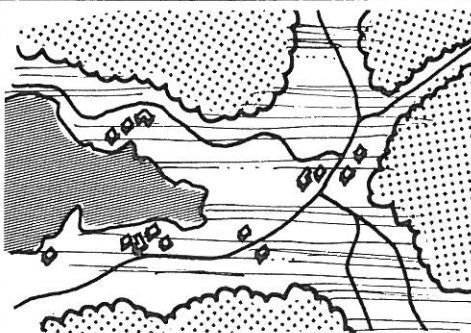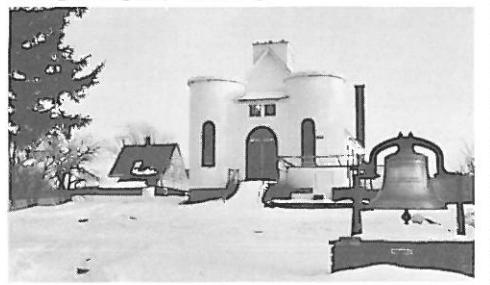

Olmstedville (E) typifies the small crossroads hamlet that has retained the early charm and rural character of many Adirondack villages.

A former company town, **Piercefield (SL)** serves as a bedroom community for Tupper Lake. Economic problems have caused some deterioration of the historically interesting company housing.

Piseco (H) exemplifies the linear Adirondack, lakeside settlement, dispersed in character in an outstanding mountain setting with numerous activity nodes.
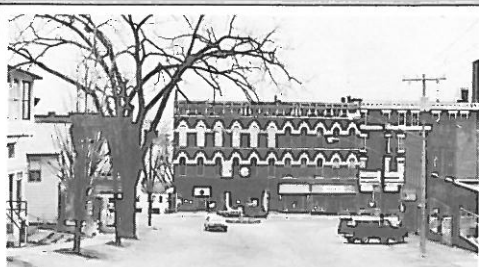

Located on a spectacular point overlooking Lake Champlain, Port Henry (E) nevertheless exhibits the dreariness of an old mining town. The strong downtown district needs to be emphasized with creative reuse of existing architecturally significant structures.

As a well-organized and formerly thriving resort community, Port Kent (E) is now a bedroom settlement with an outstanding natural setting.
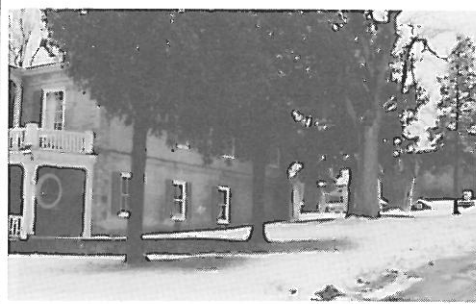
Raquette Lake (H) is remembered as the historic transfer point from rail to lake steamers providing access to the early camps and wilderness areas. Today the village remains a unique, if somewhat unmaintained, seasonal settlement.

As an extremely dispersed, institutional based village, Ray Brook (E) functions as a pass-through settlement between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid with minimal residential areas.
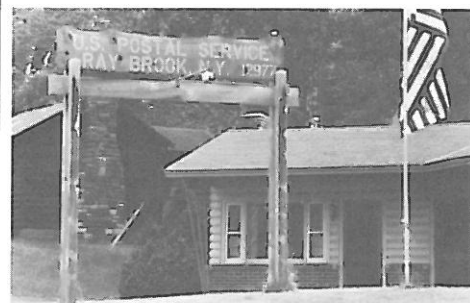
Redford (C) is a Saranac River hamlet reflecting the river's form and projecting a pleasant character and setting. Possible development opportunities are obvious in vacant buildings and attractive green spaces along the river's edge.

Riverview (C) is experienced as a stark, frontier-like hamlet struggling to survive.


Sabael (H) enjoys an outstanding setting on the shores of Long Lake and serves as a vacation spot for many seasonal visitors.

Saranac/Moffitsville (C) and Pickets Corner (C) are an almost endless linear settlement along the Saranac River with no central core and exhibiting a rather undistinguished character.
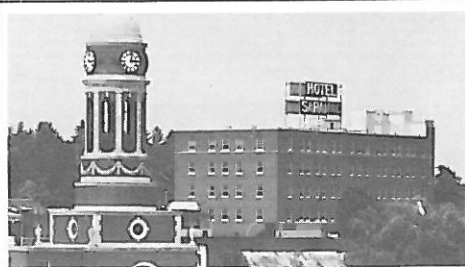

Saranac Lake (E), the largest Adirondack Park settlement, in its early history evolved as a major health resort. Historic neighborhoods, unique topography, and outstanding water relationships create significant potential for downtown development.

A thriving summer community with an attractive setting, Schroon Lake (E) offers good access from I-87. Village-wide design controls would improve the appearance of downtown areas.
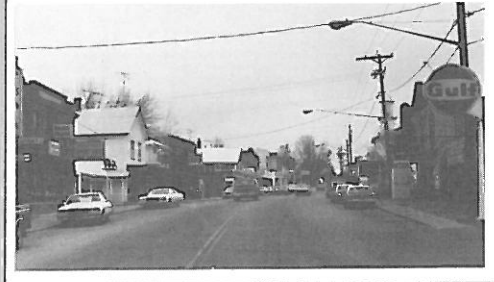

Severance (E) is an older resort settlement of both seasonal and permanent residents. A lack of village identity is promoted by its linear form.
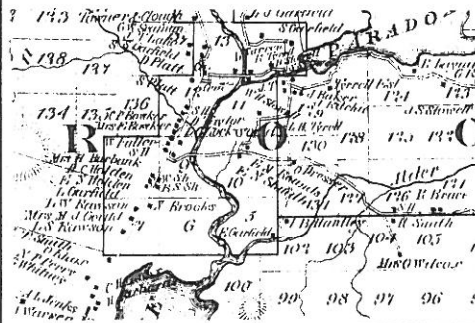
The settlement of South Colton (SL) serves as an entry point to the Adirondack Park and other local recreational facilities. The community, while not distinguished in character, has an attractive natural setting.

A good commercial and recreational base as well as a unique history number among the many attributes of Speculator (H). Stronger visual and architectural unity, especially in public areas, might encourage even greater recreational activity in the area.
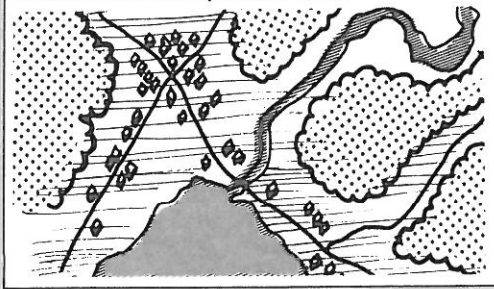
The tiny, isolated community of Standish (C), although enjoying a spectacular natural setting, exhibits deteriorated housing conditions and no viable economic base.

Star Lake (SL) serves as a regional service center and lake resort. The scattered central core of the community does not take full advantage of the lakefront setting.

As the economic hub of the lower Champlain Valley Ticonderoga (E) enjoys a unique river site with hydro reuse potential. The community's location near the old fort and other tourist attractions offers major development potential.

Upper Jay (E) is an attractive small river community having one of the earliest theme parks in the country. Although now closed due to flooding, the Park should be considered as an historical site.

As an agricultural service community **Wadhams (E)** is located on waterfalls of the Boquet River. Several 19th Century farm style homes also contribute to the village's pleasant character.

Wanakena (SL) is an attractive hamlet in a wooded, riverfront setting. Home of the State Ranger School, the hamlet has a stable year-round economy and numerous seasonal homes.

As a hamlet of architecturally consistent buildings in an impressive river valley setting, **Wells (H)** could expand its tourist and recreational facilities to enhance its economic viability.

Historic **Westport (E)** is a linear settlement along the Lake Champlain shoreline enjoying an abundance of green spaces and outstanding vistas. Future development of the old inn site is critical to the life of the hamlet.

As a depressed farm service community **Whallonsburg (E)** is experiencing the deterioration of village structures and utilities. The settlement's location on the Boquet River should be exploited.

Located near the mouth of the Boquet River, **Willsboro's (E)** close relationship to the river presents both problems and opportunities. Winter and spring flooding and lack of public utilities are encouraging commercial sprawl outside the historic village core while the newly constructed fish ladder increases recreational and tourism possibilities.

Wilmington (E), a linear hamlet located adjacent to the skiing hub of the Adirondacks, suffers from a seeming inferiority complex relative to its prosperous neighbor to the southwest, Lake Placid. The low visual quality and "lack of center" in the village need to be offset with a new public image and improved marketing strategies.

Sample Communities

As a means of summarizing the analysis in Phase One, a primary task was the selection of a group of **sample communities**. These hamlets would be used in illustrating certain prescriptive and developmental strategies which could be applied to other hamlets throughout the Adirondack Park. These were to be, in fact, prototype communities or "prime examples". Therefore, it was essential that that sample communities be a representative cross-section of all the hamlets in the Park.

To this end the consultant and county planning directors chose 12 communities which afforded the best possible coverage of the following criteria selected from the analysis. These criteria were deemed to be critical in determining the program in Phase Two of the work. The criteria and the considerations in making the selections are listed below:
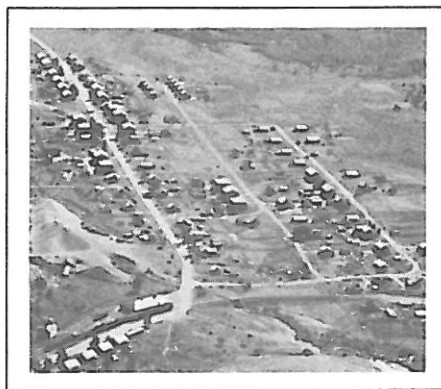
Population - Very small to large hamlets

Location - Participating counties to be represented proportionately

Geographic - All geographic groups within the four participating counties to be represented

Functional - All nine functional groups be represented

Physical Characteristics -

- all plan configurations
- varying village densities
- all qualities of visual environment
- all conditions of infrastructure
- varying landscape types
- varying conditions of village cores and neighborhoods

These 12 settlements, which together have the broad range of hamlet characteristics desired, will be the **sample communities** examined in Phase Two:

Ausable Forks
Bloomingdale
Indian Lake
Keeseville
Long Lake
Lyon Mountain
Port Henry
South Colton
Speculator
Star Lake
Willsboro
Wilmington

Sample Communities

	Geographic Groups	Functional Groups	Physical Types							
			Physical Form	Density	Visual Quality	Water	Sewer	Landscape Type	Central Core	Neighborhoods
Ausable Forks (C/E)	3	2	NODE	4.5	LOW	+A	0	RIVER VALLEY	WEAK	STRONG
Bloomingdale (E)	4	8	X-ROAD	1.5	HIGH	+A	-	OPEN MEADOW	STRONG	STRONG
Long Lake (H)	11	3, 8	LINEAR	1.6	HIGH	-	0	LAKE/FOREST	WEAK	WEAK
Indian Lake (H)	11	3	X-ROAD	2.0	AVG	+A	+A	FOREST MEADOW	STRONG	STRONG
Keeseville (C/E)	3	2	NODE	2.0	AVG	+A	+A	RIVER VALLEY	WEAK	STRONG
Lyon Mountain (C)	9	9	NODE	3.5	LOW	+M	-	FOOTHILL PLATEAU	WEAK	STRONG
Port Henry (E)	1	2	NODE	2.0	LOW	+A	+A	LAKE/STEEP TERR.	STRONG	STRONG
South Colton (SL)	10	6	X-ROAD	5.0	AVG	0	0	OPEN MEADOW	STRONG	WEAK
Speculator (H)	14	2,3	X-ROAD	1.3	AVG	+M	+M	LAKE/FOREST	WEAK	WEAK
Star Lake (SL)	8	1,3	CONC.	4.0	AVG	+0	0	LAKE	WEAK	WEAK
Willsboro (E)	1	3,5,7,8	NODE	1.0	AVG	+A	0	RIVER VALLEY	WEAK	STRONG
Wilmington (E)	1	3	LINEAR	.75	LOW	+A	0	OPEN/VALLEY	WEAK	STRONG