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HOW THE RAILROAD CAN HELP FIX WILLOW ROAD

Like Humpty-Dumpty, Willow Road is taking a beating, and all the town and county officials are having difficulty coming up with a fix.

The Lakeland Times, 1/20/2014, under the headline “Oneida County, town at loggerheads over timber hauling - Dispute could hinder timber production”:

Oneida County and the town of Lynne are at odds over an important stretch of road for hauling timber – a dispute that officials say may have significant financial implications for taxpayers, loggers and the county.

At the heart of the disagreement is a nearly 10-mile section of Willow Road in far southwestern Oneida County. The road runs north and south – vertically cutting the town of Lynne in half – and serves as a major artery for trucks hauling timber. Nearly the entire town is covered by county-owned forestland.

Town officials claim that trucks carrying timber have damaged the road, causing two dips in the pavement where tires touch the road surface. Town Chairman Dave Schatzley said the damage is particularly problematic during rain, which he said leads to hydroplaning.*

The log trucks, however, do not stop at the end of Willow Road. They travel on, some for long distances, over other roads and bridges to mills where the logs become pulp and paper, lumber or hardwood flooring, and many other forest products.

Near its southerly end, Willow Road crosses the CN/WCL railroad. If many of the logs were to catch the train, many log truck miles, loaded and empty, would be avoided. Willow Road would still incur wear and tear moving logs to market but other roads and bridges would be spared.

What about Willow Road? WI Senate Bill 31 (pending) would create a way to channel State funding for bridges on routes that carrier heavy truck freight. A similar program for road improvements could return the bridge and road wear dividend from the logs catching the train to help fix and maintain Willow Road. Other benefits include improving competitiveness of county forests, loggers, log truckers, forest products mills and safety, all with fewer emissions.

The moral of our story: the Railroad can help fix Willow Road and a whole lot more. This is what CN/WCG and many others are working to accomplish.

* Click [here](#) for complete article by Reporter Jonathan Anderson of *The Lakeland Times*.