



September 20, 2013

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September 22, 2013



Fall Begins

Tug Hill Times

Tug Hill Times is published semimonthly by the Tug Hill Commission for its board members, staff and associates, and the local representatives of the region's communities.

DEC to Discuss Forest Decline on Sandy Flats State Forest on September 26 in Boonville

DEC's Region 6 Lowville office will hold an informational meeting on possible forest management activities on Sand Flats State Forest to address a severe forest decline due to forest insect and disease infestation at the Boonville Town Hall on Thursday, September 26, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. for individuals to talk one on one to forestry staff about the issue. A formal presentation will begin at 7:00 p.m. to explain the problem and possible measures to address it.

Sand Flats State Forest is located in the town of Lyonsdale, Lewis County and town of Boonville, Oneida County and includes 2,531 acres of actively managed state forest lands located outside of the Adirondack Park. The State purchased most of the land parcels in the 1930s and 1940s. Much of this land was abandoned agricultural lands with depleted soils and significant erosion problems. Following State acquisition, the Conservation Department began a massive tree planting program to restore these lands for watershed protection, flood prevention and future timber production.

This summer during a routine yearly aerial flight, forest decline was observed in much this state forest. The flight showed hundreds of acres of pine with dead and dying tops. A ground check determined that the pines affected were strictly Scotch pine. Forest health experts and entomologists investigated the site and determined the cause was Diplodia tip blight. The damage caused by this disease is most severe on old or weakened trees. The tip blight damage was so severe because these Scotch pine are already stressed due to poor droughty soils and the age of the Scotch pine.

The public meeting will address what is killing the Scotch pine and possible management actions that can be taken to salvage the wood fiber.

For more information the public can contact: Forester Andrea Mercurio, DEC Lowville Sub-Office at 7327 State Rt. 812, Lowville, New York 13367 or by telephone at (315) 376-3521.

SLELO Posts YouTube Video

The St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) recently posted an informational video about the PRISM on YouTube in an effort to get word out about the organization in varying media outlets. It can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3EAD1EUw04>.

More information can also be found at SLELO's website at www.sleloinvasives.org. The 2013 field season was a busy one and several field reports were uploaded to the website on work done throughout the five county area. Of particular interest to Tug Hill communities may be reports on Giant Hogweed, Delta Lake, Little John WMA, and the Salmon River.

Capacity Building Grants Offered From Parks & Trails NY



Parks & Trails New York has announced another round of their *Growing the Grassroots* Capacity Building Grants, with a deadline for applications of **November 12, 2013**. The goal of the grant program is to enhance the long-term sustainability of park and trail not-for-profit organizations by helping them better fulfill their missions; improve their reach, effectiveness, and impact; leverage resources, and increase community support for and involvement in park and trail planning, development and/or stewardship. Winona Forest Recreation Association was successful in securing a \$1,400 grant in 2012 to produce newsletters and brochure to boost WFRA's membership and subsequent ability to provide quality recreational experiences in Winona State Forest. Grants of up to \$3,000 will fund ac-

tivities that help develop and strengthen the skills, processes and resources that not-for-profit organizations need to survive:

- Organizational start-up – e.g., incorporation, initial staff, equipment purchase
- Professional consulting services that aid organizational development – e.g., fundraising, communication, marketing, membership, strategic planning, financial management
- Board and staff training
- Volunteer recruitment, training and/or recognition program
- Communications – graphic design, development or enhancement of a logo, website, newsletter, or other communication tool; printing and distribution of brochures, newsletters, or other educational or outreach materials

Awards will be made to local or regional organizations that are classified by the IRS as 501(c)(3) or who operate under the fiscal sponsorship of a 501(c)(3) and whose primary mission is stewardship of a specific New York park or trail that is or will be open to the public. All potential applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in pre-application webinar on **Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at noon**. This call will be designed to review the application form and answer questions from potential applicants.

Awards will be based on:

- Ability to initiate, grow, strengthen, or transform the organization
- Demonstrated financial need; preference will be given to organizations with annual budgets of less than \$100,000
- Detailed, documented, and realistic budget.
- Clearly articulated project goals, tangible outcomes and well-defined, objective measures of success
- Applicant support for the project as demonstrated by financial and/or in-kind commitment
- Ability to leverage other opportunities, such as partnerships and funding sources
- Creativity and the ability of the project to serve as a model for other groups
- Visibility – degree to which project will promote the organization and foster public use, appreciation, stewardship, and development of applicant's park and/or trail
- If applicable, plan for sustainability of the project after grant period ends

More information, including the online application, is available on the Parks & Trails NY website, <http://www.ptny.org/advocacy/grants.shtml>. Contact Katie Malinowski at the Commission if your organization is interested in pursuing one of these grants.

Public Library Construction Grant Program Now Open

An appropriation of \$14 million in capital funds has been included in the 2013 State Budget for the **NYS Library/ Education Department Public Library Construction Grant Program**. The application procedure for the 2013-2016 construction grant program will be an online process. Libraries may apply for a construction grant that could fund up to 75 percent of a project. The minimum grant award is \$2,500 for a minimum total project cost of \$5,000. There is no maximum award, but the amounts of the awards will depend on the number of project applications received and the total funding available to the library system. More information on this program can be found at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/construct/>.

Each public library system will set their own deadlines for member libraries to submit applications to allow time for system review and board approval. Please contact your public library system to find out their due date. The deadline for submission of applications from the systems to the State Library is October 10, 2013.

Mercer's Ice Cream Featured at New York Day

Two Oneida County products were featured at US Senator's Kristen Gillibrand's annual New York Farm Day celebrated in Washington D.C. Mercer's Dairy from Boonville wine ice cream and F.X. Matt's Brewery Company's Utica Saranac Pumpkin Ale and Saranac White IPA Beer were both selected as "made in NY products". Farm Days showcases producers of New York's award winning wines, farm products and seafood from across the state. Senator Gillibrand stated that the event gives state and local farmers and their products an opportunity to shine.

Tug Hill Aquifer Informational Meeting October 17

Communities along the Tug Hill Aquifer and other interested parties are invited to attend an update meeting on Tug Hill Aquifer work on October 17, 2013 at 7 pm in the Adams Municipal Building. USGS will provide a presentation on continuing field work and analysis and plans for 2013/14. The last informational meeting was held in Sandy Creek in February of 2012. Since then, funding was secured through the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation for the current efforts.

The Forest Service's Community Forest and Open Space Program

US Forest Service grants are now available for its Community Forest Program (CFP), with a deadline of January 15, 2014. The Forest Service will provide financial assistance to grant recipients to establish community forests that provide continuing and accessible community benefits.

The CFP protects forests that are important for people and the places they call home. Community forests provide many benefits such as places to recreate and enjoy nature; they protect habitat, water quality and other environmental benefits, and they can provide economic benefits through timber resources. Community Forests have also long been sites for environmental and cultural education.

Eligible entities include local governments and non-profits who are eligible to hold title to land for conservation purposes.

In order to qualify, full fee title acquisition is required (conservation easements are not eligible) and public access is required. The program pays up to 50% of the project costs and requires a 50% non-federal match and. For more information, visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=241953>.

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Village of Prospect Facing a Difficult Decision

Earlier this month the Village of Prospect trustees made the difficult decision to dissolve the volunteer fire department. Village residents will have the opportunity to vote on whether to dissolve the fire department in a special election that will be held on Tuesday, September 24, noon to 9:00pm at the Prospect Municipal Building.

The decision made by the Village Board was one of the options considered due to a large worker's compensation claim filed against the village by a member of the fire department. The claim would cost Prospect upwards of \$443,000. The claim stems from an incident that occurred at the Fireman Field Days in 2008 during which a member of the fire department was hurt.

Officials said the Oneida County Self Insurance Compensation Plan came to the village earlier this summer asking the village to settle the claim for \$101,400. Village officials have stated that if they accept the settlement, the insurance premiums would rise to \$72,700 by 2015. If the village does not accept the settlement, premiums would still rise to \$44,585 by 2015. At this time, the village with 291 residents takes in about \$28,000 in taxes a year.

If village residents vote to dissolve the fire department, the money and property belonging to the company would be turned over to the Village Board of Trustees within 10 days after service of notice is given to fire department members. Village officials are exploring contracting with neighboring villages for fire protection.

Other options being considered by village officials are dissolving the village into a hamlet of the Town of Trenton or filing for bankruptcy.



2014 Local Government Conference Planning is Underway

Save the date!

*The Tug Hill Commission staff are in the planning stages for
the 25th Annual Local Government Conference to be held
March 27, 2014.*