

Sackets Harbor



Black River Initiative

Collaboration among diverse stakeholders can advance Black River goals

When stakeholders look at the Black River, some may see opportunities for increasing recreation, others may think of how litter can be prevented and pollution can be reduced, and still others may see opportunities for redevelopment. In order to move these great ideas forward, these stakeholders can collaborate, bringing together their varied expertise and capacities from diverse organizations including businesses, homeowner



Stillwater Mountain Fire Tower

associations, and planning organizations. This can help leverage numerous state and federal funding

resources that are available to them. Applications for programs such as the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Transportation Alternative Grants, Pollution Prevention Institute, and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative can be leveraged to enhance the 1.2 million acre natural resource, improve quality of life, enhance resiliency, and provide recreational opportunities in the basin.

State approved Black River 9 element Watershed Management Plan now available

A new watershed management plan was recently state approved for the Black River that integrates the current NY Department of State Watershed Management Plan with state goals to achieve Clean Water Act standards set by the US Environmental Protection



Agency (USEPA), by including 9 elements the USEPA requires for watershed management plans. The plan can be used to implement stormwater, agricultural, and wastewater management projects in priority areas of the watershed by leveraging state and federal funding.

Find the plan at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/press/107887.html>

Inside this issue:

State approved 9 element plan	1	Village of Lyons Falls updates	5
Great Lakes workgroups	2	Town of Wilna Crown Cleaners	5
Riparian restoration tool	2	Factory Street reconstruction	6
Black River trash bash	3	Jefferson County Stormwater Coalition	6
Water assessment training	3	Black River conference	7
Kelsey Creek update	4	Lewis County updates	7,8
Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust updates	4	Riverfest	8

Great Lakes Action Agenda Northeast sub basin Workgroup

Stakeholders including soil and water conservation districts, State Parks, NYS Dept of State, federal agencies, landowner and other interested organizations, from the Black River and St. Lawrence River watershed gathered at Keewaydin State Park this October to discuss collaborative opportunities to advance water quality, natural resources, resiliency, recreation, and energy goals in the Northeast sub-basin of New York's Great Lakes watershed. The meeting was facilitated by the NYSDEC Great Lakes Watershed Program to engage stakeholders in implementing actions of New York's Interim Great Lakes Action Agenda. At the meeting, a new communication tool, called the Great Lakes Clean Communities Network, was introduced. To connect with other stakeholders and access resources, sign up at <http://glccn.org/>

The Great Lakes program has worked with partners to provide small grants for organizations interested in applying an ecosystem based management approach to

projects and research throughout New York's Great Lakes basin. Currently, the NYS Great Lakes Research Consortium has a small grant available for research projects that is due January 9th. For more information visit: <http://www.esf.edu/glrc/>.

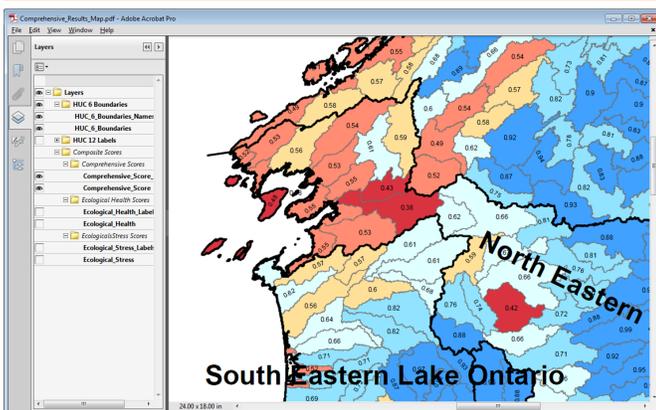
The NY Sea Grant Great Lakes small grants program supports project planning, design and implementation activities. The next round of these implementation grants is anticipated for release in summer 2017. These grant programs are supported by the Environmental Protection Fund through the Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Act. Stakeholders, including municipalities, consultants, and other organizations can leverage these small grants and develop projects to apply for

larger grant programs, including the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and other state and federal grants. To learn more, or to get involved with the sub-basin work groups, contact Great Lakes program staff at greatlakes@dec.ny.gov or visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/91881.html>



Work group meeting held at Keewaydin State Park

Great Lakes Riparian Restoration Opportunity Assessment



Comprehensive scores identify indicators of ecological health and subtract indicators of ecological stress to portray riparian conditions in the Black River watershed.

The NY Natural Heritage Program of the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, in collaboration with DEC's Great Lakes watershed program, developed landscape assessment products that will assist DEC and other stakeholder organizations to strategically identify and prioritize sites for implementation of DEC's Tree's for Trib's program and other riparian restoration and protection efforts within New York's Great Lakes basin. Planning tools and accompanying maps are publicly accessible resources designed for use by stakeholders to identify high priority stream reaches for water quality improvements, habitat enhancement and connectivity, streambank resiliency, and riparian protection. For more information and to access the tools visit: <http://nynhp.org/treesfortribsgl>

Annual Black River Trash Bash

The Black River Trash Bash, an annual watershed-wide event organized by the Tug Hill Commission, cleans up the river's shorelines and documents what is found. The annual event seeks to increase public participation in solving the problem of litter and pollution and to increase public awareness and appreciation of the river. This year, 57 participants from organizations including Lyons Falls Alive, South Lewis Central School, Adirondack Communities Advisory League, Lewis County and Jefferson County Water Quality Coordinating Committees, American Society of Civil Engineers Student Club at SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Utica, and Haderondah 4-H Club in Old Forge.

Volunteers collected 400 pounds of trash and recyclables from the Black River shoreline. Trash picked up included 1,600 cigarette butts, 422 food wrappers, 72 pieces of construction materials, 72 tobacco wrappers, 177 beverage cans and bottles and 32 diapers. Data collected from five locations along the Black River was compiled and sent to the event sponsor, the American Littoral Society, who collects data from all over New York state to be included in the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup, found online at www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup. To join us in cleaning up next September, contact Jennifer Harvill at jennifer@tughill.org.



Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators: training held in the Black River this spring



Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE) is a citizen-based water quality assessment developed by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The purpose of WAVE is to enable citizen scientists to collect biological data for assessment of water quality on wadeable streams in NY.

A workshop and field training event was held this spring at Whetstone Gulf State Park for citizens and stakeholders interested in learning how to assess their local waterways using state approved water quality monitoring protocols. By learning the protocols and coordinating water quality assessment data with the WAVE coordinator, citizens scientists can contribute to statewide water quality data and management efforts.

Contact wave@dec.ny.gov for more information or visit the programs website at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/92229.html>



NY Air Brake Remediation Update

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has had oversight of New York Air Brake (NYAB) in Watertown since 1990 when a consent order was put in place to perform a Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study for onsite and off-site areas. Cleanup of the onsite and offsite areas was completed in the late 1990s.

Based on the ten year review report for Kelsey Creek, additional remedial action was implemented by SPX Corporation (SPX) to remove contaminated sediments in Kelsey Creek and the adjacent soils in the North Watertown Cemetery that could potentially impact human health or the environment. Approximately 4,300 cubic yards of soil and sediment were excavated from a half acre area. Testing was done on soft sediments and soil and removal



Kelsey Creek on Bradley St. Photo credit: Golder Associates Inc.

continued until test results showed cleanup goals were met. The contaminated media was disposed of offsite. The area was then restored and work was completed in October of this year.

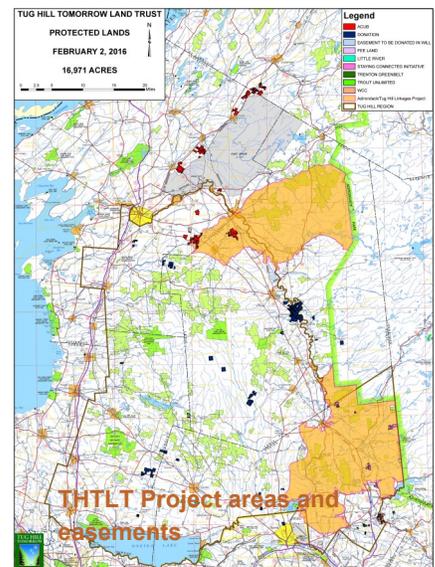
DEC is also overseeing the remediation of approximately 5000 cubic yards of contaminated soil at the Allison Test Room located on the NYAB complex. These soils were contaminated with chlorinated solvents and are currently being treated onsite utilizing a soil mixing and chemical treatment remediation program. More than 80% of the soil has been treated to the cleanup goals and has been used to backfill the excavation. Final grading of the excavation and

treatment or disposal of the remaining soil is expected to be completed in 2017. While working at the Allison Test Room site, a separate petroleum spill was discovered. The spill includes free product at the top of the bedrock. SPX removed a limited quantity of contaminated soil and rock and has installed a collection sump to capture the free product. A plastic barrier was placed between the spill site and the Allison Test Room during backfilling to prevent recontamination. DEC requested a work plan to delineate the full extent of the oil contamination.

DEC strongly values public input and staff are always available to take calls from the public by contacting the Region 6 office.

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust land protection

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust works to protect the wildlands, working forests and farms of the Tug Hill region and surrounding areas, and to promote appreciation of the region's natural and cultural heritage, for present and future generations. Using primarily conservation easements, they have protected 18,883 acres as of December 2016. The organization has leveraged funding from the Army Compatible Use Buffer Program in the Environmental Protection Fund, NYS Conservation Partnership Program, Northern Border Regional Commission, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to protect diverse lands throughout the Tug Hill region and in the Black River Watershed. They also host field trips and educational programs throughout the year. For more information, visit their website at: http://tughilltomorrowlandtrust.org/?attachment_id=5009



Village of Lyons Falls mill demolition Update

Great progress on the Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper Mill redevelopment project has continued in 2016. Since 2014, a majority of the massive old manufacturing building at the center of the site and several large outbuildings have been demolished or are being torn down at a total cost of \$3.8 million. That included \$1.33 million from state grants including Empire State Development and additional funding from Lewis County, National Grid, the Development Authority of the North Country, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Kruger Energy, which owns a hydroelectric facility adjacent to the site and



Demolition of buildings at Lyons Falls.
Photo credit: DANC

is considering an expansion project. This fall, the water tower was demolished after no alternatives for reuse could be identified. The Lewis County Development Corporation (LCDC) also announced the new name for the redeveloped site to be the Black Moose Commerce Park,

reflecting the site's confluence with the Black and Moose Rivers, and the renaming of the chemical building that will not be demolished as the High Falls Industrial building. The remaining work at the site to be completed is the removal of three more large buildings and other small structures, however, additional funding will be needed to continue this work, as a significant amount of funding is needed for hazardous material remediation. The LCDC applied for Restore NY funding and is also seeking federal funding to continue work at the site. For more information, contact the Development Authority of the North Country, or visit: <http://www.danc.org/>

Town of Wilna and Crown Cleaners Update

The demolition of buildings at the former Crown Cleaners site in the Town of Wilna was completed in 2016. The 9-acre-plus site was placed on the EPA Superfund list in 1991 because of ground and water contamination from the former dry cleaning facility. After years of testing and study, the EPA finalized its cleanup plan in 2012. Groundwater treatment will be ongoing for 1-3 years to remove contamination from the site, and the area will be covered in topsoil and planted with native winter ryegrass to hold in soil and restore the site. The Town

of Wilna and other stakeholders are interested in redeveloping the site as a park once the cleanup is completed. The town had looked at the possibility of a boat launch but found the steep slope and presence of old building material along the shore to hinder that possibility. With assistance from the Tug Hill Commission, the town applied for state funding for planning and design for a park at the site, which was just announced in the 2016

Consolidated Funding Application awards. The redevelopment of the site as a park in connection with the portage at the Brookfield Energy dam, as well as shoreline fishing opportunities could improve recreational opportunities on the Black River in the town of Wilna.



View of power dam from shoreline of Crown Cleaners site. Photo credit: Tug Hill Commission

City of Watertown Factory Street Reconstruction

Two way traffic reopened in November as fall work on Factory Street was completed. Throughout 2016, the street was restricted to eastbound traffic for utility and street construction, including the installation of hydrodynamic separator's in the sewer system to prevent combined sewer overflows to the River and meet DEC Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System requirements. Work completed included improved road infrastructure, landscaping and stormwater capture through installations of rain gardens and tree plantings that will capture .96 acre-feet or

roughly 300,000 gallons per year of rainwater that would otherwise collect pollutants and drain to the river. New ADA compliant sidewalk corridors and shared traffic/bike lanes completed along the street will connect residents and visitors with parks throughout the city, including Veterans

Memorial Parkway, Waterworks Park, the anticipated Sewall's Island park and trail system, and State Parks and Brookfield Black River trail. The city plans to complete the reconstruction work in the spring, with the installation of pedestrian

signals and brick paver work. Improvements made to Factory Street will contribute to better water quality, aesthetics, business, recreational opportunities, and quality of life in the City of Watertown. For more information: <https://www.watertown-ny.gov/>



Jefferson County Stormwater Coalition Updates

The Jefferson County Stormwater Coalition, in partnership with the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District, developed a stormwater management plan to meet the requirements of the NYSDEC Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System permitting program. Funding was leveraged from the NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Program to develop the plan. In addition, a community outreach and engagement campaign has included a survey of awareness of water quality issues in the River among Jefferson county residents, as well as a radio ad informing residents of why oil needs to be properly disposed of to protect the water. Additional outreach is planned to promote more awareness of stormwater issues. The coalition also continued implementation of the US Forest Service Green Infrastructure grant, by planting trees and installing a rain garden in the Village of Brownville, and installing a bioswale and planting trees at the Jefferson County Highway facility. Additional tree planting and rain garden installation

will continue in the spring, as well as the installation of educational kiosks highlighting the value of the plantings such as improving aesthetics, improving water quality, providing habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, and promoting community stewardship. For more information visit: <http://www.jcnystormwater.com/>



2016 Black River Watershed Conference

An annual Black River Watershed Conference is held in early June to provide a venue for training and information sharing on a variety of topics relating to the Black River. The conference is organized by the Tug Hill Commission, NYS DEC Region 6 and the Jefferson and Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Sponsorship for the 2016 conference and bus tour was provided by four member counties of the Finger Lakes– Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (Jefferson, Lewis, Herkimer, and Hamilton) and the Beaver River Advisory Council. The conference was held at Maggie’s on the River. This year’s training and information topics included updates on projects in the Black River watershed, a presentation on the ge-



Tour of Waterworks Park to discuss opportunities for promoting recreation on the River

ology of the river, presentation on hydroelectric projects and relicensing on the river, and a presentation on the history and opportunities for white-water rafting and kayaking. The conference concluded with a bus tour featuring a

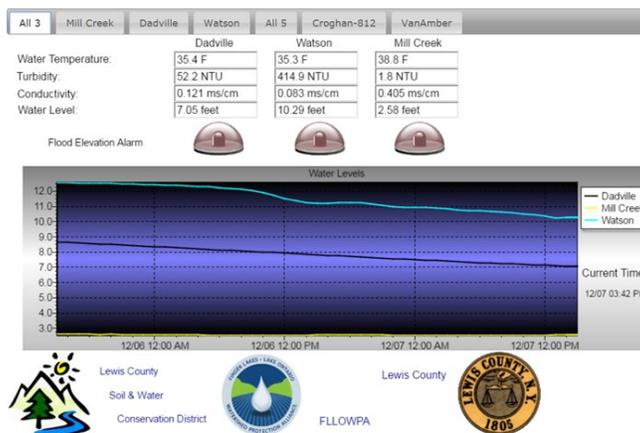
discussion about Waterworks Park, tour of the drinking water treatment facility, and a tour of the hydropower facility in Brownville. Planning for the 2017 Black River Watershed Conference is underway with plans to hold the conference in the headwaters of the watershed at Old Forge in June. Contact jennifer@tughill.org for more information and keep an eye out for the invitation. Hope to see you there!

Lewis County Stream Gauges

The Lewis County Water Quality Coordinating Committee successfully leveraged funding from the Beaver River Advisory Council and Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush to install additional stream gauges that monitor water level elevation, temperature, turbidity and conductivity in the Black River and its tributaries. This system will assist in emergency management decisions during future flooding events and inform residents of impending risk. Communicating gauge stations are located in Dadville, Beaches Bridge, and Mill Creek while the two new independent gauges are located on the VanAmber Road and NYS Route

812 on the Beaver River which are scheduled to go online in 2017. An emergency management team has been formed and will be notified of hazardous flood conditions from stream gauge readings (<http://208.125.212.114:8085/index.html>) and existing National Weather Service River predictions. The Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District is working with a Senior Service Hydrolo-

gist of the National Weather Service Forecast Office out of Cleveland, OH to include Dadville as a future river prediction site similar to Watertown and Boonville (see water.weather.gov).



Agricultural Best Management Practices in Lewis County

The Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program and the competitive Agricultural Non-Point Source Abatement and Control Grant Program (AGNPS) are cost sharing grant programs administered by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets with funding from the Environmental Protection Fund. AEM is a tool used to identify and plan for environmental concerns on farms. If concerns are identified a certified nutrient management plan (CNMP) is developed to correct the issue and funding is applied for through the AGNPS Program. Soil and Water Conservation



Districts (SWCD's) are eligible to apply for cost sharing to implement environmental best management practices (BMP's) on behalf of our local farmers based on the water quality needs identified.

In 2016 Lewis County SWCD was able to cost share beneficial BMP's for several local farms, including the installation of 233 acres of cover crops on 3 different farms in the Black River Watershed. The cover crops provide many environmental benefits including erosion control, nutrient reduction, increased soil organic matter and

completion of a large nutrient management project including the installation of 2 manure storage facilities and a silage leachate collection system. The manure storage facilities are part of an engineered total collection system that collect all manure and nutrient laden water from the bunk silos to be separated from clean water and stored until it can safely be spread on fields according to a CNMP. The SWCD expects to pay out approximately \$315,000 to local farms enrolled in the programs this year once payments are finalized. For more information visit:

many more. The SWCD also assisted with the

www.lewiscountysoilandwater.com/



Lewis County Riverfest 2016

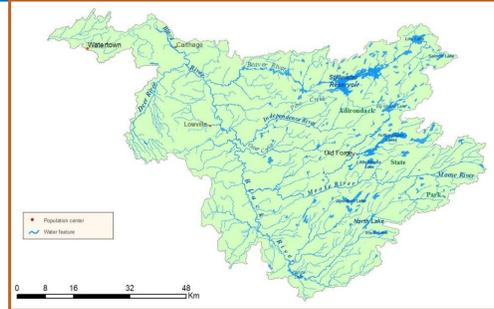
The 27th annual Lewis County Riverfest was held August 17th, 2016. There were 106 paddlers that began their trip from the Lyons Falls Boat Launch and finished at the Beaches Bridge boat launch. A free shuttle brought paddlers back to the starting launch. Along the way, paddlers had an opportunity to participate in "river trivia" to test their knowledge about the Black River basin and win a prize donated by Lewis County businesses. The trivia, shuttle and festival were sponsored by Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce. Keep an eye out for next years registration for this fun and educational event!



<https://www.facebook.com/Lewis-County-Soil-Water-Conservation-District-194437123937645/>

Black River Initiative

The Black River Initiative is a multi-pronged approach to protect and improve the water quality, recreational opportunities and communities along the Black River. The Black River Watershed Management Plan (2010), Black River Blueway Trail Plan (2007) and Black River Trail Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (2012) provide the foundation to advance existing efforts and new projects that enhance and improve all aspects of the Black River. An annual newsletter highlights recent developments in the Black River Initiative, connects with stakeholders, and promotes collaborative efforts to achieve goals. For more information, visit: <http://www.tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/watershed-initiative/>
Thank you to all of the organizations that contributed to this newsletter!



[For more Information on the Black River Initiative Contact:](#)

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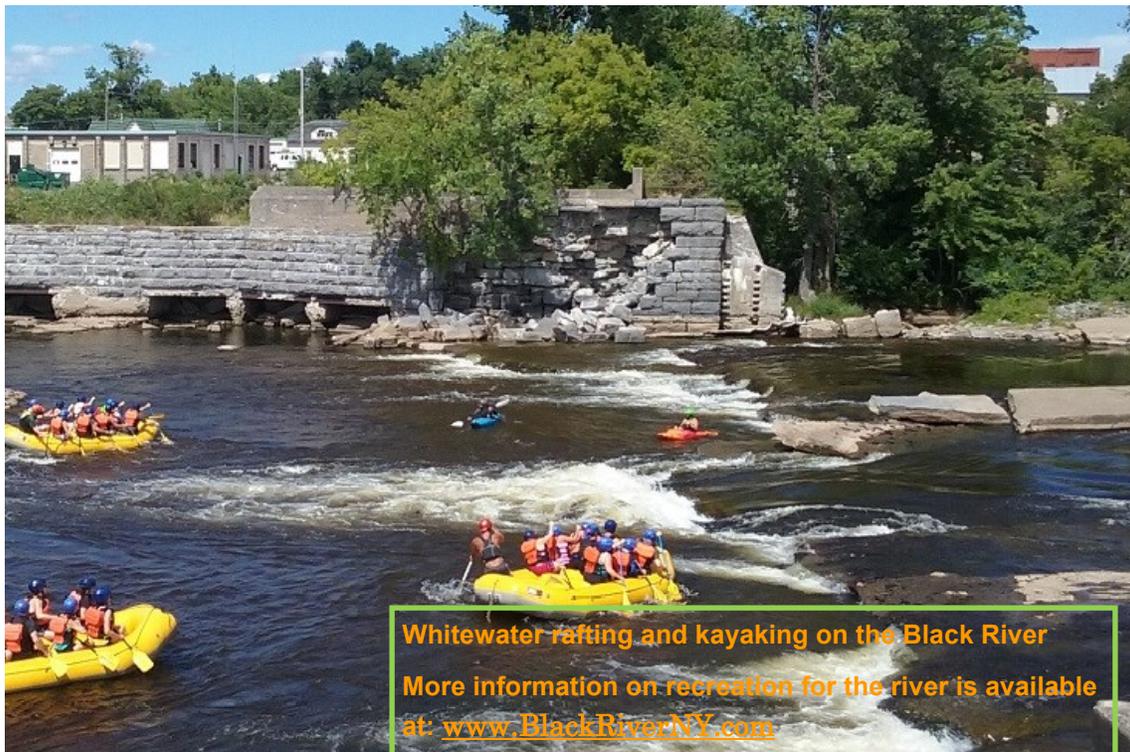
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NYS Tug Hill Commission



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Whitewater rafting and kayaking on the Black River
More information on recreation for the river is available
at: www.BlackRiverNY.com