

FISH CREEK UPDATE

Kiosk to be Installed at International Road

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is working with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to install a kiosk at International Rd. The kiosk will illustrate the natural and cultural history of the project area, as well as include information on the recreational opportunities available. The illustrative panels are being designed by Bob McNamara of Cleveland, NY.

Gate Update

As you travel the roads, you will notice that a number of new gates and barriers were installed last fall that were outlined in the Draft Recreational Management Plan. These gates and barriers assist in the management of motor vehicle, snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle use. They were placed where DEC has public use rights, per the easements, but chooses not to exercise specified right at this time, or placed where access needs to be restricted, per the easement agreements.

As a reminder, the only public right purchased for the North-South Road was for snowmobile use, so the road has been gated on both ends and will only be opened during snowmobile season.

To protect the roads from damage during spring break up, you will notice that the gates at the beginning of Camp Four Road and Michigan Mills Road Extension will be closed and locked following snowmobile season. Signs will be hung by the gates to remind visitors that the roads are closed to motor vehicle access during mud season. As soon as the roads have dried and are passable the gates will be reopened.

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SAVE THE DATE!

*East Branch of Fish Creek
Property Tour*

*Tuesday, October 5, 2010
1:00 to 4:00 p.m*

Join Tug Hill Commission staff as they visit parts of the TNC, Molpus and DEC properties, and meet with project partners along the way.

We will enter on the G&W Road, travel south on the North-South Road, and exit at Michigan Mills Road.

PREREGISTRATION REQUIRED!

Contact Linda Gibbs at
1-888-785-2380 toll-free in region,
or gibbs@tughill.org
no later than September 30 to
preregister and for further details.



Gates – From Page 1

The closing of the gates does not mean that the property is closed to public use; you can still access the property on foot or other non motorized use such as trail (mountain) bicycles. It is asked that you respect the gates and barriers and do not try to tamper with them. Destruction or damage of the gates takes time and funding away from other work that is planned to improve public access on the property.

If there are any questions or concerns in regards to the gates, please feel free to contact Michael Giocondo at the Lowville DEC Office 315-376-3521.

Invasive Plant Monitoring on TNC Property

TNC just completed another year of invasive plant monitoring. This year's focus was on wetland and riparian invasive plants. Plants found included purple loosestrife and phragmites, as well as a population of garlic mustard around one of the hunting camps. Most of the plants were removed when they were found.

TNC is hoping to keep the spread of these plants to a minimum by continuing to monitor the Conservation Area each year. If anyone wants more information on these invaders and TNC's efforts, they are more than welcome to contact Lorna Wright or Chris Lajewski.

Forest Legacy Inspection

The easement on the Molpus portion of the East Branch of Fish Creek Easement lands was acquired with partial funding from the Federal Forest Legacy Program. An inspection team from the US Forest Service, which administers the Forest Legacy program, conducted a field inspection of the property on July 28, 2010. This visit included representatives of Molpus and the NYSDEC.

NYSDEC Maintenance and Infrastructure Work

The DEC has done a limited amount of work on both the Molpus and TNC easement lands this year due to the late state budget and lack of funding. Funding appropriations are just being released, and they hope to get some more work done this season before the weather closes in.

Nature Conservancy Continues Payments to Municipalities

Early each calendar year, the Tug Hill Commission facilitates a meeting between TNC and East Branch of Fish Creek watershed town supervisors to review the payments municipalities can expect in lieu of taxes each year pertaining to TNC's properties in the watershed. Payments are determined using a formula agreed upon after TNC took ownership of its properties. The most TNC's property tax exemption may impact a town is 0.5%, after which TNC pays full taxes on any additional properties it may acquire.

TNC sent a letter early in 2010 to each town supervisor detailing the calculated amounts they can expect to receive, offering to meet so as to discuss any issues or concerns. All payments have been agreed upon for 2010.

Recreation Access Maps Available from Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust has a guide available for those wishing to use the East Branch of Fish Creek Easement Lands and East Branch of Fish Creek State Forest. The publication contains color maps, and provides information about what road access and types of activity is allowed where, by whom, and at what times of year. Free copies are available from Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, P.O. Box 6063, Watertown, NY 13601, phone: 315-779-8240, email: thtomorr@northnet.org.

Organization/Agency Contacts

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The Nature Conservancy Central & Western NY Chapter Office

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NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Fred Munk, Lowville
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Tug Hill Commission

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Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust

Linda Garrett, Watertown
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Shared Goals of the East Branch of Fish Creek Working Group (From April 1997 Report)

1. To maintain a high-quality, sustainable environment for the health, safety and enjoyment of our children, our children's children, and successive generations.
2. To provide for the protection of the core forest's long-term timber productivity, water quality, and overall natural resource and habitat health, as well as traditional hunting, trapping, fishing and recreational uses.
3. To provide for resource protection in a way that avoids a shift in the property tax burden to local taxpayers, prevents a negative impact on local job availability, and sustains the economic viability of area communities.
4. To help spread the costs of protection over the many beneficiaries at the local, regional and state level.
5. To maintain mixed ownership of most of the eastern core forest, and find ways to provide for recreational access in a way that does not threaten natural resource quality or adversely affect private property rights.
6. To encourage continued private land stewardship through voluntary compliance with environmental standards and methods, such as timber harvest guideline