

EVALUATION OF TUG HILL COMMISSION PROGRAMS

WHITE PAPER TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE

July 2008

Prepared by:

NEW YORK STATE TUG HILL COMMISSION
In cooperation with
**THE COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS
OF THE TUG HILL REGION**



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Helping local governments and citizens shape the future of the Tug Hill region.



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June 27, 2008

Governor Paterson, Senator Skelos, and Speaker Silver:

The board of the Tug Hill Commission is pleased to present its five-year report, as called for in the Commission's enabling legislation, Article 37 of the Executive Law. On behalf of my fellow Commissioners and the region's councils of government we are pleased to report that Tug Hill communities and local elected officials continue to overwhelmingly value the programs and services of the Commission.

This report evaluates the Commission programs through a survey of local elected and appointed officials from the Tug Hill region's 62 towns and villages, and several officials of key county, local and state organizations as well as nongovernmental organizations within the region. The survey was conducted in January and February of 2008, under the guidance of the five councils of government that operate in the Tug Hill region.

The survey was originally developed for the Commission by Cornell University over 25 years ago, and slightly modified over the years as Commission programs evolved. The survey has been utilized several times over the years, and this is the second time the survey has been used since the Commission was codified in the Executive Law in 1998.

Results to this survey are similar to earlier years. That is, local officials feel strongly that the Tug Hill Commission programs and services need to be continued and provide services that these rural communities otherwise could not support on their own. Analyzing the results of the survey leads the Commission, in concert with the officers of the region's council of governments, to recommend that no changes are needed in the Commission's legislation at this time.

Our thanks to each of you for continuing support for the Tug Hill Commission programs and to our partnering agencies who have forged outstanding relationships that benefit the region.

Sincerely,

Kenneth W. Vigus
Chair

John K. Bartow Jr.
Executive Director

cc: Tug Hill State legislative delegation – Senators Aubertine, Griffo, Valesky;
and Assembly Members Barclay, Destito, Scozzafava, and Townsend

Helping local governments and citizens shape the future of the Tug Hill region.

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to the
Governor and Legislature

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Article 37 of the Executive Law

2007 marked the 35th anniversary of the New York State Tug Hill Commission. For its first 25 years the Commission was a Legislative Commission under Chapter 972 of the Laws of 1972 and its subsequent amendments. Known as the Temporary State Commission on Tug Hill, the Commission served its first 25 years under various “sunset” provisions of each amendment to Chapter 972. In 1998, the Commission was established as an Executive Branch Commission under Article 37 of the Executive Law. For the past ten years the Commission has had a tangential relationship with the New York Department of State and continues to operate as an independent Commission serving the Tug Hill region and its communities.

Article 37 of the Executive Law defines the Tug Hill region as a 2,100 square mile, 1 million acre, 62 municipality region “lying between Lake Ontario, the Black River and Oneida Lake,” encompassing forest and farmland, and waters, important to the State, and deserving of technical assistance due to its small population and relative poverty. Article 37 establishes the Commission as a non-regulatory state agency that provides technical assistance to the 62 towns and villages and to community organizations of the Tug Hill region with the mission of “municipal assistance, conservation, preservation and development in the region.”

Section 847-e of Article 37 calls for an annual report to the Governor and State Legislature (the Commission’s annual newsletter report ***Headwaters***) and an every five-year report on the results of a survey of local officials “throughout the Tug Hill region in regard to the effectiveness of commission programs.” This ***White Paper*** is that report.

Sustaining the Mission

In 1976, after rounds of public meetings throughout the region, the Commission recommended a program of technical assistance to communities to help them, singly and together, protect the environment and strengthen the economy through local action. In the years since, the Commission’s legislation has been renewed several times (as its legislation “sunset”), each time reconfirming its mission regarding the economy, environment and local action. In 1998, the Commission’s legislation was again renewed (this time removing its sunset provision) making the Commission permanent with essentially the same mission.

“The purpose of the commission is to enable local governments, private organizations, and individuals to shape the future of the Tug Hill region, and to demonstrate and communicate ways that this can be done by other rural areas. Commission programs are geared toward the conservation and productive use of the natural resources of the region, strengthening the long-term economy, employment, cultural and social resources, and the general well-being of the rural communities.” Executive Law Article 37, Section 847-a – Statement of legislative findings and purpose; Chapter 440 of the Laws of 1998

Each of these reconfirmations of mission makes sense in that local communities and residents support this role for the Commission as demonstrated by the Commission’s Local Leader Surveys and its regular community surveys. The Commission recognizes that local leaders have regularly rated the Commission’s “basic” programs highest. They have found Commission services for land use planning assistance, helping in finding money for key community investments (e.g. water and sewer facilities, parks and “downtown” revitalization activities), skill development workshops, and the Annual Local Government Conference most important to them.

The Commission's mission also makes sense in terms of statements of state and national policy. For example, the State's open space plan recognizes Tug Hill as one of the State's important natural resource areas. At a national level, the U.S. Forest Service has recognized Tug Hill as part of the "Northern Forest" where traditional uses of the land and traditional land ownership patterns ought to be retained. Tug Hill is also within the Great Lakes Basin which has been nationally and internationally recognized as an important natural asset.

Other Tug Hill Related Legislation

In addition to its basic enabling statute, the Tug Hill Commission has a few other statutes that bear on our work. They include the Article 5 of the Real Property Tax Law which ensures payment of taxes on certain fee simple and all conservation easements purchased by the state; the Tug Hill Reserve Act (Chapter 846 of the Laws of 1992) which enables local governments and COGs to identify "Special Areas" vital to protecting natural resources and character landscapes and also limits government immunity from certain actions affecting such designated areas; and, most recently, an amendment to the Public Service Law (Chapter 72 of the Laws of 2004) designating the Tug Hill Commission with "Party Status" for the siting of major transmission facilities under Article VII of the Public Service Law.

The November 2007 New York State Supreme Court (Chautauqua County) decision *Dillenburg v. State of New York*; et.al. threw into question the State's payment of taxes on certain lands. This case (presently on appeal) could have significant ramifications for Tug Hill municipalities depending upon its outcome. Tug Hill communities are patiently awaiting a decision.

In 2007 the Tug Hill Councils of Government asked the Commission to revisit the Tug Hill Reserve Act and refine the criteria for designating Special Areas. The intent was to standardize the definition of Special Areas within the region and to encourage Councils of Government and local communities to complete the designation of them. In 2008 we will complete the revision of a Special Areas guidebook and revisit the designation of Special Areas in the Cooperative Tug Hill Council 16 town region.

To fulfill its statutory responsibility under Article VII of the Public Service Law, the Commission in 2004 adopted a policy governing its party status under Article VII of the Public Service Law – Siting of Major Transmission Facilities. In summary, this policy states that the Tug Hill Commission adopts a position of neutrality in its role under any Article VII proceeding and uses its position as a "party" to stay informed of any proceeding regarding a major transmission facility in the region and to use its designation and receipt of information to ensure affected municipalities are informed during any siting process. This statute does not give the Commission any regulatory authority or the ability to hold hearings on any siting in the region.

Establishing, Maintaining and Building on Partnerships

The Commission's programs servicing the region's 62 towns and villages rely on a basic team approach comprised at its core with 14 specialists based in its Watertown office and 4 full-time and several part-time circuit riders serving the four Councils of Governments (COGs). While this core team is a major asset, it is finite. To maximize services and benefits to the region the Commission relies heavily on a myriad of partnerships. The Commission's most important partnership is the partnering we are able to establish with our communities and is most evident in the partnership we have with our COGs. In addition, the Commission has a

long-standing tradition of partnering with public agencies and the private sector to leverage resources (both human and financial), expertise and skills to help meet the needs of the region's communities.

One of our core partners in the public sector is the New York State Department of State. The Department of State provides administrative help to the Commission, as established in the Commission legislation of 1998. In addition to the administrative help DOS now provides us, their Local Government Division, Coastal Division and Counsel's Office provide technical assistance to the Commission and financial assistance to the region's communities. Other key state and federal partners include: N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation; N.Y.S. Environmental Facilities Corporation; N.Y.S. Department of Transportation; Empire State Development Corporation; N.Y.S. Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; N.Y.S. Department of Agriculture and Markets; N.Y.S. Education Department; New York Sea Grant; N.Y.S. Office of the Comptroller; Hudson River/Black River Regulating District; USDA Rural Development; and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Through these partnerships we are able to increase efficiencies in Commission services and bring substantial resources to help meet the needs of our communities

The Commission has also partnered for many years with public and private universities. Whether it is Jefferson Community College who hosts our annual Local Government Leaders Conference or the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry who has offered research and graduate student interns over the years to aid our communities, these institutions have come to provide invaluable assistance to the Commission. Other institutions that the Commission has partnered with recently include: Clarkson University; Syracuse University; SUNY Potsdam; SUNY Oswego and Paul Smiths College.

The Commission also relies heavily upon our local government partners for enhanced services to the region. Key local government partners include the four county governments in the region and their industrial development agencies; county planning departments; soil and water conservation districts and farmland protection boards. In addition, there are numerous town and village clerks, code enforcement officers, economic development specialists and attorneys whose help is invaluable as well as generous. Our town and village elected officials are our key leaders. They truly are the "change makers" within the region and their support is invaluable to the Commission's success.

In the private sector, the Commission establishes partnerships with both not-for-profit and for-profit corporations. In the not-for-profit arena the Commission works extensively with: Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust; The Nature Conservancy; The Northern New York Community Foundation; Pratt-Northam Foundation; Adirondack North Country Association; Association of Towns of N.Y.S.; New York Planning Federation; and, American Planning Association. These partners not only bring financial resources to communities, but also technical assistance to the Commission's planning and training services.

Increasingly, the Commission is also partnering with private for-profit corporations to help bring resources and services to the region. Private sector partners have included: Harden Furniture, Inc.; PPM Energy Corporation; Pragma Partners; National Grid Corporation; 3-B Timber; Brookfield Power Corporation; Iroquois Gas Transmission Services; and many other corporate and small business enterprises.

Other major state and federal partners have been the State Legislators and federal Congressional delegation who serve the region. These partners have provided immense support for the Commission over the years and their service to the region's communities has been outstanding. The Commission has been able to help our legislators by administering financial grants they provide to local governments and community-based

organizations and by providing background information on issues shared by communities in the region, which often result in legislation.

Through these partnerships the communities not only get access to resources, but the Commission is able to educate partners on the unique issues of our rural communities. In many instances, we have influenced bureaucracies so they can better accommodate the concerns and opportunities of our region. The Commission will continue to rely on these and other partnerships to keep the work it does for Tug Hill towns and villages of high quality at low cost.

Commission Organization and Programs

The Commission is governed by a board of nine individuals whom are residents of the region and appointed by the Governor, and the President Pro tem of the Senate and Speaker of the Assembly (see Appendix B for the appointed Commissioners). These Commissioners serve a concurrent term of five years and oversee all policy, finances and staff of the Commission. The present term of sitting Commissioners expires on July 31, 2008.

Tug Hill Commission programs provide technical assistance in a variety of areas related to our three core program units: Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance; Natural Resources Management and Development; and, Community and Economic Development. Comprised at its core with 14 specialists based in its Watertown office and 4 full-time and several part-time circuit riders serving the five Councils of Governments (COGs) this modest but very talented staff respond to the needs of our communities and Councils of Government. See Appendix C for a Commission Organization Chart and Map of our Councils of Government.

At any one time, the Commission is likely to be working on 70 or more projects, all with local government or organization “client” that requested the assistance (see Appendix D, the Commission “project list.”) Projects include: land use planning and zoning; infrastructure financing and development (sewer and water systems, municipal facilities, telecommunications and technology development; siting and review of energy facilities; parks and historic preservation; watershed management; rural economic development (especially in the areas of forestry, farming, recreation and “Main Street” revitalization); leadership and capacity development through workshops and the Commission’s annual Local Government Conference; and, a series of technical issue papers. In managing by projects, the Commission ensures that is responsive to local needs, working on something that has a distinct beginning and an end, and results in a physical or institutional change which can be measured.

The Commission’s annual budget is about \$1.3 million (see Appendix E for a 10-year budget summary), most of it state appropriations. In any given year the Commission helps local communities and organizations find an average of \$5 million to \$10 million annually in grants and loans to help with advancing their projects. The Commissioners and staff pride themselves on being a lean, efficient and effective resource for the communities and residents of the region.

Earlier Tug Hill Leaders Surveys

The Tug Hill Commission exists, first and foremost, because the people in the Tug Hill region want it. It was local initiative that led to the Commission in 1972 when the threat of taking forest land out of production drew the region together in concern.

The Commission has relied on local officials and citizens to guide its programs from the beginning, when it gauged local concerns through eight public forums that involved 1,200 people in 1974, to its transition from a study mode to an operational agency in 1981, to the inclusion of a local leaders survey in its enabling legislation under Article 37 of the Executive Law. Few state agencies place their fate and existence in the constituents they serve and the Tug Hill Commission would not have it any other way.

The Tug Hill Commission has conducted surveys in 1985, 1990, 1994, 1997, 2002 and 2008. Results have been comparable over the period of time with an overwhelming majority of respondents indicating that they wish the Commission programs to continue.

Results of the 2008 Survey

The 2008 Local Leaders Survey was mailed to 383 persons with knowledge of Tug Hill and the programs of the Commission. Responses to the survey totaled 163, for a 43% response rate. A follow-up reminder postcard was mailed two weeks after the initial mailing. For a mailed survey the response rate was exceptional and certainly provides a statistically valid assessment of the Commission and its programs. Appendix A includes the actual survey instrument with responses for each question. The following is a summary of the results.

Local Leader Profile

Respondents represented 40 of the 41 town's in the Tug Hill region and 15 of the 21 villages. Only 31 respondents were from outside the region. 83.5% of the respondents represented elected or appointed town or village officials, 5.9% represented local organizations or associations and 10.4% represented others including partnering county, state or federal agencies with whom the Commission frequently partners. 87.2% of the respondents indicated that they occasionally or frequently worked with Commission staff.

Program Effectiveness and Importance

In all categories measured for "importance", over 80% of the respondents indicated that the Tug Hill Commission programs were important or essential to the future of the Tug Hill region. For the first time in the history of Tug Hill surveys, helping communities protect the environment ranked highest (96.3%) of all categories as essential or important - followed by: helping communities find money for water, sewer, housing and similar infrastructure (94.5%); workshops to increase skills (93.9%); land use planning assistance (93.9%); and, helping communities find money for parks, recreation and similar community facilities (90.3%). 82.3% of the respondents felt that it was important or essential for Tug Hill Commission circuit riders to attend municipal board meetings.

In rating the "effectiveness" of Commission Programs, training and technical assistance (89.1%) and land use planning and zoning (84.7%) rank the highest of all categories. Other top rankings were for helping communities protect the environment (82.3%), finding monies for infrastructure (79.9%) and resources for parks, recreation and downtown development (78.8%).

In ranking characteristics of the Tug Hill Commission, respondents answered the following in terms of excellent, good or fair: Cooperation (96.3%); Understanding Area Needs (95.2%); Expertise (95.1%); Promptness (90.8%); Objectivity (87.9%); and, Innovativeness (86%).

Commission Role

Three out of four respondents continue to believe that the Tug Hill Commission has not outlived its usefulness and 88% of the respondents agreed that the Commission provides services which local governments need and cannot afford by themselves. In other responses:

- 78.7% responded that the Commission works to enhance local control (18.9% responding they don't know).
- 90.8% indicated that the Commission often to almost always supports local cooperation and planning.
- 95.1% responded that intermunicipal cooperation and planning are important to extremely important to the region.
- 95.8% feel that local control is important to extremely important to their community.

There were numerous written responses to three open ended questions in the survey which are included in the attached compilation of results. While the comments are too numerous to note here, it is humbling to note that there was only one negative comment conveyed by the respondents.

Recommendations

Based on results of the 2008 Local Leaders Survey, consultation with the region's Councils of Government and discussions with the Tug Hill Commissioners, the Commission makes the following recommendations.

Tug Hill Regional Boundaries

Over the past five years, the Commission has been approached several times by neighboring municipalities asking if they could be added to the Tug Hill region. Of course, any change in boundaries of the region is the prerogative of the State Legislature and Governor.

To date, however, the Commission has advised these communities that it feels the current boundaries of the region are appropriate and reflect the area that the State Legislature and Governor intended when they created the Commission.

The Commission does, however, have an "outside the region" policy that provides criteria for working on projects outside the region, but which bear on the Tug Hill Region and benefit Tug Hill communities. Three examples of projects affected by the policy include on-going watershed management efforts for the Salmon River, Sandy Creeks and Black River. These watersheds extend well beyond the Tug Hill boundary and yet have a tremendous impact on Tug Hill communities. Other examples include the Commission's work on the Northern Forest and Great Lakes initiatives. These multi-state federal policy efforts stand to benefit communities throughout the entire Northern Forest and Great Lakes Basin and the Commission wants to ensure that the rural voices and concerns of Tug Hill communities are represented.

Tug Hill Commission Funding

The Tug Hill Commission and our Commissioners have, like all of our communities, made service and benefits the focus of our programs as opposed to bureaucracy and institution building. The next several years will be very tight on state funding and given the state fiscal picture, it is unlikely that increased state funding to support new staff or other expenses at the Commission will be forthcoming. It is clear, however, that increases in recurring expenses are a key part of supporting Commission programs. For instance, the Commission's goals for using technology to improve product and increase benefits to local government cannot work unless there are the means to replace, upgrade and expand equipment on a regular basis. Similarly, if we are to undertake some of the regional projects outlined in the Commission's strategic plan, we will need to look outside the agency for resources to support them.

The Commission also needs to insure that it invests in its key asset – the staff – by providing valuable training and skill development opportunities. Given the workload we have been carrying in the areas of GIS, natural resources planning, helping communities develop and finance infrastructure and our investment in the COG Circuit Rider program, we will be pressed to find additional staffing resources to sustain these efforts.

To deal with these circumstances and demands, the Commission will work to sustain modest state appropriations together with obtaining resources through our partners and outside organizations. We will aggressively seek federal funding appropriations to undertake projects and work with foundations and other not-for-profits to augment existing resources. If there is the opportunity for new staffing, we will have to consider, for some positions, project specific jobs that are dependent on continuing project funding as opposed to general fund recurring items. Above all, we will seek to maintain a lean, but efficient, staffing size and program commitments commensurate to available resources so as to ensure the quality of service brought to our constituents at the least cost.

COGs and Super COG

Our COGs and the semi-annual gathering of all of them as one Super COG have been a model of grass roots engagement and intermunicipal cooperation to help rural communities work together on problems and opportunities, and to keep a regional perspective in the work of their individual communities. The Commission needs to continue to find ways to help towns and villages work on common opportunities and problems. We also need to find efficient ways of communicating with our towns and villages so we can be increasingly responsive to local needs. The COGs and their circuit riders are a perfect vehicle for doing this.

As mentioned earlier, the Commission is looking for new ways to enhance our educational and training programs to be more responsive to local circumstances and needs. We will be strategizing with the COGs on ways that we can together offer new venues for local training. We will also continue the *Tug Hill Times* on a bi-weekly basis as a way to disseminate timely information to our COG representatives and local leaders.

The circuit riders are a vital communication and technical assistance link between the Commission and the COGs and we continue to look at ways to ensure this link remains viable. Today, the four full-time circuit riders are Tug Hill Commission employees. This is a valuable arrangement for employee retention, recruitment and compensation. To strengthen this outstanding relationship, the Commissioners drafted, for the first time, a COG/circuit rider program policy in 2005 that reaffirms the importance of COG input, maintains our

responsiveness to their respective needs and concerns, and formally adopts the principles that have historically guided our service to the region's COGs. The COGs will continue to oversee and manage the workloads and priorities of the circuit riders. The COGs will also continue to support the circuit rider program through local cost sharing. We do hope, however, that through greater communication with the COGs in terms of work programs and performance reviews, we can further the relationship between the Commission and the COGs.

New Strategic Plan

Over the balance of 2008, the Tug Hill Commissioners and Councils of Government will work on drafting a new ***Strategic Plan*** for 2009-2014. This will be the fourth strategic plan for the Tug Hill Commission and is a plan articulated by the Commissioners to serve as a guide for the Commission's work over the next five years (as opposed to a plan for the future of the Tug Hill region or its communities).

This Local Leaders Survey is the first step in this planning process. In addition the Commission hopes to conduct a survey of Tug Hill residents and land owners in the fall of 2008. This survey is intended to measure the perceptions, attitudes and concerns that residents and landowners have regarding the present and future of Tug Hill. Finally, with our Councils of Government we will meet extensively to discuss and plan for the future direction of Commission programs and services.

A p p e n d i x A

SUMMARY OF THE TUG HILL COMMISSION LOCAL LEADERS SURVEY – 2008

NYS Tug Hill Commission Local Leaders Survey – 2008

Section 1. Local Leader Profile

Your responses to this survey are strictly confidential, unless you choose to share your name at the end. Please give us the following information to help us match responses by geographic area and your involvement in local matter.

1. In what town or village do you live? 72.6% Town 20.7% Village

4	Adams(T)	2	Boylston	2	Florence	5	Lowville(V)	2	Redfield	5	Watertown
3	Adams(V)	2	Camden(T)	1	Floyd	1	Lyons Falls(V)	2	Remsen(T)	3	Western
2	Albion	3	Camden(V)	1	Forestport	4	Martinsburg	1	Remsen(V)	2	West Carthage(V)
0	Altmar(V)	1	Castorland(V)	3	Harrisburg	2	Montague	3	Rodman	3	West Monroe
2	Annsville	1	Central Square(V)	0	Hastings	4	Orwell	4	Rutland	2	West Turin
3	Amboy	1	Champion	3	Holland Patent(V)	1	Osceola	1	Steuben	2	Williamstown
1	Ava	2	Cleveland(V)	7	Lee	2	Parish(T)	2	Sylvan Beach(V)	3	Worth
1	Barneveld(V)	0	Constableville(V)	1	Lewis	0	Parish(V)	3	Trenton	31	Do not live in TH region
0	Black River(V)	2	Constantia	2	Leyden	3	Pinckney	2	Turin(T)		
4	Boonville(T)	0	Copenhagen(V)	3	Lorraine	2	Port Leyden(V)	0	Turin(V)		
2	Boonville(V)	1	Denmark	3	Lowville(T)	1	Prospect(V)	3	Vienna		

In what county do you live?

26.2% Jefferson 23.2% Lewis 28.7% Oneida 17.7% Oswego 1.8% other

2. Which of the following organizations or groups are you currently a member? (Please check all that apply.)

18.3%	town board	3.0%	council of governments	1.8%	school/other district board(s)
7.9%	village board	8.5%	other town/village official	8.5%	economic dev group/chamber of commerce
12.8%	town clerk	5.5%	county legislator	9.1%	farm or forestry organization
5.5%	village clerk	4.9%	county governmental agency	6.7%	fire company/rescue squad
12.2%	planning board	7.3%	environmental/historical/land trust org	10.4%	other
6.7%	zoning board of appeals	6.1%	hunting or fishing club		
11.6%	highway/public works superintendent	6.7%	outdoor recreation club		

3. How often have you worked with Tug Hill Commission staff (or circuit riders) in the last five years? (Please check only one.)

11.6% Not at all 44.5% Occasionally 42.7% Frequently

Section 2. Program Effectiveness and Importance

The Commission's mission is "helping local governments and citizens shape the future of the Tug Hill region." Its legislative charge calls for enhancing the region's environment and economy through work with local governments and organizations. In light of this, please rank the Commission's programs for IMPORTANCE (in Question 4) and EFFECTIVENESS (in Question 5).

4. How would you rate the IMPORTANCE of the following Tug Hill Commission programs to the future of the Tug Hill region? (Please check only one for each category.) (E=Essential, I=Important, NI=Not Important, DK=Don't Know)

	Essential	Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Helping communities protect the environment	50.6%	45.7%	0.6%	1.2%
Educational programs to increase local citizens' & children's understanding of natural/cultural resources	32.9%	55.5%	6.1%	1.8%
Workshops to increase local officials' skills including annual Local Government Conference	59.1%	34.8%	1.8%	3.7%
Land use planning assistance to towns and villages	56.1%	37.8%	2.4%	1.8%
Helping communities find money for water, sewer, housing, and similar grants and loans	60.4%	34.1%	0.6%	4.3%
Helping communities find money for parks, recreation, downtown revitalization	48.2%	42.1%	4.9%	3.7%

Helping recreation trail development (skiing, ATV's, snowmobiles, scenic highways, etc.)	37.2%	49.4%	6.7%	4.9%
Technical assistance to chambers of commerce and similar groups	25.0%	54.9%	7.9%	11.0%
Technical assistance to farmers and farm businesses	32.3%	48.2%	6.1%	12.8%
Technical assistance to forest landowners and forest products businesses	28.7%	53.7%	6.7%	10.4%
Helping towns and villages in solving day-to-day legal, accounting, computer, and similar problems	36.0%	48.8%	7.3%	5.5%
Support to groups of communities working together, especially local councils of governments (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County COG, North Shore COG, River Area COG and Salmon River COG)	51.2%	43.3%	1.2%	4.3%
Circuit rider attendance at municipal board meetings	33.5%	48.8%	4.9%	12.8%

5. How would you rate the EFFECTIVENESS of the following programs of the Tug Hill Commission? (Please check only one for each category.) (E=Excellent, G=Good, F=Fair, P=Poor, NEI=Not Enough Info to Rate)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Enough Info
Helping communities protect the environment	33.5%	41.5%	7.3%	1.2%	14.0%
Educational programs to increase local citizens' & children's understanding of natural/cultural resources	20.7%	35.4%	12.8%	0.6%	27.4%
Workshops to increase local officials' skills including annual Local Government Conference	55.5%	28.7%	4.9%	0.6%	7.9%
Land use planning assistance to towns and villages	44.5%	34.1%	6.1%	0.6%	12.2%
Helping communities find money for water, sewer, housing, and similar grants and loans	29.9%	41.5%	8.5%	0.6%	16.5%
Helping communities find money for parks, recreation, downtown revitalization	25.0%	43.3%	9.8%	1.2%	15.9%
Helping recreation trail development (skiing, ATV's, snowmobiles, scenic highways, etc.)	23.2%	40.9%	12.8%	1.2%	18.3%
Technical assistance to chambers of commerce and similar groups	14.0%	32.9%	9.1%	1.2%	39.6%
Technical assistance to farmers and farm businesses	11.0%	30.5%	9.8%	0.0%	45.7%
Technical assistance to forest landowners and forest products businesses	14.0%	29.3%	11.6%	0.6%	40.9%
Helping towns and villages in solving day-to-day legal, accounting, computer, & similar problems	28.7%	37.2%	6.7%	0.0%	23.8%
Support to groups of communities working together, especially local councils of governments (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County COG, North Shore COG, River Area COG and Salmon River COG)	33.5%	40.2%	3.0%	0.0%	18.3%
Circuit rider attendance at municipal board meetings	37.2%	31.7%	4.9%	2.4%	22.0%

6. How would you rate the Tug Hill Commission on the following characteristics? (Please check only one for each characteristic) (E=Excellent, G=Good, F=Fair, P=Poor, DK=Don't Know)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Cooperation	68.3%	25.0%	3.0%	0.0%	2.4%
Expertise	62.2%	30.5%	2.4%	0.0%	3.7%
Promptness	52.4%	32.3%	6.1%	0.6%	7.3%
Innovativeness	41.5%	36.6%	7.9%	1.2%	11.0%
Objectivity	42.1%	41.5%	4.3%	1.2%	8.5%
Understanding area needs	49.4%	41.5%	4.3%	0.0%	3.0%

Section 3. Commission Role

The Tug Hill Commission provides for the future of the region through help to local governments and organizations. It is a provider of information, expertise, and service. It does not regulate. It does not set policy for the region. Please let us know how you feel about this in answering the following questions. (Please check the one answer that best represents your opinion.)

7. How important do you feel local control is to your community? (Please check only one.)									
75.0%	Extremely important	17.1%	Somewhat important	3.7%	Important	0.6%	Not important	3.0%	Don't know

8. Does the Tug Hill Commission work to enhance local control? (Please check only one.)									
48.8%	Almost always	22.0%	Sometimes	7.3%	Often	1.8%	Almost never	18.9%	Don't know

9. How important do you think intermunicipal cooperation and planning are to the Tug Hill Region? (Please check only one.)

65.2%	<i>Extremely important</i>	23.2%	<i>Somewhat important</i>	6.7%	<i>Important</i>	0.6%	<i>Not important</i>	3.7%	<i>Don't know</i>
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10. Does the Tug Hill Commission work effectively to support cooperation and planning? (Please check only one.)

63.4%	<i>Almost always</i>	20.7%	<i>Sometimes</i>	6.7%	<i>Often</i>	0.6%	<i>Almost never</i>	7.3%	<i>Don't know</i>
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11. "The Tug Hill Commission provides services which local governments need and cannot afford by themselves." (Please check only one reaction to this statement.)

62.8%	<i>Strongly agree</i>	23.2%	<i>Agree</i>	1.8%	<i>Disagree</i>	1.8%	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	9.8%	<i>Don't know</i>
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12. "The Tug Hill Commission has outlived its usefulness." (Please check only one reaction to this statement.)

4.3%	<i>Strongly agree</i>	14.6%	<i>Agree</i>	50.0%	<i>Disagree</i>	24.4%	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	6.1%	<i>Don't know</i>
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13. What is the *MOST IMPORTANT* thing that the Tug Hill Commission has done for your community or area?

- The Tug Hill Commission has done many things in the past to help my town and village to gain knowledge in planning, conservation, forestry and many other ways. We look forward to much more training and education in the future.
- Participation in various watershed studies, i.e., Salmon River and Sandy Creek.
- Created awareness of the jewel that the Tug Hill is.
- Brought awareness of the unique characteristics at the region and the issues and concerns of the region to communities, local leaders and elected officials.
- I can't think of just one thing! There have been so many. They have helped with grants, saving the town the cost of a grant writer. We have done an official town map, using THC GIS. We are working on a comprehensive plan. Anytime I have a question, whether it is about ATVs; finances; highways, etc, they are always answered promptly, saving the town legal fees.
- Provide needed expertise and support in a timely and ongoing basis.
- Local Government Conference at JCC.
- THC provides information that municipalities need to make good legal decision on many issues faced by communities.
- Working at the grassroots level to provide information, resources and a network for local communities.
- Environmental stewardship and education recreational enhancements.
- Community planning and assisting in developing projects to benefit our community.
- Sewer districts, recreation trails, land use, local government cooperation, grant writing assistance.

14. Are there any concerns in your community you feel the Tug Hill Commission *should* be addressing, but is not right now?

- Power line proposal (NYRI) through the area; water treatment for small communities; storm water management for small communities without treatment plants or sewers flooding is an issue.
- Long-term tax breaks on long-term forest management. Also, long-term land development
- More information on grants that are available for municipal needs.

- Focus on alternative energy sources (wind, solar, etc.) to help keep the Tug Hill region green.
- Educate our planning board on what planning boards are and are not responsible for and what they need to look for and at.

15. Please make any other comments on what should happen to Tug Hill Commission Programs.

- The Tug Hill Commission will hopefully be here in the future to help our towns and villages with the same education and training we have come to know and appreciate.
- Remain objective and factual; continue your good work into the future as you have been doing it in the past.
- We need the Tug Hill Commission!! None of us has the time or resources as planning/zoning board members to do an adequate or fair job. The Commission is our source for advice!!!
- I believe they should continue as it is a tremendously valuable resource for local municipalities. It first helps the local governments with answers on planning or funding a project, but in the future, may pave the way for combining smaller government bodies into a larger more efficient run government. Tug Hill Commission offers suggestions and ideas to boards that need the out of the box approach at times.
- They definitely should be funded and continue. We could not function without their help.
- The annual local government conference is excellent and should be continued. The circuit rider program needs to continue.
- Personally, I consider the Commission to be a very valuable asset not only for this community, but the whole region.
- The Tug Hill Commission provides another “hand” in helping each town become a better place to live.
- I believe the THC is doing an excellent job with its program and would hope they continue to help local governments take care of the Tug Hill region in the future.

A p p e n d i x B

NYS TUG HILL COMMISSIONERS

TUG HILL COMMISSION MEMBERS – January 2008

Kenneth W. Vigus, Chairman

Boonville (Oneida County) Term: August 1, 2003 – July 31, 2008
Appointed to Commission on October 24, 2002, by Governor George E. Pataki
Reappointed to Commission by Governor Pataki on April 26, 2004
Elected as Vice Chairman – December 3, 2004
Elected as Chairman – November 28, 2006

Anne C. Schuler, Vice Chairman

Annsville (Oneida County) Term: August 1, 2003 – July 31, 2008
Appointed to Commission on August 29, 1985, by Speaker of Assembly Stanley Fink
Reappointed by Speaker Miller - February 1987
Reappointed by Speaker Sheldon Silver - August 7, 1996
Reappointed by Speaker Sheldon Silver - June 15, 1999
Reappointed by Speaker Sheldon Silver – December 8, 2005
Elected as Secretary – November 19, 2002
Reelected as Secretary – November 30, 2004
Elected as Vice Chairman – November 28, 2006

Michael G. Yerdon, Sr., Secretary

Redfield (Oswego County) Term: August 1, 2003 – July 31, 2008
Appointed to Commission on May 30, 1997, by Senator Joseph L. Bruno
Served as Vice Chairman from November 19, 2002 to December 3, 2004
Reappointed to Commission by Senator Joseph L. Bruno on Aug. 19, 2003
Elected as Secretary – November 28, 2006

Leona M. Chereshnoski, Member

Lorraine (Jefferson County) Term: August 1, 2003 – July 31, 2008
Appointed to Commission on November 3, 1983, by Speaker of Assembly Stanley Fink
Reappointed by Speaker Miller - February 1987
Reappointed by Speaker Sheldon Silver on June 15, 1999
Reappointed by Speaker Sheldon Silver on December 8, 2005
Served as Vice Chairman from June 1988 to November 19, 2002

Timothy V. LeVan, Member

West Turin (Lewis County) Term: August 1, 2003 – July 31, 2008
Appointed to Commission on February 12, 1997, by Governor George E. Pataki
Reappointed by Governor Pataki on September 4, 1998
Served as Chairman from January 1999 to November 2002
Reappointed to Commission by Governor Pataki on May 27, 2004

Roger W. Maciejko, Member

Turin (Lewis County) Term: August 1, 2003 – July 31, 2008
Appointed to Commission on February 1996 by Senator Joseph L. Bruno
Reappointed to Commission by Senator Joseph L. Bruno on September 5, 2003

David J. Reader, Member

Parish (Oswego County) Term: August 1, 2003 – July 31, 2008
Appointed to Commission on December 8, 2005 by Speaker Sheldon Silver, NYS Assembly

J. David Stone, Member

Adams (Jefferson County) Term: August 1, 2003 – July 31, 2008
Appointed to Commission on February 2003 by Senator Bruno
Reappointed to Commission by Senator Bruno on August 19, 2003

Arnold E. Talgo, Member

Steuben (Oneida County) Term: August 1, 2003 – July 31, 2008
Appointed to Commission on October 3, 1996, by Governor George E. Pataki
Reappointed by Governor Pataki on September 25, 1998
Elected as Chairman – November 19, 2002
Reelected as Chairman – November 30, 2004 – November 28, 2006
Reappointed to Commission by Governor Pataki on May 20, 2004

A p p e n d i x C

NYS TUG HILL COMMISSION ORGANIZATION CHART

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS REGION MAP

TUG HILL COMMISSION
Organization Chart – April 2008

The People, Governor, and Legislature of the
State of New York

Commission Counsel
James McClusky

Tug Hill Commissioners
9 appointed members
Kenneth W. Vigus, Chairman

NYS Department of State
Administration and
Management Division

Executive Director – M4
John K. Bartow, Jr.

Secretary
Paulette Collins
G11

Secretary
Sandra Taylor
G11

**Director of Community
Development – M1**
David J. Zembiec

Director of Planning – M1
Philip Street

Associate Director of Natural Resources – 23
Katie Malinowski

Natural Resources Specialist
Linda Irwin Gibbs
G18

Natural Resources Specialist
Jennifer Harvill
G18

**Geographic Information
Specialist** Mickey
Dietrich – G18

Senior Planner
Jean Waterbury
G18

Senior Planner
Matthew Johnson
G18

Municipal Mgmt. Consultant
Jane Jones (CTHC)
G-14

**Municipal Mgmt.
Consultant (RACOG)**
Kathy Amyot - G18

**Municipal Mgmt.
Consultant**
(NorCOG & SRCG)
Paul M. Baxter -G18

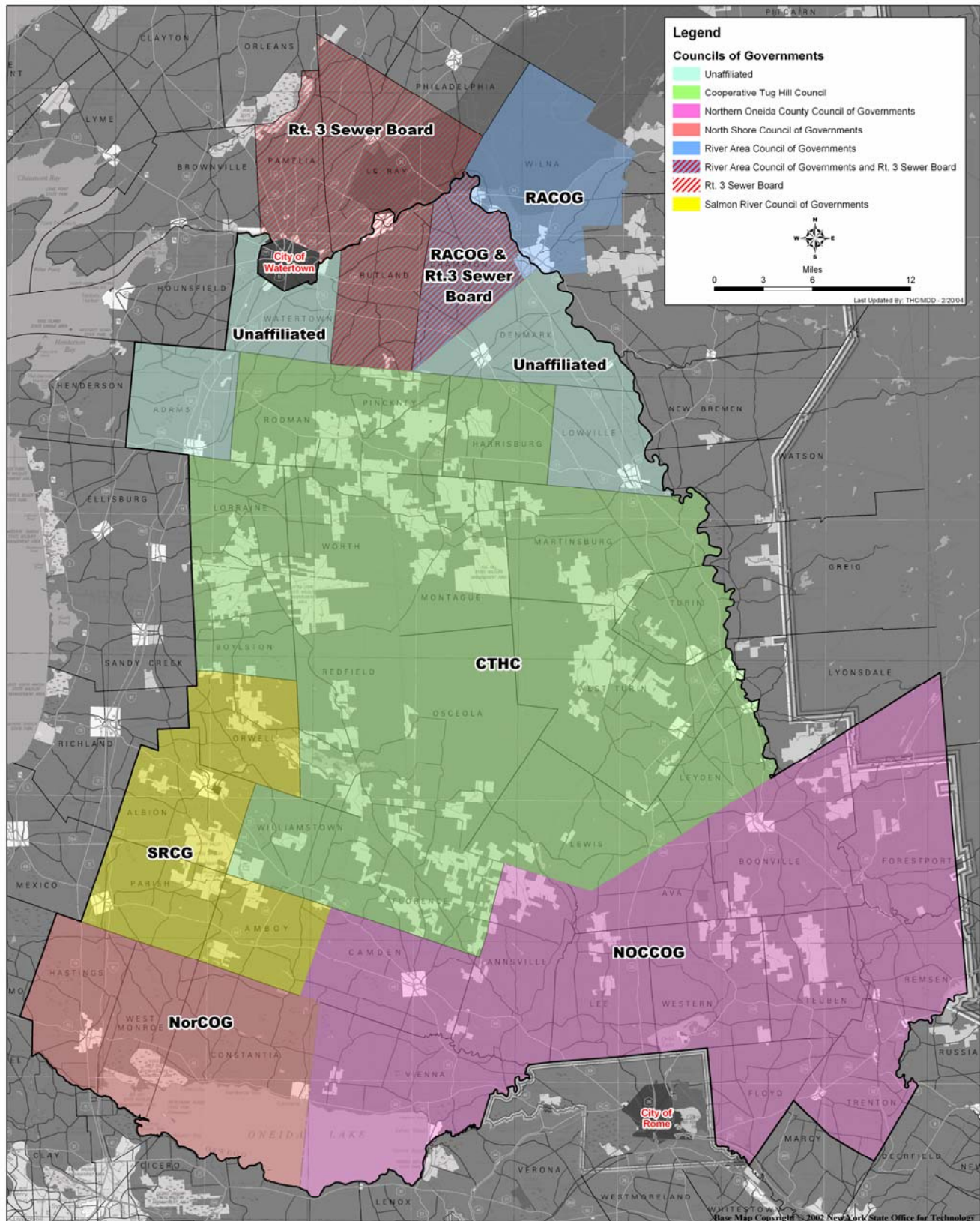
**Community Development
Specialist**
Emily Murray
G18

**Community Development
Specialist**
Carla Malmgren
G18

Administrative Aide
Felicia Passino
G13

Municipal Mgmt. Consultant
(NOCCOG)
Geraldine Ritter - G18

Tug Hill Region Councils of Governments



A p p e n d i x D

NYS TUG HILL COMMISSION PROJECTS LIST

Projects By Goal

Goal Code Goal Description Project Number Project Title

1.1 *Land Use Planning and Zoning*

1994-001	Lewis County OEDP
2000-051	RACOG Planning Project
2001-039	Village of Cleveland Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan
2003-021	Holland Patent Code Work
2004-020	Central Square Planning
2005-025	Boonville Plan/Survey
2005-027	Four-town Plan/Survey
2005-031	Port Leyden Plan/Survey
2005-035	Watertown Code Work
2005-036	West Monroe Code Work
2005-052	Fort Drum Growth Management Plan
2006-014	Sylvan Beach Zoning
2006-057	Lorraine Strategic Planning Project
2007-016	Constantia Subdivision Controls
2007-027	Barneveld Plan/Survey
2007-028	Black River Zoning Amendments
2007-029	Camden Town Zoning
2007-030	Lowville Village Zoning/Planning
2007-033	Parish Plan Update
2007-034	Annsville Plan/Code Work
2007-053	Barneveld Plan/Summary
2007-055	Camden Town Zoning
2007-057	Annsville Plan/Code Work
2007-058	Parish Plan Update

1.3 *Training and Capacity Building*

2006-061	Harrisburg, Montague, Pinckney SMSI
2007-011	Local Leaders Institute 2007-2008
2007-023	NY Conservation Alliance Educational Seminar
2007-040	Cleveland/Constantia/Central Square Municipal Finance Consultation
2007-046	Lewis Co. Cooperative Ext. LMI grant
2008-010	LGC 2008
2008-011	Local Leaders Institute 2008-2009

Goal Code	Goal Description	Project Number	Project Title
2.1	<i>Agriculture</i>	2004-031	Jefferson County PDR Program
		2008-019	Army Compatible Use Buffer Program (ACUB)
2.2	<i>Community Facilities</i>	1997-035	Cleveland Canal Terminal
		2000-015	CCC Camp Register Listing
		2002-029	Cleveland Village Hall Replacement
		2003-039	Annsville One-room Schoolhouse
		2004-030	Harrisburg Broadband
		2004-044	3G Fire Hall Construction
		2005-019	Rutland Volunteer Fire Department
		2005-066	Boonville Youth Athletics
		2006-015	Copenhagen Vol. Fire Dept.
		2006-021	Martinsburg Town Hall EPF Grant
		2006-026	Color My World Childcare Center
		2006-031	Forestport Town Hall Improvements
		2006-033	Western Town Hall
		2006-056	Parish Municipal & Community Building
		2006-062	Constableville Hall Association Capital Improvements
		2006-063	Croghan Railroad Depot
		2006-066	Lewis Co. Courthouse Security
		2007-022	Tylerville Volunteer Fire Department
		2007-035	West Monroe Court House
		2007-036	West Monroe Fire Dept. Energy Improvements
		2007-044	American Maple Museum
		2007-045	Constable Library
		2007-047	Lowville Free Library
		2007-048	Town of Lowville Equipment Grant
		2007-049	Lyons Falls Fire Dept.
		2007-050	Lyons Falls Library
		2007-051	Port Leyden Community Library
		2007-052	West Monroe Town Hall
		2007-059	Champion Town Historic District
		2008-012	V/West Carthage Shared Police Dept.
		2008-013	T/Champion Shared Salt Storage Facility

Goal Code	Goal Description	Project Number	Project Title
2.3	Energy	2000-010	Maple Ridge Wind Farm
		2004-046	Village of Croghan Dam Study
		2007-061	North Country Biomass
		2008-015	Upstate NY Power Corp Transmission Line
2.4	Housing	2005-042	Fort Drum RCI
		2005-043	Fort Drum Community Housing
		2006-038	South Jefferson Sr. Housing
2.5	Recreation	1994-027	Boonville Canal Project
		1995-026	Sears Pond Dam [reopened 2/99]
		1996-006	Central Square Village Park
		2002-010	Watertown LWRP
		2003-023	Carthage Long Falls Park
		2004-026	Black River Blueway Trail
		2004-047	ATV Issues Group
		2005-020	Newton Falls Rail Line Abandonment
		2005-054	Lyons Falls Turning Basin
		2005-055	Winona Forest UMP
		2005-057	Lewis County Snowmobile Inventory Mapping
		2006-036	Rodman Community Hall Playground
		2006-041	Town of Champion Village Green Historic Park
		2006-068	West Leyden Baseball Field
		2007-012	Lewis County Recreation Plan
		2007-014	Black River/Great Bend Trail
		2007-019	Carthage/W. Carthage QC Grant
		2007-025	Lyons Falls Community Park
		2008-016	Sandy Pond Boat Launch
		2008-018	Snowmobile Issues Groups
2.6	Sewer & Water	1997-023	Black River Area Sewer System
		2005-073	Village of Lowville GIS Asset Management
		2006-016	Copenhagen Source Water Development
		2006-035	Town of Lorraine Wastewater Feasibility Study

Goal Code	Goal Description	Project Number	Project Title
2.8	<i>Transportation</i>	2006-044	Forestport Asset Management
		2006-053	Village of Parish Sewer System Management
		2007-037	Barneveld/Remsen/Prospect Water System
		2001-022	Olympic Trail Scenic Byway
		2001-036	Revolutionary Trail Corridor Management Plan
		2005-022	Low Volume Roads
		2005-060	Black River Scenic Byway
		2005--061	Carthage Railroad Crossing Upgrade
		2005-072	Central Square Circulation Study
2.9	<i>Water bodies & Watersheds</i>	2007-018	Trenton Low Volume Road
		2007-032	Pinckney Low Volume Roads
		2002-022	East Branch of Fish Creek Management Plan
		2004-021	Salmon River Watershed Inventory
		2004-024	Black River Watershed Plan
		2006-024	Sandy Creek Ecosystem Based Management
		2006-054	Nestle Bottling Plant/USGS Aquifer Study
		<i>Support & Assist in the Development of Regional and Sub regional & Cooperative Partnerships & Initiatives That Act to Enhance the Region</i>	
4.1		1996-015	CTHC Historic Resources Regional Approach
		2005-012	Northern Forest Initiative
		2005-045	Tug Hill Indicators
		2005-048	Great Lakes Initiative
		2005-070	CTHC Special Areas
		2006-055	Tug Hill/Adirondack Wildlife Corridor
		2006-069	Tug Hill Invasive Species Monitoring & Control Program
		2007-042	NYS Commission on Local Gov't. Efficiency & Competitiveness
		2007-060	Health Insurance Consortium
5.1	<i>Community Economic Development</i>	2008-017	State Land Tax Analysis
		2003-009	Buckley Building Restoration
		2004-022	Leyden Brownfield Remediation
		2005-023	Adams Downtown Revitalization
		2006-037	Village of Black River Downtown & Residential Development Initiative

<i>Goal Code</i>	<i>Goal Description</i>	<i>Project Number</i>	<i>Project Title</i>
		2007-015	Parish Main Street Project
		2007-039	Black River Downtown Revitalization
		2007-043	Lewis Co. Traveling Veterans Tribute
		2007-054	Black River Downtown QC
		2008-014	Adams Walkable Community Project

A p p e n d i x E

NYS TUG HILL COMMISSION 10 YEAR BUDGET

Tug Hill Commission

5/20/08

**Appropriations Trend
FY1999 – FY2008**

APPROPRIATION	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Personal Services	699,200	779,200	795,900	857,000	849,000
Non-personal Services	107,100	127,100	127,100	101,000	101,000
Total General Fund	806,300	906,300	923,000	958,000	950,000
Special Revenue	12,600	12,600	12,600	33,000	53,000

APPROPRIATION	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Personal Services	904,000	922,000	958,000	1,026,000	1,106,000
Non-personal Services	101,000	104,000	110,000	110,000	110,000
Total General Fund	1,005,000	1,026,000	1,068,000	1,136,000	1,216,000
Special Revenue	53,000	53,000	53,000	53,000	53,000