

# **Summary of Seven Public Forums Held Regarding the 2009 Tug Hill Resident and Landowner Survey Concerning the Future of the Tug Hill Region**

Survey conducted in March 2009 by the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College

Forums held in May and June 2009 in Boonville, Champion, Lee, Martinsburg,

Redfield, Rodman, and West Monroe

Convened by the NYS Tug Hill Commission

Individual Forums Hosted By:

*Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC)*

*Northern Oneida County Council of Governments (NOCCOG)*

*North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG)*

*River Area Council of Governments (RACOG)*

*Salmon Rivers Council of Governments (SRCG)*

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Project Collaborators and Facilitators

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## **PURPOSE OF OUTREACH AND FORUMS**

Since its inception in 1972, the Tug Hill Commission has approached its work from a grassroots perspective, responding to the land use planning, community and economic development, and natural resource management needs of the region's citizens and local governments. It has always been important to the Tug Hill Commissioners to know that the programs and services of the Commission are responding to real concerns of the people of Tug Hill and are representative of the priorities of the region's local elected officials. To that end, the Tug Hill Commission has had a long standing tradition of surveying local elected and appointed officials in the region every five years regarding the agency's programs and services. Over the past 30 years the Commission has surveyed local leaders six times. These surveys have been the foundation upon which the Commission's programs and services are based and have been the impetus for adapting the Commission's priorities in responding to changing needs.

In addition to the Local Leaders Survey described above, The Commission has periodically sought input from the general public. In the late 1970's, the Commission held a series of open forums that addressed a broad range of topics in order to gather citizen input while developing program goals and priorities to address the needs of the region. Forums were held again in the late 1980's to find out how people felt about changes that were facing the region at that time, and to discuss various strategies for addressing those changes.

In 2009, with many changes in the economic, social and environmental landscape having taken place, the region's Councils of Governments and the Tug Hill Commission felt it was again time to again ask people, both residents and landowners, what they thought about the quality of life in their communities, and what they felt important for the future of the Tug Hill region.

### **Survey Needed**

Prior reports summarizing the community forum process, outcomes, and comments acknowledged that this way of gathering information did not necessarily reflect what most, or average, citizens felt about an issue. The results reflected what was most vocally expressed by those who attended the forums. This time around, sponsors desired a statistically valid way of gauging the average citizen's views. A survey was developed with input from local officials and leaders to help compare the opinions and attitudes of residents and landowners and to gather that information in a statistically valid way. The survey would be followed by outreach in the form of open forums held throughout the region, as in the past.

The Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College in Watertown, on behalf of the Commission and the region's five Councils of Government, gathered information from over 950 respondents about life in Tug Hill through a random telephone survey conducted in March of 2009. Results were analyzed in order to determine if statistically significant differences occurred between year-round or seasonal residents, residents in each of the four counties, and residents in each of the five Council of Governments areas. Please see Appendix C for a summary of the Tug Hill Residents and Landowners Survey methodology and results.

## **Presenting Survey Results, Gathering Feedback**

Once the survey results were analyzed and finalized by the Center for Community Studies, the sponsors held seven public forums throughout the region (from May 26<sup>th</sup> through June 25<sup>th</sup>) to present the survey results, seek further comments, and conduct a dialogue about region's quality of life and long-term future. Each session began with an overview of the Commission's history and programs, a review of the telephone survey and general results, and then a discussion period during which attendees could freely discuss their reactions to highlighted areas of the survey results. A set of wrap-up questions for attendees' response, a general question and answer period, and an overview of next steps and further forum dates completed each session. All those attending forums were asked to fill out and return a short questionnaire as well.

Forum sessions were held on the following dates, at the following locations:

Tuesday, May 26, 2009 – Boonville Municipal Building  
Thursday, May 28, 2009 – Rodman Town Hall Gymnasium  
Tuesday, June 2, 2009 – Champion Town Hall  
Thursday, June 11, 2009 – West Monroe Fire Hall  
Tuesday, June 16, 2009 – Lee Town Hall  
Thursday, June 18, 2009 – Redfield Fire Hall  
Thursday, June 25, 2009 – Martinsburg Town Hall

Though attendance at most of the public forums was low, those who attended showed a high level of engagement in the issues discussed, and offered many insightful comments concerning areas for which the Commission provides local government assistance. The highest attendance was in Redfield, consistent with forums held in the 1970's and 1980's. Although the telephone survey results have a high degree of statistical validity, it should be noted that the input from the community forums cannot be taken as statistically valid affirmation or comment on the survey results. Nevertheless, the comments received from the forums do provide valid local input on how one might further understand the survey results and some valuable opinion on how communities or the Commission might respond to the survey results.

## SUMMARY OF FORUM RESPONSES TO SURVEY RESULTS

The following provides a brief summary of the survey results as well as comments from the community forums. It is organized in the same topical groupings in which the survey results were presented and breakout sessions were organized at forums. For more detail on the actual survey or comments received at the community forums please see the Appendices of this report.

### Recreation

With significant amounts of state forests, several state parks, and numerous public and private trails and facilities, Tug Hill is a popular place for a variety of recreational pursuits year-round. Hunt clubs continue to own or lease significant amounts of land on Tug Hill. Recreational subdivisions are on the rise. Hikers, mountain bikers, ATV riders, campers and others share the resource in the summer months. The long winter season and heavy snowfall supports a well-established snowmobile trail system, and ATV recreation has recently become more popular. New sports, such as kite skiing, have begun to complement traditional winter cross-country skiing, dog sledding, and snowshoeing activities.

The Commission asked several recreation-related questions on the landowner and resident survey to determine preferences for a variety of recreational pursuits. In particular, respondents were asked to indicate whether they would like to **increase, keep the same, or decrease** the following types of recreation:

- parks/playgrounds
- hunting/fishing/trapping
- ATV riding; snowmobiling
- cross-country skiing
- motor-boating/jet-skiing
- canoeing/kayaking
- hiking/walking/camping; and
- cultural activities

People surveyed most wanted to increase parks and playgrounds, hiking, and cultural activities. Forum attendees questioned what type of cultural activities respondents might have been indicating. Respondents were given ‘festivals and concerts’ as examples if they for any during the survey, but the question was not designed to delve into significant detail.

Although those surveyed did not clearly express that they wanted to significantly reduce or eliminate any specific type of recreational activity, those getting the highest “decrease” response were motorized – ATV riding, snowmobiling, and motor-boating/jet-skiing. Forum attendees’ responses to this survey result were mixed; some felt the response indicated that residents and landowners feel there is enough of those opportunities and do not want them expanded, but some thought the negative response was not large enough to warrant an

emphasis away from motorized recreation. Many residents at the forums said that they do not ride ATVs or snowmobiles on the weekends, but rather late on Sunday afternoons or on weekdays to avoid heavy traffic. Others expressed the opinion that the only time anyone ever heard about motorized recreational activities was when there was problem, accident or injury, and that more positive news coverage might affect the public's opinion.

The survey also asked respondents about the seasonality of their recreational experiences. Although Tug Hill is famous for its snowfall and winter recreation, 84% of those surveyed said that they recreate in the summer on Tug Hill, more than in any other season.

## Energy

Energy production is a large part of Tug Hill's landscape, and is likely to become an even more prominent feature as demand for renewable energy sources increases. Tug Hill's abundant water, wind, forests and grasslands are valuable resources in the shift toward more renewable energy sources. Almost all streams and rivers in the Tug Hill region are, or have been, used for hydropower, whether to power grain mills, sawmills, or electricity-producing turbines. Today, the most prominent hydropower projects are located along the Black and Salmon Rivers. The Maple Ridge Wind Farm, located along Tug Hill's eastern ridge, or escarpment, continues to be the largest wind farm in the state and east of the Mississippi River, and there are numerous proposals for additional, smaller wind farms in and around Tug Hill. As biomass initiatives continue to develop - from Catalyst Renewable's biomass cogeneration plant in Lyonsdale, to Mascoma's cellulosic ethanol demonstration plant in Rome, to Curran Renewable's wood pellet plant in Massena - areas with significant amounts of farm and forest land, such as Tug Hill, will become more integral to supplying the feedstock for these plants. Natural gas in the area may be becoming more economically attractive as technology makes gathering the resource from Marcellus and Trenton shales more feasible.

With these projects and initiatives in mind, and the increasing attention energy issues have received over the past few years, both locally and nationally, the Commission asked both year-round residents and seasonal landowners a group of questions related to energy on the 2009 survey. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they would like to **increase, keep the same, or decrease** the following:

- Wind energy development
- Solar energy development
- Biomass energy crops (wood, corn, switchgrass, etc.)
- Power line construction
- Nuclear power development

Survey results indicated the majority of year-round residents and seasonal landowners strongly support an increase in wind and solar energy development. Biomass energy is also looked at favorably, but with less of a preference for expansion than that of wind and solar. Power line

construction had a mixed set of responses, with a majority (46%) indicating to keep it the same, and a fairly even split on increase and decrease. Lastly, the highest negative response (decrease) came from the question on nuclear power development.

Forum attendees expressed definite support for utilizing the wood resource on Tug Hill for energy generation, and most were supportive of wind as well. The need for transmission lines was often mentioned. As Tug Hill has a limited demand for electricity, and if generation projects are developed, additional transmission will be needed because the region is a net exporter of electricity. Transmission of electricity continues to be a concern in the region, both in terms of communities being wary about where new transmission lines are being sited, and a lack of capacity in existing transmission lines for proposed new generation projects. The practical considerations of using solar on a large scale in an area known for so much snow were questioned, although some mentioned that their camps are powered by solar panels, with batteries storing excess energy for times when the sun is not shining.

## Economy

Tug Hill's economy is based predominantly on its natural resources. Its vast forestlands, trails, and waterways support a strong recreational tourism industry. Its working landscape continues to support farming and logging as two key industries. Despite several of the region's paper mills and manufacturing facilities closing over the last decade, with the exception of a few such as Harden Furniture, most of the value-added processing of Tug Hill timber now takes place outside of the region. Most of the region's population lives in the communities along its edge, with many commuting to jobs in nearby cities such as Watertown, Utica, Rome, and Syracuse.

In regards to the economy, participants in the resident and landowner survey were asked if they would like to **increase, decrease, or keep the same** the following economic activities:

- Forestry
- Farming
- Tourism/recreational development
- Manufacturing/industrial development
- Retail/commercial development

For each of the five economic activities, at least 50% of the survey respondents (and as many as 63%) indicated their desire to see an increase. Responses for "Keep the same" ranged from 26% to 41%. No more than 8% called for decreasing any of the activities. There appears to be strong support for any activity that will improve the region's economy.

Forum participants expressed general support for the above survey results. Given the above survey responses and the current state of affairs in New York State and across the country, it is

not surprising that jobs (i.e. the economy) was consistently identified by forum participants as one of the three key issues facing the region.

Forum participants were asked to suggest strategies for increasing the above economic activities as called for by the survey respondents. Some of the more common suggestions from all five forums include the following:

- Develop more value-added enterprises and cottage industries, including specialty craft and food products that utilize the region's available resources;
- Increase promotion of farmers markets and retail opportunities for locally produced craft and food products;
- Utilize the internet (requires greater broadband availability) to promote and sell regionally produced products to a broader market;
- Do more to promote all types of recreational tourism activities, as that industry still has much potential;
- Reduce property tax burdens on farm and forestland;
- Provide more technical assistance to farmers and forest owners; and
- Educate the public on issues affecting the local economy.

## Infrastructure

The presence and condition of water and wastewater infrastructure varies around the region. Some communities have both, while others have one or the other. In some communities, the systems may have excess capacity with many years of useful life. In others, systems may have exceeded their useful life and be in drastic need of repair. Clean water may be essential to public health, but the need for infrastructure to provide it (and to support development) can become controversial when some people feel their current drinking water source is better than what a public system can provide. Projected user costs, especially where no public system currently exists, can also fuel controversy. It is no wonder that survey responses to the need for public sewer and water are mixed.

Access to high-speed internet service has improved over the years. More communities, particularly along the edge of the region nearer to urban centers, are now served by cable or DSL. Wireless options have also improved broadband access to some of the more remote areas in the region, where proximity to an antenna and trunk line are feasible. For some areas, the only available connection is a dial-up connection, yet those connections are often unreliable, even for phone or fax service. A few people subscribe to a satellite-based service, but cost eliminates this option for many.

The resident and landowner survey asked participants if they **increase, decrease, or keep the same** the following types of infrastructure:

- Public transportation
- Public water/sewer

- Paved roads
- Internet access

Regarding public transportation, forum participants were interested in knowing if the majority of those calling for an increase were older. Attendees acknowledged that, especially for an aging population, public transportation is an important issue, but that the overall population density of the region was not sufficient to support such a regular service for commuters or the elderly. They felt that an on-call shuttle service for seniors might be a more viable option, noting that some non-profit models in the region work by relying on volunteer drivers.

Forum participants expressed several concerns related to public water and sewer. On the one hand, they acknowledged that new business development would be difficult without adequate water/wastewater capacity. On the other, there was concern that smaller communities will be mandated to install systems they cannot afford to build or maintain at an affordable cost to residents. Even where the need is recognized, cost is often a key barrier to getting a project started.

There were few comments in the forums regarding paved roads. The general consensus was that paved roads require less frequent repair to maintain. However, the cost of blacktop (as a petroleum product) along with inadequate CHIPS funding from the state has created a situation where town budgets cannot support a recommended 10-year blacktop repair and replacement program. Otherwise, attendees felt that most areas needing paved roads had them.

Attendees felt that the extension of high-speed internet access to the more rural areas of Tug Hill was especially important, and cited that this topic is brought up frequently by local residents at town board meetings. It was cited that two key areas for which this services is needed are education and business development. Educationally, the lack of high-speed broadband has been cited as limiting the opportunity for students to utilize the internet for schoolwork and research at home. For local businesses, high-speed access is essential for general business transactions, and for broadening the market for products produced by local cottage industries. Related to internet-based communications, another common frustration expressed by attendees was the lack of reliable cell-phone coverage in many parts of the region.

## Land Use

The use of Tug Hill lands was one of the major driving forces for the Tug Hill Commission's formation. Land use concerns have generally focused on the fragmentation of Tug Hill farm and forest land -- the economic base of the region. Recreational subdivision activity has most recently acted as the most significant contributor to land use fragmentation, reflecting a regional shift from a farm and forestry economy to a recreation economy. Questions were asked which were designed to see how respondents felt about this shift in both the Hill's economy open space environment.

With regard to land use, participants in the resident and landowner survey were asked if they would like to **increase, decrease, or keep the same** the following activities:

- Permanent residential development
- Small acreage subdivisions
- Farm and forest working landscapes
- Protected open space

An increase in permanent residential development was supported by 45% of the respondents, with another 45% saying the current level of this activity should remain the same. Support for small acreage subdivisions was also equally split between respondents, with approximately 42% saying increase or keep the same. Only 10% or fewer respondents wished to decrease levels of the land use activities cited. There was popular sentiment in favor of increasing farms and working forest landscapes, and protecting open space, with over 50% wishing increases in levels, and about 40% wishing to keep current levels.

The apparent dichotomy between desiring further residential and small acreage subdivision development while increasing and protecting farms, working forest landscapes and open space was explained by the forum attendees as a general desire to have further development, but in a manner which was consistent and compatible with open space and the working landscape. The forum attendees felt that more development is possible while maintaining working landscapes and protecting the environment. The cluster subdivision technique was cited as a means of accomplishing both objectives. Another explanation offered for the apparent dichotomy is that the half of the respondents who wished to see development levels increased were the same half who wished to hold the line on further increases in working lands and open space.

## Government

- Part of the Commission's role in the region has been to strengthen the ability of local governments to manage regulatory programs, particularly in the land use arena. The resident and landowner survey asked respondents whether they would like to **increase, decrease, or keep the same** the following items: State/federal government regulations
- Local government regulations (including zoning and land use laws)
- Police, fire, and ambulance services

This question was asked to both 1) assess attitudes about regulation in general, and 2) compare attitudes about local regulations with state and federal regulations. While land use regulations on the local level are often more controversial, it was though useful to have some baseline comparison of local regulatory activities against the activities of other levels of government.

There was little support for increasing any type of regulation, but there was slightly more dislike toward state and federal regulations than toward local regulations. While roughly half of the

respondents felt that levels of regulations on all levels should be kept where they are, more wished to see them decreased than increased. Almost a third of respondents wished to see state and federal regulations decreased, while only a quarter of the respondents wished to see local regulations decreased. Forum attendees suggested that respondents felt differently about local regulations than state and federal regulations because local regulations are more appropriate to both the needs and the culture of rural areas, and because local regulations are more responsive to the needs of the people.

The Commission has had a long history of assisting local governments with all types of municipal services, but has had little feedback on how emergency services are viewed by the public. Survey respondents were very nearly split between wishing to increase services (50%) and keep services the same (47%). Very few respondents wished to decrease these services.

Forum attendees noted that there might be different opinions about police versus fire versus ambulance services, and that the way the question was asked did not give a fair assessment of the possibility that opinions might differ markedly between the three selected services. It was also suggested that feelings may differ significantly between communities, based on the particulars of how well local emergency services are funded and managed.



## **DRIVING FORCES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE REGION**

At each of the community forums, participants were asked what one or more driving forces they saw affecting the future of the Tug Hill region. Resoundingly and consistently, forum attendees identified concerns about jobs, patterns of development, and recreation as the most significant driving forces.

### Jobs

Given the state of the economy at the time of the community forums, one could expect that there would be concern about jobs and employment within the region. While that certainly was a concern, it was also clear that participants had concerns about the changing nature of employment opportunities within the region. Over the past decade or more there has been a precipitous decline in manufacturing jobs in the region, particularly those in the forestry and other natural resource related industries. Significant concern also exists about current and future employment opportunities for youth and how families and communities can help keep youth in the region. Finally, there was concern about jobs in areas immediately surrounding the region and the increase in commuting distances for good employment opportunities.

It is clear that people have lived in the region for a long time, as survey results indicate that most Tug Hill residents have lived in the area 20 years or longer and desire to stay in the region. Employment and a quality standard of living will be major factors in people's ability to remain in the region over the long haul.

### Development

Development seems to be a double-edged sword, as survey results clearly indicate that both residents and landowners want continued development in the region, but also want the pattern of development to retain or even increase the amount of open space and working landscapes in the region. Forum attendees also felt that both these objectives could be accomplished. It also seems clear that with 80% of the land area in Tug Hill in private ownership, one of the biggest challenges for local and regional officials will be how to keep land in private ownership in a way that helps protect the current pattern of land use and development. Pressures on landowners to sell their land or convert its use could be a major factor in changing the landscape of Tug Hill, and policies aimed at helping people maintain their land's current use over time will be a major policy factor in the future.

There are a number of complex economic and public policy factors that are affecting land fragmentation and land development decisions in the region. Helping local officials and public opinion leaders understand those complexities will be a challenge for the region in the coming years.

## Recreation

In both the survey results and comments received at the public forums it is clear that recreation is a major attribute of the Tug Hill region for folks who live here on either a year-round or seasonal basis. Although it was surprising that participation in summer recreation ranked so highly in the survey, it is clear that year-round recreation opportunities are an important aspect of life on Tug Hill. Over half of all respondents engage in outdoor recreation each season of the year.

Working landscapes have also been economically important to the Tug Hill region. Historically, much of this working landscape was based on natural resource extraction in forestry, agriculture and mining. Today, it appears that recreation is becoming the leader in public perception as well as in development patterns (e.g. recreational subdivisions). While recreation may not be the economic “silver bullet” for the region’s economy, it certainly will be a major influence in future investment in the region. Clearly, a better understanding of the influences on the region’s working landscape will be important for future public policy makers.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The resident and landowner survey and community forums clearly have provided a tremendous amount of information for individuals, communities and organizations to use in helping to shape the future of Tug Hill. To that end, the outreach effort has certainly provided significant fodder to continue the Tug Hill Commission's legislative mandate regarding the "economy, environment and local action". This information, together with the 2008 Local Leaders Survey, and the ongoing dialogue the Commission fosters with the region's Councils of Governments and community leaders, can help to shape future actions at multiple levels and through numerous organizations that operate within the region. For that, we are pleased to add this report to the conversation.

In regard to "next steps" there appear to be some emerging possible actions that the Commission, as well as others, may take in advancing local and regional activities. The following summarizes some of those possibilities.

### **Educate Communities, Organizations and Individuals**

The purpose of the Tug Hill Commission is "to enable local governments, private organizations and individuals to shape the future of the Tug Hill region". Whether through the results of this survey and these community forums, our technical and issue papers, or our on-going training, the Commission will use this and other information to educate people about the attitudes and perceptions of landowners and residents of the region. There is some valuable information here that can be shared with local officials, our Councils of Governments, and other individuals and organizations about what people think of Tug Hill and what their concerns are regarding the region's future.

The Commission also welcomes further comments on the findings of the survey and forums as outlined in this report. The Commission is committed to continuing public involvement in the actions that may come out of this effort.

### **Develop the Commission's 2010 – 2014 Strategic Plan**

The Commission is in the throes of developing our next Strategic Plan for 2010 to 2014. This survey, the 2008 Local Leaders Survey and the community forums will have a major impact on the actions and priorities the Commissioners lay out for the agency. The Strategic Plan is not a plan for the region, but is a plan for allocating the limited resources of the Commission. It will set priorities for the Commission's program and services and help provide Commission staff with something to measure their results against.

Along with the 2008 Local Leaders Survey, the results of the 2009 Resident and Landowner Survey and the subsequent forums, confirm that the most important thing the Commission can do is to continue its current program activities. These include: local land use planning and

regulation; helping communities lead their own economic development and investments into community facilities and infrastructure; and helping communities and organizations manage and restore natural resources of the region. The Commission's mission makes sense in that local communities and residents support the same priorities. While the Commission's new Strategic Plan may make modest changes and adaptations to local and regional circumstances, the current programs and services are on track and supported by those who need them.

### An Agenda for Commission and Community Action

While the survey and community forums did not give the Commission or our communities a specific mandate or mandates for action, there do appear to be some actions which might be taken by the Commission and communities that are derived from the results of the survey and forums. These action items in many ways correspond with the ongoing programs and services of the Commission, and present opportunities to address those concerns in new ways.

Commission action is dependent on the availability of money, staff and community support. Nevertheless, it is worth airing some of these to stimulate discussion and help set the stage for action in the near future. This preliminary action agenda includes:

1. Bring some of our regional planning efforts on watersheds (e.g. Black River and Sandy Creeks watershed plans) and in corridors (e.g. Scenic Byways and Black River Blueway Trail) out of the regional planning stages and into local planning and project implementation. While the planning and science associated with these efforts have been important, communities and individuals value results that show physical change in their communities and on the landscape.
2. Take the recently redefined "Special Areas"--as identified under the Tug Hill Reserve Act-- and bring them to the towns within one or more Council of Governments and work on having towns designate them. These special areas reflect some of the same resource priorities identified by landowners and residents as important to them. This review of special areas may also require revisiting the Tug Hill Reserve Act itself and completing some possible amendments to this legislation.
3. The nature of Tug Hill's working landscape has changed over the years. In addition, pressures on private landowners to retain this landscape in production so they can make a living off the land and afford to keep it in its traditional use and character are becoming greater and threaten economic viability of a number of traditional enterprises. In 1991, the Commission completed a report entitled "Tug Hill Working Lands" which suggested ideas to retain Tug Hill's working landscape and rural character through local and state action. Perhaps now, nearly twenty years later, it is worth revisiting this report and redefining those ideas.
4. The region's access to basic infrastructure, sewer, water, transportation and broadband create both opportunity and barriers to economic and community development in the

region. Understanding the ability of the region's communities to access the resources to develop this infrastructure is key to the economic future of many of the region's communities. The planning that accompanies infrastructure investment can significantly impact land use development patterns (which the forums identified as one of the three key issues facing the region). The Commission together with our Councils of Governments could initiate an inventory and review of existing infrastructure in the region and help to identify opportunities for targeted infrastructure investments in existing hamlets and villages that could be pivotal to future community development efforts.

5. The recent passage of legislation for the Northern Border Commission and the ongoing work of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative present opportunities for Tug Hill communities to engage in a broader regional dialogue on the future of the Northern Forest and Great Lakes Basin. Equally important is that both efforts are now appropriating financial resources for which Tug Hill communities will be eligible. The Commission will continue working with the efforts so long as there are direct and tangible benefits to Tug Hill communities and implementation of local priorities.
6. Whether the efforts are on energy conservation in municipal facilities, evaluating woody biomass technologies for heating fuels, or working with municipalities on siting major energy generation facilities or transmission lines, renewable energy has and will continue to be a major factor in the region. Our goal should be to ensure that the region's communities maximize their energy potential in a way that supports the region's residents, holds down energy costs, supports the region's working landscapes and contributes to the New York's energy independence and security.
7. Our investment in improving efficiency through technology both at the Commission and in communities in 2010-11 will also look to new ways of improving government efficiency in the region. Specifically, the Commission and our Councils of Governments are looking at using technology advancements in ways to improve local government management of community assets such as sewer and water systems, public highways, court systems and local government records management. Through such efforts we believe that our communities can better address pressing environmental, social and economic issues as well as opportunities to improve their economies and quality of life.

### Observation of Change Over Time

Perhaps the greatest value in having conducted the Tug Hill Residents and Landowners Survey is that we now have a data foundation to measure change over time. As with our Local Leaders Survey, we can now conduct the survey again at some interval (say 3 or 5 years) and measure change in the perceptions and attitudes of residents and landowners. This is yet another tool for the Commission and other organizations to monitor effectiveness of programs and services,

and to ensure that we are responsive to and representative of our constituencies. It is also a tool that can provide valuable information for adaptive management.

The Commission's experience in conducting this survey and hosting the community forums has been invaluable. It helps to ensure we are meeting our statutory mission and helps to make us more responsive to our constituents. We hope this tool is equally valuable to our local leaders and the numerous other organizations that bring services to the region and its residents.

**Appendix A**  
**Forum Description and Dates**

## **Tug Hill Community Survey and Public Forums**

**PURPOSE:** Implement a Tug Hill region-wide community survey to collect residents' and landowners' opinions about a variety of quality-of-life issues using an objective, scientific method that will be statistically valid. With results of the survey in-hand, convene community forums throughout the Tug Hill region to share survey results with Tug Hill citizens. These forums are intended to be an opportunity for public opinion leaders and citizens to speak and convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond.

**SURVEY METHODOLOGY:** The Tug Hill Commission contracted with the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College to revise the existing survey instrument and then implement it to approximately 1,000 people through a randomized telephone survey of Tug Hill region residents and landowners. The Center will analyze the data for the entire Tug Hill region, and also separately analyze it by appropriate geographic subsets (i.e. Councils of Government). A written report and at least one public presentation of the findings will be provided in early May.

**PUBLIC FORUM ORGANIZATION:** The Tug Hill Commission, in partnership with the region's five councils of government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida Council of Governments, North Shore Council of Governments, River Area Council of Governments and the Salmon River Council of Governments) will conduct the community forums in locations throughout the Hill.

Forums will be held at locations suitable for accommodating 75-100 individuals and that are handicap accessible (e.g. town halls, firehalls, and community centers). Forums will be conducted in the evening and last about 2 hours. Staff will prepare maps and/or posters to depict basic information about the resources of the region and examples of projects that the Commission is currently working on. Materials will be displayed around the room and meeting attendees will be encouraged to peruse them prior to the beginning of the meeting.

Each session will be comprised of a brief overview of the Commission history, purpose, and program areas (Natural Resources, Community Development, and Planning/Technical Assistance) (15 minutes). Following the overview the facilitator(s) will provide a summary of the survey results, and ask for any initial thoughts or comments (15 minutes). Participants will then be asked to go to individual work stations/breakouts around the room organized in the Commission's three topical areas:

- (1) Planning (to include Land Use, Training, and Transportation topics)
- (2) Natural Resources (to include Agriculture & Forestry, Energy, Recreation, Watersheds, and Regional topics)
- (3) Community Development (to include Community Facilities, Sewer & Water Infrastructure, Community Economic Development, and Housing topics)

Breakouts would last for about an hour. In the breakouts, further survey results for those topical areas will be presented and discussed. Following the breakouts, participants will be asked to re-convene as a large group and offer additional overall public comments (30 minutes).

In addition to the overview, breakouts and public comments, each participant will be given a modified version of the community survey as they enter the forum and be asked to return the survey at the end of the forum. Purpose of the modified survey is to gain a sense of action priorities.

**INTENDED OUTCOMES:** First, the survey will provide a statistically valid analysis of the perceptions of Tug Hill residents and landowners on a variety of issues. The response of forum attendees to the survey results will provide the Tug Hill Commission and councils of government a ground-truthing of the results and some ideas on how best they can be responded to.

Second, a better understanding among public opinion leaders and citizens as to the mission and work of the Tug Hill Commission

Third, all the information gathered through the survey and forums will feed into the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process. It will also be used by COG's to evaluate their own programs and priorities. In a time of budget constraint at the state level, results may serve to emphasize at the state-level the uniqueness of the Tug Hill region and its continued need for Commission programs and services. A stand-alone report on the forums would also be assembled by staff.

**SCHEDULE:** A draft survey instrument as be presented to staff at the February 2009 staff meeting, followed by a presentation to the chairs of all five COG's on February 26, 2009. The survey was conducted by the Center for Community Studies week of March 16 through 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009, with some preliminary findings referenced during the LGC keynote address on March 26. The final report would be completed in April, and presented at a meeting of all COG representatives on April 23 in Camden. Forums will be held in May and June as follows:

**FORUM LOCATIONS:**

- (a) Cooperative Tug Hill Council
  - (i) Town of Rodman Community Gym at Town Hall – Thursday, May 28, 6:30 - 9:00 pm
  - (ii) Town of Redfield Fire Hall – Thursday, June 18, 6:30 – 9:00 pm
  - (iii) Town of Martinsburg Town Hall – Thursday, June 25, 6:30 – 9:00 pm
- (b) Northern Oneida Council of Governments
  - (i) T/V Boonville Municipal Building – Tuesday, May 26, 6:30 – 9:00 pm
  - (ii) Town of Lee Town Hall – Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 – 9:00 pm
- (c) North Shore and Salmon River Councils of Governments
  - (i) West Monroe Fire Hall – Thursday, June 11, 6:30 – 9:00 pm
- (d) River Area Council of Governments
  - (i) Town of Champion Town Hall – Tuesday, June 2, 6:30 – 9:00 pm

**Appendix B**  
**Forum Minutes and Comments**

## **Forum Summary: Boonville**

Tuesday, May 26, 2009  
Boonville Municipal Building  
6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

### **Attendance**

*Staff:* John Bartow, Linda Gibbs, Jennifer Harvill, Katie Malinowski, Emily McKenna, Phil Street, Jean Waterbury, Dave Zembiec

*Circuit Riders:* Sue Martin, Harlan Moonen, Gerry Ritter, Jeanne Wooding

*Commissioners:* Arnie Talgo, Ken Vigus

*Public:* Mike Cronlise, Veronica Murphy, Francis L. Stacy, Bob Moon, Mike Backer, Guy C. Case, Fred Munk, Rocky Fawcett, Bob Ely

### **Sign In/Open House**

From 6:30 to 7:00 p.m., attendees were greeted, asked to sign-in, given a packet including a community forums description, a full survey report, and a numbered name tag. A rolling slideshow of regional scenes depicting Commission project areas ran throughout this period. Attendees were encouraged to mingle and help themselves to refreshments.

### **Introductory Presentation**

At 7:00 p.m., John Bartow welcomed participants, recognized Commissioners, circuit riders and staff, and delivered an overview of the Commission's role and work, as well as that of the region's Councils of Governments.

At 7:18 p.m., Katie Malinowski then presented an overview of the regional telephone survey and its general results.

### **Small group discussions**

At 7:24 p.m., Linda Gibbs explained that attendees would break up into three groups and head to three different breakout areas according to the number on their name tags: Land Use (1), Community Development (2) and Natural Resources (3). Highlights of survey results in each area would be used as discussion points. Feedback on highlights, plus any other comments attendees wanted to share and discuss would be welcome. The purpose was to hear from attendees about their reactions, concerns and ideas for addressing issues in each area. Each group would have approximately 15 minutes before rotating to the next area, so that each attendee would be able to comment on all three areas over the course of the night.

Linda Gibbs kept time and facilitated rotation of groups with a 5- and 3- minute warning to facilitators. Groups rotated at 7:55, 8:15, and 8:35. The rolling slideshow of regional project scenes was projected during the entire breakout session period.

Dave Zembiec and Emily McKenna facilitated the Community Development area, Katie Malinowski and Jennifer Harvill facilitated the Natural Resources area, and Phil Street, Jean Waterbury and Gerry Ritter facilitated the Land Use area.

### Wrap Up

John Bartow facilitated wrap up discussion, generating further comments from the attendees. Next steps and upcoming additional forum dates were reviewed, and contact information posted. All were thanked for coming and engaging in lively and meaningful discussions.

### **Natural Resources Breakout Group (Jennifer – note taker, Katie – Facilitator)**

#### First Group (Mike, Guy, Jeanne,....)

#### Recreation

1. Water Sports – canoeing and kayaking are big along the Moose River (Old Forge) and this needs to be capitalized on
2. Local roads opened up to ATViing has been good for the trail system
3. Trail Competition is an issue between ATVs, cross country skiers and snowmobilers
4. NYS Closing truck trails has hurt
5. Canadian trail systems accommodate multiple uses (they run parallel to each other)
  - a. Trail is owned by the government
  - b. Govt. recognizes the benefit of the trail system
6. In NYS, trails over private property can be an impediment. The landowner can change their mind and then the trail has to move elsewhere. The landowner needs a monetary incentive to participate. Recognition and thanks from the clubs go a long way with the private landowners.

#### Energy

1. Solar power is cost prohibitive in the north country (areas in NYS north of the Thruway)
  - a. Engineers report there are not enough sunny days in the year to make it cost effective
  - b. Participant has worked in schools in Dolgeville, Oppenheim and Johnstown – they are metered for educational purposes
  - c. Would this have received such a high response to increase if people knew about solar being so cost inefficient? More education and outreach needed?
2. Nuclear is most cost effective power source
3. Biomass – ethanol is not doing so good
4. Willow – need at least 50 acres to make willow planting cost effective for landowners

- a. Smaller landowners are looking for incentives to hang onto their properties, or ways to derive income from their land to at least cover the cost of property taxes, but the incentives are only for “certain people” and are not for everyone. In this case, planting willows for a cost incentive only works for people who own over x amount of acres.
  - b. 2 of the participants own land for hunting/recreation and both let farmers hay their land for no profit. The farmer gets the hay at no cost and the landowners get their properties mowed.
5. We have a great natural resource here: People with a great work ethic, but there are no jobs for them. We need jobs related to our natural resources.
  6. This is a great place to live, but a hard place to make a living. Most people leave Boonville to go to work every day.

### Second Group (Mike, Sue, Veronica, Harlen, Arnie, Bob)

#### Recreation

1. It would be interesting to see ATV use responses broken down by gender, age and education
2. Cultural aspects – Toby Keith concert at ???, Snow Ridge concerts, Town of Western Heritage Festival ?, Weekly band concerts at Boonville and Camden (these bring out vendors and they’re free)
3. There are many festivals that are good family entertainment including Maple, Strawberry, etc.
4. These festivals need more advertisement and promotion and more in-advance advertisement and promotion. Many times people find out about them too close to the event (like the night before, and then it’s too late!)
5. Radio advertising would be best
6. Flyers could be posted and distributed to help this, too
7. In resolving trail issues, we need to stop fighting amongst ourselves
  - a. It has been more difficult in Oneida County vs. Lewis County to build up the trail system. DEC closing truck trails has “hurt” the process
  - b. Experiencing a lot of conflicts between users and communities
8. Trail coordinators are needed in Oneida and Oswego counties. (Oswego maybe getting one?)
9. Need more train excursions to boost tourism
10. The Region is full of natural resources and we have a good quality of life.
11. Be careful what you wish for. Need to plan is stressed. We love people from NJ to come here and spend money and love for them to go home. Need to plan for job growth so we don’t ruin our natural resources.
12. It snows here, and that’s a good thing

#### Energy

1. People need education on what’s most efficient vs. most popular

2. Can we retrofit existing hydros to make them more efficient and generate more power, with no environmental side effects
3. Energy conservation, too, is needed to make those energy sources that are less cost effective, more cost effective. We need to be more practical about it. Solar vs. LED lights, for example. And don't mandate energy like the APA.
4. Biomass plantations/willows.....
5. Don't wait for government to help you. You need to plan and then go to the government (be more proactive).

### Third Group (Dave, Fred, Ken, Rocky and Fran)

#### Recreation

1. The people we contacted were home while the motorized people were out riding (reason for responses)
2. Recreation vs. age group could be useful
3. Motorized recreation is a double edged sword. Locals love to snowmobile, but they're afraid to go on Tug Hill on weekends. They love it, but bringing in more ruins the locals' experience
4. The locals like to rubber-neck (go slower). Outsiders want more speed
5. Locals also can ruin the experience. They don't stay on trails all the time and they're the ones going up and down the public road
6. A trail system is needed to keep people on the trails and off the roads. Locals go anywhere and everywhere
7. There is a need for more NYS funded trailhead parking lots
8. Lewis County permits were a good idea
9. Lewis County permits were a good experiment
  - a. ~1,000+ permits sold so far
  - b. Too early to tell if it will be successful
10. There is a need for more places to stay/launch boats/camp/access along the Black River

#### Energy

1. We want power, but not the transmission line. Even renewable energy sources need to have power lines  
QUESTION: Can pilots be collected on the large transmission lines?? National grid pays taxes, but what about large gas lines or main trunk???? THC to investigate!
2. Hydro and nuclear are most efficient
3. Forestport – hydro dependant on flow
4. Rocky spoke about settling a law suit at Lyons Fall P&P site????
5. The Lyons Falls mill site can access electricity from the hydro because they adjoin it – others can't.
6. Need to develop places to stay on the Black River for the canoers and kayakers – need entrepreneurs

## GENERAL COMMENTS

1. Reference to DEC involvement with Dump siting on top of hill???
2. Is Rock worth anything? (Mining) Old quarries running out Limestone mentioned??
  - a. Port Leyden
  - b. Outside Lowville
  - c. Martinsburg
3. Good PR is needed
4. Don't fight right off the bat!

### **Community Development Breakout Group (Emily – notetaker, Dave – facilitator)**

#### **Economy**

- We need more value-added enterprises so that more money will be put back into the economy and we won't be sending out our raw materials for processing elsewhere.
  - This also helps the retail sector as more money stays locally.
- Focus/emphasis should be placed on supporting local businesses.
  - A few small, well-run local industries can be much more beneficial to community's economy than 1 large industry from out of the region/state/country.
  - Increase promotion of and add additional farmers markets to help with sales of local crafts/products.
  - Internet provides a great opportunity to increase sales of local products.
  - Need an improved public understanding of the local economy and the benefits of tourism and industrial development.
- More industry is needed.
  - "Give away the land" or use some type of incentive program to recruit new industries.
  - Use new technologies to spur development.
- More retail (especially clothing) is needed in small communities.
- A more diversified economy is needed as well as plans for industry closings.
- In New York State there are institutional and political impediments to development. Need to:
  - look at labor laws in New York State;
  - address high heating costs in the area for residents and businesses alike;
  - address high taxes in the state;
  - address high insurance rates; and,
  - provide more locally produced energy to local residents and businesses.
- Recreational opportunities for all types of activities are untapped in the region. Recreation is the easiest/most cost-effective resource to tap into

because the trails and other infrastructure are already in place and it allows us to build on what we are already known for and what we have (good natural resources and good work force).

- This includes motorized and non-motorized and all-seasons.
- Better PR and Marketing is needed to promote what is available.
- More community support is needed for recreational/tourism promotion.
- The response to the Lewis County ATV permit system demonstrates how high the demand is for that type of activity in the region.
- Smaller farms seem to be failing and being taken over by larger farms or being subdivided. This causes a loss of the open space and rural atmosphere we are so well-known for.
- Increased promotion of opportunities along the Black and Moose Rivers is needed.
  - Additional camping and lodging should be developed to accommodate more tourists.
- Recreation brings in outside dollars to the area.
  - This includes monies brought in through direct spending and in taxes, etc.
- Both snowmobilers and ATV riders need to have an established trail system that they can ride on.
  - Improvements needed to the following:
    - access to snowmobile and ATV trails;
    - parking at trailheads;
    - connections with villages and hamlets; and,
    - services for riders in those community centers.
  - Tax breaks should be offered for individuals looking to establish easements or trail access on their properties.
  - Education is needed on General Liability laws that protect property owners when access/easements are located on their property.
  - Users need to work cooperatively to establish multi-use trails that are maintained by a variety of groups.
  - The Tow-path, which was once open to ATVs, should be re-opened for ATV riding.
- More community events, fairs and festivals are needed.
- Camps and second home developments represent a great opportunity for the region.

## Infrastructure

- Public transportation would be very costly for such a rural region.
  - Not-for-profit models have worked in the region using volunteers.
  - Rail development is an opportunity that should be pursued whenever/wherever possible.
- Infrastructure developments/improvements are principally driven by the budget of a small community.
- Because development follows water and sewer infrastructure, planning is critical to help shape your community.
  - If public sewer and water systems get too large or grow too quickly, long-term O & M is costly and needs to be considered.
  - Demands on the system are also critical in evaluating new development.
  - Smaller communities often can't support expensive infrastructure and, thus, have difficulty in recruiting development.
  - There is concern that someday smaller communities will be mandated to install systems that they can't afford.
- Communities need to plan better for regular maintenance of roads and water/sewer systems.
- Energy distribution is a critical area that needs addressing.
- Cellular phone service improvements are needed.
  - Planned, cooperative use of cell towers is needed.

## Land Use Breakout Group (Jean Waterbury – notetaker, Phil Street – facilitator)

- Lots of vacant buildings, village is becoming rundown. Are vacancies due to banks not wanting to lend? Depressed market? Would land use regulations help? Would development planning help?
- Main employers leave and village/hamlets become rundown.
- Some communities have a high portion of older citizens. Does this have a negative effect?
- Old anchor stores often close and downtown area greatly affected if it remains vacant and rundown.
- Development is often concentrated in just certain more populated areas of county.
- Roads that run across different jurisdictions not kept up or cannot afford to be maintained.
- Don't understand whose jurisdiction bridges are. Who owns them in villages? They are a problem when they are defective and closed. Who is responsible to fix and repair? It can be very expensive for a local government to fix defective/abandoned bridges. (Discussion centered on bridge in Village of Remsen)
- Need to look into noise ordinance, but enforcement is a problem.

- Nonconforming lots are a problem in the Town of Boonville; need to address this issue somehow.
- Concerned about agriculture in the town and how development impacts it. How can the town control subdivisions so as not to conflict with farming?
- Carbone subdivision still a problem in Boonville. The group talked about this for quite a while.
- Cost of land in the town has gone up a lot over the past 5 years and is a concern.
- There are bridge issues in Boonville as well. Continued discussion about who is responsible for bridges in the county and cost associated with repair and maintenance.
- Town of Western interested in THC assistance with a comp plan. Western did a community survey about 10 years ago and got a lot of information from results.
- Comment: need to plan for development first and then economic development comes and then the community will end up protecting the environment.
- People are happier with local government regulations but not state regulations because residents don't trust the state. Locally concerned about mandates from the state that local government cannot afford.
- Police in Boonville a big issue because of the cost associated with it; village wanting to decrease this cost but there is a need for this service. Police are paid; fire/ambulance is volunteers.
- Fire protection might not be a volunteer service for much longer because of mandates they have to comply with from the state and not enough volunteers (everyone has other full-time jobs).
- Hard to find volunteers for planning and zoning boards too. Towns/villages have a hard time finding good people to fill vacancies.
- Farming – milk prices putting farmers out of business. Is the future in mega farms/large scale farms like the Marks Farm? Need to look into “value added” products to keep farming in the county/region.

#### Wrap Up Questionnaire Written Comments

- I think it is important to balance recreation between motorized (ATVs, snowmobiles, etc.) and non-motorized (hiking, biking, etc.)
- I am concerned that our aging population will not be replaced. We need to find ways to keep our “next generation” from leaving the area, and find ways to attract new people – jobs, quality of life, educational opportunities – the other services will follow if people are here and working.
- We need to find better ways to market the area – low crime rate statistics, longevity, stability, “traditional” values – warm, fuzzy stuff that makes people want to be part of the community.
- Thanks. It was a good program!

## **Forum Summary: Rodman**

Thursday, May 28, 2009  
Rodman Town Hall Gym  
6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

### **Attendance**

*Staff:* John Bartow, Linda Gibbs, Jennifer Harvill, Matt Johnson, Katie Malinowski, Emily McKenna, Phil Street, Jean Waterbury, Dave Zembiec

*Circuit Riders:* Paul Baxter, Jane Jones

*Commissioners:* Dave Stone

*Public:* Dan Pearson, Mary Stone, Rebecca Storrings, Chanda Lindsay, Virginia Clemens, Deb Johnston, Phillip Branch

### **Sign In/Open House**

From 6:30 to 7:00 p.m., attendees were greeted, asked to sign-in, given a packet including a community forums description, a full survey report, and a numbered name tag. A rolling slideshow of regional scenes depicting Commission project areas ran throughout this period. Attendees were encouraged to mingle and help themselves to refreshments.

### **Introductory Presentation**

At 7:00 p.m., John Bartow welcomed participants, recognized Commissioners, circuit riders and staff, and delivered an overview of the Commission's role and work, as well as that of the region's Councils of Governments.

At 7:18 p.m., Katie Malinowski then presented an overview of the regional telephone survey and its general results.

### **Small group discussions**

At 7:30 p.m., Linda Gibbs explained that, due to the small number of attendees, we would not break up into three groups and head to three different breakout areas according to the number on their name tags: Land Use (1), Community Development (2) and Natural Resources (3). The full group was utilized for discussion instead. Highlights of survey results in each area would be used as discussion points. Feedback on highlights, plus any other comments attendees wanted to share and discuss would be welcome. The purpose was to hear from attendees about their reactions, concerns and ideas for addressing issues in each area.

Phil Street facilitated the Land Use area first, Dave Zembiec facilitated the Community Development discussion next, and Katie Malinowski facilitated the Natural Resources discussion. Emily McKenna recorded all notes for the forum on newsprint at the front of the room.

## Wrap Up

John Bartow facilitated wrap up discussion, generating further comments from the attendees. Next steps and upcoming additional forum dates were reviewed, and contact information posted. All were thanked for coming and engaging in lively and meaningful discussions.

## Breakout Session Discussions

### **Planning**

#### *Land Use*

- Public seems to be divided on the issue with essentially a 50-50 split between development and open-space preservation.
  - Trend seems to indicate that the public is leaning toward open space protection And preserving what we already have
  - Diverse land use should be pursued with clusters of development by type (i.e. residential, industrial, etc.) and large open space in between.
- Good planning would allow for all types of development to coexist within a community.
- More mixed-use zoning is needed to allow access to all types of services within a neighborhood.
  - Need places for kids to go to recreate
- Zoning and land use regulations can sometimes bombard individuals looking to begin any sort of enterprise in a community.
- Lack of infrastructure in small hamlets can prevent land from being used on the most efficient way.
  - Cheaper, smaller, alternative water and sewer systems need to be evaluated so that small communities will have options that they can afford to implement and operate.
    - Example, in Rodman, senior housing cannot happen due to lack of infrastructure, DEC regulations and lack of technology
    - Lorraine water issues are also an example
  - This will also help with the preservation of large lots and open space because residences will be able to be concentrated in a community without the expense and obligation involved in a large water or sewer system.

#### *Government*

- State and federal government levels have more politics than at the local level.

- State and federal governments are more removed from their constituents than officials in local government.
- State and federal levels have to create legislation that encompasses a wide variety of areas (“one-size fits all”) vs. local governments which can tailor their laws to their communities.

## **Community Development**

### *Economy*

- More restaurants and local businesses need to support farmers and foresters in the area by “Buying Local”.
  - Example in Rodman, the 1844 House using local organic products in restaurant
- Jefferson County Ag. Development Corporation has a lot of great programs for local producers.
  - Education is needed on the resources that are available for local growers.
- Opening of roads to ATVs (in coordination with the clubs) can be a great economic boost for a small community.
- Communities should capitalize on what we have in the region: open space, natural resources, recreational opportunities, and tourism opportunities.
- Two Tug Hill hotels have gone through expansions to capitalize on ATV/Snowmobiles
- Planning is needed to properly capitalize on recreation and natural resources while still encouraging development.
- More managed forestry is needed.
- Not much retail or industrial development is likely to occur in the region but there are opportunities in other areas.
- Lots of state owned land in the region provides a unique opportunity to offer isolation and solitude, which is treasured by many, with services still available close-by.
- Recreation development ties in with planning and infrastructure

### *Infrastructure*

- Public transportation is of increasing importance to the aging population in rural areas.
  - Would be interesting to cross-tab the results of the public transportation question by age.
- Several new bus systems are running in the area:
  - From Alex Bay to Watertown to Syracuse;
  - From St. Lawrence County to Fort Drum and Watertown; and

- One from the Lewis County area.
- It would be very hard to have a reliable, useful public transportation system in the core of Tug Hill as the area is so rural.
- Need to ensure that communities have the basics (water, sewer, good education, roads) before putting too much focus on extras (i.e. trails, etc.).
- More paved roads are needed but only if it can be done without raising taxes too much.
- New towers are providing wireless internet access to more rural regions where only dial-up was available previously.

## **Natural Resources**

### *Recreation*

- The Lorraine area has lots of motorized recreation support, but many of the gulfs are undeveloped and offer a great opportunity for passive recreation.
- It can be difficult to get landowners to agree to have trails on their property.
- More walking trails are needed. They should be available in every community.
- Parks and playgrounds are also very critical for communities as they attract a lot of people and are used often.

### *Energy*

- There is a high instance of cancer in the region, causing an increased awareness of health concerns. This could explain the survey results showing a desire to decrease nuclear energy.
- The survey results, which show 77% of respondents wanting an increase in wind energy, seem to be contrary to what is going on locally.
  - Vocal minority coming into play?
- Utilities should be placed underground as new lines/poles are installed.
  - Utility companies are reluctant to do this because it is more costly upfront, but it is less-costly in terms of maintenance in the long-run.
  - This could also increase public safety (reference to car accidents involving poles)
- Additional hydro-power opportunities should be considered
  - Need to consider retrofitting what's already there
    - Former Adams electric site is one possibility.
- Landfill gas to energy is a great resource and presents a good opportunity.

## **General Questions**

*What is the biggest issue facing Tug Hill today?*

- Uncontrolled development.
- Infrastructure needs and challenges.
- Overregulation and fees.

*Given these issues, what should be the role of the Commission and of communities on Tug Hill?*

- Achieving a balance between development and natural resource preservation.
- Need to focus on the “high peaks” in the survey results because these clearly indicate what residents and landowners feel is of priority.
- Projects need to be tailored to what that particular community needs and what is critical for their area because there are a wide variety of communities on Tug Hill.
- We need water, sewers, roads, good education, trails...how did we do it 100 years ago?
  - Prioritize needs and wants and get the biggest bang for the buck
- Additional publicity is needed in newspapers and on TV to get more of the public to attend meetings.

## **Wrap Up Questionnaire Written Comments**

- Thoughts and opinions encouraged. Good exchange of ideas.
- I liked what Phil said about the need for communities to develop a plan for what they want their future to look like. If that effort can be the core of all movement forward on all issues, it can help ensure community buy-in and project relevance.
- Item 3 – Highway is acceptable; Emergency is acceptable; Code enforcement is close to non-existent.

## **Forum Summary: Champion**

Tuesday, June 2, 2009  
Champion Town Hall  
6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

### **Attendance**

*Staff:* John Bartow, Linda Gibbs, Katie Malinowski, Phil Street, Dave Zembiec

*Circuit Riders:* Kathy Amyot

*Commissioners:* None

#### *Public:*

Terry C. Buckley, Town of Champion  
Ben Coe, citizen, former Tug Hill Commission Exec. Dir.  
Linda Garrett, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust  
Wayne McIlroy, Village of Carthage  
Mike Mortimer, Office of Senator Darrel Aubertine  
Brian S. Peck, Town of Champion  
John D. Peck, Town of Champion  
Thomas E. Stewart, Town of Champion  
Henry S. Watkins, Town of Champion

### **Sign In/Open House**

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### **Introductory Presentation**

At 7:00 p.m., John Bartow welcomed participants, recognized Commissioners, circuit riders and staff, and delivered an overview of the Commission's role and work, as well as that of the region's Councils of Governments.

At 7:18 p.m., Katie Malinowski then presented an overview of the regional telephone survey and its general results.

### **Small group discussions**

Due to the small number of attendees, the entire group discussed topic areas as one. Highlights of survey results in each area were used as discussion points. Feedback on highlights, plus any other comments attendees wanted to share and discuss were encouraged. The purpose was to hear from attendees about their reactions, concerns and ideas for addressing issues in each area.

Phil Street facilitated the Land Use area first, Dave Zembiec facilitated the Community Development discussion next, and Katie Malinowski facilitated the Natural Resources discussion. Linda Gibbs recorded all notes for the forum on newsprint at the front of the room.

### Wrap Up

John Bartow facilitated wrap up discussion, generating further comments from the attendees. Two questions were asked of participants:

- What would you say is the one driving force that is facing the Tug Hill region?
- What should agencies, organizations, communities or individuals do to respond to needs as expressed in the survey results?

Next steps and upcoming additional forum dates were reviewed, and contact information posted. All were thanked for coming and engaging in lively and meaningful discussions.

### Discussion comments

#### **Infrastructure**

- I feel that we need to improve pedestrian “friendliness” in villages. The sidewalks need improvements.

#### **Recreation**

- The relatively high percentage saying decrease ATV recreation seems about right. People are getting fed up with the noise, traffic, damage to land, etc.
- Parks and playgrounds are heavily used; the demand is great
- What about bus trips to cultural activities, so that those without their own transportation, or who prefer not to drive, can attend?
- Is the landowner liable for injuries from motorized recreation on a property? [NYS General Obligations law explained.]

#### **Energy**

- Found high percentage of people wanting to increase wind development a surprise
- The high percentage may or may not be reflective of turbines already in operation when survey was taken – don’t have a “before” picture of preference
- Hunting camp is run completely by solar power; sometimes have to use the generator a little on the fourth or fifth day, but not if it’s sunny while we’re there
- Town of Champion just received a permit application for a residential wind tower

#### **Transportation**

- It’s a shame that we didn’t keep our rights to railroads in the State; this might be something that legislators could think about with the idea of creating a high-speed rail service

#### **Land Use**

- Fewer and fewer landowners own forest lands

- Fewer residents are directly affected by forestry and forestry issues
- Attitudes about planning seem to have improved since the Tug Hill Commission's formation
- We need better and more up-to-date information for planning, especially with regard to wetlands and soils

**Government**

- Surprised about favorable attitude toward local government

***Most pressing issue(s) facing Tug Hill***

- Seems like many are concerned about development, such as keeping the water bottling plant out and managing development
- Use of motorized vehicles are changing the area and causing physical disturbances; more and more long-term landowners are posting their lands to keep ATVs and snowmobiles away

WrapUp Questionnaire Written Comments

- Coordinate the newest "soil survey" from Soil and Water of Lewis County. Why not make Tug Hill wilderness to keep it as it is, but allow rural lanes of access.

## **Forum Summary: West Monroe**

Thursday, June 11, 2009  
West Monroe Fire Hall  
6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

### **Attendance**

*Staff:* John Bartow, Linda Gibbs, Katie Malinowski, Carla Malmgren, Phil Street, Dave Zembiec

*Circuit Riders:* Paul Baxter

*Commissioners:* None

### *Public:*

Mark Kirkhoff, Vanderbilt Snowmobile Club  
Keith L. McKittrick, Vanderbilt Snowmobile Club  
Richard Colesante, NorCOG  
Charles Gilkey, resident  
Tom Moran, no affiliation recorded  
Samantha Bartling, NYSDOS  
Tracy Carvell, Mexico Trail Riders  
Nancy Hains, no affiliation recorded  
Alfred Hains, no affiliation recorded  
Brenda Ko, no affiliation recorded

### **Sign In/Open House**

From 6:30 to 7:00 p.m., attendees were greeted, asked to sign-in, given a packet including a community forums description, a full survey report, and a numbered name tag. A rolling slideshow of regional scenes depicting Commission project areas ran throughout this period. Attendees were encouraged to mingle and help themselves to refreshments, provided by the West Monroe fire department.

### **Introductory Presentation**

At 7:00 p.m., John Bartow welcomed participants, recognized Commissioners, circuit riders and staff, and delivered an overview of the Commission's role and work, as well as that of the region's Councils of Governments.

At 7:15 p.m., Katie Malinowski then presented an overview of the regional telephone survey and its general results.

### **Discussion**

At 7:30 p.m., Linda Gibbs explained that attendees would break up into three groups and head to three different breakout areas according to the number on their name tags: Land Use (1), Community Development (2) and Natural Resources (3). Highlights of survey results in each area would be used as discussion points. Feedback on

highlights, plus any other comments attendees wanted to share and discuss would be welcome. The purpose was to hear from attendees about their reactions, concerns and ideas for addressing issues in each area. Each group would have approximately 15 minutes before rotating to the next area, so that each attendee would be able to comment on all three areas over the course of the night.

Linda Gibbs kept time and facilitated rotation of groups with a 5- and 3- minute warning to facilitators. Groups rotated at 7:55, 8:15, and 8:35. The rolling slideshow of regional project scenes was projected during the entire breakout session period.

Phil Street facilitated the Land Use area (John Bartow and Paul Baxter, notetakers), Dave Zembiec facilitated the Community Development discussion (Carla Malmgren notetaker), and Katie Malinowski facilitated the Natural Resources discussion (Linda Gibbs, notetaker).

### **Recreation**

- The parks and playground graph seems right for Constantia
- Constantia has three parks, about 50 acres total
- Constantia also leases 2 additional sites from individual landowners; land remains on tax roll
- Landowners covered by town liability policy
- No great need to increase parks in Constantia
- One park having trouble with ATV damage – natural area with trails; inviting because of muddy conditions; submitted grant to fence, but was not awarded
- State closed Three Mile Bay – fewer recreational opportunities
- State closure due to partying and drunkenness by select groups of people, but DEC closed access to all (annual pig roast that got out of hand and there was not enough enforcement officers available)
- People who live on access road have noticed decreased traffic and less partying
- Can park at gate and walk, but hard to carry belongings that far for picnicking, swimming or fishing
- DEC has installed multiple gates and trenches to prevent vehicular access
- DEC has removed sign for car-top boat launch
- Several meetings have taken place to try to modify the DEC's decision, to no avail; Oneida Lake Association met with Ken Lynch, DEC regional director; DEC met with Assemblyman Townsend last week
- Have asked DEC to monitor use before closing to establish who/how much popular the area is for legitimate recreation, and to find out who is causing the majority of problems so laws can be enforced
  - [KM mentioned use of steward system on Sandy Pond Beach and Salmon River as possible program at Three Mile Bay]*
- Need better interagency coordination – DEC, sheriff, town, etc.
- Mayor proposing to close all village streets in Cleveland to ATVs and snowmobiles; reason unknown

- Closing Cleveland streets will cause C4 trail to close
- Closing streets may be because of ATV traffic, and the snowmobile trail closure is a consequential casualty
- ATVs have caused damage to the landscape; some riders loud and raucous
- Vanderbilt snowmobile club is established
- ATV club trying to get organized
- Lake recreation very strong –mostly fishing
- Only one public boat launch in Oneida County – Godfrey Point
- Three Mile Bay has walk-in boat launch, but is not suited to bigger boats
- Need more public boat launches – Oswego County portion of Oneida lake has none for small fishing boats
- Motorized recreation needs more positive coverage in the media; only hear the negative aspects – accidents, etc.; need to emphasize the positive economic benefits
- Locals only take note of damage to areas
- Have to find funding for enforcement for motorized recreation
- Users do police themselves, but still need law enforcement officials
- DEC and the county are the primary enforcement agencies
- Snowmobile club officials spend a lot of time acting as peacemakers between users and landowners in order to keep trails open
- ATV users are trying, but leadership is lacking to solidly organize – need state association like NYSSA
- Boats have been selling well- early season due to good weather; economic times aren't seeming to affect this
- Constantia has three parks (totaling 50 acres) and lease two other sites from individuals, where the town does maintenance and the sites are covered by town liability insurance, but still remain on tax rolls
- On the 20 acre park, need fencing grant to keep ATVs out – the park is forever wild but is being destroyed by ATVs
- Towns are trying to realize economic benefit but need help policing

### **Energy**

- People don't feel comfortable with nuclear power because we've never resolved what we will do with nuclear waste; waste is currently being stored onsite
- Constant wind off Oneida Lake seems like it would make it a good wind energy site – lots of private land
- Biomass not practical unless subsidized - willow, switchgrass OK, but not corn because it is also a food crop
- Cleveland aquifer – feelers from bottled water company – nothing to stop them from purchasing property and developing; community depends on that resource, need to protect it from exploitation
- Bottled water facility proposal bothers me as a resident – must protect the water resource since everyone uses it

*[KM mentioned aquifer study work]*

- Forests used for firewood
- Rural nature of the area makes you feel like you are away from it all – lots of forests and wetlands
- Need to get more people from Albany out to see the resources, learn the geography and reality of the resources
- Constantia has received a proposal to classify area along Route 49 as commercial – signs along road
- Haven't really talked to others about energy issues
- Wind is a big draw, but concerned about visual impact – take away from tourism?
- Not a fan of biomass – depends on how it's grown and what's used – corn vs. willow
- Want natural gas extended to Constantia
- Solar energy in an area of high snowfall? New technologies in solar –tarp that is movable and can withstand snow
- Need new renewable energy materials, configurations, portability
- Don't like the Fenner windmills
- Big visual impact in Lowville
- Wind is heavily subsidized with grants – maintenance a problem
- Windfarms need a certain level of sustained winds, engineering, money to get up and going
- Individuals are interested in small wind, other net metering opportunities, to decrease expenses
- Biomass seems not worth it because the yield of energy is marginal, government has to subsidize
- Nuclear power is the most cost-effective; more bang for the buck, more and longer-lasting jobs – look at Oswego
- Oswego has water resource for nuclear power
- Heard anything about Alcan having problems? Fallout from auto industry decline
- What about Nestle's?  
*[KM updated on what THC knows of Nestle activity, Mannsville permit for water bottling storage, EMC studying whether county water management plan is necessary]*
- Need to protect drinking water resource
- Need dedicated people to work together to deal with these issues and balance needs

### **Miscellaneous**

- Constantia has numerous wetlands

### **Economy**

#### Farming/Forestry

- Reduce taxes on farmland and forestland
- Talk to the farmers for their ideas

- Subsidize farmland preservation
- Promote sustainable forestry/silviculture
- Greater support for grants and technical assistance for farmers & forest owners
- Control school taxes

### Tourism/Recreation

- Promote trails
- Promote Oneida Lake
- Maintain & improve trails
- Decrease state fishing regulations
- Improve public access to Oneida Lake (including handicap accessibility)
- Strengthen connection to canal system
- Better promotion of tourist opportunities and services
- Need an RV park and more accommodations near Oneida Lake to hold tourists in area
- Increase law enforcement of motorized trail use and trespass issues.

### Commercial Development: Industrial/Manufacturing & Retail

- Encourage cottage industry development with tie-in to tourist economy (bait & tackle and other small services)
- Create an economic development committee of the local municipalities. Have THC help to organize and facilitate

### ***Infrastructure***

#### Transportation

- Oswego County “Ghost Bus” is little utilized. Revamping route and/or schedule to include Syracuse may increase utilization by commuters.
- Develop Park-and-Ride option
- Seniors would be better served by shuttle service

#### Roads

- Paved roads too costly to keep up with proper re-pavement and maint. schedule

#### Water/Wastewater

- Too costly for users in low density areas

#### Internet

- Need to improve high-speed access throughout NorCOG area, esp. north of Rt. 49

#### Other

- Poor access to health care, clinics, doctors, medical centers.

## **Land Use**

- Group U development needs to be an item of discussion for building code change – restrict to Adirondacks - “Residential C” class in the rest of the state should be required
- Weekend/seasonal camps being turned into permanent residences
- More state land purchases actually result in less public access (Three Mile Bay Wildlife Management Area gated now) The state shouldn’t buy more land if this is going to be the public access policy.
- Lakefront different than north of route 49
- Development pressures – people buying multiple lots and combining them
- Small lot sizes by lake resulting in variance requests
- 32% of vacant land sales by Christmas and Assoc. for camp/recreational development
- Land sales and subdivision resulting in significant disruptions to snowmobile trail system
- Private (gated) drive development a problem
- Taxes are high on recreational waterfront property
- Taxes are forcing sales of private lands – how can people afford to keep what they have?
- Real concern to maintain rural character in Constantia – farmlands, wild areas
- Concern about where commercial development belongs – West Monroe updating master plan, letters to local newspaper express concern about property rights for commercial development
- Incompatible adjacent land uses happening under current level of regulations, \$200,000 house right next door to concrete plant subsequently constructed
- Survey results seem to reflect local attitudes
- People like farms
- North shore people are conservative, evenly split on attitudes; many are poor
- North shore is getting water, and smaller lot sizes that could create problems – creating urban flavor in a place that does not want to be urban
- Encouraging hamlet development might be the best of both worlds
- Fear of infringement on solitude, “people telling me what to do”
- Constantia subdivision regulations outdated and offer inadequate protection
- Constantia will have to deal with implications of public water along NYS Rt. 49 corridor
- Sewer development a long ways off for financial reasons
- 10% of Constantia waterfront truly seasonal cottages
- Potential conflict between wealthier owners converting seasonal cottages to year round residences, and older, longer term cottage owners. Newer owners demanding services that longer term owners may not want or may not be able to afford.

- Highway infrastructure a concern – Rt. 49 barely marginally capable now, and may not be adequate to support increased traffic from growth stimulated by water, sewer. Rt. 49 not a priority for improvement/increased development.
- Bernards Bay to Central Square most unpredictable segment of commute to Syracuse area – highly vulnerable to disruptions like traffic accidents

### **Government**

- Desire to protect open space, but lax local regulations do not deter
- School boards want more nonresidential development
- Wealthier landowners coming in want more stringent regulations for protection
- Biggest “budget buster” in Constantia is ambulance service, but there is demand for service with older population moving in. No good option for sharing to reduce cost. Expense also due to remoteness
- Police service/access limited due to remoteness
- Fire service also expensive due to remoteness

### Wrap Up

To generate further comments from the participants, Katie Malinowski asked:

- What would you say is the one driving force that is facing the Tug Hill region?
- What should agencies, organizations, communities or individuals do to respond to needs as expressed in the survey results?

### **Driving Factors**

- Jobs
- Taxes – becoming too high; people can’t afford to keep homes, especially the elderly; school taxes are 4 times the amount of town taxes, but town hears the complaints
- Economic development needed, too – wages and hard work on farms requires immigrant labor
- Please talk to the media to emphasize positive aspects of local government and motorized recreation
- Help relate why this [survey work] is important to the general public who are not present at this meeting or interested in civic involvement – what’s in it for them, what’s the hook?

John Bartow facilitated wrap up discussion. Next steps and upcoming additional forum dates were reviewed, and contact information posted. All were thanked for coming and engaging in lively and meaningful discussions.

### WrapUp Questionnaire Written Comments

- Thank you for taking the time to inform us on your acquired info.
- Thank you for the opportunity to hear about this survey and to comment.
- All suggestions are mute without responsible government.

## **Forum Summary: Lee**

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

Lee Town Hall

6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

### **Attendance**

*Staff:* John Bartow, Linda Gibbs, Katie Malinowski, Jean Waterbury, Dave Zembiec

*Circuit Riders:* Gerry Ritter, Harlan Moonen

*Commissioners:* None

#### *Public:*

Adam Soruto, Sr., no affiliation recorded

Collen Seigel, Annsville Planning Board Chair

John Urtz, Lee Town Supervisor

Ivan Pritchard, Town of Lee

Alan Trombley, Town of Lee

Richard Smith, Town of Lee

### **Sign In/Open House**

From 6:30 to 7:00 p.m., attendees were greeted, asked to sign-in, given a packet including a community forums description, a full survey report, and a numbered name tag. A rolling slideshow of regional scenes depicting Commission project areas ran throughout this period. Attendees were encouraged to mingle and help themselves to refreshments, provided by the West Monroe fire department.

### **Introductory Presentation**

At 7:00 p.m., John Bartow welcomed participants, recognized Commissioners, circuit riders and staff, and delivered an overview of the Commission's role and work, as well as that of the region's Councils of Governments.

At 7:15 p.m., Katie Malinowski then presented an overview of the regional telephone survey and its general results.

### **Discussion**

Due to the small number of attendees, the entire group discussed topic areas as one. Highlights of survey results in each area were used as discussion points. Feedback on highlights, plus any other comments attendees wanted to share and discuss were encouraged. The purpose was to hear from attendees about their reactions, concerns and ideas for addressing issues in each area.

Katie Malinowski facilitated the Natural Resources discussion first, Dave Zembiec facilitated the Community Development discussion next, and Jean Waterbury facilitated the Land Use area. Linda Gibbs and Dave Zembiec recorded all notes for the forum on newsprint at the front of the room.

### ***Infrastructure***

- Public water more important than public sewers
- Money for sewer systems isn't readily available
- Lee rehabilitating all roads on county maps
- Created road standards with the state and have been bringing all up to that standard over time – best roads in the county
- Need to explain to people that paved roads are more cost effective because they require less labor and material to maintain than unpaved roads
- High speed internet access needed outside of village – customer density a factor; plan in place
- Public sewer and water is a concern for other areas of Lee, especially with seasonal camps around lakes – lack of funding is a barrier to doing this

### ***Recreation***

- ATVs hurt the snowmobile sector because of trail damage when they ride on the trails when the snow is gone and some of these trails run through farm fields; snowmobile clubs get angry calls from landowners because of the damage and threaten to close the trails for everyone
- Unsupervised, younger ATV riders more of a problem than others
- People using an ATV to reach their camp or hunt is OK
- ATV racing track idea emerging
- Some people have bought empty lots to give themselves a place to just ride
- Lee has an 87-acre park with organized youth, adult and senior programs – youth soccer, baseball, etc.
- Lee has a large, self-administered seniors club with over 300 members, \$2 to join
- Seniors club organizes all sorts of get-togethers and trips; town pays for bus for trips
- Town of Lee's population is approximately 7,000
- Retirement homes relatively close – Rome

### ***Tourism***

- The 'official' tourism facility is just off the thruway, but the Trenton information center gets more traffic, even though it's not manned all the time
- Take advantage of marketing to customers of nearby attractions, such as Turning Stone

### ***Farming***

- Organic farming gathering steam
- Processing facilities for small farmers not here anymore because of increases in regulations, although farming opportunities exist – the land is still there
- Getting goods to bigger market, such as New York City, is difficult
- Need to improve local producers' access to markets
- Farmers' markets have increased, but take a strong community leader to maintain

## **Energy**

- Has been some negative reaction to outdoor wood burners
- Neighbors have complained of smoke and odor; burning things that they shouldn't be burning
- Some furnace makers specify what should be burned and you can tell if the wrong thing has been used in them
- Lee Center has access to natural gas, as well as propane, wood, coal, oil and electricity for power and heating
- Holland Patent, Prospect, Barneveld and the Town of Trenton have adopted outdoor furnace regulations
- Taller stack requirements lead to more creosote buildup in the stack and worse odor

*[Commission staff directed participants to the Commission's web site for more information about local outdoor furnace ordinances, and mentioned that the State is working on drafting statewide regulations also.]*

- Local residents have inquired about town rules for small wind systems
- Net metering changes may increase the number of inquiries in future
- Attendee knew of one person who installed solar panels on their house; total cost of project was \$44,000, but with assistance ended up spending \$11,000 out-of-pocket; same individual also installed a small wind turbine – power company was slow in hooking up (net metered)

## **Land Use**

- Dairy farming suffering now
- No opportunities for shifting to alternative crops
- Too much of the market is controlled by only four major corporations
- Start-up capital not available for farming
- Hard work and long hours not appealing to younger generations
- Active acreage amount hasn't changed, but remaining farms have bought up smaller ones and become larger
- Cooperative Extension and Tug Hill Commission know the issues and work hard on them
- People in Albany "don't have a clue"
- Farmers can't afford to retire until they are 100 years old
- If there is an opportunity to buy land to keep it from developing, some landowners are doing this and renting it to farmers for farm use at a low rental rate
- Lee has the advantage of being close to Delta Lake – half the lake is in the town
- Lee is focused on residential development – Rome has the retail and industrial development and is close enough, 6 miles away
- Needs in Lee are for banking, groceries, etc.
- Still have CCC camps in northern part of town
- Seasonal camps have been grandfathered in and can be improved, but cannot exceed the original footprint

- Secondary businesses for farming have decreased – no farm infrastructure to support farm needs
- Farmers need further education in order to be able to run the business side of the farm and survive
- Need to expose more kids to farming – CCE, Farm Bureau sponsor a day to bring kids out to a family run farm and they were booked to the maximum with over 1,000 kids there in one day

### ***Forestry***

- Mechanization and decreased domestic paper industry has led to fewer jobs for wood products people – logging, procurement, processing

### ***Government***

- Local government is seen as a regulator for many state-mandated regulations
- Need to weigh cost/impact versus benefits of new regulations

To generate further comments from the participants, Katie Malinowski asked:  
 What would you say is the one driving force that is facing the Tug Hill region, and what should agencies, organizations, communities or individuals do to respond to needs as expressed in the survey results?

### ***Major Issues/Challenges***

- Good job opportunities for youth
- Need to manage development for slow, sustained growth
- Exodus of youth (see item above)

John Bartow facilitated wrap up discussion. Next steps and upcoming additional forum dates were reviewed, and contact information posted. All were thanked for coming and engaging in lively and meaningful discussions.

### **WrapUp Questionnaire Written Comments**

- Keep up the good work.

## **Forum Summary: Redfield**

Thursday, June 18, 2009  
Redfield Fire Hall  
6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

### **Attendance**

*Staff:* John Bartow, Linda Gibbs, Katie Malinowski, Phil Street, Dave Zembiec

*Circuit Riders:* Paul Baxter, Jane Jones

*Commissioners:* Mike Yerdon, Leona Chereshnoski

#### *Public:*

Marilyn Roser, Town of Orwell  
Robert Crossett, Town of Orwell  
Norma Crossett, no affiliation  
Paul Pratt, Town of Redfield  
Michael O'Shea, Town of Boylston  
Francis A. Adams, Town of Redfield  
Margaret Kastler, Oswego County Legislator  
Roy Davis, no affiliation  
Yvonne Phelps, no affiliation  
Kenn Pickard, no affiliation  
John Becker, no affiliation  
Michael Phelps, no affiliation  
Dan Sawchuck, NYSDEC  
Dan Marusiak, Town of Redfield  
Fran Verdoliva, NYSDEC  
Bill Falcheck, Town of Redfield  
Creg Ivison, Sandy Creek Central School Board of Education  
Peter Hopkinson, Kasoag Trailblazers, Williamstown  
Jackie Hobbs, resident, Sandy Creek Central School teacher  
Tom Jones, Redfield resident  
Tammy Hanright, Town of Florence  
Deborah Montieth, Town of Redfield  
Joyce LaCelle, Town of Redfield  
Brian Alrutz, Town of Redfield

### **Sign In/Open House**

From 6:30 to 7:00 p.m., attendees were greeted, asked to sign-in, given a packet including a community forums description, a full survey report, and a numbered name tag. A rolling slideshow of regional scenes depicting Commission project areas ran throughout this period. Attendees were encouraged to mingle and help themselves to refreshments, provided by the Redfield Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary.

### **Introductory Presentation**

At 7:00 p.m., John Bartow welcomed participants, recognized Commissioners, circuit riders and staff, and delivered an overview of the Commission's role and work, as well as that of the region's Councils of Governments.

At 7:15 p.m., Katie Malinowski then presented an overview of the regional telephone survey and its general results.

### **Discussion**

At 7:30 p.m., Linda Gibbs explained that attendees would break up into three groups and head to three different breakout areas according to the number on their name tags: Land Use (1), Community Development (2) and Natural Resources (3). Highlights of survey results in each area would be used as discussion points. Feedback on highlights, plus any other comments attendees wanted to share and discuss would be welcome. The purpose was to hear from attendees about their reactions, concerns and ideas for addressing issues in each area. Each group would have approximately 15 minutes before rotating to the next area, so that each attendee would be able to comment on all three areas over the course of the night.

John Bartow kept time and facilitated rotation of groups with a 5- and 3- minute warning to facilitators. Groups rotated at 7:55, 8:15, and 8:35. The rolling slideshow of regional project scenes was projected during the entire breakout session period.

Phil Street facilitated the Land Use area (Paul Baxter, notetaker), Dave Zembiec facilitated the Community Development discussion (Jane Jones, notetaker), and Katie Malinowski facilitated the Natural Resources discussion (Linda Gibbs, notetaker).

### **Recreation**

- Unaware of any cultural activities in Boylston
- Tug Hill Tourathon a big event
- What are the opportunities for parks and playgrounds in Boylston? There isn't a central location
- Taxes have gone up in Redfield, and the roads aren't being maintained, so why not use the money on parks and playgrounds instead
- Costs of road materials has more than doubled in the last year
- A few ATV or snowmobile riders can ruin enjoyment for the many by speeding, going off trail, etc.
- ATVs have torn up private land so that it's not useable
- ATVs and snowmobiles good for business, though (family owns B&B)
- Need places to ride
- ATV owners must register and license vehicles, but have no place to ride
- ATV club starting to organize – meeting in Orwell tomorrow night
- If snowmobilers let ATVs on trails, landowners will close the trails because of the damage ATVs do to the land
- Can't ride the roads

- County promotes but doesn't plan or help implement trails – just lip service
- How do you repair a stone road if it's torn up?
- Car insurance can cover ATVs
- Still waiting for answers regarding liability of towns if they open roads – this is crucial
- Oswego County has given ATV recreation their blessing, but has not done anything to help or plan
- Boylston has opened a few roads to make connection between Orwell and Jefferson County, has concern about damage to town roads
- ATVs and snowmobiles are positive for the economy
- Have the same ATV problems in Florida
- Boylston doesn't have many businesses that provide amenities, so doesn't realize economic benefit
- Need to patrol the trails; Oswego County does this
- Camps in Osceola, Redfield, Orwell used for snowmobiling mostly
- 75% (I had noted 3 out of 5 = 60%) of camps have an ATV for utility purposes – plowing, collecting wood, hunting/fishing, etc.
- Lots of people who don't ride an ATV or snowmobile seem to be quite passionate about their dislike of them
- Landowners who allow trails on their properties should get tax breaks
- Large forest landowners pay taxes with lease fees they collect
- If paid for access, landowner not covered for liability by NYS General Obligations Law
- People like it here because it's quiet and rural
- Not a lot of trails to hike/walk on, but it's also not promoted – need trail signs to prevent people from getting lost if hiking is promoted
- If you want to hike, go to the Adirondacks on State land – no need for more trails
- There aren't any DEC campgrounds in the area, and there are too many regulations for private campgrounds
- The State hasn't taken any action to plan – they've done nothing with the land since the 1930's
- People outside the area dictate the plan – need more local input and influence
- People in the cities don't value the northern rural areas
- Surprised at the high percentage of negativity regarding snowmobiling
- Survey results show that there is a variety of recreational interests
- Snowmobiling is organized at this point – looking at the percentage who said they wanted to keep the level of snowmobiling the same
- Cultural activities wanted more by visitors *[LG called attention to actual results of survey that showed year-round residents more likely to want more cultural activities.]*
- Seasonals may expect services like at home
- I'm a seasonal resident, and your roads are better than mine at home

- Need State camping areas like Stillwater; overseen by one person, sign in/sign out, make your own fire ring, no tables, etc. – to be done on the Salmon River Reservoir
- More recreational opportunities mean more pressure on emergency services and can be a big burden for small, volunteer departments – training, equipment, etc.
- Have to give money to enforcement and emergency response if we want to increase recreation

### **Energy**

- Nuclear response – NIMBY; living downwind of nuclear plants is worrisome
- Need a study on cancer rates before and after nuclear plants in Oswego were built
- No policy or location still for waste storage
- Perception that energy amounts and price is controlled by the government
- Much skepticism expressed with regard to solar power in the north country – enough sun? deal with snowfall?
- Propane – when you use less, pay higher cost per gallon and a tank surcharge
- Electric – pay service fee whether you use it or not
- Can't transport energy from renewable sources to the grid easily
- Don't see a local benefit for producing renewable power when the energy just goes onto the larger electric grid
- No problem with wind turbines being used
- Why not use more hydro power?
- Wouldn't be a bad place for wood burning/biomass plant – have the wood; wood would need to be chipped
- With the way energy is used today, we definitely need more nuclear power; wind and solar aren't economical – must be government subsidized
- For biomass to work, we would need to build the infrastructure for planting, harvest and transport – not there now
- Quality of wood here has declined because of acid rain, insects, etc., but we do have a lot of it
- Price for wood chips is low; Lyonsdale plant isn't steady in its need for fuel, so not a lucrative or steady market for woods workers
- Sithe Energy shuts down for days at a time because they can't produce the energy cheap enough to sell to the grid
- Harden a good example; half the mill is run on the waste from furniture production
- Would it be feasible for the Village of Redfield to build its own plant?
- Municipal power transmission fees are very expensive
- Seems like infestations like the tent caterpillar don't cycle anymore – steady
- Need more access to DEC land – walk, hunt only right now – need to be able to harvest wood
- Put local loggers to work on State lands

- Wood is a renewable resource when well managed
- Does the State pay taxes on its lands? How does the school district get its share? *[LG and KM to research and send information to this participant.]*
- Nothing shocking about the survey results in this category
- Wind is a win-win; economy and environment – do they need the subsidy?
- Some people don't like the looks of windmills
- Windmills better to look at, and safer than, another nuclear power plant
- Rome just installed a bio-bark boiler system; debark logs and burn bark for heat to dry paper, generate electricity – there is a scrubber on the stack
- Green energy is one people's minds
- People seeing the backlash on corn – takes more energy to make ethanol from corn than just using petroleum in the first place; competes against using corn for food products; depends on government subsidies; shouldn't use a food crop to generate energy
- People understand we need transmission lines, but don't want more
- Water bottling proposal is still out there; Mannsville project – permit submitted for bulk storage
- State doesn't have regulatory power for groundwater – needs it to protect the area from impacts of water bottling *[KM mentioned Sweeney bill in NYS]*
- Invasive species an issue – has destroyed Kasoag Lake [Eurasian milfoil]
- Redfield boat launch has a designated area for dumping things cleaned off boats, but no actual boat washing station

### ***Economy &***

*[All three groups came up with many of the same issues/concerns which I found very Interesting – JJ]*

#### **Farming and Forestry**

- no 'real' farms left in Redfield area
- working forestry down also due to low stumpage prices and forest land taxes – doesn't pay to work the forest land
- tax burden of ownership forces land owner to subdivide or sell all the timber and mismanage for the future –need incentives to keep land in production
- 480a too restrictive – 480a should be 'supported' by state money so locality doesn't lose those tax dollars
- creature' infestation – ie. Caterpillars etc. cause local wood product to lose value and restrict their shipment out of the area
- have raw materials, but need value added businesses – need targeted incentives and tax breaks

#### **Economic Development**

- not viable option in area
- too rural for industry

- biggest draw is recreation
- most felt that if all the ATV 'hurdles' could be eliminated that ATV ridership would 'take over' snowmobiles
- most would like to see managed ATV system that NYS would run/administer with funding for trails and trail development
- would like to see more aggressive action by THC to get answers to ATV questions (liability to towns, landowners)
- General obligations law - only viable business would be 'mom and pop' operations but need tax incentives etc. to help
- small 'cultural institutions' ie. Fiddler's Hall of Fame need help in promoting what they have to offer as does the region in general
- capitalize on snow
- do more promotion of region

### ***Infrastructure***

- lack of adequate cell phone coverage— all felt lack of cell phone coverage was a problem for accident/ medical emergency coverage especially during snowmobile and hunting season
- lack of high speed internet service comes up at town board meetings all the time from residents
- high speed internet would allow many to work from home or sell products made locally via internet – unable to do that now; Increasing local businesses sales via the internet would, in turn, generate more sales tax revenue for the town
- Only internet options in some areas are dial-up or satellite
- Road maintenance costs have increased significantly; tax base is not large enough to offset the costs

### ***Land Use***

- People want everything, all uses
- Would be interested in seeing these results broken out by resident/nonresident
- There are tax consequences to development and to farmlands, open space and minimum lot size
- Possibly residents more likely to want to see things stay the same
- In four years, town assessment up from \$26 million to \$37 million due to development
- New development tends to be expensive development
- High prices of land sales means higher assessments for long term local residents
- Local land prices look cheap to out-of-staters
- High percentage of State land in town acts as a multiplier for increases in local taxes – increases need to be spread over fewer people, so costs more per capita
- What really hurts is school taxes, which are based on enrollments; State aid formula is unfair to small districts
- People leaving Oswego County due to lack of job opportunities
- How much more open space can we protect when the State already owns 30%?

- New development not stable development; higher turnover in ownership
- Problem with power access to new subdivisions – you can hear generators fire up Friday afternoon and shut down later on Sunday
- It can be expensive to power new subdivisions
- People like the idea of camps and rural life until they try spending a week or two without power – then out come the generators!

### **Government**

- Happy with the amount of local government
- Like control over my own piece of ground
- Different satisfaction between police, fire and ambulance. Less happy with law enforcement – understaffed, slow response time. Not enough to go around.
- You can rule and regulate all you want, but it doesn't work without enforcement
- Less clustering in one place checking registrations needed – more trail patrol needed
- Three sheriff's deputies for the whole county for snowmobiles/ATVs/boats are not enough – spread too thin
- I like local government. I don't like State government and State mandates, unfunded mandates.
- Do not like new 10% standard for forcing municipal consolidation study; not fair to small governments
- Fewer elected, more appointed local officials is not more open government
- Small local government voices are being reduced
- Local government means more accountability and responsiveness
- Availability and increase in cost of ambulance service a problem
- Highway accused of being wasteful, but other parts of government are getting more expensive more quickly
- Last winter: 360 inches of snow
- Sandy Creek test scores, educational achievement better than local perception
- School taxes are a concern
- Unprofitable land being turned into land yielding more tax revenue due to development
- Why can some local governments keep stable tax rates while others can't?
- Mixed opinions on whether towns are getting enough taxes out of camps
- Highway departments less elaborately equipped here
- More input, more satisfaction the closer the level of government. You lose any kind of contact with State and Federal
- Fire departments are social clubs
- Fire departments are the heart of small communities
- Competition between fire departments and communities drives up spending for trucks, town halls
- Mandates are bad and a problem

- No cooperation from the State/Federal government; no cooperation within State/Federal government; too much “passing the buck” and dodging responsibility
- Why does Albion need the Village of Altmar?
- Why does Sandy Creek need two villages so close to each other with duplicate services (two fire depts., etc.)?
- If we start consolidating towns, somebody’s going to be left out at 3 o’clock in the morning
- Why do we need nine school districts in Oswego County?

### Wrap Up

To generate further comments from the participants, Katie Malinowski asked:

- What would you say is the one driving force that is facing the Tug Hill region?
- What should agencies, organizations, communities or individuals do to respond to needs as expressed in the survey results?

### ***Driving Factors***

- Subdivision
- Taxes too high
- Lack of jobs
- Need 5-10 year plan with action steps – “This is where we think Tug Hill is going.”
- Don’t want regulation like the blue line
- State taking over all the land on Tug Hill, but not allowing ATVs; less restrictions on State land needed
- State should control the beaver population if they’re worried about water quality problems

### ***Question & Answer***

How will this survey help us? *[JB responded]*

- Directing Commission work programs
- Communities have data they can use to help them make decisions; Commission ready to assist
- Survey can be conducted at regular intervals; monitor changes in attitudes
- Use questions from this survey in comprehensive plan surveys to get more local results to same questions
- A five-year plan would need to be community driven and based on measurable indicators and trends, i.e. number and rate of subdivisions
- Special Areas redefining and remapping – out to communities in the next year

Next steps and upcoming additional forum dates were reviewed, and contact information posted. All were thanked for coming and engaging in lively and meaningful discussions.

## WrapUp Questionnaire Written Comments

- Thank you for your time.
- I think some of the communities are very lax in keeping their downtown areas clean (i.e. buildings falling in, poor repair); draws negative opinion to potential new residents. Why would I want to live there? Just drive through Town of Williamstown – you will see what I’m talking about. The worse your property looks – you are rewarded with less taxes you pay. It’s unfair to those property owners who keep their property in nice shape – you get slapped with higher taxes.
- I was here primarily due to education response. Sandy Creek should be part of THC.
- We need more support from the State. More use of NYS land. Everything seems to depend on private landowners. 480-a – non State funded forest program. No ATV riding on State land, etc.
- Need 4-wheel trails in Redfield.
- Good job! Thanks for the opportunity to share!

## **Forum Summary: Martinsburg**

Thursday, June 25, 2009  
Martinsburg Town Hall  
6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

### **Attendance**

*Staff:* John Bartow, Linda Gibbs, Matt Johnson, Katie Malinowski, Carla Malmgren, Phil Street, Dave Zembiec

*Circuit Riders:* Jane Jones, Jeanne Wooding

*Commissioners:* None

### *Public:*

Gil Morczek, no affiliation recorded  
Doug Dietrich, Martinsburg Town Board member  
Debra Kogut, resident, Town of Martinsburg  
Mary Kelly, Town of Martinsburg Clerk  
Kayla Bogdanowicz, resident, Town of Montague  
Natalie Bogdanowicz, resident, Town of Montague

### **Sign In/Open House**

From 6:30 to 7:00 p.m., attendees were greeted, asked to sign-in, given a packet including a community forums description, a full survey report, and a numbered name tag. A rolling slideshow of regional scenes depicting Commission project areas ran throughout this period. Attendees were encouraged to mingle and help themselves to refreshments, provided by the West Monroe fire department.

### **Introductory Presentation**

At 7:00 p.m., John Bartow welcomed participants, recognized Commissioners, circuit riders and staff, and delivered an overview of the Commission's role and work, as well as that of the region's Councils of Governments. At 7:15 p.m., Katie Malinowski then presented an overview of the regional telephone survey and its general results.

### **Discussion**

The full group was utilized for discussion, rather than breaking into small groups, as in other forums. Dave Zembiec facilitated the Community Development discussion, Katie Malinowski facilitated the Natural Resources discussion, and Phil Street facilitated the Land Use area. John Bartow, Linda Gibbs and Matt Johnson took notes.

### **Recreation**

- The higher percentage wanting to decrease ATV and snowmobile activity makes sense
- Residents don't ride their own snowmobiles on the weekends because of the heavy and fast traffic; stay home from 3 pm Friday until late Sunday afternoon

- ATVs tear up stone spread on paved roads
- Residents pay taxes and are responsible for fixing things because of visiting riders, but can't enjoy riding their own ATVs and snowmobiles when they want to
- Have had to replace all four tires on truck due to stone on road; sharp stone flattened one tire, but required all four to be replaced for proper balance at \$500 per tire; stone was all over road from ATV traffic
- Snowmobile tracks also responsible for many a flat tire
- When mentioned flat tires and road maintenance burden to people there on weekend, the visitors reply, "You should expect to have to do it."
- Need to slow riders down- need more enforcement
- Response for increasing parks and playgrounds is surprisingly high
- Seems like a demographic shift is happening, with high percentage of people wanting more family oriented offerings, like parks and playgrounds; when I was younger, going to the bar was the preferred cultural activity!
- Lots of camp activity in the summer – maintenance and relaxation

### ***Economy***

- Increasing forestry activity too much might lead to no trees being left for future generations; don't see many big trees anymore
- Not much clearcutting now – must replant after doing this
- Importance of forestry not seen by most people – it's all out of sight out in the woods!
- Need better and more stable economic return for farm products; milk prices for farmers too volatile; no one wants to get into farming
- Organic farming is on the increase because farmers can get a better price for those products
- Not as many places to stop for lunch when out snowmobiling on the Hill; lots of places that support tourism have gone out of business
- Keep the Walmarts and big box stores out – need to support local businesses
- Lots of people have made a good living from farming and forestry in the past; expect that this will continue

### ***Infrastructure***

- ARC bus service just started in Lewis County
- Need to better maintain paved roads already here
- Martinsburg has sent a survey to residents west of the West Road asking them about the quality of their television reception and their preference for wanting cable service

### ***Land Use***

- Surprised that there is such an even split between increasing and keeping things the same in all the land use categories
- Would like to see this item analyzed by age group

## **Government**

- What has the Commission done about subdivisions? It was formed when Gould Paper was going to sell its land to a developer from Arizona who wanted to build a resort in the middle of Tug Hill.

*[THC staff explained many reasons for Commission formation, request by locals for no regulatory authority but rather planning assistance, Gould Lands now protected by conservation easement held by state because of local interest, revisiting special areas work]*

- Glad to see that there is a high percentage who want to keep local government regulations the same; towns need to control development more
- Locals do want controls against speculative subdivision
- Lewis County has a good training facility for emergency services; Turin does, but not as good; Port Leyden doesn't have one anymore

## **Energy**

- Transmission line response doesn't make sense – how do they think the power's going to get out?
- Windmills are good – love to see them working and no pollution being made
- 

## **Wrap Up**

To generate further comments from the participants, Katie Malinowski asked:

- What would you say is the one driving force that is facing the Tug Hill region?
- What should agencies, organizations, communities or individuals do to respond to needs as expressed in the survey results?

## **Driving Factors**

- Bad economy; costs for everything is going up
- Challenge of growing while controlling/managing that growth
- Fiscal stress on towns and tax issues – only have residential taxes to draw on; Commission should get towns together to figure out how to better share services while maintaining local identity
- Land use planning assistance is still very important
- Use some of same questions in future local leaders surveys so answers can be compared between officials and general public
- Form a focus group to look at survey questions to determine which ones need more in-depth investigation, such as forestry, wind power, solar power, etc.

John Bartow facilitated wrap up discussion. Next steps and upcoming additional forum dates were reviewed, and contact information posted. All were thanked for coming and engaging in lively and meaningful discussions.

## **WrapUp Questionnaire Written Comments**

- Control of ATV and snowmobiles (speed)
- Maintenance of town owned roads. Much needed repair on road only getting slight maintenance.

**Appendix C**  
**Summary of Resident and Landowner**  
**Survey Results**

# Tug Hill Resident and Landowner Survey 2009

## Summary of Results

*For complete report by the Center for Community Studies, please see the Commission's website at [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org).*

The Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College, Watertown, NY, conducted a regionwide telephone survey of residents and landowners in March 2009, on behalf of the Tug Hill Commission and the region's five councils of governments:

- Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC),
- Northern Oneida County Council of Governments (NOCCOG),
- North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG),
- River Area Council of Governments (RACOG), and
- Salmon Rivers Council of Governments (SRCG)

The random survey was conducted in order to determine the attitudes of both year-round and seasonal landowners and residents about current aspects of life in the region, and to assess preferences for the future of the region using statistically valid sampling methods.

The Center for Community Studies performed statistical tests of significance for each of the approximately 70 questions asking about quality of life factors and preferences for future activities. Each question was analyzed for any significant differences in responses according to three possible explanatory reasons: **residential status** (year-round or seasonal), **County** (Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, or Oswego), and **Council of Governments area** (CTHC, NOCCOG, NorCOG, RACOG, or SRCG). Statistically significant findings from the full report are can be found beneath the table and graph summaries for each section on the following pages.

## Summary of Survey Findings

### Longevity of Living or Owning Property in the Tug Hill Region

Among year-round resident adults:

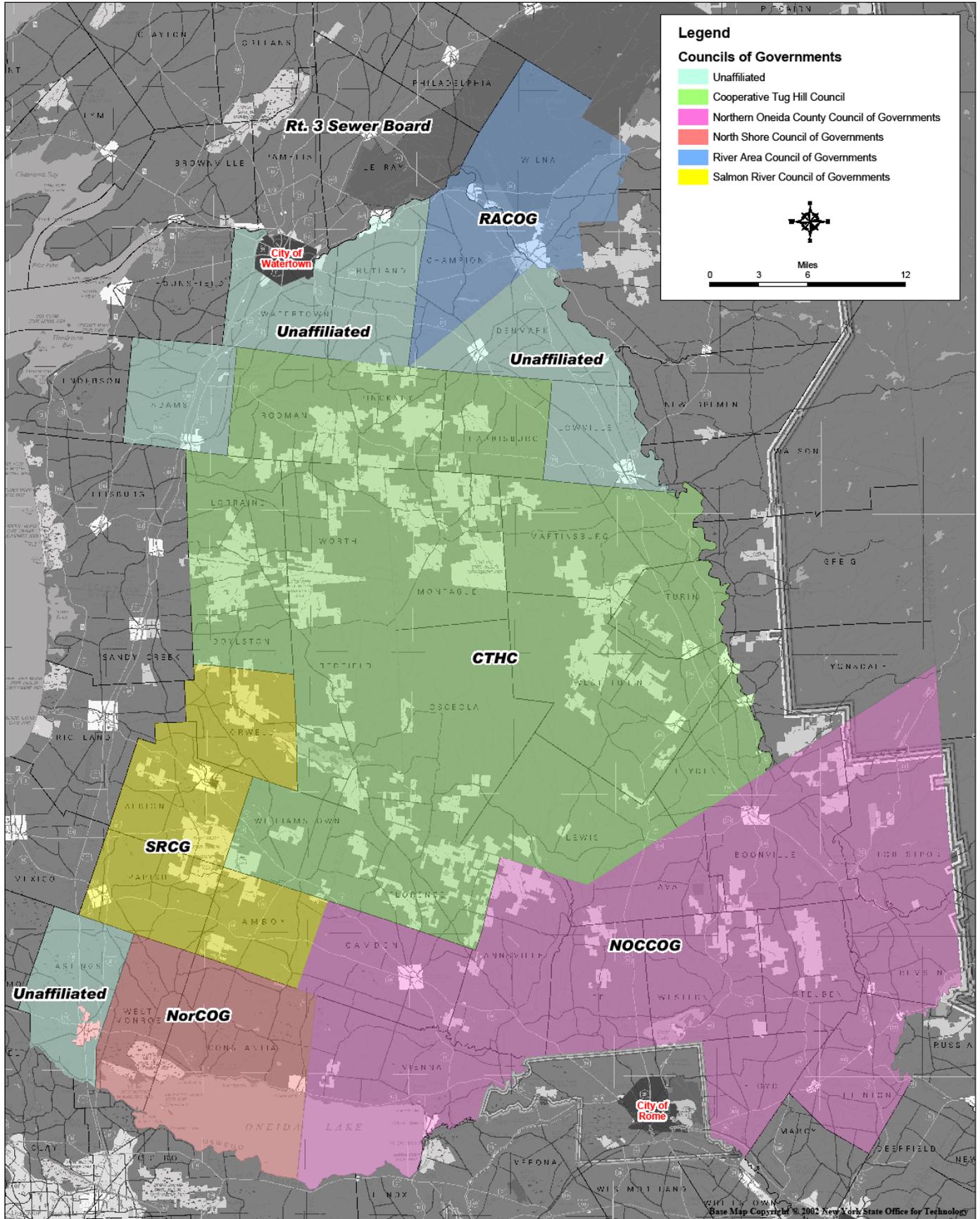
**66.0% have lived in the region for more than 20 years**, and **84.7% expect they will still live in the Tug Hill Region 5 years from now**. The year-round residents from Oswego County were the least likely to have owned their property for more than 20 years, and those from NOCCOG owned their property for the longest number of years.

Among seasonal resident adults:

**37.2% have owned property in the Tug Hill Region for more than 20 years**, and **89.1% expect they will still own the same property in the Tug Hill Region 5 years from now**. The seasonal residents from Oneida County were the most likely out of all four counties to have owned their property for more than 20 years. Of the COG areas, those from NOCCOG member municipalities stated the highest percentage of owning their property for more than 20 years.

As an apparent reflection of a general satisfaction provided from these participants, **only 9.4% and 8.4% (year-round and seasonal residents, respectively) reported that they did not expect to be living or owning property in the Tug Hill Region five years from now**.

# Tug Hill Region Councils of Governments



Base Map Copyright © 2002 New York State Office for Technology

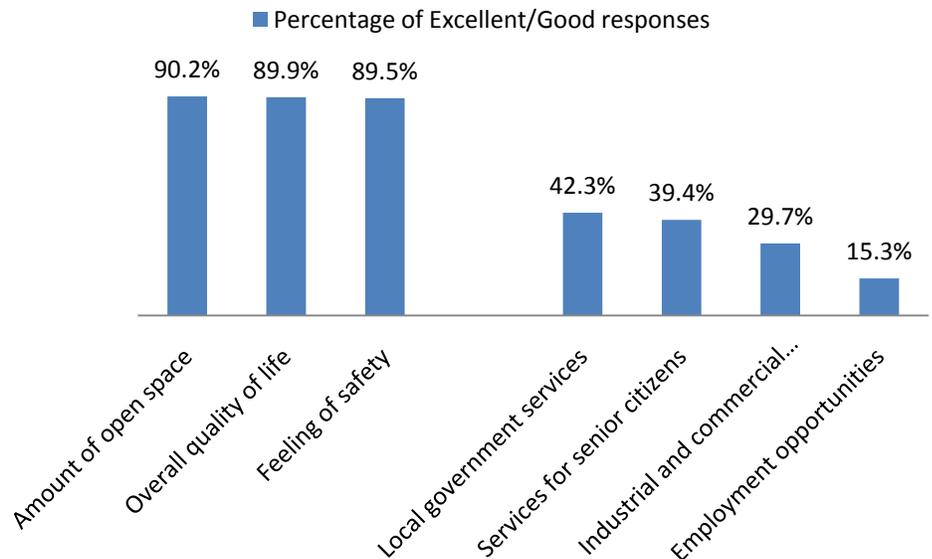
# Quality of Life in the Tug Hill Region

In an attempt to gauge the attitudes and opinions of year-round and seasonal residents regarding the quality of life in the Tug Hill Region, participants were provided a list of **21 key community characteristics**. For each of these characteristics, the participants reported whether they felt that the characteristic is currently “Excellent,” “Good,” “Fair,” or “Poor.” The table below summarizes the results with the percentage that indicated that each indicator is “Excellent,” “Good,” “Fair,” or “Poor.”

Key Community Characteristics	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Not Sure	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Quality of K-12 education	201	21.1%	486	50.9%	114	12.0%	22	2.3%	131	13.8%
Availability of higher education	131	13.7%	419	43.9%	191	20.0%	111	11.7%	102	10.7%
Feeling of safety	396	41.5%	457	48.0%	78	8.2%	13	1.4%	9	.9%
Social activities and organizations	147	15.4%	433	45.5%	227	23.8%	107	11.2%	39	4.1%
Recreational opportunities	369	38.7%	370	38.9%	131	13.7%	63	6.6%	21	2.2%
Health care	108	11.3%	401	42.0%	250	26.3%	107	11.2%	87	9.2%
Housing	117	12.3%	462	48.6%	230	24.2%	70	7.3%	72	7.6%
Services for senior citizens	80	8.4%	295	31.0%	224	23.5%	93	9.8%	259	27.3%
Drinking water quality	290	30.5%	440	46.2%	111	11.6%	59	6.2%	52	5.5%
Waste water and sewage disposal	131	13.7%	458	48.0%	163	17.1%	72	7.5%	130	13.6%
Internet access	191	20.2%	361	38.1%	118	12.4%	135	14.3%	143	15.1%
Access to groceries, pharmacies, etc.	226	23.7%	471	49.5%	181	19.0%	68	7.2%	6	.6%
Local road maintenance/snow removal	245	25.8%	435	45.7%	182	19.1%	72	7.6%	16	1.7%
Amount of open space	475	50.0%	382	40.2%	81	8.5%	6	.6%	5	.6%
Industrial and commercial development	48	5.1%	233	24.6%	310	32.7%	271	28.6%	85	9.0%
Farming and forestry activity	261	27.6%	430	45.5%	145	15.3%	60	6.3%	51	5.3%
Level of tourism	136	14.4%	429	45.7%	242	25.8%	100	10.6%	33	3.5%
Employment opportunities	13	1.4%	131	13.9%	338	35.7%	404	42.7%	60	6.3%
Local government services	34	3.6%	365	38.7%	316	33.5%	135	14.3%	92	9.8%
Condition of villages or hamlets (Main Street)	80	8.4%	534	56.4%	254	26.8%	56	5.9%	23	2.5%
Overall quality of life	257	27.2%	592	62.7%	81	8.6%	10	1.0%	4	.4%

The graph to the right summarizes the top three characteristics that respondents ranked as “Excellent” and “Good” together, and the four characteristics that had the lowest combined “Excellent” and “Good” rankings.

## Most and Least Favorable Community Character Ranking Results for Entire Region



## Amount of Open Space Great; More Jobs Needed

In general, the participants are **very satisfied with the amount of open space in the Tug Hill Region**, with approximately one in two (50.0%) rating it as “Excellent,” and nine in ten rating it as either “Excellent” or “Good” (90.2%). Only 0.6% of the participants indicated that they feel the amount of open space in the Tug Hill Region is “Poor.” Satisfaction with the amount of open space in the Tug Hill Region is significantly correlated with county, with those individuals from Oneida County being the most positive and COG, with those individuals from NOCCOG most likely to report high satisfaction and those individuals from RACOG least likely to report high satisfaction.

The participants are also **very satisfied with the overall quality of life in the Tug Hill Region**, with approximately one in four (27.2%) rating it as “Excellent,” and nine in ten rating it as either “Excellent” or “Good” (89.9%). Only 1.0% of the participants indicated that they feel the overall quality of life in the Tug Hill Region is “Poor.” Satisfaction with the overall quality of life in the county is significantly correlated with residential status, with year-round residents most likely to report high satisfaction.

A **feeling of safety in the Tug Hill Region is perceived very positively** by the participants, with approximately two in five (41.5%) rating it as “Excellent,” and almost half (48.0%) rating it as “Good.”

Conversely, the participants indicated a **lower satisfaction with employment opportunities in the Tug Hill Region**, with more than three in four (78.4%) rating this as “Fair” or “Poor” and only 15.3% rating this as “Excellent” or “Good.” Satisfaction with employment opportunities in the Tug Hill Region is significantly correlated with residential status, with seasonal residents most likely to report “Not Sure” and those from Jefferson County and RACOG being the most positive in their ratings.

The participants also indicated **lower satisfaction with industrial and commercial development in the Tug Hill Region** with less than one in three (29.7%) rating it as “Excellent” or “Good,” while three in five (61.3%) rated it as “Fair” or “Poor.” Satisfaction with industrial and commercial development in the Tug Hill Region is significantly correlated with residential status, with seasonal residents most likely to report “Not Sure” and those from Jefferson County and RACOG being the most positive in their ratings.

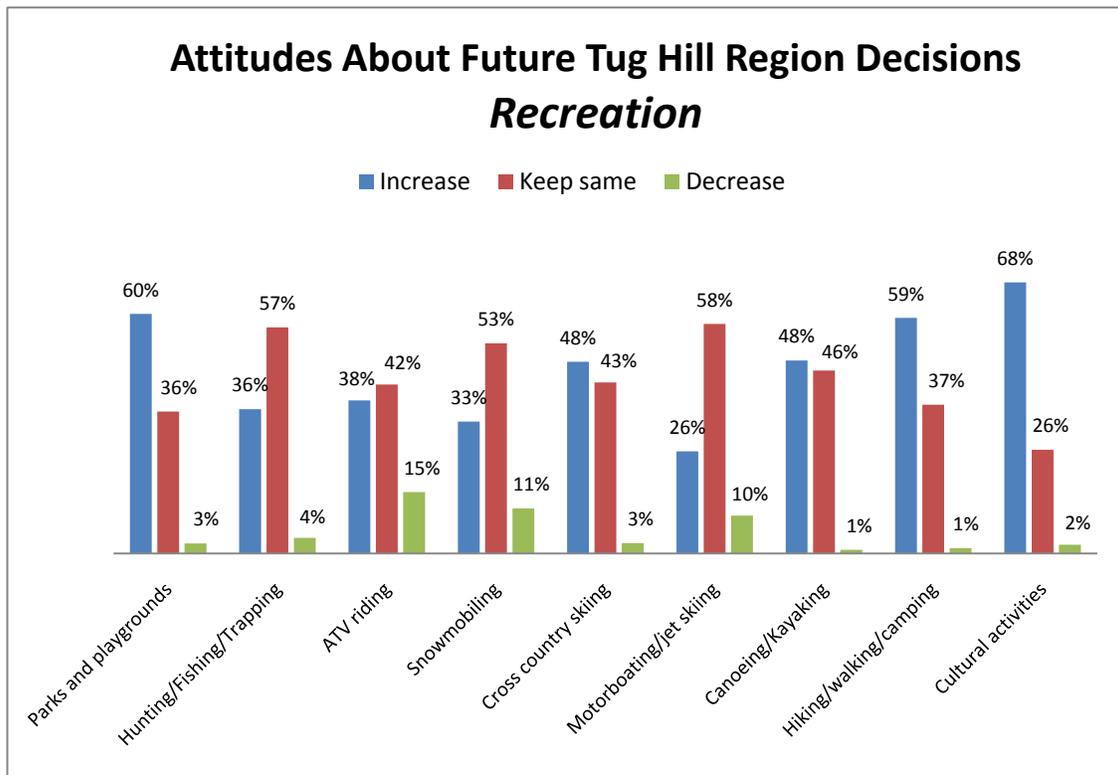
Interestingly, the participants were most likely to rate **services for senior citizens in the Tug Hill Region** as “Not Sure” (27.3%). Satisfaction with services for senior citizens in the Tug Hill Region is significantly correlated with residential status, county, and COG, with seasonal residents and those from Oswego County and CTHC most likely to report “Not Sure” and those from SRCOG being the least positive.

# What Might Improve Communities in the Tug Hill Region

A large portion of the survey was devoted to determining the attitudes of participants regarding numerous types of **activities or aspects to improve the future of communities within the Tug Hill Region**. Participants were asked: *“If where up to you to decide, would you INCREASE – KEEP BUT NOT INCREASE – or DECREASE the types of activities or aspects related to the following:”*

## Types of Recreation

	Increase		Keep, but do not increase		Decrease		Not sure	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Parks and playgrounds	564	60.1%	334	35.6%	23	2.5%	17	1.8%
Hunting/Fishing/Trapping	340	36.2%	531	56.7%	36	3.9%	30	3.2%
ATV riding	360	38.4%	397	42.4%	145	15.4%	36	3.8%
Snowmobiling	311	33.1%	494	52.7%	106	11.3%	27	2.9%
Cross country skiing	451	48.1%	402	42.9%	25	2.6%	60	6.4%
Motorboating/jet skiing	239	25.6%	539	57.6%	89	9.5%	69	7.4%
Canoeing/Kayaking	451	48.4%	428	45.9%	9	.9%	45	4.8%
Hiking/walking/camping	554	59.1%	350	37.3%	12	1.3%	22	2.3%
Cultural activities (concerts, etc.)	637	68.0%	244	26.0%	21	2.2%	35	3.7%



### Statistically significant findings - Recreation:

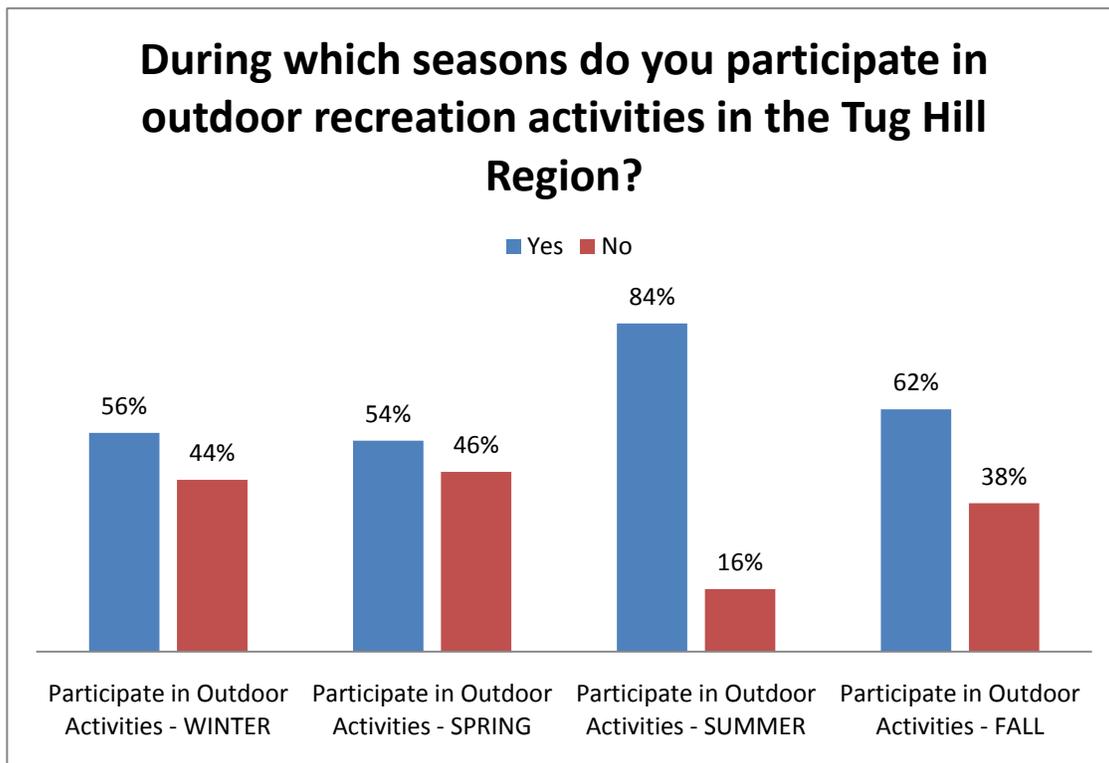
- Year-round residents throughout the region were more likely than seasonal residents to want an increase of parks and playgrounds (63.9% vs. 45.3%). RACOG respondents were most likely to want an increase in this activity (71.1%). Oneida County and NOCCOG respondents were least likely to want an increase in this activity (51.6% and 51.0%, respectively).
- Lewis and Oneida County respondents were least likely to want an increase of hunting/fishing/trapping (32.4% and 31.1%, respectively), while RACOG and SRCG respondents were most likely to want an increase of hunting/fishing/trapping (44.2% and 46.4%, respectively).

Statistically significant findings – Recreation cont'd:

- Respondents from Jefferson and Lewis counties, as well as those in the RACOG area, were most likely to want an increase in ATV riding (43.8%, 43.7%, and 47.5%, respectively).
- CTHC and SRCG respondents were least likely to want an increase in cross-country skiing (42.4% and 39.7%, respectively). In all the other COG areas, 50% or more of the respondents wanted an increase in this activity.
- SRCG respondents were least likely to want an increase in canoeing/kayaking (35.0%), but were most likely to say “Keep, But Do Not Increase” (62.4%).
- SRCG respondents were least likely to want an increase in hiking/walking/camping (41.2%), but were most likely to say “Keep, But Do Not Increase” (55.4%).
- Of the region’s year-round residents, 70.4% wanted an increase in cultural activities, while only 58.7% of seasonal residents felt the same.

Seasons of Recreation

	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
Participate in Outdoor Activities - WINTER	515	55.6%	412	44.4%
Participate in Outdoor Activities - SPRING	502	54.2%	425	45.8%
Participate in Outdoor Activities - SUMMER	778	84.0%	148	16.0%
Participate in Outdoor Activities - FALL	575	62.1%	352	37.9%

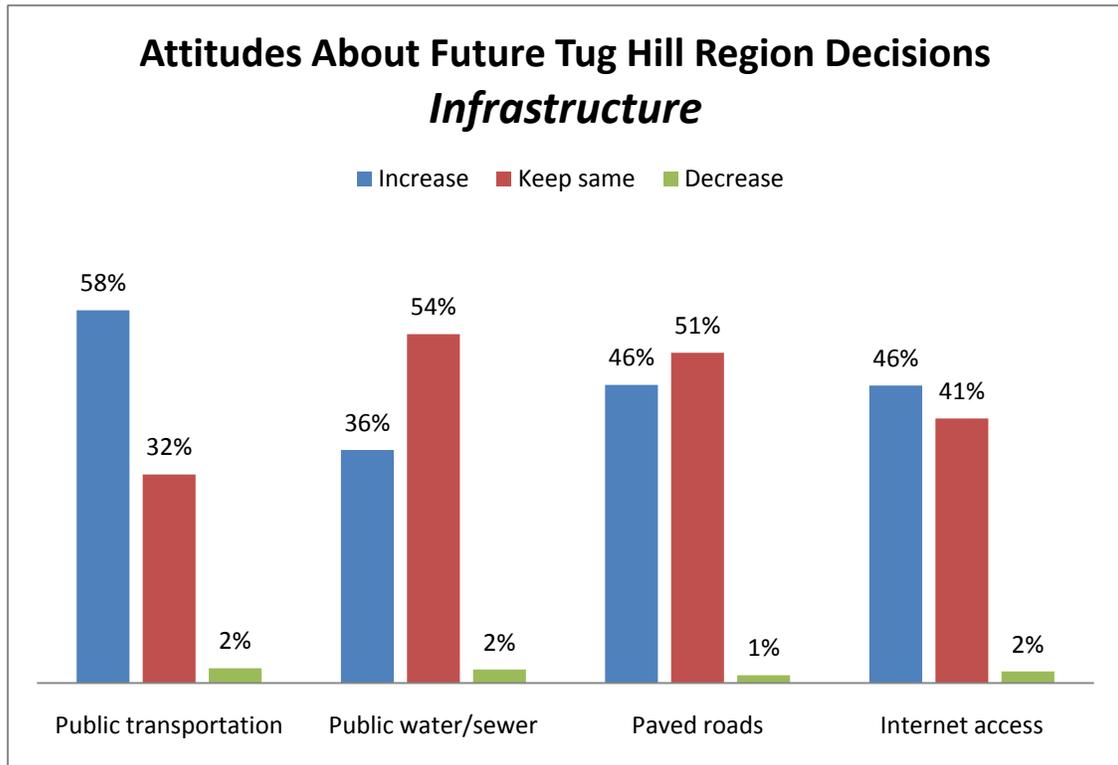


Statistically significant findings – Seasons of Recreation:

- Seasonal residents were most likely to recreate outdoors in winter (53.4%), with those in the CTHC area most likely to participate (66.9%) and those in the RACOG area least likely to participate (42.7%).

## Infrastructure

	Increase		Keep, but do not increase		Decrease		Not sure	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Public transportation	541	57.9%	303	32.4%	21	2.3%	70	7.5%
Public water/sewer service	338	36.2%	506	54.2%	19	2.1%	70	7.5%
Paved roads	433	46.3%	480	51.3%	11	1.2%	12	1.3%
Internet access	429	46.2%	382	41.1%	17	1.8%	102	10.9%

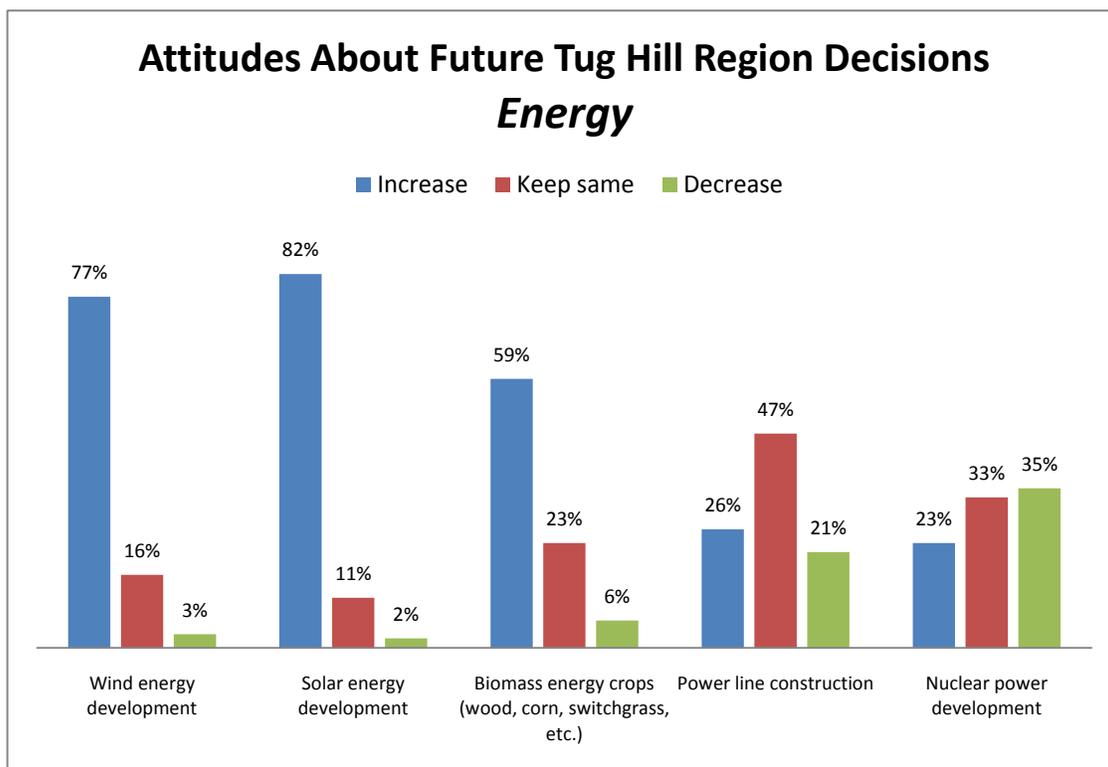


### Statistically significant findings - Infrastructure:

- Across the region, year-round residents were more likely than seasonal residents to favor an increase in public transportation (62.2% vs. 40.8%; 19.0% of seasonal residents responded “Not Sure”).
- Seasonal residents throughout Tug Hill were most likely to answer “Not Sure” when asked whether they wanted to increase, keep the same, or decrease public water/sewer service (22.1%).
- Year-round residents were more likely than seasonal residents to want an increase in paved roads (48.7% vs. 36.8%). Jefferson County and RACOG respondents most often said “Increase” (57.0% and 60.6%, respectively) and SRCG respondents were most likely to say “Keep, But Do Not Increase” (70.3%) paved roads.
- Seasonal respondents were most likely to respond “Not Sure” when asked about whether they would want to increase, keep the same, or decrease internet access (23.8%). RACOG respondents were least likely to want an increase in internet access (35.5%). In all other COG, as well as unaffiliated communities, 42% or more of the respondents wanted an increase in internet access.

## Energy

	Increase		Keep, but do not increase		Decrease		Not sure	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Wind energy development	716	76.9%	145	15.6%	29	3.1%	41	4.4%
Solar energy development	760	81.7%	102	11.0%	16	1.7%	52	5.6%
Biomass energy crops (wood, corn, switchgrass, etc.)	545	58.5%	218	23.4%	57	6.1%	111	12.0%
Power line construction	246	26.4%	433	46.5%	197	21.1%	55	5.9%
Nuclear power development	218	23.4%	306	32.9%	329	35.3%	78	8.4%

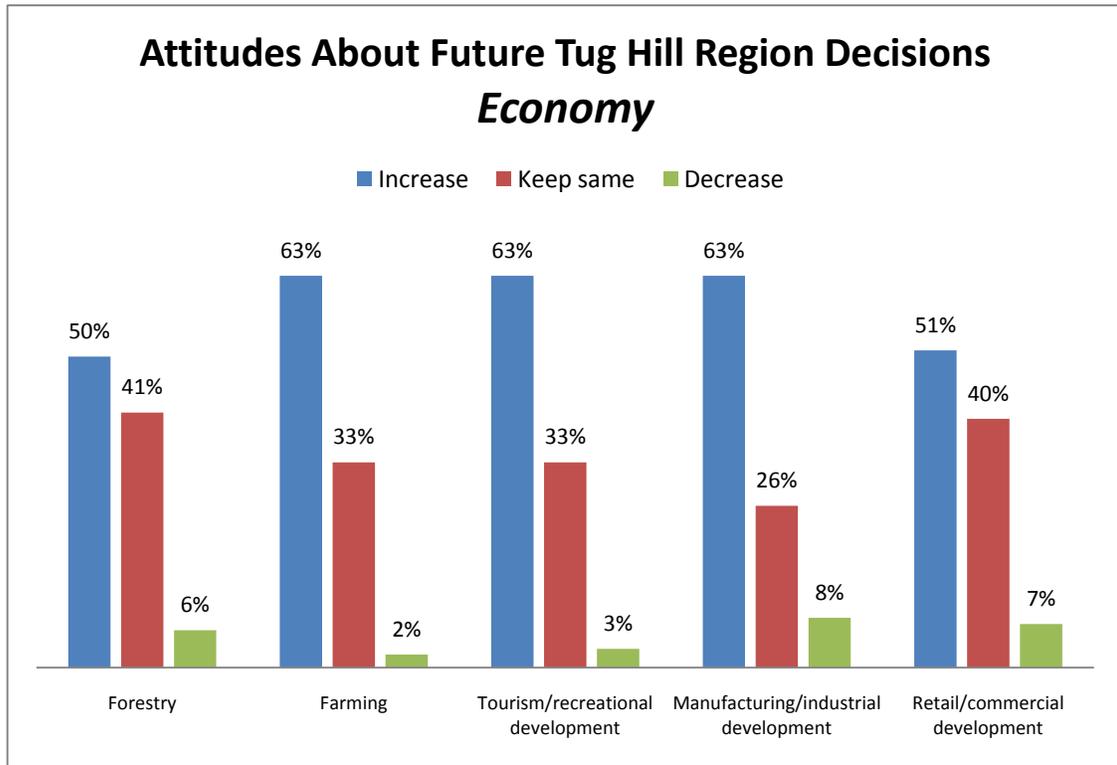


### Statistically significant findings - Energy:

- Year-round residents were more likely than seasonal residents to want an increase in wind energy development (78.8% vs. 69.7%), with residents in CTHC, Lewis County, and areas not affiliated with a COG least likely to want an increase (72.3%, 66.0%, and 69.6%, respectively), and NorCOG area respondents most likely to want an increase (88.0%).
- Year-round residents across the region were more likely than seasonal residents to want an increase in solar energy development (84.0% vs. 72.5%).
- Oneida County respondents were most opposed to power line construction (15.1% said “Increase,” 41.2% said “Keep, But Do Not Increase,” and 38.3% said “Decrease”).
- Where Lewis County respondents were least likely to want an increase in nuclear power development, NorCOG and SRCG residents were most supportive of an increase (27.5% and 29.1%, respectively).

## Economy

	Increase		Keep, but do not increase		Decrease		Not sure	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Forestry	462	49.7%	384	41.3%	59	6.4%	24	2.6%
Farming	582	62.6%	310	33.4%	22	2.3%	16	1.7%
Tourism/recreational development	582	62.8%	301	32.5%	29	3.1%	15	1.6%
Manufacturing/industrial development	587	63.2%	244	26.3%	76	8.1%	22	2.3%
Retail/commercial development	470	50.8%	371	40.0%	66	7.1%	19	2.1%

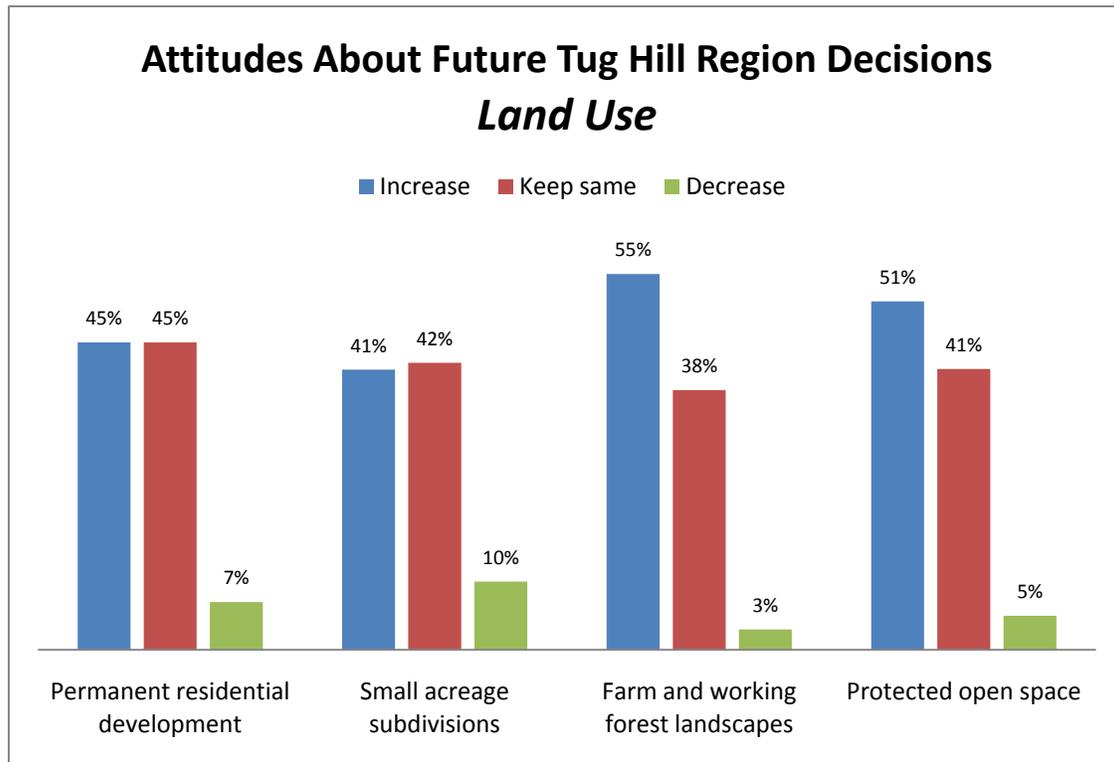


### Statistically significant findings - Economy:

- Seasonal residents were more likely than year-round residents to want forestry activities to stay at their present levels (49.6% vs. 39.2%), while year-round residents more often said “Increase” than seasonal residents (51.5% vs. 42.7%).
- Year-round residents were more likely than seasonal residents to want an increase in farming activity (65.4% vs. 51.8%).
- Year-round residents were more likely than seasonal residents to want an increase in manufacturing and/or industrial development (67.0% vs. 48.7%). Respondents in the RACOG, SRCG, and unaffiliated communities were most likely to want an increase in this activity (67.6%, 70.6%, and 72.4%, respectively).
- Year-round residents were more likely than seasonal residents to want an increase in retail and/or commercial development (54.6% vs. 35.8%).

## Land Use

	Increase		Keep, but do not increase		Decrease		Not sure	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Permanent residential development	420	45.4%	413	44.6%	65	7.0%	27	2.9%
Small acreage subdivisions	381	41.2%	386	41.8%	96	10.4%	61	6.6%
Farm and working forest landscapes	508	55.0%	349	37.8%	24	2.5%	43	4.7%
Protected open space	466	50.7%	376	40.9%	49	5.3%	28	3.0%

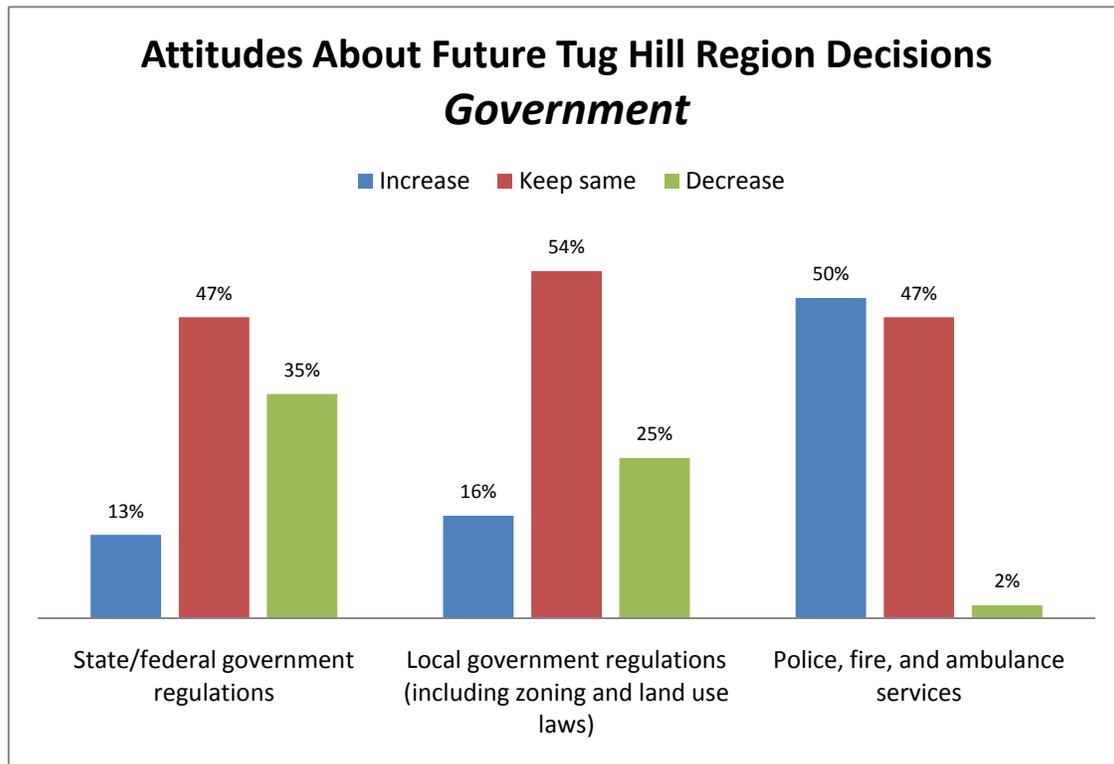


### Statistically significant findings – Land Use:

- Respondents in Jefferson and Lewis counties were most likely to want an increase in permanent residential development (52.1% and 53.8%, respectively). Only 41.5% of Oswego County respondents, and 39.1% of Oneida County respondents, felt the same.
- Those living in the RACOG, SRCG, and unaffiliated communities were most likely to want an increase in permanent residential development (53.4%, 52.6%, and 56.9%, respectively).
- Residents in SRCG and unaffiliated communities were most likely to want an increase in small acreage recreational camp subdivisions of less than 5 acres (49.0% and 51.3%, respectively). Residents in all other COGs, except NorCOG indicated more of a preference to keep levels of this activity at current levels (42.5% to 46.4%). Those in NorCOG responded with 33.6% saying “Increase,” 38.9% saying “Keep, But Do Not Increase,” 11.7% saying “Decrease,” and 15.8% saying “Not Sure.”
- CTHC, NOCCOG, and SRCG respondents were most likely to want an increase in farm and working forest landscapes (59.1%, 59.4%, and 59.5%, respectively).

## Government

	Increase		Keep, but do not increase		Decrease		Not sure	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
State/federal government regulations	118	12.8%	432	46.7%	326	35.3%	47	5.1%
Local government regulations (including zoning and land use laws)	151	16.4%	497	53.8%	234	25.3%	41	4.5%
Police, fire, and ambulance services	462	50.1%	431	46.7%	20	2.2%	10	1.1%



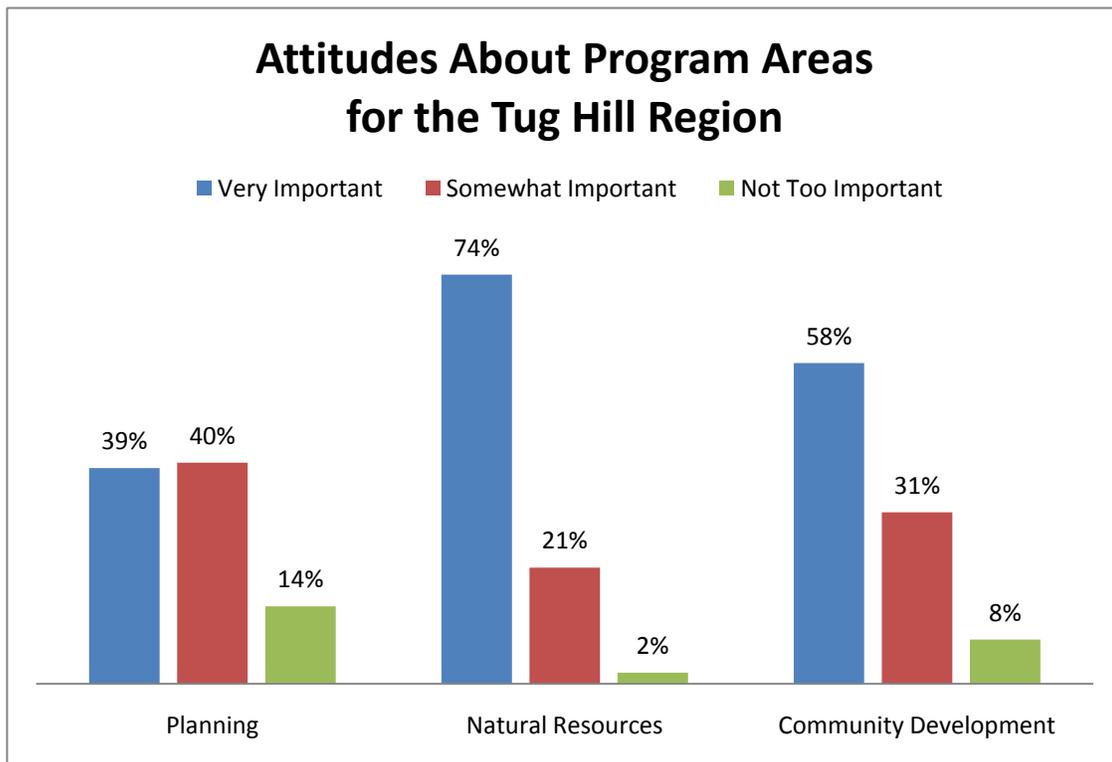
### Statistically significant findings - Government:

- Year-round residents were more likely than seasonal residents to want a decrease in state and federal government regulations (37.6% and 26.5%, respectively). 44.3% of year-round and 56.4% of seasonal residents wanted to keep these regulations at current levels.
- Oneida County respondents were most likely to want a decrease in state and federal government regulations (42.8%; NOCCOG at 43.4%). CTHC, RACOG, and SRCG respondents were least likely to feel the same (28.0%, 23.0%, and 27.6%, respectively).
- Those in the NorCOG and unaffiliated communities were most likely to want a decrease in local government regulations (34.7% and 31.9%, respectively). In these same areas, 40.6% and 45.0%, respectively, indicated that the current level of local government regulations should be kept as is. 68.1% and 60.2% of SRCG and CTHC respondents, respectively, indicated that the level of local government regulations should stay at current levels.

## Program Areas Attitudes Summary

Participants were asked to rank the importance of three different **program areas for the Tug Hill Region**, on a scale of VERY IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, NOT TOO IMPORTANT, NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT, or NOT SURE. Nearly three in four (74%) of participants rated Natural Resources as “Very Important.”

	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Not Too Important		Not at all Important		Not sure	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Planning	355	38.7%	365	39.7%	131	14.2%	32	3.4%	36	3.9%
Natural Resources	683	74.4%	193	21.1%	21	2.3%	6	.6%	15	1.6%
Community Development	537	58.4%	280	30.5%	69	7.5%	22	2.4%	11	1.2%



### Statistically significant findings – Program Areas:

- Those living in Oneida County were most likely to indicate that planning is very or somewhat important (84.4%), while NorCOG respondents were least likely to indicate the same (69.5%).
- Year-round residents were more likely than seasonal residents to indicate that community development is very or somewhat important (90.0% vs. 84.8%).

## Who Answered the Survey?

	Age Group	
	Count	%
18-34	231	24.1%
35-64	551	57.7%
65+	174	18.2%
Total	956	100.0%

Within the field of local community-based research, when using telephone interview methodology, a response rate of 30%-40% of all successful contacts, where a person is actually talking on the phone with the interviewer, is considered quite successful. Approximately 35% of the contacted (a person actually answered the phone) households completed the interview in this study.

### Residential Status

An analysis conducted by the Tug Hill Commission prior to the telephone survey indicated an approximate ratio of 80% local to 20% out-of-region landowners. Based on this, approximately 80% of the responses were obtained from local landowners and residents, and 20% of the responses were obtained from out-of-region landowners.

### Gender

While females were most likely to answer the phone and complete the survey, as expected with telephone surveying, the actual population distribution of females and males in the Tug Hill region is 50/50, according to the most recent U.S. Census report. Standardized weighting of survey results was utilized to reflect the even distribution of genders. The 50/50 gender ratio is the same, regardless of seasonal or year-round residential status, county of residence, or affiliation with any Council of Governments.

	Residential Status		County			
	Year-round	Seasonal	Jefferson	Lewis	Oneida	Oswego
Male	50.0%	50.0%	48.1%	51.0%	46.2%	54.8%
Female	50.0%	50.0%	51.9%	49.0%	53.8%	45.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sample Size	756	200	235	166	282	271

	Council of Government (COG)					
	CTHC	NOCCOG	NorCOG	RACOG	SRCG	Unaffiliated
Male	49.6%	45.0%	56.0%	51.6%	58.3%	48.0%
Female	50.4%	55.0%	44.0%	48.4%	41.7%	52.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sample Size	162	269	123	122	95	184

### Age Group

After adjustment using age distribution ratios from the most recent U.S. Census for an innate bias in telephone surveying toward older individuals answering the phone between 5:00 and 9:00 p.m., the age distribution of respondents were as follows:

	Residential Status		County			
	Year-round	Seasonal	Jefferson	Lewis	Oneida	Oswego
18-34	27.9%	10.0%	34.2%	21.6%	14.8%	27.0%
35-64	55.7%	65.0%	50.6%	53.6%	64.2%	59.7%
65+	16.4%	25.0%	15.3%	24.8%	21.0%	13.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sample Size	756	200	235	166	282	271

	Council of Government (COG)					
	CTHC	NOCCOG	NorCOG	RACOG	SRCG	Unaffiliated
18-34	25.5%	13.5%	29.1%	35.4%	22.6%	28.8%
35-64	60.7%	64.5%	55.7%	51.4%	62.0%	48.6%
65+	13.9%	22.0%	15.1%	13.1%	15.4%	22.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sample Size	162	269	123	122	95	184

### Education Level

After adjustment using education level distribution ratios from the most recent U.S. Census for an innate bias in telephone surveying toward those with more years of formal education answering the phone between 5:00 and 9:00 p.m., the distribution of respondents' education levels were as follows:

	Education Level	
	Count	%
High School Graduate (or less)	528	55.3%
Some College	254	26.6%
4+ Year College Degree	173	18.1%
Total	956	100.0%

	Residential Status		County			
	Year-round	Seasonal	Jefferson	Lewis	Oneida	Oswego
High School Graduate (or less)	58.0%	45.0%	54.2%	54.6%	47.5%	64.6%
Some College	27.0%	25.0%	32.3%	23.5%	29.2%	20.8%
4+ Year College Degree	15.0%	30.0%	13.5%	21.9%	23.4%	14.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sample Size	756	200	235	166	282	271

	Council of Government (COG)					
	CTHC	NOCCOG	NorCOG	RACOG	SRCG	Unaffiliated
High School Graduate (or less)	60.9%	46.4%	63.8%	64.6%	65.6%	46.0%
Some College	19.2%	30.0%	21.5%	26.4%	21.4%	34.2%
4+ Year College Degree	19.9%	23.6%	14.7%	9.0%	13.0%	19.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sample Size	162	269	123	122	95	184

### Employment

Overall, 81.3% of respondents said they do or did commute to work on a daily basis, while 17.6% do or did not (+/- 4% for each), with no significant difference in these percentages between year-round or seasonal residents. Residents of Lewis County were least likely to commute to work daily (70.1%, +/- 9.8%). Jefferson County residents had the highest percentage of daily commuters (85.9%, +/- 8%). Communities unaffiliated with a Council of Governments had the highest percentage of daily commuters at 85.5%, +/- 8%, with CTHC having the lowest percentage (73.9%, +/- 9.8%).

### Location where most commonly work

When asked where they did or do most commonly commute to work, results clearly showed a geographic separation, illustrating that people generally work close to home. Year-round residents most commonly worked in Watertown and Syracuse (18.5% and 18.4%, respectively, +/- 4.7%), while seasonal residents most commonly worked outside of the region (78.1%, +/- 9.5%). Jefferson County commuters were most closely associated with work in Watertown and Fort Drum, while Oswego County commuters were most closely associated with Syracuse. A large percentage of CTHC residents indicated their work location was out of the region (55.5%, +/- 9.8%), as opposed to those living in other areas of the region (11.3% to 29.8%, +/- 8-10%). NorCOG results showed a large percentage of residents commuting to the Syracuse area (67.6%, +/- 10%) for work.

## Concluding Comments

This report is a presentation of the information collected from 956 telephone interviews of adult residents and landowners in the Tug Hill Region, New York conducted during the evenings of March 16-25, 2009. The Center for Community Studies exists to engage in a variety of community-based research activities, and to promote the productive discussion of ideas and issues of significance to our community. This project was completed under contract with the Tug Hill Commission. As such, the results of this survey are available from:

NYS Tug Hill Commission  
Dulles State Office Building  
317 Washington Street  
Watertown, NY 13607  
Telephone: (315) 785-2380/2570  
E-mail: [tughill@tughill.org](mailto:tughill@tughill.org)  
Website: [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org)

The results of this survey provide a single point-in-time representation of the attitudes and opinions of a sample of residents and landowners in the Tug Hill Region. The data contained in this Presentation of Results can be used by local, regional, and state leaders as management decisions and specific actions are implemented. Additional benefits can be derived through comparisons over time with repeated implementation of this targeted resident and landowner survey. The long-term strategy to facilitate this longitudinal evaluation would be to consider coupling this resident and landowner survey with the existing five-year cycle that is employed for the Tug Hill Region Local Leaders' Survey.

These interviews produced a large volume of data, which can be analyzed and assessed in a number of different ways. For clarification and explanation of specific statistical analyses presented in this report, please contact The Center for Community Studies at:

The Center for Community Studies  
1220 Coffeen Street  
Watertown, NY 13601  
Telephone: (315) 786-2489 or (315) 786-2488

Joel LaLone, Research Coordinator  
Richard LeClerc, Director

[jlalone@sunyjefferson.edu](mailto:jlalone@sunyjefferson.edu)  
[rleclerc@sunyjefferson.edu](mailto:rleclerc@sunyjefferson.edu)

<http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html>

**Appendix D**  
**Regional Map**

# Tug Hill Region of New York State

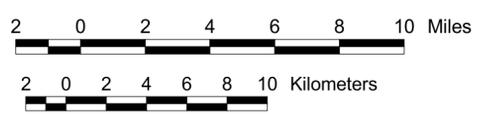


Helping local governments and citizens shape the future of the Tug Hill region

The Tug Hill Region is defined in state law in Tug Hill Commission enabling legislation (Chapter 972 of Laws of 1972 and Chapter 293 of Laws of 1995) and the Tug Hill Reserve Act (Chapter 486, Laws of 1992)

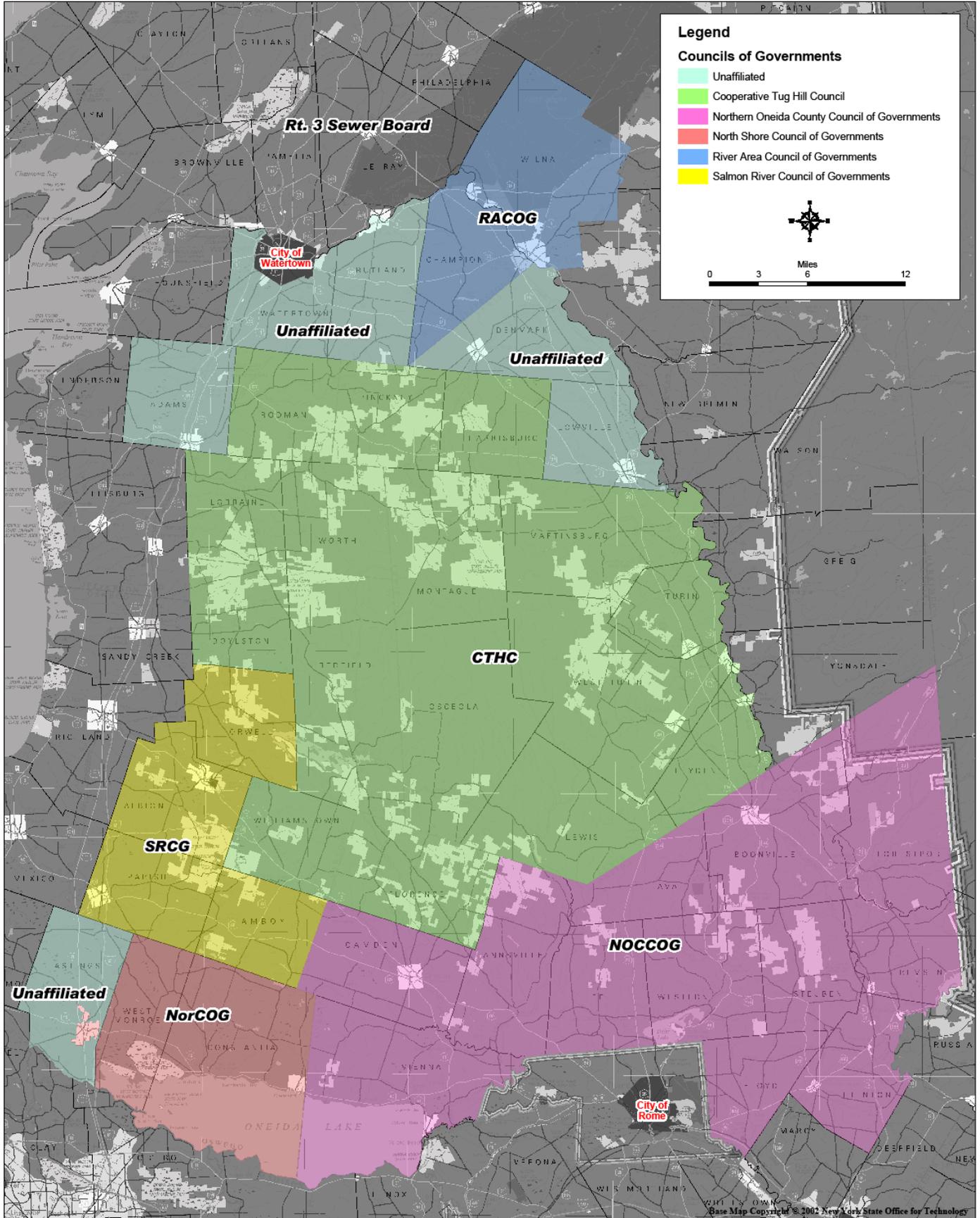


- Publicly Owned Forest and Park Land
- Town within Region
- Incorporated Municipality
- Hamlet
- County Boundary
- Adirondack Park Blue Line



**Appendix E**  
**Councils of Governments Map**

# Tug Hill Region Councils of Governments



**Appendix F**  
**Publicity Poster**

Do you **Live** on Tug Hill?

Do you **Enjoy Recreating** on Tug Hill?

Do you **Own Property** on Tug Hill?

Come and hear the results of a  
2009 Community Survey of Tug Hill  
Residents and Property Owners,  
and share your opinions about the Future of Tug Hill!

**Tuesday, May 26**—Boonville Municipal Bldg

**Thursday, May 28**—Rodman Town Hall Gym

**Tuesday, June 2**—Champion Town Hall

**Thursday, June 11**—West Monroe Fire Hall

**Tuesday, June 16**—Lee Town Hall

**Thursday, June 18**—Redfield Fire Hall

**Thursday, June 25**—Martinsburg Town Hall

All meetings are identical, and held from  
6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

6:30 - 7:00 pm *Open House*

7:00 - 9:00 pm *Presentation and*

*Work Sessions*

Coffee and Snacks Provided



Sponsored By

The Region's Five Councils of  
Governments (COGs):

Cooperative Tug Hill Council  
North Shore COG  
Northern Oneida County COG  
River Area COG  
Salmon Rivers COG

and

the NYS Tug Hill Commission

For More Information,  
Call 1-888-785-2380  
[www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org)

Check the website for draft  
results and updated forum  
dates and locations.



**Appendix G**

**Press Releases**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 13, 2009

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## **TUG HILL COMMUNITY SURVEY REACHES OVER 700 RESIDENTS AND LANDOWNERS**

The NYS Tug Hill Commission wishes to thank the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College in Watertown for conducting this spring's region-wide phone survey from March 16th to March 26<sup>th</sup>. The survey was completed by students at Jefferson Community College. In partnership with the region's five councils of government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida Council of Governments, North Shore Council of Governments, River Area Council of Governments and the Salmon River Council of Governments), the goal of the survey is to collect residents' and landowners' perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill Region of New York State.

The Center for Community Studies is currently conducting an analysis of the survey responses and will provide a preliminary report of the survey results to representatives of the area's Councils of Governments at a meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> in Camden. In May and June of this year, with results of the survey in-hand, the Commission and Councils of Governments will convene community forums throughout the Tug Hill region to share survey results with Tug Hill citizens and local officials.

May and June's forums will provide an opportunity for public opinion leaders and citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The responses of forum attendees will truth test the results for the Commission and the region's Councils of Governments, and give them ideas on how best to move forward on the issues and needs identified. The information gathered through the survey and forums will also feed into the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process, and will be used by Councils to evaluate their own programs and priorities.

Funding for the survey was provided by the Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida Council of Governments, North Shore Council of Governments, River Area Council of Governments and the Salmon River Council of Governments, the Northern New York Community Foundation, the Open Space Institute's Malcolm Gordon Fund, and the Tug Hill Commission.

More information on the Tug Hill Commission is available on their website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), or by calling 1-888-785-2380 toll-free in the region. More information about the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College is available on their website, <http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html>, or by contacting the Center at 315-786-2489.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 11, 2009

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**COMMISSION TO RELEASE SURVEY RESULTS  
AND HOLD COMMUNITY FORUM IN BOONVILLE**

The NYS Tug Hill Commission and the Northern Oneida Council of Governments (NOCCOG) will convene a community forum at the Boonville Municipal Building, NYS Route 12, from 6:30 to 9:00 pm on Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> in order to share the results of its recent region-wide survey with Tug Hill citizens and local officials, as well as gather further responses to the issues addressed. All are welcome to attend, there is no charge and no need to pre-register.

The goal of the survey, conducted in March, was to collect a statistically valid account of residents' and landowners' perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill region. The forum will provide an opportunity for citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The information gathered through the survey and forums will contribute to the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process, and will be used by Councils of Government throughout the region to evaluate their own programs and priorities.

The region-wide telephone survey was completed by students at Jefferson Community College, in partnership with the region's five councils of government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida Council of Government, North Shore Council of Government, River Area Council of Government and the Salmon Rivers Council of Government). Funding for the survey was provided by all five Councils of Government, the Northern New York Community Foundation, the Open Space Institute's Malcolm Gordon Fund, and the Tug Hill Commission.

More information on the Tug Hill Commission is available on their website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), or by calling 1-888-785-2380 toll-free in the region. More information about the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College is available on their website, <http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html>, or by contacting the Center at 315-786-2489.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 11, 2009

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**COMMISSION TO RELEASE SURVEY RESULTS  
AND HOLD COMMUNITY FORUM IN RODMAN**

The NYS Tug Hill Commission and the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) will convene a community forum at the Rodman Town Hall Gym on School Street in the hamlet of Rodman from 6:30 to 9:00 pm on Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> in order to share the results of its recent region-wide survey with Tug Hill citizens and local officials, as well as gather further responses to the issues addressed. All are welcome to attend, there is no charge and no need to pre-register.

The goal of the survey, conducted in March, was to collect a statistically valid account of residents' and landowners' perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill region. The forum will provide an opportunity for citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The information gathered through the survey and forums will contribute to the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process, and will be used by Councils of Government throughout the region to evaluate their own programs and priorities.

The region-wide telephone survey was completed by students at Jefferson Community College, in partnership with the region's five councils of government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County Council of Government, North Shore Council of Government, River Area Council of Government and the Salmon Rivers Council of Government). Funding for the survey was provided by all five Councils of Government, the Northern New York Community Foundation, the Open Space Institute's Malcolm Gordon Fund, and the Tug Hill Commission.

More information on the Tug Hill Commission is available on their website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), or by calling 1-888-785-2380 toll-free in the region. More information about the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College is available on their website, <http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html>, or by contacting the Center at 315-786-2489.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 28, 2009

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**PUBLIC INVITED TO FORUM IN WEST MONROE:  
TUG HILL SURVEY REVEALS RESIDENT AND LANDOWNER ATTITUDES**

The NYS Tug Hill Commission and the North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG) will convene a community forum at the West Monroe Fire Hall, 54 County Route 11, West Monroe, New York, from 6:30 to 9:00 pm on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>. The forum's purpose is to share the results of a recent region-wide survey of Tug Hill residents and landowners, as well as gather further responses to the issues addressed. All are welcome to attend. There is no charge, and no need to pre-register.

The goal of the survey, conducted in March, was to collect a statistically valid account of residents' and landowners' perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill region. Highlights relevant to north shore towns and villages, as well as the Oswego County portion of the Tug Hill region include:

- Oswego County respondents were the least positive of the four counties about:
  - quality of K-12 education (only 9% rated as excellent, next lowest was 22.6% in Oneida County)
  - health care (44.5% rated as excellent or good, next lowest was 56% in Jefferson County);
  - local government services (31.8% rated as excellent or good, next lowest Lewis County with 39.7%);
  - condition of hamlets and villages (56.9% excellent/good, next lowest Lewis with 65.2%) .
- NorCOG respondents had the second highest positive response to internet access (71.8% ranked it excellent or good)
- NorCOG respondents most likely to want to increase wind energy development (88% increase, next highest is SRCOG at 82%)
- NorCOG respondents most likely to want to decrease local government regulation (34.7%, next highest NOCCOG at 25%)
- NorCOG least likely to answer very or somewhat important when asked about the value of planning programs in the region (69.5%, next is RACOG at 75.4%)

The Towns of West Monroe and Constantia, and the Village of Constantia are members of NorCOG. Additional Oswego County communities within the Tug Hill region are: the Towns of Albion, Amboy, Boylston, Hastings, Orwell, Parish, Redfield, and Williamstown, as well as the Villages of Altmar, Central Square, Constantia, Parish, and Williamstown.

The West Monroe forum, as well as additional forums in the region, will provide an opportunity for citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The information gathered through the survey and forums will contribute to the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process, and will be used by Councils of Government throughout the region to evaluate their own programs and priorities. Additional forums will be held from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Lee Town Hall on June 16<sup>th</sup>, Redfield Fire Hall on June 18<sup>th</sup>, and the Martinsburg Town Hall on June 25<sup>th</sup>.

The region-wide telephone survey was completed by students at Jefferson Community College, in partnership with the Tug Hill region's five Councils of Government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County Council of Government, North Shore Council of Government, River Area Council of Government and the Salmon Rivers Council of Government). Funding for the survey was provided by all five Councils of Government, the Northern New York Community Foundation, the Open Space Institute's Malcolm Gordon Fund, and the Tug Hill Commission.

More information on the Tug Hill Commission is available on their website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), or by calling 1-888-785-2380 toll-free in the region. More information about the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College is available on their website, <http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html>, or by contacting the Center at 315-786-2489.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 4, 2009

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## **TUG HILL RESIDENTS PLAN TO STAY, ACCORDING TO SURVEY**

The NYS Tug Hill Commission and the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments (NOCCOG) will convene a community forum at the Lee Town Hall, 5808 Stokes Lee Center Rd. Lee Center, NY from 6:30 to 9:00 pm on Tuesday, June 16th. The forum's purpose is to share the results of a recent region-wide survey of Tug Hill residents and landowners, as well as gather further responses to the issues addressed. All are welcome to attend. There is no charge, and no need to pre-register.

The goal of the survey, conducted in March, was to collect a statistically valid account of residents' and landowners' perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill region. When asked if expected to live and/or own land in the Tug Hill region five years from now, nearly 85% of residents said they did expect to still be living in the region, and over 82% of landowners said they expected to continue to own their land, indicating a stable population of residents and landowners.

NOCCOG municipalities include the Towns of Annsville, Ava, Boonville, Camden, Floyd, Forestport, Lee, Remsen, Steuben, Trenton, Vienna and Western, as well as the Villages of Boonville, Camden, Holland Patent, Prospect, Remsen, and Sylvan Beach. Highlights relevant to NOCCOG towns and villages, as well as the Oneida County portion of the Tug Hill region, compared to other Tug Hill areas, include:

- Year-round respondents from NOCCOG were most likely to have lived in the Tug Hill region for more than 20 years (76.4%).
- Seasonal respondents from NOCCOG and Oneida County were most likely to have owned land in the Tug Hill region for more than 20 years (62.5% in NOCCOG, 61.5% for Oneida County).
- Oneida County and NOCCOG respondents were most likely to rate the amount of open space as Excellent or Good (96.1%)
- Respondents from the NOCCOG area were the most positive about the condition of hamlets and villages.
- Oneida County and NOCCOG residents were least likely to want to increase parks and playgrounds.
- Oneida County and NOCCOG respondents were most opposed to powerlines.

The Lee forum will provide an opportunity for citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The information gathered through the survey and forums will contribute to the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process, and will be used by

Councils of Government throughout the region to evaluate their own programs and priorities. Additional forums will be held from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Redfield Fire Hall on June 18<sup>th</sup>, and the Martinsburg Town Hall on June 25<sup>th</sup>.

The region-wide telephone survey was completed by students at Jefferson Community College, in partnership with the Tug Hill region's five Councils of Government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County Council of Government, North Shore Council of Government, River Area Council of Government and the Salmon Rivers Council of Government). Funding for the survey was provided by all five Councils of Government, the Northern New York Community Foundation, the Open Space Institute's Malcolm Gordon Fund, and the Tug Hill Commission.

More information on the Tug Hill Commission is available on their website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), or by calling 1-888-785-2380 toll-free in the region. More information about the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College is available on their website, <http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html>, or by contacting the Center at 315-786-2489.

**PUBLIC INVITED TO FORUM IN MARTINSBURG:  
TUG HILL SURVEY REVEALS RESIDENT AND LANDOWNER ATTITUDES**

The NYS Tug Hill Commission and the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) will convene a community forum at the Martinsburg Town Hall, State Route 26, Martinsburg, from 6:30 to 9:00 pm on Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. The forum's purpose is to share the results of a recent region-wide survey of Tug Hill residents and landowners, as well as gather further responses to the issues addressed. All are welcome to attend. There is no charge, and no need to pre-register.

The goal of the survey, conducted in March, was to collect a statistically valid account of residents' and landowners' perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill region. Highlights relevant to CTHC towns and villages, as well as the Lewis County portion of the Tug Hill region include:

- While Jefferson County respondents were most positive about the availability of higher education, with 80.2% ranking it excellent or good, 70.1% of Lewis County respondents, and just 55.1% of CTHC respondents ranked it the same.
- Although CTHC respondents were least positive about the quality of K-12 schools, 28% responding said they were "not sure" about a ranking, reflecting the influence of seasonal landowners who may not have knowledge of the local school system.
- Lewis County had the most positive response concerning recreational opportunities, with 83.2% ranking them excellent or good.
- In addition to the quality of K-12 schools, CTHC respondents had the greatest percentage of "not sure" responses about the quality of housing and services for senior citizens.
- In the Lewis County portion of Tug Hill, 61.7% ranked social activities and organizations excellent or good.
- CTHC residents seemed least satisfied with access to groceries, etc., with 41.4% responding fair or poor.

The Martinsburg forum, the last of a series of seven held around the region, will provide an opportunity for citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The information gathered through the survey and forums will contribute to the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process, and will be used by Councils of Government throughout the region to evaluate their own programs and priorities.

The region-wide telephone survey was completed by students at Jefferson Community College, in partnership with the Tug Hill region's five Councils of Government (Cooperative Tug Hill

Council, Northern Oneida County Council of Government, North Shore Council of Government, River Area Council of Government and the Salmon Rivers Council of Government). Funding for the survey was provided by all five Councils of Government, the Northern New York Community Foundation, the Open Space Institute's Malcolm Gordon Fund, and the Tug Hill Commission.

More information on the Tug Hill Commission is available on their website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), or by calling 1-888-785-2380 toll-free in the region. More information about the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College is available on their website, <http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html>, or by contacting the Center at 315-786-2489.

**Appendix H**

**Media Advisories**

MEDIA ADVISORY  
May 18, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
May 18, 2009

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:** John K. Bartow, Jr. at 315-785-2380

**WHEN:** Tuesday, May 26, 2009  
6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Boonville Municipal Building  
NYS Route 12  
Boonville, NY 13116

**WHO:** Northern Oneida County Council of Government and the NYS Tug Hill Commission

**WHAT:** Public community forum, including presentation and discussion of region-wide telephone survey results

**WHY:** This first region-wide telephone survey, conducted in March by the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College, asked residents and landowners their opinions about current community characteristics, and their preferences for future community improvements. The survey results provide important information for decision-makers in local communities regarding residents' priorities, needs, and how those may or may not have changed over time. The results will be used in formulating the Tug Hill Commission 5-year strategic plan, by local governments making land use decisions, and various organizations and agencies in their programming efforts.

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MEDIA ADVISORY  
May 27, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
May 27, 2009

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:** John K. Bartow, Jr. at 315-785-2380

**WHEN:** Tuesday, June 2, 2009  
6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Town of Champion Town Hall

**WHO:** River Area Council of Government (RACOG)\* and the NYS Tug Hill Commission

**WHAT:** Public community forum, including presentation and discussion of March 2009 region-wide telephone survey results

**WHY:** This first region-wide telephone survey, conducted in March by the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College, asked residents and landowners their opinions about current community characteristics, and their preferences for future community improvements. The survey results provide important information for decision-makers in local communities regarding residents' priorities, needs. The results will be used in formulating the Tug Hill Commission 5-year strategic plan, by local governments making land use decisions, and various organizations and agencies in their programming efforts.

Some relevant survey highlights:

- Jefferson County respondents were most positive about the availability of higher education (68.7% excellent or good, next best was 58% in Oswego and Oneida);
- Jefferson County respondents were least positive about recreational opportunities (67.2% excellent or good, as compared to the highest in Lewis County at 83.2%) ;
- Jefferson County most positive about waste water and sewage disposal, internet access, access to groceries, pharmacies and other necessities, industrial and commercial development, employment opportunities, local government services;
- RACOG respondents were most positive about services for senior citizens, with 53.2% rating them as excellent or good;
- RACOG respondents were the least positive about the amount of open space, with 18.5% rating it as fair or poor ;
- RACOG most wanted to increase parks and playgrounds, ATV riding, paved roads;
- RACOG respondents least likely to participate in outdoor activities in winter.

*\*RACOG is a Council of Government whose members include the Jefferson County Towns of Champion and Wilna, and the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage. In addition, the Town of Champion works as a member of the Route 3 Sewer Board with the Towns of Rutland, Pamela and LeRay, all in Jefferson County.*

*The Tug Hill region covers a 2,100-square-mile area incorporating portions of Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida and Oswego counties that fall south and west of the Black River, north of Oneida Lake, and roughly east of Interstate Route 81.*

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MEDIA ADVISORY  
May 27, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
May 27, 2009

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:** John K. Bartow, Jr. at 315-785-2380

**WHEN:** Thursday, May 28, 2009  
6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Rodman Town Hall Gym  
Village of Rodman, NY

**WHO:** Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC)\* and the NYS Tug Hill Commission

**WHAT:** Public community forum, including presentation and discussion of March 2009 region-wide telephone survey results

**WHY:** This first region-wide telephone survey, conducted in March by the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College, asked residents and landowners their opinions about current community characteristics, and their preferences for future community improvements. The survey results provide important information for decision-makers in local communities regarding residents' priorities, needs, and how those may or may not have changed over time. The results will be used in formulating the Tug Hill Commission 5-year strategic plan, by local governments making land use decisions, and various organizations and agencies in their programming efforts.

Some relevant survey highlights:

- Jefferson County respondents were most positive about the availability of higher education (68.7% excellent or good, next best was 58% in Oswego and Oneida)
- CTHC respondents however were the least positive about the availability of higher education – 47% ranked excellent or good)
- CTHC respondents were least positive about the quality of K-12 schools, and 28% said not sure
- Jefferson County respondents were least positive about recreational opportunities (67.2% excellent or good, as compared to the highest in Lewis County at 83.2%)
- CTHC respondents had the most responding “not sure” to quality of K-12 schools, housing, services for senior citizens
- Jefferson County most positive about waste water and sewage disposal, internet access, access to groceries, pharmacies and other necessities, industrial and commercial development, employment opportunities, local government services
- CTHC most negative on access to groceries, etc., with 41.4% responding fair or poor

*\*CTHC is a Council of Government whose members include the Jefferson County Towns of Rodman, Lorraine, and Worth, the Lewis County Towns of Pinckney, Montague, Martinsburg, Harrisburg, Turin, West Turin, Osceola, Lewis and Leyden, the Oswego County Towns of Boylston, Redfield, Williamstown, and the Oneida County Town of Florence.*

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MEDIA ADVISORY  
June 2, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
June 2, 2009

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:** John K. Bartow, Jr. at 315-785-2380

**WHEN:** Thursday, June 11, 2009  
6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** West Monroe Fire Hall  
54 County Route 11  
West Monroe, New York

**WHO:** NYS Tug Hill Commission and North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG)

**WHAT:** Public community forum, including presentation and discussion of region-wide telephone survey results

**WHY:** This first region-wide telephone survey, conducted in March by the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College, asked residents and landowners their opinions about current community characteristics, and their preferences for future community improvements. The survey results provide important information for decision-makers in local communities regarding residents' priorities, needs, and how those may or may not have changed over time. The results will be used in formulating the Tug Hill Commission 5-year strategic plan, by local governments making land use decisions, and various organizations and agencies in their programming efforts.

Highlights relevant to NorCOG towns and villages, as well as the Oswego County portion of the Tug Hill region include:

- Oswego County respondents were the least positive of the four counties about:
  - quality of K-12 education (only 9% rated as excellent, next lowest was 22.6% in Oneida County)
  - health care (44.5% rated as excellent or good, next lowest was 56% in Jefferson County);
  - local government services (31.8% rated as excellent or good, next lowest Lewis County with 39.7%);
  - condition of hamlets and villages (56.9% excellent/good, next lowest Lewis with 65.2%) .
- NorCOG respondents had the second highest positive response to internet access (71.8% ranked it excellent or good)
- NorCOG respondents most likely to want to increase wind energy development (88% increase, next highest is SRCOG at 82%)
- NorCOG respondents most likely to want to decrease local government regulation (34.7%, next highest NOCCOG at 25%)
- NorCOG least likely to answer very or somewhat important when asked about the value of planning programs in the region (69.5%, next is RACOG at 75.4%)

The Towns of West Monroe and Constantia, and the Villages of Cleveland and Central Square are members of NorCOG. Additional Oswego County communities within the Tug Hill region are: the Towns of Albion, Amboy, Boylston, Hastings, Orwell, Parish, Redfield, and Williamstown, as well as the Villages of Altmar and Parish.

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MEDIA ADVISORY  
June 15, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
June 15, 2009

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:** John K. Bartow, Jr. at 315-785-2380

**WHEN:** Thursday, June 18, 2009  
6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Redfield Fire Hall  
4879 County Route 17  
Redfield, NY

**WHO:** NYS Tug Hill Commission, the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC), and the Salmon Rivers Council of Governments (SRCG)

**WHAT:** Public community forum, including presentation and discussion of region-wide telephone survey results

**WHY:** This first region-wide telephone survey, conducted in March by the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College, asked residents and landowners their opinions about current community characteristics, and their preferences for future community improvements. The survey results provide important information for decision-makers in local communities regarding residents' priorities, needs, and how those may or may not have changed over time. The results will be used in formulating the Tug Hill Commission 5-year strategic plan, by local governments making land use decisions, and various organizations and agencies in their programming efforts.

Highlights relevant to CTHC and SRCG towns and villages, as well as the portions of each county in the Tug Hill region include:

- Oswego County respondents were the least positive of the four counties about the quality of K-12 education (only 9% rated as excellent, next lowest was 22.6 in Oneida), health care (44.5% rated as excellent or good, next lowest was 56% in Jefferson County), local government services (31.8% rated as excellent or good, next lowest Lewis with 39.7%), condition of hamlets and villages (56.9% excellent/good, next lowest Lewis with 65.2%)
- CTHC and SRCG respondents were least satisfied with the quality of K-12 education, availability of higher education, and access to groceries, pharmacies, and other necessities.
- CTHC and SRCG areas had the lowest percentage of people wanting to increase cross-country skiing activity, with 42.4% and 39.7%, respectively.
- On availability of housing and services for senior citizens, over 16% of CTHC respondents said "not sure," reflecting the influence of seasonal residents who may not have knowledge of local conditions in these areas. SRCG respondents were least satisfied with these aspects, with 34.7% ranking them fair or poor.
- CTHC residents were most likely to participate in winter recreation (66.9%, as opposed to 57.6% and lower in other COG areas).
- SRCG respondents were most likely to own their property (90.6%), and were the most negative about local government services (67.4% rated these fair or poor) and condition of villages and hamlets (41.8% fair or poor).
- The SRCG area had the highest percentage of respondents wanting to "keep, but do not increase" paved roads (70.3%), and the lowest percentage of respondents in the region who wanted to increase paved roads (27.7%).

The Cooperative Tug Hill Council is comprised of the 16 towns and villages in the geographic center of the region, and encompasses parts of Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego and Oneida counties. Member towns include Boylston, Florence, Harrisburg, Lewis, Leyden, Lorraine, Martinsburg, Montague, Pinckney, Osceola, Redfield, Rodman, Turin, West Turin, Williamstown, and Worth. The Salmon Rivers Council of Governments includes the towns of Albion, Amboy, Parish, and Orwell, as well as the villages of Altmar and Parish.

###

H-5

MEDIA ADVISORY  
June 17, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
John K. Bartow, Jr.  
(315) 785-2380

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
June 17, 2009

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:** John K. Bartow, Jr. at 315-785-2380

**WHEN:** Thursday, June 25, 2009  
6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Martinsburg Town Hall  
State Route 26  
Martinsburg, New York

**WHO:** NYS Tug Hill Commission and Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC)

**WHAT:** Public community forum, including presentation and discussion of region-wide telephone survey results; final of a series of seven forums that have been held throughout the Tug Hill region

**WHY:** A region-wide telephone survey, conducted in March by the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College, asked residents and landowners their opinions about current community characteristics, and their preferences for future community improvements. The survey results provide important information for decision-makers in local communities regarding residents' priorities, needs, and how those may or may not have changed over time. The results will be used in formulating the Tug Hill Commission 5-year strategic plan, by local governments making land use decisions, and various organizations and agencies in their programming efforts.

Highlights relevant to CTHC towns and villages, as well as the Lewis County portion of the Tug Hill region include:

- While Jefferson County respondents were most positive about the availability of higher education, with 80.2% ranking it excellent or good, 70.1% of Lewis County respondents, and just 55.1% of CTHC respondents ranked it the same.
- Although CTHC respondents were least positive about the quality of K-12 schools, 28% responding said they were "not sure" about a ranking, reflecting the influence of seasonal landowners who may not have knowledge of the local school system.
- Lewis County had the most positive response concerning recreational opportunities, with 83.2% ranking them excellent or good.
- In addition to the quality of K-12 schools, CTHC respondents had the greatest percentage of "not sure" responses about the quality of housing and services for senior citizens.
- In the Lewis County portion of Tug Hill, 61.7% ranked social activities and organizations excellent or good.
- CTHC residents seemed least satisfied with access to groceries, etc., with 41.4% responding fair or poor.

CTHC is a Council of Governments whose members include the Jefferson County Towns of Rodman, Lorraine, and Worth, the Lewis County Towns of Pinckney, Montague, Martinsburg, Harrisburg, Turin, West Turin, Osceola, Lewis and Leyden, the Oswego County Towns of Boylston, Redfield, and Williamstown, and the Oneida County Town of Florence.

###

**Appendix I**  
**Press Coverage**

# Commission to Release Survey Results And Hold Community Forum in Rodman

SJJ  
5/20/09

The NYS Tug Hill Commission and the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) will convene a community forum at the Rodman Town Hall Gym on School Street in the hamlet of Rodman from 6:30 to 9:00 pm on Thursday, May 28th in order to share the results of its recent region-wide survey with Tug Hill citizens and local officials, as well as gather further responses to the issues addressed. All are welcome to attend, there is no charge and no need to pre-register.

The goal of the survey, conducted in March, was to collect a statistically valid account of residents' and landowners' perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill region. The forum will provide an opportunity for citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in gen-

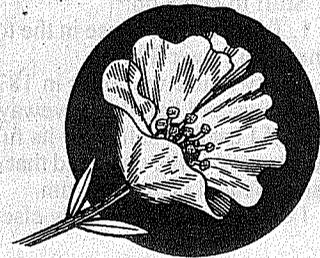
eral, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The information gathered through the survey and forums will contribute to the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process, and will be used by Councils of Government throughout the region to evaluate their own programs and priorities.

The region-wide telephone survey was completed by students at Jefferson Community College, in partnership with the region's five councils of government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County Council of Government, North Shore Council of Government, River Area Council of Government and the Salmon Rivers Council of Government).

Funding for the survey was provided by all five Councils of Government, the Northern New

York Community Foundation, the Open Space Institute's Malcolm Gordon Fund, and the Tug Hill Commission.

More information on the Tug Hill Commission is available on their website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), or by calling 1-888-785-2380 toll-free in the region. More information about the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College is available on their website, <http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html>, or by contacting the Center at 315-786-2489.



# Public invited to forum in Martinsburg

## Tug Hill survey reveals resident and landowner attitudes

6-17-09  
RJR

The NYS Tug Hill Commission and the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) plan to convene a community forum at the Martinsburg Town Hall, State Route 26, Martinsburg, from 6:30-9 p.m. Thursday, June 25. The forum's purpose is to share the results of a recent region-wide survey of Tug Hill residents and landowners, as well as gather further responses to the issues addressed. All are welcome to attend. There is no charge, and no need to pre-register.

The goal of the survey, conducted in March, was to collect a statistically valid account of resident's and landowner's perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill region. Highlights relevant to CTHC towns and villages, as well as the Lewis County portion of the Tug Hill region include:

While Jefferson County respondents were most positive about the availability of higher education, with 80.2% ranking it excellent or good, 70.1% of Lewis County respondents, and just 55.1% of CTHC respondents ranked it the same.

Although CTHC respondents were least positive about the quality of K-12 schools, 28% responding said they were "not sure" about a ranking, reflecting the influence of seasonal landowners who may not have knowledge of the local school system.

Lewis County had the most positive response concerning recreational opportunities, with 83.2% ranking them excellent or good.

In addition to the quality of K-12 schools, CTHC respondents had the greatest percentage of "not sure" responses about the quality of housing and services for senior citizens.

by students at Jefferson Community College, in partnership with the Tug Hill region's five Councils of Government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County Council of Government, North Shore Council of Government, River Area Council of Government and the Salmon Rivers Council of Government). Funding for the survey was provided by all five Councils of Government, the Northern New York Community Foundation, the Open Space Insti-

tute's Malcolm Gordon Fund and the Tug Hill Commission.

More information on the Tug Hill Commission is available on their Web site, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), or by calling 1-888-785-2380 toll-free in the region. More information about the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College is available on their Web site, [www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html](http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html), or by contacting the Center at 786-2489.

In the Lewis County portion of Tug Hill, 61.7% ranked social activities and organizations excellent or good.

CTHC residents seemed least satisfied with access to groceries, etc., with 41.4% responding fair or poor.

The Martinsburg forum, the last of a series of seven held around the region, will provide an opportunity for citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The information gathered through the survey and forums will contribute to the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process, and will be used by Councils of Government throughout the region to evaluate their own programs and priorities.

The region-wide telephone survey was completed

## Wood-burning boiler issue raised during Tug Hill forum

TOWN OF LEE — The economy, changes in the farming community, and regulating wood-burning boilers were among topics at a public forum Tuesday night on issues in the Tug Hill area.

The gathering, which sought feedback on a recent survey of Tug Hill residents' opinions of the region, was attended by six people, said Katie Malinowski, associate director of natural resources for the state Tug Hill Commission. She said two attendees were from the general public, while others at the Lee Town Hall session were local government officials including Lee Supervisor John Urtz.

The discussion, said Malinowski, included forces that contribute to job scarcity locally, and the difficulties in overcoming that. Also addressed was the trend for consolidations of local farms, and how to regulate wood-burning boilers while avoiding problems with neighbors, she said. Lee officials are considering such regulations, and Malinowski said her organization will provide data from other communities.

The session was the fifth of seven forums in the Tug Hill region regarding the survey, which was conducted in March by the commission and the region's five councils of government. The final two are Thursday night at Redfield Fire Hall and June 25 at Martinsburg Town Hall. Among categories in the project, which generated nearly 1,000 completed surveys, were the economy, land use, government regulations and infrastructure.

Attendees at each forum are being asked to fill out another brief survey that followed up in more detail on some survey topics, Malinowski said. A summary will be presented after the forums.

The largest forum turnout was 15 people at a Boonville session last month, while the Lee turnout was one of the smallest, Malinowski noted. She observed that Lee is on the edge of the Tug Hill region, and residents may not identify themselves with it as closely as others do.

A total of 12 towns in northern Oneida County are part of Tug Hill, which is located roughly in the triangle formed by Watertown, Rome and Syracuse.

Home : general

RomeSentinel.com  
A Community Reporter  
SERVING THE TUG HILL REGION OF NEW YORK STATE

Community Reporter

NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPHY



# Tug Hill Survey Reveals Resident and Landowner Opinions

## Public Invited to Forum in Martinsburg

BH 6-23-09

MARTINSBURG - The NYS Tug Hill Commission and the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) will convene a community forum at the Martinsburg Town Hall, State Route 26, Martinsburg, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, June 25. The forum's purpose is to share the results of a recent region-wide survey of Tug Hill residents and landowners, as well as gather further responses to the issues addressed. All are welcome to attend. There is no charge, and no need to pre-register.

The goal of the survey, conducted in March, was to collect a statistically valid account of residents' and landowners' perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill region. Highlights relevant to CTHC towns and villages, as well as the Lewis County portion of the Tug Hill region include:

\* While Jefferson County respondents were most positive about the availability of higher education, with 80.2% ranking it excellent or good, 70.1% of Lewis County respondents, and just 55.1% of CTHC respondents ranked it the same.

\* Although CTHC respondents were least positive about the quality of K-12 schools, 28% responding said they were "not sure" about a ranking, reflecting the influence of seasonal landowners who may not have knowledge of the local school system.

\* Lewis County had the most positive response concerning recreational opportunities, with 83.2% ranking them excellent or good.

\* In addition to the quality of K-12 schools, CTHC respondents had the greatest percentage of "not sure" responses about the

quality of housing and services for senior citizens.

\* In the Lewis County portion of Tug Hill, 61.7% ranked social activities and organizations excellent or good.

\* CTHC residents seemed least satisfied with access to groceries, etc., with 41.4% responding fair or poor.

The Martinsburg forum, the last of a series of seven held around the region, will provide an opportunity for citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The information gathered through the sur-

vey and forums will contribute to the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process, and will be used by Councils of Government throughout the region to evaluate their own programs and priorities.

The region-wide telephone survey was completed by students at Jefferson Community College, in partnership with the Tug Hill region's five Councils of Government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County Council of Government, North Shore Council of Government, River Area Council of Government and the Salmon Rivers Council of Government).

Funding for the survey was provided by all five Councils of Government, the Northern New York Community Foundation, the Open Space Institute's Malcolm Gordon Fund, and the Tug Hill Commission.

More information on the Tug Hill Commission is available on their website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), or by calling 1-888-785-2380 toll-free in the region. More information about the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College is available on their website, <http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html>, or by contacting the Center at 315-786-2489.

# Community Foundation Awards \$553,000 in Scholarships 7/5/06

The Northern New York Community Foundation has awarded \$553,550 in scholarships for the 2006-2007 academic year to 294 students (192 new and 103 continuing students). This compares with \$303,649 spent on scholarships by the Foundation last year for 260 students. New funds from donors like Garry McGivney account for much of the increase. Individual awards have increased in amount to a maximum of \$5,000 per year for non-traditional students and \$3,000 per year for traditional students, depending on financial need. Included in these scholarships are three Rotary Purple Heart Scholarship awards, one to a Purple Heart recipient, one to a spouse and one to a child of Purple Heart recipients.

At its quarterly meeting, the Community Foundation board approved an annual concert in memory of Sidney T. Cox who

left the Foundation in excess of \$3 million in his will. Mr. Cox was a composer and music aficionado. The concert will be funded annually through a \$300,000 Sidney T. Cox Memorial Concert Fund. The Thousand Islands Performing Arts Fund (TIPAF) will produce the concert to be held at the Clayton Opera House. "This fund will remain at the Community Foundation and hopefully be the stimulus for the creation of an endowment for TIPAF," said Alex Velto, Foundation Executive Director. "The concert will be a high quality performance on the level of the Rochester Philharmonic and Syracuse Symphony," he added.

The Community Foundation Board approved the following grants:

- \$70,000 to the Children's Home of Jefferson County for

the WINGS program with Watertown City Schools. The WINGS project, a collaboration between the Children's Home and Watertown City School District, is designed to provide intensive services to the most difficult at-risk students and their families to increase their chances of being successful in school. The Watertown school system has committed \$40,000 to the project.

- \$5,000 to the Town of Lorraine for improvements to the town park

- \$5,000 to the Tug Hill Commission for a community opinion survey

- \$3,500 to North Country Public Radio for the StoryCorps mobile recording studio in Watertown

- \$5,000 to the Watertown Family YMCA for their Train with a Champ Swim Camp.

(Photo)

# Commission to Release Survey Results and Hold Community Forum in Boonville

BH 5-26-09

The NYS Tug Hill Commission and the Northern Oneida Council of Governments (NOCCOG) will convene a community forum at the Boonville Municipal Building, Route 12, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26, in order to share the results of its recent region-wide survey with Tug Hill citizens and local officials, as well as gather further responses to the issues addressed. All are welcome to attend. There is no charge and no need to pre-register.

The goal of the survey, conducted in March, was to collect a statistically valid account of residents' and landowners' perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill region. The forum will provide an opportuni-

ty for citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The information gathered through the survey and forums will contribute to the Commission's 2009 Strategic Planning process, and will be used by Councils of Government throughout the region to evaluate their own programs and priorities.

The region-wide telephone survey was completed by students at Jefferson Community College, in partnership with the region's five councils of government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County Council of Government,

North Shore Council of Government, River Area Council of Government and the Salmon Rivers Council of Government).

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## **Tug Hill phone survey shows some local dissatisfaction**

**Posted by [dpadovan](#) June 03, 2009 13:09PM**

Oswego County residents seem to be the least optimistic people in the four-county Tug Hill area.

That's according to a survey conducted in March by the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College.

The survey of 956 Tug Hill and North Shore residents was conducted for the state's Tug Hill Commission which will use the information when it prepares its new five-year plan.

The survey found Oswego County residents are the least positive about the quality of education, health care, local government services and the overall condition of villages and hamlets.

The survey findings aren't all bad.

Residents along Oneida Lake's North Shore feel good about their access to the Internet and support the development of wind energy.

Oswego County municipalities included in the survey were the North Shore towns of West Monroe and Constantia and the villages of Cleveland and Central Square. Also included in the survey were the Tug Hill towns of Albion, Amboy, Boylston, Hastings, Orwell, Parish, Redfield and Williamstown and the villages of Altmar and Parish.

The [Tug Hill survey](#) is 110 pages long.

Categories: [Breaking News](#), [Madison County](#), [Oswego County](#), [Top News](#)

### **Comments**

**pergammon says...**

Bash Oswego below-

Posted on 06/03/09 at 1:36PM

**namb2 says...**

oswego makes itself look bad enough, I'm almost starting to feel bad for that place geeze

Posted on 06/03/09 at 2:10PM

Footer

# OSWEGO

## TUG HILL SURVEY

### Poll: Oswego County residents are Tug Hill's least optimistic

By John Doherty  
Staff writer

Oswego County residents seem to be the least optimistic people in the four-county Tug Hill area.

That's according to a survey, conducted in March by the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College.

The survey of 956 Tug Hill and Oneida Lake North Shore residents was conducted for the state's Tug Hill Commission, which will use the information when it prepares its new five-year plan.

The survey report is available at [syracuse.com](http://syracuse.com) by entering Tug Hill in the search field, then clicking on the link, **Tug Hill survey**.

The survey found Tug Hill residents were the least positive of all who responded about the quality of education, health care, local government services and the overall condition of villages and hamlets where they live.

However, the findings weren't all bad.

North Shore residents felt good about their access to the

Internet and supported the development of wind energy, but they also were least likely to support regional planning and government regulations.

The survey will be discussed at two forums to be held 6:30 to 9 p.m. June 11 at the West Monroe Fire Hall, 54 county Route 11, and 6:30 to 9 p.m. June 18 at the Redfield Fire House, county Route 17.

The Tug Hill region includes parts of Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida and Oswego counties.

Oswego County municipalities included in the survey were the North Shore towns of West Monroe and Constantia and the villages of Cleveland and Central Square. Also included in the survey were the Tug Hill towns of Albion, Amboy, Boylston, Hastings, Orwell, Parish, Redfield and Williamstown and the villages of Altmar and Parish.

The survey, the commission's first, was conducted between March 16 and 25. Of the 2,746 people contacted by interviewers, 1,790 declined to participate.

**syracuse.com**

## The Post-Standard

### **Survey: Oswego County residents least optimistic in four-county Tug Hill area**

**Poll: Oswego County residents are Tug Hill's least optimistic**

Thursday, June 04, 2009

**By John Doherty**

**Staff writer**

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June 5, 2009

# Public invited to forum in West Monroe: Tug Hill survey reveals resident and landowner attitudes

The NYS Tug Hill Commission and the North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG) will convene a community forum at the West Monroe Fire Hall, 54 County Route 11, West Monroe, from 6:30-9 p.m. on Thursday, June 11. The forum's purpose is to share the results of a recent region-wide survey of Tug Hill residents and landowners, as well as gather further responses to the issues ad-

ressed. All are welcome to attend. There is no charge, and no need to pre-register.

The goal of the survey, conducted in March, was to collect a statistically valid account of residents' and landowners' perceptions and opinions about a variety of issues and opportunities in the Tug Hill region. Highlights relevant to north shore towns and villages, as well as the Oswego County portion of the

Tug Hill region include:

Oswego County respondents were the least positive of the four counties about: quality of kindergarten-12 education (only 9 percent rated as excellent, next lowest was 22.6 percent in Oneida County) health care (44.5 percent rated as excellent or good, next lowest was 56 percent in Jefferson County); local government services (31.8 percent rated as excellent or good,

next lowest Lewis County with 39.7 percent); condition of hamlets and villages (56.9 percent excellent/good, next lowest Lewis with 65.2 percent) NorCOG respondents had the second highest positive response to Internet access (71.8 percent ranked it excellent or good) NorCOG respondents most likely to want to increase wind energy development (88 percent increase, next highest is SRCOG at 82 percent) NorCOG respondents most likely to want to decrease local government regulation (34.7 percent, next highest NOCCOG at 25 percent) NorCOG least likely to answer very or somewhat important when asked about the value of planning programs in the region (69.5 percent, next is RACOG at 75.4 percent)

The towns of West Monroe and Constantia, and the villages of Cleveland and Central Square are members of NorCOG. Additional Oswego County communities within the Tug Hill region are: the towns of Albion, Amboy, Boylston, Hastings, Orwell, Parish, Redfield, and Williamstown, as well as the villages of Altmar and Parish.

The West Monroe forum, as well as additional forums in the region, will provide an opportunity for citizens to convey their thoughts and concerns about the survey results, the region in general, and how agencies, organizations, communities and individuals can work to respond. The information gathered

through the survey and forums will contribute to the commission's 2009 strategic planning process, and will be used by Councils of Government throughout the region to evaluate their own programs and priorities. Additional forums will be held from 6:30-9 p.m. at the Lee Town Hall on June 16, Redfield Fire Hall on June 18, and the Martinsburg Town Hall on June 25.

The region-wide telephone survey was completed by students at Jefferson Community College, in partnership with the Tug Hill region's five Councils of Government (Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County Council of Government, North Shore Council of Government, River Area Council of Government and the Salmon Rivers Council of Government). Funding for the survey was provided by all five Councils of Government, the Northern New York Community Foundation, the Open Space Institute's Malcolm Gordon Fund, and the Tug Hill Commission.

More information on the Tug Hill Commission is available on their Web site, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), or by calling 1-888-785-2380 toll-free in the region. More information about the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College is available on their Web site: [www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html](http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/ccs/index.html), or by contacting the center at 786-2489.

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*(Continued on page 2)*

## Tug Hill survey reveals

*(Continued from front page)*

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NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR THE MOHAWK VALLEY

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## Survey: Life is good on Tug Hill

**Reveals recreation, setting for children keep residents in region**

By BRYON ACKERMAN

**Observer-Dispatch**

Posted Jun 15, 2009 @ 05:42 PM

Last update Jun 15, 2009 @ 06:53 PM

Tug Hill residents enjoy their rural lifestyles and don't plan to leave the area anytime soon, according to recently released survey results.

About 90 percent of residents in the area believe their quality of life is good or excellent, and about 85 percent of residents said they expect to still be living in the region five years from now.

Residents say the open space, the recreational opportunities, their feeling of safety and the setting for raising children are the major factors contributing to their quality of life.

Charlie Shoemaker is an independent contractor who lives on 40 acres in Steuben with his wife, children and three German shepherds. He said he enjoys hunting, car shows, family events and knowing everybody in town.

"I'm a country boy," he said. "And I like the whole country living."

The survey was conducted by the New York State Tug Hill Commission, Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida Council of Governments, North Shore Council of Governments, River Area Council of Governments and Salmon Rivers Council of Governments.

During the process, 1,012 calls were made, and 956 surveys were completed by residents in the 2,100-square-mile Tug Hill region, which includes much of northern Oneida County.

The fact that so many people said they expect to live in the region and most of the landowners anticipate continuing to own land there five years from now indicates a stable population, according to the survey summary.

Residents were asked to rate their feelings about more than 20 issues from poor to excellent. Results will be discussed during a community forum from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday at the Lee Town Hall.

### Employment opportunities

Frank Daskiewich, general manager of the Hulbert House in Boonville, said he employs about 15 people, but in general, the region faces a major challenge because businesses continue to shut down and leave.

Of all the categories in the survey, residents expressed the most concern over employment opportunities. Only 1.4 percent of responses ranked the opportunities as excellent - 42.7 percent believed they are poor. But some small-business owners in the area said their establishments have been going strong.

Sue Pfendler, own of Hair Elegance at 105 Main St. in Boonville, said she has operated there for 17 years, and her business never struggled.

And at 118 Mappa Ave. in Barneveld, Richard and Debbie Fitzsimmons work seven days a week in their rooster-decorated Sweet Basil diner, where regulars don't need menus and the local police know the other customers on a first-name basis.

Debbie Fitzsimmons said she also believes there are many other good jobs available in the area.

### Feeling of safety

Sisters Marjorie Mahl, 82, of Taberg, and Rosemary Foy, 80, of Rome, meet once per week to have a meal at the Hulbert House and visit Mahl's husband in a nursing home.

Foy said she likes warm weather and spends her winters in southern states. Mahl said she likes cool weather and spends her winters snowshoeing in the Tug Hill region.

Staying in the region year-round, Mahl lives alone with just her dog, but she said she feels safe at home. Nobody bothers her, and if anyone did, state police likely would respond, she said.

Almost 90 percent of Tug Hill residents rated their feeling of safety as excellent or good, according to the survey.

### **Government services**

Tug Hill residents are split on how they feel about local government services. Just more than 42 percent of residents said the services are excellent or good, 33.5 percent judged them as fair, 14.3 percent rated them as poor.

Mahl said Oneida County provided assistance for her husband before he moved to a nursing home, and she likes knowing the same help would be available to her.

"If I need it, I'm sure there would be services," she said.

Remsen town Supervisor Clifford Hill said he thinks his town government supplies strong services.

"Whatever people need, we seem to be able to provide for them," he said.

### **Recreation**

While on the ninth hole at the Alder Creek Golf Course and Country Inn last week, Clinton resident Tim Reece, 57, said he appreciates that golfing, fishing, mountain biking and other recreational opportunities are available in the Tug Hill region.

"You can't beat that," said Reece, who has a camp on Kayuta Lake.

According to the survey, almost 80 percent of Tug Hill residents think their recreational opportunities are excellent or good.

Greg Brand, co-owner of the golf course and inn, lives at the location and said he and his family also take advantage of the chances for recreation the region offers.

"It's great to bring up a family," he said. "There's a lot to do up here."

### **SURVEY RESULTS**

#### Quality of K-12 education:

Excellent: 21

Good: 50.9

Fair: 12

Poor: 2.3

Not sure: 13.8

#### Availability of higher education:

Excellent: 13.7

Good: 43.9

Fair: 20

Poor: 11.7

Not sure: 10.7

#### Feeling of safety:

Excellent: 41.5

Good: 48

Fair: 8.2

Poor: 1.4

Not sure: 0.9

#### Social activities and organizations:

Excellent: 15.4

Good: 45.5

Fair: 23.8

Poor: 11.2

Not sure: 4.1

Recreational opportunities:

Excellent: 38.7

Good: 38.9

Fair: 13.7

Poor: 6.6

Not sure: 2.2

Health care:

Excellent: 11.3

Good: 42

Fair: 26.3

Poor: 11.2

Not sure: 9.2

Housing:

Excellent: 12.3

Good: 48.6

Fair: 24.2

Poor: 7.3

Not sure: 7.6

Services for senior citizens:

Excellent: 8.4

Good: 31

Fair: 23.5

Poor: 9.8

Not sure: 27.3

Drinking water quality:

Excellent: 30.5

Good: 46.2

Fair: 11.6

Poor: 6.2

Not sure: 5.5

Wastewater and sewage disposal

Excellent: 13.7

Good: 48

Fair: 17.1

Poor: 7.5

Not sure: 13.6

Internet access:

Excellent: 20.2

Good: 38.1

Fair: 12.4

Poor: 14.3

Not sure: 15.1

Access to groceries, pharmacies, etc.:

Excellent: 23.7

Good: 49.5

Fair: 19

Poor: 7.2

Not sure: 0.6

Local road maintenance/snow removal:

Excellent: 25.8

Good: 45.7

Fair: 19.1  
Poor: 7.6  
Not sure: 1.7

Amount of open space:

Excellent: 50  
Good: 40.2  
Fair: 8.5  
Poor: 0.6  
Not sure: 0.6

Industrial and commercial development:

Excellent: 5.1  
Good: 24.6  
Fair: 32.7  
Poor: 28.6  
Not sure: 9

Farming and forestry activity:

Excellent: 27.6  
Good: 45.5  
Fair: 15.3  
Poor: 6.3  
Not sure: 5.3

Level of tourism:

Excellent: 14.4  
Good: 45.7  
Fair: 25.8  
Poor: 10.6  
Not sure: 3.5

Employment opportunities:

Excellent: 1.4  
Good: 13.9  
Fair: 35.7  
Poor: 42.7  
Not sure: 6.3

Local government services:

Excellent: 3.6  
Good: 38.7  
Fair: 33.5  
Poor: 14.3  
Not sure: 9.8

Condition of villages or hamlets (Main Street):

Excellent: 8.4  
Good: 56.4  
Fair: 26.8  
Poor: 5.9  
Not sure: 2.5

Overall quality of life:

Excellent: 27.2  
Good: 62.7  
Fair: 8.6  
Poor: 1  
Not sure: 0.4

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