

HEADWATERS

NEW YORK STATE TUG HILL COMMISSION

2009 NEWSLETTER - 2008 ANNUAL REPORT - Issue 47

Change, Challenge, Response

Inside this issue

LGC MARKS 20 TH ANNIVERSARY	2
GROWING INTEREST IN COOPERATION AND CONSOLIDATION	2
COG UPDATES	4-5
FORT DRUM GROWTH MGMT STRATEGY	6
BLACK RIVER INITIATIVE	6
NEW TUG HILL WEB SITE COMING SOON	6
INVASIVES ON THE RISE	7
SUBDIVISION CONTROLS	7
COMMISSION PROGRAMS AND FUNDING	7

New York State
Tug Hill Commission

Dulles State Office Building
317 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601-3782

(315) 785-2380/2570

(315) 785-2574 (fax)
Toll-free in region:
1-888-785-2380

Email: tughill@tughill.org
(staff addresses page 2)

Website: www.tughill.org

The year of 2009 has seen many changes and challenges for Tug Hill communities, the region and the Tug Hill Commission. With these come opportunities that can make our communities and residents more prosperous, the region more vibrant, and the Commission more responsive to local need. Throughout this edition of Headwaters you will see how Tug Hill communities and local leaders are responding and how we at the Commission are adapting to ensure our services and programs continue to meet the region's needs.

The Commission has had some long standing Commission members leave our board this year – Anne Schuler (24 years), Timothy LeVan (12 years), and J. David Stone (5 years). We thank them for their devoted service to the region's communities and their unwavering support to Commission staff. We welcome new Commission members – Tom Boxberger (Town of Watertown) and Jan Bogdanowicz (Town of Montague) who bring new ideas and enthusiasm to the board. We also say goodbye to a longtime colleague – David Zembiec – who leaves our staff after nearly 20 years of

service.

In 2009, with the assistance of our Councils of Governments, we commissioned the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College to conduct the first ever survey of land owners and residents in the region and found a wealth

standard of living in the region. Communities are faced with rising costs at a time when pressure on real property taxes has never been stronger. This has prompted communities to be innovative in how they provide basic services to their residents and keep costs to a minimum.

Our communities are responding in numerous ways that maintain services while improving efficiency.

Perhaps the greatest opportunities our communities, residents and local leaders have is the opportunity to reinvent and strengthen those aspect of local governance and community vitality that make Tug Hill a desirable place to live and raise a family. In this newsletter

you'll read of just a few things our communities are facing and how they are responding to those changes and challenges. Commission staff will continue to deliver the important services and programs to help you face these changes and challenges. Thank you for the opportunity to serve!

The economic challenges our residents and communities face are demanding new responses to how we ensure jobs and a



Anne Schuler is presented with an original Robert McNamara wildlife print at the October Commission meeting. Left to right: John K. Bartow Jr., Tom Boxberger, Leona Cheresnoski, Anne Schuler, Ken Vigus, David Reader, Michael Yerdon Sr., Jan Bogdanowicz, Roger Maciejko, Arnie Talgo.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, likely belonging to one of the individuals mentioned in the caption or a staff member.



Meet the Tug Hill Commission Staff

Commission staff provide support to Tug Hill communities on land use planning, natural resource management, and community and economic development, geographic information systems (GIS) and related fields.

John Bartow
executive director
john@tughill.org

Paulette Collins
secretary
collins@tughill.org

Mickey Dietrich
GIS
mickey@tughill.org

Linda Gibbs
natural resources
gibbs@tughill.org

Matthew Johnson
planning/GIS
matt@tughill.org

Jennifer Harvill
natural resources
jennifer@tughill.org

Katie Malinowski
natural resources director
katie@tughill.org

Carla Malmgren
community development
carla@tughill.org

Emily McKenna
community development
emily@tughill.org

Felicia Passino
administrative aide
felicia@tughill.org

Philip Street
planning director
phil@tughill.org

Sandy Taylor
secretary
taylor@tughill.org

Jean Waterbury
planning/
technical assistance
jean@tughill.org

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

LGC Marks 20th Anniversary

The Local Government Conference held on March 26, 2009 at Jefferson Community College marked the 20th conference the Commission has held since 1989. The Commission organized a pilot local government

local officials attended. Cost of attending as well as the number of attendees has grown considerably over the past 20 years. The 2009 conference cost \$50 to attend and over 600 local officials attended.

There have been many interesting keynote addresses. John Parr, President of the National Civic League, Denver, CO was

noters included inspirational speakers, authors, state dignitaries, and a retired lieutenant general from Fort Drum.

Concurrent sessions are the heart of the conference and where local officials learn about new regulations they need to comply with, how a neighboring municipality is dealing with a similar situation or the basics of site plan or subdivision reviews. In 1989, sessions were planned for town/village board members, municipal clerks, planning board members and zoning boards of appeals. Over the years, additional tracks were added for highway crews, assessors and emerging issues. The 1989 conference had 14 concurrent sessions compared to 22 sessions in 2009. The Commission would like to thank all speakers that have presented at the conferences over the years for their time in training and inspiring our local officials.

Exhibitors and cosponsors have contributed greatly to the

conferences. Their support has kept registration affordable. Exhibitors also bring a wealth of information to those attending and the number of exhibitors has grown to over 30 at the 2009 conference. The Commission is grateful to have so many local businesses and agencies involved in the conference.

The 2010 LGC will be held on April 1st and Robert Freeman, Executive Director, Committee on Open Government will be the keynote speaker. Mr. Freeman has been with the Committee on Open Government since 1976 and has spoken on open government laws and concepts throughout the United States and Canada, Japan and Hong Kong. In 1999, Mr. Freeman was cited in Empire State Report as one of “25 Empire State residents during the past 25 years whose public service, determination, idealism or gut instincts resulted in sweeping improvement in the lives of fellow New Yorkers.



Attendees at the 2009 LGC fill the amphitheater to hear the keynote speaker, John Zogby.

conference in 1984, held at the Dulles State Office Building with just over 100 local officials attending, but it would be 5 years before another LGC was held.

Cost of attending the 1989 conference was \$12 and 132

the keynote speaker in 1989. He presented the elements that make up a strong and resilient civic infrastructure and outlined a framework that rural community leaders could use to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and future challenges. Other key-

SAVE THE DATE
Tug Hill Local Government Conference
Thursday, April 1, 2010

Growing Interest In Cooperation and Consolidation of Services

Intermunicipal cooperation can take many forms. It may involve coordinating planning efforts, establishing a joint ZBA, sharing highway equipment, jointly owning a municipal building, or mutually providing a shared service to the public. As a strategy, pooling limited resources can lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness, help to leverage additional outside resources in the form of grants, eliminate duplication of effort, and give project partners a greater collective voice at higher levels of government. Within the Tug Hill region, several towns and villages have joint planning boards or share space in a common municipal building. Others are coordinating their comprehensive planning efforts. Two villages are studying the potential for sharing police services; three others are investigating the feasibility of hiring a shared operator for their neighboring water systems; and several towns are attempting to establish a joint court facility.

In these times of fiscal stress at the federal, state, and local level, there appears to be a growing interest in intermunicipal cooperation. Some of this interest comes from local officials seeking ways to better serve their citizens while doing more with less. Others advocate for the complete consolidation of certain services or of local government itself. Several resources are available to assist those interested in pursuing an idea for intermunicipal cooperation or consolidation.

For several years now, the **NYS Department of State** has been funding intermunicipal projects through what it now calls the Local Government Efficiency Grant program (LGEG). This program provides 90% grant funding to help address

two of the greatest impediments to cooperation and consolidation of local government services—the upfront costs to implement an intermunicipal effort and the lack of a cost analysis to determine if an idea for shared services is worth pursuing. Two or more municipalities may see some projects as “no-brainers” that require no additional study or analysis to determine their merit. In those cases, they can apply directly for an implementation grant. Other projects may require the services of a consultant to provide a detailed cost comparison or provide the necessary guidance or legal documents to enter into a shared services agreement. For that purpose, efficiency planning grants are available. Project partners may then use the completed plan to support a request for implementation funding in a future grant round. For more information on the LGEG program, visit the Dept. of State website at www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/sharedservices/index.html. The DOS website also provides several examples of intermunicipal agreements and case studies.

The **Office of the State Comptroller** has three publications on intermunicipal cooperation and consolidation on its website at www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/costsavings/index.htm. These include a helpful guide to the process and issues that need to be considered. OSC staff can also provide guidance and technical assistance on the fiscal issues involved in cooperation and consolidation.

The New NY Government Reorganization and Citizen Empowerment Act was passed and signed into law in early 2009. This new legislation includes no new mandates, but streamlines the process for consolidating

local government or special districts—whether initiated by local government or by local citizens. The Empowerment Act includes a new uniform signature requirement of 10% or 5,000 of the electors, whichever is less, in order for citizens to initiate a consolidation or dissolution process. For small entities of 500 or fewer electors, such a petition requires the signatures of 25% of the electors. The **Office of the Attorney General** website at www.oag.state.ny.us/ provides information on the act, flowcharts, and sample documents for citizens and local officials.

Intermunicipal cooperation does not always require new funding. Sometimes it is just a matter of sitting down and coordinating current efforts for greater effectiveness. If your municipality has an idea for shared services with another town or village, Tug Hill Commission staff are available to help facilitate the process of investigation and/or implementation. Call the main office or contact your circuit rider for assistance.

If you would like to receive *Headwaters* electronically, or would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us at tughill@tughill.org or toll-free in the region, 888-785-2380.

About Headwaters

Headwaters is the newsletter annual report of the New York State Tug Hill Commission.

The Tug Hill Commission is a state funded, regional agency overseen by a board of nine unpaid commissioners - two each from Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida and Oswego counties, and one at-large.

Commissioners are appointed for five year terms: three each by the Governor, State Senate and State Assembly. The Commission has an administrative link to New York State's Department of State.

Chairman

Michael G. Yerdon, Sr.
Oswego County

Vice Chairman

Leona M. Chereshnoski
Jefferson County

Secretary

David J. Reader
Oswego County

Members

Jan J. Bogdanowicz
Lewis County

Thomas E. Boxberger
Jefferson County

Roger W. Maciejko
Lewis County

Arnold E. Talgo
Oneida County

Kenneth W. Vigus
Oneida County

COGs Circuit Rider Contacts

Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC)

Jane Jones

CTHC circuit rider
315-599-7724

tomjanej@northnet.org
www.tughillcouncil.com

Northern Oneida County Council of Governments (NOCCOG)

NOCCOG circuit rider
315-392-2260

Gjritter01@aol.com
www.nocog.org

North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG)

Paul Baxter

NorCOG circuit rider
315-668-8945

paul@norcog.org
www.norcog.org

River Area Council of Gov- ernments (RACOG)

Kathy Amyot

RACOG circuit rider
315-785-2390

kathy@tughill.org
www.racog.org

Salmon Rivers Council of Governments (SRCG)

Paul Baxter

SRCG circuit rider
315-668-8945

paul@salmonrivers.org
www.salmonrivers.org

CTHC Approves Continuing Work on Special Area Designations

At the Council's Annual Meeting, held September 17, 2009 in Constableville, the representatives present approved a draft resolution to go forward with revising the 'special area' designations included in the Planning Accord for Tug Hill that CTHC communities adopted in 1992. Tug Hill Commission Planning and Natural Resources staff along with CTHC circuit riders have been working on revising the definition guidelines and remapping the areas in the CTHC region for over two years. The 'guidelines' workbook and mapping is complete. The next step will be to schedule meetings in each individual town to go over this work and answer any questions member communities might have. The final step is for CTHC member communities to designate and approve their own 'special areas' in the revised Accord. Circuit riders will be discussing the scheduling of these meetings with member towns over the next few months.

In other business, the town representatives approved the Council's budget and goals for the upcoming year. Please feel free to contact your circuit rider with questions about the Planning Accord, Tug Hill Reserve Act, 2010 budget or goals and any other issue that is important to your community.

RACOG Communities Move Forward on Joint Initiatives

Over the past year, RACOG member communities (towns of Champion and Wilna and villages of Carthage and West Carthage) have worked together on several continuing and new initiatives, and have

also assisted neighboring communities in Lewis and Jefferson counties to enhance regional opportunities for more cost effective and efficient shared highway services. For example, West Carthage, working with Carthage, contracted with the Rochester Center for Governmental Research (CGR) for a \$57,000 feasibility study to explore issues and opportunities in providing more cost effective and efficient shared police service. Funded through the 2008-2009 Local Government Efficiencies Grant Program (LGEG) and targeted for June 2010 completion date, members of an appointed steering committee will assist consultants in reengaging the public, exploring alternative options, identifying collective bargaining issues/concerns and cost/benefit opportunities, tax assessment impacts and develop detailed implementation strategies.

A year-long regional initiative involving highway/DPW superintendents and local officials in Champion and West Carthage, in conjunction with Lewis and Jefferson counties, the towns of Croghan, Lowville, Martinsburg, Adams, Alexandria, Clayton, Denmark, LeRay, Philadelphia, and the villages of Lowville and Philadelphia culminated in a grant application to the 2009-2010 LGEG program. Serving as lead agent to the 15 municipalities, Lewis County submitted an application for data collection services, purchase of software & equipment and training to implement next steps in the integration of asset management tools to better manage road/highway & water/wastewater resources. Compliant with GASB-34 standards, if funded the project will save taxpayers over \$1.6 million and streamline the annual budget process, capital planning initiatives and day-to-day operations & maintenance. Likewise, Wilna and the villages of Deferiet and Herrings are exploring opportunities for

shared winter highway services for more cost efficient & effective service.

Cooperative efforts to standardize zoning regulations are ongoing as the RACOG Planning Committee complete Phase II of the 3-phase land review process. To advance Phase III, the committee completed work sessions facilitated by Peter J. Smith & Associates in designing "Comprehensive Plans" for all four RACOG communities. Funded through Quality Communities and the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization, the plan will serve as a tool to assist local officials, planning & zoning boards and zoning & code enforcement officers.

Multiple park projects in Carthage and West Carthage continue to move forward based upon recommendations outlined in the "Destination: Blueway, A Waterfront Plan for the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage." Recently awarded EPF funding through OPRHP to implement improvements to the South Main Street boat launch area in West Carthage, pedestrian trails will interconnect the downtown to the Black River waterfront area. Likewise, Phase II of the "Long Falls Park Project" in Carthage is underway with the contracting of Clough Harbor & Associates to design improvements on Guyot's Island that preserve and protect its historical significance. Complementary efforts at the Champion Village Green Park provide visitors and residents with access to an open air gazebo featuring a field stone fireplace, historic period children's playground, picnic tables, benches and handicapped accessible rest areas.

NOCCOG Communi- ties Working Together

As local governments in NYS face economic and structural challenges, municipalities have continued to look for new ways

to work together, as discussed in the article on page three. NOCCOG communities have been busy identifying mutual problems and projects that can be addressed through inter-municipal cooperation and sharing of services.

The Commission assisted member communities with two LGEG grants, administered by the NYS Department of State. The Villages of Barneveld, Prospect and Remsen were awarded \$26,000 to assess the practicality of sharing a full-time water system operator. The feasibility study will examine potential cost savings, efficiencies, and improved protection of the quality and safety of their respective water supplies. Study outcomes would also help guide development of the inter-municipal agreements necessary to structure a shared services arrangement to merge the operations and maintenance of the three village water systems. Similarly, the towns of Western and Floyd recently submitted a request for \$21,600 to institute a shared services solid waste collection program, but have not heard if they were awarded yet.

The towns of Lee and Anns-ville submitted a joint application to the Division of Housing and Community Renewal for a community planning grant, and were awarded \$3,000 to complete a joint housing analysis to gather information to submit a joint application for a Community Development Block Grant to rehab low and moderate income housing. Also, the village of Remsen and town of Steuben submitted a joint application to the NYS Archives Local Government Records management Improvement Fund for the creation of a file management system for their active records.

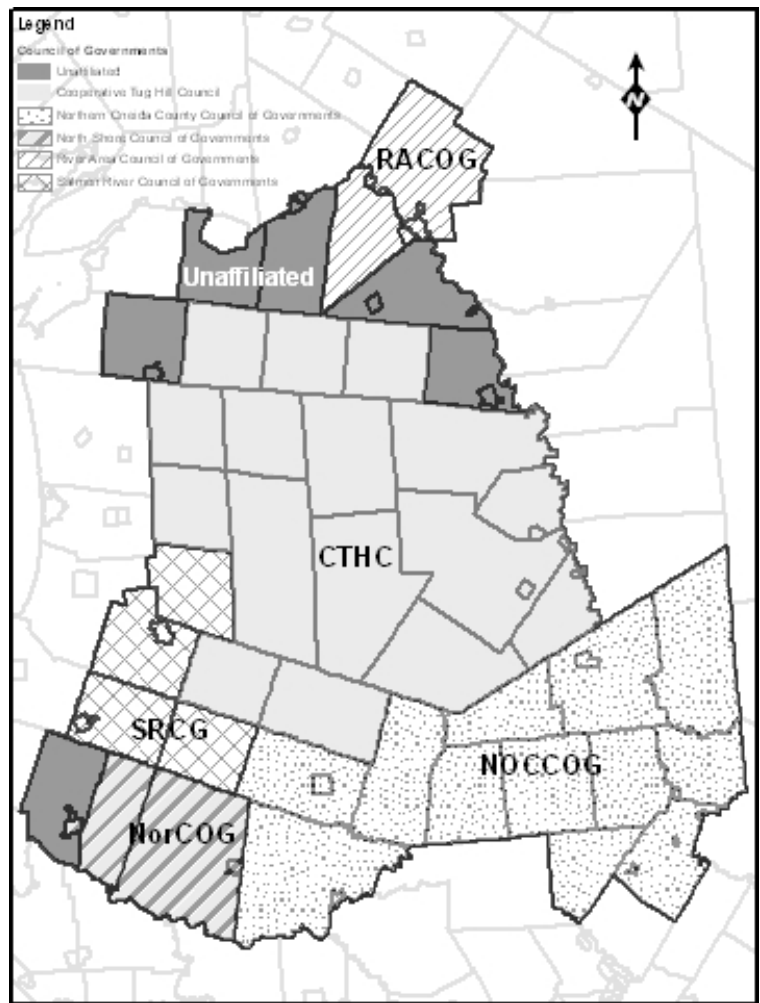
NOCCOG itself also continued to work on cooperative records management projects by submitting a grant applica-

tion on behalf of 28 municipalities in Oneida County. The project will improve access to historical records for each of the participating communities by making them available digitally on www.ancestry.com.

North Shore Council of Governments

North Shore communities have moved forward on several projects the past year. The village of Central Square completed a transportation study for the village, and held a public presentation of study recommendations on October 2009. The town of Constantia moved forward in the last year with plans for construction of a salt storage structure for the town highway department. The towns of Constantia and West Monroe continue to make progress on development of a joint water district. Design work has been completed, including work on proposed water tower placement, and the towns are progressing on acquisition of necessary easements.

Things in West Monroe have been busy, with the town completing and adopting an update to the town's twenty year old master plan in the culmination of a multi-year effort, which included review of past studies and extensive public information and involvement effort. Significant improvements to West Monroe's town hall were also completed, including a new entranceway, a new small meeting room and a new bench for justice court. Funding made available to municipalities for justice court improvements paid for much of the work with no resultant impact on local town tax rates. The Pinnacle tire yard cleanup and shredding operation, under the authority of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and conducted by contractors under the state Office of General Services, continued



over the last year as well, making considerable progress toward completion.

Salmon Rivers Council of Governments

The town of Amboy built an addition to the historic Amboy Town Hall, adding additional space for town officials and functions. Through care with town finances, the town was able to do so without an increase in town tax rate. The town of Orwell is working on implementing improvements to its water system to meet current standards and requirements.

The town and village of Parish conducted a public survey regarding interest in public water for the area. The survey helped the municipalities define the area in which to focus water system limits. The town and village are now moving forward on a study to examine engi-

neering parameters and financial feasibility for public water. The town and village of Parish Planning Board concluded their work in conjunction with the Commission to update the joint comprehensive plan. The update has been referred to the town and village boards for consideration and action.

The village of Parish also received a grant of over \$600,000 from a Small Cities Block Grant application for rehabilitation of grinder pump stations in the village's wastewater disposal system.

Invasive Species on the Rise

Over the past few years, the Commission has worked as a partner with other organizations throughout the region to help identify and manage or remove invasive species occurrences. These partnerships have formed from the Commission's involvement in the region's Water Quality Coordinat-

ter Chestnut, Black and Pale Swallow-worts, Eurasian Milfoil, Japanese Knotweed, and many more.

Most recently, Commission natural resources staff took part in a training session and plant removal project that addressed Giant Hogweed outbreaks in southern Lewis and northern Oneida counties.

Giant hogweed is an herbaceous, biennial plant that in-



Giant Hogweed along the Black River in Lewis County.

ing Committees and the St. Lawrence-Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM). Additional work has been completed as part of the Sandy Creeks Watershed Eco-system Based Management Plan and the Black River Watershed Plan.

The Commission has offered workshops for municipal highway departments and others at the annual Local Government Conference, as well as at other dates and locations in the region, in order to educate and provide management guidance for those most likely to come into contact with invasive plants and animals. Invasive species of concern in the Tug Hill region include the Asian Long-Horned Beetle, Emerald Ash Borer, Giant Hogweed, Wa-

vades disturbed areas across both the Northeast and Pacific Northwestern United States. It can grow up to 15 to 20 feet high. It resembles something like a very large Queen Anne's lace or cow parsnip. Giant hogweed is designated as a Federal Noxious Weed, because it produces sap that causes skin sensitivity to UV radiation and leads to blistering and severe burns. It can also cause blindness upon contact with the eyes.

NYSDEC is planning to unveil a new website with comprehensive information about invasive species in the state soon.

Fort Drum Growth Management Strategy

The *Fort Drum Growth Management Strategy* was completed earlier this year and dis-

tributed to those communities bordering the Fort Drum army installation. The report was prepared for Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization by Behan Planning and Design with EDAAW, Inc. and is available electronically at www.fdrlo.org under the "Growth Management" tab. Funding for the project came from the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA).

Although Fort Drum's economic impact on the region has been documented and reported (\$1.68 billion in Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties), the Growth Management Study is the first effort to analyze current and projected land development patterns on a regional scale. As noted in the report, Fort Drum and the region's communities have a mutual interest in managing the region's growth. Unmanaged growth can result in sprawl and development adjacent to the installation that is incompatible with its training mission, thereby jeopardizing its long-term viability. By proactively managing growth, communities help to preserve the Fort's training mission. At the same time, they can preserve their own rural character and maximize infrastructure investments by directing growth to their community centers.

The final report provides a number of recommendations to help guide Fort Drum and its neighbors in working together more effectively to maximize the benefits of future growth while minimizing incompatible development activity. Several communities bordering Fort Drum have already incorporated report recommendations into their own comprehensive plans.

Perhaps the greatest outcome of the report is the continuing emphasis on improving communication between Fort Drum and its neighboring communities. Good planning re-

quires good information, and two-way information sharing helps the army and the communities to better accommodate each other's needs and interests. It is the same principle that guides neighboring municipalities that work together on comprehensive planning efforts.

The project also included a "Growth Management Series" of land use training workshops in partnership with the Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence County planning departments; the NYS Tug Hill Commission; and Jefferson Community College's Center for Community Studies. In response to the popularity of those sessions, the partners have continued to schedule ongoing workshops to address the needs of the region.

Black River Initiative Moving Forward

Three complimentary plans focusing on the Black River - the *Black River Blueway Trail*, the *Black River Trail Scenic Byway* and the *Black River Watershed Plan* - are all nearing completion and are shifting focus to implementation. The planning process for the water quality focused *Watershed Plan* will be complete by spring 2010. Current activities include the completion of the recommendations from the planning process and a final public meeting, which successfully used an "open house" format. Funding for the watershed plan was provided by the Beaver River Advisory Council, Senator Griffo, the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, NYS Department of State's Office of Coastal, Local Government, and Community Sustainability Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) through Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

The Black River Blueway Trail project continues to implement

recommendations from the 2007 *White, Still and Wild: A Blueway Trail Development Plan for the Black River*. The Town of Martinsburg, as Lead Agency and administrator of the 2004, 2006, and 2007 grants that fund half of the projects, has been working with the Tug Hill Commission and a stakeholder advisory committee to direct the progress of a River Guide, Signage Plan, Navigation Signage Plan, river access improvement projects, removal of navigation hazards, a Marketing Kit, www.blackriver-ny.com website improvements, and park and river access designs in the Town of Forestport—all at various stages of completion. Blueway funding is administered by the NYS Department of State's Office of Coastal, Local Government, and Community Sustainability Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) through Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

The Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the Black River Trail Scenic Byway is complete and was prepared by the Com-

mission in partnership with the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA), with significant input from local byway stakeholders. Funding was provided by the NYS Department of Transportation's Scenic Byways Program through the Federal Highway Administration and Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. The CMP documents detailed plans for economic development strategies that promote tourism while preserving the natural, historical, cultural and recreational resources and maintaining the distinctive qualities and character of the byway route. It also describes how to maintain and enhance the byway and proposes numerous regional and local projects and actions as well as recommendations for future implementation. Once approved, the plan sets the stage for additional byway funding to implement those actions and other community projects that support the Byway CMP goals.

Recreational Subdivisions Spur Planning Activities

A number of recreational subdivision proposals throughout Tug Hill have spurred local governments to take a renewed interest in developing subdivision laws or updating existing ones. This interest has generally centered around establishing appropriate standards for recreational roads that are suitable for seasonal use, yet do not present a future liability to town budgets should towns find themselves responsible for future maintenance.

Typically, recreational subdivisions are proposed with privately owned roads. But there is concern that the realities of long-term maintenance by property owners without very effective means of pooling maintenance resources could result, over time, in subdivisions with deteriorating roads and declining property values. In worst cases, there is a possi-

bility that subdivision residents will be turning to the municipality for help with road ownership and maintenance at some point in the future. Local subdivision controls help to ensure that road design and construction standards are maintained.

The Town of Annsville has recently adopted its first subdivision law, while Florence and Forestport have significantly upgraded their road standards. The towns of Albion, Ava, Camden, Constantia, Lorraine, Osceola and the Village of Parish have been in the process of reviewing draft materials and examples from other municipalities in an effort to update their laws.

The Commission staff has been holding training sessions for planning boards throughout the region on subdivision review procedures, and has prepared "Plain English" procedural checklists to help local communities move through the sometimes difficult subdivision review process. These checklists can be found on the Commission's website.

Commission Programs and Funding

The Tug Hill Commission's budget for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009 was about \$1.2 million. Most of this funding came from the Commission's annual state appropriation. A small amount came from grants and revenues, such as registration for our Local Government Conference. Commission funding has remained unchanged and level with the previous year's funding for two years in a row.

Commission expenditures equal its funding, again about \$1.2 million this past year. Eighty-four percent of Commission expenditures are for staff salaries. The balance covers operational costs such as post-

age, office equipment, car expenses, etc. The Commission employs 18 staff, including four full-time circuit rider positions for Tug Hill councils of governments (COGs). COGs use their revenues from member communities to help fund part-time circuit riders and other costs.

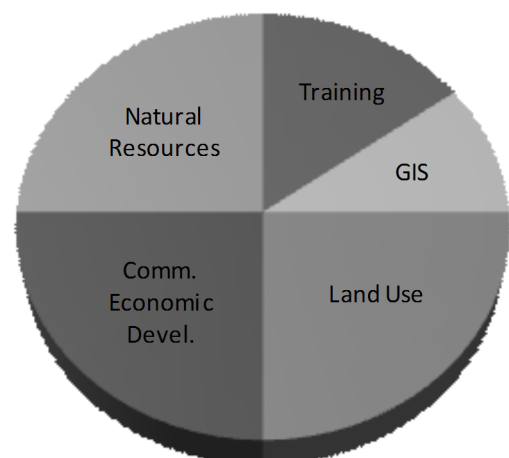
One way to gauge the value of the Commission's budget is to look at what it brings back to the region. Historically, the Commission helps secure more money for Tug Hill local governments every year than the Commission's annual appropriation. Another way to gauge value is by what gets done in Tug Hill communities. Annually, the Commission works with some 20 local communities on revisions to land use codes, and works on some 70 other projects from watershed protection to Main Street revitalization and business development,

especially in the areas of forest products, farming, and tourism and recreation.

The Commission anticipates growing demand for assistance in land use planning and natural resource protection as communities work to manage growth and development around the region. As indicated throughout this newsletter, there is an increased emphasis on regional

projects that focus on corridors and watersheds and involve multiple partnerships.

As we continue to deal with these challenging fiscal times, staff will look for ways to deliver fiscal savings while sustaining vital services. The Commission will also work with communities in savings of their own through efficiencies and sharing of services where communities want it.





New York State Tug Hill Commission
Dulles State Office Building
317 Washington Street
Watertown, New York 13601-3782

U.S. Postage
PAID
Watertown, NY 13601
PERMIT #100

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



December 2009
Printed on Recycled Paper

Tug Hill Local Government Conference Over The Years

Date	LGC Key Note Speaker	Attendance
May 31, 1989	John Parr National Civic League	132
May 23, 1990	Tony Hiss Expert/Author/Speaker	229
May 29, 1991	Frank Marra Rockefeller Institute	284
March 31, 1992	Dennis Allee NYS Dept. of Econ. Dev.	409
April 7, 1993	No Key Note	382
April 7, 1994	Bob Benedict NYS Dept. of Env. Cons.	335
May 9, 1995	Alexander Treadwell Secretary of State	250
April 3, 1996	Mike Zagata NYS Dept. of Env. Cons.	330
April 2, 1998	Alexander Treadwell Secretary of State	274
April 8, 1999	Clement Bezold Inst. for Alternative Futures	380

Date	LGC Key Note Speaker	Attendance
April 13, 2000	NYS Quality Community Program	387
April 11, 2001	Jay Rifenburg "No Excuses!" Leadership	311
April 11, 2002	Randy Daniels Secretary of State	434
March 27, 2003	Ed McMahon The Conservation Fund	411
March 31, 2004	Lt. Gen. Lawson W. Magruder III	412
March 31, 2005	Dr. James Segedy, AICP, AIA	474
March 30, 2006	Frank Pastizzo "Warming Up Your Comm."	526
March 29, 2007	Mark Fenton "Walkable Communities"	611
March 27, 2008	Jack Schultz "Boomtown USA"	656
March 26, 2009	John Zogby "The Way We'll Be"	616