

Poor's Island



Village of Black River

Black River Initiative

Recent Funding Announcements Include \$1.8M for Black River Watershed Projects

Sustaining water and natural resources of the 1.2 million square acre Black River Watershed ensures we will have clean drinking water, enjoyable outdoor recreation, and continued agricultural production. That's why organizations are collaborating to implement actions in the Black River Watershed Management Plan and Black River 9 Element Plan. State grants were recently announced totaling \$1.8 million in projects, which include:

- **Lewis County Fairgrounds Green Infrastructure** —The NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation awarded Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) \$525,000 to install practices that will reduce storm water runoff.
- **Managing Urban Forests Against Threats**—The City of Watertown and Jefferson Community College received over \$38,000 in



Black River waters rush by the Water Treatment Plant in Watertown. Photo : DEC.

- grants from DEC's Urban and Community Forestry grants to manage urban forests against threats such as invasive species, like the Emerald ash borer.
- **Agricultural Best Management Practices**—Lewis County SWCD was awarded nearly \$1.25 million from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to implement manure storage, comprehensive nutrient management and cover crops, which will reduce agricultural runoff and protect drinking water.



Tug Hill farm in the fall. Photo: DEC

These projects and others detailed in this newsletter, will further sustain Black River water resources and enhance life in the watershed. Thank you to these organizations for their commitment to the Black River Watershed!

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Black River Trash Bash Sheds Light on Trash Dumping

In the ninth year of the Black River Trash Bash, an annual event to promote stewardship of the Black River, 53 participants from six locations collected 627 pounds of trash and recyclables from the shore of the Black River. This and other NYS data was sent to the American Littoral Society to be included in the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup (<http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/>).

Jefferson and Lewis County groups noted that the woods next to Black River boat launches have been being used as dumping grounds for household trash and electronics. Firework remnants were also of concern in Old Forge. Chemicals that leach from this trash can run off into the surface water of the Black River, threatening the water we drink and aquatic organisms. Trash dumping is illegal and subject to fines. To report any observed violations, go to <https://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/67751.html> or call 1-844-DEC-ECOS.



Lewis County WQCC cleanup fills a truck with trash from Otter Creek and Beaches Bridge. Photo: DEC.

We thank the five groups across three counties that hosted cleanup events, including Lyons Falls Alive, the Lewis County and Jefferson County Water Quality Coordinating Committees (WQCC), Jefferson Community College and the Haderondah 4H Club (Old Forge). Join us next September by contacting Jennifer Harvill at: jennifer@tughill.org.

Volunteers Show Black River Trail Some Love

Volunteers gathered at the newly extended Black River Trail this May for I Love My Park Day (ILMPD). ILMPD is a statewide event organized by Parks and Trails New York to cleanup trash, maintain trails, and monitor or control, invasive species at parks and public lands. Volunteers joined staff from NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's Thousand Islands region to clean up the trail.

This successful event attracted 18 volunteers who filled a truck with trash from the trail and surrounding woods. Plans are underway to offer the event at the Black River Trail next year on May 4th, 2019. For more information and to get involved, visit: <https://www.ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day>



Black River Trail in Watertown. Photo: DEC.

Monitoring Invasive Species in the Black River Watershed

Invasive species are a threat to natural resources and waters of the Black River Watershed. Common invasive species threats in the area include terrestrial plants such as Purple loosestrife, Giant Hogweed and Japanese knotweed, forest pests such as Emerald ash borer and Hemlock wooly adelgid, and aquatic invasive species such as Eurasian watermilfoil and Curly leaf pondweed.

Monitoring these aggressive species and controlling their impacts to water quality and native ecosystems is extremely important.

The St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) coordinates activities throughout the region to monitor, control, and educate the public about invasive species. Despite broad partnerships, partnering organizations are challenged to have eyes everywhere, and need help from concerned citizens to report invasive species. The [Volunteer Surveillance Network](#)



Invasive species observations in the Black River Watershed. Courtesy iMapInvasives.

provides an easy way to learn about local threats and get involved.

An online mapping tool is also available for coordinated efforts to monitor observations and track treatment activities, and can be accessed at: www.imapinvasives.org

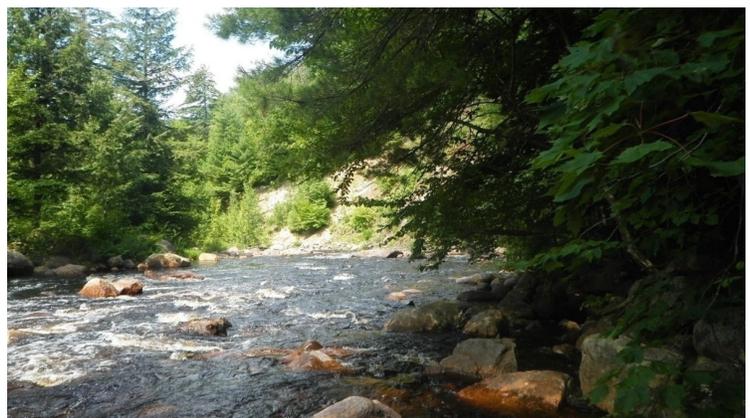
If you are interested in learning more, attending a training, becoming a partner, or helping to monitor for invasive species, please visit: <http://www.sleloinvasives.org/> or contact Megan

Independence River Shoreline Property Protected

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust worked with the Cataldo family in the town of Greig to conserve 254 acres of shoreline property on the Independence River. The conservation of the property ensures that the water, fish, and wildlife of this land are protected for generations to come by preventing future development.

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust works within the 2100 square mile Tug Hill region to protect the wildlands, working forests, and farms of the region, and promote appreciation of the regions natural and cultural heritage for generations to come.

For more information about the Land Trust, including upcoming events, visit: <https://tughilltomorrowlandtrust.org/about/>



Independence River shoreline. Photo: Cataldo Family.

2018 Black River Watershed Conference

The Black River Watershed conference is organized annually by the Tug Hill Commission, DEC Region 6 and the Jefferson and Lewis County SWCD. This year, 85 attendees registered for the conference that was held at Camp Turk in Woodgate, NY.

Sponsorship for the 2018 conference and keynote speaker was provided by the Black River Advisory Council and 4 exhibitors, including Siewert Equipment, GYMO, Barton and Loguidice. Partner organizations provided program information on the Adirondack Park Invasive Species Plant Program and the DEC Great Lakes Program.

This year's training and information topics had a theme of building resiliency in the face of changing weather patterns, with nine presenters and keynote speaker David Eichorn discussing the region's meteorological trends.

Updates on projects in the Black River Watershed were provided including stream restoration projects in Oneida County, natural channel design case studies in Hamilton County, invasive species management in Herkimer County, wildlife connectivity in the Black River, and a presentation from Cornell's Local Roads Program on reducing winter road salt runoff to waterways.



The 2018 Black River Watershed conference had over 80 attendees. Photo: DEC.

Conference presentations are available at: <http://www.tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/black-river-watershed-conference/>

Save the Date! June 4th, 2019

Black River Watershed Conference

Hope to see you there!

Questions? Contact Jennifer Harvill at jennifer@tughill.org

“Strategic Planning” Session Discusses Future of Initiative

Opportunities for engaging in thoughtful, strategic discussions to advance shared goals are all around us. Prior to the conference in June, a group of interested stakeholders gathered around a campfire to have a strategic planning discussion about the future of the Black River Initiative.

The camp's tranquil setting allowed for the group to connect and share ideas as well as discuss actions needed to promote additional and ongoing progress in the Black River Watershed. Additional coordination, evaluating the success of past projects, and promoting additional awareness of Black River Watershed issues were among the key needs identified.



Strategic planning at Camp Turk. Photo: DEC.

Water Quality Monitoring in the Black River

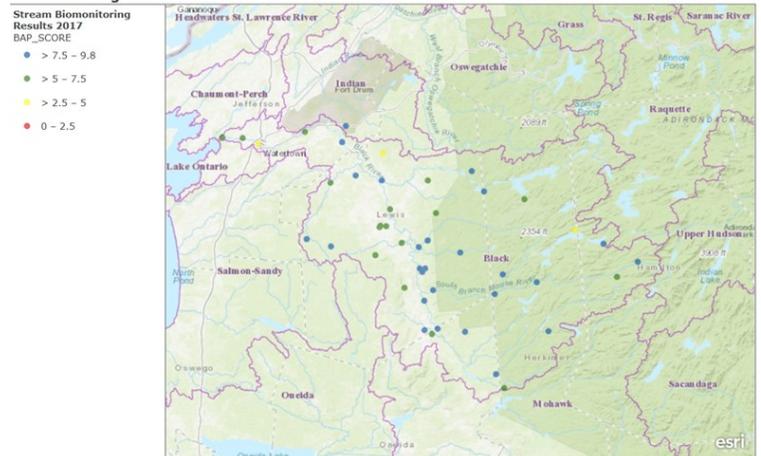
The DEC Routine Statewide Monitoring Program is charged with monitoring water quality throughout the state. To accomplish this, staff rotate their sampling to different basins, and ensure that every basin is monitored every five years.

In 2017, stream bio-monitoring and intensive monitoring at routine sites was completed at 53 locations in the Black River watershed, and preliminary results indicated a range from non-impacted in the upper watershed to moderately impacted conditions in the lower watershed. When fully analyzed, samples will be used in updating the DEC Waterbody Inventory/ Priority Waterbodies list - effectively providing a “report card” for assessed waterbodies.

To supplement data collected, promote awareness of water quality, and help screen sites in advance of sampling, DEC enlists the help of trained volunteers through the Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE) Program.

In 2017, volunteers provided information to DEC about 7 stream locations in the Black River, including streams near Boonville, Fish

RIBS Screening Site List 2018 and Recent Results



USGS TNM - National Hydrography Dataset, Data Refreshed September, 2018. | Esri, © OpenStreetMap contributors, HERE, Garmin, FAO, USGS, NGA

DEC Biological Assessment Profile scores— yellow indicates moderate impacts and blue indicates no known impacts. For more information and to access the interactive map, visit: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8459.html>

Creek, Fulton Chain of Lakes, Woodgate, Moose River Plains, and Hawkinsville.

Lab analysis of macro-invertebrates sent in found no known impacts in these locations. Thanks to these volunteers for their help, and if you are interested in getting involved, email wave@dec.ny.gov.

Boonville Salt Storage Reduces Runoff

The town of Boonville recently celebrated the completion of its new salt storage facility, thanks to funding received through the DEC Water Quality Improvement Program. Tug Hill Commission and Northern Oneida County Council of Governments staff aided in the grant submission for a 160 foot by 72 foot salt storage facility.

Salt storage reduces salt runoff that can impact water supplies and aquatic life and protects the nearby municipal water supply and Black River Canal. The town was able to utilize in-kind services of the highway department for much of the site prep, while being eligible for about \$360,000 in grant dollars for the structure and related work.



Newly constructed salt storage facility along Route 12 in the town of Boonville. Photo : town of Boonville.

Sugar River Streambank Protection

For at least the past decade, the Sugar River has been eroding the banks of the village of Constableville's wastewater treatment plant. The last straw came with Hurricane Sandy and Tropical Storm Lee. The streambank had been so far eroded that 20 feet of the outlet pipe to the wastewater plant was washed away. The Lewis County SWCD assisted the village with an application for Federal Emergency Management Agency Aid funding which was submitted in October of 2013. Funding was finally approved for the village of Constableville to install natural stream design structures to protect the bank of the river and prevent further damage to the wastewater treatment plant.

The project entailed installing four rock vanes, facing upstream, to help build up the streambank. These rock vanes consist of large limestone rock fingers, approximately 3 foot, by 3 foot by 6 foot, that are pitched from the top of the bank to the base of the stream at a 2-7 % slope upstream. As water flows over the vanes, the water velocity decreases dropping sand, gravel and rock out of the water column. These structures build the streambank while protecting it at the same time. The outlet pipe was also fortified with limestone rock and larger rip rap to prevent ice from damaging the outlet.



Sugar River streambank protection.
Photo: Lewis County SWCD

Outreach Encourages Actions to Protect Water Resources

The Jefferson County Stormwater Coalition completed tree plantings and rain garden installation in several member communities in 2018, through a US Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant secured by the Jefferson County SWCD.

The coalition also developed a poster to display at municipal offices and other public locations to promote awareness of storm water impacts and educate on ways to protect water resources from harmful pollutants. Education and outreach activities are being supported through a DEC Water Quality Improvement grant secured by the town of LeRay a few years ago.

The coalition formed in 2014 in response to a new urbanized designation in Jefferson County as a result of the 2010 census. Member communities are the towns of LeRay, Rutland, Watertown; villages of Black River, Brownville, Carthage, West Carthage; the city of Watertown; and Jefferson County.

For more information visit www.jcnystormwater.com/

Pollutants HARM our WATER

Simple steps YOU can take to keep pollutants out of our waterways:

- MOTOR OIL & ANTIFREEZE**
Dispose of properly
- PESTICIDES**
Avoid using, follow directions on the container's label
- ANIMAL WASTE & YARD DEBRIS**
Pick up and compost away from storm drains and waterways
- SOAPS & DETERGENTS**
Wash cars over grass, and use sparingly
- PLASTICS**
Recycle, dispose of properly

JCNYSTORMWATER.COM

The diagram shows a house with arrows indicating runoff from the roof, lawn, and gutter. It also shows street runoff and stormwater runoff entering a stream, which then flows into local streams, creeks, rivers, and lakes.

Great Lakes Action Agenda Northeast Sub Basin Workgroup

NY's Great Lakes Program continues to facilitate coordinated actions among stakeholders interested in advancing water quality, natural resource, resiliency, and recreation goals in the Black River and St. Lawrence River watersheds. Ongoing sub basin work group meetings provide opportunities to connect and collaborate.



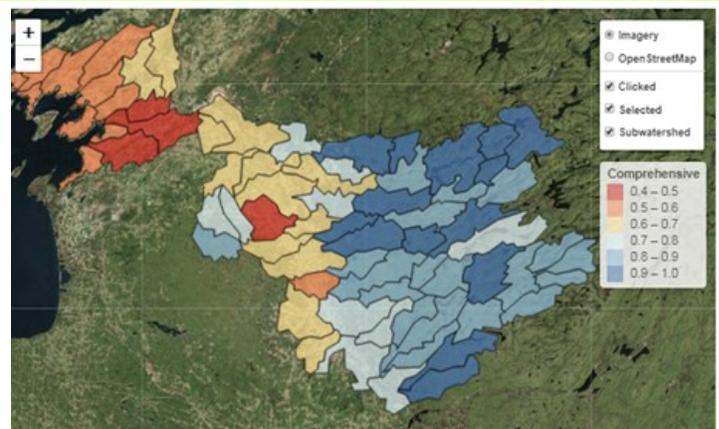
In addition to providing technical support and fostering collaborative efforts, the Great Lakes Program has continued to provide small grants for implementing priority goals of the Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA) through the NY Sea Grant/DEC Great Lakes Small Grants Program: <https://seagrant.sunysb.edu/articles/t/new-york-s-great-lakes-basin-small-grants-program-home>

The meetings are held bi-annually throughout the area. In 2018, a meeting was held in Redwood in May, and in Potsdam in December. St. Lawrence watershed stakeholders are beginning to enhance coordination and advance actions within a watershed management plan, and lessons learned from Black River Initiative are helping to guide these efforts. To learn more and get involved, visit: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/91881.html>

Research projects identified in the GLAA are advanced through a SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry/DEC Great Lakes Research Consortium Small Grants Program. <https://www.esf.edu/glrc/> Collaborative project proposals to sustain Great Lakes ecosystems, consider social, ecological, and economic perspectives and inform decision making with science are encouraged.

NYSDEC Trees for Tribs Small Grants Program and the NYS Riparian Restoration Opportunity Assessment

The NYSDEC Trees for Tribs program expanded statewide this year and announced a new grant program for planting trees on public and private lands. The Trees for Tribs small grants program, with funding from the NYS Environmental Protection Fund, announced \$525,000 was available, with up to \$100,000 per project for interested communities and organizations to plant trees along streams and rivers, benefiting fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and reducing flood risk. More information on the grant program is available at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/113412.html>



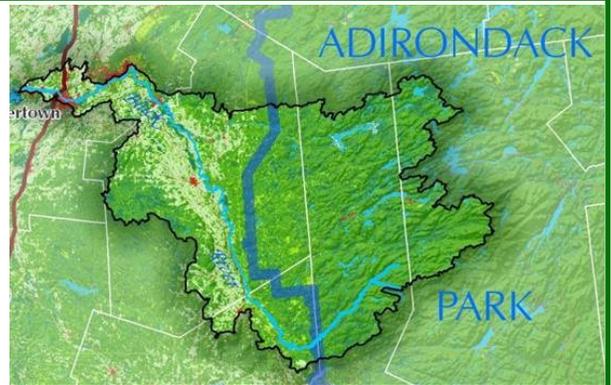
Comprehensive scores for the Black river watershed.

NY Natural Heritage Program, in coordination with NYSDEC and other partners, released new tools that can be used to guide riparian restoration and protection projects in NYS. Interactive online mappers display comprehensive scores for HUC 12 sub watersheds and catchments throughout the state. Comprehensive scores are calculated based on indicators of ecological health and stress, such as land use, water quality, habitat for lake trout and other important species, dam storage, and connectivity. Data can also be downloaded and viewed in ARCGIS. To learn more and access the tools, visit: <http://www.nynhp.org/treesfortribsny>

Black River Initiative

The Black River Initiative is a multi-pronged approach to protect and improve the water quality, recreational opportunities and communities along the Black River. The Black River Watershed Management Plan (2010), Black River 9 Element Plan (2016) Black River Blueway Trail Plan (2007) and Black River Trail Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (2012) provide the foundation to advance existing efforts and new projects that enhance and improve all aspects of the Black River. This annual newsletter highlights recent developments in the Black River Initiative, connects with stakeholders, and promotes collaborative, ecosystem based management efforts to achieve goals. For more information, visit:

<http://www.tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/watershed-initiative/> Thank you to all of the organizations that contributed to this newsletter!



Black River Watershed boundary.
Graphic courtesy of Bergmann and Associates.



For more Information on the Black River Initiative Contact:

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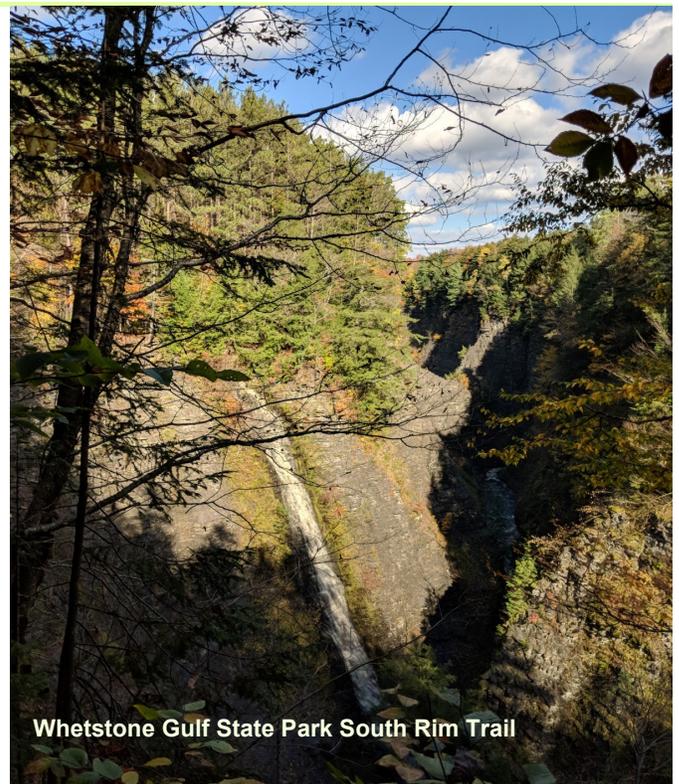
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Department of
Environmental
Conservation

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Information on recreation in the Black River is available at www.blackriverny.com