

AUGUST 25, 2017

Commissioners and Staff Enjoy Annual Retreat



Staff and commissioners on the banks of the East Branch of Fish Creek.

The staff and board of the Tug Hill Commission were hosted for a day in the Lewis County core forest this past Monday, by Tug Hill Sage Bob McNamara and Great Lot owner John Constable. The day started with a guided tour of the not-quite-yet completed first leg of the Tug Hill Traverse by Bob McNamara. Bob is widely acknowledged as an expert on Tug Hill's natural history and has, along with Zach Wakeman, moved forward the concept of a long distance north/south hiking trail through the center of Tug Hill.

After a short hike, the group gathered at John Constable's hunting camp to hear about the Constable family history, tour the property, and brainstorm about the upcoming year's priorities and activities. John is descended from William Constable, who was part of the Macomb Purchase in 1792, and whose family

once owned the historic Constable Hall. The 250-acre great lot is enrolled in 480a and is currently having a harvest completed. The property is also permanently protected by a conservation easement held by Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust.

The day was topped off with a great view of the partial solar eclipse.



A 125 year old yellow birch slice, from the ongoing forestry operation.



John Constable shows veneer sawlogs being harvested from his property.



Tug Hill Sage Bob McNamara displays a map of the Tug Hill Traverse.

In This Issue

- Annual Retreat
- Fall Training
- CTHC Fall Dinner
- Town Budget Workshop Held
- ALA Symposium
- Lewis County Tour
- NOCCOG Salary Survey
- Town Tax Levy
- Invasive Species Survey
- EAB Workshop Held

2017 Fall Training for Planning Officials

PLANNING BOARD OVERVIEW

Monday, September 18, 2017 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

To be held at Jefferson Community College, Jules Center Amphitheater Room 6-002, 1220 Coffeen Street, Watertown 13601.

The Jefferson County Department of Planning and the NYS Tug Hill Commission are co-sponsoring this land use training session. RSVP's are strongly encouraged by Thursday, September 15th. Contact Jefferson County Planning Department at 315-785-3144 or email: planning@co.jefferson.ny.us for more information.

SOLAR ENERGY REGULATIONS & MOCK HEARING FOR SPECIAL USE PERMITS

September 19, 2017 from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.

To be held in the Large Group Instruction (LGI) Room, Lowville Academy & Central School, 7668 State Street, Lowville, NY.

Lewis County Planning is sponsoring this land use training session. Contact the Lewis County Planning Department at 315-376-5422 or email suekulzer@lewiscounty.ny.gov for more information.

Commission Sponsors OSC Town Budget Process Workshop

The Tug Hill Commission and the councils of governments in the Tug Hill region co-sponsored a town budget process workshop held at the Parish Village Gym on Monday, August 21. The well-attended workshop included practical considerations on town budget preparation, and use of the budget as a tool during the fiscal year, including what information a town board should expect to receive as part of regular town operations. Questions from the audience enriched the workshop with practical application of the principals of town budgeting provided by the presentation.



Rain barrel display by the Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District.

Black River Watershed Experience Shared at ALA Symposium

Commission Executive Director Katie Malinowski and Lewis County SWCD District Manager Nichelle Billhardt spent a day at Paul Smith's earlier in August, helping facilitate a session at the Adirondack Lakes Alliance annual conference. Using the work done on the Black River Watershed Management Plan, Katie and Nichelle talked about the approach taken and ways that lake associations across the Adirondacks might approach creating a vision, along with goals and objectives, for their lakes and ways to analyze available data to support action items.

Nichelle also displayed a rain barrel, to show one way landowners can reduce stormwater runoff and provide a water source for gardening and lawn watering.

Lewis County Tour

Natural resources staff person Jennifer Harvill toured sites in Lewis County with the Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff and board members earlier this month. This was a chance for the SWCD to highlight a few of their projects that protect natural resources in Lewis County and the Black River Watershed. Jennifer also serves as the Lewis County Water Quality Coordinating Committee's vice chairperson.



On the day-long tour, the group learned about the county's new interseeder. This piece of equipment combines several functions, saving time and money on farms. This machine is a 15 foot drill capable of planting between six rows of corn and it also includes liquid fertilizer and herbicide applicator tanks. This means that cover crops can be planted between growing corn rows while applying fertilizer and/or herbicides in a single pass. It can also be used just like any other no till grain drill. The interseeder will be available to rent from the SWCD on a first-come-first-served basis for a \$50 delivery fee plus \$15 per acre.

The group also visited one of the county's new stream gauges on the Black River. These gauges measure water elevation, temperature, turbidity and conductivity. Monitoring water elevation allows for flood or drought monitoring. The other three parameters are measured to help monitor the quality of the water in the river.

The tour stopped at the Roaring Brook Bridge, on the West Road, to look at recently installed natural channel design structures that are decreasing erosion at the bridge and also helping to prevent erosion of nearby streambanks. The project was installed by the county highway under the supervision of the NYS DEC and USFWS.

The first photo to the right shows before with the stream widening into three channels and the second photo is post-construction.

The group toured one farm where the district was able to assist with the completion of a large nutrient management project, which included the installation of two manure storage facilities and a silage leachate collection systems. The system collects all manure and nutrient laden water from the bunk silos to be separated from clean water and stored until it can be safely spread on fields, according to a certified nutrient management plan.



For more information on any of these or other programs and projects, please visit <http://www.lewiscountysoilandwater.com/> or call Nichelle Billhardt at 315-376-6122.

NOCCOG Salary Survey to be Released

Communities in the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments have been working cooperatively with staff to provide salary information in anticipation of the release of the 2017 bi-annual salary survey. Each of the eighteen participating NOCCOG towns and villages provide data relating to salaries for elected and appointed positions ranging from supervisors, mayors, council members, and trustees to attorneys, assessors and highway and DPW superintendents. Appointed officials such as planning board and ZBA members are also included.

The salary survey is conducted every other year and provides boards with a tool in gauging typical costs for salaries during budget season. It is expected that NOCCOG's 2017 survey will be released in early September along with the monthly announcements.

New York State Comptroller Announces Town Tax Levy Limit for 2018

As Tug Hill towns prepare to embark on the budget preparation process once again, New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli has announced that the tax levy limit for towns will be 1.84% for the 2018 fiscal year. The comptroller noted the tax levy limit had been less than one percent for the past two years, and inflation has caused a rise in the limit to the highest level since 2013. This represents the fifth consecutive year of a tax levy limit of less than two percent.

For more about the tax levy limit, see the Comptroller's press release at www.osc.state.ny.us/press/releases/july17/071417a.htm, and the tax levy limit page at www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/realprop/.

Invasive Species Survey – Please Take a Moment

The St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) is conducting a survey to find out what impacts invasive species are having on individuals and businesses in their area, which includes all of Tug Hill. The goal of the survey is to determine if invasive plants, animals and other organisms are having an impact on people's wellbeing and livelihoods.

To take the short survey, please follow this link: https://cornell.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bQRWDPOsXoLSRGR

Emerald Ash Borer Workshops Held

Local landowners and local officials had opportunities recently to attend workshops in Boonville and West Monroe to learn more about the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) as it expands to reach the Tug Hill Commission area's towns and villages. Representatives from the New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), and Agriculture and Markets presented information on the history of the EAB problem, biology of the EAB and its affect on ash trees, quarantine regulations on ash trees, and forest management practices. Emerald Ash Borer is expected, over time, to spread statewide, and ash tree mortality in EAB-affected areas is 100%.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has a web page about the Emerald Ash Borer at: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html. There is a NYSDEC EAB woodland management web page at www.dec.ny.gov/animals/46279.html, and a woodland management plan workbook at www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/eabplanwkbk.pdf

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets has a web page about the Emerald Ash Borer at: www.agriculture.ny.gov/PI/eab.html, which includes Emerald Ash Borer regulations and the quarantine on movement of ash from quarantine areas.

Contact Us

NYS Tug Hill Commission

317 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Phone: 315-785-2380
Toll Free within the region:
1-888-785-2380
Email: tughill@tughill.org

Visit us at:

Web: www.tughill.org
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/TugHillCommission

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