



March 13, 2015

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 480a Revisions Under Consideration
- Congratulations Towns of Lorraine and Boonville, Recent Recipients of Grants
- Tug Hill Commission to Meet
- Tug Hill From Above
- Village of Camden Pursues Main Street Grant
- CTHC Executive Committee Meets
- ZBA Basics Training Session in West Monroe
- River Area Council of Government to Meet
- QGIS Training Available
- Trees and Shrubs for Saratoga Tree Nursery
- Save the Date - 2015 Clean Energy Conference

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SAVE THE DATE
FRIDAY, MARCH 20
5pm Public Rally & Listening Session at JCC

Tug Hill Times

Tug Hill Times is published semimonthly by the Tug Hill Commission for its board members, staff and associates, and the local representatives of the region's communities.

480a Revisions Under Consideration

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is currently working on revisions to the state's 480-a Forest Tax Law. NYSDEC was charged in Governor Cuomo's 2015 State of the State agenda to:

....."bring together stakeholders from forestry management companies, environmental groups, government agencies, and private landowners to discuss the opportunities and challenges the industry faces and ways the State can contribute to the industry's advancement, including by reforming the current property tax incentive program (480-a Forest Tax Law). The goal will be to increase sustainable production from the forest product industry in New York while preserving open space."

NYSDEC has begun sharing draft documents and asking for stakeholder feedback. Three documents are available for review on the Tug Hill Commission website (<http://www.tughill.org/2015/03/13/480a-revisions-under-consideration/>) that explain the current proposal for revising the 480-a program. Please review these documents, and if you have questions or comments share them with your circuit rider or contact Katie Malinowski or Jennifer Harvill in Watertown.

Congratulations Towns of Lorraine and Boonville, Recent Recipients of Grants

The Town of Lorraine will be receiving a \$500 "Quick Start" grant from the NYS Urban Forestry Council. Virginia Clemens, the successful applicant on behalf of the town, says the funding will assist with purchasing and planting 2-3 trees in land recently developed by the Fire Department in the Hamlet of Lorraine. A September 12, 2015 Arbor Day celebration is planned to dedicate the land and commemorate the trees being planted.

The Village of Boonville was awarded \$5,000 from the Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center through their Municipal Mini-Grants for Asset Management Inventory Development Program. This money will be used to begin an inventory of the wastewater treatment plant, with the goal of providing an accurate description of its assets, their useful lifespan, current condition, replacement costs, and redundancy of each component of the village's WWTP system.

Tug Hill Commission to Meet

The Tug Hill Commission will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 2015, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Commission office located at 317 Washington Street, Watertown. Highlights of the meeting will include routine business of the Commission, latest updates of the Regional Economic Development Councils and review of major projects and activities in the region. The public is welcome to attend and there will be a public comment period at the end of the meeting.

Tug Hill From Above

Staff member Katie Malinowski had an opportunity to join a LightHawk flight over Tug Hill this week, and was able to take pictures of various Tug Hill locations. The goal of the flight was to orient the new North Country Public Radio Tug Hill correspondent Julia Botero to the region. Bob Keller, LightHawk pilot and Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust board member, and Janet Thompson, also a land trust board member participated.



Hamlet of West Leyden.



Lyons Falls.



ReEnergy Lyonsdale.



Boonville.



Snow Ridge with wind farm in background.



Core forest stream and wetland in winter.

Village of Camden Pursues Main Street Grant

The Tug Hill Commission is assisting the Village of Camden in the resubmittal of a Consolidated Funding Application in under the New York State Main Street Program. The goal is to secure funds for the revitalization of several downtown business district properties.

After a similar application did not receive funding in 2013, Commission staff are now working with Village officials and volunteers from the Imagine Greater Camden group to revive the effort in 2015. More than a dozen Main Street property owners signed on to commit funding in the 2013 round, and many are anticipated to recommit in 2015. After acquiring stronger commitments from property owners, a more specific scope of work for individual projects and updated cost estimates, the Village is hopeful that funding will be acquired in the 2015 round to help finance both façade renovations and interior building upgrades along historic Main Street.

CTHC Executive Committee Meets

The Executive Committee of the Cooperative Tug Hill Council met on Thursday March 5th at the Town and Village Hall in Adams. Following reading and approval of the minutes and the financial reports, the Committee heard updates on projects they are working on with the assistance of the Tug Hill Commission and also discussed the dates of upcoming meetings with Commission staff. The Committee also reviewed some upcoming updates to both their Bylaws and their Executive Committee Guidelines, for presentation to the full Council at the annual spring meeting. Proposed work goals for 2015 were also discussed, prior to approval at the annual meeting. The Committee scheduled the annual spring meeting and dinner for April 30th. More details and the location will be announced soon. There are several towns that have not sent in the Informational Survey that was discussed at the last full Council meeting. We ask that people fill out and turn in the surveys, so we can tabulate the results to present on April 30th. Additionally, dues letters will be going out in the mail soon, so watch your mailbox, and we thank all of our Towns for their continued support!

ZBA Basics Training Session in West Monroe Thursday, March 19

Tug Hill Commission Director of Planning Phil Street will conduct a training workshop at the West Monroe Town Hall, 46 County Route 11, West Monroe on Thursday, March 19, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. This workshop will be on ZBA basics, with an emphasis on variances. This workshop is intended primarily for zoning board of appeals members, although it is open to planning board members, enforcements officers, other local officials, and those interested in learning more about how ZBAs operate. This session will be good for two hours training credit for ZBA members and planning board members.

Preregistration is encouraged, to ensure that Phil has enough copies of handouts and other meeting materials. Please preregister by e-mailing the Tug Hill Commission at tughill@tughill.org, or by calling the Commission offices on their toll-free number, 888-785-2380.

River Area Council of Government to Meet

Members of RACOG, are scheduled to meet on March 17th at 7:00 P.M. at the Village of Carthage Municipal Building located at 120 S. Mechanic Street to discuss topics of shared interest. Highlights of the meeting include a review of the 2014 Annual Project Report, Election of Officers; Budget Approval, Expansion of the Joint Zoning Board of Appeals (JZBA) to include the V/West Carthage and 2015 Twin Village Swim Program. In addition, Phil Street, Director of Planning at the Tug Hill Commission will be available to respond to questions local officials may have about the JZBA and planning.

Contact us at:

**NYS Tug Hill
Commission**

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QGIS Training Available, Get Started With GIS Today!

The GeoAcademy is having training on QGIS 2.8.1. You can go to their website for more information: <https://foss4geo.wordpress.com/>. Most of the classes are just \$25 and you can earn CEUs. Here is a list of the courses being offered and they are filling up fast:

1. GST 101: Introduction to Geospatial Technology Using QGIS
2. GST 102: Spatial Analysis Using QGIS
3. GST 103: Data Acquisition and Management Using QGIS
4. GST 104: Cartography Using QGIS
5. GST 105: Remote Sensing Using QGIS

QGIS is free desktop software and a good way to get started in GIS. If you have any questions feel free to contact Mickey Dietrich at the Tug Hill Commission 785-2380.

Trees and Shrubs from Saratoga Tree Nursery – Free to Schools, Low Cost for Public and Private Landowners

More than 45 species of trees and shrubs from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Saratoga Tree Nursery are now available to public and private landowners and schools.

Schools

Schools across New York are eligible to receive free seedlings for spring planting through the DEC School Seedling Program which provides 50 tree seedlings or a mixed packet of 30 wildlife shrubs to any public or private school that would like to participate. A classroom tree planting stewardship project is a great way to get students outside and learn about the benefits of trees for the lands and waters in their local communities.

To participate in [DEC's School Seedling Program](#), schools can submit an application, or contact the Saratoga Tree Nursery at (518) 581-1439 or contact the nearest DEC regional forestry office to request a "School Seedlings" brochure. The brochure contains all the information necessary to place an order. Applications must be received at the nursery by March 31, 2015.

Public and Private Landowners

To encourage landowners to enhance the state's environment for future generations, the program is providing low cost seedlings from the Saratoga Tree Nursery. The [2015 Tree and Shrub brochure](#) can be found on the DEC's website or by calling the Nursery at (518) 581-1439. To order seedlings by phone, contact the nursery on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at (518) 587-1120. Mail orders are also accepted and can be sent to the NYSDEC Saratoga Tree.

Save The Date

The **2015 Clean Energy Economy Conference** will be held June 11-12 at SUNY Polytechnic Institute (formerly SUNY IT) in Utica. Formerly the **North Country Clean Energy Conference**. More information will be available soon!