

Winter 2015

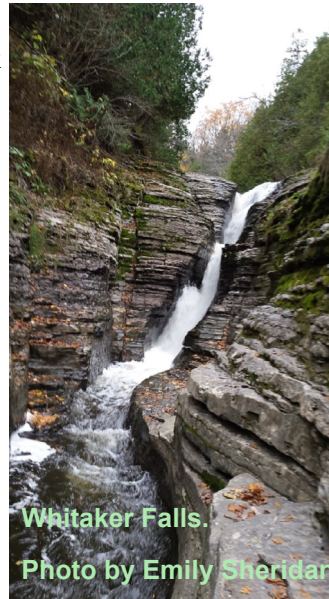
Fish Island, Dexter



# Black River Initiative

## Partners continue progress to achieve goals in the Black River

Throughout 2015, partners in the Black River Watershed have been working collaboratively to advance [The Black River Initiative](#). Partners including Jefferson and Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Jefferson and Lewis County Planning, the City of Watertown, Tug Hill Commission, and the Department of Environmental Conservation have advanced actions identified by the



Whitaker Falls.  
Photo by Emily Sheridan

Black River Watershed Management Plan (WMP). Efforts have included the Black River Watershed Conference, an addendum to the existing Black River WMP, the Factory Street Reconstruction, invasive species management and green infrastructure projects. These efforts are essential to ensure the 1.2 million acres of land within the watershed continues to provide communities with quality natural resources.

## Addendum to Black River Watershed Management Plan will meet federal guidance

Progress is underway, led by the DEC Great Lakes Program, DEC Division of Water, and the Tug Hill Commission, to update the existing Black River Watershed Management Plan (WMP). An addendum to the existing WMP will meet the Environmental Protection Agency's minimum 9 element guidance for watershed management plans, and allow for the plan to be used to leverage federal funding, as well

as target management actions to achieve measurable results in the most degraded sub watersheds. The addendum identifies existing phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment loading in high priority sub-watersheds, identifies specific management actions needed to address loading issues, estimates load reductions that will be achieved by management actions, identifies lead organizations that will implement (cont. on p. 2)

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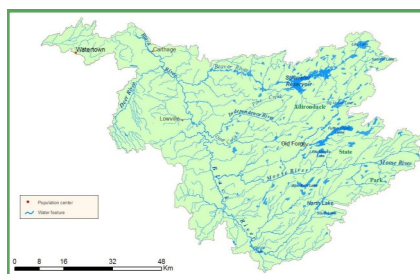
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## Addendum (cont.)

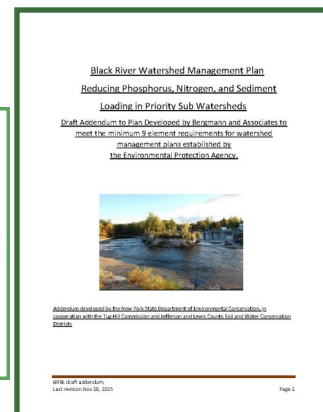
actions, monitors and evaluates effectiveness, and seeks to provide more robust education and outreach to promote watershed stewardship and awareness of management actions. The addendum does not intend to require any actions, but rather provides a tool to leverage federal resources that will incentivize actions that have been recommended by the existing WMP. For more information on the EPA watershed management plan guidance, visit: [http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/handbook\\_index.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/handbook_index.cfm)

To view the existing Black River Watershed Management Plan: <http://www.tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/watershed-initiative/>

A copy of the draft addendum is available to anyone who is interested by contacting Emily Sheridan, Eastern Great Lakes Watershed Coordinator for DEC's Great Lakes Program, at [emily.sheridan@dec.ny.gov](mailto:emily.sheridan@dec.ny.gov)



Black River Watershed



## Great Lakes Action Agenda Northeast sub basin work group meetings Held in June and September

The DEC's Great Lakes Program has held 2 successful workshops to engage northeast sub basin (St. Lawrence and Black River watershed) stakeholders in collaborative efforts to identify and implement projects that achieve water quality, natural resource, sustainability, resiliency, and recreation goals in the Great Lakes basin. Work group meetings were well attended by Federal and State Agency partners, not for profit organizations, county soil and water conservation districts, county planners, and educational institutions to discuss priority projects for the region that can be implemented through an ecosystem based management (EBM) approach. An EBM approach seeks to protect the ecosystem structure, function and processes, recognizes the interconnectedness within and among systems, integrates ecological, social, economic, and institutional perspectives, involves stakeholders in collaborative actions, seeks to



apply a scientific foundation to decision making and is adaptive. Needed projects identified by the workgroups that can be achieved through EBM actions included promoting on site septic maintenance and upgrades, implementing agricultural best management practices and riparian buffers, engaging communities in planning to be more resilient to potential climate change impacts and flood events, enhancing fish and wildlife habitat through ecological restoration and culvert enhancement projects, working with partnerships for regional invasive species management to better coordinate invasive species control efforts, and identifying water supplies under precipitation scenarios to

better inform water use and land management. For more information, visit <http://www.dec.lands/91881.html>. To get involved with quarterly meetings, contact Great Lakes Program staff at: [GreatLakes@dec.ny.gov](mailto:GreatLakes@dec.ny.gov)

# Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators: training in the Black River this spring



Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE) is a citizen-based water quality assessment developed by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). The purpose of WAVE is to enable citizen scientists to collect biological data for assessment of water quality on wadeable streams in NY State.

Planning is underway for training opportunities in the Black River basin for coordinators and for citizen scientists to learn how to assess their local waterways by observing aquatic organisms and stream conditions. Citizens can participate in WAVE in the following ways:

- Serve as local coordinators who coach and coordinate their own team of WAVE participants. Local coordinator training sessions are one full day and include presentations and hands on, in-stream demonstrations.
- Sample independently. This requires half-day training sessions that are completed entirely in the stream.
- Join a local team lead by a WAVE local coordinator.

Training for this option is conducted by the local coordinator or group.

Contact [wave@dec.ny.gov](mailto:wave@dec.ny.gov) for more information or visit the programs website at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/92229.html>



## Invasive Species Management: Signage

Through a grant from the St. Lawrence– Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Invasive Species Management, Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District was able to fund the installation of signs and aquatic invasive species disposal stations at Black River boat launches. The project installed 77 signs to promote awareness of invasive species threats throughout the Lewis County trail system, and

14 aquatic invasive species disposal stations at boat launches throughout the county, with 11 disposal stations within the Black River watershed. Increased awareness of invasive threats and mechanisms for more adequately

disposing of aquatic invasive species will further prevent the introduction and spread of new infestations into the Black River watershed, protecting the ecosystem functions, fish and wildlife habitats, and recreational resources.

For more information, contact Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District staff at:

(315)376-6122





## Village of Carthage Boat Launch

This September, the village of West Carthage held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly renovated and upgraded boat launch. With funding from the Department of Transportation's Recreational Trails Program, the village was able to install a new boat launch, retaining wall, dock, and picnic area on 2.1 acres along the western shoreline of the Black River. Additional funding

leveraged from the T.F Wright Memorial Foundation, Black River Advisory Council, Pratt-Northern Foundation, and Carthage Savings and Loans enabled the installation of

benches, grills, trash receptacles, flags, a flagpole, and picnic tables. Northern Developers LLC donated a gazebo for the park, and Upstate Landscape and snow services donated a 15 foot spruce tree.

Additional opportunities within the [Destination Blueway Waterfront Plan for the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage](#) can further conserve and restore lands along the waterfront and enhance recreational opportunities.



Aerial view of West Carthage boat launch. Photo by Jeff Powis.

## NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program

The Greater Adirondack Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc., in partnership with County Soil and Water Conservation Districts and other partners, successfully leveraged funding through the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The RCPP funding will support the Greater Adirondack Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program. Encompassing the entire northern portion of New York State, this program will address water quality, soil health and inadequate habitat issues utilizing Environmental Quality Incentives Program

funding throughout the Upper Hudson River, St. Lawrence River, Black River and Lake Champlain Watersheds. Five objectives are to be achieved;

1. provide services directly to producers (farmers and non-industrial forest land owners) for conservation planning;
2. create a ranking matrix for project prioritization;
3. invest in innovative Best Management Practices on agricultural and forestry lands throughout the region;
4. monitor progress by creating and utilizing a monitoring database; and
5. educate local producers.

The overarching goal of this project is to reduce nutrient, sediment and bacterial loading into surface waters and improve habitat within these watersheds utilizing strong regional partnerships.

For more information on the RCPP program:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/>



# Village of Lyons Falls

## Mill Site Update

### **Mill Site Update**

The Village of Lyons Falls continues to transform its community as it finishes the second phase of demolition of the former Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper Mill. Working with its partners, the Lewis County Development Corporation, Northbrook Lyons Falls LLC and the Development Authority of the North Country (Authority), the Village saw several more buildings and structures be remediated and removed from the former mill site. In total, 15 buildings and several ancillary structures at the site have been taken down during phases 1 and 2 of the project. The Village hopes the remaining structures slated for demolition will be taken down in a third project phase, for which funding has not yet been committed. In addition to the demolition, more than half of the mill site has been remediated and is ready for redevelopment. Work at the Mill site to date has significantly improved Northbrook's operation by

improving safety and access to its hydropower site, co-located at the former Mill. Northbrook hopes to expand its operation in the near future to increase its electrical generating capacity.



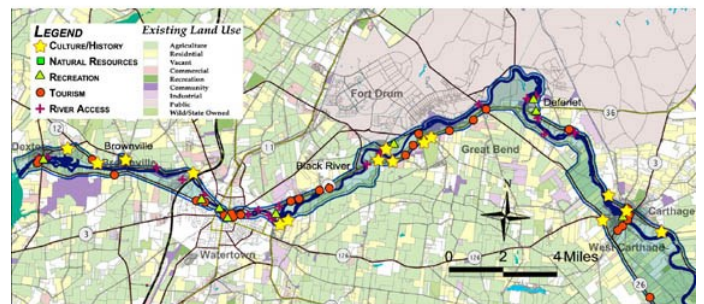
## Brownfield Opportunity Assessment News

Lewis County has entered into an agreement with the Authority to oversee work on the Village's Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Implementation Strategy. The Implementation Strategy will advance the work outlined in the Village's Step 2 Nomination Study, which was completed in July 2012 by Elan Planning/Design/Landscape Architecture PLLC with the Williams Group and HRP Associates, Inc. Funded through the Department of State's BOA

program, the primary objectives outlined in the current project include redevelopment of the abandoned mill site and other sites and to create business and employment opportunities in the village. Additionally, project objectives are to revitalize the Village and stimulate the social and economic quality of life by addressing community needs for living wage jobs, affordable housing and physical improvements to the downtown. Specific activities outlined to achieve these objectives include defining future land uses for the Village, developing marketing plans for strategic sites and identifying programs to assist in implementing revitalization plans. Work will be led by the Authority through a BOA Implementation Strategy Committee made up of representatives from Lewis County, the Village of Lyons Falls, the Lewis County Development Corporation (LCDC) and the Tug Hill Commission.

## **Black River Website**

A website was developed, using Environmental Protection Funds from the NYS Department of State to help promote tourism along the Black River Blueway. The website highlights recreational opportunities and amenities in the area, including whitewater rafting, kayaking, trails, restaurants, local businesses, accommodations, and other attractions. To learn more about what the Black River Blueway has to offer, please visit the website at [www.BlackRiverNY.com](http://www.BlackRiverNY.com)



**Black River Blueway**



## Town of Wilna and Crown Cleaners

Restoration work has been underway at the former Crown Cleaners site in the village of Herrings. Site clearing activities began this past spring to cleanup the Environmental Protection Agency superfund site, after the EPA committed 3.1 million dollars to the cleanup this year. Efforts have been underway since the sites designation in 1991 to remove hazardous materials and identify remedial actions for the site. Contract work that has been completed to date by Kemron Environmental Services of Atlanta, Ga., has included brush and tree clearing around the 20 foot perimeter of the buildings on the Route 3 site and removing

debris from the buildings. In the spring the contractor had resumed work at the 9-acre site and has hauled away 35 roll-off containers of wood and clothing debris. Extraction of contaminated soil and sediment of the site will be necessary to remove volatile organic compounds that could seep into the soil. After the buildings are emptied, they will be demolished, and a 2 foot soil cap will be placed over the site. In

addition, a groundwater treatment plan will be required to remove all contamination from the groundwater. A health and safety plan and monitoring are in place to protect the community and workers from harm during the cleanup process. After the cleanup, the Town of Wilna plans to transform the former industrial site into a park, improving aesthetics and community access to the Black River. The town is seeking funding for the design of the park, and hopes to begin work on the park, with the assistance of on site EPA crew, in the spring of 2016.

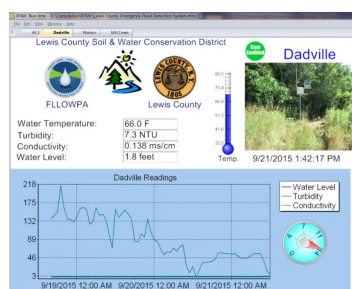
For more information: <http://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?>



Former Crown Cleaners site, village of Herrings. Photo by Emily Sheridan

## Lewis County Stream Gauge System

To better inform residents and emergency management personnel, the Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District, in coordination with Lewis County Economic Development and Planning, has installed 3 stream gauges that will provide real time monitoring of the hydrology, flow, and water quality of the Black River, and notify emergency management personnel of impending flood events.



This will allow residents to evacuate from areas that may be impacted, and ensure the protection of vulnerable property. All necessary personnel have been trained on the operation and maintenance

of the system. The Beaver River Advisory Council funded an additional stream gauge on the Beaver River that will be installed. For more information, contact Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District staff.



Installing stream gauges. Photo by Lewis County Soil and Water.

## 2015 Black River Watershed Conference

An annual Black River Watershed Conference is held in early June to provide a venue for training and information sharing on a variety of topics relating to the Black River. The conference is organized by the Tug Hill Commission, NYS DEC Region 6 and the Jefferson and Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Sponsorship for the 2015 conference and bus tour was provided by four member counties of the Finger Lakes— Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (Jefferson, Lewis, Herkimer, and Hamilton) and the Beaver River Advisory Council. The Conference was held at The Hayloft at Moonshine Farms in Port Leyden, NY, and was attended by 65 stakeholders and interested citizens. This year's training and information topics included invasive species watercraft inspection, community resiliency and green



2015 Black River Watershed Conference at the Hayloft. Photo by Emily Sheridan.

infrastructure, and nutrient management, as well as updates on projects in the Black River.

The conference concluded with a bus tour featuring visits to the Lyonsdale ReEnergy plant, Conway

Farm, Port Leyden, and the Black River Canal Museum in Boonville. Planning for the 2016 Black River Watershed Conference is underway and we are excited to bring the conference to Watertown this year. We hope to have training and information focusing on paddling, storm-water and geology. The Conference will be held on June 8th of 2016, so watch your inboxes. Contact [Jennifer@tughill.org](mailto:Jennifer@tughill.org) for more information.

Hope to see you there!



Black River fog from Moonshine Farm. Photo by Emily Sheridan

## Jefferson County Storm Water Coalition Updates

Population increases documented in the 2010 U.S. Census led to the designation of an urbanized area in Jefferson County in 2013. Several of the communities in the urbanized area are now being required to regulate municipal separate storm water sewer systems (MS4's) differently. In 2014 the Towns of LeRay, Rutland, and Watertown; Villages of Black River, Brownville, Carthage, Dexter and West Carthage; the City of Watertown; and Jefferson County signed an inter-municipal agreement to work together to meet the requirements of the new regulations. In 2015, Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District successfully leveraged a grant from the US Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Program to install 3 gardens and plant 50 trees in each of the communities in the urbanized area. Green infrastructure such as tree plantings and rain gardens reduces runoff to waterways by absorbing rain water, and filters nutrients and pollutants from entering waterways. Trees and rain gardens also improve the aesthetics of the landscape, provide habitat, and reduce air pollution. The project will additionally promote green infrastructure practices through signage at the project sites and education and outreach activities. A rain garden has been installed this fall and groundwork will continue next spring, so keep an eye out for more green on the landscape! For more information on green infrastructure: <http://www2.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure>



Rain garden at Black River village  
Photo by Christine Watkins



# City of Watertown Factory Street Reconstruction

The City of Watertown is undertaking a project that will reconstruct a stretch of Factory Street from Mill Street to Huntington Street, as well as several side streets. The primary work is roadway, curb, and sidewalk reconstruction. Along with Factory Street's Redevelopment, the City of Watertown has aggressively been searching for opportunities to bring itself into compliance with Federal Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) regulations. Like many older

Great Lakes communities, the City of Watertown has several antiquated Combined Sewer Systems (CSS) that in addition to storm water runoff, also collect sewage that will enter the Black River via Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) structures.

The City of Watertown will construct a closed drainage system to separate stormwater from existing combined sewers. The City constructed the combined sewer system along Factory Street in 1967, with existing catch basins that connect to smaller combined sewers built

in 1893 and 1904, respectively. The City of Watertown is also constructing two hydrodynamic separators as part of the Factory Street Redevelopment. Hydrodynamic separators are a Best Management Practice in stormwater management. They use cyclonic separation to remove sediment and other pollutants from urban stormwater runoff. In addition to the two hydrodynamic separators that the City will construct along Factory Street, the City intends to install a third on Public Square.

PN 7753.15 FACTORY STREET RECONSTRUCTION: MILL STREET TO HUNTINGTON STREET  
City of Watertown, Jefferson County



TYPICAL SECTION VIEW OF FACTORY STREET, LOOKING EAST DOWN HUNTINGTON STREET



AERIAL VIEW LOOKING WEST DOWN FACTORY STREET, LOOKING WEST TOWARD MILL STREET



AERIAL VIEW FROM MILL STREET, LOOKING EAST DOWN FACTORY STREET



## Riverfest 2015

The 26th annual Lewis county Riverfest was held August 1st, 2015. There were 90 paddlers that began their 11.3 mile trip from the Glenfield Boat Launch and finished at the Beaches Bridge boat launch. A free shuttle brought paddlers back to the starting launch. Along the way, paddlers had an opportunity to participate in "river trivia" to test their knowledge about the Black River basin and win a prize donated by Lewis County businesses. The trivia and festival were sponsored by Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cook's Consulting, and the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce. Keep an eye out for next years registration for this fun and educational event!



<https://www.facebook.com/Lewis-County-Soil-Water-Conservation-District-194437123937645/>



# 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 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. An annual newsletter highlights recent developments in the Black River Initiative, connects with stakeholders, and promotes collaborative efforts to achieve goals. For more information, visit:

<http://www.tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/watershed-initiative/>

For more Information on the Black River Initiative Contact:

Jennifer Harvill; Natural Resources Specialist

Tug Hill Commission [jennifer@tughill.org](mailto:jennifer@tughill.org)

Emily Sheridan; Eastern Great Lakes Watershed Coordinator

NYSDEC [emily.sheridan@dec.ny.gov](mailto:emily.sheridan@dec.ny.gov)

NYS Tug Hill Commission



Dulles State Office building  
317 Washington St.  
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Black River headwaters, view of the Fulton Chain of Lakes from Summit of Rocky Mtn. Emily Sheridan