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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ***Black River Initiative Progress Report: 2010-2020 Released***

**WATERTOWN, NY.** The New York State Tug Hill Commission, in coordination with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), is pleased to announce the release of the [Black River Initiative Progress Report: 2010-2020](#) (also available at [tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/](http://tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/)). The report details coordinated efforts of agencies, communities, and local organizations under the Black River Initiative to protect and conserve Black River land and water resources, promote coordination, and improve recreation and quality of life in the watershed. The Black River watershed spans 1.2 million acres in Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Herkimer, and Hamilton counties, and includes the city of Watertown, and villages of Dexter, Carthage, Copenhagen, Lowville, and Old Forge.

To offer feedback on these efforts and to get involved with the Black River Initiative, anyone who lives, works or plays within the watershed is encouraged to share their ideas through an online [survey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R3NJ57M) ([www.surveymonkey.com/r/R3NJ57M](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R3NJ57M)). The NYS Tug Hill Commission and partners are also offering a webinar on September 30 to share report highlights and offer opportunities for engagement, as part of their 2020 Virtual Black River Watershed Conference. Register at [tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/](http://tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/).

“The Black River is an incredible resource that connects habitats and communities across our Region. The Black River Initiative plays an important role in helping agencies and people protect and enhance water quality and the quality of life for all of us in the Black River watershed,” said Randall Young, DEC Region 6 Director.

Nichelle Swisher, District Manager of the Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation Districted, stated “Through the Black River Initiative, the Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District is dedicated to reducing nutrient loading, protecting water quality, sustaining our natural resources and keeping our farms economically viable by implementing best management practices on the land. Agriculture provides our local foods, many livelihoods and recreational opportunities to the community and our farms are crucial to the success of our local economy. This initiative is providing the needs of today and protecting our future.”

*Helping local governments and citizens shape the future of the Tug Hill region.*

“This report demonstrates and quantifies stakeholder effort spent improving the environment and economy of the Black River watershed. The river is a critical asset to all watershed communities, and we are happy to be part of this important work,” said Katie Malinowski, executive director of the NYS Tug Hill Commission.

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The New York State Tug Hill Commission is a non-regulatory state agency charged with helping local governments, organizations, and citizens shape the future of the region, especially its environment and economy. The commission uses a grassroots approach to build local capacity and provide technical assistance in land use planning, community development, and natural resource management.