

December 4, 2020

2020 Black River Trash Bash

In its eleventh year, the Black River Trash Bash saw a smaller haul and lower participation due to the pandemic, but a new relationship with the Alliance for the Great Lakes was formed. Fourteen participants representing three groups collected 155 pounds of trash from the waterways and shorelines of the Black River Watershed. Participating groups were Lyons Falls Alive, Adirondack Communities Advisory League and the Jefferson County Water Quality Coordinating Committee.

Since the event started in 2009, participants have collected over 5,800 pounds of garbage! This year's data was compiled through the Alliance for the Great Lakes and its Adopt-A-Beach program, great-lakes.org/get-involved/adopt-a-beach/september-adopt-a-beach/.

Every year, we are grateful for gloves donated by White's Lumber and trash grabbers donated through the Black River Advisory Committee. One can imagine the materials that are handled, which this year included around 135 food wrappers, over 200 cigarette butts, over 170 beverage containers, and numerous items such as plastic grocery bags, straws and balloons.

This event is organized annually by the Lewis and Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Tug Hill Commission. Thank you to the Development Authority of the North Country and the City of Watertown for handling and hauling the trash. Last, but certainly not least, thanks to the beach captains of the cleanup sites for their time and dedication and for organizing their groups, coordinating the data collection and making this event so successful.

The Black River, winding from Forestport to Dexter, is one of the North Country's most important natural resources. The Black River Trash Bash is an annual watershed-wide event to clean up along the river and document what litters its shores. The event seeks to increase public participation in solving the problem of litter and pollution and to increase public awareness and appreciation of the river. If you or your community group are interested in participating in next year's event, please contact Jennifer Harvill at jenifer@tughill.org or toll-free at (888)785-2380.

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What are Community Choice Aggregation, Clean Energy Communities, and Climate Smart Communities?

If you ever wondered what these things are and how they could benefit your community, then you are in luck! The River Area Council of Governments has tentatively scheduled a presentation on these topics on **Tuesday, December 15 at 6 p.m.** This will be a remote presentation, with presenters from Lewis County Planning, Joules Assets, and the Adirondack North Country Association. Information for the Zoom meeting will be posted to the Tug Hill Commission website and Facebook page once details are finalized. This presentation will be relevant to communities across the region, so all are welcome to attend.

Presenters will discuss Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) and the benefits, as well as information regarding a new community solar opt-out program. Communities can use these programs in becoming a Clean Energy Community and/or a Climate Smart Community. There are potential grant funding opportunities for communities who pursue this.

If you have any questions, contact Mickey Dietrich at mickey@tughill.org or (315) 681-5023.

EO 202.79 Extends Remote Public Meeting and Hearing Ability Through January 1, 2021

The entire Executive Order 202.79 is available at www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-20279-continuing-temporary-suspension-and-modification-laws-relating-disaster-emergency. If your community needs help with a remote meeting, contact commission staff and we can provide a Zoom link.

Final Black River Initiative 10 Year Progress Report Available

After integrating feedback from interested organizations, recreational users, and citizens within the Black River Watershed, the Tug Hill Commission and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Great Lakes Program are pleased to announce that the **Black River Initiative Progress Report: 2010- 2020** is now final. The report integrates comments received during [the Virtual Black River Watershed Conference](#), from the public survey, and from emails received after the draft report was released. We are thankful that the progress report and presentation has led to additional coordination and discussions towards achieving the recommendations of the Black River Watershed Management Plan and the Black River 9 Element Plan. To access the final report, visit: tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/.

If you would like to have discussions about the watershed, or would like to be more involved in the initiative, please reach out to **Emily Sheridan**- NYSDEC Great Lakes Program; Eastern Great Lakes Watershed Coordinator, emily.sheridan@dec.ny.gov or **Jennifer Harvill**- NYS Tug Hill Commission; Natural Resources Specialist, jennifer@tughill.org.

Black River Initiative Progress Report: 2010-2020

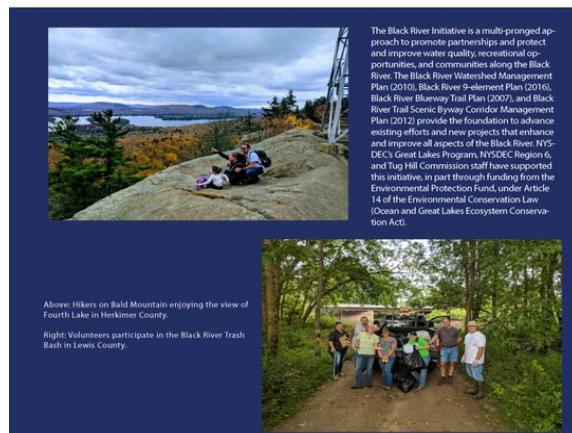
December 2020



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This paper was prepared in cooperation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Great Lakes Program.



Proposed Renewable Energy Host Community Benefit Program Available for Comment

As part of the Accelerated Renewable Energy Growth and Community Benefit Act, the Public Service Commission has been working on a new program for distributing host community benefits. In the past, many solar and wind projects have delivered those benefits through grants to local community organizations. A white paper released in September, followed by a stakeholder forum on November 10, outlines a proposed utility bill credit program that would directly benefit local ratepayers. Initial comments are due December 10. All relevant documents are available at documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?MatterSeq=62773.

In summary, the white paper proposes that owners of major renewable energy facilities will be required to pay an annual fee of \$500/MW for solar projects, and \$1,000/MW for wind projects, for the first 10 years of operation, and only applies to facilities with a nameplate capacity of 25MW or more. These fees would be used to fund bill credits, which would be distributed equally among the residential electric utility customers within the host community. More details on the mechanism and comments to date can be found in an article by the Hodgson Russ law firm, www.hodgsonruss.com/newsroom-publications-12901.html.

Constable Chronicles Webinars Complete

The Constable Hall Association and the Tug Hill Commission had a blast recording the "Constable Chronicles" webinar series. Thank you to Martha Murray and Peter Hayes for bringing to life the history of this remarkable family of New Yorkers! All three webinars, narrated by Martha Constable Murray, a direct descendant of William Constable Jr., the builder of Constable Hall in Constableville, can be found [here](#) on the commission's YouTube channel.

Be on the lookout later this month for information about our new series titled **"Letters from a Tug Hill Logger"**, featuring Leona and Peter Cheresnoski! The first installment will be in January 2021.

Draft Statewide Greenways Plan Released

In November, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP) released a plan for a comprehensive statewide system of non-motorized multi-use Greenway Trails.



Draft Statewide Greenway Trails Plan & Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement

November 18, 2020



"The Statewide Greenway Trails Plan envisions a network of shared use paths that provide all New Yorkers and visitors opportunities for healthy and active recreation, routes for alternative transportation, and the ability to connect to and enrich our communities and natural landscapes in urban, suburban, and rural settings."

The Statewide Greenway Trails Plan identifies trail user types, addresses trail needs and trends, and discusses the benefits of trails. Input from a variety of state and local stakeholders as well as from the general public was solicited earlier this year in the creation of the draft Plan. The plan compiles a GIS inventory of existing and proposed non-motorized, shared-use trails across the state. The plan provides a vision, goals and recommendations that will guide future planning and development of Greenway Trails in the State. A Greenway Trail map can be found at: <https://greenway-trails-plan-nysparks.hub.arcgis.com/app/d39732c5913340768722edbc2db6521b>.

Greenway trails often use pre-existing corridors, such as former railroad right-of-way or canal paths. The Black River Trail is listed as an example on page 12. Like rail lines, remaining and intact towpaths can be retrofitted as public trails that provide pleasant and inviting

routes alongside the canal. The most well-known greenway trail in New York is the Erie Canalway Trail that stretches from Albany to Buffalo, part of the Empire State Trail. The Black River Feeder Canal is among the other canal trails mentioned on page 17 of the document.

A public hearing will be held at 6:00 p.m., January 6, 2021 before an Administrative Law Judge from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) via electronic webinar.

The OPRHP's webpage for the Statewide Greenway Trails Plan/GEIS may be accessed at: <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>.

The final plan will guide decision-making, influence greenway trail development policy in state and local governments, and inform communities, organizations and individuals engaged in trail development and management. Potential environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the plan, as well as mitigation measures that could be taken to reduce potential impacts, are included as a part of the plan.

State Archives' YouTube Channel

The State Archives is on [YouTube](#)! There are hundreds of videos from the State Archives collection highlighting various aspects of New York State history, culture, and government, as well as webinars, workshops, interviews, and topics of interest to records managers such as:

- files management
- electronic records
- records management systems
- establishing records management policies
- disaster planning, and much more

There are also a number of state agency recordings available, including [I Love NY ads](#) from the Department of Economic Development, State Police scuba diving operations videos, highway ribbon cutting from the New York State Thruway Authority, and episodes of the State Education Department's [Vegetable Soup](#) television program.

Draft Deer Management Plan for NYS Available for Review; Comments Due December 28

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has released a draft Deer Management Plan for public review and comment. The plan builds upon the progress made by DEC's first deer management plan, released in 2011, and will guide DEC's deer management actions to balance natural resource protection, public safety, and recreational and economic interests for the next 10 years. The [draft plan](#) is available on DEC's website and public comments will be accepted through Dec. 28, 2020.

The draft plan details a new method for setting deer population objectives that integrates an assessment of deer impacts on forests with public preferences for deer population changes. It emphasizes new and adaptive approaches for harvesting antlerless deer by recommending strategic hunting season and tag changes in rural landscapes where additional harvest is needed and developing new opportunities for community-based deer management in suburban and urban landscapes.

Significant elements of the Draft Plan include:

- Establishing desired deer population trajectories (more deer, fewer deer, stay the same) for 23 regions of the state by aggregating existing deer management units, including deer impacts on forest regeneration with new tools like AVID;
- Monitoring deer populations for diseases such as Chronic Wasting Disease and taking steps to reduce disease risk;
- Recommending several hunting-related changes to provide additional hunter opportunities;
- Maintaining a voluntary approach for [letting young bucks](#) go and re-evaluating the existing mandatory antler restriction program;
- Encouraging voluntary use of non-lead ammunition by deer hunters to reduce human and wildlife exposure to lead by ingestion;
- Pursuing regulatory mechanisms to improve the Deer Management Assistance Program and Deer Damage Permit program to reduce deer damage and deer-human conflicts;
- Providing technical assistance for community-based deer management;
- Exploring the potential for a small grants program to assist communities in developing and implementing local deer management plans;
- Promoting the Assessing Vegetation Impacts of Deer (AVID) protocol for citizen science monitoring of deer browse impacts; and
- Better understanding and addressing public values/interests regarding deer populations, impacts, and management decisions.

Comments on the draft plan should be sent to wildlife@dec.ny.gov (using "Deer Plan" in the subject line) or by mail to: DEC Deer Management Plan, NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4754. The public comment period closes on Dec. 28, 2020.

DEC Releases Final Trout Stream Management Plan

DEC recently released its new statewide [Trout Stream Management Plan](#). Planning began in 2017 with 20 public meetings held to identify anglers desired outcomes for the state's numerous and diverse trout streams. The result is a document that provides distinct approaches to managing both wild and stocked trout fisheries. The final plan is the product of public engagement and science with a focus on simplicity, angler participation, and the value of managing trout streams for self-sustaining populations of wild trout.

Anglers can also go to [DEC's website](#) to view the fishing regulations proposed to implement the plan and instructions for submitting comments. **DEC is accepting public comments on the proposed rule changes from Nov. 25, 2020, to Jan. 25, 2021.**

[Read DEC's news release](#) on the Final Statewide Trout Stream Management Plan.



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For upcoming trainings, grant deadlines, and meetings, view our [calendar](#).

NYSDEC Annual Arbor Day Original Artwork Poster Contest

Each year, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Urban and Community Forestry Program commemorates Arbor Day with a poster contest that invites the public to submit original photos and artwork that celebrate the value of trees. Photos and artwork must feature trees within NYS and should be sent to arborday@dec.ny.gov. Participants will be limited to five submissions and each submission should include a completed [artist information form](#) available on DEC's website. Deadline: **December 31, 2020**. More information at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/108006.html.