

Tug Hill Traverse Reaches Tug Hill WMA

October 7, 2022

On September 24, a hike and celebratory picnic was hosted by Tug Hill Commission Chairman Jan Bogdanowicz and Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust (THTLT) Board President Natalie Bogdanowicz at the Tug Hill Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Montague. Friends and volunteer trail workers of THTLT and the Black River Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club gathered to celebrate the completion of the northern segment of the Tug Hill Traverse hiking trail, that runs approximately six miles from the G&W Road north through The Nature Conservancy property and to the WMA in Montague. Bob McNamara and Zachary Wakeman (THTLT board members) and Cindy Stewart (Adirondack Mountain Club) were especially thanked for their leadership and hard work. When completed, the trail will span approximately 22 miles from the Osceola-West Leyden Road in Osceola to Montague, "traversing" the Tug Hill core forest. A map of the trail is included in the Tug Hill Recreation Guide, and is available as a geopdf online [here](#).



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OSC 2020 Census Dashboard

The Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) has developed an interactive local government 2020 Census dashboard on their [website](#). Data for municipalities in the entire state can also be downloaded as an excel file.

Detailed Tug Hill census analysis will be forthcoming, but a quick look shows three of the four Tug Hill counties losing population. Montague, Lewis County retains its standing as the smallest town in Tug Hill population-wise and is the fourth smallest in the state. The largest town in Tug Hill is Hastings, Oswego County.

COUNTY	2010 Pop.	2020 Pop.	%Change 2010 to 2020
Jefferson	116,229	116,721	0.4%
Lewis	27,087	26,582	-1.9%
Oneida	234,878	232,125	-1.2%
Oswego	122,109	117,525	-3.8%

Save the date

**Local Government
Conference**

**Turning Stone Resort and
Conference Center**

Thursday April 6, 2023

**Optional afternoon session
and evening reception on
Wednesday April 5, 2023**

**More information will be
coming soon!**

NOCCOG Annual Dinner Meeting October 27

The 38th Annual NOCCOG Dinner Meeting will be on Thursday, October 27 at the Delta Lake Inn. Cash bar social hour starts at 5:30 p.m. with dinner to follow at 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$30 per person. Scheduled to speak are Hannah Phillips, Director of Marketing and Communications, at Mohawk Valley Edge, and Christopher Dodson, Director of Water Resilience Initiatives at Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center (SU-EFC). Hannah will be discussing the tremendous growth at the Griffiss Business and Technology Park, and how that growth benefits our local municipalities. Khris will explore knowledge inventory and discuss the best practices for transferring that knowledge through viable succession planning. For more information, or to reserve a spot at the dinner, please contact John Healt, by email jhealt@tughill.org or by calling 315-941-2818. Reservations are needed by October 14.



Official Road Mapping Available to Tug Hill Towns

Road-related questions are one of the most common technical assistance requests Tug Hill staff receive. Every town has road infrastructure and managing the road network accounts for a large part of most town budgets. Because of this, Tug Hill staff has worked for many years with towns that want to adopt an official road map through the official map statute, [NYS Town Law Section 270](#), which “shall be final and conclusive with respect to the location and width of streets and highways.”

By using several data sources (the NYS Department of Transportation inventory, Comprehensive Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) inventory, county highway maps, etc.), Tug Hill staff can generate a draft map for towns to review and correct as necessary. Sometimes these data sources are missing roads and are not useful guides to determining the status of what have been locally considered to be abandoned roads. Often, former roads that were prescriptive highways and that have been abandoned have not had their abandonment officially recorded in the town records, or the recording has been lost over time or destroyed. Once a draft map is created, field work with the highway superintendent is sometimes necessary to look at roads and determine their proper start and end points of a road. To support the effort, the commission updated its GPS equipment over the summer of 2022 and is available to assist with any data collection needed.

The official road map provides the groundwork for pursuing full or qualified abandonments of eligible roads, designating low volume and minimum maintenance roads, and town comprehensive plans. If your town is interested in working on an official road map, contact your circuit rider or Taylor McKinney (taylor@tughill.org) in the Watertown office.

Sign Regulation Webinar October 18

The Tug Hill Commission is hosting a free Zoom webinar entitled **“Regulating Private Speech: Sign Regulations & the First Amendment”** on Tuesday, October 18 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. According to the First Amendment, speech may be subject to different degrees of protection based upon its content, the speaker, and the context in which the speech is made. How does the First Amendment impact sign regulations in local communities? Attorney Mark Cuthbertson will cover the nuances of the First Amendment, sign regulations, and relevant court cases.

Register at tinyurl.com/tughillsspeech, or call the Tug Hill Commission office at 315-785-2380.

Mark Cuthbertson concentrates his practice in commercial real estate, municipal litigation and the representation of municipalities and not-for-profit cemeteries. Mr. Cuthbertson is admitted to practice in New York and Connecticut.

Mr. Cuthbertson is also active in public service. He has been a councilman for the town of Huntington since 1998. Prior to that, he served as assistant town attorney and special assistant district attorney for the town of Huntington. He also served on the town of Huntington Planning Board. Mark Cuthbertson earned his Juris Doctor degree, cum laude, from Albany School of Law of Union University. While in law school, he was executive editor for symposium for the Albany Law Review. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree, magna cum laude, from Villanova University.

2022 Black River Trash Bash

On September 21, members of the Lewis County Water Quality Coordinating Committee and the Tug Hill Commission gathered at Otter Creek in Lewis County, to participate in the 13th annual Black River Trash Bash. This citizen-science and cleanup event is organized annually by the Lewis and Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Tug Hill Commission.

Since the completion of the Black River Watershed Management Plan in 2010, events like the Black River Trash Bash aim to emphasize the importance of the healthy shorelines and watersheds by increasing public participation toward litter and pollution prevention. Since 2010, numerous volunteer groups have removed 6,000 pounds of trash from the Black River Watershed at sites located in Jefferson, Lewis, and Hamilton counties.



Volunteers from the 2022 Trash Bash. Photo by Emily Fell.

Volunteers worked in teams of two to properly separate trash from recyclables and document every piece of trash removed by category. Protective gloves were generously donated by White's Lumber, and trash grabbers were provided by the Black River Advisory Committee. Trash removal efforts were focused along the shoreline and the nearby trail and campsites. Common litter recovered from Otter Creek included cigarette butts, cans and bottles, plastic and foil food wrappers, and sanitary products like wet wipes and diapers. All collected data was submitted to the Alliance for the Great Lakes and [Adopt-A-Beach](#) program as part of the International Coastal Cleanup. At the end of the cleanup, the 41 collected bags were weighed (41 pounds) and disposed of at the Lewis County Transfer Station.

NYS GIS Association Annual Meeting and Watch Party

Tug Hill staff members Taylor McKinney and Matthew Smith attended the NYS GIS Association Annual Meeting and Geospatial Watch Party last Thursday, September 29 at UDIG Syracuse. The event was the first in-person event for the NYS GIS Association since the COVID pandemic with multiple event locations across the state. The first part of the event included budget updates, awards, and a series of videos from each region to showcase projects conducted over the past few years. Some of the interesting projects were tree mapping, pipe mapping, using drones as data collectors, and "youthmappers" which is a group for young people to share mapmaking techniques and maps themselves. The second half of the event featured two speakers, Frank Winters, former director of the NYS GIS Program Office for 25 years, and Josh Delmonico, acting executive director of the Federal Geographic Data Committee Office of the Secretariat, who mentioned he was a former intern at the Tug Hill Commission. The event was very informative and a great opportunity to network and learn more about the GIS community.



RACOG Welcomes New Member and Discusses Local Food Supply

On September 28, the River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) board met and approved a pending request from the town of Croghan to join RACOG. RACOG will now include the towns of Champion, Croghan, Denmark, Lowville, and Wilna, and the villages of Carthage, Castorland, Copenhagen, Deferiet, Lowville, and West Carthage.

Additionally, April Roggio, a research associate through the Center for Policy Research of the University at Albany, presented to the RACOG board on local food supply. She has been working on a local food supply initiative for NYS, which is currently gathering information from municipalities. She was also very interested in how the council of governments work and was intrigued in that level of collaboration among municipalities.

Monarch Butterfly Rearing and Tagging at THC

Throughout the month of August, Tug Hill Commission staff have been sharing their office space with some very special guests: Monarch caterpillars!

With a habitat range swathing North America, Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) are a butterfly species native to New York, and their larva are often found on various species of milkweed, their native host plant species. They are famous for their long-range migration patterns: populations to the west of the Rocky Mountains overwinter in coastal California, and populations to the east of the Rockies fly to Mexico for the winter.

In the last several decades, the Monarch butterfly population has been on decline. As of this year, they were considered “endangered” by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s most recent Species Status Assessment indicates that several the populations recently delineated are at risk of continued decline and possible extinction. The Monarch butterfly meets the current criteria for listing under the Endangered Species Act and will continue to be monitored as part of the five-year National Listing Workplan.

Monarch caterpillars were collected from staff members’ backyards and brought to the Tug Hill Commission’s location within the Dulles State Office Building. Inside, the caterpillars were reared in an enclosure with temperature, humidity, and parasite monitoring to ensure the successful formation of a chrysalis and the eventual emergence of healthy adult butterflies.

Adult specimens were affixed with tags from [Monarch Watch](#), a non-profit, citizen-science organization focused on studying the monarch butterfly, its habitat, and migration patterns primarily through volunteerism and field collection. Tag data and data recovery is uploaded to the Monarch Watch website, meaning Tug Hill staff will be able to monitor their progress down south as they are encountered by others in the field. The last of the reared butterflies were released September 19. We look forward to seeing how far these butterflies get!



An adult monarch with a Monarch Watch tag.



The office enclosure with monarch caterpillars and chrysalis.

ANCA Annual Report Released

The Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) released their 2021 Annual Report at their recent annual meeting at The Wild Center in Tupper Lake. ANCA’s region includes all four Tug Hill counties, and the report highlighted two Tug Hill projects. Della Terra, in Castorland, Lewis County, was recently the first recipient of a loan from ANCA’s SOIL loan fund, which helps small farms and businesses bridge funding gaps with zero or no-interest loans. The village of Deferiet, Jefferson County has been working with ANCA Energy Circuit Riders (modeled after the Tug Hill Commission’s circuit riders) to undertake high impact energy efficiency actions in the village.

The entire annual report can be read [here](#).

FREE VIRTUAL TRAININGS IN CLEAN ENERGY

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS, DATES AND AUDIENCE

All courses are from 5:00-7:00 p.m. EST on Zoom

Clean Energy & Your Comprehensive Plan -- Wednesday, November 2, 2022

Offers an introduction to best practices and strategies for incorporating clean energy goals and objectives into a new or updated municipal comprehensive plan. *Municipal board members, planning staff, and comprehensive plan committee members are encouraged to attend.*

Overview of the Model Solar Energy Law -- Tuesday, November 8, 2022

Provides an in-depth review of the customizable template zoning law contained in NYSERDA's Solar Guidebook for Local Governments. *Municipal board members, code enforcement officials, and staff are encouraged to attend.*

Solar PV Permitting and Inspecting (Approved for 2-hours of In-Service training credit) -- Tuesday, November 15

Offers an in-depth review of permitting and inspecting solar energy systems in New York State from start to finish; topics covered include the NYS Unified Solar Permit and various components of the NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code. *Code enforcement and building officials are encouraged to attend.*

Overview of the Model Battery Energy Storage System Law -- Tuesday, November 29, 2022

Provides an in-depth review of the customizable template zoning law contained in NYSERDA's Battery Energy Storage System Guidebook for Local Governments. *Municipal board members, code enforcement officials, and staff are encouraged to attend.*

Battery Energy Storage for First Responders (Approved for 2-hours of In-Service training credit) -- Monday, December 5, 2022

Introduces key safety considerations for battery energy storage systems for codes and building officials; covered topics include fire prevention considerations and compliance with the 2020 NYS Uniform Code. *Code enforcement and building officials are encouraged to attend.*



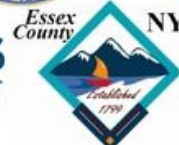
**REGISTRATION
FOR ALL
SESSIONS:**

<https://bit.ly/3rcgF6z>

CONTACT:

nbernstein@adirondack.org

PRESENTED BY:





Remembering Ed Davis

Our friend, and NOCCOG Director, Ed Davis recently passed away. He will be missed by his family, friends, and the NOCCOG community. His dedication and commitment to the Tug Hill region is not without recognition. It will be rare to find another with the same enthusiasm, integrity, and spirit as Ed.

NYSDEC Releases Draft Great Lakes Action Agenda

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) released the draft New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda 2022-2030, a multi-year action plan to guide restoration and conservation, and foster sustainable, resilient, communities in New York's Great Lakes region, including the Tug Hill region.

In support of New York's ecosystem-based management goals, the Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA) promotes collaborative, science-informed decision-making to achieve outcomes that support the needs of people, nature, and the economy. The draft 2022-2030 GLAA includes new cross-cutting priorities that reflect the State's commitment to inclusion and engagement of diverse stakeholders and historically underserved communities.

The draft Action Agenda is available on DEC's website at: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/91881.html. Public comments will be accepted until November 11, 2022, and can be submitted to great-lakes@dec.ny.gov. DEC's Great Lakes Program will be hosting a webinar on Tuesday, October 25 at 3:00 p.m. to introduce the GLAA and invite feedback. [Register at link here](#) and to learn more about these and future opportunities to engage in this work, please contact great-lakes@dec.ny.gov for additional details.

Contact Us

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To request our newsletter electronically please email gwen@tughill.org or call

1-888-785-2380.

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

Understanding and Managing Floodplains for Healthy Watersheds and Resilient Communities

Local Government Training Workshops

Register Now!

www.nyseagrant.org/2022GLFloodplainsTraining

To reach communities in New York's Great Lakes Basin, we are holding the same workshop at three venues. To register, click on the name of the one that works best for you!

1. **Lake Erie/Western New York**
November 2, 2022; 9:30am-4:30pm
Clarion Hotel; 30 Lake Shore Dr E, Dunkirk, NY 14048
Registration fee: \$30
2. **Western Lake Ontario** (part of the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council's Fall Conference)
November 3, 2022; 9am-4:30pm
del Lago Resort & Casino, 1133 New York 414, Waterloo, NY 13165
Registration fee: \$81.55 incl. \$6.55 Fee
3. **Eastern Lake Ontario**
November 9, 2022; 9:30am-4:30pm
Tailwater Lodge, 52 Pulaski St, Altmar, 13302
Registration fee: \$30

- **Who should attend?** This workshop is geared towards planning, zoning and municipal boards, supervisors, mayors, code enforcement officers, conservation advisory boards, and floodplain managers, but anyone interested in learning more about floodplains, related risks and ways to maintain/enhance the health of our Great Lakes by protecting and managing their watersheds is encouraged to join us!
- **Planning Team:** Central NY Regional Planning & Development Board, Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy, Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance, NY Sea Grant, NY State Department of Environmental Conservation, NY Department of State, Southern Tier West Regional Planning, & Tug Hill Commission.
- **Questions?** Email Mary Austerman at mp357@cornell.edu

Credits: For most municipalities, the Local Government Workshop fulfills state law required training for local planning officials. A certificate of participation may be requested for the number of hours of attendance. AICP CM Credits are pending.

Helping local governments and citizens shape the future of the Tug Hill Region for over 45 years.