

## All Aboard! Glenfield and Western Railroad October 28

The Glenfield and Western Railroad is the next subject of the continuing series of historical workshops organized by the Tug Hill Commission since 2020. The presentation will be given by Charley Swerdoski, a local resident interested in the history of the Glenfield & Western Railroad, who has helped research the timeline of events, compile pictures, and reach out to families to collect personal stories. He has distant family connections with his great great Aunt being a schoolteacher at Page. He now owns a camp along the old railroad bed where the community of Page once stood and has regularly utilized the path carved by others over 100 years ago for hunting and fishing. The presentation will feature the extensive history of both the railroad and the communities of Michigan Mills and Page. The information was compiled using books, newspapers, pictures, postcards, and first-hand accounts from families with relatives that lived in Page. With popular G&W photographs, intimate family portraits, and post cards from Page, the presentation will tell the story of one of the most unique railroads in New York State history and the only railroad ever to be completed to access the core of Tug Hill.



Photo courtesy Lyons Falls History Association.

The presentation will take place in-person at West Leyden Elementary School, 1157 Fish Creek Rd, West Leyden, NY 13489 on Saturday, October 28 at 12:00 p.m. Interested persons can also join online via Zoom. Register using the link [tinyurl.com/glenfieldwesternrr](https://tinyurl.com/glenfieldwesternrr) (for both in-person and online registration), or by calling the commission office at 315-785-2380 (in-person registration only).

## Welcome Chris

Chris Barboza joined the Tug Hill Commission this past week as a planner. Born into a military family, Chris has seen much of the world, but spent his formative years in the village of Carthage and has chosen to retire in the area after serving 20 years in the Army. Chris's military background was in logistics and project management, and he has a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice and master's coursework in occupational health and safety with a focus on Environmental Engineering. While transitioning out of the Army, Chris participated in Fort Drum's intern program and spent several months interning at the Tug Hill Commission and the River Area Council of Governments (RACOG). Since his internship ended in April, he has been working as a part-time contract circuit rider with RACOG.



Chris enjoys the outdoors with his wife and three children, and looks forward to working with communities across the Tug Hill region.

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## We're Hiring: Project Specialist

The Tug Hill Commission is hiring an entry level Project Specialist to provide assistance to local governments and regional organizations in the rural Tug Hill region of upstate New York in the areas of natural resources, community development, and general technical assistance. For the detailed job announcement, see [www.tughill.org/job-openings/](http://www.tughill.org/job-openings/).

Interested applicants should submit a resume and cover letter to Jennifer Harvill, [jennifer@tughill.org](mailto:jennifer@tughill.org). Applications are due no later than October 27, but will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

# American Chestnut Restoration Project at Zoo New York

On September 18, a gathering was held at Zoo New York in Thompson Park, Watertown, for the unveiling of the American Chestnut Restoration Project in honor of T. Urling “Tom” Walker. This project is the result of an ongoing partnership with the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust (THTLT), SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) and the American Chestnut Foundation, Zoo New York, and former city of Watertown mayor and philanthropist Tom Walker. Several American chestnut trees, safely ensconced in tree protectors until next spring, have been planted along the Northern Wolf Trail by the Tug Hill exhibit in Zoo New York. Additionally, two new interpretive signs on American Chestnut trees, the “Redwoods of the East” have been installed on this trail. Robert McNamara, a 2015 Tug Hill Sage, lent his artistic talents for the sign renderings.

Robert Quinn (THTLT, Board Member), Larry Sorel (Zoo New York, Executive Director), Mark Pacilio (THTLT, Executive Director) and Adriana Del Grosso (SUNY ESF, Tree Distribution Manager) spoke on the ecological and cultural significance of the American Chestnut and future conservation plans. Thomas Walker Jr. spoke in memory of his father, Thomas Walker Sr., who many credit with starting this project on the local level due to his concern of vanishing native tree species. Project stakeholders have two major hopes for this unveiling: to raise public awareness on restoring the American Chestnut species and – in keeping with Zoo New York’s mission – to provide a physical space for the public to see, learn, and interact with nature.

American Chestnut trees were once one of the most numerous trees in the Appalachian corridor. Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, nearly 1-in-4 trees in the region were chestnut trees. They had a tremendous ecological and cultural importance, and their food output in the form of nuts was so impactful to wildlife that it was once considered a keystone species. In the early 1900s, a fungal blight was accidentally introduced to the United States through imported timber and the illness devastated the native chestnut tree population to such a point that it has not recovered. Today, American chestnut trees are so scarce that they are considered functionally extinct.

There is a ray of hope for the recovery of the American Chestnut, however; a new, genetically modified chestnut tree (referred to as the “Darling 58”) may be the answer to restoring the presence of these trees in the wild once more. Created by the American Chestnut Research & Restoration Program at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF), the Darling 58 is the culmination of 30 years of collaborative research with The American Chestnut Foundation to create a highly “blight-tolerant” chestnut tree.

The Darling 58 is still a year or two away from being available for public distribution, according to Tree Distribution Manager Adriana Del Grosso. A planting space is being held at the project site in Zoo New York for when the Darling 58 clears its final regulatory hurdles.



*From left to right: Larry Sorel, Mark Pacilio, Tom Walker Jr., Laurie Pike, Pete Pike, Mike Lumbis, Adriana Del Grosso.*



# Solar Installation in Agricultural Areas Webinar Series

In a continued collaboration between Cornell Cooperative Extension, Pennsylvania, and Farm Bureaus of Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York, this series of webinars will explore the continued push for development of solar energy projects in agricultural areas of the Northeast. This five-part series will address the topic from multiple perspectives and help to identify the opportunities and challenges as well as currently known best practices for integrating the need for renewable energy with other economic and social factors. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

## **Session #1: Impacts of Large-Scale Solar on Rural Communities – A Research Perspective - Thursday, September 28, 12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.**

Research into this topic is still relatively new. However, initial studies offer some insight into the perceptions, impacts and opportunities around solar and land use. This session will explore current finding on key issues in rural communities, decision making metrics being developed through this research and how communities can integrate these metrics. Additionally, the potential tradeoffs between energy and agriculture and emerging opportunities in agrivoltaics will be discussed.

## **Session #2: Solar and Agriculture – A Company's Perspective on the Challenges and Pathways to Successful Integration of Both - Thursday, October 12, 12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.**

Developers of large-scale solar facilities are interested in optimizing the use of the land within the project footprint and continue to work to understand the opportunities and challenges of agrivoltaics, or dual use, setups. The session will also explore the key aspects of the decision-making process developers use for site selection and how they weigh these factors against impacts on land use, particularly when the location contains soil types identified as prime for agriculture production.

## **Session #3: A Farmer's Perspective on Solar - Thursday, October 26, 12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.**

Farmers who have looked closely at solar electricity production on their land will discuss their experiences with developers, and their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of solar for agriculture. Discussion will include differences in the scale of solar projects, how solar might impact farmers in varied circumstances, and ideas for optimizing the benefits of and mitigating the challenges of solar for agriculture.

## **Session #4: A Community Perspective on Solar - Thursday, November 9, 12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.**

Expanding out beyond the impacts to individual landowners, solar development can have broader opportunities and challenges for the rural, agricultural based communities that host them. This session will offer observations and ideas for communities on best practices for successfully integrating solar as a land use. When it is a competing land use and when it can be a complementary land use?

## **Session #5: Question and Answer - Wednesday, November 22, 12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.**

A Q&A to cover any and all of the previously presented material in Sessions 1-4 featuring the speakers from this series.



# Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Report Released

A long-awaited report summarizing the findings of the Adirondack Salt Reduction Task Force has been released. The task force, originally created through legislation passed in 2020, consisted of 10 public members plus representatives of the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Health, and Adirondack Park Agency.

The main report calls for enhanced funding to achieve ways to reduce salt use during winter months given the documented damage and ill effects of chloride and substances that wash into the Adirondacks' many waterbodies and corrode facilities and equipment. The report estimates 193,000 tons of road salt gets spread each winter over public roads of the Adirondack Park — some 34 tons of road salt per lane-mile of state roads and 13 tons per lane-mile of local roads. "Once dissolved, about half the road salt applied to roads in winter runs off into surface waters through snow melt and stormwater," according to the report. The remainder continues to leach into soil and surface and groundwater throughout the year.

The report recommends road salt reduction pilot programs, which DEC and DOT are planning for this coming winter season, along with enhanced alternatives to salt such as reduced speeds and increased vegetation management. The task force also states that proving that chlorine-free deicing strategies can meet or exceed salt use performance will encourage the uptake of these alternative strategies by stakeholders. Read the [report here](#).

## Salmon River Fish Hatchery Open House September 23



The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is hosting its 24<sup>th</sup> annual Salmon River Fish Hatchery Open House and Family Day on Saturday, September 23. Located in Altmar, Oswego County, the Salmon River Fish Hatchery will be open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to celebrate National Hunting and Fishing Day.

The aim of the open house is to provide visitors with a behind-the-scenes peek into how the DEC helps bolster the salmon and trout fisheries in Lake Ontario and its tributaries, such as the Salmon River. Scheduled programming will include tours of the facility, displays and information, vendor tables by conservation, hunting, and fishing organizations, and games for kids. While you're there, feel free to visit the Tug

Hill Commission staff at our agency's table and help yourself to a Tug Hill Recreation Guide!

For questions specific to the Open House, the DEC recommends reaching out to Betsy Ukeritis, DEC Environmental Educator, at 315-314-0768.

## Budgeting and Accounting Training for Small Towns September 26 and 27, Glenfield

The Tug Hill Commission and Association of Towns of the State of New York are collaborating to provide training on financial requirements and regulations for town governments. Instructor Laird Petrie will provide a two-day, comprehensive training on town governments requirements and regulations related to budgeting and accounting on Tuesday, September 26 and Wednesday, September 27 from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the Howard G. Sackett Technical Center, 5836 St. Rt. 12, Glenfield, NY 13343.

If you have questions, please contact the Tug Hill Commission at (315) 785-2380.

### Contact Us

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