

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Is Awarded \$34,000 Through Land Trust Alliance



(ALBANY, NY) - The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Land Trust Alliance joined members of the state Legislature and land trust representatives Monday, March 14, 2011 to announce \$1.4 million in Conservation Partnership Program grants.

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust (THTLT) was one of the 57 nonprofit land trusts to be awarded funding. Two of these prestigious grants, funded through New York State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), were awarded to THTLT. The first, a \$25,000 Capacity & Excellence Grant will enable the recently accredited land trust to develop their communications and fundraising efforts and improve their financial systems. The second, a \$9,000 Conservation Transaction Grant supports the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program – designed to limit the development of land bordering Fort Drum, minimizing interference with military training.

Linda Garrett, Executive Director of THTLT, explained how vital the grant program is, “With the limited resources available to nonprofit land trusts in the North Country, the Conservation Partnership Program grants have been strategic in the development and success of THTLT over the past several years.”

Not only did the Conservation Partnership Program grants help initially fund both the executive director and communication and outreach staff positions, they were also essential in preparing the land trust for the national accreditation application process. THTLT was successful in its application and received National Accreditation in February 2011.

Since 2002, the Conservation Partnership Program has awarded matching grants for 350 projects benefitting 75 different land trust organizations across the state. The grants announced Monday will help local land trusts sustain and expand community and landowner outreach, land conservation, stewardship, and education programs. The grants will create new land trust jobs and strengthen partnerships with local and state governments, advancing efforts to preserve prime farmland, municipal watersheds and green infrastructure around the state.

“The New York State Conservation Partnership Program advances Governor Cuomo’s agenda for A Cleaner, Greener New York,” said Joe Martens, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation. “New York State’s financial support for the Partnership Program is critical to the important work of land trusts who, in partnership with communities across New York, provide vital protection of open space for its environmental and economic value.”

The competitive state grants announced Monday will be matched by more than \$1.82 million in private and local funding. Since the program’s inception in 2002, the Conservation Partnership Program has leveraged over \$12 million in additional funding, creating employment and advancement opportunities in the conservation field and helping local communities permanently conserve approximately 15,000 acres of farmland, wildlife habitat, recreation areas, and urban open space.

“New York State has demonstrated its support of local land trusts and their vital mission to save the places New Yorkers cherish and depend on for clean air and water, food, and recreation,” said Rand Wentworth, President of the Land Trust Alliance. “I commend Governor Cuomo, Commissioner Martens ... and other members of the Legislature for their support of this pioneering initiative. The EPF and the Conservation Partnership Program are cost effective investments that pay dividends for public health and New York’s economy.”