

Greenings

Celebrating Conservation & People



“We needed a way to conserve the farm and lower our operating costs. Conserving it, and diversifying the operation, makes it easier for me to take over the farm.” – Dillon Huntley



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Volunteers give more than time

Imagine paddling down the Black River, a river that provides drinking water to the City of Watertown and Fort Drum, and discovering fishing line ensnared along the bushes—the very place where Great Blue Herons come to fish and river otter live.

Now imagine fishing on the River and finding plastic bags, a kiddie swimming pool, and bottles polluting the shores, making it hazardous for people and wildlife alike.

Well, that's now a distant memory for six miles of the Black River from Forestport to Dexter, where 431 pounds of plastic, construction material, cigarette butts, and household debris were extracted from its shores as part of a community cleanup hosted in partnership with the Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Tug Hill Commission, and the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust.

The cleanup was part of a national effort to increase the health of local waterways and, ultimately, the ocean habitats into which they run.

The river cleanup was one of many volunteer projects throughout the year. Folks also pitched

in to help develop and maintain the Tug Hill Traverse Trail and the trails at the Land Trust's Joseph Blake Wildlife Sanctuary, led community programs, answered questions at events, and hosted local gatherings to celebrate conservation.

"I love to volunteer, out on the land, whether it's helping with trails or taking photographs for the Land Trust, because together we are making a difference," explained Zach Wakeman. We agree.

It's people like Zach who share their passion for Tug Hill by volunteering their time and talents who make Tug Hill a better place to live, work, and play.

We'd love to hear from you...

If you'd like to volunteer and join a growing team of people who have fun while making a difference, please call Lin Gibbs at 315-779-2239 or email her at lgibbs@tughilltomorrow.org. We'd love to see you.



Have you ever wondered what the future of wildlife and water will be in Tug Hill?

Studies around the world, including the University of Florida, Wisconsin at Madison, Cornell University, and as far away as the University of Tasmania, are documenting that plants and animals are undergoing a mass redistribution due to climate change.

Indeed, a recent study from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the American Bird Conservancy noted we have lost 1/3 of our North American birds in less than 50 years, largely due to habitat loss and pesticides.

This adds to a growing body of research in the Northeast: isolated islands of habitat will not allow for the necessary movement and survival of wildlife. Instead, connecting corridors of woodlands and farmlands, waterways and wetlands, are a critical strategy for wildlife to flourish.

Good news for wildlife and communities

Local families and landowners will now have another opportunity to help. A recent grant to The Nature Conservancy

(TNC) from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Water Quality Improvement Program, in partnership with Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, will allow for purchase of conservation easements (voluntary retirement of development rights) on lands that will protect ground and surface drinking water sources and benefit wildlife habitat.

The project spans several communities, with one focus area including West Canada Creek and Hinckley Reservoir.

Lands qualifying for these grants would contain woodlands and river frontage with the goal of conserving several thousand acres of privately-owned lands in the Black River Valley between Tug Hill and the Adirondacks. Limited development, hunting camps,

recreation, and forestry would continue to be permitted.

With increasing severe weather events, forests also serve a vital role in filtering and absorbing water, reducing the impacts of flooding and gradually releasing water over time into neighboring rivers and ground water. Given that several Tug Hill Communities rely on reservoirs, aquifers and town wells, this benefits their drinking water supply and buffers them from periods of drought as well as the impacts of flooding.

Alissa Fadden of TNC explains that "This is a terrific project that benefits wildlife and our communities. We have a chance to ensure that the farms, wildlife and water resources remain a central part of this region's identity and economic base."

Explore more...

If you are interested in finding out more email Linda Garrett at lgarrett@tughilltomorrow.org.

"We have a chance to ensure that the farms, wildlife, and water resources remain a central part of this region's identity and economic base."

— Alissa Fadden, Adirondack Chapter of the Nature Conservancy





THE NEXT GENERATION STEPS UP

Dairy farmers conserving their land, family heritage

Dan Huntley's family has worked the same land for 200 years. The iconic 720-acre farm, located in the town of Pierrepont, in St. Lawrence County, meets the foothills of the Adirondacks with sweeping views of the St. Lawrence Valley.

Now a certified organic dairy farm, the Huntley Farm is within the watershed and larger habitat area of the St. Lawrence River, only 30 miles away. As part of the farm's income diversification, the Huntley's run a bed and breakfast, sell firewood, and manage their woodland as a sugarbush and for sustained timber production.

Dillon, Dan's son, is investing in soil improvements to increase soil health and productivity. He also grows local organic grain for his dairy and to sell to other farmers, and is working towards increasing his maple sugaring operation to over 5,000 taps.

The farm has now joined the ranks of a growing number of farmers who would prefer to conserve their land rather than face the prospect of it being sold for development.

"Many of the dairy farms in our region have gone out of business because the cost of running a dairy farm is

outpacing the price of milk," explains Dillon. "We needed a way to conserve the farm and lower our operating costs. Conserving it, and diversifying the operation, makes it easier for me to take over the farm."

Conservation leverages change

Now, thanks to a recent NYS Farmland Protection Dairy Program grant, written by THTLT on behalf of the family, the Huntley's are working to conserve their land.

The grant program recognizes the importance of dairy farms to NYS's economy and rural communities and the need to increase the long-term viability of these farms. The Huntley's are able to invest in improvements that will enhance their farming operation.

Dillon and Dan will use the funding to upgrade their milking facility, as well as implement additional farm improvements for cow comfort and soil management.

"These enhancements will make our small, family-run farm, more sustainable—and we know that the 200 years our family has invested here is now more secure. It's a great feeling to



Farming is part of the Huntley legacy, with three generations now part of the farm





create a strong economic future as part of preserving our farm's heritage," explains Dillon.

One of many farms...

In addition to the Huntley farm, THTLT is working with three additional farms awarded grants by the NYS Farmland Protection Dairy Program: the Northrup & Sons Farm in Rodman and Adams, Jefferson County; the Groeslon Farm in Remsen, Oneida County; and the Jones Farm in Trenton, Oneida County. This adds to several other THTLT farmland conservation projects currently underway.

"These families are leaders in their own right; they care deeply for the land and want to make sure their farms remain part of their community," explains Linda Garrett, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust's Executive Director.

Jane Powers, Pierrepont Town Supervisor, notes that land trusts like Tug Hill Tomorrow are often pivotal in a farmer's ability to apply for these grants, remarking, "It takes a lot of time to pull together the grant applications, let alone undertake the land protection work. We are delighted that the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust jumped on this opportunity on behalf of our town's dairy farms."

Farms are part of the climate solution

Farms throughout the country and here in Tug Hill are an important part of the solution to slow down climate change. Cornell University, Cooperative Extension, and other research groups are documenting that:

- **Cover crops increase soil resilience** to extreme weather, absorb more water, reduce carbon dioxide (one of the greenhouse gases we must reduce) released from bare soil, and enhance farm economics.
- **Rotational grazing of animals** increases soil health, increases pasture health, helps reduce costs, and improves soil absorption and root mass, thereby increasing carbon dioxide storage.
- **Renewable energy on farms**—when designed to be compatible—can increase farm viability and offset the need for fossil fuels.

For more information about climate change, farms, and soils, check out American Farmland Trust's website: farmland.org.

We need you more than ever

In the coming year, your support will be central to our ability to work with additional farmers. It's important to understand that as a community-based land trust, we can't conserve these lands without you.

Farmland protection work is often a two- to three-year process, and your donations allow us to help farmers tap into the state farmland protection grants and protect their lands.

Without these grants, it's often difficult to transfer the land to the next generation. Thanks to you, these farms will be here for generations.





© Bob McNamara

TRAVERSE TRAIL UPDATE

Igniting a passion strengthens conservation

Remember the dream to create a trail that would go from Osceola to Montague through some of the most remote parts of Tug Hill?

That vision is coming to life, with volunteers working together under the leadership of Bob McNamara to flag, create, and mark 20 miles of what will become the **Tug Hill Traverse Trail**.

This fall, volunteers are extending the trail north from the Glenfield and

Western Railroad to the Tug Hill Wildlife Management Area. Once complete, you'll be able to walk through towering old trees, along the East Branch of Fish Creek, and into the headwaters of the Mad and Deer Rivers.

In the meantime, check out the **Joseph Blake Wildlife Sanctuary**,

owned and managed by THTLT with the support of a terrific team of volunteers. The land is located in the town of Rutland, just 15 minutes from Watertown. There, you'll find three miles of trail designed for a gentle and kid-friendly walk with great views of a wetland, bird habitat, and lovely fall color.

For more information visit:
TugHillTomorrowLandTrust.org.

You can be a part of our trail volunteer team.



RECREATIONAL GUIDE REPRINT

Get ready to explore Tug Hill

Good news! The ever-popular Tug Hill Recreation Guide will soon be reprinted and available from THTLT, the Tug Hill Commission, and our four County Tourism Promotion Agencies. In it you'll find over 28 detailed trail maps, stunning photographs, regional overviews, and profiles of local communities.

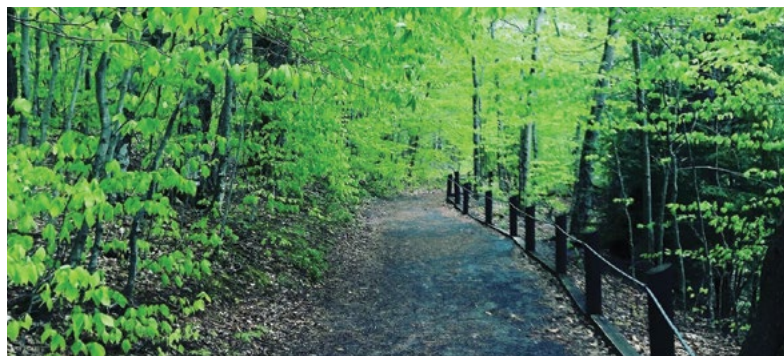
Once the guide has been released, THTLT will be kicking off its new Tug Hill Ten Challenge: hike, paddle, ski, or bike ten different trails featured in the guide, and you will get an exclusive t-shirt to celebrate your

accomplishment. The trail maps from the guide will be available for download from our website.

Watch for our eNews for more information.



© Julie Westdale



Nature close to home

This past summer and fall hundreds of people from all walks of life explored Tug Hill, celebrated conservation and community, learned about farms and wildlife, and worked together to take care of the land.

Programs like these help to build a sense of community and long-term commitment to conservation. We couldn't offer them without you.

In the coming year, thanks to growing support from people like you, we'll offer additional programs for people of all ages and experience. Watch our eNews for announcements.



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© Linda Fellers



© Julie Westdale



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When you love Tug Hill

What do you love about Tug Hill? Is it the farms, the walks in the woods, or listening to the owls under the full moon? Perhaps you want to make sure that local families and friends can experience farms, woodlands, wildlife, and clean water for generations to come?

Your year-end gift is crucial if we are going to conserve these magical places before they are lost.

For many families, there's a window of time when conservation is right for them—and once the land is sold to development, it's gone for good.

Each month we receive requests from farmers, communities, and a wide range of interested individuals.

They are asking us to provide outdoor and environmental education programs, information about land management, as well as requests to conserve land for farming, timber, wildlife, and trails.

While we do our best to partner with as many families as we can, some have to wait due to our staff working at full capacity.

That means there's a much greater risk that they will need to sell for development—even if they don't want to.

Your generosity and compassion will help change that

Whether it's a monthly gift, your year-end contribution, or a gift in your will, it's your generosity that allows us to step up the pace of conservation and ensure that we can conserve, connect, and celebrate the special places we all cherish.

Check out this cool stuff!

With the holidays just around the corner, there are a variety of gifts for those who love Tug Hill. All proceeds go towards our conservation, education, and cultural heritage work.

You can order on our website, give us a call, or come see us at the office (located at the Thompson Park Zoo in Watertown).



Stainless steel tumbler, book, and t-shirt.



2020 calendar filled with beautiful Tug Hill region photographs.

Greeting card set, natural history guide, and cap.

Kids need to be the future of conservation

“Ewww. I don’t want to go outside. It’s buggy out there. It’s boring.”

Have you heard similar comments from kids you know? You aren’t alone. The lure of technology and the couch are strong, but more and more, the youth of Tug Hill have programs to entice them outdoors.

It turns out that kids—even rural kids—aren’t spending enough time in nature, or on farms, to feel comfortable and excited about the natural landscape.

Children ages five to 16 spend an average of six and a half hours a day in front of a screen (compared to around three hours, in 1995), according to research firm, Childwise.

Other research from a national report, *The Nature of Americans*, notes it’s more important than ever to support local families and kids by creating kid-friendly and accessible places for everyone to enjoy—ideally within 15 minutes of home.

Experiencing nature and green spaces through community parks, local conservation areas, a farm, or educational programming has been shown to improve a child’s ability to focus, reduce the level of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and counter rising anxiety. These benefits are seen not only in youth, but also in adults.

This builds upon still more documentation that with regular,

fun, and interactive experiences immersed in nature and farms throughout childhood, kids are more likely to feel comfortable with the sounds and smells of these landscapes.

Not only does that mean they are more likely to thrive, but it also means they are more likely to care about conservation as adults.

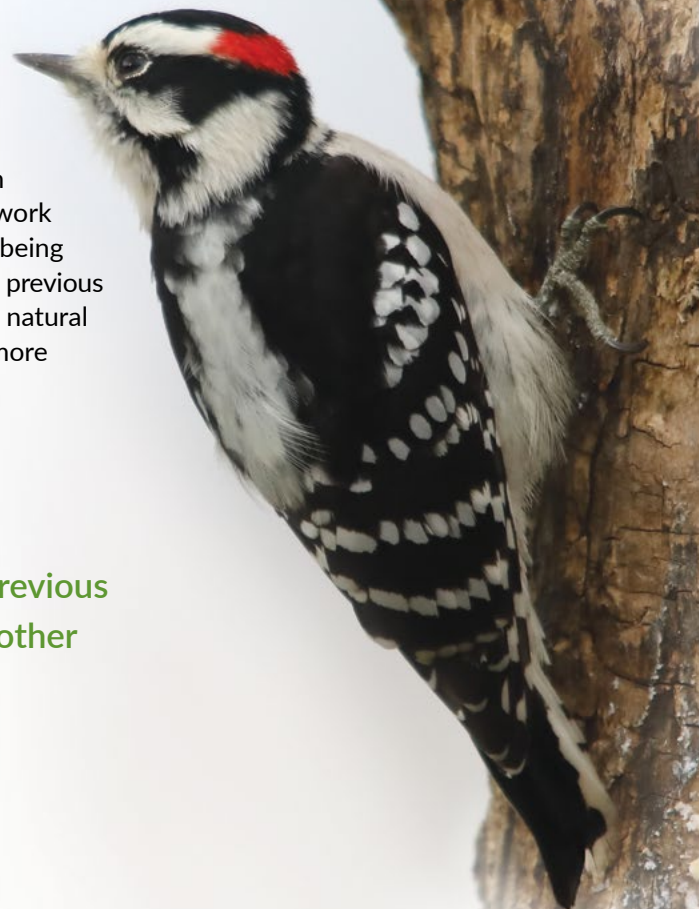
That’s why we are ramping up our programs with local libraries, schools, and youth programs.

Fun and interactive nature education, games, and access to birding programs can instill a love of learning, foster a greater ability for empathy, and reduce bullying. Plus, it helps raise kids who will feel more confident facing life-long challenges.

As Sarah Milligan Toffler from the Children and Nature Network observed, “With today’s kids being less connected to nature than previous generations, children and the natural world need each other now more than ever.”



© Sarah Hullar.



“With today’s kids being less connected to nature than previous generations, children and the natural world need each other now more than ever.”

– Sarah Milligan Toffler, Children and Nature Network

Tug Hill remembers those inspired by nature

This past summer saw the passing of two kind, compassionate, and caring people who were inspired by the land and waters of Tug Hill.

David Esterly, a world-renown, self-taught master wood carver and impassioned nature artist, who lived in Barneveld, N.Y.

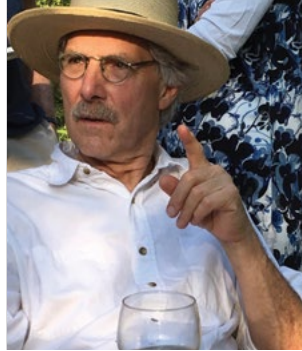
David spent his life creating remarkable carvings inspired by nature. Reflecting on the environmental loss that we all are witnessing, he wrote: "To portray organic subjects in an organic medium is to say something that can't be said any other way... In a time of radical destruction of the natural world, there's a poignancy to the beauty of fine foliage carving and the manual skills required to produce it, a kind of reproach that sharpens our awareness of what we are losing."

According to his wife, Marietta von Bernuth, David's recognition of the importance of conserving the natural world fueled his strong commitment to the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust.

Donald R. Kenderdine, also of Barneveld, spent his childhood in Maine, before landing in Tug Hill. Don and his wife Sally shared a passion for Yankees baseball, home renovations, travel, the outdoors, and most importantly, each other's company and the family they built together.

Don's family and friends honored his love of the outdoors with gifts to the Tug Hill Land Trust. We so appreciate this generous and thoughtful tribute. He will be remembered for generations to come.

We want to express our sympathies to the families and friends of David and Donald and appreciation for their love of nature and the beauty of Tug Hill. The memorial gifts will conserve the lands and waters they both loved.



For David Esterly

Leiter and Ricky Doolittle

Joan B. & William F. O'Shea Family Fund
at The Community Foundation of
Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc —
Brian & Peggy O'Shea

Linda Garrett

J.D. King

Susan Knight

Mary Mackay-Wheatley

Pierre HSH the Prince d'Arenberg

Chris & Melany Welch

For Donald Kenderdine

Tim Deyo and Toni Kulak

Erma, Monica, Maureen & Shirley Nevits

Bob & Sharon Dicks

Mary Ann & Ed Ewen

David Gildersleeve

Janis Kenderdine

Vickie Price

Co-workers at Utica Life

Patricia Patla

Karla Owens

Kathy (Storsberg) Russ

Gina (Foster) Currie

Joe Malecki

Deb Testa

Carol Ashe

Bill & Becky Stuhlinger

Denise Rose

Andrea Annuich

Donna Guminiak



Be a Conservation Hero

"One of the things I loved about Tug Hill was the solitude and quiet. Being able to go on a walk or hike and not hear or see anyone else. Lots of quiet places I value now more than ever. I found the people incredibly warm and welcoming—maybe it's all that snow!" exalted Janelle Blakely.

If you would like to become one of our conservation heroes—and help conserve Tug Hill all year long—you can join Janelle and many others with a gift of \$5 or more per month.

It's easy to do.

Just go to our website tughilltomorrowlandtrust.org and sign up. We'll keep you updated on the change you are making.

"Now that I'm living on the West Coast, working for a nonprofit, it's even more important to me. I know what's at risk, and why it's so special."

That's why I am a monthly donor. Being a monthly donor is easy and it would be a stretch for me to make a \$120 donation all at once, but \$10 a month is no problem and it makes me feel good."

—Janelle Blakely



A gift that keeps on giving

How a qualified charitable distribution from an IRA works

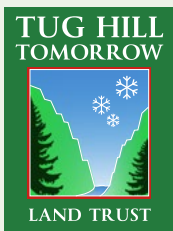
If you have a traditional IRA, you know that once you are 70½ or older you are required to make a minimum distribution from your IRA every year. That triggers taxes.

Yet there's another way. You can make a contribution directly from your traditional IRA to a qualified charity

like THTLT, up to \$100,000, without it being considered a taxable distribution.

This year-end is a great way to make a difference and increase the pace of conservation. Talk with your financial advisor and check out our website for more information.





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We're here for you...

Want to find out about new projects,
family-friendly programs and hikes,
conservation tips, and community events?



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TugHillTomorrowLandTrust.org

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Dust of Snow

BY ROBERT FROST

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

© Pamela Underhill Karaz.

Because of you, the special places of
Tug Hill will be here for generations to come.

We are working with you to protect the wildlands, forests, and farms of the
Tug Hill region and surrounding areas, and to promote appreciation of the
region's natural and cultural heritage, for present and future generations.
Thank you for your partnership.

