

# 4-Town Comprehensive Plan



DRAFT 4/30/07



## *Acknowledgements*

### 4-Town Planning Committee

#### *Town of Harrisburg*

Norman Roof  
Randy Nicol

#### *Town of Martinsburg*

Terry Thisse  
Paul Kelly

#### *Town of Montague*

Jan Bagdanowicz  
Wendy Perry  
David Andolora

#### *Town of Pinckney*

Sherry Harmych  
Dan Pearson, Jr.

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

### **PART I – COMMUNITY PROFILE**

#### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

- Population
- Regional Population Change
- Household and Family Size
- Housing
- Age
- Income
- Employment and Occupation
- Industry
- Educational Attainment
- Transportation to Work

#### **FINANCE**

- Revenues
- Expenditures
- Tax Rates

### **PART II – PLAN ELEMENTS AND STRATEGIES**

#### **NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT**

#### **AGRICULTURE**

#### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **RECREATION & OPEN SPACE**

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & OTHER**

### **PART III – PLAN ELEMENTS AND STRATEGIES**

### **APPENDIX A – PLAN MAPS**

- Map 1 – Topography
- Map 2 – Land Use
- Map 3 – Population Density
- Map 4 – Road Network
- Map 5 – Agricultural Districts
- Map 6 – Important Farmlands
- Map 7 – Watersheds
- Map 8 – Development Constraints (wetlands, steep slopes, streams, water bodies, public lands)
- Map 9 – Snowmobile & ATV Trails
- Map 10 – School Districts
- Map 11 – Special Districts
- Map 12 – Historic Resources



# Natural Resources and Environment

There are many areas in the town which have a limited suitability or are inherently unsuitable for development. There are other areas in which development should be avoided due to the valuable natural character of the area, character which would be lost or damaged if disturbed. Areas which are either unsuitable or fragile include floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, hydric soils, and stream corridors.

## **Floodplains**

**Character:** Floodplains are areas which are completely inundated at certain times with water. They are usually divided between a floodway and a fringe area. The floodway is the area where floodwaters must be free to flow completely unrestricted. The adjacent fringe areas are flooded but are not as critical to floodwater flow.

**Where located:** Certain floodplains have been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These include flood hazard areas which have a probability of flooding at least once in 100 years.

**Consequences of Development:** These areas are considered severe hazards to development. Floodway areas must remain completely undeveloped, as any structures in these areas may act as obstructions which impede floodwaters, thus increasing damage and loss further upstream of the obstruction. The fringe areas may be subject to limited development where base flood elevations will not be increased. Any development which increases base flood elevations will increase flooding upstream.

## **Wetlands**

**Character:** Wetlands are areas where groundwater is exposed on the surface of the ground. These areas often act as recharge areas, areas for filtering and cleaning water, and as significant wildlife habitat.

**Where located:** Certain major wetlands have been mapped by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). These include only wetlands of greater than 12.4 acres. The towns have an abundance of these wetlands.

**Consequences of Development:** Wetlands are generally considered a severe hazard to development. Development can lead to loss of valuable and irreplaceable wildlife habitat. Wetlands are particularly important as they may directly recharge groundwater supplies and are vulnerable to pollution. Thus, in areas where potable water is obtained from ground water, some wetlands need a high level of protection. Development can also lead to a loss of valuable open space. Development of these

---

areas is expensive, as landfill is usually needed and flood protection is often necessary.

### **Steep Slopes**

**Character:** These are areas which have slopes greater than 10 percent, which means that there is a vertical rise of ten feet for each 100 feet of horizontal distance.

**Where located:** Steep slopes are found where the Tug Hill Plateau drops to the Black River and where streams have carved gulfs or gorges from the erosion action of the water.

**Consequences of Development:** Slopes of less than 10 percent are generally considered slight constraints on development. Slopes of between 10 and 15 percent are generally considered moderate constraints on development. Slopes of greater than 15 percent are considered severe constraints on development. The development of slopes is not recommended for several reasons. There are some environmental concerns, such as erosion and stream sedimentation. It is also more expensive for communities to service development on steep slopes with roads, water lines, and sewerage facilities.

### **Hydric Soils**

**Character:** Hydric soils are soils that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in their upper parts. Hydric soils include soils developed under sufficiently wet conditions to support the growth and regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation.

**Where located:** Hydric soils are prevalent and evenly scattered throughout the town.

**Consequences of development:** Hydric soils present hazards to development, particularly on-site septic systems, due to their poor drainage characteristics.

### **Stream Corridors**

**Character:** Stream corridors act as important fish and wildlife habitats. They may be important for their significance as drainage conduits. Some have relatively steep slopes.

**Where located:** The towns contain portions of three watersheds: Black River, Mid-Northern Lake Ontario and Oneida. Within the Black River watershed, portions of the following sub watersheds are located: Deer River, Middle Black River, Mill Creek, and Upper Middle Black River. Within the Mid-Northern Lake Ontario watershed, portions of the following sub watersheds are located: Salmon River Reservoir, Sandy

Creek, and South Sandy Creek. Within the Oneida Lake watershed, portions of the following sub watersheds are located: East Branch Fish Creek.

**Consequences of Development:** Stream corridors must be developed very carefully so as not to destroy their amenity. Improper development can lead to erosion of the stream banks, resulting in siltation of the stream and the loss of stabilizing soil. Water quality can be impaired, and the recreational use of the stream degraded. The aesthetic qualities of the stream may likewise be destroyed by improper development, thus degrading the quality of life in the town.



## NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT GOALS AND POLICIES EXAMPLES

The towns are rich in natural resources. Its residents respect and protect those natural resources: land, water, air, wildlife, rural character, scenic views, and its mineral, groundwater, and surface water rights. Those resources are an essential part of why residents choose the town for their primary and secondary homes and are appreciated by those who visit here. Protection and wise management of those natural resources through preservation of natural habitats, careful management of land/water resources, and preservation of existing forest and agricultural lands is a mandate for the town and its residents. The town and its Comprehensive Plan supports preservation of those resources and want to assure that they are considered in all actions it takes or recommends.

Goal – To recognize the unique natural resources in the town and protect them for future generations



Policy – Open space is an important non-renewable resource in the town



Policy – Future decisions made in the town need to protect environmental resources



Policy – Protecting water quality in the streams and creeks in the town is essential



Policy – Protecting environmentally sensitive areas in the town is imperative



Policy – Development taking place in floodplain areas, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas should be limited to those uses that will not adversely affect water quality.



Policy – Sewage disposal systems should be properly separated from drinking water sources.



Policy – Lots should be large enough to ensure that sewage which is disposed of by conventional on-site septic systems can safely percolate, and that wells will not overdraw groundwater supplies (typically 1.5 – 3.0 acres).



Policy – Uses and structures should be properly set back from streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands.



Policy – Land disturbing activities should be conducted in accordance with proper erosion control measures and/or NYS mining regulations.



Policy – Landfills, toxic and nontoxic, should be prohibited town wide.

---

# PLANNING ACCORD FOR TUG HILL (PATH)

## A 15-town Plan for the Future of the Cooperative Tug Hill Council Area - 1991

### GOALS FOR OUR FUTURE

1.0 Retain the quality of our area's surface and groundwater. These waters are essential to providing individual and municipal water supplies. They are essential to many industries of our area. They are important to retention of fishing opportunities and wildlife habitat.

- 1.1 Avoid adverse development near major wetlands and concentrations of wetlands.
- 1.2 Avoid adverse development near major stream corridors.
- 1.3 Avoid adverse development near significant springs, wellhead areas of water supply systems, and aquifers.
- 1.4 Identify and map town-by-town major wetlands, concentrations of wetlands, major stream corridors, significant springs, water supply well head areas, and aquifers.
- 1.5 Share information on water resources among CTHC towns.
- 1.6 Raise awareness of the importance of Tug Hill waters through school and citizen education programs.

2.0 Retain major forested areas most important to forest industry, hunting, fishing, and recreation.

Major blocks of forest land on Tug Hill are not only important for retaining the area's economy and recreation opportunities, they are also important in providing wildlife habitat and the very character of the area. In addition, Tug Hill's vast reaches of forest are key to maintaining the purity of its waters and to controlling rates of runoff.

- 2.1 Avoid subdivision and development that would take major forested lands out of productive use for forest industry, hunting, fishing and recreation.
- 2.2 Avoid unreasonable local restrictions on forestry activities that adversely affect businesses in and near the area.
- 2.3 Encourage forestry-related businesses in and near the area as a means of maintaining a healthy economy, and as a means of retaining large parcels of forestland.
- 2.4 Identify major forested areas on a town-by-town basis.
- 2.5 Share information on major forested areas among member towns.
- 2.6 Encourage educational programs that show the importance of forested lands to the area's environment, economy and recreational opportunities.

3.0 Retain the area's most important wildlife habitat and unique areas to conserve hunting, fishing, and recreational opportunities, and to help retain the character and biological richness of our area.

Important wildlife habitat areas and unique areas such as our gulfs are a significant part of the character of our heritage, and can provide important recreational opportunities. They also are of great importance to our economy because of the economic contributions hunting and fishing make to the area, and the economic benefit that comes from the viewing of wildlife and scenery by snowmobilers, skiers, hikers, motorists, and others.

- 3.1 Avoid adverse development in deer wintering yards, other important wildlife and plant habitat areas, and in and near gulfs.
- 3.2 Support town-by-town identification of important wildlife habitat and unique areas. Encourage further research to identify such areas.
- 3.3 Share information on important wildlife habitat and unique areas among member towns.
- 3.4 Encourage educational programs regarding the importance and benefit of habitat and unique areas for use in schools and with civic and adult groups.

---

# TUG HILL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

*Cooperative Tug Hill Planning Board -1976*

## **4. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The plan for Tug Hill must reflect the needs and aspirations of its people. Hence, early in the planning process, the Cooperative Board sought direction from local residents through a questionnaire, Appendix B, and a series of local meetings.

This Section relates the results of those responses to the physical, social and economic conditions of the region. It consists of a series of goals and objectives with respect to major land use categories. The goal statements represent broad policy positions adopted by the Cooperative Board. The objectives are more specific actions necessary to bring each goal into reality.

The formulation of goals is an important part of the planning process. After physical, social and economic elements are studied, the goals of the community provide further direction for change. The end result is a Resource Management Plan, which can be implemented through a variety of administrative and legal programs. As values and circumstances change, so do community goals. Thus goal forming, planning and town action are a continuous process, adapting to changing needs and aspirations.

## **FOREST RESOURCES**

### **Goals**

#### **1. Maintain the forest resources of the Tug Hill area.**

Forest resources are important to the complex ecological balance that exists on the Tug Hill, and to the economy of the area. These resources provide for the conservation of soils, watersheds, scenic beauty and wildlife habitats.

2. Conserve the forest environment for recreation purposes in areas where access will not damage natural resources or violate the private property rights of landowners.

The principal recreation resource of Tug Hill area is recognized to be the forest, its watersheds and snow. Conservation is often compatible with recreation use if conducted in a reasonable and thoughtful way.

### **Objectives**

1. Promote sound forestry practices for all commercial harvesting through the establishment of minimum forest management standards.
2. Promote sound forestry practices for individuals who cut forest products for home use by encouraging them to follow minimum forest management standards.
3. Direct the development of active recreation facilities and programs to areas near population concentrations where services can be provided more economically.
4. Encourage the proper design and management of passive recreation activities in the more remote areas in order to conserve the water and forest resources and to minimize change to the area's character.
5. Encourage proper use of the forest resource through conservation, education and public distribution of this document.

---

## **WATER RESOURCES**

### **Goals**

#### **1. Preserve the quality and quantity of water within the area**

The nine towns of the Cooperative Board area and other communities as well, rely upon the benefits of Tug Hill's water resources. Because the water system threads through all of the area, activity in one town will frequently affect other towns. Any radical change to this sensitive natural resource will tend to degrade the natural environment of Tug Hill – not only within the Cooperative Board area, but also in surrounding areas.

#### **2. Maintain the wetlands of Tug Hill in their natural state.**

Wetlands are an essential and invaluable element of Tug Hill's natural environment. The existence of wetlands provides stream flow, wildlife habitat, control of downstream flooding, necessary water for forest growth, storage capacity for aquifer recharge and water supply, siltation traps for natural erosion, natural laboratories for education and scientific research, and a site for natural biological and chemical activity. Preserving wetlands is basic to keeping Tug Hill's environment in its present condition.

#### **3. Protect major stream systems.**

Streams are expressly necessary for support of aquatic wildlife, preservation of the Tug Hill watersheds, support of the land environment, ground water recharge, and present and future water supplies. Therefore, protection of streams is basic to maintaining the area's natural environment in its present condition.

#### **4. Conserve unique land forms in the Tug Hill region**

Several landforms have been identified because they are unique in terms of water quality, scenic beauty, and fragile plant and/or animal habitats. These areas are part of Tug Hill's special character and must be preserved.

### **Objectives**

1. Protect wetlands and streams by regulation of development activities that may adversely affect the natural functions of these water resources.
2. Protect, through regulation, forested areas that serve the purpose of watershed protection.
3. Protect, through regulation, unique stream areas designated in the Plan.
4. Promote understanding of the importance of water resources through distribution and public discussion of this Plan.
5. Encourage the proper design and management of passive recreation activities in the more remote areas in order to conserve water and forest resources and to minimize change to the area's character.
6. Encourage conservation and proper use of forest resources through distribution and public discussion of this Plan.