

New York State Tug Hill Commission  
**PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET**

**Program:** Planning

**Mandate:**

Executive Law, section 847-c 5. To assist local governments and other appropriate state and local organizations to plan and work for a positive future, and to do this, as far as possible, through intermunicipal cooperation and through technical assistance, including planning assistance, legal assistance, training, citizen education and participation assistance, and assistance in preparation of grant applications to other entities.

**Mandated Funding Level:**

None, but presently allocate approximately \$278,000 of our annual General Fund appropriation to this program area.

**Brief Description/History/Background:**

In the Commission's early years this was the primary focus of the Commission's work in conjunction with cooperative planning boards. As the Commission's mission evolved, this has continued to be the single most sought-after area of assistance. Work is divided into direct comprehensive planning assistance where the Commission is presently working with 14 communities on comprehensive land use plans or updates. The Commission is also working on drafting or updating 9 municipal land use regulatory codes involving zoning, subdivision regulations or other land use regulations. In addition, commission staff field dozens of land use related technical assistance requests on a monthly basis.

**Issues:**

Our communities are facing increasingly complex land use issues regarding recreational subdivisions, siting of major energy generation facilities (e.g. Maple Ridge Windfarms) and development pressures related to the rapid expansion of Fort Drum. Demand for and the complexity of land use regulatory and technical assistance requests is constantly evolving. In addition, our rural communities are collaborating on a number of intermunicipal planning efforts (e.g. Fort Drum Growth Management Strategy and the CTHC 4-town comprehensive plan) as well as intermunicipal shared planning and zoning boards.

**Population Served:**

Forty-one towns and twenty-one villages served within the Tug Hill statutorily defined region. In addition there are nineteen towns and villages surrounding Fort Drum, 10 of which are outside of the designated Tug Hill region.

**Performance Measures:**

Number of planning efforts underway (i.e. 18). Number of local law amendment projects underway (i.e. 9). Number of technical assistance requests handled.

New York State Tug Hill Commission  
**PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET**

**Program:** Natural Resources

**Mandate:**

Executive Law section 847-c 3. To stimulate action by public and private organizations on region wide issues, problems and opportunities that affect the Tug Hill region, with primary emphasis on possible solutions at the local level and with attention to the ways in which information developed and experience gained in the Tug Hill region may be usefully shared elsewhere in New York state. Section 847-c 5. To assist local governments and other appropriate state and local organizations to plan and work for a positive future, and to do this, as far as possible, through intermunicipal cooperation and through technical assistance . . . The Tug Hill Reserve Act (Chapter 486, Laws of 1992) calls for the establishment of a system of protection for the region's natural resources, administered by local councils of governments.

**Mandated Funding Level:**

None, but presently allocate approximately \$278,000 of our General Fund Appropriation and \$3,000 of our Special Revenue Fund appropriation to this program. Special Revenue Funds for this program area are associated with revenue streams that the program is able to generate for specific projects. This fluctuates on an annual basis.

**Brief Description/History/Background:**

The Commission has always placed considerable program emphasis on working with our communities to enhance natural resources of the Tug Hill region and on ensuring that those natural resources contributed to the region's robust natural resources based economies in forestry, agriculture and recreation. The Commission's legislative purpose states "Commission programs are geared toward the conservation and productive use of the natural resources of the region." The Commission is presently working on 3 watershed management efforts covering 60% of the region and extending well beyond the region to Lake Ontario and east to the Adirondack Park; working with the entire region on redefining and designating Special Areas under the Tug Hill Reserve Act (Chapter 486, L. of 1992); and assisting communities in advancing no fewer than 12 natural resource restoration or access projects throughout the region.

**Issues:**

The region's communities are faced with compounding natural resource related pressures that are both hurting the region's economy and presenting new opportunities for future economies based on the sustainable use of the region's rich and abundant natural resources. The region is a hotbed for alternative and sustainable energy production including wind farms, woody biomass electrical generation and hydro-electric generation. The region's forests continue to support a wood-based economy despite the significant loss in value-added manufacturing in the region. The region's resources are also being sought for water bottling production. In addition, the region is becoming a recreation magnet for a diverse array of all-season motorized and non-motorized recreational opportunities.

**Population Served:**

Forty-one towns and twenty-one villages within the legislatively designated Tug Hill region. In addition there are over 40 towns and villages within watersheds and project areas adjacent to the region that are benefitting from our regional efforts.

**Performance Measures:**

Number of natural resource related plans underway or completed. Number of natural resource restoration, access, recreation and energy projects completed. Amount of grant dollars secured for natural resource related planning and capital projects undertaken.

New York State Tug Hill Commission  
**PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET**

**Program:** Community Development

**Mandate:**

Executive Law, section 847-c 5. To assist local governments and other appropriate state and local organizations to plan and work for a positive future, and to do this, as far as possible, through intermunicipal cooperation and through technical assistance, including planning assistance, legal assistance, training, citizen education and participation assistance, and assistance in preparation of grant applications to other entities.

**Mandated Funding Level:**

None, but presently allocate approximately \$266,000 of our annual General Fund appropriation. Also, \$12,000 in Special Revenue is used to support special initiatives such as the development of a corridor management plan for the Black River Trail Scenic Byway. However, that contract's completion in Fall 2009 will lead to a decline in 2009-10 special revenue.

**Brief Description/History/Background:**

Over the past 20 years the Commission has experienced a steadily increasing demand for community development assistance. Starting with sewer and water infrastructure projects, the Commission has diversified its community development efforts to include Main Street revitalization, historic preservation, commercial/retail development analysis, and the enhancement of tourism and recreation facilities. The Commission has been successful in helping the region's communities bring millions of dollars of investment (over \$30 million in sewer investment alone) and annually (between \$6-10 million in other community development funding) to the region's communities and organizations.

**Issues:**

As with any rural region, our communities are facing declining population levels, out-migration of youth, and severe loss of manufacturing related jobs, particularly in the natural resource related value-added manufacturing sector. The region is remote with severe transportation challenges and has a lack of basic infrastructure (sewer, water and high speed broadband) which presents significant challenges in attracting economic development. Its communities lack the inhouse professional capacity to otherwise compete for the resources they need to invest in infrastructure improvements.

**Population Served:**

Forty-one towns and twenty-one villages which comprise the region and just over 100,000 residents.

**Performance Measures:**

Federal, state and NGO grant dollars received to advance community development initiatives. Strategic plans completed and ready for implementation. Attraction of private investment in development projects.

New York State Tug Hill Commission  
**PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET**

**Program:** Local Government Training/Information Services

**Mandate:**

Executive Law section 847-c 3. To stimulate action by public and private organizations on region wide issues, problems and opportunities that affect the Tug Hill region, with primary emphasis on possible solutions at the local level and with attention to the ways in which information developed and experience gained in the Tug Hill region may be usefully shared elsewhere in New York state. Section 847-c 5. To assist local governments and other appropriate state and local organizations to plan and work for a positive future, and to do this, as far as possible, through intermunicipal cooperation and through technical assistance, including planning assistance, legal assistance, training, citizen education and participation assistance, and assistance in preparation of grant applications to other entities

**Mandated Funding Level:**

None, but presently allocate \$167,000 of our General Fund appropriation and \$15,000 of Special Revenue Funds to this program element.

**Brief Description/History/Background:**

One of the most sought after services of the Commission is our training and technical assistance services to locally elected and appointed officials. Our annual Tug Hill Local Government Day is an all day regional conference drawing nearly 600 local officials. In addition, the Commission coordinates a number of locally based stand-alone workshops throughout the year. On average we facilitate approximately 6 such training venues a year. The Commission also fields hundreds of technical assistance requests from local officials and boards on an annual basis. We also rely on our model circuit rider program to deliver on-the-spot technical assistance and information, while also promoting intermunicipal cooperation and efficiency through regional councils of governments.

**Issues:**

Increasingly local officials and boards are facing unfunded mandates from the state and federal levels of government and demands for services that often are beyond the individual expertise of volunteer local officials. For example, effective in January 2007, state legislation mandated a minimum of 4 hours per year of in-service training for planning and zoning boards. In addition, local boards are constantly faced with turn-over of elected and appointed officials requiring lots of training to effectively carry out their public service requirements.

**Population Served:**

Forty-one towns and twenty-one villages that are specified in the Commission's legislation. In addition the Commission has a statutory mandate to share its experiences with state agencies and other rural municipalities throughout the state.

**Performance Measures:**

Training venues conducted, number of attendees and number of technical papers developed. Results from the recently completed five year survey of local officials on the Commission's programs and services continue to rate this service among the highest.

New York State Tug Hill Commission  
**PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET**

**Program:** GIS Mapping

**Mandate:**

Executive Law, section 847-c 5. To assist local governments and other appropriate state and local organizations to plan and work for a positive future, and to do this, as far as possible, through intermunicipal cooperation and through technical assistance, including planning assistance, legal assistance, training, citizen education and participation assistance, and assistance in preparation of grant applications to other entities.

**Mandated Funding Level:**

None, but presently we allocate \$115,200 of our General Fund appropriation and \$5,000 of our Special Revenue Fund to this program.

**Brief Description/History/Background:**

For years the Tug Hill Commission has provided mapping services to communities throughout the region as part of the Commission's assistance in research and local comprehensive activities. Over the past decade the Commission has invested significantly in Geographic Information Service (GIS) technology as a means of enhancing our ability to provide not only mapping services, but analytical tools to our communities. The Commission's GIS services have won awards, but more importantly have raised the level of geographic services to all our communities. Our GIS services not only support research and local planning efforts, but have become an important component of our grant writing capabilities. We are also bringing emerging technologies to project review capabilities of communities when conducting their land use reviews and community development activities.

**Issues:**

As rural communities face ever increasingly complex project reviews and policy questions their need for current information and analysis of that information needs to keep pace. Through a centralized GIS capability and through remote access to numerous data sets, Tug Hill communities have access to information needed in conducting their project review and planning activities. The Commission's GIS capabilities are also being used in monitoring change over time and in assisting communities in asset management applications involving infrastructure and highway services.

**Population Served:**

Forty-one towns and twenty-one villages served within the Tug Hill statutorily defined region. In addition the Commission participates on the State GIS Clearinghouse where we are able to assist rural communities throughout the state on GIS technology and applications.

**Performance Measures:**

Number of mapping requests completed. Technical assistance requests monitored and successful research and funding applications.

New York State Tug Hill Commission  
**PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET**

**Program:** Administrative Services

**Mandate:**

Executive Law, section 847-c 1. To adopt and use a seal; to sue and be sued; to appoint and remove officers, agents and employees and determine their qualifications, duties and compensation; to acquire, hold and dispose of personal property; to retain or employ counsel, private consultants, and independent contractors; to make and execute contracts and all other instruments necessary or convenient for the exercise of its powers and functions under this article. 11. To enter into agreements for the extension of its powers and duties to other local governments, in concert with local, state and federal agencies and others. 12. To lease and manage real property, solely for the purpose of providing for the official offices of said commission.

**Mandated Funding Level:**

None, but presently allocate approximately \$100,000 of our 2008-2009 General Fund appropriation to this program area.

**Brief Description/History/Background:**

As an independent Executive Branch agency the Commission is responsible for maintaining its own administrative procedures and all of its administrative support from fiscal, to personnel to procurement. With only 1 FTE devoted to administrative services considerable amounts of our administrative services are carried out by secretarial and program personnel in addition to their other program duties. In a day when accountability and administrative procedures for public agencies are increasing for more transparency and public accountability this function is increasingly competing with agency core program areas. In addition to general agency administrative services, the Commission administers 10-15 Legislative Member Initiatives on an annual basis and 1-3 other grants that augment agency and community programs (e.g. Scenic By-ways, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funding).

**Issues:**

In an era where there is legitimate but ever increasing requirements for transparency and public accountability, for a small agency to meet these administrative functions is challenging. While an essential function for any state agency, our constituency places little value or benefit on these bureaucratic functions that divert core program resources.

**Population Served:**

Internally, our administrative services support 18 FTEs, our Watertown office and three remote (in-home) offices services for our Circuit Riders. Forty-one towns and twenty-one villages served within the Tug Hill statutorily defined region. In addition we routinely get Legislative Member Initiatives for communities within in the region's four counties, as well as for communities beyond our statutory boundary.

**Performance Measures:**

Ability to meet payroll, fiscal reporting and budget reporting of the agency, ability to process overhead payment and contracts for equipment and maintenance, ability to administer employee services related to benefits, etc. Number of Legislative Member Initiatives contracts administered.

Agency Programs/Activities: Inventory and Key Data  
 NYS Tug Hill Commission

| Relation to Core Mission (H/M/L) | Program/Activity                  | Spending Category (SO, ATL, CAP) | 3/31/09 FTEs (All Funds) | General Fund Disbursements (\$000s) |                |              |                   | State Special Revenue Funds Disbursements (\$000s) |                |              |                   | Capital Projects Funds Disbursements (\$000s) |                |              |                   |  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|--|----------------|--------------|-------------------|---|----------------|--------------|-------------------|--|
|                                  |                                   |                                  |                          | 2006-07 Actual                      | 2007-08 Actual | 2008-09 Plan | 2009-10 Projected | 2006-07 Actual                                     | 2007-08 Actual | 2008-09 Plan | 2009-10 Projected | 2006-07 Actual                                | 2007-08 Actual | 2008-09 Plan | 2009-10 Projected |  |
| H                                | Planning                          | SO                               | 3.75                     | 247                                 | 257            | 278          | 284               |  |                |              |                   |   |                |              |                   |  |
| H                                | Natural Resources                 | SO                               | 3.75                     | 247                                 | 257            | 278          | 283               |  |                |              |                   |   |                |              |                   |  |
| H                                | Community Development             | SO                               | 3.75                     | 235                                 | 245            | 266          | 272               | 15   | 20             | 12           | 2                 |   |                |              |                   |  |
| H                                | Local Govt Training/Info Services | SO                               | 3.75                     | 149                                 | 154            | 167          | 172.5             | 8  | 15             | 15           | 15                |   |                |              |                   |  |
| H                                | GIS Mapping                       | SO                               | 1.5                      | 102                                 | 106            | 115.2        | 118               | 9  | 10             | 5            | 3                 |   |                |              |                   |  |
| L                                | Administrative Services           | SO                               | 1.5                      | 88                                  | 92             | 100          | 103               |  |                |              |                   |   |                |              |                   |  |
| M                                | Other NPS (Contracts/Consultants) | SO                               |                          |                                     |                | 300          |                   |  |                |              |                   |   |                |              |                   |  |