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Tug Hill



CONSERVATION PROFILE

The 150,000-acre Central Tug Hill Forest is one of the three largest intact forests in New York State. Thanks to its high level of precipitation—most of which falls as snow—and its relatively poor soils, Tug Hill is comprised of largely undeveloped northern hardwood forests, extensive wetlands and the headwaters of 4,000 miles of river and streams. Within the borders of the central forest, seven different rare plants species, four rare animals species and 14 different natural communities can be found.

An intact forest of this size provides habitat for wide-ranging mammals, such as bobcat and black bear and interior forest species such as blackburnian warblers and goshawks. By preserving it, we will also protect the water quality of the 4,000 miles of river and streams that flow off Tug Hill.

IMPORTANCE

For more than a century, forestry has been the main industry of this area. Timber was intensively harvested, often unsustainably, by a variety of landowners. Forest fragmentation affects many Tug Hill species that need continuous habitat. Atmospheric deposition - including acid rain - could be impacting the region, too; it alters soil composition, stresses tree health and impairs water quality in the Tug Hill's lakes and streams.



STRATEGIES

In 2002, The Nature Conservancy and partners protected a key 45,000-acre property in the heart of the Central Tug Hill Forest, which at the time was the Conservancy's largest land deal in New York state. To date, approximately 80,000 acres of the 150,000-acre core forest have been protected by the Conservancy and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Included in this is 15,000 acres of core forest that The Nature Conservancy owns and manages for mature forest conditions. Based on analysis by our science and conservation team, we estimate that of the additional 70,000 unprotected acres in the core forest, The Nature Conservancy will need to directly acquire another 10,000 acres. This will ensure that wide-ranging and interior forest species have enough habitat to thrive.



SPECIES

Tug Hill is a dense forest filled with red spruce, sugar maple, yellow birch, balsam fir and American beech, among others. The rare Brown bog sedge, Weigand's sedge, wild sweet william and both auricled and broad-lipped twayblade can also be found here.

The large area provides habitat for black bear, bobcats, fishers and white-tailed deers. Many types of birds are found in Tug Hill, such as wood thrushes, great blue herons, ducks, waterfowl and neo-tropical song-birds. Tug Hill's streams are home to brook trout and eastern pearlshell mussels.

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Marr at (585) 546-8030 or emarr@tnc.org.



Based on the current average fair market value for land acquisition and stewardship in this area, the price per acre protection at Tug Hill is \$523.

Photo Credits

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Back Page Left: Man fishing in the Tug Hill stream © R. Heilman

Back Page Right: Blue heron © Phil Marr