



# Brown Forest Legacy Tract, New York

April 1997

In the face of development pressure from nearby Utica and Rome, New York, 119 acres on the Tug Hill Plateau was dedicated to open space. On April 21, 1997, landowner Judson Brown received \$120,000 from the USDA Forest Service to protect the tract's scenic and recreational values by halting development, and allowing for commercial forestry.

"My grandparents and uncle planted trees on the property over 70 years ago", said Judson Brown. "My grandmother contracted the first thinning in 1956, and I oversaw the second thinning in 1976."

Originally, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) advised the forest management work; later advice was provided by a private consultant forester. "The project area had management work done over the years and presently shows positive results," says Gary Miller NYSDEC Forester. "Forest management will continue under a forest stewardship plan, remarked Dick Ackerman, a

The greenbelt has a designated trail system that is maintained by volunteers. Tug Hill Tomorrow, Inc., a regional land trust incorporated in 1991, holds the easements and monitors the tracts. The town of Trenton owns one parcel that has a parking area to allow for access to these private lands.

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Judson Brown Landowner

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Tug Hill Tomorrow told Mr. Brown about the Forest Legacy Program. "My brother and I were not in a position to donate easements on all our property, Brown said. "I thought it was terrific that someone had thought up a program like this. We wanted to

keep our land open and practice forestry on it, and the Forest Legacy Program was right in line with what we wanted."

The Brown easement protects springs that feed Ninemile Creek, and the watershed for the Village of Holland Patent. Under the easement, opportunities for hiking and skiing would continue to be available to the public.

"The program is a great opportunity for open space protection," says Doug Wilson, NYSDEC Real Property Supervisor, who worked on the project. "The Browns were good patient people to work with. The result is a positive public opportunity."

Tug Hill Tomorrow has agreed with NYSDEC to monitor the Brown tract, which entails visiting the tract at least once a year.

The Forest Legacy Program protects important forests from conversion to nonforest uses. Important forests are those that provide critical wildlife habitat; protect water quality, offer outstanding recreation opportunities, afford outstanding scenic views, are home to historic sites, and/or provide the opportunity to continue traditional forest uses. A Federal-State partnership allows landowners to keep their land private while ensuring it remains forest forever.



Planted red pine stand on the Brown property, immediately after thinning—1992.

Forest Service official who worked on this project. "Thus, in keeping with the aim of the Forest Legacy Program, this forest will remain a working forest."

It all started when Mr. Brown's uncle, Sheldon Judson, Jr., became concerned at the potential for development of the area. He and his nephews donated easements on their own properties. Neighbors followed suit and placed easements on their respective properties. The resulting 200 acres of private land that went under easements became the Trenton Greenbelt.

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