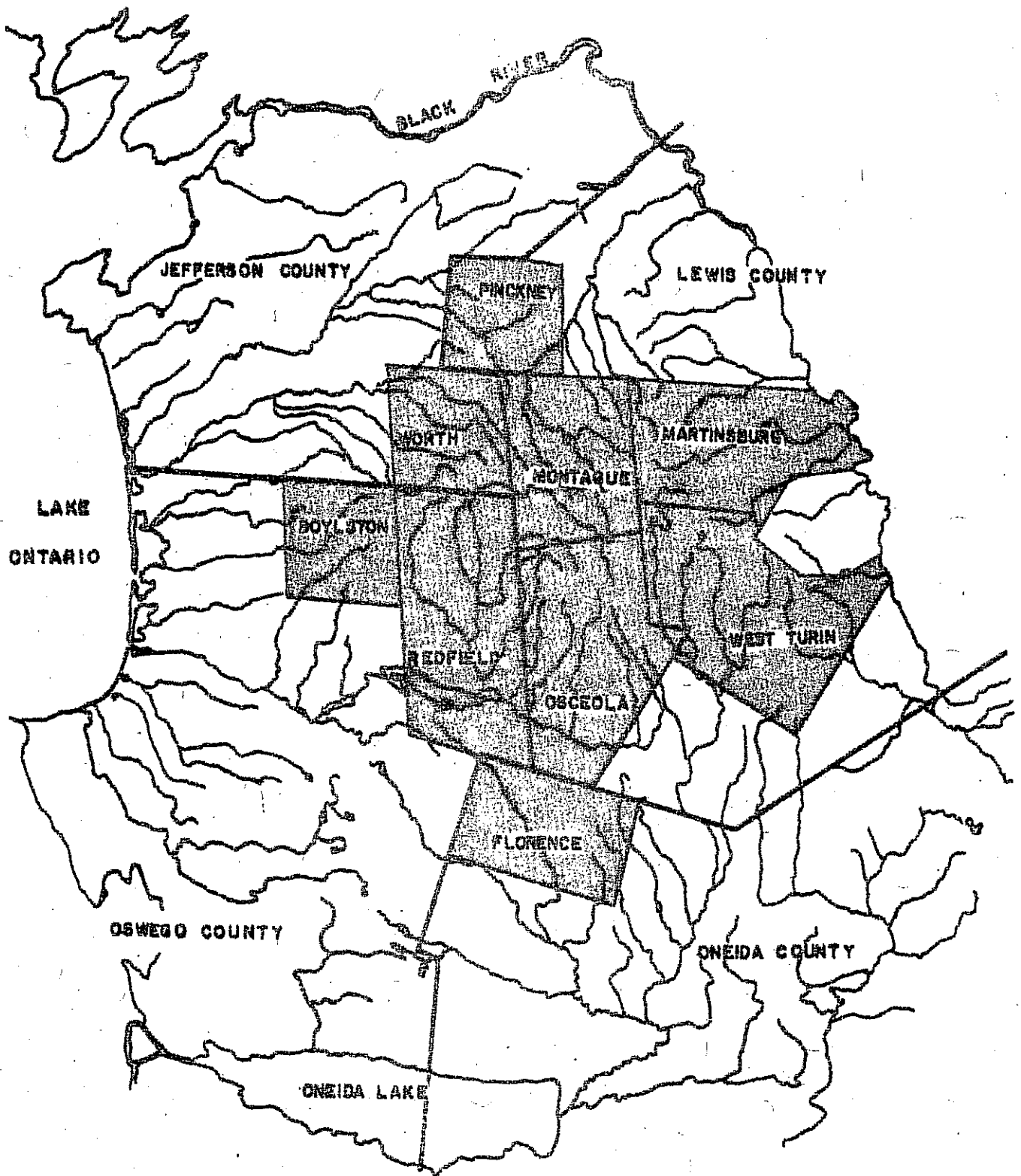

1. OVERVIEW

IN JUNE 1974 THE TOWN OF REDFIELD INVITED NEIGHBORING TOWNS TO MEET AND DISCUSS WORKING TOGETHER TO PLAN THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF LAND USE FOR CENTRAL TUG HILL. AFTER SEVERAL SESSIONS TO DISCUSS THE NEED FOR LAND USE PLANNING AND THE VALUES OF COOPERATIVE ACTION, THE COOPERATIVE TUG HILL PLANNING BOARD HELD ITS FIRST OFFICIAL MEETING OCTOBER 7, 1974. MEMBER TOWNS ARE BOYLSTON, FLORENCE, MARTINSBURG, MONTAGUE, OSCEOLA, PINCKNEY, REDFIELD, WEST TURIN, AND WORTH.



COOPERATIVE TUG HILL PLANNING AREA

Scale 1:500,000



Establishment of the Cooperative Board was by resolution of each town board to:

- Appoint a 5 or 7 person planning board and designate a chairman pursuant to Article 16, Section 271 of Town Law,
- Advise the town board on the extent that the town may protect and enhance its visual environment pursuant to Article 2, September 10, Paragraph 11 of the Municipal Home Rule Law,
- Produce a master plan pursuant to Section 272a of Town Law,
- Collaborate with other towns to form a "Regional Planning Board" pursuant to Section 239b of General Municipal Law, and,
- Appoint two representatives from each town to the Cooperative Board.

The need for planning for the future was generally recognized from the beginning.

At public forums held by the Temporary State Commission on Tug Hill, a frequent comment was, "Let's Keep Tug Hill The Way It Is."

There was also a desire to develop certain services and economic improvements in a way that would not drastically change the surroundings.

Many people recognized that residents and land owners had little control over change. The most dramatic evidence was Horizon Corporation's option to buy Georgia-Pacific's 55,000 acres in 1972. Though the option was dropped, much attention focused on Tug Hill and the event was a main factor in residents asking for the formation of a study commission.

Other evidence of the need for Tug Hill towns to plan and direct their own future was the growing activity in dividing Tug Hill land into smaller parcels and the attendant increase in land values. The number of parcels smaller than two acres for the 39 towns in the Tug Hill study area in Lewis, Oneida and Oswego County almost doubled between 1964 and 1974. Average price of inactive land for parcels of 50 or more acres has risen from \$5 to \$120 per acre over the past 10 years.

Much of the associated development has been in the form of camps. Redfield's population, for example, stayed the same over the last 10 years but the number of camps increased from 148 to 260 (76%) between 1972 and 1974. The increase occurred on outlying roads where vacation homes are located. At the same time, the number of occupied residences in the hamlet of Redfield decreased. The cost of road maintenance, particularly snowplowing, is very high per taxpayer for homes built at the end of isolated roads. Concern has been expressed that one or two decisions to build and live in such locations could actually bankrupt any one of the nine towns.

In endorsing the idea of cooperative planning, the towns recognized that they shared the central Tug Hill forest and watersheds and that this common interest outweighed the possible difficulties caused by the governmental division of the area into nine towns lying in four different counties. Other values of cooperative planning and regulation that were recognized include:

- Tug Hill people feel that whatever planning and regulating is done, should be done by the towns. They feel they know the natural and other values of the area best and are capable of taking care of its future. At stake is the principle of "home rule" which the Cooperative Tug Hill Planning Board values highly.
- Some land uses cross town boundaries and some kinds of decisions in one town affect its neighbors.
- Along the same lines it was felt that although Tug Hill towns are small in population and influence, by banding together in land use matters they could make their weight felt both with private interests and at other levels of government. This has proven to be so. The evidence is strong that a plan for an area of over 200,000 acres that clearly shows how the pieces fit together based on sound technical and legal principles, carries considerably more legal and political weight than an individual town plan.
- The towns felt that the cost of planning, as well as of any implementation programs, would be less through joint action.
- There is a history throughout rural New York of town plans and ordinances falling apart because of pressure from strong outside or local interest. The inability of single town plans and ordinances to protect land resources is one reason land use powers have been removed gradually from towns and given to state or regional agencies. Cooperative action should be better able to deal with issues objectively and resists such pressures. If the nine towns can prove that this is so, the lesson will not only be important to "home rule" in Tug Hill but in other parts of rural New York.
- The formation of the Tug Hill Commission by the State Legislature showing a recognition that the future of Tug Hill was of interest to the citizenry of the State as a whole.

The feeling that working together makes sense was reinforced by the results of the questionnaire sent by the Cooperative Tug Hill Planning Board to all residents of the nine towns. Returns, summarized in Appendix B, show the citizenry's strong positive feelings about the need for directing the future.

The Plan which this document presents is based on an inventory of natural resources and a review of man's current impact on the land. The capability of the land to withstand various uses becomes a major factor in determining how to direct change and protect resources. Other factors related to the health, safety, prosperity and welfare of the inhabitants have been considered, such as the economy, recreational opportunities, historical assets, population trends, transportation, and local government facilities and services.

We, the nine towns of the Cooperative Tug Hill Planning Board, present this plan, then, to the citizens. It is presented in the belief that our destiny is in our own hands. We believe that our resources such as commercial timber and pure water, require a long term plan and that their future should not be purely at the mercy of land speculators and developers. We believe that local government is best able to act in the interest of all affected by land use decisions.



In forming a cooperative planning board, the nine towns signified their recognition of common problems and mutual interests with one another. A need exists to communicate and plan with towns outside the nine town area. Important topics for regional discussion include (1) urban residential pressures, (2) agricultural development, (3) transportation, (4) recreation and (5) resource management, especially of the region's watershed.

The Plan recognizes that the resources of the nine towns are of special interest to people in the surrounding region. In the future, it will be increasingly important for the Cooperative Board to monitor activities outside the nine-town area in order to respond effectively.

Three neighboring Towns, Orwell, Albion and Parish, formed the Salmon Rivers Cooperative Planning Board.

By cooperating with the adjacent towns, the Cooperative Tug Hill Planning Board hopes that the future character of the Tug Hill region will be consistent with the aspirations of its people.