

July 31, 2020

Fall 2020 Training Survey for Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals Members

Commission staff wants to help planning board and zoning board of appeals members meet their four-hour training requirement. COVID-19 and related concerns and requirements have made this a challenge in 2020. Please complete the survey, link below, so we can plan to meet your training needs this fall.

docs.google.com/forms/d/16ea-jCPIyPYLZorF9bRaxAGlcWpRI2q3mOkVO9bsrs/viewform?edit_requested=true

Please pass the link to others you think would like to respond. Thanks in advance for your time and participation.

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Black River Watershed Initiative News

Draft Ten Year Progress Report

Tug Hill Commission staff and NYSDEC's Eastern Great Lakes Watershed Coordinator, Emily Sheridan, have been working on a report to evaluate the implementation of the Black River Watershed Management Plan and the Black River 9 Element Watershed Plan, over the past 10 years, as part of the Black River Initiative. Over the next few weeks, the draft report will be sent to stakeholders with feedback requested through a survey. After this initial feedback period, the report will be published in draft, and input from the public will be invited. Please reach out to Emily with any questions at emily.sheridan@dec.ny.gov. Highlights from this report will be presented during the Virtual Black River Watershed conference (more details below).

Virtual Black River Watershed Conference

Details are being worked out for a series of free Zoom webinars this fall to include presentations that would have been part of last spring's Black River Watershed Conference, canceled due to COVID-19. On deck right now are presentations from four county soil and water conservation districts, as well as presentations about floodplain management, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the dam relicensing stakeholder process, a summary of the progress made in the Black River watershed over the last ten years, and a special feature on the history of the Black River by Peter Hayes of Constable Hall and Dr. Laurie Rush, archaeologist and cultural resources manager at Fort Drum. Please stay tuned for more information about the webinars at tughill.org/projects/black-river-projects/black-river-watershed-conference/.

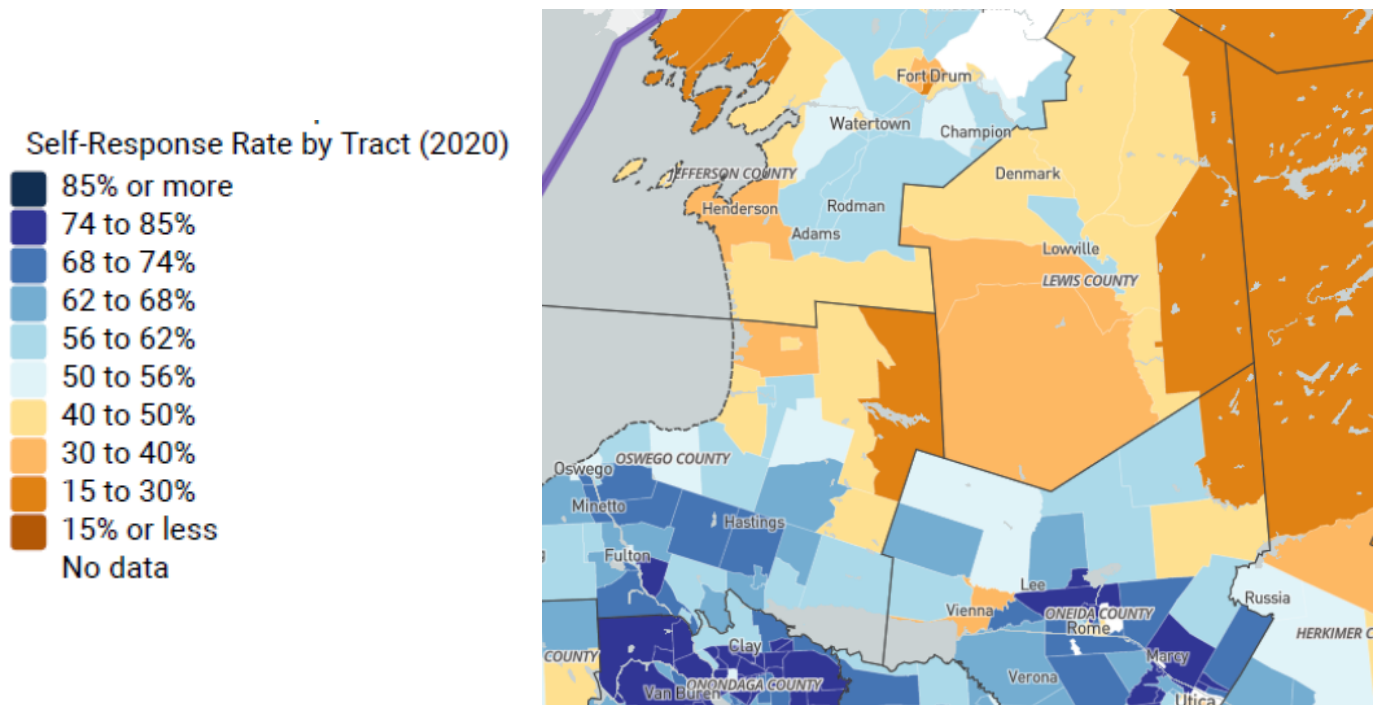
Black River Trash Bash

This year, the commission is working through the Great Lakes Alliance to assist Black River Trash Bash participants with collecting waste and data about the waste for the Black River Trash Bash. There is a wealth of information about conducting a beach cleanup safely at greatlakes.org/2020/05/safety-and-your-adopt-a-beach-cleanup/. In the Black River watershed, to date groups have agreed to host cleanups in Lyons Falls and at Arrowhead Park in Inlet. The Jefferson and Lewis County Water Quality Coordinating Committees will also be scheduling cleanups very soon. For more information about hosting or participating in a cleanup, either in the Black River watershed or another Great Lakes watershed, please contact Jennifer Harvill at the commission, jennifer@tughill.org.



Black River at Marble Street Boat Launch, Watertown.
Photo by Emily Sheridan.

2020 Census Self Response Rates July 30, 2020



2020-21 Justice Court Assistance Plan (JCAP) Grants Available

The Justice Court Assistance Plan (JCAP) grants for 2020/21 are now available. The Unified Court System's budget includes \$4 million in JCAP funding for this fiscal year, with the maximum grant amount per court at \$30,000 (joint applications may have a maximum amount of \$60,000). All town and village courts can apply for funding in many areas including office equipment and furniture, security equipment and court room and court facility improvements and renovations. The application must be filed by justice court personnel, so if boards are aware of an area needing funding, they should coordinate with their court personnel to apply. The deadline to apply is **October 8, 2020**. Much of the application must be submitted online, with the signature page, certified board resolution, estimates and the court's budget being either faxed, emailed, or mailed in. Court personnel will be able to access the page which includes the fax number, email address and the user name and password to access the application by visiting www.nycourts.gov/courts/townandvillage. Also available at that web address are guidelines for the board resolution, applying for construction funds, and security equipment. If you need assistance completing the application process, you can contact the Office of Justice Court Support at 1-800-232-0630 or contact your circuit rider.

Since the JCAP program was established in 1999, local justice courts have been provided with over \$35 million in equipment and other resources. There was \$3 million available for the 2019/20 JCAP grant cycle with 292 applications submitted and awards issued for 278 applications.

CaRDI Research and Policy Brief on Solar Siting

Cornell's Community and Regional Development Institute (CaRDI) released a second research and policy brief on solar siting, focused on the evolving permitting process, available [here](#).

The brief's conclusions states: "The fate of New York State's aggressive permitting and implementation agenda for LSS (large scale solar) projects is uncertain. As the specific standards and protocols for siting review under the new Act (Accelerated Renewable Energy Growth and Community Protection Act) have yet to be fully developed or implemented, it will be important for local governments and other stakeholders to continue to monitor these decisions. Additional research to assess how these decisions will impact participation and outcomes for all stakeholders is needed."

Fort Drum Intern Peter McCain

The River Area Council of Governments (RACOG), along with the NYS Tug Hill Commission, welcomed Fort Drum intern US Army Major Peter McCain on July 6, 2020. Peter will soon retire from the Army and has a background in economic development. He plans to pursue work in this field when he moves back to his home state of Pennsylvania after his retirement.

Peter is working on a resource management plan executive summary for RACOG, putting his experience in economic development to work. He has also been trained on the commission's GIS/GPS system, to do mapping work for communities. To date he has done sidewalk mapping for the villages of Port Leyden and Constableville, and will do more infrastructure mapping projects for communities soon. He has been impressed with the different things that can be done with GIS/GPS and plans to use them as a tool in his future employment.

Peter will be with RACOG and the Tug Hill Commission until the middle of August. It has been a pleasure having Peter working with us.



Vienna Comprehensive Plan Update in Progress

The town of Vienna will hold a public hearing Wednesday, August 5 on an updated comprehensive plan. The plan, developed by a committee made up of planning board members, town board members and other representatives from the community, is intended to prioritize capital investments and provide direction for future development within the community. The plan provides a framework for the existing zoning and land subdivision controls and will help assure that growth will be in accordance with existing plans for future water, sewer and road development. After the hearing, the plan will be reviewed by the Oneida County Planning Department.

Build-Ready Solar Sites Webinar August 4

NYSERDA is holding an informational meeting on their new Build-Ready program on Tuesday, August 4 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Registration is required for the [informational webinar](#).

NYSERDA has released a [Request for Information](#) (RFI) to engage with local communities across NYS to consider prospective sites for large-scale renewable energy project development. The RFI is meant to proactively seek nominations from elected officials, community members, private companies, or other interested parties for potential sites to consider as Build-Ready projects.

The RFI states that preferred sites for consideration will:

1. Fall within one of the following land use types:
 - Have 65 acres upon which a project could be built (i.e., excludes area covered by buildings, existing infrastructure, ponds, etc.). Sites smaller than 65 acres will not be considered through this RFI. Larger sites will be prioritized for consideration.
 - Dormant electric generating sites.
 - Former industrial sites.
 - Existing or abandoned commercial sites.
 - Brownfields.
 - Landfills.
 - Other underutilized sites.
2. Have flat or gently sloping terrain.

Additional information specific to NYSERDA's Build-Ready Program is available on [NYSERDA's website](#) or you may reach the Build-Ready Team directly at buildready@nyserda.ny.gov

Tug Hill Staff Lead Two Sessions in the QGIS North America Virtual Conference

Alaina Mallette (planner) and Mickey Dietrich (RACOG circuit rider) led a workshop and presentation, respectively, at the QGIS North America Virtual Conference. Alaina gave hands-on tutorials and troubleshooting support to participants in a four-hour introductory QGIS workshop. Mickey presented the commission's transitional design (from Esri products to open-source QGIS software) and lessons learned.

The conference was planned by the QGIS US User Group and their partners in North America. The conference is being held over three consecutive Fridays in July (17, 24, and 31). Each workshop and presentation has been recorded and uploaded to the QGIS North America YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCLQd1MsyWWPoli6rNLUCjhg/videos, which have collectively been viewed over 7,000 times.

If you are interested in learning more about QGIS or the commission's GIS program, please reach out to Mickey (mickey@tughill.org) or Alaina (alaina@tughill.org). For more information about the conference, visit the event webpage: qgis.us/qgis-na-2020.

Large Scale Solar Development for Landowners

On July 8, 2020, a webinar by Penn State Extension was recorded and is now available at https://psu.mediaspace.kaltura.com/media/Large+Scale+Solar+Development+for+LandownersA+Webinar+on+7-8-20/1_5fyg068g. While this webinar was geared towards Pennsylvania residents wishing to learn more about lease prices offered by developers, environmental impacts of solar development and legal considerations surrounding land leases, residents and community leaders in New York may also find the information useful and thought provoking.

Second Quarter Local Sales Tax Collections Down Significantly- June Collections Improve for Most Regions

A recently released report from the State Comptroller's office states that June 2020 sales tax data showed mixed results for local governments. Year-over-year statewide local collections were down 25.4 percent, a slight improvement over the 32.3 percent drop in May and slightly higher than the 24.4 percent decrease in April.

However, sales tax performance for June varied considerably, with many counties in regions that began reopening sooner seeing growth over June of 2019, and New York City having a particularly steep decline (see page 2 of the report for more details). For the second calendar quarter (April-June) overall, local sales tax collections declined significantly in all parts of the state, with the statewide total down 27.1 percent, or \$1.2 billion, over the same quarter in 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic shuttered many businesses in mid-March, caused spikes in unemployment and a national recession, and was the main driver of quarterly sales tax declines, which were especially steep in April and May. By early June, most retail stores and offices in upstate regions were conditionally permitted to reopen under strict safety guidelines, while downstate regions were not permitted to reopen as soon, especially New York City.

The second quarter drops came after a 4.6 percent increase in first quarter (January-March) collections, the strength of which was partly due to better collection of taxes on internet sales from small, out-of-state merchants (see page 3 for more details).

To view this report, go to the website here: www.osc.state.ny.us/local-government/publications.

Cornell Local Roads Program August Webinar Schedule

Keeping your Culverts "Well"

8/4/20, 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. EST, Presented by Willy Grimmke, PE

Willy will cover distresses and deterioration frequently found in culverts and discuss maintenance techniques for correcting those issues.

[Register Here](#)

Off the Rails: Safety Along the Roadside

8/11/20, 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. EST, Presented by David Orr, PE

To improve driver safety, many agencies turn to guiderail. During this webinar, David will discuss steps that should be reviewed prior to installing rail, how rail works, and the basics of a proper roadside barrier.

[Register Here](#)

The "Dirt" on Gravel Roads

8/18/20, 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. EST, Presented by David Orr, PE

Gravel roads should be designed similarly to paved roads, but there are some differences. This webinar will provide the basics of what makes gravel roads unique, review maintenance needed, and describe when (and how) to pave a gravel road.

[Register Here](#)

Contact Us

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1-888-785-2380.

For upcoming trainings, grant deadlines, and meetings, view our [calendar](#).

Webinars for the New LGS-1 Retention & Disposition Schedule for NY Local Government Records

State Archives will be offering the following webinars for the **NEW** LGS-1 - Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records!

The new schedule will be released August 1. All previous local government schedules (CO-2, MU-1, ED-1, and MI-1) will be replaced by the LGS-1 on January 1, 2021. Local governments must formally adopt the LGS-1 before January 1 to continue legal destruction of records.

Join State Archives for these webinars created to introduce the new LGS-1, explain its role in your government and provide you with an overview of changes related to your records. Each session will also have time for questions.

To register for any of these webinars, click on the titles below:

[The New LGS-1 Featuring Records for the General Administration of all Local Governments](#) - Monday, August 24, 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.
This session will discuss the *general administration* records of *all* local governments.

[The New LGS-1 Featuring Records of Cities, Towns, Villages, and Fire Districts](#) - Wednesday, August 26, 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.
This session is for cities, towns, villages, and fire districts and their records.

Please note that these webinar sessions are for local government entities within New York State. If you have questions about any of these sessions, please [contact your Regional Advisory Officer \(RAO\)](#)