

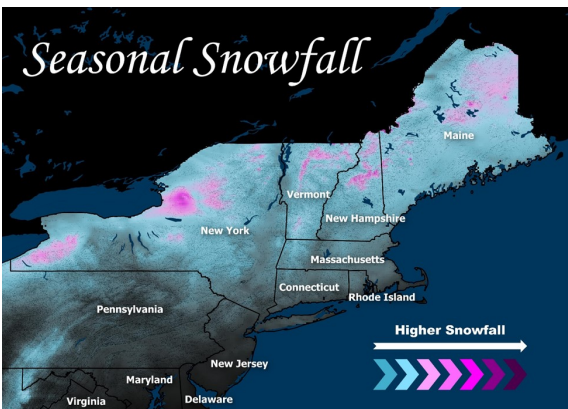
February 12, 2021

Snowmobile Economic Impact Study Kicks Off

Lewis County Economic Development, working together with Jefferson County Economic Development, the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, Oneida County Tourism, Oswego County Community Development, Tourism and Planning, Operation Oswego County, Tug Hill Commission and several area snowmobile clubs, has contracted with the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College (JCC) and Camoin 360 to undertake an economic impact study of snowmobiling in Lewis County and the Tug Hill region. JCC students will soon be at high-traffic locations throughout the four-county area interviewing snowmobilers on a variety of aspects of the popular winter sport. There is also an opportunity for snowmobilers to take the survey online starting Monday, February 15 at www.surveymonkey.com/r/LCTHRSNOW2021.

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The Tug Hill region is known for snow, as national weather data shows it is the snowiest place east of the Rocky Mountains. The snow and extensive trail network, enabled by landowners and local governments who willingly allow trails on property with no compensation, has created a strong winter economy reliant on snowmobiling. By quantifying the significance of snowmobiling activity, the partners will be better able to communicate the impacts of the sport on the local economy to local residents, landowners, local governments and New York State. Long term, the group hopes to help make Tug Hill an even more appealing destination to help bolster local spending and growth of existing and new businesses.

The results of the economic impact analysis are expected to be complete by the summer of 2021.

Tug Hill Commission Year In Review

In place of the presentation that would typically be given at the commission's annual meeting, executive director Katie Malinowski prepared a video overview of the commission's 2020 activities. The fifteen minute video can be viewed on the commission's [YouTube](#) channel.

NYS Tug Hill Commission 2020 Year in Review

Katie Malinowski, Executive Director

NYS Tug Hill Commission
Dulles State Office Building
317 Washington Street, 6th Floor
Watertown, New York 13601-1782
(315) 785-2380 | www.tughill.org
tughill@tughill.org

Lewis County Moves Agricultural Enhancement Plan Forward

In May 2019, Lewis County was awarded \$50,000 from NYSDAM as part of their Farmland Protection Planning Grant to update the 2004 Lewis County Agricultural Enhancement Plan. Subsequently, an Agricultural Advisory Committee was created to guide in the Plan's update. On a monthly basis, this committee, comprised of representatives from Lewis County, Naturally Lewis, Farm Credit East, Tug Hill Commission, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, Lewis County Farm Bureau, CCE Lewis, Lewis County Soil & Water and Lowville Producers, met to evaluate current agricultural conditions and trends. From there, with the help of feedback collected from surveys and focus groups, they identified key agricultural issues, opportunities and needs in order to offer strategies that address challenges and take advantage of the prospects identified.

Last month, the Agricultural Enhancement Plan Advisory Committee finalized the 2021 Lewis County Agricultural Enhancement Plan. A copy of the final draft Plan can be found on the Lewis County website at www.lewiscounty.org/agplan. The committee welcomes your feedback and invites you to submit comments on the electronic form provided on the webpage. A presentation was delivered to the Lewis County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board on February 8 for their approval. With their blessing, a public hearing will be set at the April 6 Board of Legislators meeting to solicit public input and feedback before adoption.

Commission Looking for Community Leaders to Support Civic Engagement and Social Connectedness Efforts in the Region

The Tug Hill Commission's mission is to help local governments and citizens shape the future of the Tug Hill region. The commission achieves this, in no small part, thanks to maintaining close working relationships and partnering with local, county, and regional entities as well as state agencies. Furthermore, the commission's enabling legislation charges the agency to strengthen the "long-term economy, employment, cultural, and social resources" of the region, which is often done by preparing, publishing, and disseminating information or reports to highlight for state agencies, local governments, and the general public issues, problems, and opportunities relevant to the Tug Hill region.

Considering the economic and cultural opportunities of the region, the commission is embarking on a program to build social cohesion, inclusive governance, and connectedness on Tug Hill and with the surrounding communities. The program to create a sense of belonging and build meaningful contact and communication within the community and with neighboring communities. To do so, the program must promote trust within and between communities in an effort to increase civic engagement in all aspects of social and cultural life. This programming also strives to engage a new set of leaders as champions for social cohesion and civic engagement.

In partnership with SUNY University at Albany, the commission will launch a baseline study of social relations, connectedness, and the community orientation to the common good. Simultaneously, a regional leadership team made up of Tug Hill residents will be established to address the issues that come from the study and through organic conversations. Some other tasks that the leadership team might address are: developing outreach strategies for civic engagement and social cohesion programming (e.g., civic engagement campaign), writing recommendations on improving local governance, and review project proposals that the commission and/or its partners develop throughout these efforts. A first meeting will be setup with potential community leaders to establish mutual expectations and an action agenda.

We are looking for individuals who are committed to strengthening the social fabric of the region. These individuals should be leaders in their community and passionate about the Tug Hill region. If you would like to participate in the community civic engagement leadership team or would like to nominate someone else, please submit a nomination form to the commission using [this link](#) by February 26, 2021. If you have any questions about this program, please reach out to Alaina, alaina@tughill.org, or Katie, katie@tughill.org.

RACOG February Board Meeting

The River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) will hold their February 17 board meeting by Zoom at 6 p.m. Kristopher Reff from the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) will present about the Black River Trail along with DOT's consultant, Barton & Loguidice.

If you would like the Zoom information for the meeting, please contact Mickey Dietrich at (315) 681-5023 or mickey@tughill.org.

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Webinar February 25

Electric vehicles have gone mainstream and growing demand for public charging access will significantly impact municipal planning activities. Whether your jurisdiction is considering providing public charging resources for your residents or adding electric vehicles to your fleet, this webinar will discuss the benefits of developing a robust network of charging resources. Highlighting local municipal and commercial projects, PlugIn Stations Online will demonstrate the value of EV charging infrastructure in your community.

On Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 6:30 p.m., Ron Semp, Director of Commercial Sales for PlugIn Stations Online will present this information. Mr. Semp works directly with stakeholders promoting electrical vehicle charging for commercial, institutional, and municipal end users. He is also responsible for project development which includes site consultation, proposal development, and sales. To register: us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Em8FzMtwT-Oo20JIPC_axg

Conservation on Tug Hill Webinar Series

Conservation on Tug Hill Part 3 – Forest Conservation, will take place on Wednesday March 10, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time. In this third and final installment in the series, you will learn about the multiple benefits of forest conservation, and existing and proposed funding programs. To register: us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_68NAWYdDQgmARKRpj1JTCA

The webinar recording for *Conservation on Tug Hill Part 2 - Farmland Conservation* is available on the commission's [YouTube page](#).

Letters from a Tug Hill Logger – Part 2 February 24

This is part two of a three-part series narrated by Leona and Peter Chereshnoski, the granddaughter and great-grandson of John Clemens and keepers of his treasured scrapbooks of memories. They will read letters, share stories, show off artifacts and photos and “spin yarns” of Tug Hill logging in its hey-day, all through the eyes of two remarkable personalities, one who wrote the stories and the other that broadcast them over the radio for the masses to hear. In this second session, Leona and Peter will read letters about both hardship and humor, so join us and find out what happens to the snow on Tug Hill at the end of winter. To register: us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7FQIt7HgTpmUVADeB7gTDg

Cyber Security Practices in 2021 Webinar Recording Available

Lisa Atkinson, from Zelvin Security, presented on the 2021 threat landscape in the cyber security world. The recording is available on the commission's [YouTube page](#).

ANCA Clean Energy Communities Webinars February 23 and March 2

Join the Adirondack North Country Association's (ANCA) Clean Energy Communities (CEC) Coordinators Nancy Bernstein and Jennifer Perry for an overview of NYSERDA's recently announced Clean Energy Communities Leadership Round.

What: Introduction to the Clean Energy Communities Leadership Round Webinar

When: Tuesday, Feb. 23, 1:00-2:30 p.m. or Tuesday, March 2, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Where: Virtual via Zoom

Register here for February 23, 1:00-2:30 p.m.: adirondack.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=144

Register here for March 2, 9:30-11:00 a.m.: adirondack.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=145

Nancy and Jen will provide an overview of the CEC program including clean energy project funding opportunities, access to match-free grants, pathways to CEC designation, review of individual “High Impact Actions,” opportunities to be recognized for completed action, and firsthand experience from municipal neighbors who participated in CEC Round 1.

Clean Energy Communities Leadership Round Announced

The NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has over \$17 million to help communities implement actions to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change in a new Clean Energy Communities Leadership Round. Since the Clean Energy Communities program launched in 2016, more than 600 communities have completed 1,700 high-impact actions through the program.

Four high-impact clean energy actions must be completed to earn a Clean Energy Communities designation. This round builds on the previous round of the program. Local governments in New York State interested in participating in the program can apply for grants through NYSEDA's online [portal](#) on a rolling basis, until December 31, 2025 or until funds are exhausted. Grants available include:

1. **Clean Energy Communities Grant** of \$5,000 for communities that complete at least four NYSEDA-identified [high-impact actions](#).
2. **Action grant** of up to \$50,000 for adopting the NYStretch Code and up to \$60,000 for undertaking one or more clean energy Community Campaigns.
3. [Disadvantaged Communities](#) that are awarded more than \$20,000 for a clean energy project can qualify for an additional \$10,000 to further the project.
4. **Point-based grants** where communities earn points for each clean energy action completed. Upon crossing certain point thresholds, communities will become eligible for larger grant amounts.

The program also provides Clean Energy Community Coordinators at no charge to help communities develop and prioritize clean energy goals; assist with accessing easy-to-use resources, such as guidance documents and case studies; and help them leverage available funding and technical assistance opportunities. Local governments interested in working with a coordinator to develop their plan and complete the actions can find local contact information [here](#).

The Clean Energy Communities Program is funded through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and the Clean Energy Fund (CEF).

DEC Buffers in a Bag Program Open

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) application period for the Trees for Tribes' Buffer in a Bag program is now open. Private and public landowners who qualify may apply for a free bag of 25 tree and shrub seedlings for planting near streams, rivers, or lakes to help stabilize banks, protect water quality, and improve wildlife habitat.

To qualify, landowners must have property in NYS with at least 50 feet that borders a stream, river, or lake, and provide photos or a map of the planting location. Previous recipients are encouraged to reapply to continue to build their riparian buffer. Applicants are eligible for one bag of 25 seedlings and recipients are chosen on a first-come, first-served basis. A total of 500 bags will be available statewide for this round of applications.

Seedlings are provided by DEC's Colonel William F. Fox Memorial Saratoga Tree Nursery and the Trees for Tribes program is supported by the State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). Governor Cuomo's proposed 2021-22 Executive Budget includes sustained record funding for the EPF at \$300 million.

Visit DEC's website for more [information about the Buffer in a Bag application process and requirements](#). Applications are due by 3:00 p.m. on April 12. Contact treesfortribs@dec.ny.gov with questions and visit [Trees for Tribes](#) Program on DEC's website to learn more.

New State Archives Advisory Just Out

Does your municipality use social media to communicate with citizens and gather feedback? Twitter, YouTube, Vimeo, TikTok, Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, LinkedIn, among others? These sites can create records that must be managed, just like any other record.

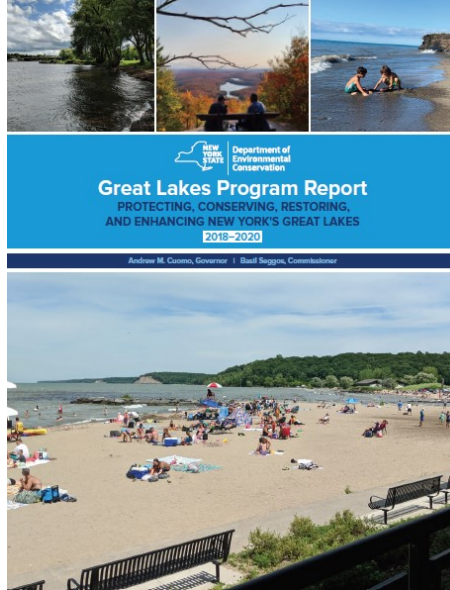
Take a look at State Archives latest [advisory](#) to learn what records you might be creating, how to manage them, and the risks you should be aware of when using social media.

DEC RELEASES 2018-2020 REPORT ON NEW YORK'S GREAT LAKES

State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos recently released [the 2018-2020 progress report](#) on the restoration and protection of New York's Great Lakes resources. Prepared every two years, the report highlights partnerships and achievements completed towards achieving shared goals of New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda. This progress is achieved by applying adaptive, ecosystem-based management approaches that balance the needs of communities, nature, and the economy, and prioritize science-based decision making.

The [2018-2020 Great Lakes Program Report](#) highlights significant achievements, as they relate to the Tug Hill region, include:

Celebrating 10 years of progress under the Black River Initiative, including 72 actions with project funding totaling \$35,812,470 to improve water quality, natural resources management, and quality of life for the area, and benefitting [environmental justice](#) communities, such as Carthage and Lowville.



- Identifying barriers to aquatic connectivity using the [North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative](#) protocols, and by partnering with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- Mitigating flood risks within Fish Creek through the [Resilient NY Study](#), and applying these assessments to other flood prone communities in the region.
- Engaging teachers and students in Great Literacy and Stewardship under the NYSDEC/ NY Sea Grant [Great Lakes Ecosystem Education Exchange](#).

In the coming year, DEC's Great Lakes Program will update the [Great Lakes Action Agenda](#) for the next 10 years. The updates will ensure the Action Agenda reflects emerging challenges, new science, and innovative approaches in order to address the most pressing issues within our Great Lakes communities and ecosystems. DEC encourages interested individuals and organizations to get involved at the local and regional level and to share your ideas and goals for the lands and waters of our Great Lakes basin. To learn more and sign up for email updates, visit www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25562.html, or email us at greatlakes@dec.ny.gov.

Court Records with the Office of Court Administration - State Archives Free Training Opportunity

Wednesday March 17, 10 a.m.

Join Geof Huth, Chief Records Officer for the Office of the New York State Unified Court System, as he discusses the unique rules and retention and disposition schedules that apply to municipal court records. Learn how to use these schedules, how to organize files, how to properly dispose of court records, and other special rules those who manage court records should be aware of. [Register today](#). Can't make a live State Archives webinar? Watch the recording on the [YouTube channel](#).

Contact Us

NYS Tug Hill Commission
317 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Phone: 315-785-2380
Toll Free within the region:
1-888-785-2380
Email: tughill@tughill.org

Visit us at:

Web: www.tughill.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TugHillCommission

To request our newsletter electronically please email gwen@tughill.org or call

1-888-785-2380.

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