

Welcome Gabriel

November 18, 2022



Gabriel Yerdon joined the Tug Hill Commission this past week as a project specialist. Gabriel was raised in Sandy Creek and has strong family connections to the Tug Hill region. Gabriel is a 2020 alumnus of Tufts University, with a bachelor's degree in biology and environmental science. Prior to beginning at Tufts, he participated in the inaugural year of the 1+4 Bridge-Year Service Learning Program, where he lived in Southern Brazil for eight months while living with a host family and volunteering at a wildlife rehabilitation center. Post-graduation, Gabriel worked as an environmental scientist contracted with the Environmental Protection Agency Region 1 (New England). This past summer he returned to the area as a seasonal environmental DNA project technician with The Nature Conservancy's St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) program in Pulaski.

He collected data through much of Tug Hill and beyond to the Adirondacks and the St Lawrence.

In his spare time Gabriel enjoys all things outdoors including hunting, hiking, and downhill and water skiing. He also loves to travel and spend time on his family farm with his border collies, sheep, goats, alpacas and other critters. Gabriel is very excited to bring his passion for the Tug Hill region, its people, and its natural resources to his position with the Tug Hill Commission.

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Commission Board Meeting December 12

The Tug Hill Commission will meet on Monday, December 12, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the Town of Watertown Municipal Building, 22867 County Rd 67, Watertown, NY 13601. The public is welcome to attend.

The Constable Chronicles Continue!

The Constable Hall Association and the Tug Hill Commission are pleased to present a fifth installment in the *Constable Chronicles* webinar series. We hope you'll join us!

Join Constable Hall Association members Peter Hayes and Martha "Marty" Constable Murray to learn more about how the children who grew up in Constable Hall in the early 1800s experienced the Adirondack wilderness bordering the Tug Hill region. Records show that by the 1830s, the Constable children were ranging through the western Adirondacks from Big Moose to Blue Mountain Lake, making them some of the first non-native people to see the area.

"Constable Chronicles: Into the Adirondack Wilderness" will take place on

Wednesday, November 30, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. Attendance is completely free, but pre-registration is required: pre-register by clicking [here](#).

Are you new to the *Constable Chronicles* series and don't know how to catch up? Click [here](#) for the playlist on the Tug Hill Commission's YouTube channel to view the previous four installments.

To stay up to date on future Tug Hill Commission webinars, workshops, training, events, and more, check out our spotlight webpage on the Tug Hill Commission website [here](#).



(Photo/artwork courtesy of the Constable Hall Association.)

Lake-Effect Electrification Study Underway; Sensors Installed Across the Region

The *Lake-Effect Electrification and the Impacts of Wind Turbines on Electrification East of Lake Ontario* study, referred to as LEE, is underway. Funded by a \$1 million National Science Foundation grant, [SUNY Oswego](#) is partnering with the University of Oklahoma and the [National Severe Storms Laboratory](#) (NSSL) to research the problem of lake-effect lightning striking and damaging local wind farms. Solar-powered, portable Lightning Mapping Array sensors have been installed across the Tug Hill region and will collect lightning related data. NSSL researchers are also using instrumented balloons to collect storm electricity data as they rise into the storm. The project also includes a Doppler on Wheels mobile unit on loan from the University of Illinois.

SUNY Oswego Professor Scott Steiger is providing real-time updates on the project on a Twitter account, @nsf_lee, and will present about the project at the Tug Hill Local Government Conference on April 6, 2023 at Turning Stone Event Center.



Personnel from Oklahoma's National Severe Storms Laboratory traveled to the region to install the lightning mapping array sensors.



Solar panels power the instrumentation on the sensors.



Batteries are installed with each sensor for backup power, and include information about the project.

Community Development Block Grants Announced for Constantia, Orwell

Governor Kathy Hochul announced more than \$33 million in Community Block Grant awards Tuesday, November 15, and \$2.5 million is designated for the Tug Hill region via state Homes and Community Development.

The town of Constantia is to receive \$1.25 million toward the cost of developing sewers in the Constantia-Bernhards Bay Sewer District. The district, on the north shore of Oneida Lake, has a significant number of old and failing septic systems, many of which are inadequate for more intensive demands placed on them since their original installation.

The town of Orwell was awarded \$1.25 million for improvements to their public water system. In recent years, the system has periodically experienced water shortages, boil water advisories, and high nitrate warnings, and the town has been actively pursuing options to remedy these problems.

Final Updated Tug Hill Regional Maps Delivered

Last week, the Tug Hill Commission concluded delivering updated regional maps to the remaining municipalities within the Tug Hill region. Every municipality within the Tug Hill region should now have the updated regional Tug Hill map with their municipality highlighted, suitable for hanging on a wall if desired.

The map displays the different areas across Tug Hill by highlighting the locations of state forests, state wildlife management areas, state parks, county and municipal parks, and water features such as streams and lakes. In addition, the map features basic infrastructure such as roads and railroads. The area around Tug Hill is displayed in less detail but includes Fort Drum, the border of the Adirondack Park, and various municipalities. The map stands to be used as a visual aide for each respective municipality and the various municipal boards across Tug Hill to help better visualize the location of natural resources and important infrastructure.

RACOG Digital Radar Sign Presentation

At the October 26 River Area Council of Governments meeting, Chris Paginello from Traffic Systems, Inc. did a demonstration of digital radar signs for interested member communities. Chris's presentation included both the solar powered permanent sign and battery-operated mobile sign. The signs can collect data on what day and time people are speeding through an area, which could allow law enforcement to be more efficient in setting up radar traps. The goal of the communities interested in the digital radar signs is to improve pedestrian safety on their roads. There are studies that show having these alert systems will typically slow people down 80% of the time.



Currently there are seven municipalities within RACOG interested in purchasing digital radar signs. If you are a community outside of RACOG please contact your circuit rider or contact Mickey Dietrich at mickey@tughill.org or (315) 681-5023.

Westernville Tornado Documentary

On July 7, 2021, a devastating EF1 tornado with winds up to 105 miles per hour hit the small hamlet of Westernville, Oneida County, New York. The storm ripped the steeple off the Presbyterian church, damaged homes, and destroyed hundreds of trees. This locally produced [documentary](#) tells the story of damage and rebuilding and describes how this hardship brought residents together.

Oneida County History Center volunteer Dennis Dewey produced the film in partnership with the Westernville Historical Society.



Updated Local Law Required for Enforcing Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code

The NYS Department of State has filed a Notice of Adoption of a rule repealing and replacing Part 1203 of Title 19 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations. Under Executive Law § 381(1) the Department of State is authorized to promulgate regulations establishing minimum standards for administration and enforcement of the Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (Uniform Code). Additionally, Energy Law § 11-107 provides that the Energy Code shall be administered and enforced in the manner prescribed by applicable local law or ordinance consistent with the standards and procedures adopted pursuant to § 381 of Executive Law.

Executive Law § 381(2) provides that local governments (cities, towns, and villages and, under some circumstances, counties) are required to administer and enforce the Uniform Code. 19 NYCRR Part 1203 contains the “minimum standards” established by the Department of State pursuant to Executive Law § 381(1) and requires each local government that administers and enforces the Uniform Code and Energy Code to establish a code enforcement program and to include certain features within that program.

Based on the new versions of the Uniform Code and Energy Code effective since May of 2020, corresponding changes were necessary to 19 NYCRR Part 1203 to coordinate these rules and regulations for administration and enforcement of the Uniform Code and Energy Code.

This means that local governments will have until December 30, 2022 to update their code enforcement programs by local law, ordinance, or other appropriate regulation. An updated model local law is available on the [Department of State's](#) website as well as full text of the [amended rule](#).

ANCA Webinar Series, NYSERDA “Overview of the Model Solar Law”

The Adirondack North County Association (ANCA) recently hosted a webinar in cooperation with [NYSERDA](#) titled “Overview of the Model Solar Law.” The speaker was Bill Oberkehr, a senior project manager at NYSEDA, working within the Clean Energy Siting space.

The webinar focused primarily on photovoltaic (PV) solar projects, but mentioned there are two other types of solar: focused solar which positions mirrors to focus on a single point, and thermal solar which captures the heat energy from the sun. They referenced the requirements of the “Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act,” otherwise known as the Climate Act, which is the NYS law mandating 70% renewable energy by 2030 and 100% projects.

The main purpose of the presentation was to continue to demonstrate the classifications and regulations on solar development that will be coming in the future, and how municipalities can prepare their local laws to site the solar projects in the best place for each municipality and its citizens.

Two resources to look at are the New York Solar [Guidebook](#) for Local Governments and the Model Solar Energy Local Law. If anyone would like a copy of the slides from the presentation, please email msmith@tughill.org.

Planning Board and ZBA Training

Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals members are required by state law to complete four hours of annual training. Have you been busy this year? Unable to attend training during the work week?

The New York Planning Federation (NYPF) is offering a four-hour Zoom webinar on Saturday, December 3, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the following topics:

- Comprehensive Plans
- Ethics for Planning Boards & ZBA members
- Cannabis & Zoning
- Brownfields and Opportunity Planning Process

The cost is free for NYPF members, \$50 for non-members. Please note, the NYPF is setting a 30-participant minimum for this event.

To register email nypf@nypf.org with your name, email and municipality/affiliation. A Zoom link will be emailed to you 1-3 days before the December 3 webinar. If you any questions call 518-512-5270 or email nypf@nypf.org.

Town of Watertown Beginning Zoning Updates

On November 7, Tug Hill Commission staff attended the Watertown Planning Board meeting to discuss updates to the town's zoning law. The updates include new solar energy provisions, adding new definitions, and adding certain allowable uses in different zones. The commission will begin work on these updates soon and will attend the next planning board meeting with a draft of the proposed changes.

Contact Us

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1-888-785-2380.

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