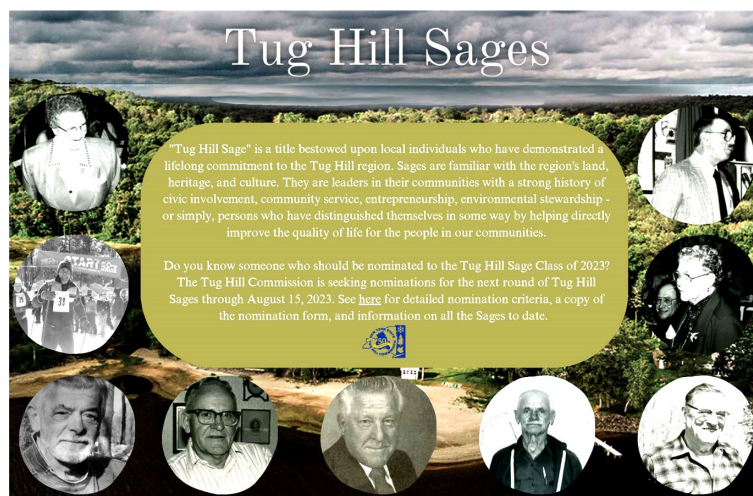


Tug Hill Sages Class of 2023 Nominations Open

As part of the NYS Tug Hill Commission 50th anniversary celebration, we are seeking nominations for Tug Hill Sages. Since 1983, the distinction of “Tug Hill Sage” has been bestowed upon local individuals who have demonstrated a lifelong commitment to the region through leadership, civic involvement, and community service – or individuals who have otherwise directly contributed to improving the quality of life for those on the Hill. Sages also have a deep knowledge of the Tug Hill Region’s heritage, culture, and environment. To date, 36 individuals have been recognized for their contributions to the region.

The commission will be accepting nomination forms from June 1 to August 15, 2023. Sage nominees will be reviewed and selected by the Tug Hill Commission board based on the information provided in the form and adherence to the nomination criteria. The newest round of Tug Hill Sages will be selected in September and announced at the commission’s 50th anniversary celebration October 19 at Tailwater Lodge.



A nomination form, detailed nomination guidelines, and pictures with backgrounds of all current sages can be found at the commission’s website: www.tughill.org. Nomination forms can be mailed to Taylor McKinney, Tug Hill Commission, 317 Washington Street, Watertown, NY, 13601 or emailed to taylor@tughill.org. If you have any questions please call Taylor at (315) 785-2606.

Jefferson County Awarded \$8.5 Million Restore NY Grant to Improve Deferiet Mill Site

Jefferson County was among four Restore NY ‘special projects’ [winners](#) statewide this round. Special projects are awarded to municipalities where a highly visible and blighted property causes severe economic injury and has a depressing effect on the overall economic development potential of the community. Jefferson County will receive over \$8.5 million for demolition of the former St. Regis paper mill in the village of Deferiet.

Commission staff assisted Jefferson County to submit a Restore NY Round 7 application in February for the “Reinvent Deferiet Initiative: Mill Site Demolition Project.” The project will demolish the century old, abandoned former St. Regis paper mill facility in the village of Deferiet and town of Wilna. The site includes 192 acres of land, 15 buildings, ancillary structures, foundations, and debris piles.

Amid tax delinquency, liability concerns, and the extent of demolition activities required, there has been no private party able to successfully return the site to productive uses. However, a partnership that includes the village of Deferiet, the town of Wilna, Jefferson County Economic Development, Jefferson County, the Tug Hill Commission, NYS Department of State (DOS), and the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) is working together to study and address existing site conditions with the goal to create multiple community-informed projects involving renewable energy, light-industrial/commercial redevelopment, and restoration of habitat.

Other programs are part of the same effort. NYSERDA Build-Ready program is assessing part of the site for solar development. Also, Wilna is working with stakeholders as it begins a DOS Brownfield Opportunity Area study for the site. An application to the National Grid Brownfield Redevelopment program is also pending.

In This Issue

- Tug Hill Sage Nominations Open
- Restore NY Grant Awarded
- Highway Dept. and Town Budget Workshop Held
- Tug Hill Commission to Meet
- Cemetery Workshop Held
- North Country Clean Energy Hub Launches
- Regenerate NY Forestry Cost Share Grants
- Lake Ontario Fisheries Public Meetings
- Wastewater Collection System Maintenance Webinar
- Cornell Local Roads Webinars

Highway Departments and Town Budgets Workshop Information Available

Approximately 40 town supervisors and highway superintendents packed the Adams municipal building on Tuesday, May 30 for the “Highway Departments and Town Budgets Workshop” presented by Laird Petrie. For a copy of the handout and a link to the recording, please [visit our website](#). You’ll find a library of other training resources here, as well.

Tuesday’s presentation discussed the duties and responsibilities of the highway superintendent and the town board as they relate to budgets, highway funds, hiring personnel, and purchasing of highway equipment and materials. Other topics included highway accounts, fund balances, highway budgeting, and record keeping. If you have any questions for Laird, particularly related to municipal budgeting, please let us know!



The Tug Hill Commission will meet on **Monday, June 26** from **10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** at the Castorland Village Office, 5185 State Rt. 410, Castorland, NY 13620. Highlights of the meeting will include routine business of the commission and a review of major projects and activities in the region. The public is welcome to attend and there will be a public comment period at the end of the meeting.

Lewis County Cemetery Workshop Well-Attended

On Friday, May 19 the Lewis County Historical Society hosted a two-day Lewis County Cemetery Workshop in Lowville. This free workshop was the result of a partnership between the Lewis County Historical Society, the NYS Division of Cemeteries, the Lowville Rural Cemetery Association, and the NYS Tug Hill Commission, which provided hybrid online options for those who could not attend the workshop in person.

Introductory remarks were made by Jonathan Miller, President of the Lewis County Historical Society, and Peter Hayes of the Constableville Cemetery Board. Each presentation was an open forum for attendees to pose questions to these experts in order to help address the challenges faced by municipal officials, cemetery boards, and those interested in historic preservation. The presentations were as follows: “Abandoned Cemeteries and Municipal Responsibilities,” with David Fleming, COO of Featherstonhaugh, Wiley, and Clyne, LLP, as a follow-up to the recently-updated *NYS Tug Hill Commission Technical and Issue Paper* by the [same name](#); “Cemetery Basics,” with Cynthia Craig, a licensed funeral director and vestigator for the NYS Division of Cemeteries; and “Historic Cemetery Preservation” with Joe Ferrannini of Grave Stone Matters, a professional cemetery conservator. Joe Ferrannini also led the second-day proceedings where workshop attendees were trained in practical preservation techniques at the Lowville Rural Cemetery.



Day one attendees included approximately 40 in-person participants and 72 online viewers.

If you missed the workshop or would like to revisit the presentation, resources and slide decks are available through the Tug Hill Commission’s [website](#), and Zoom recordings have been uploaded to our [YouTube page](#).

North County Clean Energy Hub Launches

Do you have questions about weatherization and clean energy projects or how you could help pay for them? The North Country Clean Energy Hub recently launched, with staff prepared to offer a variety of information on such resources to North Country residents. The mission of the hub is to “support people and businesses in adopting clean energy technology, utilizing energy efficiency programs, and finding jobs in the clean energy industry. These initiatives can save money, make homes healthier, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.” The hub will serve Clinton, Essex, Franklin, St. Lawrence, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Lewis counties.

The hub offers advisory resources that can help residents and homeowners access funding, information, and contractors. The advisory topics include home energy audits, weatherization and energy efficiency, green heating and cooling options, and renewable energy. Depending on your family’s income and the improvements you are interested in, you may be eligible for grants, loans, rebates, and tax credits.

As clean energy efforts expand in New York, the hub is seeking to provide workforce development support to ensure that there is an adequate pool of companies and skilled labor to meet the demand of clean energy projects. Contractors or those looking to enter the clean energy industry should reach out.

If you are interested in a clean energy project for your home or business, including weatherization, please reach out to your North Country Clean Energy Hub advisor. Middle and low-income people are especially encouraged to inquire. The advisor for Jefferson and Lewis counties is Eamon LaDue, el692@cornell.edu or 315-775-8864. More information and contacts for the hub can be found on the [Hub’s website](#). To locate your energy advisor in Oswego, Oneida, and other NY counties, visit [the NYSER-DA website](#).

DEC Announces “Regenerate NY” Forestry Cost Share Grants

The New York State Department of Conservation (DEC) has announced that \$850,000 in funding is now available for the third round of the “Regenerate NY” Forestry Cost Share grant program. The purpose of this grant program is to assist private landowners to support the regeneration of forests so they may continue to deliver vital services such as providing wildlife habitat, mitigating climate change, protecting air and water quality, and supporting the economy.

Regenerate NY is funded by New York State’s Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and managed by DEC’s Division of Lands and Forests. Private landowners planning to restore or establish five or more acres of forest land in New York State may apply for grant awards ranging from a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$100,000, with a required 25 percent match. Regenerate NY is a cost share reimbursement program, so applicants would pay the costs upfront and be reimbursed 75% of the costs.

Eligible projects include: tree planting, soil scarification, removing competing vegetation that would interfere with seedling establishment and growth, and installation of deer fence.

Applicants must work with a forester or a qualified natural resource professional to develop their project. Up to two applications may be submitted per applicant, provided the applications are for separate properties.

Applications can be submitted through the [NYS Grants Gateway](#) and will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on October 6, 2023, or until funds are depleted, whichever comes first. Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis. For more information visit the [DEC’s website](#).

Lake Ontario Fisheries Public Meetings

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) bureau of fisheries chief, Lake Ontario unit leader, and respective regional fisheries managers will be on-hand at two upcoming public meetings hosted by DEC partners in Rochester and Mexico. DEC experts will talk about the current state of Lake Ontario sport fisheries and take questions on a wide array of management actions and research taking place on the lake and tributaries. At the meetings, interested anglers will have the opportunity to speak directly with staff after a brief presentation.

The Lake Ontario Charter Boat Association is hosting the event in DEC’s Region 7 on Wednesday, June 21, at 7:00 p.m. at the VFW Hall, 5930 Scenic Ave., Mexico, NY 13114.

For more information contact Chris Legard, Lake Ontario unit leader, at 315-654-2147 or email: chris.legard@dec.ny.gov or visit the [DEC’s webpage](#) on the event.

Wastewater Collection System Maintenance Webinar

June 13

The Environmental Finance Center Network, in cooperation with the Environmental Finance Center at Syracuse University and the Great Lakes Environmental Infrastructure Center, is hosting a one hour webinar on Tuesday, June 13 at 1:00 p.m. Presenter and wastewater trainer, Gary Pearson, will discuss recommended routine maintenance tasks for wastewater collection systems, including:

- Methods for cleaning sewer collection mains
- How smoke testing is conducted and interpreted
- Flow testing procedures for collection system mains
- Methods used to conduct condition assessment mains
- Defining flow and filtration in collection systems
- Methods for assessing lift stations & diagnose operational issues
- And more!



The webinar is geared for managers, owners, and operators of wastewater systems with an average daily flow of less than one million gallons, decision-makers for wastewater utilities, including mayors, finance officers, utility managers, public works directors, city councilors, board members, and clerks, as well as consultants and technical assistance providers serving wastewater systems.

While this webinar has not been submitted for approval of continuing education credit, a certificate of attendance can be given to eligible attendees. There is no guarantee attending will meet your PDH or CEU requirements.

More information and registration can be found [here](#).

NYSLTAP - CLRP Foundational Webinars Series

Join the New York State Local Technical Assistance Program Center - Cornell Local Roads Program for their ongoing series of free foundational webinars focused on the important principles key to local highway agency operations and management.



These webinars are held on Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., unless otherwise noted.

June 13 - [Asset Management*](#)

June 13 - [Estimating and Understanding the Costs of Highway Projects*](#)
(1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.)

June 20 - [Complete Streets and ADA*](#)

June 27 - [Guides*](#)

**Anticipated to be worth 1 PDH for engineering continuing education*

Contact Us

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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](#).