

## “Mementos” of 50 years: Share Your Memories with Us

The NYS Tug Hill Commission has been truly fortunate to work with the communities across the Tug Hill region for 50 years. In this time, we’ve met countless remarkable individuals, immersed ourselves in the local character unique to all parts of the region and provided technical assistance and capacity building. Most importantly, through our core competencies, we’ve worked to give our communities whatever tools and support they need so that they can shape the future they would like to see for themselves and the region. As the NYS Tug Hill Commission celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we are collecting memories and best wishes for the future in advance of our October 19 Anniversary Bash and Annual Dinner. To do this, we need our communities’ help.



### Memento: Celebrating Memories From Over the Years

In the last 50 years, the NYS Tug Hill Commission has been truly fortunate to work with the amazing communities and individuals across the Tug Hill region. As part of our celebration, we are collecting memories and best wishes for the future in advance of our October 19th Anniversary Bash and Annual Dinner.

Do you have any memories of the commission or words you would like to share? Have there been ways that the commission has helped your community? To share any memories or fun stories, please use the following link to our free Memento account, where you can record and upload to Tug Hill Commission’s 50th anniversary video album:

[tinyurl.com/tughillmemento](http://tinyurl.com/tughillmemento)

#### Submission Suggestions:

- Try to keep the video short and sweet - ideally, anywhere from 10 to 60 seconds!
- Share any memories or stories that are meaningful to you
- Speak as clearly as possible
- Check lighting - we definitely want to see you!



Use this button on the website to leave a video message!

Have you worked with the Tug Hill Commission in the past? Has our organization been able to make a difference in your community? Do you have any fond memories or funny stories you would like to tell? If so, we would love to hear from you. To share your memories, the commission has started a video album on Memento, a free platform that makes it easy to collect, record, and preserve your stories. Memento makes it easy to share your memories and stories, regardless of whether you have a video recorder or not.

To visit the Tug Hill Commission’s Memento album, please use the following link: [tinyurl.com/tughillmemento](http://tinyurl.com/tughillmemento). When directed to the page, simply click “Join the Video,” and you can record yourself then and there on your internet browser! Or, if you prefer, there is also an option to upload a video file, if you would rather record it separately. The album will be open for about twelve weeks, a few days short of the Anniversary Bash. We look forward to hearing from you!

## DRI and NY Forward Grant Funding Round Announced

Governor Kathy Hochul announced this week in Syracuse that \$200 million in funding is available through NYS's two signature downtown revitalization and economic development programs — \$100 million each for Round 7 of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and Round 2 of the NY Forward program, which focuses on revitalizing smaller and rural downtowns. This year's funding brings the total amount of NYS investment across all rounds of the programs to \$1 billion since 2016. Together, the two programs have awarded \$800 million in funding to 93 communities across every region of the state. Applications are available on the [Downtown Revitalization Initiative](#) and [NY Forward](#) websites. The deadline to apply is September 29 at 4:00 p.m.

Governor Hochul also hosted the state's first-ever forum in Syracuse on the past, present and future of the DRI and NY Forward programs. The forum, entitled "A Retrospective for the Future of the State's DRI and NY Forward Communities," featured mayors from communities selected in the first five rounds of the DRI, as well as private stakeholders engaged and invested in the DRIs, who provided advice, insights, lessons-learned and recommendations. Secretary of State Robert Rodriguez and Department of State staff shared that this year’s NY Forward program will consider two communities working together to submit an application. Tug Hill Commission staff are available to assist any Tug Hill communities interested in applying.

### In This Issue

- Mementos
- DRI and NY Forward Grants
- Loon Rescue
- NorCOG Economic Study
- Municipal Certificates
- Highway Dept. and Town Budget Workshop
- Active Transportation and Complete Streets
- Former Key Bank in Parish
- The Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg Presentation
- Community Forest Grants
- 2023 Forest Economy Program
- Timber Harvesting-related Permits

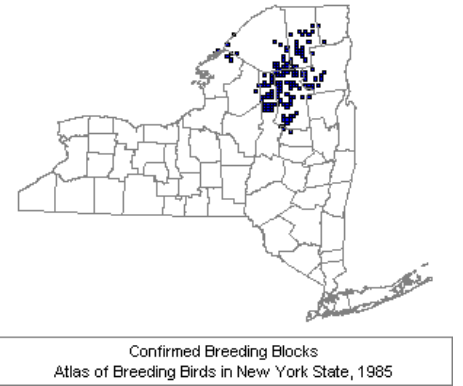
# Commission Staff Rescue Stranded Loon

Two Tug Hill Commission staff were quite surprised to come across a common loon on the shoulder of West Ava Road in the town of Ava, on Thursday, July 20. En route from Sylvan Beach to Turin to transfer the commission's MetroCount traffic counting system, they spotted what appeared to be a loon. Upon closer inspection, it was indeed a common loon stranded near the roadway with no significant water body for miles. The loon was alert and appeared in overall good health. When approached, the loon let out a signature "tremolo" call, often used in response to perceived threats. [Click here](#) to listen!



The loon most likely ended up stranded after mistaking the road for a water body. Loons' legs are placed far back on their bodies compared to other birds, making it nearly impossible for them to walk on land. Additionally, loons are heavy bodied birds with solid bones that help them dive after fish. Those adaptations also make flight very energy intensive for them. They can only take off from water and require at least 100 yards of open water as a runway. Find more information from the [Loon Preservation Committee](#) and [NYS DEC](#).

Jen Harvill and Gabriel Yerdon were able to contact a Region 6 DEC wildlife biologist who advised that the simplest and least stressful option for the loon was to release it into a nearby waterbody. The breeding plumage of adult loons is primarily black along their head and back, not ideal for an 80+ degree day, far from water. With the nearest DEC staff well over an hour away, Jen and Gabriel were able to capture the loon and transport it in a makeshift crate to a nearby waterbody. Upon release the very thirsty loon regained its vigor, gracefully swimming and calling once again, back in its rightful habitat. You can see pictures and videos of the release on the Tug Hill Commission's [Facebook page](#).



It remains unclear what a common loon was doing in Ava in July, with most New York loon breeding areas located in the Adirondacks and the St. Lawrence. However, it does serve as a welcome reminder of the mysteries of the vast wilderness that is Tug Hill, and the plants and animals that find refuge there.

Please remember, wildlife may seem sick, abandoned, or injured but that may not be the case. [Contact the NYS DEC](#) if you find sick, injured, or abandoned wildlife, or encounter nuisance wildlife.

## NorCOG Economic Study, August 16 Meeting

The North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG) signed a proposal letter with the MRB group on June 27 for development of an "Economic Resiliency and Recovery Plan," and the process is officially underway now, with a kickoff call via Zoom to define the mechanics of getting the project started. The kickoff call included representatives of the MRB Group, the Tug Hill Commission, and NorCOG. From now until the end of the project, there will be a coordination conference call every other week. The project is expected to take about six months, with a final presentation of the plan's findings in January of 2024. Information about the project will be available on the North Shore Council of Governments website, [www.norcog.org](http://www.norcog.org).

NorCOG has also scheduled its next meeting, which will be on Wednesday, August 16 at 7:00 p.m. at the West Monroe town hall, 46 County Route 11, West Monroe, New York. The main purpose of that meeting will be to meet with the County of Oswego Industrial Development Agency CEO Austin Wheelock, and David Turner, director of strategic initiatives for Oswego County and past director of the county Department of Community Development, Tourism, and Planning.

## Municipal Certificates of Incorporation

Municipal certificates of incorporation are foundational documents for a town or village's very existence, and are needed sometimes for financial matters and things like grant applications. As such, it is good practice for the municipality to be able to produce theirs when needed – and to look for it *before* needed. Otherwise, if the search is started when the town or village becomes aware it is needed, they may not be able to produce it in time.

It's a good idea to look for it now and keep it safe with your most essential documents! And if the town or village doesn't have one, and can't remember ever *having* one, there is hope. The official state repository of municipal certificates of incorporation is Researcher Services at [New York State Archives](http://New York State Archives), [archref@nysed.gov](mailto:archref@nysed.gov), (518) 474-8955.

# Highway Departments and Town Budgets with Laird Petrie

There is often confusion about who is really in charge of the town highway department. Is it the town board or the highway superintendent? This session will cover the statutory duties of both the town board and the highway superintendent when it comes to highway operations including the highway budget, hiring and firing highway workers, and control of highway equipment. All are welcome and questions are encouraged.

Since retirement from the Office of the State Comptroller in 2021, instructor Laird Petrie has been providing technical assistance and training to towns and villages in a four-county area through a contract with the Tug Hill Commission. This session will repeat what Mr. Petrie presented in Adams, NY in May.

**Wednesday, August 23, 2023**

**6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

**Town of Trenton Municipal Center  
8520 Old Poland Road  
Barneveld, NY 13304**

Sponsored by the NYS Tug Hill Commission



In cooperation with the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments

---

Call 315-785-2380 or email [tughill@tughill.org](mailto:tughill@tughill.org) to register  
for this free workshop.

# Active Transportation & Complete Streets Training

On Wednesday, July 19, three junior staff members at the NYS Tug Hill Commission attended an “Active Transportation and Complete Streets Training” workshop hosted at Watertown City Hall. In partnership with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and with support from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Jefferson County Planning, and the NYS Tug Hill Commission, Dan Suraci of Urban Cycling Solutions led an interactive workshop to a full house of municipal planners, public agency representatives, and other key community stakeholders.



The Center for Disease Control (CDC) defines “[active transportation](#)” as “any self-propelled, human-powered mode of transportation, such as walking or bicycling.” The Department of Transportation describes “[Complete Streets](#)” as a policy and methodology to design and maintain safe streets that support all manners of transportation for all age groups and ranges of mobility. The goal of the workshop was to analyze the two concepts in concert and to think critically about the role of municipal streets, especially in downtown areas.

The workshop challenged attendees to think about streets as more than just “arteries” into downtown areas. Streets, which are created and maintained by tax dollars, are fundamentally public spaces: apart from their obvious role in transportation and infrastructure, streets can also tie into public health concerns (especially when considering handicap accessibility and active transportation modalities), serve as community placemakers in certain circumstances, and are crucial economic drivers to hubs of business. Attendees were encouraged to not think of active transportation and Complete Streets policies as a solely metropolitan pursuit or possibility, and that thoughtful planning and maintenance, and the integration of some simple tools could help make rural streets safer and more accessible to all members of rural communities.



For the interactive component, workshop attendees were placed into groups and given markers and printed-out maps of intersections to suggest changes and improvements (i.e. roadwork, crosswalk additions or improvements, signage suggestions, visibility improvements, etc). The workshop also conducted a walk audit of the public square in the city of Watertown, assessing different intersections for their strengths and weaknesses, and thinking critically about how those spaces could hypothetically be changed with efficiency and accessibility in mind.

## Parish Town, Village, and Historical Society Meet on the Future of the Former Key Bank

Representatives of the town of Parish, village of Parish, the Parish Historical Society, and the New York State Tug Hill Commission met on Monday, July 24, to discuss the future of the former Key Bank in Parish. The village owns the former bank building, which was donated and has long been seen as the future home of the historical society. The topic of the future of the former Key Bank has been on the agenda of the past several village board meetings, in part due to interest expressed in potential future possible sale.

While the building is owned by the village, the historical society is a town historical society, and thus the village invited the town to attend this meeting.

Much of Monday’s meeting was spent discussing the future use of the building, its suitability for use by the town historical society, its cost of operation and maintenance and who would pay for those, and whether there is any advantage to any changes of ownership, such as joint ownership of the building by both the town and village, or by the historical society itself. Different ownership options mean different potentials for funding, including grant opportunities.

Another topic of discussion was whether there were alternatives to municipal or historical society ownership of the building, but there was a consensus that the intended purpose of the donation of the building to the village was to provide space for the historical society, and the priority should be to respect that intention.

At the meeting, the group decided to meet again on Tuesday, September 26 at 1:00 p.m. at the former Key Bank building, 2976 West Main Street, Parish. Video and audio recordings of Monday’s meeting are available on the village website, [villageofparish-ny.us/](http://villageofparish-ny.us/), under Minutes. Note that the first 20 minutes of the meeting do not have audio, due to initial technical problems.

# Upcoming Event

## “WE ARE STILL HERE: THE MICHISAAGIIG NISHNAABEG”



Join Chief Laurie Carr, Chief of the Hiawatha First Nation Council, and Assistant Professor Chadwick Cowie, for an introduction to the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, the Nation itself, and the confederacy it belongs to.



South Lewis Central School  
Auditorium OR Zoom



Friday, July 28, 2023  
6:30PM

Register at:

<https://tinyurl.com/BRHiawatha>

**Sponsored by:**

Tug Hill Commission  
Lewis County Chamber of Commerce  
Friends of the Black River

# Community Forest Grants Due October 11

An additional round of community forest conservation grants is now available through the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Municipalities can use this funding to purchase land or conservation easements to create new or expand existing community forests and protect land from development. DEC's [Community Forest Conservation Grant](#) program helps preserve biodiversity and safeguards the ecosystem benefits forests provide, such as stormwater mitigation, temperature regulation, and carbon sequestration, which in turn improves a community's climate resilience. In addition, these community forests will create new opportunities for public access and outdoor recreation.

Grant awards ranging from \$50,000 to \$300,000 are available for reimbursing the costs to acquire land, including the purchase price, appraisal, survey and boundary marking, title search, recording fees, and attorney fees. A 10 percent match is required. Acquired properties must be 10 or more contiguous acres, have forests on at least 75 percent of the property, be accessible to the public, and provide public benefits such as recreational opportunities, flood mitigation, wildlife habitat, clean water, and forest products.

## 2023 Forest Economy Program Information Sessions

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) has scheduled two information sessions in support of the fall, 2023 Forest Economy Program (FEP) grant application opportunity. Each session will consist of an overview of the program with plenty of time for questions.

Eligible organizations, which include but are not limited to nonprofit and governmental entities (state, local & Indian tribes), are currently able to access grant application details via the NBRC's [website](#), and attendees are encouraged to review program materials prior to attending. NBRC State Program Managers, and FEP Advisory Board members will be in attendance as schedules allow.

All information sessions will be held via Zoom and registration is required. Information for each is below:

**August 8, 2023** 9:30 a.m. Eastern Time, [register](#) in advance.

**August 9, 2023** 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time, [register](#) in advance.

Potential applicants for the Fall 2023 FEP grant round must express interest through Letters of Interest, which must be submitted by September 22 at 5:00 p.m. Letters of Interest will be evaluated by a 9-member Advisory Board, consisting of representatives from each of the four NBRC states. The Advisory Board will determine which applicants will be invited to submit a full application, which will be due November 10, with anticipation of awards in January 2024.

## Comment Period for Timber Harvesting-related Permits

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation proposes to reissue two statewide General Permits for placement, construction, maintenance, and removal of stream crossings for timber harvesting:

- 1) GP-0-23-004 Temporary Bridges no greater than 30 feet long; Temporary single arch bottomless culverts only in streams no greater than 4 feet wide; and
- 2) GP-0-23-005 Temporary Bridges no greater than 50 feet long; Temporary Single Culverts only in streams no greater than 8 feet wide. There may be no more than one crossing per 1,000 feet of stream course, and the crossing will be removed upon completion of the work.

The permit authorizations would include ECL Article 15 Stream Disturbance. The [draft General Permit](#) containing the full description of proposed authorized activities, terms, and conditions is available for review on DEC's website at: [www.dec.ny.gov/permits/93482.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/93482.html). **Comments must be sent in writing to** Kristen Cady-Poulin, NYS DEC - Division of Environmental Permits, 625 Broadway, 4th Floor, Albany NY 12233-1750, E-mail: [DEPPermitting@dec.ny.gov](mailto:DEPPermitting@dec.ny.gov) **by August 11, 2023.**

### 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](mailto:tughill@tughill.org)

Visit us at:

**Web:** [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org)

**Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/  
TugHillCommission](http://www.facebook.com/TugHillCommission)

**Instagram:** [Instagram](#)

To request our newsletter electronically please email [gwen@tughill.org](mailto:gwen@tughill.org) or call

1-888-785-2380.

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