

## 2023 Tug Hill Local Leaders Survey Results Released

Every five years, the Tug Hill Commission surveys local and regionally-elected and appointed officials, as required by [Article 37, Section 847-e of Executive Law](#). The most recent survey was conducted in April-May 2023, with 381 surveys sent and 212 returned, for a response rate of 55.6%. The complete results can be found [here](#), and will be incorporated into a white paper sent to the Governor and legislature in January 2024, and used over the next year to develop the commission's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. For more information please contact commission Executive Director Katie Malinowski, [katie@tughill.org](mailto:katie@tughill.org), (315) 785-2380.

Highlights of the survey results were:

### Importance - Top programs ("essential and important" ratings)

- 98%: **Workshops** to increase local officials' skills including annual LGC
- 97%: Helping communities **find money** for water, sewer, housing, etc.
- 97%: **Land use planning** assistance to towns and villages
- 97%: Support to **groups of communities working together**, especially local councils of governments
- 96%: Helping communities **protect the environment**

### Effectiveness - Top programs ("excellent and good" ratings)

- 91%: **Workshops** to increase local officials' skills including annual LGC
- 87%: **Land use planning** assistance to towns and villages
- 85%: Helping communities **protect the environment**
- 84%: Support to **groups of communities working together**, especially local councils of governments
- 82%: **Circuit rider attendance** at municipal board meetings

### Commission Role

**Should the commission continue?** 82% Strongly Agree, 17% Agree

**How important is local control?** 82% Very Important, 15% Moderately Important

**Does the commission enhance local control?** 57% Almost Always, 28% Often, 6% Sometimes

**How important is intermunicipal cooperation/planning?** 81% Very Important, 16% Moderately Important

**Does the commission support cooperation/planning?** 69% Almost Always, 23% Often

**"The commission provides services which local govts need and cannot afford by themselves"** 62% Strongly Agree, 31% Agree

Characteristics: Ranked from highest to lowest on the "excellent and good" responses

- Cooperation (98%)
- Expertise (96%)
- Promptness (95%)
- Understanding Area Needs (94%)
- Objectivity (93%)
- Innovativeness (90%)

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## Commission Meeting September 18

The Tug Hill Commission will meet on Monday, September 18, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Town of Williamstown Offices, 79 Lakewood Rd., Williamstown, NY 13493. Agenda items will include a chairman's report and discussion of the Class of 2023 Tug Hill Sages; an executive director's report and discussion of LGC 2024, staffing, and project updates; and a Cooperative Tug Hill Council report. The commission will also tour the new Williamstown offices.

The public is welcome to attend.

# Commission Annual Dinner October 19

Invitations are in the mail to the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Tug Hill Commission! If you did not receive an invitation and would like to join us, please call the commission office at (315) 785-2380.



## NYS Tug Hill Commission Annual Dinner & Meeting

Thursday, October 19, 2023  
Tailwater Lodge, 52 Pulaski Street  
Altmar, NY 13302

Cost: \$60/per person includes commemorative gift.

Please return enclosed card with your check made payable to  
"NYS Tug Hill Commission" by Thursday, October 5th.

Please call 315-785-2380 with any questions.



5:00 p.m. - *Park It: Tug Hill* Video debut with WPBS

5:30 p.m. - Social hour with hors d'oeuvres and cash bar  
Music by NYS Old Tyme Fiddlers' Association

6:30 p.m. - Gathering & Reflections on 50 Years

7:00 p.m. - Buffet dinner includes dessert, coffee, and tea

8:00 p.m. - Designation of Tug Hill Sages: Class of 2023

Visit the Tug Hill Commission's video album  
at [tinyurl.com/tughillmemento](https://tinyurl.com/tughillmemento) to  
record your memory to share at our celebration.

## Florence Historical Marker Dedication

On Friday, August 25, a ceremony was held at the historical site of the Florence Farming Association to rededicate the historic marker commemorating the African American Settlement that existed there between 1848-1860. The original marker was installed and dedicated in 2017 but went missing in 2022. With the help of donors and the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, funds were raised to replace the sign. Installed by Florence's highway superintendent, John Boncella, the sign features significantly more material in the base and mounting structures to prevent removal.

The Oneida County History Center and the Oneida County Freedom Trail Commission hosted the event and invited the Tug Hill Commission to join. The Tug Hill Commission hosted a series of webinars in 2021 that highlighted the influence of abolitionists in the north country, including "The Rise and Fall of the Florence Settlement" (see links below).

June 24, 2021 || "A Well-Perfected Organization: The Underground Railroad in Oneida County, NY" || with Oneida County Freedom Trail Commission members Judith Wellman, historian, and Jan DeAmicis, Mary Hayes Gordon, Deirdre Sinnott || [YouTube Video](#)

May 20, 2021 || "The Rise and Fall of the Florence Settlement" || by Jessica Harney, Camden Central School, Charles Vanderi, NYSDEC and Matthew Kirk, Hartgen Archeological Associates || [YouTube Video](#)

June 10, 2021 || "The Underground Railroad: Routes Through the North Country" || by Jackie Madison, president, North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association || [YouTube Video](#)

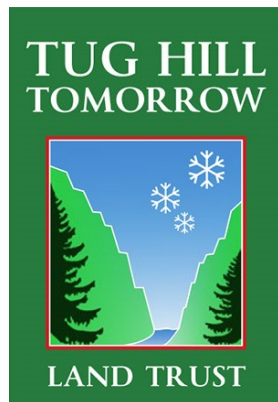
# CTHC Fall Meeting September 21

On Thursday September 21, the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) will hold their annual fall meeting at the Steak and Brew restaurant, 4497 State Route 26, Turin. Social hour will start at 6 p.m. with dinner at 7 p.m. and the business meeting to follow.

The agenda includes review of the April 2023 meeting minutes and the current financial report. The proposed 2024 budget will also be reviewed and voted on. The Tug Hill Commission will provide updates on projects and legislative issues.

Other subjects scheduled are a possible expansion of the Cooperative Zoning Board of Appeals and the issues with vacancies in elected and appointed positions. The speaker for the evening is still being verified. The meeting will close, as usual, with Supervisor and Mayor topics and any other comments from the floor.

Invitations to the meeting are out now. Dinner for CTHC representatives will be covered by the CTHC and there is a cost for guests if they want to join the council for dinner. There is no charge to attend the meeting itself and the public is welcome to attend. Reservations can be made by contacting Angie Kimball at [angie@tughill.org](mailto:angie@tughill.org) or at 315-599-8825 by September 14.



## Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Dinner September 28

The Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust annual dinner will be held on Thursday, September 28 at the Tailwater Lodge, 52 Pulaski St, Altmar, NY 13302. Visit the [Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust website](https://www.tughilltomorrowlandtrust.org) to view the schedule for the night and to purchase tickets for the event. The land trust is a valued partner of the Tug Hill Commission. Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust's mission is to protect the wildlands, working forests and farms of the Tug Hill region and surrounding areas, and to promote appreciation of the region's natural and cultural heritage, for present and future generations.

## Northern Border Regional Commission Announces 2023 Catalyst Grant Awards

Three in or near Tug Hill regional applicants were recently awarded 2023 catalyst grants from the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC).

Hand in Hand Early Childhood Center in Lowville was awarded \$2,996,422.80 to expand their flagship center located in Lowville by adding two classrooms and 24 more potential childcare slots. The proposal also includes the creation of two satellite facilities located at the northernmost and southernmost school districts in Lewis County. These satellite facilities would provide approximately 32 childcare slots at each school campus.

The Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) was awarded \$2,455,079.00 to complete a multi-jurisdictional telecommunications project bringing affordable, high-speed broadband to approximately 488 unserved households in rural communities in Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence Counties. The project will result in 63.3 miles of new fiber and bring digital parity to rural residents.

The town of Henderson was awarded \$1,000,000 to construct a wastewater treatment and collection system to address sanitary waste problems for residents utilizing individual subsurface sewer disposal systems. The town's economy is almost entirely dependent on outdoor recreational tourism and this project will assist with the expansion of existing businesses and creation of new economic opportunities.

If you are seeking funding opportunities for a project please reach out to Tug Hill Commission staff for assistance.



# Federal Aid 101 Workshop September 12

Getting federal aid is only the first step in the process to complete a local project. To make a project successful, the local agency needs to understand the steps as well as the federal and state requirements. Join the New York State LTAP Center - Cornell Local Roads Program as they present a virtual workshop covering federal aid on Tuesday, September 12, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. During this four-hour online workshop, the instructor will walk through a federal aid project from start to finish, discuss the steps to a successful project, and review issues that have led to problems in the past. Attendees will learn the roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved and ways to reduce stress for themselves and the agencies overseeing the work. The webinar is worth three Professional Development Hours (PDHs). Although there is no cost to register and the workshop is free to attend, there is a \$20 PDH fee, if PDHs are needed or wanted.

Click [here](#) for more information or to register.



## Hot Button Land Uses Training September 26

The Jefferson County Planning Department is hosting a two-hour “Hot Button Land Uses” training class for planning board members on Tuesday, September 26 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Jefferson Community College, 1220 Coffeen Street Room 6-002 in the Jules Center, Watertown, NY 13601.

Staff from the NYS Department of State will be on hand to deliver this course that discusses some land uses that many local officials find challenging, along with the statutory rules and case law associated with, and options for regulating them. Local governments are not able to regulate all uses the same way: some uses have special statutory protection or rules established through case law and require special consideration. Other uses might be new to the local officials attempting to regulate them, such as solar energy facilities, barn weddings, and short-term rentals.

The event is free but [registration](#) is required.

## Executive Order 30 Pro-Housing Community Program

[Executive Order 30](#), signed by Governor Hochul earlier this summer, creates a new pro-housing community program. Municipalities who successfully receive a pro-housing community program certificate from the Division of Housing and Community Renewal will receive priority points in applications to several state grant programs, including:

- the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) administered by the Department of State;
- the NY Forward Program administered by the Department of State;
- the Regional Council Capital Fund Program administered by Empire State Development;
- the New York Main Street Program administered by New York State Homes and Community Renewal;
- any capital grants made pursuant to the Market New York Program administered by Empire State Development; and
- the Public Transportation Modernization Enhancement Program (MEP) administered by the Department of Transportation.

Certification applications will be reviewed on a list of factors soon to be determined, but will likely include whether the community has streamlined permitting and pro-housing policies, and whether it submitted critical housing and zoning data to the state to help identify challenges to, and track progress on, housing growth, in making its determination. Communities that further meet annual housing growth targets of one-third of a percent upstate will receive top prioritization.

Relatedly, a beta version of the [Housing Data Dashboard](#) was also released to track housing development and zoning data.



# 2023 ANNUAL *Black River Trash Bash*



## EVENT DETAILS

### Jefferson County Cleanup

September 13, 2023

Cleanup efforts will take place along Felts Mills Creek. Participants are to meet up at the Jefferson County Forest at Felts Mills' pavilion area in Black River, NY.

### Lewis County Cleanup

September 26, 2023

Cleanup efforts will be along the riverbank of Eatonville Falls in Otter Creek. Participants are to meet up at Glenfield Elementary School in Glenfield, NY.

### Or, organize your own!

For guidance in organizing your own Adopt-A-Beach cleanup, please look to the contact information below!

## ABOUT THE EVENT

The Black River Trash Bash is part of a grassroots approach to maintaining the well-being of our local watershed. Following the completion of the Black River Watershed Management Plan (2010) the Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District, Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the NYS Tug Hill Commission have organized trash cleanups within the Black River Watershed. In the last thirteen years, over 6,000 pounds of trash have been removed on the local level.

All trash collected during these cleanups is sorted, documented, and disposed of according to the Alliance for the Great Lakes' "Adopt-A-Beach" program. The collected data is used to study plastic pollution sources and help identify policies to protect the Great Lakes.

*Looking to get  
involved? Contact*

Gabriel Yerdon   gabriel@tughill.org   (315) 785-2387

Join us!

# 2023 ANNUAL LAND USE TRAINING WORKSHOP

For all members of Town and Village Planning Boards, Zoning Board of Appeals,  
and Code Enforcement Officials seeking Professional Development electives.



**LEWIS  
COUNTY**  
NEW YORK



NEW YORK  
STATE OF  
OPPORTUNITY.

**Department  
of State**

## AGENDA

3:30 pm - 3:45 pm	Registration
3:45 pm - 4:00 pm	Opening Remarks
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Affordable Housing
5:30 pm - 5:45 pm	Break
5:45 pm - 6:45 pm	Community Design Tools
6:45 pm - 7:00 pm	Break
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Public Meetings & Hearings



## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This is a topic shrouded in misconceptions and strong biases. One thing is certain: it cannot be ignored. Public interest and case law require municipalities to address the affordable housing needs of their regions. This course examines the history and evolution of laws, policies and programs pertaining to affordable housing. Exclusionary zoning case law is highlighted, as well as the benefits of using land use tools such as inclusionary zoning regulations and accessory apartments to provide affordable housing.

## EVENT DETAILS



Lewis County - JCC Education Center  
7395 East Road Lowville, NY 13367



4:00 pm - 8:00 pm



Wednesday September 27, 2023



## COMMUNITY DESIGN TOOLS

Municipal officials have a variety of tools available to them to help shape the appearance of their community. At this session tools ranging from simple design guidelines to landscape ordinances and architectural review boards are discussed. We'll look at some practical approaches that can be applied to both public and private development, and explain some basic design concepts.

## REGISTRATION

RSVP's are strongly encouraged by **Wednesday, September 20th**. To register please call Lewis County Planning at 315-376-5422, email [suekulzer@lewiscounty.ny.gov](mailto:suekulzer@lewiscounty.ny.gov), or fill out the form at the website below.



<https://arcg.is/0SiXnX>



## PUBLIC MEETINGS & HEARINGS

This session addresses the goals and requirements associated with holding meetings, in contrast to the purposes and legal requirements surrounding a public hearing. It explores the role of the chairperson in conducting effective meetings and hearings, and includes a discussion of how to manage the public and the media in the context of a hearing or meeting. Also addressed are aspects of the Open Meetings Law, including executive sessions, quorums, minutes, and public notices.

**FOOD & REFRESHMENTS  
PROVIDED**



# Lewis County Round 3 Façade and Streetscape Program

Lewis County is launching Round 3 of the Façade and Streetscape Improvement Program, an initiative that incentivizes property owners, non-profits, business owners, and municipalities to perform façade improvements and streetscape enhancements in downtown areas across Lewis County. Round 3 will award up to \$200,000 in project submissions and aims to revitalize the character and attractiveness of villages and hamlets in Lewis County through public and private investment. The program will provide up to 75%/25% matching funds for eligible improvements to mixed-use and commercial buildings and streetscape enhancements in Lewis County's villages and hamlets.

Façade improvement funds are available to property owners, non-profits, and businesses with mixed-use and commercial buildings located in a downtown area of a hamlet or village. Projects must align with local zoning regulations and design standards. Façade improvements can include but are not limited to, upgrades to entryways, signage, windows, doors, paint, and exterior lighting. Municipalities are invited to apply for streetscape improvement funds for projects that improve the walkability and community aesthetics in their village or hamlet. Streetscape improvements can include gateway and wayfinding signage, street furniture, landscaping, and public art.

Applications are due November 3, 2023 and will be reviewed by a committee of representatives from the Department of Planning & Community Development, the County Manager, Naturally Lewis, and the Lewis County Historical Society. Award notifications will be made on December 1, 2023. Click [here](#) for more information.

## \$58,050 Awarded from the Sawyer Community Fund

Fourteen community projects and organizations that benefit Boonville, Constableville, and Westernville residents will share \$58,050 in funding from the Kenneth V. and Jeannette Remp Sawyer Community Fund of the Northern New York Community Foundation this year. Nearly two dozen organizations applied for grant funding in the sixth year of the grant program. The following organizations will receive 2023 grant funding from the Sawyer Community Fund:

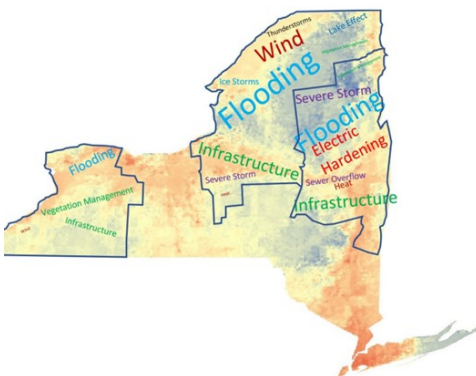
Constableville Library Association, Erwin Library and Institute, Boonville Cemetery Association, Boonville Fire Company, Dodge Pratt Northam Art and Community Center, Constable Hall Association, Adirondack Community Chorus, Village of Boonville, Lost Trail Snowmobile Club, Constableville Volunteer Fire Company, Boonville Black River Canal Museum, Boonville Search and Rescue Association, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), and the Young at Heart Senior Citizens Group.

The Kenneth V. and Jeannette Remp Sawyer Community Fund was established in 2018 as a geographic-specific fund to strengthen and enhance the communities of Boonville, Constableville and Westernville. Through the community fund, the Sawyer family established a lasting charitable resource that will forever impact these communities.

## National Grid's Climate Change Vulnerability and Resilience Plan

National Grid recently held a webinar on possible effects on infrastructure of extreme heat and weather resulting from changes in local temperatures and weather patterns. Climate change can have effects on the infrastructure itself, and create higher demand for heating and cooling. Renewable energy sources being added into the grid may also be vulnerable to changing weather patterns and measures should be taken to address the possible effects. The main concerns for Tug Hill communities, according to National Grid, are ice storms, flooding, wind, and infrastructure. This wraps up the vulnerability study portion of National Grid's process and now the goal is to produce a draft Climate Change Resilience Plan by November 2023.

For the slides from the webinar or a copy of the draft study, please email [msmith@tughill.org](mailto:msmith@tughill.org).



### Contact Us

**NYS Tug Hill Commission**  
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Watertown, NY 13601

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1-888-785-2380  
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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](#).