

Lorraine Minimum Maintenance Home Rule Bill Signed Into Law

On Friday, December 8, Governor Hochul signed bill number A6412/S6249 into law. The bill which was sponsored by Senator Mark Walczyk and Assembly Minority Leader Will Barclay. The law amends Highway Law and Vehicle and Traffic Law, in relation to establishing minimum maintenance roads in designated towns, in this case Lorraine, Jefferson County. It codifies into state law the same process that towns across NYS have been following, under their home rule authority, for decades to designate low volume roads and minimum maintenance roads. The law goes into effect 120 days after it was signed, and expires after eight years. The signed bill and the Governor's approval memo can be accessed on the commission's website, tughill.org/roads/. This new law is the result of decades of efforts by towns, councils of governments, partner organizations, and state legislators.

The Governor's support memo states "This bill will authorize a process by which the Town of Lorraine, in Jefferson County, may designate roads with low volumes of traffic as "minimum maintenance roads," not requiring snow and ice removal or other maintenance. I support the goals of this legislation, which would allow the Town of Lorraine to grant this designation to certain roads, helping farmland and forestland, encourage outdoor winter recreation, and help localities manage road maintenance budgets. However, changes to the legislation are necessary to make clear that this authorization for the Town of Lorraine shall not be read to limit, diminish or in any other way, impact the powers of any other locality."

Lorraine is 39 square miles (24,960 acres) in size. In 2020, the total population of the town was 924, which equates to 23.7 people per square mile. The total town road mileage is approximately 36.4 miles, with approximately 15 miles of that designated as minimum maintenance roads. Twenty percent of the land (5,145 acres) in Lorraine is designated New York State Forest, and of the town's minimum maintenance road mileage, 6.5 miles has state land on one or both sides of the road. In 2020, the town's budget was approximately \$1.4 million, and 75% of that was spent on highway management.

Several town roads in Lorraine provide critical access to the 9,233-acre Winona State Forest: Sharp, Marsh, Brown, Kate Hall, Bishop, Wart, Dodge and Hessel. These roads are unpaved, providing access to the area by motor vehicle in the summer, and access to the area via skis, snowmobiles, dog sleds, snowshoes and fat bikes in the winter.

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Marsh Road in the town of Lorraine, signed with a NYS Department of Transportation approved minimum maintenance road sign, serves as a NYS-funded snowmobile trail. Snowmobiling is an economic driver in the Tug Hill region, with 866 jobs, over \$28.8 million in wages (earnings), and nearly \$81.6 million in sales are attributed to snowmobile activity (tughill.org/reports/).

Rodman Survey Opening January 1

Rodman is currently undergoing a comprehensive plan update and as part of the update, the town will be conducting a town wide survey. Postcards will be sent out to residents to encourage public participation by explaining what a comprehensive plan is, and how to take the survey. The survey will be available online and paper copies are available by calling the town clerk at (315) 232-2522. The survey is scheduled to open on January 1 and run for a month before closing on February 1.



Infrastructure Funding Solutions Webinar January 9

On Tuesday, January 9 at 1 p.m., the Environmental Finance Center is presenting an informational webinar that will cover the US EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program and State Revolving Funds (SRFs). More information [here](#).



In this webinar, presenters Dallas Shattuck, senior program manager for the WIFIA Program, and Brad Raszewski, financial analyst, US Environmental Protection Agency will discuss the WIFIA program, SRF funding, and how the two can work together. Following the overview, attendees can engage in an interactive Q&A session to ask EPA experts any questions they may have about the programs.

The WIFIA and SRF programs accelerate investment in our nation's water infrastructure by providing low-cost (or below market rate) financing to help utilities solve their water infrastructure challenges.

Running Your Highway Department Workshop January 23

The Lewis County Highway Department is sponsoring a **Running Your Highway Department** workshop with the NYS LTAP Center – Cornell Local Roads Program on Tuesday, January 23, 2024 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (snow date January 25).

Who should attend: Recently elected or appointed town or village highway superintendents or public works officials who supervise staff.

Participants taking this course will be able to:

- Compare and contrast various highway department organizational structures.
- Calculate efficiency of various highway department operations. Locate critical resources needed to manage the department.
- List the assets of the department and develop simple replacement plans. Identify the proper budget lines to use and describe various budgeting methods.
- Propose asset management plans to the board.

Cost: FREE sponsored and paid for by the Lewis County Highway Department.

Location: Lewis County Jefferson Community College Education Center, 7395 E Rd., Lowville, NY 13367

To register, please contact Jody Angelo either via email ja785@cornell.edu, or phone 607-255-5437.



Department of State

Division of Local Government Services

2023-2024 Winter Webinar Series

When:

Wednesday evenings in December 2023 and January 2024.

Where:

Attend on WebEx from wherever you are. You will need a computer with speakers or a mobile device.

Courses:

Site Plan Review, Amending Zoning, Planning Board Overview, Zoning Board of Appeals Overview.

Who:

Planning Board Members, Zoning Board of Appeals Members, Governing Board Members, Planning Staff, Code Enforcement Officers, Other Local Officials.

Training Schedule:

<https://dos.ny.gov/local-government-training-schedule>

More Training Information:

<https://dos.ny.gov/training-assistance>

To Register:

Click on each course below that you want to attend to register.

Once registered, you will receive a confirmation email from WebEx with instructions for joining each session.

December 13, 2023

Site Plan Review

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

1.5 hours training credit

December 20, 2023

Amending Zoning

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

1.5 hours training credit

January 10, 2024

Planning Board Overview

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

2 hours training credit

January 17, 2024

Zoning Board of Appeals Overview

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

2 hours training credit



Tug Hill Winter Wildlife Webinar Series

1 of 4

FISHER

TUESDAY JANUARY 16, 2024, 6PM

Join us for a four-part webinar series focusing on the diverse wildlife that inhabit Tug Hill.

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation staff will present new research on Tug Hill and Adirondack fisher populations, and fisher ecology on Tug Hill.



**FISHER, OTTER,
BOBCAT, AND GROUSE
OH MY!!**

Tune in for the rest of the winter wildlife series, to tentatively include river otter, bobcat, and birds of Tug Hill.



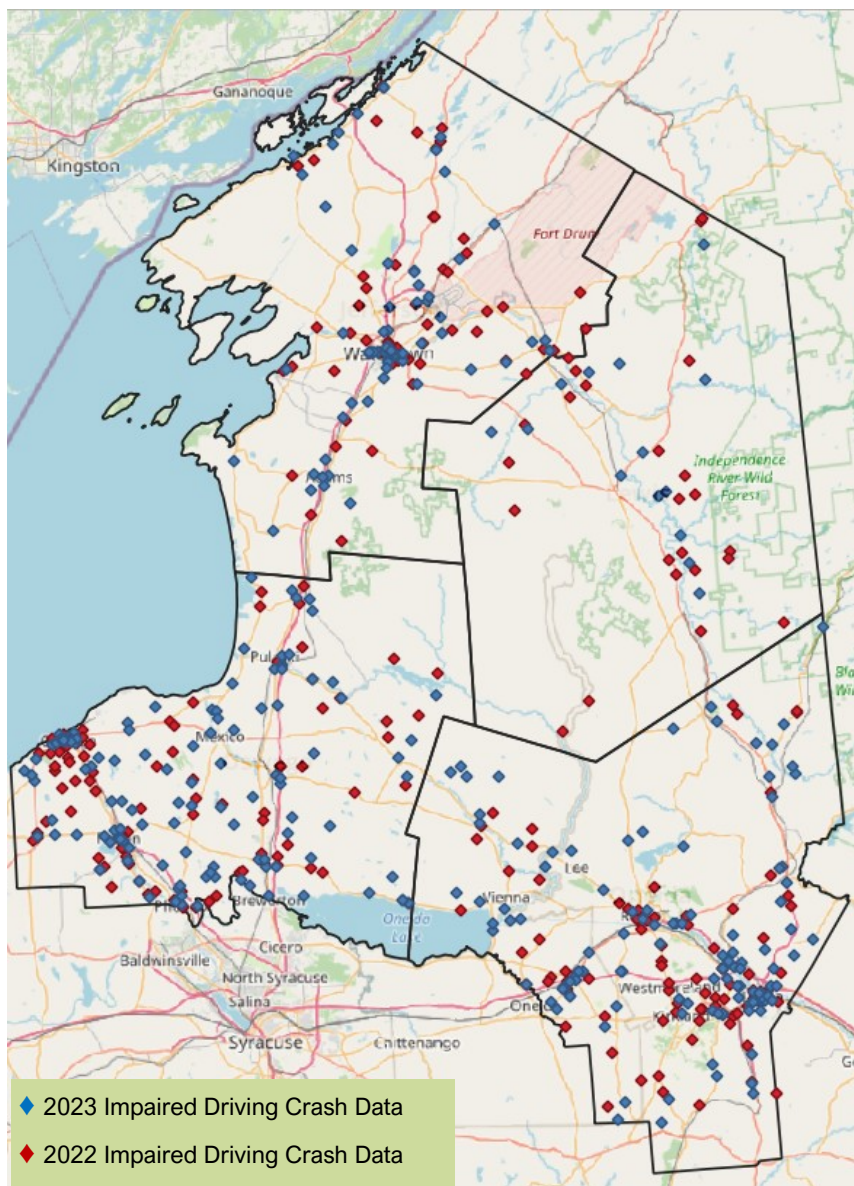
Register at:

tinyurl.com/TugHillFisher

CONTACT INFO:

gabriel@tughill.org | 315-785-2387

Tug Hill Traffic Corner: National Impaired-Driving Prevention Month



In support of National Impaired-Driving Prevention Month, this article focuses on impaired-driving crash data collected in 2022 and to date for 2023 for the four-county region. The map shows locations, by year, of crashes that occurred which either involved alcohol or illicit drug use. The corresponding chart identifies the total number of crashes, how many crashes involved alcohol versus drug use, and number of crashes that resulted in property damage, injuries, or fatalities, and includes the percent change of crashes between 2022 and 2023.

In 2022 there were approximately 12,638 motor vehicle crashes, and 9,668 crashes in 2023. Crashes that involved alcohol or drugs accounted for 2.3% of all crashes in 2022 and 3.3% of all crashes in 2023 within the four-county region. This shows an increase of 13% (between the two years) of crashes involving impaired driving.

Many people will be driving this holiday season to see friends and family, and celebrate the holidays with loved ones. To avoid impaired driving this holiday season make sure to plan ahead and designate someone who is sober to drive, avoid driving while impaired (alcohol/drugs), use alternative transportation such as Uber, Lyft, or taxi, stay at your current location and sleep it off, and be a responsible host and ensure those visiting don't drive impaired.

Contact Us

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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

Instagram: [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/tughill.org)

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](#).

Impaired Driving Data				
	2022	*2023	Total	Change
Total Crashes	285	322	607	+13%
Alcohol Involvement	264	284	548	+7.5%
Drugs (Illegal)	21	38	59	+81%
Property Damage	196	228	424	+16.3%
Injury	59	54	113	-8.5%
Serious Injury	23	34	57	+47.8%
Fatal	7	6	13	-14.3%

*Jan 1, 2023 – Dec 7, 2023