

## State Open Space Plan Update In Process

The NYS [Open Space Conservation Plan](#) (OSP) is a comprehensive statewide plan that describes current open space conservation goals, actions, tools, resources and programs administered by state and federal agencies and conservation nonprofits. Since 1992, the OSP has served as the blueprint for New York State's open space program, guiding the investment of land protection funds from the Environmental Protection Fund. As required by law, the plan is updated periodically, relying heavily on the work of the nine Regional Advisory Committees (RAC). The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) are the two state agencies leading the planning process.

Tug Hill is divided into two DEC regions – Region 6 (includes Jefferson, Lewis, and Oneida Counties) and Region 7 (includes Oswego County). The current OSP includes several priority projects that encompass parts of Tug Hill, including:

- Black River Valley and Corridor
- Fort Drum Army Compatible Use Buffer Project
- Inman Gulf
- North Shore of Oneida Lake
- Recreational Trail Linkages & Networks
- Tug Hill Core Forests and Headwater Streams

The RACs are meeting regularly and the commission serves on both the Region 6 and 7 committees. If there are open space issues or projects that your municipality or organization would like to discuss, please contact Katie Malinowski, [katie@tughill.org](mailto:katie@tughill.org), 315-785-2380, or any RAC member listed [here](#).



### 2016 NEW YORK STATE OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PLAN



## Last Chance To Register: December 4 & 6 Workshops

**Forest Carbon Workshop, Monday, December 4, 2023, 6:00 p.m., Boonville Town Hall or Online**

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Speakers from The Nature Conservancy, American Forestry Foundation, and Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District will provide an overview of forest carbon, forest carbon programs, and the carbon credit market. Speakers will also introduce the Family Forest Carbon Program, which recently began operating in NY, as well as other carbon programs for small landowners.

Register [here](#).

### **Newly Elected Officials, Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 6 - 8 p.m., Online Only**

Join the NYS Tug Hill Commission and the Association of Towns of New York State as Sarah Brancatella and Lori Mithen-Demasi cover a multitude of topics for newly elected officials, including conflicts of interest, codes of ethics and boards of ethics, financial disclosure requirements, typical town offices and their roles, oaths of office, and first meeting preparation. There will be plenty of time for questions and answers at the conclusion of the webinar.

Register [here](#).

# How Electrifying! Great Discussion at LEE Workshop

On Tuesday, November 14, the NYS Tug Hill Commission and Scott Steiger, Professor of Meteorology at SUNY Oswego, held a presentation at the Sandy Creek Town Hall. Following a period of analysis from the Fall 2022 – Spring 2023 fieldwork season, Dr. Steiger presented the unfolding process and analysis of the Lake Effect Electrification (LEE) research project funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation. Dr. Steiger was also accompanied by one of his students and undergraduate research team members, Tom White, who shared some of his experiences chasing and recording lake-effect snowstorms in the Tug Hill region.



Dr. Scott Steiger presenting at Sandy Creek Town Hall

While winter fieldwork posed many challenges (nighttime storm-chasing, severe-sized hail-like graupel, weather trucks getting stuck in the snow, etc.), this research has its own rewards and findings: a new type of lightning was discovered, brand-new balloon technology was integrated into formal meteorological research, and some evidence suggests a connection between wind turbines and “thundersnow” patterns. These findings may lend themselves to further study of lake-effect phenomena in the region in the future.

For those who were unable to attend, would like to re-watch, or share to friends, links to the presentation recording can be found on our YouTube page [here](#). The slide deck from the presentation can be found on the commission’s “Past Presentation” website page [here](#).



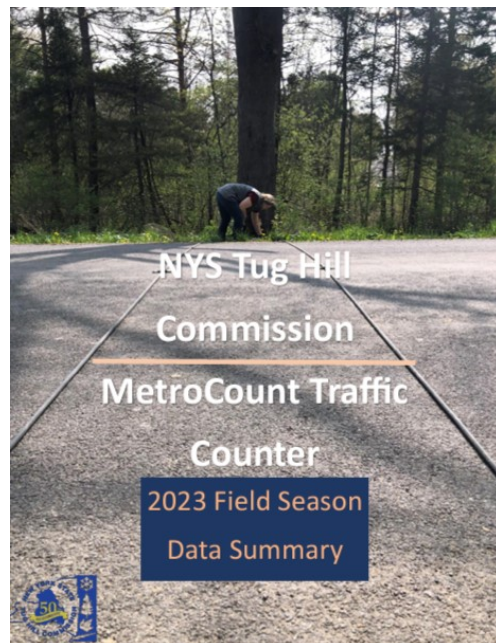
One of the weather trucks used for data-gathering during the LEE Project. Photo excerpted from Dr. Steiger’s presentation.

**The Tug Hill Commission will meet on Monday, December 11 at 10:00 a.m. at the Village of West Carthage Office, 61 High St., West Carthage, NY 13619. The public is welcome to attend.**

## MetroCount 2023 Field Season Data Summary Available

The Tug Hill Commission’s MetroCount Traffic Counter 2023 Field Season Data Summary report is now available [here](#). The new equipment and capability proved to be popular, with nine municipalities taking advantage of the traffic counter, and data collected at 16 unique locations. The report provides the locations where the MetroCount was deployed, types of data collected at each location, and a summary of how municipalities could use the data for project planning and development. The commission will continue to extend this service to all towns and villages in the Tug Hill region, and those outside the region that belong to one of our five councils of governments, in spring 2024.

For further information, or to request this service, please contact Chris Barboza at (315) 785-2389, or [chris@tughill.org](mailto:chris@tughill.org), or fill out the sign-up form [here](#).





# 2024 Local Government Conference

## May 1 and May 2, 2024, Turning Stone Conference Center

Please visit our updated conference [website](#) to see how our conference is shaping up! There's a new navigation menu on the right-hand side of the screen that will take you through the details. Please note, this is a work in progress and is being updated frequently as plans are finalized. Check back often! Registration forms will be in mailboxes early January 2024.



### Navigation

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## Final Upstate Flood Mitigation Task Force Report Available

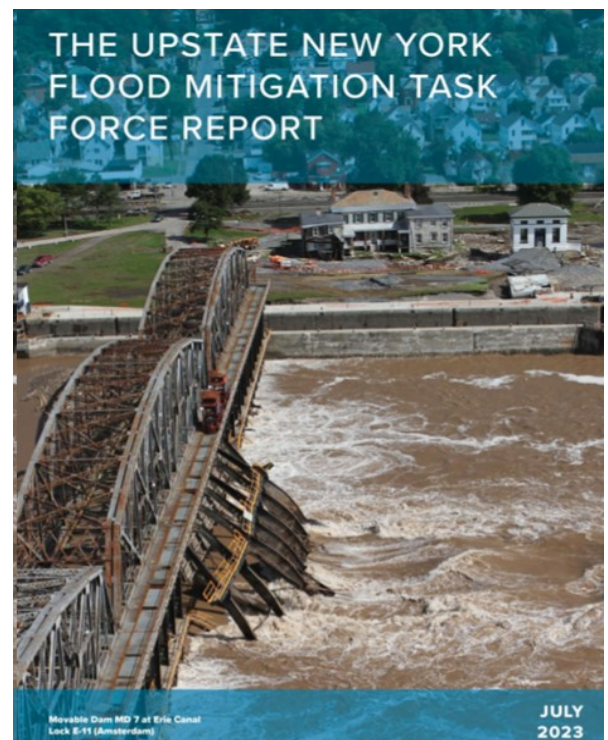
The final report of the [Upstate Flood Mitigation Task Force](#) has been released. The task force was created by the New York State Legislature in 2017 and amended in 2022. Its purpose is to identify and recommend reasonable measures that can be taken to enhance flood management and mitigation in the upstate flood mitigation region encompassed by the Mohawk and the Oswego River basins. Oneida Lake, which is wholly in the Tug Hill region, is part of the Oswego River basin.

The report was tasked with evaluating the costs and impacts of flooding over the past five years, assessing current operation procedures and plans which may directly or indirectly impact flooding and flood mitigation, and providing a list of adaptive measures with their associated costs. The report acknowledges that there are limits to the ability to regulate water levels in the region. It also notes that Oneida Lake levels have not approached flooding damage levels at any time in the last five years during the non-navigation season.

Three key findings were:

- Solutions to flood damage cannot be accomplished by any single agency.
- Approaches to flood damage cannot simply move flooding from one location to another.
- There needs to be sufficient weather and stream gauges to accurately monitor conditions and study potential changes.

The study recommends a total of \$33 million in capital projects and studies in the Oswego River basin, and a total of \$81 million overall, and adaptive measures that can be reduce flood damages and associated flood damage costs within the Mohawk and Oswego River basins, to include both physical interventions and policy driven adaptive measures. The final task force report can be found [here](#).

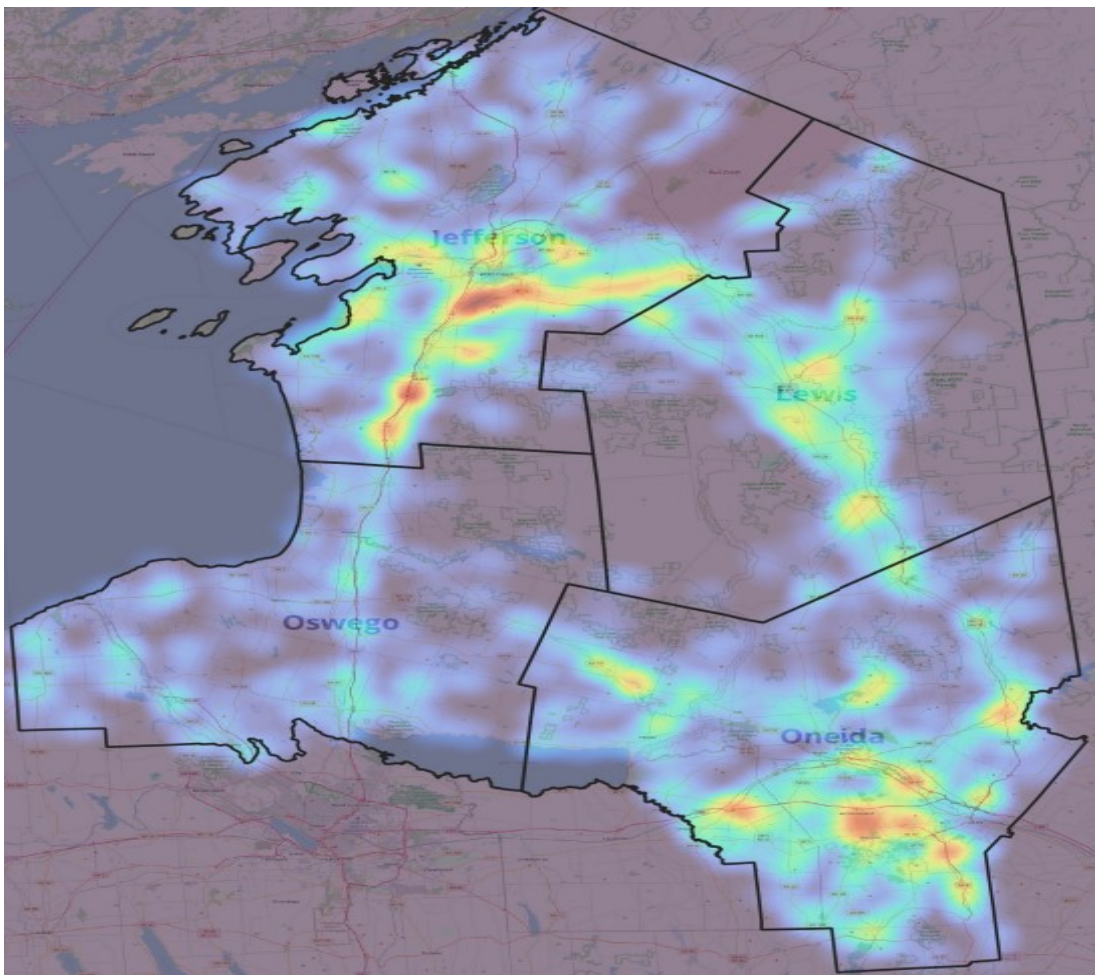


# Tug Hill Traffic Corner: Vehicle Crashes and Deer Collisions

Vehicle crashes due to animal actions are the number one contributing factor of all crashes in Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, and Oswego Counties. Between January 1, 2023 and November 14, 2023, there were 2,267 crashes involving animal actions in the four counties. Of these crashes, 1,970 involved deer collisions. High-crash corridors in each of the counties include:

- Jefferson County: I-81 between the Adams and Sandy Creek, US-11 between Adams and Watertown, NYS-126 between Watertown and West Carthage;
- Lewis County: NYS-12 between Houseville and Martinsburg, CR-29 between Lowville and Martinsburg, NYS-812 between Lowville and New Bremen, NYS-812 north of Croghan;
- Oneida County: NYS-8 between New Hartford and Paris, NYS-49 between Rome and Marcy, NYS-12 between Trenton and Remsen, I-90 and NYS-365 near Verona;
- Oswego County: I-81 between Pulaski and Parish, and I-81 between Parish and Central Square.

The map shows areas of high deer collisions with red areas being the highest concentrated areas, and light blue being the lowest. With deer being very prevalent in upstate New York, there are several precautions that drivers can take to avoid being a statistic:



- Know that deer are most active at dawn and dusk. Their activity also increases during breeding season between October and January, peaking in November. Drivers should reduce speeds and use high beams when possible .
- Know that deer don't travel alone. Drivers should slow down and remain alert for other deer that may follow.
- Be aware of deer crossing areas and slow down through these areas.
- Know what to do: if a deer runs out in front of you while driving; do not swerve. Press on the brakes firmly and steer through the anticipated collision. Swerving off the roadway may result in hitting a fixed object such as a tree or utility pole, which can result in serious injury.

# New Justices' Certification Course December 11-15

The Office of Court Administration is offering an in-person ***Taking the Bench Certification Course*** for newly elected or appointed town and village justices. ***Taking the Bench*** is comprised of two separate training sessions. The first session will be held at the Crowne Plaza Albany-The Desmond Hotel, 600 Albany Shaker Road, Albany, NY 12211, December 11-15, 2023. The second session will be held virtually on Microsoft Teams on June 20 & 21, 2024.

Each newly elected or appointed town or village justice, who is not a member of the New York State Bar, is required pursuant to §17.2 of the Rules of the Chief Judge (22 NYCRR 17.2) to attend the first available certification course after his/her appointment or election. A non-lawyer town or village justice may not assume the functions of the office until he or she has filed a certificate of completion of the course with their municipality (Uniform Justice Court Act §105). Attorney justices are strongly encouraged to attend, and some Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits may be available for attending attorney judges.

There is no cost to attend the in-person training and the registration deadline is Friday, December 8 at 12 pm. For more information, click [here](#).

# NYCOM Planning and Zoning Webinar December 14

The NYS Conference of Mayors (NYCOM) planning and zoning webinar series continues Thursday, December 14, with ***Pre-Existing Nonconforming Uses: Understanding Vested Rights & What Local Governments Can Do to Regulate Them***, from 11 a.m. to noon.



Pre-existing nonconforming uses are extremely common in New York. However, most local governments have not proactively addressed them. This webinar will provide an overview of what a pre-existing nonconforming use is, why property owners have vested rights in continuing those uses, and how such rights can be abandoned. Additionally, this session will address some of the steps local officials can take to phase out such uses and facilitate enforcement of nonconforming uses that are NOT prior existing to newly adopted land use regulations.

There is a registration fee for this webinar, \$30 for NYCOM members, \$100 for non-members. For more information, or to register, click [here](#).

# Newly Elected Town Officials January Training Schools

The Office of the NYS Comptroller and the Association of Towns of New York State have scheduled two ***Newly Elected Town Officials Training Schools***, January 10-12, 2024, at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 1111 Jefferson Road, Rochester, NY 14623 and again January 17-19, 2024, at the Albany Marriott, 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205.

These schools cover a broad range of topics and all first and second-term supervisors, town board members, fiscal personnel and town clerks are encouraged to attend.

There is a cost of \$200 per member, \$250 per non-member, which is payable in advance of the program. The fee covers the cost of tuition, course materials, breakfasts, lunches, and coffee breaks. As an added incentive, attendees of either newly elected training school can register for the Association of Town's [2024 Annual Meeting & Training School](#), February 18-21, 2024, for the reduced price of \$50.

For more information, or to register, click [here](#), or contact Patty Kebea, Executive Meeting Coordinator, Association of Towns, at (518) 465-7933 or [pkebea@nytowns.org](mailto:pkebea@nytowns.org).





# DOT Launches Podcast

The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) just launched its first-ever podcast, “The D.O.T. P.O.D.” to share the human story of the DOT, its people and the work that is done to help keep New Yorkers safe.

The new podcast will tell first-hand stories of the people who help design, build, and maintain New York’s vast transportation network. From building bridges and paving roads in the summertime to clearing snow in the winter, the podcast will explore how it all gets done. About every two weeks co-hosts Josh Heller and Anya Kardos will explore the inner workings of the department, the infrastructure it oversees, as well as the people behind New York’s extensive transportation networks.

Episode 1 of features Harry White, a NYSDOT bridge engineer with decades of experience who combines wit and humorous anecdotes to break down the cutting-edge concepts behind some of the department’s bridge designs. People can listen in or subscribe on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, iHeartRadio, and Amazon Music or on NYSDOT’s podcast [website](#).



## Planning for a 2024-25 LGRMIF Grant Webinar December 7

New York State Archives has scheduled a training event called “Ask Us Anything About Planning a 2024-25 LGRMIF Grant Application” for Thursday, December 7 from 10 to 11 a.m.

If you are thinking about submitting a Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund grant application in the 2024-2025 grant cycle and are not sure when or how to get started, then join this webinar where State Archives’ staff will be available to answer your questions, such as

- What kind of information do I need to include in the application?
- How should I organize it?
- What resources are available to help me?

For more information and to register visit the [Archives workshop](#) page. Registrations are due by 4 p.m. on December 6.

## Oneida Lake Watershed Plan Website Live

The Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board (CNY RPDB) recently launched an [updated website](#) for the Oneida Lake Watershed 9E Plan, currently under development.

This plan will build on past watershed planning efforts, including the 2004 Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and its Watershed and the 2003 State of the Lake and Watershed Report. Both resources are available on the updated website.

A 9E Plan is a plan that describes a community’s water quality concerns and provides a strategy to address those concerns. The Nine Element (9E) plan will be developed in partnership with the people who live, work, visit, and enjoy Oneida Lake and the creeks and streams around it, with guidance from state and local agencies. Funding for this initiative is being provided by the NYS Department of State, under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund, through a grant to Madison County and the CNY RPDB.

### Contact Us

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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](#).