

## 2024 LGC Registration Open!!

Registration is open for the annual Tug Hill Local Government Conference (LGC) at the Turning Stone Conference Center.

[Complete details about the conference](#) can be found on our website. A handy, [one-page PDF-formatted flyer](#) detailing registration with clickable links can be downloaded. The flyer is also attached to this email. You can also view our outstanding line-up of [speakers and sessions](#) on our website.

There are **three ways** to take advantage of this year's conference and **registration is required for each**.

**First**, the traditional [main conference and concurrent sessions](#) will take place **Thursday, May 2, 2024**. Breakfast will be served at 7:30 a.m., opening remarks begin at 8:30 a.m., and concurrent session begin at 9:00 a.m. The conference concludes at 4:15 p.m. The regular registration fee is \$85 (\$170 after April 1, 2024)\*.

**Second**, together with the Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center, an [Infrastructure Roundtable Discussion](#) is also being offered on **Wednesday, May 1, 2024**, from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. The regular cost of this session is \$25 (\$50 after April 1, 2024)\*. If you are interested in learning more about funding and financing for municipal infrastructure in your town or village, come meet representatives from funding agencies like the USDA, DEC, DOH, DOS and EFC and learn about numerous existing and new funding opportunities for safe water (drinking water), clean water (wastewater), road-related projects, and other community investments. Find out how their programs can help make your municipal infrastructure more resilient and adaptable and take the opportunity to sit down with them individually to discuss your current projects and funding needs.



**Third**, a reception, sponsored by our platinum sponsor, GYMO Architecture, Engineering & Land Surveying, will be held on **Wednesday, May 1, 2024**, from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. All are invited to join us. There is a \$15 fee for this event (\$30 after April 1, 2024)\*. Hearty appetizers will be served, and a cash bar will be available.

\***For complete details about registration**, [click here](#). If you are registering with a check, your registration sheet must be postmarked by April 1, 2024, to take advantage of the regular fee. If you are registering with a credit card, the regular fee is also honored until April 1, 2024. On or after April 2, 2024, all fees are doubled. No refunds will be issued after April 1, 2024.

### In This Issue

- 2024 LGC Registration Open
- Commission Meeting January 22
- Black River Initiative Newsletter
- Wildlife Webinar Series
- Town of Watertown Zoning Update
- NYCOM New Officials Webinar Series
- Rodman Survey
- NYS Grant Administration News
- LGRMIF Grants
- Grant Checklist
- Annual Tree Sale
- Traffic Safety Corner: Preliminary Crash Data
- NYMIR Reasonable Suspicion Webinar

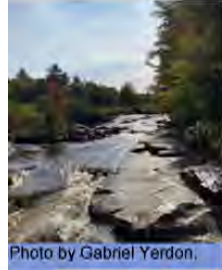
The Tug Hill Commission will meet on **Monday, January 22 at 10:00 a.m. at the Town of Trenton Municipal Office, 8520 Old Poland Road, Barneveld, NY 13304. The public is welcome to attend.**

# Black River Initiative 2023 Highlights Newsletter Available

In support of the Black River Initiative, the NYS Tug Hill Commission and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Great Lakes Program are pleased to present another year of environmental progress, driven by a diverse set of stakeholders within the Black River watershed. The Black River Initiative newsletter is an annual showcase meant to highlight important water quality related work ongoing in the watershed. Some highlights from 2023 include:

- Black River Watershed Signage Project
- Climate Smart Lewis County
- Drinking Water Improvements in Jefferson County and the City of Watertown
- Many Soil and Water Conservation District projects across the counties
- Trout Unlimited Updates
- And much more!

The 2023 newsletter, along with editions from past years, can be found [here](#). If you find the content of this newsletter interesting, the Black River Watershed Conference, June 2024, will showcase more progress and emerging challenges in the watershed. Keep an eye out for registration details!

<p>Winter 2023</p>  <p>Photo by Gabriel Yerdon.</p> <p>tive</p>	<h3>Expanding Efforts in the Watershed</h3> <p>The Black River Watershed saw expanding efforts by individuals and groups across the region to improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, educate and engage with youth and the broader public, and conduct research over the course of 2023. The funding landscape is very positive for current and future work in the watershed thanks to new funding sources, including the Environmental Bond Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, as well as enduring funding sources like the Environmental Protection Fund.</p> <p>While work continues to be done in the Black River Watershed to mitigate perennial water quality issues, climate change has ushered in a renewed sense of urgency to confront emerging environmental issues and create a landscape that is resilient to the diverse set of challenges that we are already seeing. With equity at the forefront, a diverse set of stakeholders are working diligently to ensure that communities across the watershed have access to safe and clean water resources and a healthy environment.</p>
--	--

## Winter Wildlife Webinar Series, Part 1 – Fisher

The Tug Hill Commission is hosting a four-part Winter Wildlife Webinar Series, focused on species native to the Tug Hill region. The inaugural webinar, produced in collaboration with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), will deliver a comprehensive exploration of fisher populations on Tug Hill. Join us virtually as DEC staff biologist Tim Pyszczynski presents findings from a recent survival and reproduction study, shedding light on the unique dynamics of fisher populations on both Tug Hill and in the Adirondacks. Topics will include the historical presence of fisher on Tug Hill, range distribution, general fisher ecology, historic and emerging threats to fisher populations, and interactions with species such as marten and beaver.



Tug Hill  
Winter Wildlife Webinar Series  
1 of 4  
**FISHER**  
TUESDAY JANUARY 16, 2024, 6PM

Registration is required and available at [tinyurl.com/TugHillFisher](https://tinyurl.com/TugHillFisher). A Zoom link will be sent along with your registration confirmation email.

Subsequent webinars in the series will tentatively feature the river otter, bobcat, and the diverse bird species that rely on Tug Hill throughout the year. Stay tuned for more information on these upcoming events, to be held January – April 2024. Join us as we continue to explore and celebrate the rich wildlife diversity of the Tug Hill region.

## Town of Watertown Zoning Update Underway

Commission staff have been working with the town of Watertown planning board to update the town zoning regulations. Some of the work includes changing the zoning to allow for a multi-purpose event center, which has been proposed in Watertown. Also included are updates to solar regulations, some updates to screening measures within the town, and updates to definitions. Commission staff have been attending meetings for about a year to help make the changes requested by the planning board. The updates are expected to be delivered to the town board for comments this week.

# NYCOM's 2024 New Officials Webinar Series

Over the course of four webinars starting on Tuesday, January 23, the New York Conference of Mayors (NYCOM) staff will cover key subject matters related to serving as a local government leader. Whether you are a newly elected or appointed official, or a seasoned official in need of a refresher, these interactive webinars will provide you with the most up-to-date guidance from NYCOM's experienced legal and programmatic experts.

These webinars are open only to NYCOM members only, with a \$25 per webinar registration fee. A recording of the webinars will be provided to each registrant following the completion of each webinar.



Each of the hour-long webinars start at noon.

## ***Tuesday, January 23 - Getting Your Bearings: A Primer on Local Government Structure and Operations***

To effectively perform their jobs, local government officials must become experts on a variety of topics, while at the same time complying with numerous legal restrictions imposed by the state. This session will give an overview of how New York's local governments are structured, including the powers and duties of local government officials. Presenter: Wade Beltramo, NYCOM General Counsel.

## ***Thursday, January 25 - Funding Your Local Government: An Overview of Municipal Finance Requirements, Procedures and Best Practices***

Proper management of local government finances is essential to setting priorities, providing essential services, and ensuring the fiscal well-being of your village or city. This presentation will provide an overview of the basics of municipal finance, including the budget process, budget management, the tax cap, local revenues, the expenditure of funds, and borrowing. Presenter: David Bissember, Legislative and Research Analyst.

## ***Tuesday, January 30 - Conducting Meetings: The Legal Requirements of the Open Meetings Law and Best Practices***

Meetings are an integral part of running a local government and well-run meetings can save time, minimize conflict, maximize efficiency, and promote confidence among your residents. Poorly run meetings, on the other hand, can be a Pandora's Box for local officials. This presentation will provide an overview of the requirements of the Open Meetings Law and the importance of having written meeting procedures. The presentation will also address the recently amended videoconferencing provisions of the Open Meetings Law and conclude with a brief summary of local governments' records management obligations and each official's role in properly handling records. Presenter: Rebecca Ruscito, NYCOM Counsel.

## ***Thursday, February 1 - Managing Staff and Doing it Ethically: This Isn't the Private Sector***

The presentation will include an overview of public sector labor law, including a discussion of the role the Civil Service Law plays in being a public employer as well as the role unions play in local government operations. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of municipal ethics, highlighting the many laws local officials need to be aware of to avoid ethical and legal pitfalls. Presenter: John Mancini, NYCOM Counsel.

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

## Rodman Survey Closing on February 1

The town of Rodman is currently undergoing a comprehensive plan update. As part of the update, the planning committee is conducting a town wide survey. Postcards have been mailed to residents and property owners in the town to encourage public participation by explaining what a comprehensive plan is, and how to take the survey. The survey is available online by going on the town website and paper copies are available by calling the town clerk at (315) 232-2522. The survey is scheduled to close at the end of the day on February 1.



# NYS Grant Administration News

The NYS Grants Management team announced that as of January 16, 2024, New York will transition grantmaking activities from the Grants Gateway to the Statewide Financial System (SFS). Following the transition, the gateway will be retired and SFS will become the new enterprise grants management system. [Important information is available here.](#)

Excerpted from the grants management website:

The Grants Gateway will not be accessible from **Wednesday, January 10, 2024, until Tuesday, January 16, 2024.** After January 16, 2024, only competitive grant applications for grant opportunities that were posted in the Grants Gateway prior to January 16, 2024 will be processed in the Grants Gateway. For questions about this, please contact [grantsreform@its.ny.gov](mailto:grantsreform@its.ny.gov).

It is important that organizations prepare for this transition by logging in to the [Statewide Financial System \(SFS\)](#) to verify they have access and their organizational profile (e.g., primary contact, address, banking), is up to date. If your organization previously registered with the Grants Gateway or has a New York State Vendor ID, your primary contact received an enrollment email with login credentials and instructions on how to access [SFS](#). To help ensure a smooth transition, you are asked to login immediately and verify your organizational profile. Logging in will help ensure timely access to renew your prequalification status, submission of claims for payment and bidding on future grant opportunities. As a best practice, you should continuously monitor and update your organizational profile and access SFS every six months, so your account is not locked.

If you have questions, please contact the SFS Help Desk directly at (855) 233-8363 or at [Helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov](mailto:Helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov).

## LGRMIF Grants Kickoff Meeting January 18

The New York State Archives invites you to participate in the rescheduled LGRMIF Grant webinar. Originally scheduled for January 9, **it is now scheduled for Thursday, January 18, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.** If you are thinking about applying for a 2023-2024 Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) grant, this will be a useful webinar for you to attend. [Click for more information and to register.](#)

The presentation will cover:

- How to prepare for grant writing season.
- Important dates and requirements you need to know.
- The resources and contacts you'll need to prepare a strong application.

## Successful Grants Checklist Updated

January is the perfect time of year for municipalities and non-profit organizations to think about their projects and what grant applications they might submit in the upcoming months. To assist with that effort, the Tug Hill Commission updated its "[Making a Successful Grant Application](#)" checklist, available on our website under [technical and issue papers](#). Strong project development, a well-articulated need, and community support are all key to a successful grant application. Get started early to position projects for success.

## Annual Tree Sales Open

The Oswego, Jefferson, and Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) are currently holding their annual tree and shrub sales. According to the Lewis County SWCD, "the purpose of this event is to help promote Arbor Day while making seedlings and transplants available to all landowners for conservation projects." Varying by county, customers can choose from various types of coniferous and deciduous seedlings as well as transplants, shrubs, wildflower seed packets, and conservation packets. Available as supplies last.

Order forms can be found at the links below:

[Jefferson County](#) orders due **February 27, 2024.**

[Lewis County](#) orders due **March 7, 2024.**

[Oswego County](#) orders due **April 1, 2024.**

# Tug Hill Traffic Corner: 2023 Preliminary Crash Data by Contributing Factors

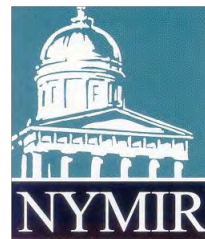
The Institute for Traffic Safety Management and Research’s New York State Traffic Safety Statistical Repository provides crash data obtained through the Accident Information System that is maintained by the Department of Motor Vehicles. The information below provides preliminary data on crashes that occurred within 2023, and the top six contributing factors associated with the crashes. The highest contributing factor for crashes is animal actions (2,764) which is an environmental factor. The other five contributing factors for crashes are a result of human factors. Environmental factors are those that are out of human control, whereas human factors are those that we can control. The top five human contributing factors of crashes are driver inattention/distraction, failure to yield right-of-way, following too closely, passing/lane change/improper use, and unsafe speed. Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, and Oswego counties all share the same top five human contributing factors for vehicular crashes. Animal actions is the top environmental contributing factor across all four counties.

The table below also identifies the percentage of crashes based on the top contributing factors against the total number of vehicular crashes for 2023. The total number of vehicular crashes, in 2023, was 17,269. Animal actions made up 15.5%, driver inattention/distraction 8.3%, unsafe speed 7.6%, failure to yield right-of-way 6.9%, passing/lane change/improper use 6.7%, and following too closely 6.3% of all crashes for 2023. These top contributing factors account for **51.3%** of all vehicular crashes this past year.

	Jefferson	Lewis	Oneida	Oswego		Total Crashes by Contributing Factors	% of Total Crashes
Driver Inattention/Distraction	294	33	852	267		1,446	8.3
Failure to Yield Right-of-Way	265	32	629	278		1,204	6.9
Following too Closely	276	18	590	211		1,095	6.3
Passing/Lane Change/Improper Use	271	40	610	229		1,150	6.7
Unsafe Speed	278	126	570	336		1,310	7.6
Animal Actions	895	404	986	389		2,764	15.5

## NYMIR Reasonable Suspicion Webinar January 23

Accidents attributed to driving or operating equipment while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol has enormous consequences each year. Managers and supervisors have a responsibility to identify and control these incidents. *Reasonable Suspicion Drug and Alcohol* training and testing programs are key to the success of controlling this exposure.



Join New York Municipal Insurance Reciprocal on Tuesday, January 23, at 9:00 a.m., as they cover:

- Policy dissemination
- Understand what “reasonable suspicion” means and how it differs from other testing
- Warning signs of both alcohol and drug abuse
- How to manage the situation and how to approach a driver suspected of drug or alcohol use
- How to adequately document observed behavior
- Signs and Symptoms related to the use of alcohol and each drug type
- Discussion on legalization of and use of medical marijuana

This session is geared for managers and supervisors and is offered at no cost. Click [here](#) to register.

### 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](https://www.instagram.com/tughill)

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](#).