

## Commission Kicks Off 2025-2029 Strategic Plan

Commission board members, staff, and associates gathered at Camp Zerbe, Williamstown on Monday, August 19 to kick off development of the Tug Hill Commission's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. Monday's brainstorming session was facilitated by Richard Halpin, a strategic planning consultant who worked with the commission for many years before his retirement, in both his Jefferson Community College Center for Community Studies and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County leadership roles. Dr. Halpin led the gathering through several individual and group exercises intended to generate key strategic priorities for the next five years.



Dick Halpin, standing, leads commission board, staff and associates through strategic planning exercise.

Over the next several months, the commission will refine the outcomes into a draft one-page document that will be shared with the region's councils of governments and other key partners, for feedback and suggestions. The final document will be adopted by the commission board later this year.

## Commission Annual Meeting September 19 in Port Leyden

We hope to see many of you at our annual dinner and meeting on Thursday, September 19 at the Hayloft at Moonshine Farms, just outside of Port Leyden. The site overlooks the Black River Valley and fall colors may be at their peak! RSVP by September 6.

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- Regenerate NY Forestry Grants
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The evening will begin with entertainment by Cincinnati Creek and appetizers, followed by presentations by commission executive director Katie Malinowski and Simon Skolnik, executive director of the NYS Association of Conservation Commissions. A buffet dinner will be served by the Pine Tree Inn, and the evening's festivities will be topped off by keynote speaker Katie Petronis, Deputy Commissioner of Natural Resources at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.



Please contact the office, 315-785-2380, for more information.

## Budget Workshop Boonville August 29

There is still time to sign up for our last 2024 town budget workshop, being held on Thursday, August 29, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at the Boonville Municipal Building, 13149 State Route 12, Boonville. The presenter will be Laird Petrie, and the workshops are sponsored by the NYS Tug Hill Commission, in cooperation with the Cooperative Tug Hill Council, North Shore Council of Governments, Northern Oneida County Council of Governments, River Area Council of Governments, and the Salmon Rivers Council of Governments.

Villages are welcome to attend, but the workshops are aimed at assisting towns to prepare for the 2025 budgeting process. Topics to be covered include an overview of the budgetary responsibilities of local officials, development of a structurally balanced budget, key elements of the annual budget, tools available for assisting town officials in the budget process and monitoring and amending the annual budget. Please bring questions for Laird to address during the question and answer period!

The workshops are free of charge, but registration is required. Space is limited, so register soon by calling the Tug Hill Commission at 315-785-2380 or by emailing [tughill@tughill.org](mailto:tughill@tughill.org).

## Constableville Working on Zoning Law

The Tug Hill Commission continues to work with the Village of Constableville Zoning Commission to create a zoning law. Some of the work includes the establishment of one-zone zoning concept within the village and incorporation of previously enacted local laws. Commission staff have been attending meetings for about five months to help make changes and updates to the draft zoning law requested by the zoning commission. With the draft zoning law nearly complete, the next step will be to engage the community through scheduling a public hearing. A public hearing provides attendees with an opportunity to gain an understanding of the proposed zoning law, ask questions, express their views, and to voice suggestions and concerns. Developing a zoning law is a big step for the village in the preservation of community character, protecting health and well-being, and providing a framework for regulating future development.

## CTHC Associate Circuit Rider Search

The Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) has received word that associate circuit rider Beth Steria-Rush has decided to retire and not renew her contract in 2025. Beth has been with the CTHC since 2013 and will be missed by all.

With this, CTHC is looking for a new contractor to fill Beth's position. The ideal candidate will be a highly motivated individual interested in local government and providing technical assistance to Tug Hill communities on a contractual, part-time basis. The person must be a self-starter and expect to attend evening meetings with some daytime follow-up.

The municipalities currently covered by the position include the regular board meetings for Rodman in Jefferson County and Martinsburg, Turin, Harrisburg, Port Leyden, Pinckney, and Montague in Lewis County, although this is subject to change as necessary and agreed between the CTHC and the contractor.

A draft contract and qualifications can be found at [www.tughillcouncil.com](http://www.tughillcouncil.com). Resumes and references should be sent to Angie Kimball, P. O. Box 34, Redfield, NY 13437 or [angie@tughill.org](mailto:angie@tughill.org) no later than 09/06/2024.

## August 29 Inventorying Your Electronic Records Webinar

New York State Archives has a training webinar entitled "Inventorying Your Electronic Records" scheduled for **Thursday, August 29** from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Managing electronic records is a time-intensive challenge, and it is increasingly important for records managers to know their electronic records and develop plans to manage them. An effective way to begin this process is to conduct an electronic records inventory.

This webinar will: Discuss how to identify key e-records systems; discuss how to collect meaningful data, analyze the results; and develop an e-records management plan.

The training is free and registration information can be found on the [workshop registration](#) page. The NYS Archives also has many recorded webinars that are available for viewing at your leisure, which are available on their [webinar](#) page.

# TOWN CLERK LUNCH & LEARN

New York State Tug Hill Commission  
Office of the New York State Comptroller  
and the  
Northern Oneida County Council of Governments  
present:

## FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TOWN CLERK

No Cost Hybrid Workshop

REGISTER BY  
SEPT. 25!

Monday, September 30, Noon - 1:30 p.m.  
Town of Trenton Municipal Offices  
8520 Old Poland Rd, Barneveld, NY 13304



Ingrid M. Otto, CPA, Auditor 2  
Office of the New York State Comptroller  
Division of Local Government and  
School Accountability



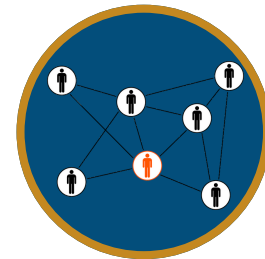
### LUNCH

Attend in person and enjoy  
lunch on us!  
Starts at Noon  
Or join remotely if you cannot  
attend in person.



### LEARN

This session will assist town clerks in  
understanding their major financial  
duties and responsibilities, to include  
receiving cash, recording receipts,  
preparing and making deposits, and  
reporting out to the Supervisor  
monthly.



### CONNECT

Connect with other town clerks from  
neighboring municipalities and  
expand your resource network!

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER, OR VISIT: HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/OSCTOWNCLERK](https://tinyurl.com/osctownclerk)

For more information:

315-785-2380

[tughill.org](http://tughill.org)

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

315-941-2818

[noccog.org](http://noccog.org)

[jhealt@tughill.org](mailto:jhealt@tughill.org)



# National Grid's Upstate New York Projects

Elected officials from towns and villages in Oswego County met with representatives from National Grid in Oswego on Thursday, August 21, to discuss upcoming projects in Central, Northern, & Western New York. Tug Hill Commission staff were also in attendance regarding potential impacts to Tug Hill.

The push to create a smarter, cleaner, and stronger energy grid is being driven by New York State's Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act (CLCPA). One of the goals of the "Climate Act" is for 70 percent of New York State's energy to come from renewable sources by 2030. For the state to meet these goals, National Grid recognizes that utilities cannot bottleneck energy projects from coming to fruition. Therefore, National Grid seeks to meet the demand for green energy projects through more reliable, powerful infrastructure.

Two project lines, including new substations (one in Hastings and one in Albion), will intersect with the Tug Hill region. These lines are not new construction, but a rebuild of outdated lines.

In the Black River-Clay line (62.2 miles), the pre-existing double-circuits will be replaced by two single-circuit lines that are significantly taller, stronger towers. These lines are based on a new design concept, which will increase the needed right-of-way by approximately 60 feet (32.5 ft on each side). The Oswego to Tar Hill line (29.6 miles) will also feature mostly single-circuit replacements.

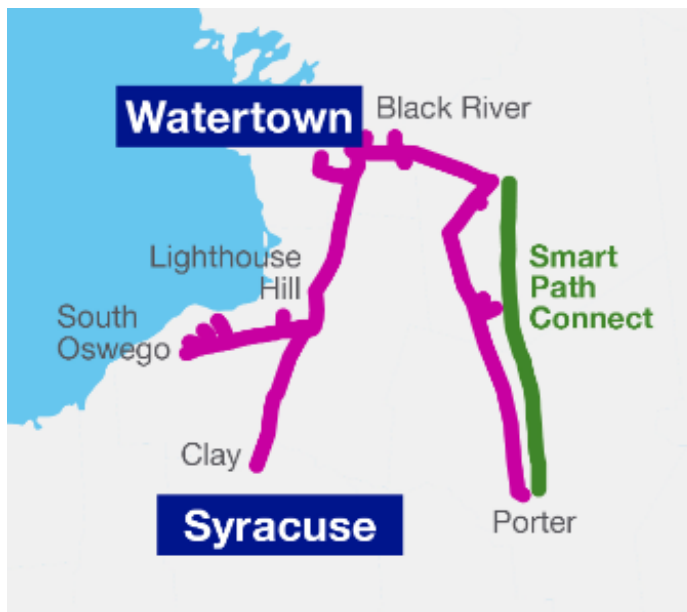
Due to the size and scope of the project, National Grid is preparing an application to the Public Service Commission as part of Article VII. Affected municipalities (including the towns of Boylston, Orwell, Albion, Parish, Hastings, and village of Central Square in Oswego County) and individual landowners will be contacted as part of this process. Notice of public meetings will be forthcoming. As part of Article VII, National Grid is required to look at "alternate routes" for these lines in sensitive areas where re-routing the new lines may be prudent. In Albion, for example, an alternative route is being investigated to avoid Brown's Camp; in Hastings, an alternative route to avoid residential areas is also being explored.

Key meeting takeaways:

- Stakeholder & community input is ongoing and strongly encouraged
- While National Grid does not plan to add more transmission lines in these project areas, the replacement lines are engineered to have a far greater capacity than the pre-existing lines, enabling greater support of energy projects
- Replacement lines and towers require a larger project area and ROW
- National Grid's real estate department is in the process of reaching out to landowners where ROW might encroach or abut private property; landowners will be compensated for the increased land needed for ROW, including monitoring, troubleshooting, or compensation for crop loss

As National Grid's application is filed, there will be several more meetings throughout Oswego and Jefferson counties.

For more information regarding National Grid's "Upstate Upgrade" project, visit their website here: [upstateupgrade.nationalgrid.com/](http://upstateupgrade.nationalgrid.com/).



Snapshot of map from National Grid website.

# Potential Revisions to Freshwater Wetland Regulations

## Public Comment Period

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is currently in the process of proposed rule making that would amend 6 NYCRR Part 664, Freshwater Wetlands Maps and Classification regulations, to implement amendments to the Freshwater Wetlands Act that take effect January 1, 2025. The rule making would define key terms, improve the freshwater wetland classification system, establish criteria for the identification of Wetlands of Unusual Importance, and establish procedures related to jurisdictional determinations.

DEC is holding two virtual public comment hearings on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., and an in-person hearing on Thursday, September 12, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. Details about how to register and participate in those hearings are available [here](#).

DEC is also taking public comments, which must be submitted in writing and can be emailed to [WetlandRegulatoryComments@dec.ny.gov](mailto:WetlandRegulatoryComments@dec.ny.gov) with the subject line "Wetlands Part 664 Comments" or mailed to NYSDEC, Attn: Roy Jacobson, Jr., 5th Floor, 625 Broadway, Albany NY 12233-4756 and **must be received by close of business on Thursday, September 19, 2024.**

In 2022, New York's Freshwater Wetlands Act (Environmental Conservation Law Article 24) was amended to increase application fees and make several important changes to the way the program will be administered. The following is a brief summary of the legislative amendments and their effective dates:

January 1, 2023 - Permit application fees are increased to better reflect the nature of the application review and to ensure that funds are available to wetland resource protection activities. Application fee information is available [here](#).

1. January 1, 2025 - The current NYS Freshwater Wetlands Maps will no longer limit DEC regulatory jurisdiction to wetlands depicted on those maps. Instead, maps will become informational, and any wetlands that meet the applicable definition and criteria will be regulated by DEC and subject to permitting, regardless of whether they appear on the informational maps.
2. January 1, 2025 - Small wetlands of "unusual importance" will be regulated if they meet one of 11 newly established criteria listed in the new legislation.

## August 27 Webinar on Proposed Changes to NY's Freshwater Wetlands Regulations

Krista Spohr, Environmental Program Specialist, Bureau of Wildlife and Habitat, DEC, will be the speaker at a webinar on **Tuesday, August 27, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.** The webinar will cover the need for the major changes in NY's Freshwater Wetlands regulations that will take effect January 1, 2025, the contents of the draft regulations, how the comments received earlier in the year were incorporated, and the next steps in finalizing the regulations. Because of the status of the draft regulations, questions are invited in advance only. Following [registration](#), you will receive an email message with the link for submitting questions. The speaker will not take new questions during the webinar.

## August 28 Municipal Infrastructure Funding Opportunities Webinar

On Wednesday, August 28, the Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center will present an interactive exploration of funding for water infrastructure projects in New York State. This no cost webinar will run from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and will equip participants with essential knowledge and strategies for accessing funding opportunities for community infrastructure upgrades. They will dive deep into Clean Water & Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), uncover co-funding opportunities, and clarify pathways to successful infrastructure funding. The first portion of the session will feature NYS representatives sharing insights on state funding programs. This will be followed by an interactive game where participants will tackle infrastructure challenges in the fictional town of Calamity Falls.

For more information, visit the EFCN training [webpage](#), or click [here](#) to register.



# 2024 NYSACC CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT



## SEPTEMBER 18-20

**REGISTER HERE**

**[TINYURL.COM/NYSACC-CONFERENCE-REGISTRATION](https://tinyurl.com/NYSACC-CONFERENCE-REGISTRATION)**



Check out [our website](http://www.nysacc.net/2024-coe) for information about our speakers, field trips, and more:  
[www.nysacc.net/2024-coe](http://www.nysacc.net/2024-coe)

**\$25 for the virtual day, \$75 for the entire conference**  
**Virtual day registration is free for all students!**

Listen and learn about renewable energy, natural resources economy, the environment, and recreation and tourism in the Tug Hill region and how it can be applied statewide!

Tour unique areas that Tug Hill offers in Boonville and Lyons Falls.

Join us for our joint conference reception and  
Tug Hill Commission Annual Dinner!

Questions? Contact Jillian, [jillian@tughill.org](mailto:jillian@tughill.org) or 315-785-2406

# Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Planning Assistance

The Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) planning assistance program is now accepting applications! See [Applying for Assistance](#) to learn more!

Recognizing that outdoor recreation is a large and growing sector of the economy nationwide, the RERC program was formed in 2019 to provide planning assistance to small towns and rural communities to help them boost their outdoor recreation economy and revitalize their main streets. The program is a partnership between EPA's Office of Community Revitalization, USDA Forest Service, the Northern Border Regional Commission, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Denali Commission.

**On Thursday, September 5, 2024 from 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**, the Environmental Protection Agency will host a webinar for community representatives interested in applying for planning assistance from the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program. [Please register to join the webinar.](#)

## Regenerate NY Forestry Cost Share Grants Available

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation recently announced a fourth round of the state's Regenerate NY grant program. \$500,000 is available for eligible private forest landowners to plant trees, to mitigate climate change, provide wildlife habitat, protect air and water quality, and supply a critical renewable resource. Private landowners planning to restore or establish five or more acres of forest land in New York State may apply for grant awards ranging from a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. A ten percent match is required. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, planting trees, soil scarification, removing competing or invasive vegetation that interferes with seedling establishment and growth, and installation of deer fence. Applicants must work with a forester or a qualified natural resource professional to develop their project.

Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 6, 2024, or until funds are depleted, whichever comes first. Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis. Applications must be submitted through the SFS Grants Management System (SFS). Those wishing to apply need to establish an account in SFS. Once registered, search SFS for "Regenerate NY." For more details about the grant opportunity including application criteria, visit DEC's [website](#).

## Assistance to Firefighters Grants Awarded

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been making periodic announcements of Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) awards on their [website](#). The table below details awards to Tug Hill area firefighting organizations to date. Please note, these grant applications are very detailed and administratively challenging. Start early if you plan to apply in the next round!

North Bay Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	Vehicle Acquisition	\$325,238
Rutland Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.	Operations and Safety	\$71,257
Otter Lake Fire Company, Inc.	Operations and Safety	\$68,571
Hastings Volunteer Fire Department Inc	Operations and Safety	\$106,666
Village of Boonville	Operations and Safety	\$59,500
Lyons Falls Village of	Operations and Safety	\$10,000
West Leyden Fire Co Inc	Operations and Safety	\$67,239

### Contact Us

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

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Toll Free within the region:  
1-888-785-2380  
Email: [tughill@tughill.org](mailto:tughill@tughill.org)

Visit us at:

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

**YouTube:** [YouTube](#)

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

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