

Commission Adopts Consolidated Procedures, Principles and Policies at July Meeting

The Tug Hill Commission board met at the Denmark Municipal Building on Monday, July 15. In addition to conducting routine business related to administration, regional projects, and councils of governments, the commission also adopted a *Consolidated Procedures, Principles and Policies* document. A review committee, appointed by Commission Chair Jan Bogdanowicz and consisting of Commissioners Tom Boxberger, Leona Chereshnoski, Robert Keller, William Scriber and Executive Director Katie Malinowski, and assisted by Commission Counsel Lee Willbanks, recommended the adoption to the board.

Originally established as the Temporary State Commission on Tug Hill in 1973, the New York state legislature adopted legislation in 1998 to make the Tug Hill Commission permanent. The legislation, Article 37 of Executive Law, sets out that “the purpose of the commission is to enable local governments, private organizations, and individuals to shape the future of the Tug Hill region, and to demonstrate and communicate ways that this can be done by other rural areas.” The newly adopted document, based on decades of previously adopted individual policies as well as requirements set out in state law, will guide the internal operation of the Commission and its relationships with other agencies, local governments and the residents of the Tug Hill region.

The document and its appendices can be viewed at tughill.org/commission-policies/.



Commissioners, left to right: Bob Keller, Leona Chereshnoski, Jan Bogdanowicz, Bill Scriber, Tom Boxberger, Gerry Ritter, at the July 15 commission board meeting in Denmark.

In This Issue

- Commission Adopts Procedures and Policies
- Updated Ambulance Services Issue Paper
- Large Scale Solar Development Community Session
- Restore NY Grants
- Remp Sawyer Community Grant Awards
- Citizen Preparedness Program
- Real Property Tax Collection Webinar
- Land Use Training Workshop
- Black River Adaptive Modeling Project
- Harmful Algal Boom
- Wild Turkey Sighting Survey
- NYSACC Conference on the Environment
- THTLT Events
- Tax Levy Limit for 2025

Ambulance Services in Rural NYS Issue Paper Updated

Providing ambulance service in rural areas has been, and continues to be, a challenge to maintain across New York. A significant number of emergency medical services (EMS) agencies have closed in the past few years. The challenges for EMS and ambulance services include volunteer and staffing changes, a dysfunctional funding model, and increasing training requirements. First published by the commission in 2020, the updated issue paper provides background on emergency services and explores each of these challenges as experienced with municipalities and ambulance services in the Tug Hill region. It is intended to add to the statewide conversation about this important topic.

The updated paper, along with many other relevant and informative issue papers, can be viewed and downloaded on the commission’s website at tughill.org/publications/technical-issue-papers/.



Interested in getting involved with large scale solar development in your community?

Come share your questions, insights and concerns!

Tuesday, August 20th
5:30-7:30pm

Hilton Garden Inn
1290 Arsenal Street
Watertown, NY 13601



Use the QR code to register or go to:
https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/community_solar_222

As large scale solar projects expand in NY, CCE Jefferson is working to collect community perspectives on development. Attend this community session for education on current development from various organizations and participate in discussions to share your perspective.

Dinner included, no cost to attend. Limit 50 participants, preference for attendees who live or work in Jefferson County. Registration required.

For more information:

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Mitch McCormick

Community & Economic Vitality Issue Leader
315-788-8450 ext 332 | mam697@cornell.edu

Restore NY Grants for Boonville and Lewis County

The [Restore New York](#) grant program supports municipal revitalization efforts with funds to help remove and reduce blight, reinvigorate communities and generate new residential and economic opportunities statewide. The program, administered by Empire State Development, is designed to help local governments encourage new commercial investments through community revitalization, growing local housing, and putting properties back on the tax rolls to increase the local tax base.

Recently announced was \$2 million to the village of Boonville for the former Ethan Allen furniture manufacturing facility, more recently Delta Hardwood Flooring, a 200,000 square-foot property on 38 acres of land located at 210 Grove Street. It is the largest vacant and underutilized building in the village and is in various stages of disrepair. The building anchors Boonville's recently awarded NY Forward strategic investment area and is the village's top redevelopment priority. The developer/property owner, in cooperation with the village, plans to stabilize the roof, secure the envelope, and create a new light industrial/manufacturing complex with the already established Lodging Kit Company Inc. relocating to the premises as the primary tenant.

Also announced was \$1.724 million to Lewis County, who foreclosed on a nearly 24,000 square-foot decommissioned elementary school in the village of Lyons Falls and is currently working to abate hazardous materials from the vacant three-floor building. It is the intent of Lewis County to select the developer who proposes the best use for the community. However, they hope this yields interest for a 16-unit market-rate residential facility with commercial space incorporated.

Remp Sawyer Community Fund Grant Awards

Thirteen community projects and organizations that benefit Boonville, Constableville, and Westernville residents will share \$57,446 in funding from the Kenneth V. and Jeannette Remp Sawyer Community Fund of the Northern New York Community Foundation this year. Eighteen organizations applied for funding in the seventh year of the grant program.

The following organizations will receive grant funding this year: Boonville Cemetery Association, Constableville for Tomorrow, Boonville Black River Canal Museum, Dodge-Pratt-Northam Art and Community Center, Adirondack Community Chorus, Erwin Library and Institute, Boonville Concert Band, Village of Boonville, Constable Hall Association, Western Town Library, Boonville Search and Rescue Association, Volunteer Transportation Center, and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA).

The Kenneth V. and Jeannette Remp Sawyer Community Fund was established in 2018 as a geographic-specific fund to enhance and strengthen the communities of Boonville, Constableville and Westernville. The fund has provided more than \$350,000 in support to 102 projects and organizations since grant-making efforts began in 2018.

Citizen Preparedness Program August 14, Pulaski

New York State and the Army National Guard will offer a citizen preparedness course aimed at helping people prepare their families and homes for disaster, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 14 at the Snow Memorial Building, 4917 Jefferson St., Pulaski. This training course will help participants collect tools and resources to be able to respond to an emergency or disaster. Each family that attends will receive one preparedness kit.

Sponsored by the Oswego County Emergency Management office and village of Pulaski, topics will include the tools and resources to prepare for any type of disaster, how to respond to emergencies and how to recover as quickly as possible to pre-disaster conditions. People will learn how to develop a family emergency plan and what supplies to include in a disaster supplies kit.

Registration is required [here](#). Those who do not have access to the internet can call Terry Bennett at the Oswego County Emergency Management Office at 315-591-9160. For more information, visit www.prepare.ny.gov.

Real Property Tax Collection Webinar August 22

Just in time for the upcoming tax season, the New York State Town Clerks Association and the Association of Towns of New York State are presenting a no cost webinar, *Hot Topics in Real Property Tax Collection*, on Thursday, August 22, at 10:30 a.m.



This one hour interactive course, presented by Katie Hodgdon of the Association of Towns, will cover the legislative changes in 2024 that directly impact collecting officers, as well as provide an overview of the tax collection process and delve into some recent hot topics, including the length of collection for school taxes, whether one must accept post-dated checks, when it is appropriate to require a fee for a duplicate bill request and pending changes to the penalty structure, among other things.

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

Join Us!

2024 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	Special Use Permits
5:30 PM - 6:00 PM	Break
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	SEQR (Short EAF)
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	County Referral

EVENT DETAILS

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

 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

 Wednesday, September 25, 2024

REGISTRATION

RSVP's are strongly encouraged by **Wednesday, September 18, 2024**. To register please call Lewis County Planning at 315-376-5422, email suekulzer@lewiscounty.ny.gov, or fill out the form at the website below.

 <https://arcg.is/1bmqG00>

FOOD & REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED!

SPECIAL USE PERMITS

Some uses require additional review and should be granted permission only if the application meets certain conditions. These special uses include gas stations, dog kennels, and uses with drive-through windows. The special use permit is also used for development in environmentally sensitive zones with overlays such as for wetlands, steep slopes, and along scenic ridgelines. Scenarios in which the special use permit tool is most helpful will be discussed, along with rules local boards must follow for reviewing and approving applications for special use permits.

SEQR (SHORT EAF)

The State Environmental Quality Review process is one about which there are wide misconceptions. To help clarify the role of SEQR for local review boards, this course takes a hypothetical site plan for a relatively small project through Parts 2 and 3 of the Short Environmental Assessment Form. A variety of scenarios that could result in a different outcome for the SEQR process will be discussed in the context of mitigating the potential impact of the project to the environment.

COUNTY REFERRAL

Many applications before local boards require referral to the county planning agency before action can be taken on them. This course reviews the requirements of General Municipal Law 239-l, -m, and -n and the law's impact on local decision making. It includes discussion of the benefits of county referral, the effect of recommendations from the county planning agency, and the consequences of failing to make a required referral to the county planning agency.

Black River Adaptive Modeling Project Phase 1 Completed

The Black River Adaptive Modeling project (BRAM) was the first step in considering whether additional planning, implementation actions and/or modeling efforts should be explored for the Black River Watershed, eight years since the 2016 Black River 9 Element plan was developed, and 14 years since the original Black River Watershed Plan was finished. The 2016 plan was developed at the HUC11-scale (hydrologic unit code), which has since been catalogued as an outdated level of geography and therefore no longer widely used. HUCs correspond to the scale at which a subwatershed is mapped, with HUC-11 being larger than HUC-12, and so on. This makes tracking project implementation and progress within priority subwatersheds difficult, such as agricultural best management practices, as the geographic size used to determine whether water quality is getting worse or better does not match what the planning document outlined.

BRAM Phase 1 goals (2022-2024) were to engage with the public, review existing data, identify data needs, and identify water quality monitoring needed for future implementation, modeling, and planning. One of the primary outcomes of this first face was that the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Division of Water developed an interactive crossover tool that identifies the corresponding HUC-11 and HUC-12 subwatersheds. The tool is available [here](#).

The BRAM project involved collection of all water quality related data for the Black River watershed, including agricultural practices, stream or lake monitoring results, culvert assessment data, watershed BMPs, and nutrient and sediment concentrations. The BRAM planning committee worked with engineering firm Ramboll and Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI) to produce a document summarizing data sources and datasets. The [final document](#) also identified data gaps, that if filled, could better educate future planning and modeling efforts.

UFI worked with the soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) in Lewis, Oneida, and Jefferson Counties to complete water quality sampling based on data gaps identified in the BRAM project. The project team is also evaluating next steps, which include forming a Black River Watershed Coalition of SWCDs, developing a Watershed Implementation Plan, performing additional modeling in Phase 2, and seeking funding sources.

This project was a collaboration between the Lewis, Jefferson, Hamilton, Herkimer, and Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the NYS Tug Hill Commission, NYS DEC, Ramboll, and Upstate Freshwater Institute.

Harmful Algal Bloom Reporting

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) compiles and provides notifications of known harmful algal bloom (HAB) locations in NYS when they are reported to DEC HABs program staff by local/state/federal government personnel, trained monitors, and the public via the [NYHABS](#) reporting tool. With between 7,500 and 16,000 ponds and lakes in NYS, DEC seeks public participation to identify HABs.

NYHABS is composed of 1) an online reporting system, and 2) an interactive map. When bloom reports are confirmed by DEC staff, information about the HABs and their locations are posted publicly on the NYHABS interactive map.

Cyanobacteria harmful algal blooms affect the ecological health and aesthetics of many lakes in New York State. They also can pose a health risk to humans and animals that use the water for drinking or recreation. Exposure to any cyanobacteria HABs can cause health effects in people and animals when water with HABs is touched or swallowed, or when airborne droplets are inhaled. People and pets should avoid contact with HABs and rinse off with clean water if contact occurs.

Summer Wild Turkey Sighting Survey

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) conducts a summer wild turkey sighting survey annually, and the public is being asked to assist in the effort. Surveys are conducted during the month of August to estimate the average number of wild turkey poults (young of the year) per hen statewide and among major geographic regions of the state. This index allows DEC to gauge reproductive success in a given year and to predict fall harvest potential. Weather, predation, and habitat conditions during the breeding and brood-rearing seasons can all significantly impact nest success, hen survival, and poult survival.

During the month of August, DEC staff and volunteers record the sex and age composition of all flocks of wild turkeys observed during normal travel. This survey is a great way to partner with DEC as a citizen scientist, to help monitor this popular game bird! Participate in the survey here: [Summer Wild Turkey Sighting Online Report](#).

To learn more about the survey and view past years results, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/48732.html.



Students You're Invited!



2024 NYSACC Conference on the Environment

Highlighting work in & around the Tug Hill region while sharing it statewide for others to understand, relate to, & learn about.

September 18-20



September 18: Virtual Day of Presentations
FREE Registration for Students



Register Here
**Did we mention it's
free for students?**



Website
**Including the agenda,
list of speakers, &
more!**

What can you get out of this?

Diverse Environmental Topics

You'll hear speakers from state government, nonprofits, & more that will talk about renewable energy, natural resources economy, the environment, & recreation & tourism.

A Career Panel Just for You

Ask questions to young professionals in the field. Hear how they navigated to the career they have today & where they want to go in the future.

Registration

Full Conference: \$75

Virtual Day Only: \$25

The virtual day is free for students!

September 19 & 20 will include field trips to explore unique aspects of the Tug Hill region.

Questions?

Contact Jillian Lee, jillian@tughill.org

THTLT August and September Events

2024 Tug Hill Community Picnic, Saturday, August 10, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

The Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust invites you and your family and friends to join for a day of celebrating conservation and community. Join one of three optional group outings to learn more about the natural history of the David S. Smith Public Conservation area or visit the Fun Zone with hands-on activities for the young and young at heart. Attendees will gather over lunch (pre-order lunch through us or pack your own).

Firebuilding Safety at Stone House Preserve, August 16, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Come learn how to locate, build, tend and extinguish camping fires safely for your camping excursions. Join us near Camden in the town of Vienna, for this hands-on workshop, led by experienced outdoor adventurer, John Souva.

Tug Hill Traverse Trail Work Day, Saturday, August 24, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Twice a month, from June to September, volunteers will meet in the heart of Tug Hill and work together to maintain current sections as well as clear and mark the remaining sections of the historic Tug Hill Traverse Trail. THTLT has partnered for several years with the Black River Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club to establish this historic 20-mile north/south hiking trail.

For a map of the established northern section of the trail, visit: [Tug Hill Traverse Trail 2024](#)

Beech Leaf Disease Walk & Talk, Friday, September 20, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

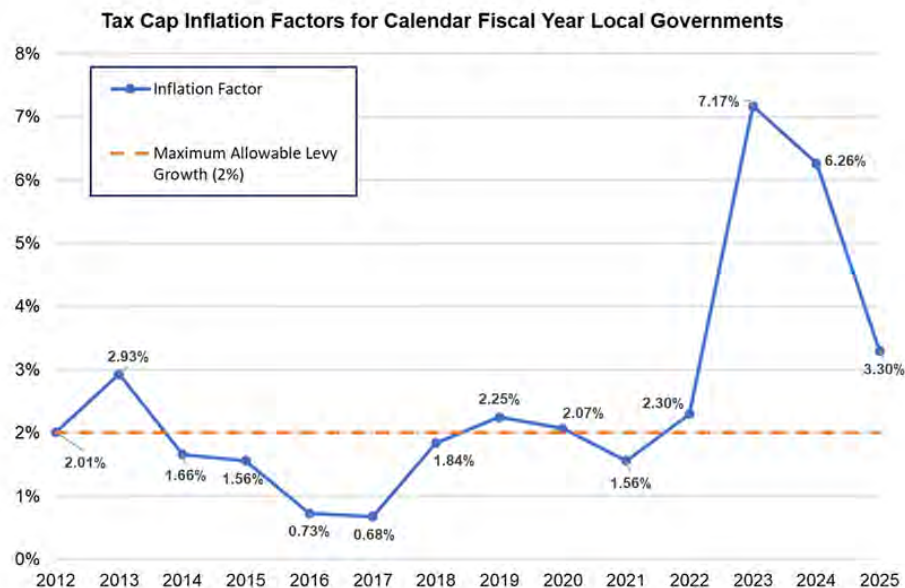
Join THTLT and SLELO PRISM at the Salmon River Falls Unique Area, town of Orwell, to learn about and survey for Beech Leaf Disease (BLD). You'll walk off trail in some areas to examine American Beech trees and learn how to report the absence or presence of BLD in the field using the mobile app iMapInvasives.

Please visit the land trust's website at tughilltomorrowlandtrust.org/events/ to make your reservations!

Tax Levy Limit for 2025 Town Budgets

State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli has announced the tax levy limit for local government units whose fiscal years' end December 31. These local governments, which include towns and counties, will have a tax levy limit of 2.00% for the 2025 fiscal year, the fourth consecutive year at 2.00%.

The comptroller's [web page](#) concerning the tax levy limit for local governments and school districts and past years' inflation and allowable levy growth factors [chart](#) for local governments are useful references.



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

Visit us at:

Web: www.tughill.org

Facebook:
[www.facebook.com/
TugHillCommission](http://www.facebook.com/TugHillCommission)

Instagram: [Instagram](#)

YouTube: [YouTube](#)

To request our newsletter electronically please email gwen@tughill.org.

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