

## Tug Hill Community Projects Funded

Several Tug Hill communities have been awarded funding through the state's 2024 consolidated funding application. The commission worked directly with the town of West Turin on a \$487,800 salt shed application to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP). The town will construct a salt storage building to replace an undersized building and cover currently uncovered piles. The new building will protect groundwater within a principal aquifer and the Sugar River, which flows into the Black River.

Other communities on or near Tug Hill receiving funding include the town of Watertown and the village of Pulaski. Watertown will install disinfection equipment at their new wastewater treatment plant. This project will improve water quality to Mill Creek by reducing pathogens in the treatment plant's discharge (\$1,000,000 DEC WQIP). Pulaski was awarded funding for two projects. First, through the DEC's Climate Smart Communities Program (\$2,000,000 awarded), the village will construct a sidewalk network that will connect nine activity centers within the community. A pedestrian bridge will connect two parks along the route. Currently, there are no sidewalks, or sidewalks are substandard. Second, the village will also remove the Pulaski Dam by slowly reducing the crest height until the dam is completely removed. Removing the dam will restore Spring Brook and protect the village of Pulaski from potential flooding. Funding for the dam project was awarded through the DEC's WQIP and totaled \$410,000.

The city of Rome was awarded funding for its Boyd Dam restoration project. The dam, located in the town of Lewis in Lewis County, impounds the East Branch of Fish Creek and creates Lake Tagasoke, which serves as the primary water supply serving Rome and other communities. Through this award, the city will stabilize Boyd Dam. Repairs will be made to the spillway and earthen dike to ensure the dam's safety and protect the public drinking water supply (\$1,000,000, DEC WQIP).

Lewis County will update its county comprehensive plan to incorporate smart growth principles and develop a community focused approach. The plan will serve as a strategic roadmap guiding sustainable growth and development initiatives which will address economic development, housing, health and well-being, tourism, energy, and environmental sustainability throughout the county (\$215,280, DOS Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grant).

The Kraft Heinz Company in Lowville was awarded a NYS Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA) Commercial & Industrial (C&I) Carbon Challenge grant of \$3.75 million that will reduce emissions facility-wide by 92% through equipment electrification, more efficient heating, and installation of on-site thermal storage technology.

Two projects were also awarded in Hamilton County that will improve water quality in the Black River watershed. The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District will implement a countywide roadside stabilization program for eroding road ditches. The program will stabilize approximately 20 acres of erosive roadsides and ditches using methods like hydroseeding, check dams and erosion control matting. These practices will reduce erosion and sedimentation in the Black River and Upper Hudson watersheds (\$148,970, DEC WQIP). Trout Unlimited, Inc. will replace six high priority stream culverts in the town of Arietta. The replacements will connect over eight miles of critical habitat for native brook trout within the Bradley Brook section of the South Branch Moose River watershed, which is one of the Black River's subwatersheds (\$566,310, DEC WQIP).

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### Commission Board Meeting

Monday, January 27 at 10:00 a.m. at the Parish Municipal Offices,  
2938 East Main Street, Parish, NY 13131. The public is welcome to attend.

## NOCCOG Member Municipalities Receive One Free LGC Registration

At the December NOCCOG Executive Committee meeting, the directors unanimously agreed to cover the registration cost of one attendee from each member municipality attending the 2025 Local Government Conference, March 31 and April 1, at the Turning Stone Conference Center. The intent is twofold, as training and knowledge are essential in any board position, and offers a savings to participating NOCCOG communities.



The registration can cover one or both days of the conference, including the reception. Designated registration forms will be provided to NOCCOG municipalities by their circuit rider. Once completed, please email the NOCCOG sponsored registration to John Healt, at [jhealt@tughill.org](mailto:jhealt@tughill.org). The designated registration forms must be received before the end of the early registration period, which is February 28.

Local Government Conference registrations and agendas have been sent but are also available on the Tug Hill Commission's LGC [webpage](#). For more information, please reach out to John Healt by calling 315-941-2818, or by email, [jhealt@tughill.org](mailto:jhealt@tughill.org).

## SRCG Winter Meeting January 22

The Salmon Rivers Council of Government (SRCG) will hold their winter meeting on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at the Altmar-Albion Municipal Building (15 Bridge St. Altmar, 13302) at 2:00 p.m.

Guest speaker Terry Bennett from the Oswego County Emergency Management Office will be there to give a presentation on emergency planning for municipalities. SRCG will also be discussing updates on their intermunicipal agreement, bylaws and budget.



## NorCOG Winter Meeting January 23

The North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG) winter meeting will take place on Thursday, January 23, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the West Monroe Municipal Building (46 County Route 11, West Monroe, 13167).

NorCOG will discuss routine business and explore opportunities from NorCOG's Economic Resiliency & Recovery Plan. The meeting will feature guest speaker William Buchan from the Constantia Sewer Board, who will provide an update on the Southern Oswego County Regional Interceptor Sewer (SOCRIS) project.



## RACOG Meeting January 23

The River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) will hold their next meeting Thursday, January 23, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the town of Wilna municipal building. Jillian Lee from the Tug Hill Commission will give an update on the Civic Service Student Activity Program (CSSAP) and on the RACOG student board. There will also be election of officers at this meeting.



## NYCOM Winter Legislative Meeting

The New York Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials (NYCOM) has announced their winter legislative meeting to be held February 2-4 at the Marriott Albany. The meeting includes afternoon sessions and an evening reception on Sunday, February 2; workshops all day Monday, February 3; and morning sessions on Tuesday, February 4. There are three session choices in most of the time blocks covering a wide variety of topics.

The cost to register is \$410 for the entire meeting including the reception and meals, or \$290 for Monday registration only (which includes lunch). These prices are good through January 15, after which the cost increases by \$15 for members and \$30 for non-members. Online registration and a tentative agenda are available through February 2 on the NYCOM [meeting registration page](#). Hotel reservations must also be made by January 15 by using the link on the [meeting hotel reservations page](#) or by calling the hotel directly at 518-458-8444.



Tug Hill Winter Wildlife Webinar Series

# SEA LAMPREY CONTROL IN LAKE ONTARIO AND THE GREAT LAKES



Photo by NOAA

**Tuesday**  
**January 21**  
**2025**  
**6PM**

Join the Great Lakes Fishery Commission for a webinar on efforts to protect the health of the Great Lakes from the threat of invasive, parasitic sea lampreys. These invaders harm the Eastern Lake Ontario fishery by preying on species like Steelhead, Brown Trout, and Salmon. Learn about treatments in the Tug Hill region, including lampricide applications in tributaries like Orwell Brook and Black Creek, and sea lamprey barriers to block migration. Discover the science behind these efforts and the impact of unchecked sea lamprey populations on local ecosystems and fisheries. Don't miss this chance to explore solutions for protecting the Great Lakes fishery!



Sportfish of the Salmon  
River



Male spawning-phase chinook  
salmon



Male spawning-phase coho  
salmon



Steelhead trout



Atlantic salmon



Brown trout



Register at [tinyurl.com/TugHillWildlife](https://tinyurl.com/TugHillWildlife)

# DEC Finalizes Regulations to Protect Freshwater Wetlands; Proposed General Permit for Various Activities

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has finalized the adoption of updated regulations to protect freshwater wetlands. The regulations implement new statutory requirements under the state's Freshwater Wetlands Act that will regulate an estimated one million additional acres of wetland habitat. The updated regulations took effect in January 1, 2025 and clarify jurisdictional status of smaller wetlands of "unusual importance" that meet one of 11 specific criteria contained in the state's amended Freshwater Wetlands Act, which was updated as part of the 2022-2023 Enacted State Budget. In addition, the regulations provide a streamlined wetlands classification system and process for the public to request and appeal jurisdictional determinations.

DEC will host a webinar on January 15 at 2:00 p.m. to provide information and answer questions about the updated regulations. Register for the webinar [here](#), and a recording of the webinar will be posted on DEC's website when available. Additional public engagement sessions, including webinars and community workshops, are planned for 2025. [The final regulations and additional resources, including maps and information, are available on DEC's website.](#)

In addition to the finalized regulations, DEC proposed a statewide general permit for various activities in state-regulated freshwater wetlands and adjacent areas, protected waterbodies, and navigable waters. The Freshwater Wetlands General Permit (GP-0-25-003) would be for a five-year term to allow for the repair, replacement, or removal of existing structures and facilities; construction or modification of various residential, commercial, industrial, or public structures; temporary installation of access roads and laydown areas; cutting trees and vegetation; drilling test wells; and routine beach maintenance and replenishment in areas under DEC jurisdiction. The draft permit can be found on DEC's Freshwater Wetlands General Permit website. Public comments will be accepted through January 27, 2025, and can be submitted via email to [DEPPermitting@dec.ny.gov](mailto:DEPPermitting@dec.ny.gov) or via mail to NYSDEC Division of Environmental Permits, Attn: Kristen Cady-Poulin, 4th Floor, NYSDEC 625 Broadway, Albany NY 12233-1750. DEC is also developing additional draft freshwater wetland general permits in 2025.

## Municipal News

### Denmark/Copenhagen/Castorland Comp Plan Update

The town of Denmark and villages of Copenhagen and Castorland are continuing the development of their joint comprehensive plan in the new year. The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Denmark Municipal Building. The focus of the meeting will be on economic development and community facilities. The comprehensive plan committee has previously conducted meetings involving agriculture, open space, transportation, infrastructure, housing, and historic preservation. The town and villages are anticipated to begin the adoption process early to mid-summer of 2025.

### Wilna/Carthage/Deferiet Comp Plan Update

The town of Wilna and villages of Carthage and Deferiet continue to work together on their joint comprehensive plan. The next committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. at the Wilna Municipal Building. The focus of the meeting will be on community facilities. The comprehensive plan committee has previously conducted meetings on agriculture, open space, transportation, infrastructure, housing, economic development, and historic preservation. The town and villages anticipate beginning the adoption process late spring or early summer of 2025. If you have any questions or comments regarding the comprehensive planning process, please reach out to Christopher Barboza, [chris@tughill.org](mailto:chris@tughill.org).

### River Area Council of Governments Website Training

The River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) held a website training on December 10, 2024 at the town of Denmark. Brian Phelps, the IT consultant for RACOG, provided the training and answered questions for attendees. Currently, the towns of Champion, Denmark, Lowville, Wilna, and villages of Castorland, Copenhagen, and Deferiet utilize website hosting services through RACOG. This is a service available to any RACOG member at no additional cost.

Brian discussed some things that could be adjusted on websites to make them more ADA compliant, as well as options to simplify the websites. The websites will undergo some changes in the next few months, with each community continuing to have full control over their template and design.



## DEC Large Forest Grants Due January 7

Private land owners (or their representatives) who own at least five acres of unforested land can apply for funding to establish new forests through [new funding](#) from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The grants are available as reimbursements from a minimum of \$30,000 up to a maximum of \$750,000. Eligible projects need to have a planting component and can include associated site work, such as removing invasive plants and protecting new plantings from deer with fencing. Applicants must work with a forester or qualified natural resource professional to develop their projects and agree to maintain the new forest for at least 15 years. The deadline to submit applications is 3 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, through the SFS Grants Management System.

## Get Ready for Records Grants Webinar January 16

Are you thinking about submitting a Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) grant application in the 2025-2026 grant cycle? Join State Archives' staff for an informational webinar on Thursday, January 16 from 10 to 11 a.m. by registering [here](#). Presenters will be Jamie Brinkman, Maria McCashion, Michael Martin, Monica Hauck-Wheaton, and Sarah Durling.

Questions that will be answered include:

- What is LGRMIF and who is eligible?
- What can the money be used for?
- How do I get started?
- What kind of information do I need to include in the application?
- What resources are available to help me?

## Ask Me Anything! SRF Technical Assistance & Office Hours

*Ask Me Anything State Revolving Fund (SRF) Office Hours* will expand your knowledge and enhance your ability to navigate the SRF. These sessions are tailored for state agencies, utility operators, and stakeholders who support water infrastructure projects. Each session will open with a specific theme, providing clarity, strategies, and practical insights for preparing and managing an SRF-funded project. The remainder of the session will be devoted to "Ask Me Anything" open questions.



Sessions are scheduled on the first Wednesday of the month from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and the third Monday of the month from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m., excluding holidays. The topics covered in January are [How Do I Get Started](#), held Wednesday, January 8, starting at 11:00 a.m., and [What is an IUP?](#) on Monday, January 13, beginning at 2:00 p.m. Click [here](#) for more information, to register, or to see the entire 2025 open office hours schedule.

## Asset Management for Green Infrastructure Webinar January 23

The Environmental Finance Center Network's next webinar in their Green Infrastructure series, which runs through July 2026, has been scheduled for Thursday, January 23 from 12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Water, wastewater, and stormwater systems are often understaffed and underfunded. This leads to a conflict between the time and money it takes to complete all the basic tasks of the system, as well as the additional burdens of extraordinary events and the funding available. System staff must make decisions regarding the trade-off between funds and activities. Asset management (AM) provides a set of tools and practices that can assist a system in operating, maintaining, and managing assets in a cost-effective, sustainable fashion. In this webinar, five key principles of the AM approach will be reviewed and applied to green infrastructure. Also discussed will be an integrated asset management framework (IAMF) that blends green and grey assets.

The guest speaker is Brooke Bushman, Storm to Shade Program Green Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance Manager, city of Tucson. Register [here](#).

# Planning Board and ZBA Overview Webinars, January 6 and 13

The Division of Local Government Services Winter Webinar Series continues with planning board overview on Monday, January 6 and ZBA overview on Monday, January 13. Both webinars run from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. and each provide two hours of training credit.



Presenters Christopher Eastman, Andy Acker, and Monica Ryan will address the powers and duties of town, village, and city planning boards and commissions. The administrative and regulatory roles of the planning board, including its review of site plans, special use permits, and subdivision plats are discussed, along with the planning board's role in the municipal comprehensive plan. The importance of board procedures, referral to the county planning agency, and making findings are also covered.

Christopher Eastman, Monica Ryan, and Patricia Burke will present the ZBA overview. This introductory course to the zoning board of appeals focuses on the statutory tests boards must follow to grant use and area variances and proper handling of zoning interpretations. Meeting procedures and notice requirements will also be discussed, along with the ZBA's relationship with enforcement officials and the planning board, and the importance of making good findings.

There is no cost to attend either of these sessions. Click [here](#) to register for the planning board overview, or [here](#) for the ZBA overview. For more information, visit the Department of State's training and assistance webpage, [here](#).

## Did You Know...Oaths of Office

Public Officers Law Section 10 and Town Law Section 25 require that every public officer "...take and subscribe" an oath of office "before an officer authorized by law to administer oaths..." and to file that oath of office before he or she performs any official duties. The oath of office for an elective office must be taken and filed before duties are performed and within 30 days after the commencement of the term of office. The oath of office for an appointive office must be taken and filed within 30 days after notice of appointment or within 30 days after the commencement of the term of office. All "town officers" are subject to this requirement – any position where the functions and duties directly affect the citizens of the town and involve the exercise of the powers of the town, would be considered a town officer (including deputies, planning and zoning board members, assessment review board members etc.).

The above cited section of the Public Officers Law also outlines who may administer an oath of office. These include notary publics, town councilmen or town justices in the town they serve, town supervisors or town clerks if they have taken their oath of office, justices of the State Supreme Court or Court of Appeals and several others (see Public Officers Law Section 10). Once the oath has been completed, the oath of office needs to be filed with the town clerk's office, and town justices and court clerks must additionally file an oath of office with the county clerk and the Office of Court Administration. The oath of office is good for the term of the office for which it is taken.

Taking and filing an oath of office is very important because if an individual refuses or fails to file in the time limit established by law, the office automatically becomes vacant per Public Officers Law Section 30 (1)(h). Taking and filing the oath late does not cure the vacancy. If the appointing body so desires it may fill the vacancy that occurs in this instance. The only exemption to this time frame deals with members of the Armed Forces who are absent from the county they reside in at the time of appointment and this case has its own time requirements. The actions of officers who continue to serve in their positions after a failure to file their oath are still considered valid under Public Officers Law Section 15, but the officer can be notified of the vacancy by the town and then replaced at any time.

### Contact Us

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