

## Commission Adopts 2025-29 Strategic Plan



Adopted at the March 17, 2025 Tug Hill Commission Board Meeting

The Tug Hill Commission board adopted the organization's 2025-29 strategic plan at their March 17 meeting in Harrisburg. The full document can be found at [tughill.org/strategic-plan/](http://tughill.org/strategic-plan/). The plan's objectives are organized by the commission's powers and duties outlined in Article 37 of NYS Executive Law, with action matrix tables that outline detailed strategies, actions, lead and partners, priority, timing, and measures of success.

Since 1996, the commission has created five-year strategic plans. This plan is the seventh. The strategic planning process formally kicked off in August 2024 at a facilitated day-long retreat with Dr. Richard Halpin, which included the commission board, staff, attorney, and associates. Smaller working groups of staff and board members developed and refined the document, and it was shared with the region's five councils of governments for their input.

Please contact commission executive director Katie Malinowski with any questions.

## How Winter is Changing in the Tug Hill Region Paper Released

The Tug Hill Commission recently completed a new issue paper, "How Winter is Changing in the Tug Hill Region," explore changes in winter season temperatures and snowfall. The Tug Hill is known for its heavy snowfall patterns and prime winter conditions for outdoor recreation. More recently, communities in the region have experienced a wide array of changing winter conditions. Winter events are often postponed or canceled, and winter recreation has been unreliable at times because of snowfall uncertainty. This winter season has felt like a more "normal" winter, but last season received far less snowfall.

The paper seeks to inform readers about changes in Tug Hill winters by presenting data analysis from four weather stations located in the region: Bennetts Bridge, Boonville, Highmarket, and Lowville. Average maximum (high) and minimum (low) air temperatures and snowfall data were examined over a 50-year period. The paper is designed to educate readers about the differences between weather and climate, understand climate data and where it comes from, learn about the importance of climate normals, learn about how winter is changing in the Tug Hill region, discuss why these changes are occurring, and discuss what this all means for the communities in the region.

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The Tug Hill Commission Technical and Issue Paper Series are designed to help local officials and citizens in the Tug Hill region and other rural parts of New York State. The Technical Paper Series provides guidance on procedures based on issues frequently reviewed by the Commission. The Issue Paper Series provides background on key issues facing the region without taking advisory positions. Other papers in each series are available from the Tug Hill Commission. Please call us or visit our website for more information.



This paper can be useful for a variety of groups, including those focused on recreation, planning, emergency services, and the environment, to help understand the history of winter seasons and what the future may entail. The paper is available to read on [our website](http://ourwebsite). If you have any questions, please contact Jillian Lee at [jillian@tughill.org](mailto:jillian@tughill.org) or 315-785-2406.

# National Grid Files Petition for Upstate Upgrade

National Grid has filed a petition for a “Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need,” Pursuant to Article VII of the Public Service Law, for the reconstruction of approximately 60.9 miles of 115kV transmission line running from the Black River substation in LeRay, Jefferson County, to the Clay substation, in Clay, Onondaga County, and the construction of a new Staplin Creek substation in Rutland, Jefferson County. Within Tug Hill, the Black River-Clay line traverses the Oswego County municipalities of Hastings, Parish, Albion, Orwell, Boylston, and Central Square, as well as the Jefferson County municipalities of Black River, Lorraine, Worth, Rodman, and Rutland.

As of earlier this month, the Article VII Public Service Commission applications for all three National Grid power line/substation projects in the Tug Hill region (Black River-Clay, Black River-Porter, and South Oswego-Tar Hill) are available to the public. For more information on the Upstate Upgrade project, see [here](#). To view the Public Service Commission applications for each line, scroll past the “Projects” map on the webpage and click on the individual project webpages. Links to the applications and other documents can then be found in the “Document Library” section of each sub-page.

Black River-Clay [page](#).

Beaver River-Porter [page](#).

South Oswego-Tar Hill [page](#).



Project map courtesy of National Grid's Upstate Upgrade website.

## Salmon Rivers Elects Officers, and Revamps Website

On February 26, the Salmon Rivers Council of Governments (SRCG) held its winter meeting at the Albion-Altmar Municipal Building, with six of its seven members in attendance. During the meeting, SRCG conducted its officer elections, appointing Bill Potter (Orwell) as chair, Jan Tighe (Pulaski) as vice chair, and Kevin Dwyer (Parish) as fiscal agent.



Salmon River Falls.

Members also reviewed and approved the renewal of its 2025-2029 intermunicipal agreement and bylaws. Additionally, the council voted to serve as a bronze sponsor for the Tug Hill Commission Local Government Conference.

SRCG would also like to announce the launch of its newly reformatted website at [www.salmonrivers.org](http://www.salmonrivers.org), which will serve as a resource for member municipalities and the public, providing meeting information, documents, and updates on regional initiatives.



SRCG board meeting February 26.



TUG HILL WINTER WILDLIFE SERIES:



# SPRING RAPTOR MIGRATION ALONG LAKE ONTARIO

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 6PM

JOIN US FOR AN EXCITING WEBINAR WITH DAENA FORD, A CONSERVATIONIST WITH 30+ YEARS OF RAPTOR EXPERIENCE AND PRESIDENT OF BRADDOCK BAY RAPTOR RESEARCH.

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## WEBINAR HIGHLIGHTS:

- Raptor migration counts at sites along Lake Ontario like Braddock Bay and Derby Hill
- The importance of raptor populations as an environmental barometer
- The challenges and threats our native raptor species face and which populations are in decline
- Previous conservation challenges and victories such as raptor recovery and DDT
- Ways to get involved in hawkwatching, seeing the migration in person, and ID'ing raptors



**For more information and registration, see here:**

**[tinyurl.com/tughillraptor](https://tinyurl.com/tughillraptor)**



# Oneida County Releases Housing Market Report



The office of the Oneida County Executive commissioned a housing inventory assessment in 2023 as part of an initiative to address the needs and gaps in county housing options through a strategic plan. The Oneida County Department of Planning, in partnership with UP Development Planning LLC, conducted the assessment, which also included an online survey that was conducted last fall.

The goal of the comprehensive housing plan was to bring together market influencers and workforce drivers to accurately assess current needs and provide a strategy for the future of housing within Oneida County using meta-analysis of existing data, housing plans, identified housing needs and projected housing needs across the region.

Some of the key highlights of the [report](#) include:

- 6,070 new housing units will need to be created to meet market demand by 2040, with a majority of those required by 2030. This includes 4,500 homeownership and 1,575 rental units.
- Senior housing should account for nearly half of new construction.
- Employment-driven housing demand will support the creation of 2,240 new homes for younger homeowners by 2030 (this is included in the 6,070 units needed).
- 16% of all homeowners and 39% of all renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing.
- Among renters earning less than 30% of the area's median income, 78% are cost-burdened and 63% are extremely cost burdened (over 50% of income goes towards housing).

The report also includes employment trends, including total job numbers, industry sectors and commuting trends, in-depth demographic information, and affordability and cost burden examination. In addition to translating the data collected, the report lays out five goals and 13 implementation strategies, as well as 34 potential action steps to take. It outlines partners for each action and potential funding and resources as well as a proposed timeframe range. A story map of the process can be viewed [here](#).

## Municipal Parks and Recreation Grants Due May 2

The NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation has announced the new Municipal Parks and Recreation (MPR) grant program to fund the development and improvement of municipal parks and recreation sites. Applications are now open through the on-line [Consolidated Funding Application](#) with a deadline of **May 2 at 4:00 p.m.** [Details are available on the parks website.](#)

Eligible applicants include counties, cities, towns, and villages in NY that own the property where the proposed project is sited. MPR funding is available for the construction of recreational facilities and other improvements to municipally owned recreational sites and parks. Examples include playgrounds, courts, playing fields, and facilities for swimming, biking, boating, picnicking, hiking, fishing, camping, or other recreational activities. Grants will primarily fund construction costs. Preconstruction activities, such as developing plans and design specifications may be included in the project budget, but MPR cannot fund projects that are solely for planning and design without a construction component.

For the 2025 grant cycle, successful MPR project applications will be funded with up to \$10 million in Bond Act funds from the Open Space Land Conservation and Recreation category. An additional grant cycle will occur in the future, bringing the program total to \$20 million through two rounds of applications. The MPR grant opportunity can fund up to 90% of the total eligible project costs, with a matching share requirement of 10%. The maximum grant award is \$1,000,000. Grants are administered on a reimbursement basis.

Please let commission staff know if we can help you with an application! Contact: Jennifer Harvill at (315) 785-2380 or [jen-nifer@tughill.org](mailto:jennifer@tughill.org).

## NYS Archives Webinar April 3

New York State Archives has a webinar titled "Ask Us Anything About Inactive Storage" scheduled for Thursday, April 3 from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Do you want to know more about how to design an effective storage space? To document records locations as they move between the office and storage? To choose shelving, boxes, labels, or other storage materials? Then join State Archives staff for a special session marking National Records Management Month where attendees share their questions about storing their inactive records.

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.

# Great Lakes Grants Due May 2

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and New York Sea Grant (NYSG) announced \$200,000 is now available for projects benefiting the Great Lakes basin. The NY Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program supports stakeholder-driven efforts to restore and revitalize the state's Great Lakes region using ecosystem-based management. NYSG administers the program in partnership with DEC's Great Lakes Program.

Eligible applicants include not-for-profit organizations, municipalities, county and local government entities, public agencies, such as regional planning and environmental commissions, and educational institutions including, but not limited to, public and private K-12 schools, colleges, and universities. Budget requests cannot exceed \$40,000. Eligible proposals include local projects that implement goals, strategies, and actions outlined in New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda. Projects selected for funding must demonstrate the successful use of ecosystem-based management.

Proposals are due by May 2 at 4:30 p.m. The application form, guidelines, and detailed project criteria can be found [here](#). Proposals must be submitted through the NYSG portal [here](#).

## Annual ARPA Reporting Portal to Open Soon

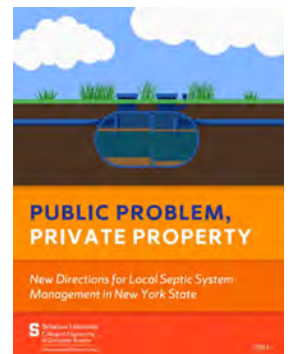
The State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) (also known as ARPA funds or COVID funds) reporting portal on the U. S. Treasury website will open by April 1, 2025. As a reminder, SLFRF funds could be used for eligible costs incurred from March 3, 2021, to December 31, 2024, and this ARPA funding needed to be spent or obligated by December 31, 2024. The next report, due April 30, 2025, will need to have any of these outstanding projects added to it. The reporting process will remain the same as the last few years and monies that have been obligated but not yet spent will need to be spent by December 31, 2026.

Additional information is available on the U. S. Treasury's [State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#) webpage. There is a [self-service resources link](#) and generally a contact center opens for live questions closer to when the annual reporting is due. The April 2025 Project and Expenditure Report User Guide should also be available soon on the webpage listed above.

Anyone who needs help completing their report this year is encouraged to reach out to your circuit rider or commission staff, and we will be glad to help walk you through the report process.

## Septic System Resource Available

The Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center (SU-EFC) has a new publication available on their website titled [Public Problem, Private Property: New Directions for Local Septic System Management in New York State](#). This resource offers valuable information and insights on existing septic system programs and research to guide the creation of septic system improvement programs that support water quality goals. The publication addresses the need for affordable and accessible resources for septic system maintenance by homeowners. Ensuring the proper functioning of private septic systems is critical for safeguarding public health, protecting the environment, and furthering community resilience. However, achieving this goal requires more than the actions of individual property owners; it requires careful planning and program design that address the affordability, educational, and governance barriers that persist in onsite wastewater management.



You'll also find [other valuable publications here](#) including *Lead Service Line Removal Funding in New York State*, *NYS Funding Source Guide* and *A Quick Guide for Town Boards on District Formation*.

## Sawyer Community Fund Grant Proposals Due April 18

The Kenneth V. and Jeannette Remp Sawyer Community Fund, at the [Northern New York Community Foundation](#) (NNYCF), is accepting grant proposals from nonprofit organizations that serve Boonville, Constableville, and Westernville residents.

The fund was established in 2018 to support programs, projects, and initiatives that broadly impact the quality of life in the three communities. The NNYCF administers this permanent, charitable legacy fund that makes annual grant awards. Up to \$60,000 in grant funding is available and proposals must be submitted by April 18. To be eligible, nonprofits must be classified as a 501(c)(3) organization by the IRS. Other entities may be eligible depending on the request.

For grant guidelines, or to learn more about this funding opportunity, contact Max DelSignore, Community Foundation Assistant Director, [max@nnycf.org](mailto:max@nnycf.org) or 315-782-7110.

# Track Your Tree Plantings with the Tree Tracker

Have you tried to say that five times fast? Or have you planted a tree since January 1, 2024? You are invited to track how many trees you have planted using the [Department of Environmental Conservation's Tree Tracker](#). The state has a goal of planting 25 million trees by 2033 as part of the climate equity and reforestation goals outlined in the [Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act](#). Logging your plantings helps towards this number, as every tree counts.



## Preservation League TAG Grants Due April 11/18

The Preservation League of NYS's [Technical Assistance Grants](#) (TAG) are currently open, with the pre-application available until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 11 and the deadline to submit final applications is 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 18.

TAG supports discrete studies on spaces or systems within a building, structure, or site to precede repairs or limited rehabilitation projects. Supported projects include accessibility studies, limited condition assessments, engineering/structural analyses, feasibility/reuse studies, and mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) analyses. The funding is open to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and units of local government managing an arts/cultural facility.

Requests of up to \$7,500 are allowed for projects costing up to \$8,000. Applicants must contribute at least a \$500 cash match. The application process is entirely online. Prospective applicants must first complete [a pre-application to determine eligibility](#)

Applications that meet one or more of these funding priorities will receive priority consideration.

- Projects that identify and preserve histories, places, and culture associated with underrepresented communities (which includes rural communities) and/or that address issues of social justice, diversity, equity, access, and inclusion
- Projects that respond to challenges created by climate change.

## Adirondack Climate Conference Held at the Wild Center



Commission staff Katie Malinowski and Jillian Lee attended the Adirondack Climate Conference on March 6 at [The Wild Center](#) in Tupper Lake, in partnership with Paul Smith's College and the Adirondack Research Consortium. The conference aimed to address climate challenges and opportunities

in Northern New York. Presentations focused on climate and flood resilience, disaster preparedness and response, the NYS Climate Impacts Assessment, climate initiatives, disadvantaged communities, public health, climate reporting, and more. The plenary sessions can be [watched online](#).

## Kubota Hometown Proud Grant Program

Kubota seeks applications for 501(c)3 organizations located within 50 miles of an authorized Kubota dealer (Lowville, Watertown) for hometown projects and initiatives. The program will invest in communities across the country by awarding ten grants, valued at \$50,000 each (\$25,000 cash and a \$25,000 voucher for Kubota equipment). The online application portal opens April 3 and closes May 9, 2025. More information [here](#).

### Contact Us

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Visit us at:

**Web:** [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org)

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

**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](#).



*15 Years!*

# BLACK RIVER WATERSHED CONFERENCE 2025

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**JUNE 2-3, 2025**

*Featured  
Content*

**MONDAY, JUNE 2**  
**6:00-8:00 PM**

## **WATERSHED WELCOME: AN EVENING OF CONNECTION & CONVERSATION**

Join us to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Black River Watershed Conference with a guest speaker. Light fare will be served.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 3**  
**9:00AM-3:30PM**

## **EXPLORING OUR WATERSHED: INSIGHTS, INNOVATIONS, AND ACTION**

Learn about projects focused on protecting and preserving the Black River Watershed. Breakfast and lunch included.

**HILTON GARDEN INN**  
**WATERTOWN/THOUSAND ISLANDS**  
1290 ARSENAL ST, WATERTOWN, NY 13601

**REGISTRATION  
COMING SOON!**

Questions?  
Contact Jillian Lee  
☎ 315-785-2406  
✉ [jillian@tughill.org](mailto:jillian@tughill.org)