



## Local Government Conference Presentations Available

That's a wrap on the 2025 Local Government Conference! Commission staff worked hard organizing the event, attending to the details, and helping conference-goers navigate the halls of Turning Stone. Attendees were treated to presentations on a host of topics geared towards town and village board members, planning and ZBA board members, clerks, highway officials, and assessors. There were 664 registered attendees this year, which is the highest since the move to Turning Stone Conference Center after COVID. Most of the presentations from the conference are available on the commission's [website](http://www.tughill.org). Thank you to all who attended, presented, sponsored, or tabled at the event. If you attended and did not provide feedback yet, [please click here for the survey](#), which closes on Friday, April 18. If you would like to share your ideas for future training topics, please call the commission (315) 785-2380 or email [jennifer@tughill.org](mailto:jennifer@tughill.org).

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*Christopher Eastman, NYS Department of State Local Government Specialist, presenting to planning board members.*



*Laird Petrie presenting a budgeting session.*



*Commission staff Heidi Tompkins and Angie Kimball.*

# Tug Hill Region Represented at Rural Resources Fair in Albany

Commission staff, Jennifer Harvill (community and regional projects director) and Jillian Lee (project specialist), attended the third annual Rural Resources Fair on March 26 in Albany at the Legislative Office Building. Over 40 rural groups attended to raise awareness and highlight issues faced in rural communities, including but not limited to, housing, energy, agriculture, and education. Jennifer and Jillian spoke with several legislators, staff, and members of the public about the Tug Hill region. Conversations ranged from housing, education, recreation, climate, and more. Many people recognized the Tug Hill region for its recreational opportunities, while others had not heard of the region before and were very interested in learning more.



From left, Jennifer Harvill and Jillian Lee.

## Fourth Article VII Application Submitted by National Grid

The proposed reconstruction of ~27 miles of 115kV transmission line between the Black River Substation in LeRay, Jefferson County, and the new Beaver River Substation in Croghan, Lewis County, has been submitted to the NYS Public Service Commission for their review and potential approval. National Grid split what was originally the Black River to Porter project into two separate projects, Black River-Beaver River and Beaver River-Porter. Links to all four projects on Tug Hill are provided below.

Taken together, the four pending Article VII projects encompass 42% (25 out of 59) of the communities in the legislated Tug Hill region, and 44% (27 out of 62) of communities that belong to one of the region's five councils of governments.

- South Oswego-Tar Hill, [National Grid website](#), [PSC Case 25-T-0049](#)
- Black River-Clay, [National Grid website](#), [PSC Case 25-T-0184](#)
- Beaver River-Porter, [National Grid website](#), [PSC Case 25-T-0178](#)
- Black River-Beaver River, [National Grid website](#), [PSC 25-T-0195](#)



## Agricultural Development Conference Well-Attended

On Friday, April 4, Jefferson County Economic Development (JCED) hosted its agricultural development conference at Jefferson Community College. Attendees included local farmers and food producers, local businesses, commission staff, stakeholders in Jefferson County, and state representatives, among others. Agricultural coordinator and deputy CEO of JCED Jay Matteson credited this year's conference as being the result of its partnership with Jefferson Farm Bureau, as well as other agencies and partners.

Prior to the conference's opening remarks, a video produced by Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), "Agribusiness in Drum Country," was played for a public audience for the first time. The short video was developed by DANC and JCED to help attract more businesses to the area due to the unique opportunities in the North Country.

Presentations throughout the day emphasized several critical, timely topics: the importance of workplace development cross-generational understanding, navigating modern insurance needs and coverage options for farms, and the significance of understanding larger economic trends to create a resilient business. Attendees received presentations from the following experts: Mike Spaulding, Nationwide Insurance ("The Future of Insurance"); David Freund, Chief Leadership Officer from The Manufacturers Association of Central New York ("Tapping into Generations for Business Success"); and Danny Munch, Economist with American Farm Bureau Federation ("As the World Turns, a Guided Trip Through Our Economy").





# Economic Visioning Summit

**April 30, 2025**

Howard G. Sackett Technical Center  
5836 State Highway 12, Glenfield, NY 13343

**FREE  
REGISTRATION**

[tinyurl.com/racogeconomicsummit2025](https://tinyurl.com/racogeconomicsummit2025)

## Agenda

08:30am -  
08:50am

**Introduction, Recap, & Events**

08:50am -  
09:20am

**Transportation Initiatives**  
(Tug Hill Commission)

09:20am -  
09:50am

**Educational & Student Initiatives**  
(Tug Hill Commission & Jefferson  
Lewis BOCES)

09:50am -  
10:05am

**Grants Overview**  
(Tug Hill Commission)

10:05am -  
10:20am

**Break**

10:20am -  
11:00am

**Game Time! (Team Activity)**

11:00am -  
12:00pm

**Local Government Updates**  
(Towns, Villages, & County  
Planning Departments)

12:00pm -  
01:00pm

**Lunch**

01:00pm -  
02:00pm

**Economic Development Updates**  
(Naturally Lewis & JCIDA)

**Register**



**Mickey Dietrich, RACOG Municipal Management Consultant**



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+315-681-5023



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



**Website**  
[www.racog.org](http://www.racog.org)

# Denmark Culvert Inventory Update

Culverts are essential for hazard mitigation, particularly in flood prevention, by safely directing water beneath roadways. The town of Denmark is currently collaborating with Lewis County on their hazard mitigation plan and decided to update its culvert inventory for this effort.

In 2013, Denmark participated in the Joint Infrastructure Management Initiative, which included an inventory of culverts. To ensure the data was current, the town put a request into the Tug Hill Commission to update the inventory. On March 25, several commission staff members spent the day in the field to perform the update. During this visit, the commission also took the opportunity to offer mapping training to the staff.

The commission provides a variety of mapping solutions and capabilities to support the needs of its communities. Contact Taylor McKinney, [taylor@tughill.org](mailto:taylor@tughill.org) for more information.



*Chris Barboza measuring a culvert.*

## CTHC Spring Meeting April 29

On Tuesday, April 29 the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) will hold their annual spring meeting at the Glenfield (3G) Fire Hall, 6229 Blue St., Glenfield. Social hour will start at 6:00 p.m. with dinner at 7:00 p.m. and the business meeting to follow. Business includes election of officers for 2025, adoption of goals for the year and many other topics. Officials from Lewis County are expected to be the speakers for the evening. Invitations with a tentative agenda have gone out, so please make reservations by April 22. The meeting portion of the evening is open to the public and free of charge, but additional guests who would like to attend the dinner will be charged \$42 each, payable at the venue. CTHC pays for two representatives' dinners from each municipality.

The CTHC executive committee recently interviewed and offered a contract to a new associate circuit rider to replace outgoing associate Beth Steria who has chosen not to renew her contract for 2025. Denali Dietrich has accepted the contract and started attending board meetings this month for the municipalities she will be covering going forward. Denali is Tug Hill circuit rider Mickey Dietrich's daughter and long-time executive committee member Doug Dietrich's granddaughter.

## North Shore Council of Governments Spring Meeting Recap

On March 27, the North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG) held its spring meeting at the West Monroe Municipal Building. Three of the four member municipalities were represented, and over a dozen local residents attended.

During the meeting, members participated in a brainstorming session for the economic resiliency study, explored potential new logos and branding concepts, and discussed a possible partnership with Oswego County Tourism on a collaborative project.

Bill Buchan provided an update on the Southern Oswego County Regional Interceptor Sewer (SOCRIS) project, noting that the initiative is now in the county's hands. There is optimism about applying for grant funding this summer. Bill and Heidi will collaborate to provide monthly updates moving forward.



*NorCOG meeting in West Monroe.*

Matt Johnson, planning director, also attended the meeting and shared updates on several initiatives, including the Oneida Lake 9E study, the Route 49 traffic study, and the Tug Hill Commission's new strategic plan.

NorCOG's next meeting is scheduled for June 26 at 7:00 p.m. at the Constantia Town Hall and will feature a guest speaker.

## Commission Staff Attend NY Planning Federation Conference

The New York Planning Federation hosted their annual planning and zoning conference in Cooperstown April 6-8. Commission staff members Matt Johnson (planning director), Christopher Barboza and Maria Covey (planners), and Heidi Tompkins (circuit rider) attended the conference. With over 20 speakers, attendees from across the state had an opportunity to sit in six different sessions to learn more about a variety of planning and zoning related topics including land use allocation, large scale renewable energy permitting, area variances, and DEC freshwater wetland regulations. Commission staff attend the conference annually to keep on top of new planning topics, network with other professionals, and bring back ideas for the commission's annual local government conference.



# Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program Grants Due May 2

## [New York's Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program](#)

2025 application period is now open. New York Sea Grant, in partnership with DEC, is accepting proposals up to \$40,000 from non-profits, county and local governments, public agencies, and educational institutions, for projects that advance the [Great Lakes Action Agenda](#) and align with a locally supported community plan to address environmental challenges in New York's Great Lakes basin. These plans may focus on water quality, natural resources, or sustainable land use and include, but are not limited to, coastal lakeshore economy and resiliency regional plans, comprehensive plans, harbor management plans, hazard mitigation plans, local waterfront revitalization plans, natural resource management plans, Resilient NY flood mitigation studies, and watershed management plans.

To learn more about previously awarded projects, visit [the project dashboard](#). Tug Hill is located in both the northeast and southeast subbasins.



## Northeast Lake Ontario Work Group Meeting in Lowville May 5

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Great Lakes program is holding their spring 2025 Great Lakes Action Agenda Northeast Lake Ontario- St. Lawrence River Sub-Basin Work Group meeting at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County, 7395 East Road, Lowville on Monday, May 5 from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. [Click here to register](#), for either in person or virtual attendance.

Agenda topics include:

- Great Lakes/DEC and partner updates
- Baseline conditions characterization updates
- Project and partner spotlights – to include the Black River Initiative
- Upcoming funding and collaborative opportunities

## Eastern Lake Ontario Invasive Species Symposium June 12



The Eastern Lake Ontario Invasive Species Symposium will be held on Thursday, June 12, from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., at SUNY Oswego's Sheldon Ballroom. This symposium is free and will feature a distinguished lineup of speakers. Reach out to Megan Pistolese, [megan.pistolese@tnc.org](mailto:megan.pistolese@tnc.org), with any questions. [Learn more and register here](#).

Pre-Symposium Workshops: In conjunction with the symposium, SLELO is offering two workshops on Wednesday, June 11, between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at the SUNY Oswego Rice Creek Field Station.

1. Emerald Ash Borer Biocontrol Monitoring Workshop: Learn about and engage in biological control monitoring efforts.
2. Water Protectors Aquatic Plant Workshop: Hands-on experience to learn about and observe live native and aquatic invasive plants.



NEW YORK STATE WATER  
RESOURCES INSTITUTE  
Cornell University

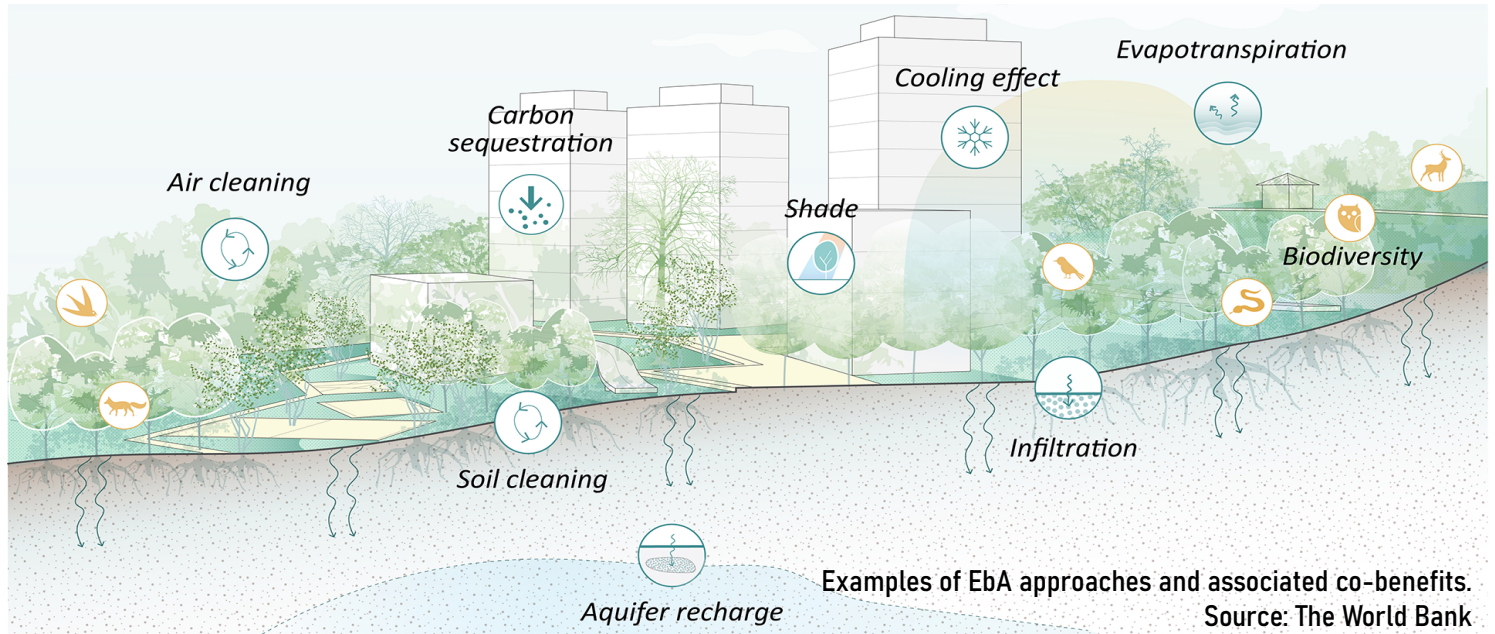


Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

For more information on the tool and to stay involved,  
contact Shannon Duerr ([shannon.duerr@dec.ny.gov](mailto:shannon.duerr@dec.ny.gov))

# Help Shape the EbA Co-Benefits Tool!

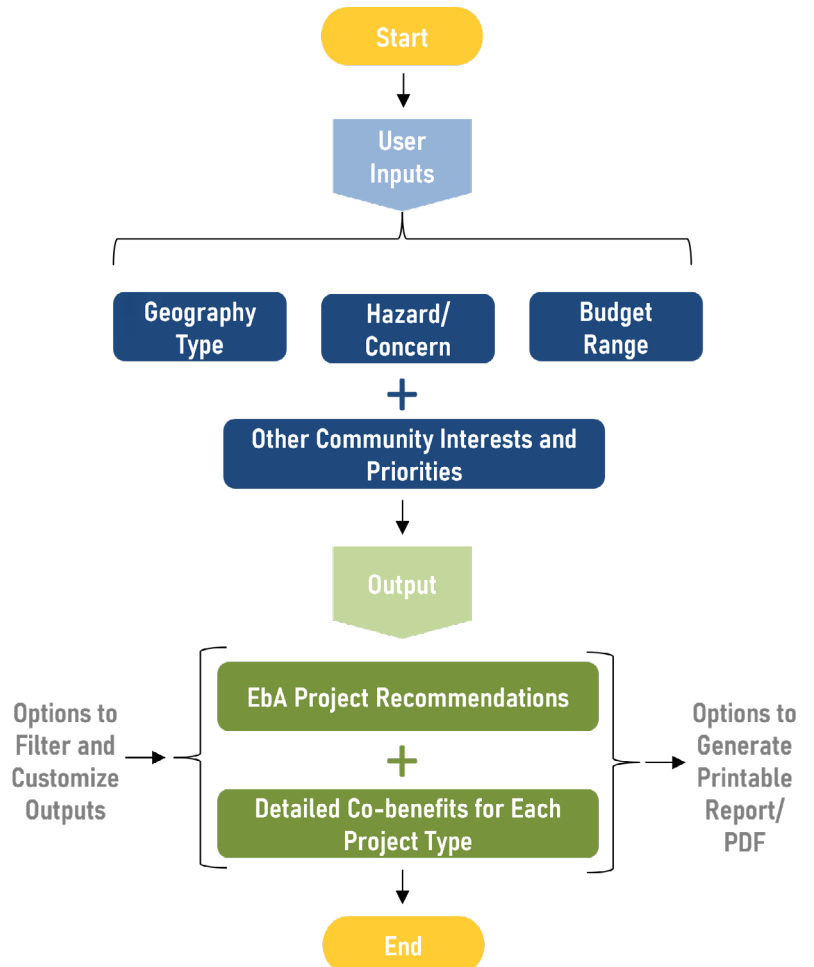
Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) uses natural systems—like wetlands, forests, dunes and floodplains—to help communities adapt to climate risks while enhancing environmental and social benefits (see below).



Examples of EbA approaches and associated co-benefits.  
Source: The World Bank

## What is this tool?

The EbA Co-Benefits Tool is designed to help communities identify ecosystem-based strategies that reduce hazards like flooding and erosion while providing co-benefits like habitat restoration, water quality improvement, and recreation opportunities. The tool prompts users to provide inputs about their concerns, and then provides EbA recommendations and information on associated co-benefits, as shown in the diagram on the right.



## Attend the early feedback workshop at Jefferson County Cornell Cooperative Extension!

When: Monday, May 7th 10:30am to 12:30pm  
Where: 203 North Hamilton St. Watertown, NY 13601  
Registration link: <https://tinyurl.com/DECEBAWORKSHOP>

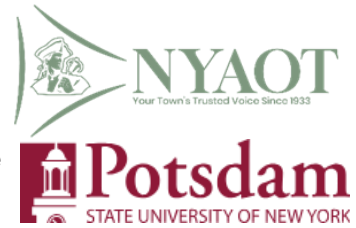


This tool is in development, and your input will help shape how it works. You can provide feedback during the workshop, or scan the QR code or visit this link after you've attended: <https://forms.gle/oE3waZdQN3QwhJsU7>



# NYAOT and SUNY Potsdam Launch Microcredential Program in Grant Writing and GIS

The New York Association of Towns, in partnership with SUNY Potsdam, recently announced the launch of a workforce development initiative designed to improve recruitment and retention in towns, as well as create an accredited and skilled workforce.



Local government employees and candidates for employment can now earn microcredentials in the areas of [public sector grant writing](#) and [spatial data analysis with GIS](#). A microcredential is a short course of study that focuses on a particular skill. All microcredentials will launch this summer and will be offered online for maximum compatibility with work schedules. Course durations will vary from six weeks to two semesters.

Many smaller municipalities lack the resources to effectively research, apply for, and secure grants. Training in grant writing can help local governments access much-needed funding, while education in spatial data analysis with GIS enhances municipal planning and decision-making capabilities.

Additionally, these programs support the development of a workforce pipeline by preparing students for careers in local government. Enrolled college students, as well as individuals transitioning from the private to the public sector, will benefit from these opportunities to gain relevant, applicable skills that align with the needs of municipal employers. More information on these programs can be found [here](#).

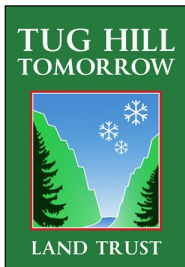
## NYAOT 2025 Town Finance and Personnel School

There is still time to register for the NYS Association of Towns' (NYSAOT) annual town finance school, April 22-24, in Saratoga Springs. This 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year includes a special, expanded program with a personnel track. AOT has significantly increased the number of available classes by introducing a new personnel track of concurrent sessions and adding an entire extra day of programming. Additionally, all town officials are invited to the anniversary dinner, featuring keynote speaker NYS Comptroller, Thomas P. DiNapoli.



For more information and to register, click [here](#).

## April Tug Hill Tomorrow Events



**Tug Hill Explorer Animal Tracks and Signs, April 16,  
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

Learn about footprints and other signs of animal activity at the Central Square Library. Participants will use materials in the library's new Tug Hill Explorer Animal Tracking Backpack to learn the basics of animal tracks and signs. [Register here](#).

**Blake Sanctuary Owl Prowl and Twilight Walk, April 19,  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**

Enjoy a twilight walk and owl prowling at the Joseph A. Blake Wildlife Sanctuary in the town of Rutland. Learn about the ways animals are adapted to a low-light lifestyle, look for all types of animal tracks and signs, and look and listen for owls. [Register here](#).

**Spring Blueberry Pruning and Trail Cleanup at Stone House Preserve, April 26,  
1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Help prune Stone House Preserve's large blueberry patch and help with light trail maintenance as time allows. Please RSVP for directions and in case of last-minute changes. [Register here](#).

### Contact Us

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

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