

New and Updated Commission Technical and Issue Papers

The Tug Hill Commission staff regularly writes new and updates existing technical and issue papers on relevant topics for use by Tug Hill communities and beyond. The demand for these papers is often generated by common themes commission field staff hear raised at municipal board meetings. Staff compile all the relevant information, reach out and work with partners as needed, and provide final products in an organized and easy-to-read format. All of these papers can be found on the commission's website at tughill.org/publications/technical-issue-papers/.

The new ***A Municipal Guide for Writing Requests for Proposals for Professional Services*** technical paper focuses on how to create a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the procurement of professional services, such as legal, architectural, engineering, and surveying. The process of purchasing goods and services necessary for municipalities can be a time-consuming task. Using information from the NYS Office of the State Comptroller and the NYS Office of General Services, and working with partners at GYMO Architecture, Engineering, and Surveying, the paper details what should be included in an RFP, and provides a sample in the appendix.

The new ***Understanding the New Regulatory Standards for Animal Shelters*** issue paper describes the responsibilities of local governments in NY regarding animal control and sheltering. Article 7 of the state's Agriculture and Markets Law for decades has governed municipalities in this area, focusing on the licensing, identification, and control of dogs, requiring municipalities to appoint dog control officers (DCO), seize unlicensed or dangerous dogs, and ensure minimal sheltering conditions for seized animals. New Agriculture and Markets Law Article 26-C, augments but does not replace Article 7, provides state-level oversight and consistent quality in shelter operations primarily by taking already established standard operating procedures for municipalities and putting them into law.

The updated ***Short-Term Rentals*** issue paper incorporates new data and state law into the commission's existing primer on what municipalities should know about vacation rentals. Using March 2025 data from AirDNA, commission staff analyzed location data for just over 1,000 regional listings. Additionally, new state law requirements for counties, hosts, and booking services are discussed, using much information provided by the NYS Association of Counties.

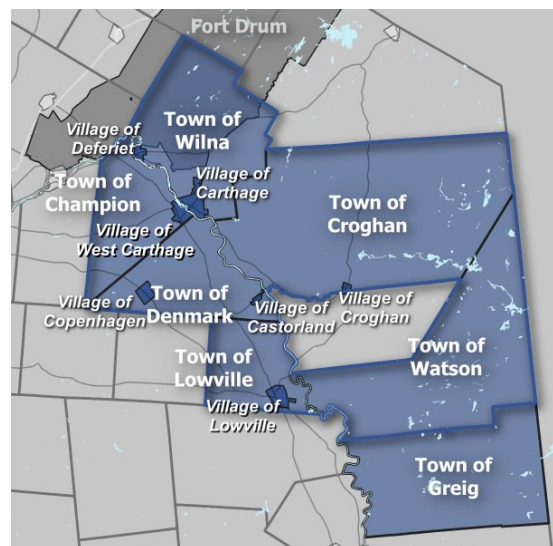
RACOG Board Meeting & New Members

At the May 22 River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) meeting, the village of Croghan and town of Greig were approved as new members. Bob Johnson, Greig supervisor, attended and expressed that the town saw value in collaboration with neighboring municipalities on regional projects, shared concerns, and information exchange. RACOG now includes seven towns and

seven villages in Jefferson and Lewis counties.

The RACOG board also voted to continue supporting the Civic Service Student Activity Program for the upcoming year and to maintain the RACOG Student Board. Denali Dietrich and Avery Kilburn presented on behalf of the RACOG Student Board, sharing the results of a peer survey focused on identifying factors that could encourage local youth to remain in or return to the area after completing their education.

The next RACOG board meeting will be held in September.



In This Issue

- New and Updated Papers
- RACOG Board Meeting
- Black River Watershed Conference
- Commission Board Meeting
- NOCCOG Service Survey
- Camden Students Florence Settlement
- National Grid Meetings
- Commission Hosts Second Student Day
- Wadas Foundation Grants
- THTLT Events
- Oswego County Notification System
- June 26 ZBA Basics Webinar

15th Annual Black River Watershed Conference a Success

The 15th Annual Black River Watershed Conference was held on Monday, June 2, and Tuesday, June 3, at the Hilton Garden Inn, Watertown. The conference began on Monday evening with a reception and a keynote speaker, Nicole Rice. She spoke about the impacts of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, including its efforts to connect and communicate with communities, and the importance of data in informing decision-making.



Day two started with the soil and water conservation districts providing updates about their programs. Lewis County spoke about cover crops, Hamilton County discussed aquatic invasive species surveys, Herkimer County provided an update on their hydroseeding program, Oneida County shared insight into their urban and municipal forestry program, and Jefferson County concluded with their agricultural environmental management cost-share program.



Jo-Anne Humphreys from Trout Unlimited provided a detailed examination of culverts and culvert replacements. Dr. Kevin Rose from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute educated everyone about lake browning in the Adirondacks. Andrew Brainard spoke about Black River Water Quality sampling results. Sunita Halasz from the Adirondack Climate Outreach and Resilience Network moderated the breakout session, which provided a space for interdisciplinary collaboration and discussion. Attendees worked together to identify the most significant challenges facing the Black River Watershed and potential solutions to mitigate them. Thom Allgaier from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets spoke about invasive species, specifically the spotted lanternfly, box tree moth, and other regulated plants. The day concluded with Jillian Lee from the Tug Hill Commission presenting on how winters are changing in the Tug Hill region with warming air temperatures and more unpredictable winters.

The Black River Watershed Steering Committee would like to extend its gratitude to everyone who presented and attended. An additional thank you to the conference sponsors: AES, River Area Council of Governments, GYMO Architecture, Engineering, & Land Surveying, DPC, and BCA Architects & Engineers. We also greatly appreciate our exhibitors: Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management, and DEC's Great Lakes Watershed Program. All presentations are available on the commission's website [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Jillian Lee at jillian@tughill.org. We can't wait to see you next year!



Commission Board Meeting

Monday, June 16 at 10:00 a.m. at the Town of Champion office, 10 North Broad Street, Carthage, NY 13619.
The public is welcome to attend.

NOCCOG Service Survey Launched

To ensure that the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments (NOCCOG) continues to be an asset to its member municipalities and to help improve the range and relevance of services, the NOCCOG executive committee is asking local officials within the council of governments to take a few minutes and complete the 2025 Service Survey.

The goal of this survey is to check each municipality's familiarity with NOCCOG, illustrate some of the needs of the member communities, as well as provide direction on where NOCCOG can assist.

The survey is open to NOCCOG municipalities only, and can be accessed [here](#), by scanning the attached QR code, or by visiting the NOCCOG [website](#), and will be open until the end of June.



Camden Students Break Ground in Florence Settlement

On May 15, students from three Advanced Placement history classes at Camden High School embarked on a research trip to Florence Hill State Forest. The now-state forest land was once home to the Florence Settlement, also known as the Florence Farming Association. Founded by abolitionist and philanthropist Gerrit Smith, the Florence Settlement was a planned community for freed African American farmers as an alternate opportunity to suggested emigration and recolonization efforts. The land parcels were promoted by abolitionists as an avenue for freedmen to secure financial independence, a way of life, and the right to vote in NY.



Matthew Kirk showing a reference guide for identifying soil type in stratigraphic layers.

While the site of the former settlement has reverted to a mostly wild state, remnants of wells, foundations, and stone fencing dot the area, hinting to the site's rich past. Matthew Kirk and staff from Hartgen Archeological Associates, Inc., led the day's archeological proceedings. Dr. Michael Lucas from the New York State Museum and staff from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the Stephen & Harriet Myers Residence, and the Underground Railroad Education Center also partnered with organizer and teacher Jessica Harney of Camden High School for this event. Commission staff were also invited to participate.

Students were able to walk the site and see the remnants of the settlement – most importantly, they were able to get hands-on and interact with the site itself. As part of the day's research trip, students hit the ground running by learning and then using various field skills: how sites are identified through research, field survey, and non-invasive sensing technology before breaking ground, how to mark and measure excavation units, protocols for field notes and records-keeping, shovel and trowel skimming technique, identifying and documenting stratigraphical layers, soil sifting, and visualizing features and recovering artifacts.

This occasion marked the first time that ground has been broken in the historic area of the Florence Settlement. Archaeological and historical research into the site is expected to continue, and to help offer greater insight into the daily lives of the people who lived there a little under two hundred years ago.



Excavation Unit ID.

National Grid “Upstate Upgrade” Public Meeting Schedule

National Grid is inviting the public to attend virtual or in-person open house meetings regarding the Upstate Upgrade transmission line projects in northern and central New York. There will not be any formal presentation for the in-person open houses. Project team members will be present to provide project information and answer questions.

South Oswego-Tar Hill line (City of Oswego, and the towns of Albion, Mexico, New Haven, Orwell, Richland, and Scriba):

Wednesday, June 11, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., in-person at the Oswego City Hall – Council Chambers, 13 W. Oneida St., Oswego

Thursday, June 12, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., in-person at the Altmar-Albion Municipal Building, 15 Bridge St., Altmar

Black River-Clay line (towns of Clay and Cicero in Onondaga County; Hastings, Parish, Albion, Orwell and Boylston, and the village of Central Square in Oswego County; and the village of Black River and towns of Lorraine, Worth, Rodman, Rutland, and Le Ray in Jefferson County):

Tuesday, July 15, 6:00 p.m., virtual, the Zoom link will be on National Grid's [website](#) closer to the event date.

Thursday, June 12, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., in-person at the Altmar-Albion Municipal Building, 15 Bridge St., Altmar

Thursday, July 17, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m., in-person at the Paul V Moore High School, 44 School Dr., Central Square

Tuesday, July 22, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m., in-person at the Black River Municipal Building, 107 Jefferson Place, Black River

Commission Hosts Second Student Day

The Tug Hill Commission hosted the second day of the Civic Service Student Activity Program (CSSAP) on Thursday, May 15, with field trips designed to show students different careers available in their area and how they can get involved with local government. Eleven students participated from Beaver River, Copenhagen, and Lowville schools.

The first stop had students learning about local government at the Lowville Town Board meeting, where they met the board members, learned about decisions they need to make for their community, and learned how a public meeting is run. The students then traveled to the Lowville Volunteer Fire Department, where fire chief Joe Austin educated them about the fire department, opportunities for students throughout the year, and gave them a firehouse tour. The day's final tour was at the Lowville water treatment plant, where Matt Cervini from GYMO and Colin Fayle, the wastewater operator, taught students about how wastewater is treated and provided a tour of the facility.

CSSAP's purpose is to develop and support students and future leaders in their exploration of leadership opportunities in public and government service and



workforce development. The program's vision is to foster an environment where communities develop a clear path for the next generation of leaders. It engages future leaders through a two-day course of student activities. The first day, on October 24, 2024, included activities related to real-life scenarios that might occur in local government.

The students said they appreciated learning about different careers they could have in their home communities. Each student received a certificate awarding them five hours of civic participation credit for the NYS Education Department's Seal of Civic Readiness. The Seal of Civic Readiness is recognition a student can receive to show they attained a high level of proficiency in terms of civic knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences.

The commission would like to thank the town of Lowville board members, Joe Austin, Matt Cervini and his team from GYMO, and Colin Fayle for taking time to educate the students, RACOG for financially supporting lunch, Jeff Ginger and his team for their support for this program and providing a bus to transport the students, the guidance counselors for student engagement, and most importantly, the students for taking the time to participate.

The next CSSAP day will be in fall 2025 and will be back in a classroom setting for the first day. Students who attend schools served by the Howard G. Sackett Technical Center can contact their guidance counselors if they are interested in participating. Mickey Dietrich and Jillian Lee facilitated the program on behalf of the commission. If you have any questions about CSSAP or expanding to other regions, please contact Mickey Dietrich at mick-ey@tughill.org or 315-681-5023, or Jillian Lee at jillian@tughill.org or 315-785-2406.



Wadas Foundation Grant Opportunity for Oneida and Herkimer Summer Recreational Programs

Municipalities in Oneida and Herkimer counties who run summer recreation programs for youth but lack resources have a new possible source of funding with the Edwin J. Wadas Foundation. Needs such as paid summer internship opportunities, equipment, field renovations, and more can be considered. Reach out by calling 315-982-9003 or visit the Edwin J. Wadas Foundation [website](https://www.edwinjwadasfoundation.org/).



June Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Events

Healthy Habitat Series: On-Site Field Trip at the David S. Smith Public Conservation Area,
Saturday, June 7, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Join the last part of the Healthy Habitat series for June: an in-person field trip with Cierra Williams, Horticulture and Natural Resources Educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, at the David S. Smith Public Conservation Area (Smith PCA), 25775 Taylor Rd., Evans Mills. Hear about plans to remove areas of invasive species, followed by native species management and plantings.

Little Sprouts Adventure Day, Sunday, June 15, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Bring your kids to join the land trust for an activity program specifically for young children at Verona Beach State Park. Kids can make egg carton seed starts, paint pinecones and rocks, go on a scavenger hunt, and more. A story time will take place at 2:45 p.m. Free to attend and snacks are provided. Registration is required.



Oswego County Hyper-Reach Notification System

Oswego County's 911 Emergency Communications Department has implemented the new Hyper-Reach Broadcast Notification Service to rapidly alert residents during emergencies. Capable of delivering messages to 10,000 phone numbers per hour, the Hyper-Reach system leaves voicemail messages if no one answers and will continue to redial busy numbers until contact is made. This tool may be used during incidents such as AMBER alerts, hazardous material events, or when evacuations are necessary. While landline numbers are automatically included, residents can register mobile phones, receive text alerts, or request communication by visiting the county's website. Learn more [here](#).



June 26 ZBA Basics Webinar

MRB Group and Hancock Estabrook continue their free annual training series designed to support local governments, municipal officials, and planning and zoning boards. The next session, "Zoning Board Basics: Roles of the Zoning Board in Community Development," will take place on Thursday, June 26, 2025, from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Zoning boards play a key role in local decision-making. From reviewing area and use variances to conducting public hearings, board members are involved in many aspects of the development process. This session will provide an overview of zoning board responsibilities and help new and existing members understand what to expect in their role. Learn more about the program [here](#).

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

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