

Commission Welcomes New Board Member

The Tug Hill Commission has recently gained a new board member with the appointment of Fred Munk by Governor Hochul. Fred is a long-time resident of the village of Lowville, Lewis County. He retired from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in 2023 with 43 years of service, starting as a forester in the Lowville office and ending as the Region 6 Natural Resources Supervisor in Watertown. He is active in his community, including serving on both the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County and the Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District Boards of Directors, the Lowville Lions Club, among other volunteer activities. He is a member of the Society of American Foresters and the International Society of Arborists. Welcome Fred!



Five Consolidated Funding Applications Submitted

Commission staff have been busy preparing grant applications for the towns of Western, Turin, and Leyden (NYSDEC's Water Quality Improvement Program), and for the Barnes Corners Sno Pals and Long Pond Sno Sled Club (NYSOPRHP's Recreational Trails Program). The three towns are submitting applications for salt storage barns and the two clubs are applying for funds for grooming equipment.

The mission of the commission is to enable citizens to shape the future of the Tug Hill region. Our programs are geared toward the conservation and productive use of the region's natural resources, strengthening the long-term economy, employment, cultural and social resources, and general well-being of the rural communities. These projects fully support this mission by encouraging state investment in structures like salt barns, protecting water quality, and equipment purchases, sustaining and enhancing trail grooming which supports safe and high-quality winter recreation on Tug Hill. If you are thinking about applying for grants in the future, please reach out! We provide project development and granting writing support as part of our mission.

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LITTLE SALMON RIVER DAMS ANNUAL INFORMATION MEETING



SIGN UP HERE:
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/LSRD2025](https://tinyurl.com/LSRD2025)



Learn about dam removal, including updates on the Little Salmon River dams removal, dam safety, research, monitoring efforts, funding opportunities, and how dam removal can affect aquatic invasive species.

Tuesday
August 26

Village of Mexico Office
3236 Main Street, Mexico, NY 13114

Start
4:45 - 5:15 pm Field Trip to Black Creek Dam Removal Site
5:30-7:30 pm Informational Meeting

QUESTIONS? ➡

<https://tinyurl.com/littlesalmonriverdams>

jillian@tughill.org

Town Budget Process Technical Paper

It is that time of year again, and the town budget process in New York State can be confusing for both new town board members and seasoned officials. A good reference is the Tug Hill Commission's [Town Budget Process Overview](#) paper, which provides a timeline of when towns should be undertaking certain elements of the budgeting process and the many references to state law that identify portions thereof. Assistance continues to be available from Laird Petrie as well. Contact your circuit rider to inquire.



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 questions frequently received by the Commission. The Issue Paper Series provides background on key issues facing the region without taking advocacy positions. Other papers in each series are available from the Tug Hill Commission. Please call us or visit our website for more information.



Advancing Agrivoltaics Video and Presentation Available

The American Farmland Trust and NYS Tug Hill Commission finished their **Advancing Agrivoltaics in New York** initiative on July 9 with a webinar viewable [here](#). The slide deck can be downloaded on the commission's [presentations](#) page.

Anyone who would like discuss future efforts related to agrivoltaics can reach out to [Linda Garrett](#) or [Katie Malinowski](#).



New Bremen farmer Myron Zehr describes how solar panels have been incorporated into his farming operation.

DEC Public Comment Period Open

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) recently issued a combined notice of complete application and public comment hearing on a number of [permit applications](#) related to potential natural resource impacts of the proposed Micron facility in Clay. DEC is accepting public comments on these permit applications until Monday, September 1, 2025.

The proposed permits are for:

- Article 24 Freshwater Wetlands Permit for approximately 174.77-acres of impacts to NYS regulated freshwater wetlands.
- Section 401 - Clean Water Act Water Quality Certification.
- Article 11 Endangered/Threatened Species (Incidental Take) for impacts to approximately 624-acres of NYS Threatened Northern Harrier and NYS Endangered Short-eared Owl habitat.

Additionally, there are several permits related to mitigation wetland permit applications in the towns of Hastings, Palermo and Schroepel in Oswego County, totaling 480.9 acres of wetland mitigation and 14,030 linear feet of stream mitigation. Details on all the permits are available at the [Micron Technology Inc. website](#).



**Development Authority
of the North Country**

Open House

Tours, Displays & More!

Thursday, August 28, 2025 4:00-6:00 PM

Materials Management Facility
23400 NYS Route 177, Rodman, NY 13682

Celebrating 40 Years of Serving the North Country!



State Energy Plan Released for Public Comment

The State Energy Planning Board has released the draft [State Energy Plan](#), which provides a 15-year outlook through 2040 to guide energy direction with recommendations for meeting future energy demands that prioritize an energy system that is reliable, clean, and affordable, while supporting economic development, equity and a healthy environment. Written comments will be accepted through October 6, [here](#), via email to nysenergyplan@nyserda.ny.gov or mailed to State Energy Plan Comments, NYSErDA, 17 Columbia Circle, Albany, NY 12203-6399.

Recommendations within the Draft State Energy Plan include actions to:

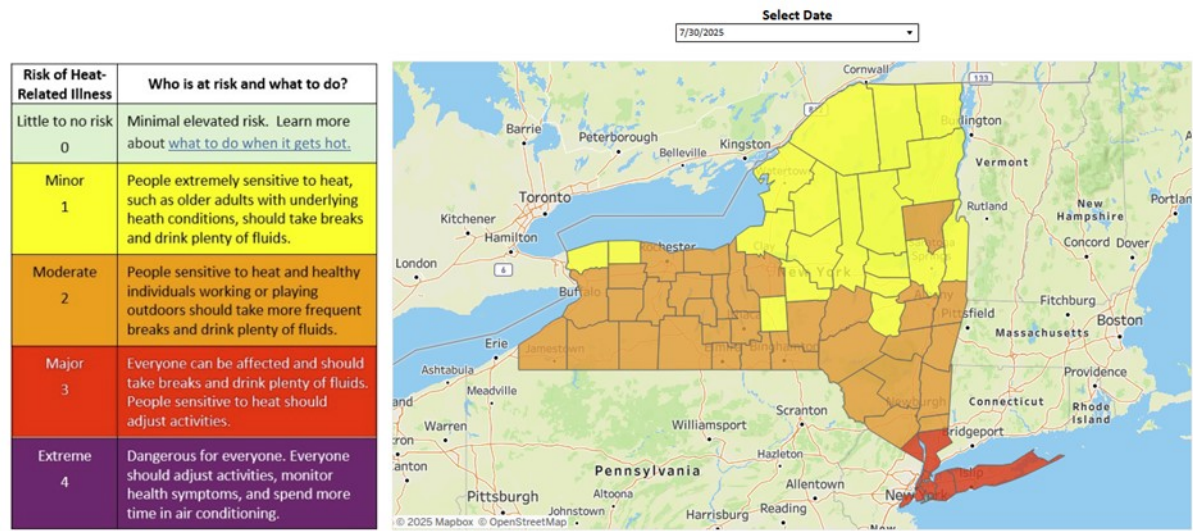
- deliver abundant, reliable, resilient, and clean energy through a diverse mix of resources and supply infrastructure, while supporting energy efficiency and load flexibility;
- plan for and pursue strategic investments to upgrade the state's aging energy system infrastructure;
- provide affordable energy across combined household energy and transportation fuel expenses, and lessen the energy burden for lower-income households;
- provide equitable clean energy benefits by reducing the upfront costs of energy efficiency and clean energy choices for households, businesses, and in the transportation sector;
- ensure all communities, especially disadvantaged communities, benefit from the energy transition by tailoring programs to their needs, designing inclusive engagement, and building local government capacity;
- promote economic development by meeting the needs of large energy users and attracting new industry;
- support workforce development to take advantage of employment opportunities offered by the energy transition; and
- advance energy innovation that fosters economic development and brings new technologies to market that will help enable New York's energy transition.

Below are virtual and in-person public hearings scheduled in August and September, nearest to the Tug Hill. Pre-registration is encouraged but not required for all hearings. For more information [click here](#).

Date	Time	Region
Tuesday, 8/19/2025	2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Statewide - Virtual
Thursday, 9/4/2025	11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Rochester
Wednesday, 9/10/2025	5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Albany
Tuesday, 9/30/2025	5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Statewide - Virtual

NYS Heat Risk and Illness Dashboard

The NYS Department of Health (DOH) offers a Heat Risk and Illness Dashboard that utilizes data from the National Weather Service, the NYS Mesonet Early Warning Weather Detection System, and the NYS DOH to display the risk of heat-related illness. It takes into consideration temperature, humidity, duration of heat, and people’s underlying health. The map displays risk on a scale from 0 (little to no risk) to 4 (extreme risk), by county. Find the [dashboard here](#). County-level data is also available by selecting “Go to County Dashboard” at the top of the page.



Note: Visit [NWS HeatRisk](#) for the most recent forecast

Town Highways 96th Annual Conference September 23-26



The NYS Association of Town Superintendents of Highways (NYSATSOH) will hold their 96th Annual Conference, *Navigating the Rapids: Guiding Roads and Overcoming Obstacles*, September 23-26, at the Niagara Falls Convention Center. Each year, this conference offers timely education sessions with many opportunities to network with highway superintendents around the state and interact with participating vendors.

For more information, or to register, visit the NYSAOTSOH conference webpage [here](#). For question, email info@nystownhwys.org or call 518-426-1023.

Cornell Local Roads Program – LTAP Webinars Available

The New York State Local Technical Assistance Program (NYS LTAP) hosted by Cornell Local Roads Program (CLRP) has many webinars and online training courses available for those unable to attend in-person training programs.

There is a “Foundational Webinar” series which is an ongoing series of free webinars focused on important principles key to local highway operations and management. Each webinar offers a way to learn the basics of a particular topic and with all subjects taken together they cover the foundation of local highway issues. Many of these webinars are offered yearly or every other year to allow people to access the entire series. The current series has several webinars available in August; including “[Complete Streets and ADA](#)” on August 5; “[Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD\)](#)” on August 12; “[Bridge Basics](#)” on August 19 and “[Employee Handbooks \(panel\)](#)” on August 26. The webinars are on designated Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Follow the links above for the listed webinars or additional information on these or previously recorded webinars is available by visiting the CLRP [Training and Events](#) page.

Community Development Block Grant Funds Available

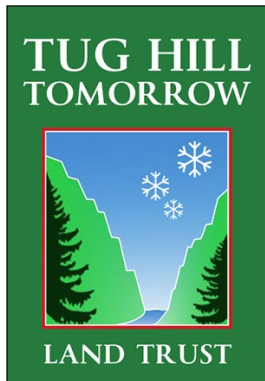
The NYS Office of Homes and Community Renewal has several Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grants currently open, with eligible applicants to include towns and villages with populations of less than 50,000. The primary objective of the CDBG program is the development of viable communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, ***principally for persons of low and moderate income (LMI)***. Much more information, including upcoming informational webinars, are available [here](#).

CDBG funding categories include:

Public Infrastructure Funds for: Public or private water source development, storage, and distribution; Sanitary sewage collection and treatment; Flood control and storm water drainage; Municipal utilities; Ancillary public works components such as sidewalks, streets, parking and open space.

Public Facility Funds for: Senior centers; Accessibility modifications for the removal of architectural barriers; Neighborhood facilities, including but not limited to, libraries, childcare centers, recreational facilities, parks, playgrounds; Facilities for persons with special needs such as facilities for the homeless or domestic violence shelters, nursing homes, or group homes for the disabled; Infrastructure improvements including construction and installation of streets, curbs, lighting and broadband; Fire stations and equipment are eligible. Note that eligibility for assistance to public facilities may vary based on use and local demographic information.

Community Planning funds for: Community Needs Assessments surveys, housing needs assessments, market analysis or similar assessments; Project Specific Planning.



August Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Events

[Healthy Habitat Series Webinar: Native Forest Plants](#), Thursday, August 7, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Join THTLT with presenter Cierra Williams, Horticulture & Natural Resources Educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, focusing on forest plants. Cierra will introduce individual plants, discuss the importance of nurturing native plants and beneficial non-native plants, and discuss identifying and managing invasive plants for improved habitat health.

The webinar will be followed up with an [in-person field trip](#) on Saturday, August 9 at the Joseph A. Blake Wildlife Sanctuary, 31241 Middle Road, Watertown, a 144-acre property managed for a range of forest habitats suitable for all kinds of wildlife.

[For the Birds Festival at Whitecaps Winery](#), Sunday, August 17, 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Learn all about how you can benefit the birds around us, with a special presentation in the pavilion at 2:00 pm by Irene Mazzocchi, retired Region 6 NYSDEC biologist. Wildlife agencies, land trusts, native plant vendors, and more will be on hand to help you find resources and identify ways that you can make an important difference for the birds! There is no fee to attend and no registration required.

Gaming Commission Seminar August 13

The NY Gaming Commission's Division of Charitable Gaming holds free online seminars to help interested organizations and municipal clerks learn about the various laws, rules and regulations governing charitable gaming in New York State.

The webinar will answer common questions regarding raffles including definitions, filing requirements, fees, raffle consent forms, the different categories of raffles, types of raffles, prizes and more.

Seminars occur on the second Wednesday of each month. Registration [here](#).

Contact Us

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YouTube: [YouTube](#)

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

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