

Commission Annual Dinner October 9, Delta Lake Inn, Rome

We hope to see many of you at our annual dinner on Thursday, October 9 at the Delta Lake Inn in Rome. We are excited to welcome a panel of speakers that evening, from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, Chobani, Northeast Dairy Producers Association, and Cornell Pro-Dairy, to learn more about Agricultural Economic Development and Dairy Expansion Projects in Upstate New York.

The evening will include appetizers and an Italian buffet by the Delta Lake Inn, a welcome from chair Gerry Ritter, and a Tug Hill Commission year-in-review presentation by executive director Katie Malinowski. Tickets are \$35 per person, and RSVPs must be received by Tuesday, September 30. Reservations can be made by mail with a check, or online at tinyurl.com/2025-THC-Annual-Dinner. For more information or to ask questions, please contact the office at 315-785-2380.



You Are Invited

NYS Tug Hill Commission Annual Dinner

Thursday, October 9, 2025

**Delta Lake Inn, 8524 Fish Hatchery Road,
Rome, NY 13440**

Cost: \$35/per person with cash bar.

RSVP's must be received by Tuesday, September 30, 2025.
Please make checks payable to "NYS Tug Hill Commission."
Credit card payment can be made at
tinyurl.com/2025-THC-Annual-Dinner.

Please call 315-785-2380 with any questions.

Hope to see you there!

Photo credit: Tony Machia

Commission Staff Meet with CiTi BOCES Superintendents

On Wednesday, August 6, Tug Hill Commission staff members Jillian Lee, Patrick Brady, and Heidi Tompkins met with CiTi BOCES school superintendents representing nine component districts in Oswego County. The meeting and presentation were held at the CiTi BOCES offices in Mexico, NY.

In This Issue

- Commission Annual Dinner
- Staff Meet with CiTi BOCES Superintendents
- Little Salmon River Dams Meeting
- Fish Creek Working Group Meeting
- Animal Shelters Issue Paper
- Companion Animal Care Standards and Capital Fund Webinar
- Oneida County Agricultural Strategic Plan
- NYS Woodsmen's Field Days
- Grants Available for Swimming Facilities
- EFC Grants
- Northern Board Regional Commission Pre-Applications
- Wood Products Businesses Technical Assistance
- NYAT 2025 Planning & Zoning School
- OSC Webinars

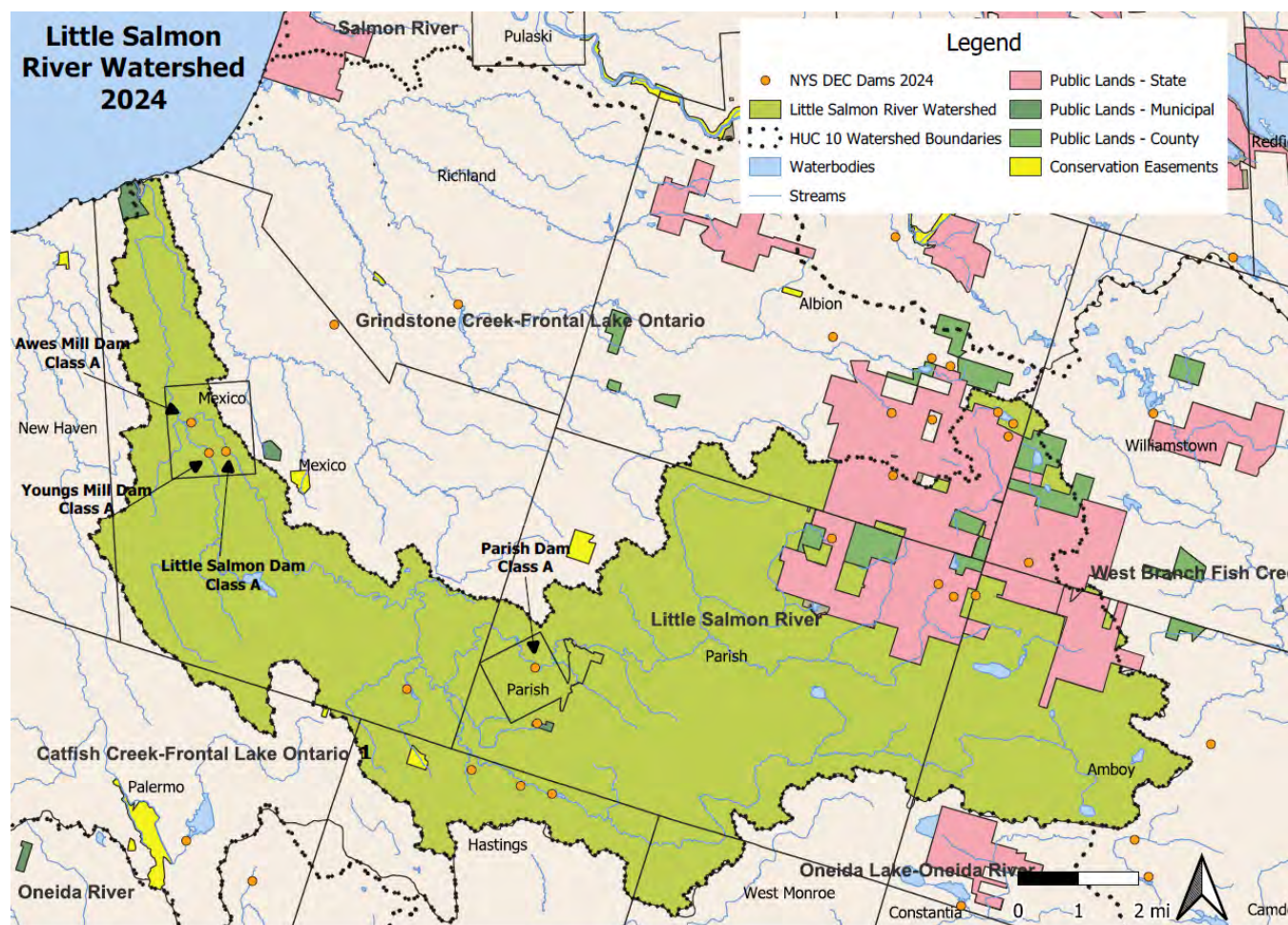
Board representatives from the North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG) and the Salmon Rivers Council of Governments (SRCG) have shared growing concerns with their circuit rider about the future of community leadership. Participation on town and village boards has steadily declined, and many students graduate without understanding how local government works or how they can get involved. The discussion emphasized engaging students early: building civic awareness, developing leadership skills, and fostering a pipeline of future board members, clerks, and civic leaders. Strengthening relationships between towns, villages, and school districts was highlighted as a key strategy for closing knowledge gaps and ensuring stronger local governments in the years ahead.

Superintendents also learned about programs that could be supported by NorCOG and SRCG, including the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness and the Civic Service Student Activity Program (CSSAP), which offer students opportunities to gain real-world local government experience. The group discussed ways to incorporate these programs into existing curricula and extracurricular activities, with the shared goal of inspiring the next generation of civic leaders while benefiting the communities they serve.

Little Salmon River Dams Meeting August 26

The Tug Hill Commission will host a Little Salmon River Dams annual information meeting on Tuesday, August 26, 2025, in Mexico. From 4:45 p.m. to 5:15 p.m., interested parties can join in a field trip to the Black Creek Dam removal site, followed by the meeting from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Village of Mexico Office, 3236 Main Street.

Various speakers will provide information about dam removal, dam safety, research, monitoring efforts, funding opportunities, and aquatic invasive species. Sign up to attend at tinyurl.com/littlesalmonriverdams, and contact [Jillian Lee](#) with any questions.



Fish Creek Working Group Meeting October 2

The East Branch of Fish Creek Working Group will hold its annual gathering of lessees, landowners, and other stakeholders in the East Branch of Fish Creek area on Thursday, October 2, 2025, from 5 :00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the West Leyden Fire Hall, 1046 State Rt. 26, West Leyden, NY 13489. Representatives from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, The Nature Conservancy, and Aurora Sustainable Lands will give updates and provide the opportunity for questions and answers. Please RSVP to the Tug Hill Commission, 315-785-2380 or gwen@tughill.org, by Thursday, September 25, 2025. Pizza and wings will be provided.



Animal Shelters Issue Paper Updated

The commission has updated its recently released *Understanding the New Regulatory Standards for Animal Shelters* issue paper to incorporate feedback from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and local dog control officers. The revision also includes a gap analysis tool to help municipalities identify and address potential challenges posed by the new regulations. The updated paper is available [here](#) for download.

August 20 Companion Animal Care Standards and Capital Fund Webinar

Join NYCOM and presenter, Libby Post, executive director of the New York State Animal Protection Federation, for an informative and practical session on how your municipality can prepare for the implementation of the Companion Animal Care Standards Act, which takes effect on December 15, 2025.



This new law establishes minimum standards of care for shelter animals and will require many municipal shelters to evaluate, and potentially upgrade, their existing policies, procedures, and facilities. The webinar will also provide a detailed overview of the Companion Animal Capital Fund, a state funding source that can help offset the costs of capital improvements at municipal shelters.

This hour-long webinar starts at noon on Wednesday, August 20, and is provided at no cost to NYCOM members, although registration is required. A recording of the webinar will be provided to registrants following completion of the webinar.

For more information, visit the NYCOM Lunch & Learn Series webpage, [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact NYCOM Counsel Rebecca Ruscito at 518-463-1185 or rebecca@nycom.org.

Oneida County Agricultural Strategic Plan Released

Oneida County has released its 2025-2030 [Agricultural Strategic Plan](#), designed to provide stakeholders in Oneida County's agricultural sector with a roadmap to guide future investments and advance the county's agricultural economy. It builds upon previous plans and also serves as a strategic evaluation of the county's agricultural and food-related initiatives.

During the formation of the plan, five theme areas were identified:

1. Farmland Preservation and Protection
2. Economic Development and Business Support
3. Agritourism and Local Food Promotion
4. Workforce Development and Farm Transition
5. Sustainability and Climate Resilience

From there, 21 project concepts were identified within the five theme areas. Each concept is outlined by a short profile that details current challenges, a model approach, and key actions.

The plan addresses the Chobani dairy processing plant that is being constructed in Rome, NY. The plant is estimated to process approximately 12 million pounds of milk per day, which represents over 25% of the state's total daily milk production. To prepare for this, the county highlights projects that focus on developing the processing and distribution of agricultural products, enhancing support for farms throughout the supply chain.

The county's goal of preserving existing farmland for continued agricultural operations is also highlighted in the plan. Large-scale solar has recently been competing for farmland, as sighting on flat, cleared land is ideal for both agriculture and solar. Communities are faced with the pressure of balancing residential development, renewable energy goals, and agricultural expansion. With these concerns in mind, the plan highlights projects that encourage local municipalities to update their comprehensive plans and solar laws to include farm-friendly land use regulations.

Various other focus areas are highlighted throughout the plan, including supplying regional food to local schools, increasing assistance available to farmers for grant applications, and developing workforce training and education programs to encourage interest in the agricultural sector. To ensure action, the plan establishes an Implementation Committee to coordinate efforts, monitor progress, and guide decision making. They will generate an annual Implementation Report and adjust their priorities accordingly. To read the plan and other agricultural resources developed by Oneida County, visit their website [here](#).

NYS WOODSMEN'S FIELD DAYS

EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

JOE GRIFFO BUILDING

Time	Friday, 8/15	Saturday, 8/16
10:00 AM	Introducing the NYS Wood Products Development Council	NYS DEC's Cost-Share and Private Lands Programs
11:00 AM	NYS DEC's Cost-Share and Private Lands Programs	The Role and Services of Consulting Foresters
12:00 PM	The American Tree Farm System: Assistance for Forest Owners	Invasive Species and Herbicide Treatments
1:00 PM	Conservation Easements with the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust	American Tree Farm System: Assistance for Forest Owners
2:00 PM	New Wetland Regulations and Their Relation to Forestry	Forest Economy
3:00 PM	Current Pest and Disease Threats to NYS Forests	
4:00 PM	How Winter is Changing in the Tug Hill Region	

***BRANCH OUT AND LEARN
SOMETHING NEW!***

FREE TO ATTEND



\$53 Million in Grants Available for Swimming Facilities

Governor Kathy Hochul [announced](#) the second round of the New York Statewide Investment in More Swimming (NY SWIMS) Initiative, offering \$53 million in capital grants to municipalities and nonprofits to expand safe swimming access across the state. The program, managed by the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation and administered by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York, provides matching grants for constructing, renovating, or improving swimming pools and natural swimming areas, with at least \$25 million reserved for underserved communities. Grants range from \$250,000 to \$10 million, requiring a 20% funding match, and can cover related infrastructure like bathhouses, public restrooms, and accessibility features.

Applications will be accepted from September 24 to October 30, 2025. Projects will be prioritized that demonstrate clear public benefit, serve underserved communities, and show strong preparation for implementation. A webinar for potential applicants will be held on September 3, 2025, and application materials are available on [DASNY's website](#).

EFC Grants Due September 12

The Water Infrastructure Improvement (WIIA) program provides competitive grants to help municipalities affordably undertake critical wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects. The Intermunicipal Water Infrastructure Grants (IMG) program is available for both drinking water and wastewater projects that serve multiple municipalities, such as a shared water quality infrastructure project or the interconnection of multiple municipal water systems. Both grant programs are administered by the Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC).

EFC uses an online application. Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on September 12. EFC held a webinar on July 11 to share information about this round and how to apply. [A recording is available on YouTube](#). Any community that needs assistance with its water infrastructure is encouraged to contact our EFC's [Community Assistance Teams](#).

Northern Border Regional Commission Pre-Applications Due August 29

Interested applicants are invited to submit pre-applications to the Northern Border Regional Commission's (NBRC) [Catalyst](#), [Forest Economy](#), and [Timber for Transit](#) programs for fall 2025 funding consideration. The required pre-applications can be submitted online through the [Grants Management System](#) (GMS).

WHICH NBRC PROGRAM IS RIGHT FOR YOUR PROJECT?

Program	Description	Projects may include:
Catalyst	Designed to stimulate economic growth and inspire partnerships that improve rural economic vitality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• public water and wastewater services• transportation infrastructure• workforce & business development• resource conservation, tourism, outdoor recreation• childcare and healthcare facilities• feasibility projects
Forest Economy	Designed to support the forest-based economy, and to assist in the industry's evolution to include new technologies and viable business models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• public infrastructure• community development projects• workforce training & development• business planning & technical assistance• marketing/communication & education work (must be paired with at least one other project category.)
Timber for Transit	Designed to advance the use of wood-based materials and composites for transportation and transportation adjacent infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• roads• railways• airways• waterways• canals• terminals such as airports, railway stations, bus stations, parking, refueling depots, and seaports

Visit www.nbrc.gov for a full overview of our core programs, eligibility requirements, and application information.

Wood Products Businesses Technical Assistance Available

The Northern Forest Center has recently announced “Telling Your Forest Story,” an online workshop series designed to help wood products businesses better understand and incorporate their wood-origin story into business philosophy and marketing messaging.

The series will cover and connect businesses with experts on:

- Branded Marketing
- Wood and Wood Flows from the Forest
- Forest Stewardship
- Forest Product and Chain of Custody Certifications
- Consumer Perceptions of Wood and Wood Products

This series consists of six online sessions Tuesdays, September 9 through October 14, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. via Zoom. Following the workshop series, each participating business will receive up to ten hours of one-on-one technical assistance from a marketing expert to help put lessons learned into practice in marketing businesses. Interested businesses should complete and submit the application [here](#). Contact Amy Robinson at arobinson@northernforest.org with any questions. Amy offers free technical assistance to wood product businesses across Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and New York.

NYAOT 2025 Planning & Zoning School September 13

The New York State Association of Towns Planning and Zoning School will be at the Fort William Henry Hotel & Conference Center in Lake George, on Saturday, September 13. Join presenters Sarah Brancatella, Katie Hodgson, and others from 8:00 a.m. to noon as they cover topics such as, What Planning & Zoning Officials Need to Know About Open Meetings Law and Foil, New York’s New Freshwater Regulations and Home Rule Meets the (Affordable) Housing Rule.



Click [here](#) for more information, or to register.

Upcoming OSC Webinars

The Office of the New York State Comptroller’s (OSC) Local Government Academy is offering two online training opportunities in September:

September 3 - 4 | 8:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Virtual | [Introduction to Governmental Accounting](#)

This multi-day school is designed to familiarize participants with the basic concepts of governmental accounting and give them a working knowledge of basic bookkeeping procedures such as understanding debits and credits, a discussion of the modified accrual system of accounting, the practice of maintaining the books and records, developing and accounting for the annual budget, as well as the year-end closing process.

September 10 | 10:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m. Virtual | [Fiscal Stress Monitoring System Briefing for Local Governments](#)

Presenters from OSC will provide preliminary information and summary results regarding the fiscal stress score release in September. Please note that this release is for 12/31 fiscal year-end counties, cities, towns, and villages.

Contact Us

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

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