

## Tug Hill Commissioners

### Chair

**Gerry Ritter**

Town of Forestport, Oneida County

### Vice Chair

**Bill Scriber**

Town of Parish, Oswego County

### Secretary

**Tom Boxberger**

Town of Watertown, Jefferson County

### Members

**Jan Bogdanowicz**

Town of Montague, Lewis County

**Leona Chereshnoski**

Town of Lorraine, Jefferson County

**Robert Keller**

Town of Boonville, Oneida County

**Fren Munk**

Village of Lowville, Lewis County

**Mike Yerdon**

Town of Redfield, Oswego County

## Commission Members

The Tug Hill Commission is overseen by a board of unpaid volunteers, all residents of the region. They are appointed three each by the governor, speaker of the State Assembly, and majority leader of the State Senate.

Commissioners are chosen by appointing authorities so that two come from each of the four counties that overlap the region, with a ninth member serving "at large."

Commissioners set policy, budget, and program priorities, and oversee staff through the executive director.

## Commission Staff

Commission staff, based in Watertown, work together with circuit riders to assist towns and villages within the Tug Hill region.

Staff can be reached by phone or email at the Watertown office during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Memorial Day to Labor Day).



## About Tug Hill and the Tug Hill Commission

The Tug Hill region encompasses 2,100 square miles of forest and farmland, rural villages and hamlets, between Lake Ontario and the Adirondacks, Oneida Lake and the Black River. It is the third largest forested region of NY with a population of only 100,000.



The New York State Tug Hill Commission was created by state legislation in 1972 to help the region's towns and villages protect natural resources and provide for appropriate economic development through local action. Today, the commission assists the region's towns, villages and local organizations with land use planning, community development, and natural resources management.

Through public meetings and surveys, local people have expressed their desire to see Tug Hill's rural economy grow while maintaining and promoting the natural resources that make the region special. The commission works toward this goal by building the capacity of the region to conserve its most important assets: clean water, healthy forests, productive farms, stable communities, and recreational opportunities.

New York State

# Local Government Services

*Helping local governments and  
citizens shape the future  
of the Tug Hill region.*



## NYS Tug Hill Commission

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[www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org)  
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# Councils of Government

## Local Control Through Local Partnerships

The Tug Hill Commission most frequently works with towns and villages of the region through five councils of governments (COGs). Each council has a "Circuit Rider," a local person who provides a link between COG member communities and commission services.



**Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC)**  
[www.tughillcouncil.com](http://www.tughillcouncil.com)

**North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG)**  
[www.norcog.org](http://www.norcog.org)

**Northern Oneida County Council of Governments (NOCCOG)**  
[www.nocccog.org](http://www.nocccog.org)

**River Area Council of Governments (RACOG)**  
[www.racog.org](http://www.racog.org)

**Salmon River Council of Governments (SRCOG)**  
[www.salmonrivers.org](http://www.salmonrivers.org)

# Services for Local Governments

## Technical Assistance & Grant Writing

Commission staff and circuit riders answer hundreds of information requests each year on topics including local government management and budgeting, code administration and enforcement, recent legislative actions and the actions of other governmental agencies, to name a few. This saves local officials time and money while providing necessary information to govern effectively. The commission also provides grant writing assistance.

## Land Use

Commission staff assist communities with developing comprehensive plans, upgrading land use laws, and reviewing development proposals. Commission staff are also available to answer land use and planning questions, and provide one-on-one skill development for planning boards and others involved with land use controls.

## Community Development

Commission staff use a grassroots approach to help communities identify, prioritize, initiate and complete a variety of projects that include: downtown revitalization, historic preservation, park development, and improvement of public facilities and infrastructure. The commission also helps local governments gain financial efficiency through shared services.

## Geographic Information System (GIS)

The commission's geographic information systems support all programs and services. The geospatial database provides data on land use patterns, property ownership, natural resources, and more. Through an online GIS application, data is available to local boards for project reviews and resource management efforts.

## Natural Resources

The commission's natural resources programs are geared toward the conservation and productive use of the natural resources of the region, including its water resources, wildlife habitat, energy resources and recreational assets. Working with partners such as governmental agencies, non-profits and landowners, the commission helps formulate solutions to environmental issues, seeks out funding for natural resource focused projects, assists its communities in implementing those projects and works with communities to assess their conservation-related needs and objectives.

## Workshops and Issue Papers

Over a dozen workshops are organized each year by commission staff, to provide elected and appointed officials the latest information and tools. Topics are selected from locally-expressed needs and deal with a wide variety of issues, including zoning and planning, municipal budgets, SEQR, records management, and maintaining local roads. The commission also produces technical and issue papers on a periodic basis, which provide summaries of key topics regularly faced by local officials.

## Local Government Conference

Each year over 600 Tug Hill local officials, speakers and exhibitors gather for a day of workshops, idea exchange, camaraderie and "recharging" to continue with the sometimes underappreciated task of local government service. The conference is held in the spring and has sessions for town and village board members, municipal clerks, planning and zoning boards, highway superintendents, and assessors.

# Staff Contact Information

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