

March 31 Webinar: Understanding Energy Storage: Market Drivers, Technologies, and Community Considerations

The Tug Hill Commission is hosting an educational webinar for interested local governments and communities on Tuesday, March 31 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Supported by subject matter experts from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, Sandia National Laboratories, and the Electric Power Research Institute, this program will address key topics of interest to our region, including:

- Energy storage drivers in New York (including state energy markets, policies, and programs)
- Introductions to relevant energy storage technologies
- Overview of critical planning and zoning considerations
- Fire safety and incident management

There will be plenty of time for questions and answers at the end of the session, facilitated by Tug Hill Commission staff. Register for this free webinar at tinyurl.com/TugHillEnergyStorage.

Solar & Battery Storage Best Practices Two Pager Available

Due to ongoing interest in solar and battery energy storage systems (BESS) in many Tug Hill municipalities, the Tug Hill Commission recently developed a [two-page summary](#) focused on best practices for municipalities regarding BESS safety practices, the host community benefit program, host community agreements, and PILOTs. It is the second summary sheet prepared from the breadth of material that can be found in the commission's August 2025 [Planning for Solar Energy Projects](#) issue paper. That paper, along with many more, can be found under the "[Technical & Issue Papers](#)" section of the commission's website. Please reach out to Maria Covey, maria@tughill.org, with any questions.

Commission Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 18 at 10:00 a.m. at the town of Lorraine Municipal Building
20876 County Rt. 189, Lorraine, NY 13659.
The public is welcome to attend.

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Wolverines Video Posted; Join March 26 to Learn About Pollinators

Over 70 attendees enjoyed an interactive presentation on wolverines for part two of the 2026 Winter Wildlife Webinar Series on February 26. Steve Chorma, Lead Zookeeper at Zoo New York, ran an exciting game of wolverine trivia throughout the webinar as he shared information on the history of wolverines, the role they played in the New York wilderness, and current conservation efforts. Those interested in watching the webinar can find it [here](#).

Part three of the series will be on Thursday, March 26 and will highlight the vital role pollinators play in the natural environment, and how to attract and support them. Webinar participants will hear from Cierra Williams, horticulture and natural resources educator from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County. Register [here](#).



2026 LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

Strengthening Communities
Empowering Local Government
Growing Together



Regular registration rates end on March 20th!
Registration rates double beginning March 21st!
For complete details:
www.tughill.org/localgovernmentconference

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

- Register online by March 20: events.humanitix.com/lgc-2026 or
- If you are mailing a form, be sure it's postmarked by March 20
- Please pick your sessions when you register
- We are also offering a four-hour Planning for Growth session and Reception the afternoon before the full-day conference



**Does your municipality need vehicle traffic data?
We may be able to help!**

**Contact us to be put on the list for
the 2026 Metrocount season!**

Spots are limited

**The Metrocount traffic counter collects a
variety of vehicle traffic information, including:**

- Traffic volume
- Vehicle speed
- Vehicle classification
- Direction traveled
- Vehicle spacing



For more information, and to reserve your spot



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maria@tughill.org



(315) 785-2389



(315) 785-2384



NON-PROFIT BOOTCAMP



Session #6

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR NAVIGATING THE STATEWIDE FINANCIAL SYSTEM (SFS) FOR NONPROFITS

Navigating New York State's grant system can feel overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. Join us for an overview of the Statewide Financial System (SFS) and how nonprofits can successfully use it to access funding opportunities. This session will cover the prequalification process, required documentation, how to search for grant opportunities, and tips to help your organization be ready to apply.

APRIL 2, 2026

Thursday | 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Virtually via Zoom

TOPIC HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Getting Pre-Qualified
- ✓ Searching for Funding
- ✓ Registering in SFS

REGISTER



EXPERT

-  **Kristen Hamilton**
Assistant Director, NYS Office of Information Technology Services
-  **Lillian Padilla**
Deputy Director of Nonprofit Affairs,
NYS Executive Chamber

Annual Burn Ban Starts March 16

The annual NYS ban on outdoor burning begins on March 16 and extends through May 14. With a more typical winter season this year, much of Tug Hill is currently snow-covered, but the ban dates have not changed. Open burning remains the single greatest cause of wildfires in New York. Even with the burn ban in effect since 2009, DEC Forest Rangers continue to extinguish dozens of these fires every year. Additionally, the main volunteer fire departments on Tug Hill have members that must leave their jobs and families to respond to wildfires caused by illegal debris fires. Please be aware of the dangers of spring burning and refrain from outdoor brush burning during the burn ban.

The DEC posts a [fire danger rating map](#) which is updated weekly. Violators of the state's open burning regulations are subject to both criminal and civil enforcement actions, with a minimum fine of \$500 for the first offense. More information about open burning regulations in general is available from the commission [here](#), or check out the DEC's "[Open Burning](#)" or "[FIREWISE New York](#)" webpages. To report a wildfire call 1-833-NYS-RANGERS (1-833-697-7264), [contact a forest ranger](#) in your area or dial 911.

Caring for Your Cemetery Day April 25/26

The NYS Department of State Division of Cemeteries has announced its 3rd annual **Caring for Your Cemetery Day** on Saturday, April 25, and/or Sunday, April 26. Cemeteries may choose one or both dates. The Division of Cemeteries aspires to connect cemeteries with volunteers - both groups and individuals - to assist in clean-up activities, especially volunteer-run cemeteries with limited maintenance budgets, to help them prepare for the spring season. The idea for the day is to welcome volunteers into cemeteries to help with tasks like: cleaning up small debris, trash, and seasonal decorations, planting flowers, removing downed branches, weeds, and overgrowth, scattering grass seed, and other light tasks appropriate for untrained volunteers.

Cemeteries that [sign up](#) prior to March 13 will be included in the Division of Cemeteries advertising and publications. General sign-ups are still accepted after this deadline. They will be holding a [webinar for interested and participating non-profit cemeteries](#) on March 24 at 1:00 p.m. For more information including editable flyers and solicitation letters, visit the [Cemetery Resources and Information webpage](#).

The Division of Cemeteries oversees the establishment, maintenance, and preservation of burial grounds for approximately 1,700 not-for-profit cemeteries and works with cemetery officials on a wide range of issues including the sale of lots, service fees, and the acquisition of land. The division can be reached at (518) 474-6226.

EFC Grants Due May 15 and June 12

The NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) has announced \$5.5 million in grant funding available through two programs to help communities protect and modernize water and wastewater infrastructure. Three million is available to help fund initial water quality capital project planning. This grant may fund up to 80% of eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$100,000 per project. Grant [applications](#) are due by 4:00 p.m. on June 12.

Additionally, there is \$2,500,000 available to help protect water and wastewater systems from evolving cyber threats. This grant will cover up to \$50,000 for cybersecurity assessments and up to \$100,000 to implement cybersecurity upgrades. Grant [applications](#) are due by 5:00 p.m. on May 15.

Running Your Highway Department Workshop, Oriskany, March 26

Join veteran Highway Superintendent Marty Roberts, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Thursday March 26 at the Oneida County Public Works garage, 5999 Judd Rd, Oriskany, as he discusses budgets, straightforward replacement plans, taking asset management plans to your board, and more. This is a great session for elected or appointed town or village highway superintendents or public works officials who supervise staff.

Click [here](#) to register. For more information and to view other 2026 spring workshop topics, visit the Cornell Local Roads Program workshop [webpage](#).

Contact Us

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