

CTHC Spring Meeting Well Attended

On Thursday, April 30, the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) held their annual spring meeting at the Tug Hill Hideaway in West Leyden. Sixteen of the twenty-two CTHC municipalities were present, along with five Tug Hill Commissioners, four Tug Hill staff members, three of the CTHC circuit riders and several other guests. Following approval of the previous meeting's minutes and the current financial reports, the current slate of officers was re-elected with Roger Tibbetts returning as chairman; Doug Dietrich as vice chairman; Carla Bauer as secretary and Ian Klingbail, Steve Bernat, Paulette Walker, and Fran Yerdon returning as directors.



Andy McDuff and Robert Ripp present to the CTHC membership at the Tug Hill Hideaway.

The speakers for the evening were Andy MacDuff and Robert Ripp from Region 6 of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Andy gave an overview of the region's natural resources programs, including proposed changes to the mineral resources rules currently open for comment. He also discussed changes to the cool water fishery rules, which mainly shorten the season for several species of fish and remove special rules from certain waterbodies. Changes to deer management permits (DMPs), buck tag allocation and other changes to help manage an expanding doe population were also outlined. Also discussed were the state's wetlands regulations and where things stand after a recent court decision. Robert discussed the state's forest lands and the Real Property Tax Law 480a program, as well as reforms to the program's regulations, effective March 2026, that are intended to streamline program administration, increase compliance, and create more flexibility with forest plans. Those reforms do not affect the existing law, and several questions were asked regarding this issue, mainly regarding municipal impacts of the program and state reimbursement to local governments to mitigate these impacts. Both presentations and meeting minutes will be available on the [CTHC website](http://www.cthc.org) soon.

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Commission executive director Katie Malinowski gave updates on the state budget and discussed the increase in municipalities joining or asking to join the region's councils of governments and the resulting need for additional funding and staff for the commission to be able to manage the increased workload. She also gave a brief overview of the CTHC towns who are working on minimum maintenance roads, including proposed state legislation to add Montague and Redfield to Highway Law Section 205-c, which currently applies solely to Lorraine. Matt Johnson, the commission's planning director, also reported on planning work in CTHC towns and villages and that mini comp plans adopted by CTHC municipalities have all been added to the CTHC website.

In other business, CTHC's proposed work goals for 2026 were reviewed and approved by the members. The council also reviewed their intermunicipal agreement (IMA), which needs to be renewed for next year, and bylaws and executive committee guidelines, which have proposed amendments. Drafts of the documents with the proposed changes were provided to all attendees for further discussion and action at the fall meeting. Also, associate circuit rider Denali Dietrich will be leaving in the fall, so the search is underway for a new associate to take her place.

Fort Drum Day at the Capitol

The annual Fort Drum Day at the Capitol in Albany was held on Monday, May 4, co-hosted by Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton and Senator Mark Walczyk. Fort Drum leadership and community organizations joined together to demonstrate the importance of Fort Drum to the North Country, the State of New York, and the entire country, both in terms of economic impact and national defense. Recently released [reports](#) by Fort Drum and Advocate Drum calculate the total 2025 impact of Fort Drum on the local economy to be almost \$2.5 billion, with over 17,000 military and civilian personnel employed on base in 2025. Fort Drum is the state's largest single-site employer, and accounts for approximately 20% of the three-county region (Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence) workers.

Major general Scott Naumann, commanding general of the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) and Fort Drum, addressed the State Senate and participated in several meetings throughout the day, along with other Fort Drum representatives. Community organizations from the North Country also traveled to Albany to emphasize the importance of the community and Fort Drum connection, including Advocate Drum, Carthage Central School District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, Development Authority of the North Country, Next Move NY, Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization, Jefferson Community College, Tug Hill Commission, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, and Watertown Family YMCA.

Register Now for Budgeting and Accounting Training

Back by popular demand, Laird Petrie will be delivering a two-day workshop on budgeting and accounting for small towns on June 18 and 19 at Tailwater Lodge in Altmar, Oswego County. Cost is \$125 per person and includes meals and materials. More details, including a registration link, at tughill.org/upcoming-workshops/. Space is limited and registrations must be received no later than June 10.



River Area Council of Governments Meeting May 28

The River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) next board meeting will be on May 28 at 6:00 p.m. at the Castorland Fire Hall (5187 NY-410, Castorland). The board will be reviewing the draft strategic plan at this meeting and considering its potential adoption. The strategic plan focuses on the direction RACOG would like to take over the next five to ten years. It includes background on RACOG's formation, its purpose, mission, vision, goals, objectives, strategies and tactics, and drivers and risks. Each RACOG member is encouraged to attend and provide feedback on the strategic plan. Additionally, the village of Black River has sent in a request to join RACOG, which will also be voted on.

Staff Tour VanderKamp in Cleveland

On Tuesday, May 5, the Tug Hill Commission monthly staff meeting was held at VanderKamp in the town of Constantia, near Cleveland. In addition to normal housekeeping topics, staff participated in a photography tips and tricks session, sharing practical tips and techniques to improve field documentation. The Metro-Count team also did a field demonstration on how the commission's traffic counter is set up on local roads based on requests from communities, and how the data collected is downloaded and analyzed for community use. Following a midday lunch break, staff held a collaborative discussion on internal expertise and ways to better share knowledge among each other.

[VanderKamp](#) staff gave the group a tour of the renovated wilderness retreat, situated on 850 forested acres just north of Oneida Lake. The property is named after a Dutch minister who first purchased the land in 1794 and was owned and managed as a summer camp for many years.

JOIN US

**TUG HILL COMMISSION
BOARD
Meeting**

**ROUTINE BUSINESS AND
SALMON RIVERS COUNCIL UPDATE**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 20
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM**

**ORWELL TOWN HALL
1999 COUNTY ROUTE 2, ORWELL**

THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME TO ATTEND

SANDY CREEKS CLEAN WATER PLANNING

MODELING RESULTS & WATERSHED GOALS

SANDY CREEK TOWN HALL

1992 HARWOOD DRIVE, SANDY CREEK

TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026

5:30 - 7:00 PM

Zoom option available

COMMUNITY UPDATE SESSION

Do you live or work in Adams, Ellisburg, Lorraine, Rodman, Worth, Sandy Creek, Boylston, Pinckney, or Rutland?

These results pertain to you!

Watershed modeling results are in. UFI will present modeling results and host a short Q&A before Soil and Water staff go over 9E Plan goals and potential management practices.

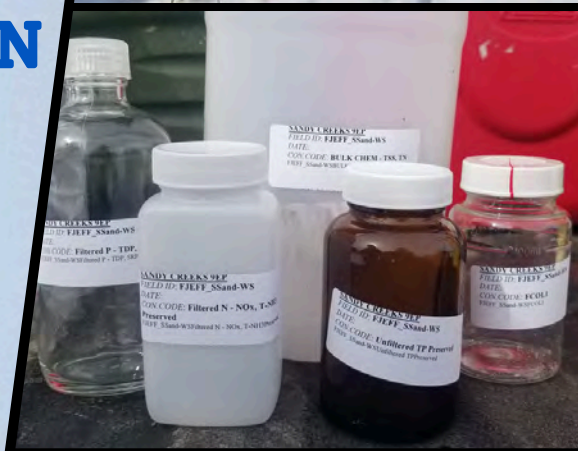
Be one of the first to learn which subwatersheds have the highest nutrient loads and provide YOUR input on how the 9E Watershed Plan should improve water quality in our streams!

YOUR ENGAGEMENT AND INPUT ARE INVALUABLE!

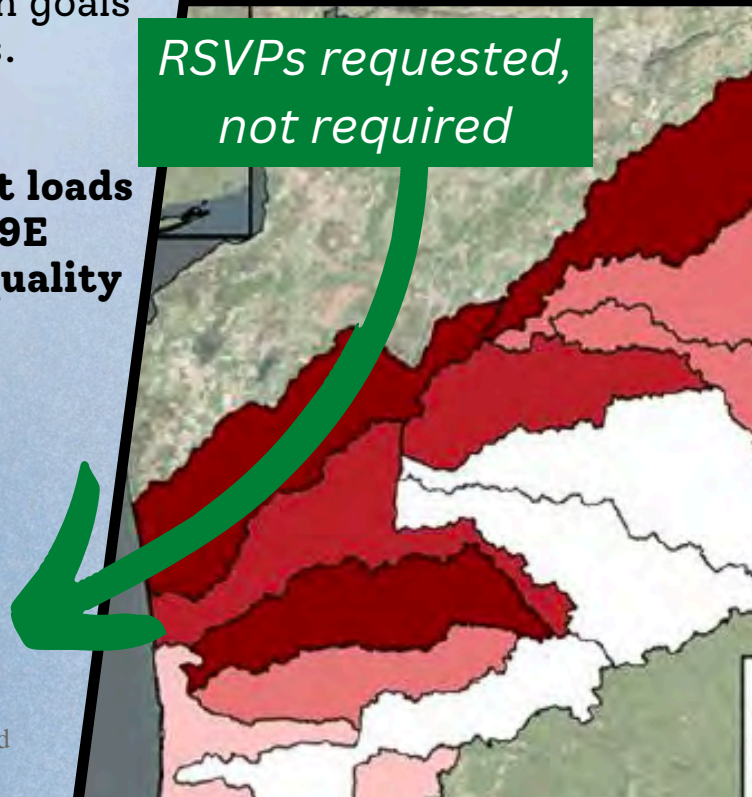


Scan me to register online or go to tinyurl.com/SandyCreeksMeeting
Register by Phone: (315) 785-2380

Funding provided by the Environmental Protection Fund as administered by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation



RSVPs requested, not required



[May 20]

[LOCAL HISTORY]

[1992 HARWOOD DR
SANDY CREEK, NY]

BLOUNT LUMBER

Join the Sandy Creek History Center and the NYS Tug Hill Commission for a hybrid webinar opportunity!



Event Details

- This event will be held on May 20th from 6:30pm to 8:00pm.
- This presentation is hosted by the **Sandy Creek History Center** in a hybrid format. Attendees may participate in-person (at the Sandy Creek History Center at 1992 Harwood Dr, Sandy Creek, NY 13145) or digitally via zoom.

- In-person attendance is highly recommended for a close-up look at educational materials, artifacts, and the structure that was once the Blount Employee Building.

This event is free to attend, but pre-registration is required for planning purposes! Please contact Taylor McKinney at taylor@tughill.org or (315) 785-2606 with any questions.

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY! REGISTER AT [TINYURL.COM/BLOUNTLUMBER](https://tinyurl.com/blountlumber)

Upcoming Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Events

Tug Hill Book Club, Thursday, May 28, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Join the land trust hosted the Tug Hill Book Club. They mostly read non-fiction books about animals, natural history, cultural history and environmental issues happening in or applicable to the Tug Hill region. For May 28, they are reading: 1) *Vulture: The Private Life of an Unloved Bird* and 2) *Better Living Through Birding: Notes from a Black Man in the Natural World*. All meetings are hybrid so all can attend in whatever way works best for them. Location directions and an online link is provided to all prior to each meeting. [Register here.](#)



Forest Hike on the Tug Hill Traverse Trail, Saturday, June 6, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Come experience the peace of a deep woods hike in the heart of Tug Hill, guided by Cindy Stewart of the Black River Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. This hike will start at the northern trailhead for the Tug Hill Traverse Trail in the Tug Hill Wildlife Management Area east of Barnes Corners in Montague. Hikers will go south for about an hour, or as long as hikers wish, then return. Cindy will meet attendees to caravan to the trailhead at these times and locations: 9:15 a.m. – Tug Hill State Forest Parking Lot, 25841 NYS Rt. 177, Rodman, and 9:35 a.m. – The Montague Inn, 6765 Sears Pond Rd, Lowville. [Registration is required.](#)

2026 Winter Wildlife Webinar Series Complete

Over 50 people joined the fourth and final part of the 2026 Winter Wildlife Webinar series on April 30. Participants heard from Linda Gibbs, community programs director at Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, and Irene Mazzocchi, retired NYSDEC Region 6 wildlife biologist. They shared their knowledge about the owls of New York State. Those interested in watching the webinar recording can find the YouTube link and slide deck [here](#).

This year's Winter Wildlife Webinar Series covered an array of topics. Participants learned about ash tree restoration to fight the negative impacts of the invasive emerald ash borer, wolverines, pollinators, native flowers, and owls. Click [here](#) to access the Winter Wildlife Webinar playlist on YouTube.

Municipal Training Series Offered by New York Sea Grant

New York Sea Grant has two upcoming free webinars for municipal leaders involved with land use management planning and implementation along the Great Lakes and connecting river channels. On Tuesday, May 26, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., Roy Widrig from Sea Grant will present *Great Lake Coastal Processes for Municipal Leaders in New York*. The session will provide information on how shorelines respond to the natural, dynamic and changing action of the waters along New York's Great Lakes and connecting river channel shorelines. [Register here.](#)

On Tuesday, June 9, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., a panel of local government representatives who have successfully developed and implemented land use planning goals will present *Keeping your Plan off the Shelf*. The panel will share tips for keeping an active process moving after completing a local plan to accomplish the desired objectives and benefits for the local community. [Register here.](#)

Contact Us

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