

16th Annual Black River Watershed Conference in the Books

Wednesday, June 3 was a beautiful day for the 16th annual Black River Watershed Conference at Tug Hill Estate in Lowville, hosted by the commission and the Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District. The consistent message throughout the day's presentations was that small, local initiatives can collectively create significant regional impact. Keynote speaker Zachary Labe's *Communicating Climate Science* started off the day with the theme of conversation and accessible data visualizations. Representatives from the Oneida, Hamilton, Lewis, and Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation Districts spoke about their accomplishments throughout the year and hosted a panel of questions and answers for the attendees. Cody O'Donnell and John Reed of the Lewis County Highway Department discussed the county's work to inventory and assess culverts as well as practical strategies for reducing road salt application. Attendees were also treated to talks on invasive species and [Snapshot NY](#), which is a community-based statewide wildlife monitoring project using outdoor trail cameras. Thank you to all that attended, presented, and helped make the day possible!



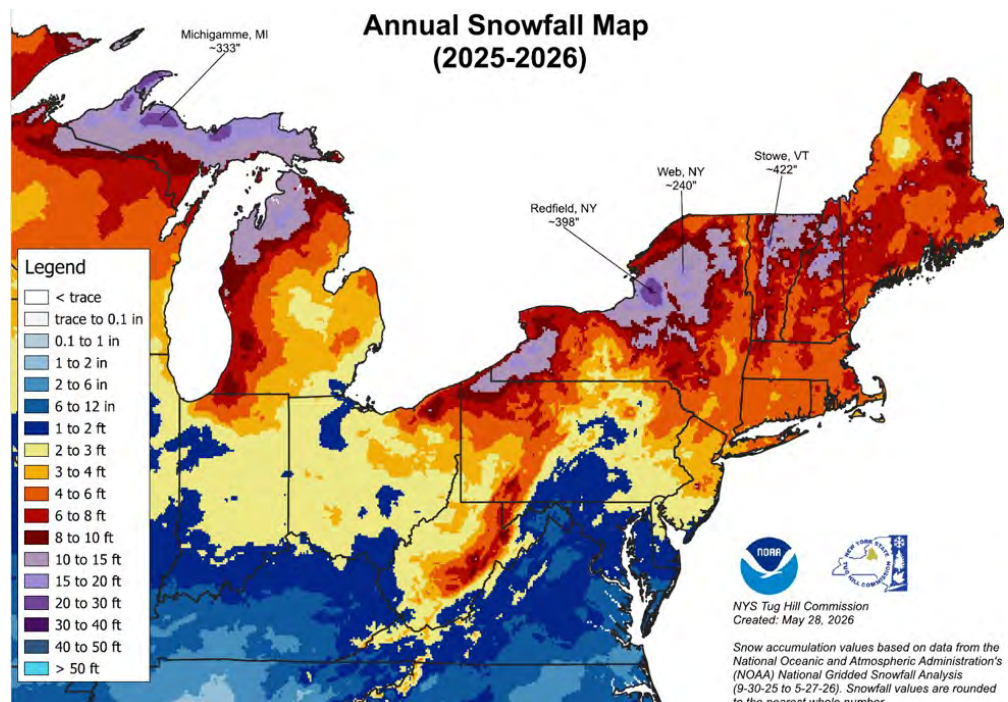
Commission Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 17 at 10:00 a.m. at the
Ava Municipal Building, 11468 State Rt. 26, Ava, New York, 13303.
The public is welcome to attend.

2025-26 Winter Season Snowfall Data Available

Tug Hill got bumped by Stowe, Vermont this past winter season for bragging rights for the most snow east of the Rocky Mountains. This map shows annual snowfall in the northeast US during the 2025-2026 winter season, based on data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Gridded [Snowfall Analysis](#). North Redfield had the most on Tug Hill with ~398 inches.

Annual Snowfall Map
(2025-2026)



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Staff Represent Commission at Career Jam

On Thursday, May 21, staff members Jillian Lee and Maria Covey represented the Tug Hill Commission at the 10th Annual [Career Jam](#) at the Watertown Municipal Arena. Career Jam is an event that gives eighth-grade students from Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego, and Oneida counties an opportunity to learn about a wide variety of careers that are available locally. Jillian and Maria had the opportunity to share with students jobs that could be available to them in the realm of local government.

Students passing by the commission's booth were asked, "What's most important to you in your community?", 82 students responded. The chart shows what they had to say.

Fire Department/EMS	23
Agriculture/Open Space	13
Family Homes	10
Walking Trails/Parks	10
Colleges/Schools	8
Renewable Energy	8
Downtown Areas	7
Small, Local Businesses	2
Commercial Businesses	1



CSSAP Students Explore Local Government in Lewis County



On Thursday, May 21, staff members Mickey Dietrich and Patrick Brady accompanied seven students from the Lowville and Copenhagen Central School Districts on a field trip to introduce them to various aspects of local government. This field trip was part of the two-day Civil Service Student Activity Program (CSSAP), which gives students an opportunity to learn about community issues and the role of local government. The first day of the program, held last fall, focused on problem solving activities where students worked with local mentors to discuss challenges faced by community leaders.

During the May field trip, students visited four different sites within Lewis County. They had the opportunity to sit in on the town of Lowville board meeting and ask questions, interact with equipment in the Lewis County Highway Garage, and learn more about the work of the Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District. The day concluded with a tour of the Lewis County Courthouse, where students visited several county departments and learned about how each office contributes to the broader framework of local government. This experience helped students better understand how local decisions are made and how different departments work together to serve their communities.

Blount Lumber: Tug Hill to Town Well Attended

The Sandy Creek History Center and the Tug Hill Commission hosted a hybrid history presentation on May 20, "Blount Lumber: Tug Hill to Town." The workshop was attended by 49 people in-person and over Zoom. This presentation focused on the history of the Blount Lumber company from its inception to its heyday, as told through the Sandy Creek History Center Archives, the oral histories of those who once lived and worked for the company, and Blount descendants who remain close to their roots. The history center was once the Blount Parker Employee Building, with amenities for Blount employees and their families as well as a thriving center of community events. Today, it serves as both a history center and museum for the history of the village of Lacona and Sandy Creek.

The commission would like to extend its gratitude to the Sandy Creek History Center for partnering on this event and Peggy Rice, the town historian, for her expertise and passion on the subject.



For those who were unable to attend, would like to re-watch, or to share with friends, the link to the presentation recording can be found on our YouTube page [here](#). The slide deck from the presentation can also be found on the commission's "Past Presentations" website page [here](#).

NOCCOG Executive Committee to Meet June 18

The NOCCOG directors are scheduled to meet on Thursday, June 18 at noon at the Town of Trenton municipal offices. Along with routine business, other items on the proposed agenda include the GPS mapping program, the scholarship program, and possible future trainings. The executive committee meetings are always open to the public.

For more information, contact John Healt at 315-941-2818 or jhealt@tughill.org.



DATA CENTERS AND THE TUG HILL REGION: Understanding Industry Activity and Planning Considerations for Your Community

Free Webinar Thursday, June 25, 6 – 7:30 p.m., including Q & A

TOPICS

- ✓ Introduction/Overview of Data Centers
- ✓ Why Rural Communities are Seeing More Data Center Interest
- ✓ Evolution of Data Centers
- ✓ Land Use Tools and Regulations
- ✓ Expansion and Growth of the Industry
- ✓ Types and Scale of Facilities
- ✓ Community Preparedness

SPEAKERS

-  Jim Damichis, Senior Vice President Camoin Associates
-  Alex Tranmer, CEcD, Director of Industry and Workforce, Camoin Associates
-  Sarah Kirk, Director of Real Estate, Camoin Associates
-  Matthew Johnson, Planning Director, Tug Hill Commission

Please Register by June 23



<https://tinyurl.com/WebinarDataCenters>



Changes to State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) adopted amendments to the regulations (6 NYCRR Part 617) that implement the State Environmental Review Act (SEQR) on April 24, 2026. Changes include:

- Required consideration of whether an action will cause a pollution burden on a 'disadvantaged community'. A map of disadvantaged communities in NYS can be found here: <https://climate.ny.gov/Resources/Disadvantaged-Communities-Criteria>.
- New provisions for the analysis of climate impacts of actions within the environmental assessment forms (EAFs) used in the SEQR review process.
- Expansion of the list of actions that are exempt from SEQR review (known as the Type II list), including certain multi-family housing projects under 10,000 square feet of gross floor area.

The changes go into effect Friday, June 12, 2026. For more information, see the DEC's webpage: <https://dec.ny.gov/regulatory/regulations/proposed-emergency-recently-adopted-regulations/state-environmental-quality-review-act-regulatory-revisions>.

Commission staff are also available to answer questions your community may have regarding these changes.

2026 NYS Consolidated Funding Application Now Open

The 2026 Regional Economic Development Council Initiative is now open. Up to \$135 million funds will be made available through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) to facilitate projects that advance each region's strategic plan and state priorities.

The full 2026 Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) list of available resources is available [here](#). The Consolidated Funding Application is available [here](#). The 2026 CFA Application Manual is available [here](#). Applications are due Friday, July 31, at 4:00 p.m. EST. [Click here for complete details](#).

Grant opportunities of interest to the Tug Hill Community include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Community Development Block Grant:** Up to \$25 million to help municipalities with projects that improve communities and benefit residents across the state. Learn more about community planning, public infrastructure, and facilities [here](#).
- **Environmental Protection Fund Grants for Parks, Preservation, and Heritage (EPF):** Up to \$28.75 million available for the acquisition, planning, development, and improvement of parks, historic properties and heritage areas within the state. Learn more [here](#).
- **Local Waterfront Revitalization Program:** Up to \$13.975 million in matching grants available for eligible villages, towns, cities, and counties along New York's coasts or waterways for planning, design, and construction projects to revitalize communities and waterfronts.
- **New York Main Street Program:** Up to \$4.2 million available for municipalities and eligible not-for-profit organizations involving projects that provide economic development and housing opportunities in downtown, mixed-use commercial districts. Learn more [here](#).
- **Regional Council Capital Funds:** Up to \$60 million of capital grant funding is available for capital-based income economic development projects to create/retain jobs; prevent, reduce, or eliminate employment barriers; and increase business or restore economic activity in a region. \$8 million of this funding includes the former Market New York Capital Grant Program, which is earmarked to expand, construct, restore, or renovate tourism attractions.
- **Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Program:** Up to \$4.8 million available for the development or update of comprehensive plans, area plans, or zoning ordinances that incorporate smart growth principles, including promoting efficient and sustainable land development and redevelopment patterns that optimize prior infrastructure investments.
- **Climate Smart Communities Grant Program:** Up to \$18 million for municipalities to address eligible climate change mitigation, adaptation, and planning and assessment projects. See request for applications [here](#).
- **Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program:** At least \$75 million for local governments and non-profit organizations to implement projects that directly improve water quality or aquatic habitats, promote flood risk reduction, or protect a drinking water source. Learn more at the DEC website [here](#).

The **Mohawk Valley REDC** held its CFA workshop in Utica on June 1, 2026.

The **North Country REDC** is holding a series of virtual CFA workshops, Details and registration information are available [here](#).

The **Central New York REDC** will hold its CFA Workshop on Tuesday, June 9, 2026. Details are available [here](#).

For a complete listing of regional workshops and live agency webinars, see [here](#).

CCE Soil Health Day June 25

Sheland Farms in Adams is hosting a Soil Health Field Day to highlight how double cropping with triticale as a cover crop following lower relative maturity corn silage improves soil health and reduces soil erosion and runoff. There will be a brief field tour, an overview of manure injection equipment, a short Q & A farmer panel discussion, and an update from JCSWCD and NRCS on programs available to qualifying farms in the region. The event will also feature a talk on compaction by the CCE statewide ag climate resiliency specialist, and a rain simulator demonstration by the Cornell Soil Health Team. The field day is from 9:00 a.m. - noon on June 25 and registration is free: <https://cce.cornell.edu/jefferson/soil-health-day>

For more information contact Eric Antrim, the crop & soil specialist for the Tri-County Ag Team at esa63@cornell.edu.



Oneida County Launches Youth Investment Initiative

ONEIDA COUNTY



In partnership with Oneida County, the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties is seeking applications from local governments and nonprofit organizations for programs that address the unique needs and challenges of at-risk youth in Oneida County and provide meaningful services which help to reduce acts of violence among youth. Submissions will be accepted through June 30.

The Oneida County Youth Investment Initiative invites nonprofits and government entities to apply for \$25,000 to \$450,000 to expand existing programs or create new programs that foster positive youth development, strengthen community ties, and reduce factors that contribute to youth violence. Funding request amounts should be proportionate to an organization's overall operating budget, number of employees/volunteers, and ability to implement the proposed program. Proposed programs must align with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's [Youth Violence Prevention Resource for Action Guide](#). For more information, visit the Community Foundation's Youth Investment Initiative [webpage](#).

DEC Urban and Community Forestry Grants Due August 12

\$10 million in funding is now available through Round 17 of DEC's Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Grant Program. Of the \$10 million dollars available for this round of grants, \$3 million is set aside for communities with populations of 65,000 or less. Maximum grant awards are limited to \$2.5 million and minimum awards are \$50,000. Eligible entities include municipalities and not for profit organizations. Eligible projects are:

- Traditional street and landscaped park tree inventory and assessment;
- Street tree and landscaped park tree inventory and assessment using ground based remote sensing technologies;
- Forested natural areas inventory and assessment; and
- Management plans based on inventory and assessment data.

Applications must be submitted through the [Statewide Financial System](#) (SFS). Those wishing to apply must first register in SFS. Not-for-profits must also prequalify before the application deadline. Funding for this grant opportunity is provided by the NYS Environmental Protection Fund. For complete information on eligibility, application questions, grant requirements, and scoring criteria, applicants should review the [UCF Round 17 Request for Applications](#) (RFA).

Contact Us

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