

TUG HILL TIMES

Bi-weekly newsletter bringing you the latest news, trainings, and updates from in and around the Tug Hill region.



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REGIONAL ISSUES AND DIRECTION IDENTIFIED AT SUPERCOG MEETING

Forty-seven Tug Hill elected and appointed local officials, as well as 17 staff, associates, and commissioners, participated in SuperCOG on Tuesday, September 22, at the Redfield Fire Hall. All five Tug Hill Councils of Governments (COGs) were well-represented, including all five COG chairs and representation from 34 of the 66 COG member towns and villages. SuperCOG, when all five Tug Hill Councils of Governments and their member municipalities gather with the Tug Hill Commission board and staff, had not been held since 2018.

Following introductory remarks and acknowledgement of all that has changed since 2018, including significant growth in COG membership both from communities within the legislated Tug Hill Commission boundary as well as adjacent, outside region communities, the group brainstormed a wide variety of regional issues based on their communities' experiences. The group then voted for their highest priority issues, with the following topics rising to the top, in order of priority: ATV recreation and law enforcement, unfunded mandates, data centers, the Office of Renewable Energy Siting and home rule, and aging populations. The group then brainstormed approaches to each of these issues, using the new acronym **TUG: Together, Understand, Get it Done**.

Next steps include a post-event survey completed by participants, distribution of a meeting summary, and development of actions to address prioritized issues. Thank you to all of the hard-working Tug Hill local officials that took time out of their busy schedules to participate in the meeting.



Newsletter Highlights

- Regional Issues and Direction Identified at SuperCOG
- CTHC Fall Meeting Held
- Staff Attends Upstate Nuclear Summit
- EBFC Working Group Hears Updates from Landowners
- AI and Sustainability Conference Held in Glens Falls
- RACOG Dinner Meeting October 21
- NOCCOG Dinner Meeting October 29
- NY Bricks for Community Centers Grants Due December 7
- Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations Capital Funding Grants
- Woodsmen's Field Days Highlight: Sound Designs

CTHC FALL MEETING HELD IN TURIN

On Thursday, September 17, the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) held their annual fall meeting at the Timberview Resort in Turin. Thirteen of the 22 CTHC towns and villages were present, along with four Tug Hill commissioners and commission staff as well as several other guests, for a total of 38 people. Chairman Roger Tibbetts presented the proposed budget for 2027 which showed a small increase for website costs. He reported that he did not anticipate a need to increase membership dues for the next few years at the current rate of spending, and the proposed budget was approved by the council.

The speaker for the evening, Taylor McKinney, was unable to attend, so Tug Hill Commission executive director Katie Malinowski presented Taylor's remarks about road issues, including road mapping. She displayed the official road map from Turin, as well as the draft of the low volume and minimum maintenance road maps that the town is in the process of adopting. Katie also talked about the upcoming SuperCOG meeting, the date of the commission's annual dinner and the local government conference dates for 2027. She mentioned the budgeting workshop the commission recently conducted and the workshop on "Providing Fire Protection" scheduled for October. She concluded by speaking about the commission's planning department work with CTHC municipalities on comp plans and zoning law updates, as well as a new paper on low density zoning which is expected to be completed soon.



Denali Dietrich and Roger Tibbetts.

The current intermunicipal agreement for the council expires at the end of 2026, so the amended and updated agreement for the next five years was discussed and approved. The council's bylaws and executive committee guidelines were also reviewed and discussed with changes to clarify language on fiscal agents and to add a records management agent. Both the amended bylaws and guidelines were adopted unanimously following the discussion. The council members also approved a resolution in support of the Tug Hill Commission and a request to increase the funding from New York State for the commission's operation.

Associate circuit rider Denali Dietrich was honored for her time with the council, as she has completed her contract and will be attending college out of the area. She was presented with a certificate and gift to thank her for her time with the CTHC. Mallory Cardinal, the council's newest associate circuit rider, was introduced and was warmly welcomed. The night concluded with supervisor and mayor topics with concerns about decommissioning agreements for renewable energy projects discussed.

STAFF ATTENDS UPSTATE NUCLEAR SUMMIT

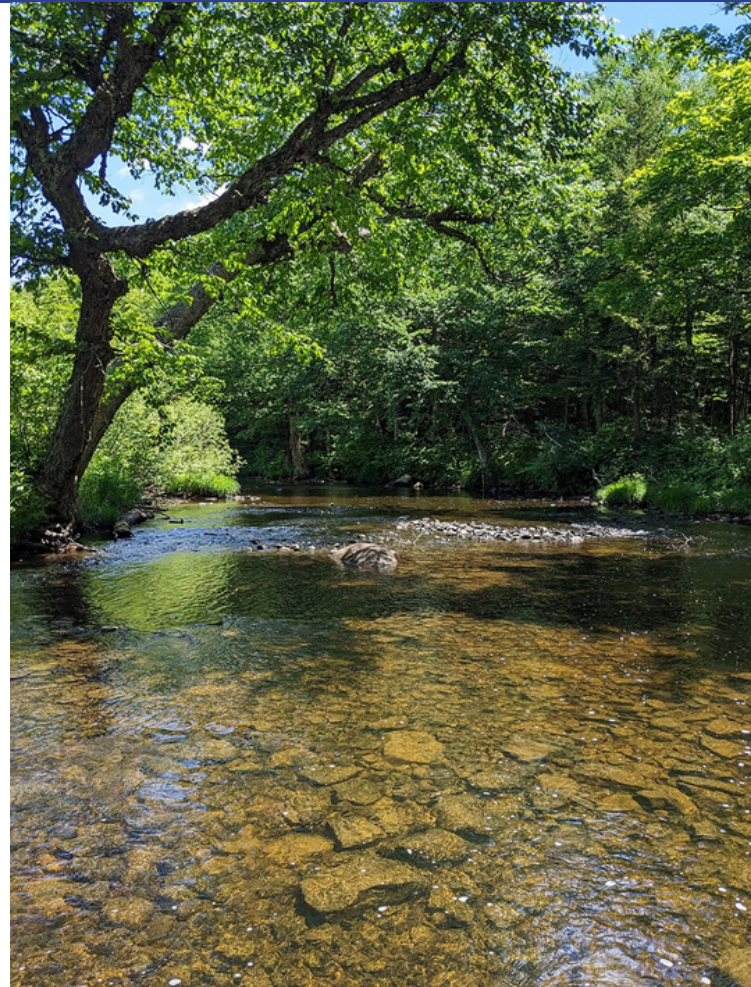
On Thursday, September 17, staff member Maria Covey attended the Upstate Nuclear Summit in Waterloo, NY. Harter Secrest & Emery collaborated with international engineering firm TetraTech to organize the event, which allowed attendees to hear from experts in the field to better understand the opportunities and challenges of the future of nuclear energy in New York State. The summit gave insight into what the energy landscape looks like moving forward and the role that nuclear energy may play in achieving energy goals. The day consisted of three panels: technical, legal and regulatory, and community impact. The panels helped attendees understand the different types of nuclear technology, the state and federal regulations and permitting process, and workforce opportunities and local engagement.



EBFC WORKING GROUP HEARS UPDATES FROM LANDOWNERS

Approximately 30 people attended the annual meeting of the East Branch of Fish Creek (EBFC) Working Group, held at the West Leyden Fire Department in West Leyden, on September 23. The group was formed in the mid-1990s in response to the sale of the Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper lands in southern Lewis County. The group continues to meet annually to hear updates about all the work being done by the large landowners in and around the easement. It is a forum for discussion on projects, happenings, and a time for everyone to ask and to answer questions. After attendee introductions, updates were provided by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), LandVest (for Aurora Sustainable Lands), and local resident Bob McNamara.

NYSDEC spoke about work that was completed in the last year including grading done on the G&W Road and a new accessible campsite at the East Osceola State Forest. TNC update included news about the closure of Wagon Wheel Road over the Mad River and an update on their efforts to restore mature forest conditions. There has been healthy regeneration of yellow birch so far and the survival rates of newly planted oak trees have also been good so far. The major update from LandVest centered around Aurora's decision to pull parcels out the 480A program in favor of focusing on land management for carbon sequestration. Bob McNamara also updated the group about the work he has been doing with the Tug Hill Tomorrow



Tug Hill Traverse Trail on East Branch of Fish Creek, north of Michigan Mills. Photo credit Bob McNamara.

Land Trust and the Black River Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club to build a 20-mile, non-motorized, primitive hiking trail right down the center of the Tug Hill region. So far, 13 of the planned 20 miles are finished, and once complete the trail will run from the Tug Hill Wildlife Management Area to the north to the Osceola Road to the south.

A complete update will appear in the coming weeks on our [East Branch of Fish Creek](#) page. This group meets annually, usually in the first week of October. If you would like to be added to our email list, please contact Jennifer Harvill jennifer@tughill.org at the Tug Hill Commission.

AI AND SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE HELD IN GLENS FALLS

Commission staff attended the Adirondack Research Consortium's AI and Sustainability, Considerations for Rural Communities, Energy, and the Environment Conference last week in Glens Falls. The day included a number of presentations, including the keynote, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for Sustainable Rural Communities, by Dr. Jack Watson, senior data analyst at the Clean Economy Project. His talk explored "AI" and "machine learning" and described how machine learning is being used to improve planning and preparedness for climate and weather-related events in small, rural communities. The organizers shared an [AI and Data Centers Resource List](#) that points to a number of studies and informational resources about the topic.



River Area Council of Governments Dinner Meeting

**WEDNESDAY,
OCTOBER 21, 2026**

Tug Hill Estate

4051 YANCEY ROAD
LOWVILLE, NY 13367

6:00 PM | Happy Hour

7:00 PM | Dinner

7:45 PM | RACOG Meeting

8:15 PM | Presentations by:

**Ryan Piche, Jefferson County Manager
Timothy Hunt, Lewis County Manager**

**For more information, contact Mickey Dietrich
at (315) 681-5023 or mickey@tughill.org.**



**Register
Here**



Dinner is \$45/Person
Register By: **October 6, 2026**
<https://tinyurl.com/racogfalldinner>

Please join us for the
**NORTHERN ONEIDA COUNTY COUNCIL
OF GOVERNMENTS'**
42nd Annual
DINNER MEETING

Thursday | October 29, 2026 | 5:30 pm
Legacy Grill at the McConnellsville County Club
3007 McConnellsville Rd, Blossvale, NY 13308
Keynote Speaker: James J. Genovese II
Commissioner, *Oneida County Planning*

\$35 per person
Please RSVP before
Oct. 15, 2026

Make your checks payable to NOCCOG
and send with your reply to:
Betsy Mack, Finance Officer
8599 Sand Road, Remsen, NY 13438

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

NY BRICKS FOR COMMUNITY CENTERS GRANTS DUE DECEMBER 7

The [NY Building Recreational Infrastructure for Communities, Kids and Seniors](#) (BRICKS) program supports municipalities and nonprofit organizations in building or renovating community centers that promote physical health, mental well-being, and community connections for youth and older adults. NY BRICKS offers grants to fund design, construction, renovation, and land acquisition for these centers. Priority will be given to projects in underserved communities, as well as those offering affordable services like childcare, eldercare, and mental health counseling. The program aims to make transformative, high-impact investments in local communities. BRICKS offers grants between \$250,000 and \$15 million to acquire, design, construct or reconstruct facilities, provide major renovations, improvements, and modernization or rehabilitation of community centers. NY BRICKS grants will require applicants to provide a 20 percent matching contribution towards the overall project cost. The application period for the NY BRICKS capital grant program will open on November 2, 2026, and applications must be submitted by December 7, 2026.

NONPROFIT ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS CAPITAL FUNDING GRANTS

The New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) has \$80 million in capital funding available to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. NYSCA's Capital Projects Fund will support funding for investments in capital improvements that allow organizations to sustain and expand cultural programming for diverse audiences, promote accessibility and environmental sustainability, preserve and create jobs, and ultimately contribute to the growth of New York's dynamic arts and tourism sectors.

Several categories of grants are available. The small and midsize improvements category will support new construction, renovations, and/or expansions of publicly accessible art space(s) used for arts and cultural programming OR the purchase and installation of major capital equipment and/or complete capital equipment systems for publicly accessible art space(s) used for arts and cultural programming. Grants of \$50,000-\$2 million support up to 50 percent of the project's total cost. No-match grants of \$10,000-\$99,000 are also available for organizations with operating budgets under \$2 million. The large improvements category supports impactful, large-scale capital improvements. Grants range in value from \$2 million to \$10 million. Lastly, the capital design category supports the development of mid-stage and advanced design documents for arts and cultural nonprofits with an operating budget of \$10 million or less in the early stages of design for capital improvements. A recording of an information webinar held on September 22, as well as details on live office hour sessions with NYSCA staff, can be found [here](#). Applications will be accepted through January 12. For a complete list of NYSCA FY2027 programs, support materials, and eligibility requirements, see [here](#).

WOODSMEN'S FIELD DAYS HIGHLIGHT: SOUND DESIGNS

Joe Ferrara, owner and founder of [Sound Designs](#), spoke at the event about how his company turns urban wood waste into heirloom furniture pieces. The company is based on Long Island, an area with many historic and unique urban trees. When these trees fall due to storms or other circumstances, Sound Designs connects with the property owners and requests to harvest the logs. From there, they transfer the logs to their site on Long Island, where they process the logs through their sawmill, solar kiln, and planer. Joe told those in attendance about the unique challenges that the company has faced. Processing logs of this scale requires a large amount of space and expensive machinery. The process produces significant noise, requiring the company to balance the necessary operations of the business with local regulations such as noise ordinances. Despite the challenges, Sound Designs has a passion for recovering fallen trees to transform into custom furniture pieces for future generations to enjoy. The presentation can be found [here](#).



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