

# Local Government Services

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



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## Tug Hill Commission Members

The 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.

The 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."

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

## Tug Hill Commission Staff

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

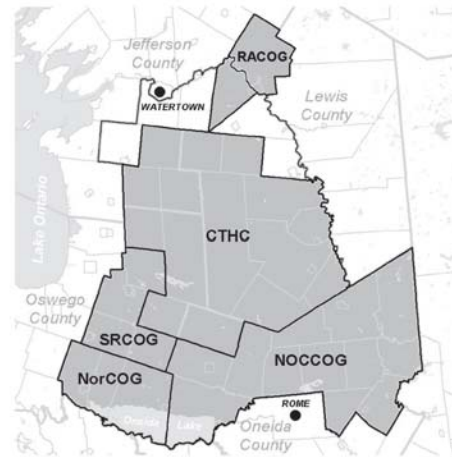
Staff can be reached by phone or email at the Watertown office during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Memorial Day to Labor Day).



## 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. Each employs its own "circuit riders," local people who provide 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 COUNCIL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

(NOCCOG)

[www.nocog.org](http://www.nocog.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)

## 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.

The New York State Tug Hill Commission was created in 1972 to help the 41 towns and 21 villages of the region protect the area's natural resources and provide for appropriate economic development through local action.

While the region is larger than the state of Delaware, its population of only 100,000 makes it among New York's most rural areas. Today, the Commission assists the region's towns, villages, and local organizations with land use planning, watershed protection, main street revitalization, shared government services, municipal infrastructure development, park development, historic preservation, and a host of local government operations.

Through public meetings and surveys, local people have repeatedly expressed the desire to maintain the clean water, healthy forests, productive farms, stable communities, and opportunities for hunting, fishing, and recreation that Tug Hill provides. The Commission works toward these goals by building the capacity of the region's people to chart their own future.

## Services for Local Governments

### √ Technical Assistance

The Commission's staff and circuit riders answer hundreds of information requests each year, from land use law, to budgeting, recent legislative actions, and court rulings, to name a few. This saves local officials time and money while providing necessary information to govern effectively.

### √ Community Development

Keeping Tug Hill's communities vibrant is key to retaining the region's character and economy. Working with a variety of partners, staff provide assistance to Tug Hill's communities by helping to find funding for "Main Street" revitalization, historic preservation, parks, and other community facilities. Commission staff also assist local governments to gain financial efficiencies through shared service projects.

### √ Land Use

Commission staff assist communities with developing comprehensive plans, upgrading zoning and subdivision regulations, 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.

### √ Natural Resources Management

The Commission staff work with local governments, landowners, and regional organizations on a variety of natural resource and environmental issues, including watershed planning, energy generation and conservation, forestry, farming, open space planning, and Tug Hill Special Areas. The Commission also works on regional projects, such as Northern Forest and Great Lakes initiatives, to make sure information and opportunities are shared with interested partners.

### √ Geographic Information System (GIS)

The Commission's geographic information system supports all programs and services. The system provides data on land use patterns, property ownership, natural resources, and more. Through the online GIS system ([www.thram.org](http://www.thram.org)), data is available to local boards for project reviews and resource management efforts.

### √ Workshops and Issue Papers

A dozen or more workshops each year give local elected and appointed officials the latest information and tools for their jobs. Topics are selected from locally-expressed needs and deal with such issues as 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 and issues regularly faced by local officials.

### √ Local Government Conference

Each year over 600 Tug Hill local officials gather in the spring for a day of workshops, idea exchange, camaraderie and "recharging" to continue with the sometimes underappreciated task of local government service.

### √ Infrastructure

Water and sewage systems, town roads, and telecommunications play a major role in community health and growth potential. The Commission can help Tug Hill communities work with state and federal agencies and private consultants to identify cost-effective strategies for building these systems. Staff also works with communities on management efforts for these assets and services to provide operation and maintenance cost savings.