

DEC: Nearly \$1 million in first round of community forest conservation grants; one for Lewiston

Funds municipal land acquisition for community forests to advance Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos recently announced more than \$956,000 in awards to four towns in Western and Central New York and Long Island to establish community forests.

DEC noted, "Protecting forests from potential development and establishing new forested areas helps preserve biodiversity, and safeguard the ecosystem benefits forests provide, such as storm water mitigation, temperature regulation, carbon sequestration and climate resiliency. In addition, community forests bring commu-

nity benefits by creating new opportunities for public access and recreation."

Seggos said, "New York state continues to bolster support for conserving and sustainably managing local forests, which will provide a wide range of ecosystem, community and climate benefits."

DEC said, "The inaugural round of the community forest conservation program grants represents an important step forward in providing key resources for communities to protect forest resources of local importance. The community forest conservation grants, administered by the

state Department of Environmental Conservation, support New York's ongoing initiatives to meet its Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act goals by increasing the rate of forest protection to keep forests as forests and combat climate change as recommended in the Climate Action Council's draft scoping plan."

- Funded projects include:
- √ Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County: \$225,000 to acquire 11.3 acres
 - √ Town of Lewiston, Niagara County: \$300,000 to acquire 66.9 acres
 - √ Town of Webster, Monroe

County: \$270,089 to acquire 28.7 acres

√ Town of Whitestown, Oneida County: \$161,100 to acquire 15.9 acres

Funding for this grant program was provided by the state's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), a resource for environmental programs such as land acquisition, farmland protection, invasive species prevention and eradication, recreation access, water quality improvement, and environmental justice projects.

Hochul increased the EPF from \$300 to \$400 million, the highest-ever level of funding in the

program's history. The EPF supports climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, improves agricultural resources to promote sustainable agriculture, protects water sources, advances conservation efforts, and provides recreational opportunities for New Yorkers.

A second round of community forest conservation grant funding is expected to be released in the second half of 2023 to continue to support local community forest land acquisition. For more information on this program, visit: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/124345.html>.

New York Power Authority approves 5-year \$38 million contract to build new gantry crane at flagship Niagara Power Project

New 680-ton crane to support \$1.1 billion, 15-year 'Next Generation Niagara' project to digitize and extend operating life of state's largest hydropower plant

The New York Power Authority board of trustees on Tuesday approved the award of a competitively bid contract, valued up to \$37,984,000, to REEL COH Inc. of Boisbriand, Canada, to fabricate, deliver and install a new gantry crane with a lifting capacity of 680 tons for the Power Authority's Niagara Power Project in Lewiston.

A press release said, "The new crane is critical tool that will help enable the power project's 15-year modernization and digitization program titled 'Next Generation Niagara' (NGN), and support NYPA's leadership role in advancing the bold climate action goals as outlined in the state's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

NYPA Interim President and CEO Justin E. Driscoll said, "The Niagara Power Project's overhead gantry crane is the workhorse that makes possible all the of the plant's mechanical upgrades, especially those related to our \$1.1 billion, multiyear 'Next Generation Niagara' effort to modernize and extend the life of New York's flagship clean energy plant. Many of the efforts to digitize the project are already underway, but a new crane is essential for planned major mechanical upgrades. We are pleased to have REEL COH help us achieve our bold goal to modernize and digitize our foundational hydroelectric plant, so we can continue to consistently provide clean energy to our cus-

tomers and New Yorkers across the state."

Launched in 2019, "Next Generation Niagara" is designed to extend the operating life of the Niagara Power Project, the largest source of clean electricity in New York, and one of the country's largest hydroelectric projects. "Next Generation Niagara" is focusing primarily on the 13 power generating units that make up the project's Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant.

Standing 70 feet high and 60 feet wide, the project's bright red overhead crane (dubbed "Big Red" by plant staff) rolls along rail tracks at the project's main generating facility, lifting rotors and other major components for maintenance and repairs. It is original to the plant and is nearing the end of its useful life. NYPA said, "The new crane will play an integral role in NGN and will be rated to carry loads 50 tons greater than its predecessor."

It explained the NGN program improvements include replacing aging equipment with the latest machinery that reflects advanced digital technologies for optimizing the hydroelectric project's performance. In addition to the crane replacement, which enables the disassembly and reassembly of the generating units, "Next Generation Niagara" encompasses three other projects: 1) Design and implementation of an inspection platform to conduct

comprehensive inspections of the Robert Moses Plant's penstocks – the 485-foot conduits that are 26 feet in diameter along the face of the project that carry water from the forebay to the turbine generators; 2) upgrading and digitizing control systems and building a new back-up control room; and 3) overhaul and/or replacement of mechanical components that have reached the end of their operating life, for which the new crane will play an integral role.

The scope of work under this contract includes the design, fabrication, delivery and installation of the new crane with a lift capacity of 680 tons, as well as a 15-ton monorail hoist, a five-ton maintenance hoist, bird deterrent systems and closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems.

Construction of the new crane is expected to be complete by 2026.

It was determined REEL COH was the best value bidder based on its competitive pricing, experience, and its submission of a well-

thought-out project execution plan.

The first turbine outage to update the plant's mechanical components is scheduled to begin in April 2023.

About the Niagara Power Project

Following the collapse of Niagara Mohawk's Schoellkopf Power Station in 1956 and the elimination of tens of thousands of jobs in the Niagara Region and nearly 25% of the city's tax base, the Federal Power Commission issued a license in 1957 to the New York Power Authority to redevelop Niagara Falls' hydroelectric power. The Power Authority employed 11,700 workers and within three years, 12 million cubic yards of rock were excavated. The herculean effort led to the construction of a massive main structure that is 1,840 feet long, 580 feet wide and 384 feet high. When the Niagara Power Project produced its first power in 1961, it was the largest

hydropower facility in the Western world and President John F. Kennedy called it "an example to the world of North American efficiency and determination." After 60 years of operation and successful obtainment of a new 50-year federal operating license in 2007, the Niagara Power Project remains the crown jewel and flagship foundation of New York's power infrastructure and growing clean energy economy.

NYPA is the largest state public power organization in the nation, operating 16 generating facilities and more than 1,400 circuit-miles of transmission lines. More than 80% of the electricity NYPA produces is clean, renewable hydropower. NYPA uses no tax money or state credit. It finances its operations through the sale of bonds and revenues earned in large part through sales of electricity. For more information, visit www.nypa.gov.



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