



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### School Districts

There are eight public school districts with a presence in Lewis County, serving a 2007-2008 total student enrollment of 14,124 between pre-kindergarten and 12th grade. This figure includes students living in adjacent counties but part of districts that are contained in Lewis County. This represents a 3.3 percent increase in enrollment from the 2005-2006 school year. See Figure 17 for the geographic coverage areas of each district within the county, which are listed below. There are no colleges or universities in Lewis County, with the closest being Jefferson Community College in Watertown.

1. Adirondack Central School District
2. Beaver River Central School District
3. Camden Central School District
4. Carthage Central School District
5. Copenhagen Central School District
6. Harrisville Central School District
7. Lowville Academy & Central School
8. Sandy Creek Central School District
9. South Jefferson Central School District
10. South Lewis Central School District

### Public Health

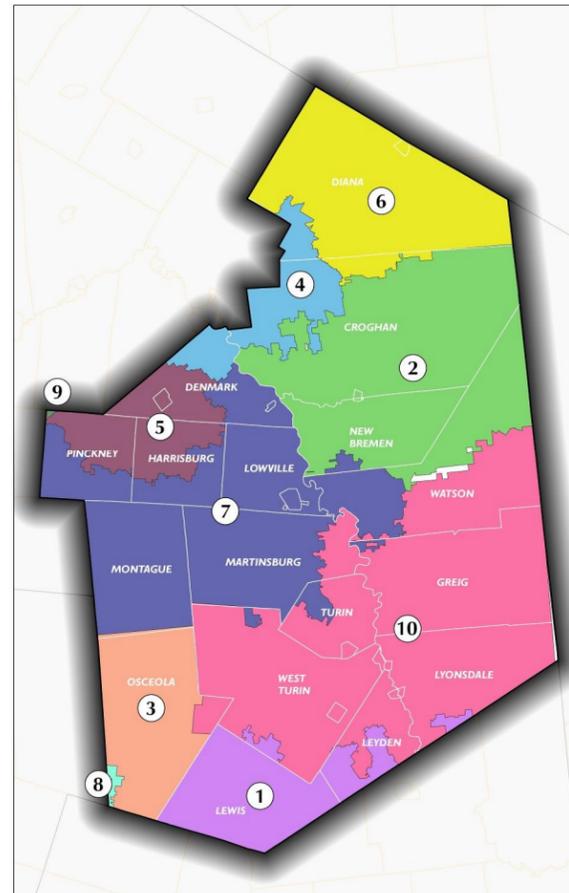
The Lewis County General Hospital and Residential Health Care Facility is Lewis County's sole primary care facility. The facility provides 54 acute care and 160 long-term beds for use by residents and seasonal visitors. This facility houses approximately 23 physicians and is located in Lowville. Lewis County General Hospital provides 24-hour emergency medical services handling over 10,000 cases annually. There are four health centers affiliated with Lewis County General Hospital: the South Lewis Health Center, located in Lyons Falls; the Beaver River Health Center, located in Beaver Falls; and two centers located within the hospital itself. Tug Hill Urgent Care is a newly established facility that provides acute care at non-traditional hours, such as evenings and weekends. An additional privately owned health center is located in Copenhagen.

### Service and Development Organizations

#### Lewis County Industrial Development Agency

According to their website, the County of Lewis Industrial Development Agency (LCIDA) was formed in 1973 as a self-funded public benefit corporation. The agency was created to attract and enhance industrial and economic development. The LCIDA provides financial assistance to

**Figure 17. School District Boundaries**



qualified applicants in order to promote the economic welfare and prosperity for residents of Lewis County.

LCIDA offers payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreements for substantial projects needing property tax relief. In conjunction with the Small Business Development Center, LCIDA provides assistance in developing business plans, and guidance in addressing the myriad of details that are necessary for a successful business. The organization has extensive experience with businesses of all sizes and types, as all are critical to the success of the county.

#### Lewis County Chamber of Commerce

The Lewis County Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1945 to promote business and economic activity in Lewis County. As stated on their website, the Chamber administers county, state, and federal grant programs whose funding is designated for business, economic development, and tourism purposes. Through its office in Lowville, the Chamber is focused on enhancing the quality of life and the general prosperity of Lewis County residents through the promotion of

agricultural, professional, commercial, recreational, industrial, and community activities of the area.

#### Cornell Cooperative Extension

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) assists Lewis County residents by providing a wealth of research-based, up-to-date information presented through a variety of venues. They offer a wide range of educational activities and program areas throughout the year to individuals, families, youth, business people, farmers, and professionals. The CCE office in Lowville provides programs for agriculture, community and family education, 4-H and youth development, and community outreach, covering topics varying from dairy science and farm business management to livestock marketing, nutrition education and youth services.

#### Lewis County Opportunities

Lewis County Opportunities is a not-for-profit community action agency with offices in Lowville and Jefferson County that strives to meet the needs of citizens by devoting energy to family development through supportive programs that promote a better standard of living. Lewis County Opportunities staff and volunteers offer a wide range of services that are reflective of the needs within Lewis County, and look toward local trends to deliver health and wellness services that match issues. Services include wheels for work, domestic violence/sexual assault services, emergency housing, homeownership and self-sufficiency programs, emergency food and utility assistance, legal advocacy, and charitable giving.

#### Snow Belt Housing Company, Inc

Snow Belt Housing was formed to promote the availability of decent, safe, and affordable housing to residents of Lewis County. Originally part of Lewis County Opportunities, the organization was established as a separate entity in 1982. Utilizing funding from federal and state sources, they administer grants and loans for home improvement and purchase assistance as well as provide grants to municipalities for community revitalization efforts. They also own and manage over 40 low-income and elderly housing units.

#### Lewis County Department of Economic Development and Planning

This agency is responsible for all planning and economic development for the county, with staff serving the County Planning Board and providing training to all planning board and zoning board of appeals members. The department also administers the county's agricultural district, provides staffing to the Lewis County Development Corporation and to the Community Economic Development Strategy Committee. As well, department staff also serve as board members for the Home Consortium and the Workforce Investment Board.

## Recreation (see Map 12)

Recreation is an important segment of Lewis County's economy, and is responsible for the majority of tourism dollars and traffic in the region. The abundance of lakes, rivers, and streams, along with large tracts of public and private open space (over 232,000 acres) provide the foundation for outdoor recreation activities. Additionally, the region's remarkable snowfall levels make it one of the most popular destinations in the northeast for snowmobiling. Other popular activities include ATVing, horseback riding, mountain biking, boating, fishing, hiking, camping, hunting, skiing, and canoeing.

### Forest-Related Recreation and Tourism

In New York, many recreation and tourism activities are linked to the forest, but it is difficult to estimate the specific contribution made by the forest environment towards recreation and tourism expenditures. The activities that take place primarily in a forest environment include camping, hiking, hunting, downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, fall foliage viewing and wildlife viewing. According to the North East State Foresters Association, statewide recreation activities contribute \$2.48 billion in sales to the economy in 2006. The portion attributed to the forest resource is \$1.88 billion, distributed among purchases at food and beverage stores, automobile gasoline service stations, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments and a host of other retail trade or service sectors. At the state level, passive-recreation activities (fall foliage viewing, camping, and wildlife viewing) account for nearly two-thirds of total sales, with the remaining sales attributed to active recreational activities such as hiking, hunting, skiing and snowmobiling. The abundance of forest resources located in Lewis County provide a myriad of opportunities for tourism related economic development activities that take advantage of these statewide trends in spending and visitation.

### Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling is one of the most key elements to Lewis County's identity. Heavy snow, especially in the Tug Hill Region, allows for over 470 miles of public and private snowmobile trails throughout the county. Snowmobiling accounts for the largest percentage of tourism dollars generated by any activity or destination in



*Snowmobiling on the Tug Hill Plateau*

Lewis County, and helps feed numerous spin-off businesses including lodging, camps, restaurants, equipment and retail sales. Map 12 shows the location of designated snowmobile trails in the county.

Snowmobile traffic on Tug Hill has steadily increased in recent years, with approximately half a million riders using the trails every season. This is due in part to lower recent snowfall totals in other parts of the northeast. However, local snowmobile clubs and associations are struggling to keep pace with trail grooming and maintenance as state funding sources have decreased. The state now reimburses snowmobile associations for trail maintenance at a rate of around \$300 per mile of trail, down from recent levels of about \$500 per mile. Simultaneously, the snowmobile registration fees that contribute to the State's reimbursement pot have either stayed constant or increased. This leaves local advocates looking for answers from the state and looking for alternative sources of funding.

### Kite Skiing

Kite Skiing, a sport where skiers are attached to a parachute-like kite that pulls them across the snow, is a relatively rare but growing activity in the US. In February 2008, Lewis County hosted the first annual Ozone North American Kite Skiing Basecamp Tour. This event was held on Tug Hill in the Maple Ridge Wind Farm, an ideal location providing the two critical elements — snow and wind. Over 100 kite skiers participated from all over the East Coast, along with over 200 spectators. The growing popularity of this sport, coupled with ideal conditions in Lewis County, present great opportunities for expanding the already abundant recreational options in the region.



*Kite-skiing the Tug Hill Plateau near Lowville*

### Other Winter Activities

Lewis County's long winters and legendary snowfall totals support a variety of other winter sports, such as cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, and even dog sledding. These activities are made possible by an extensive number of State and privately maintained cross-country ski trails, and a regional commercial downhill ski area in southern Lewis County (Snow Ridge Ski Resort).

### ATV Riding

ATV riding is nearly as popular as snowmobiling, and has somewhat higher participation levels from locals versus out of state tourists. According to a 2006 study, ATVs have a direct economic impact of \$23.1 million, and a total economic impact of \$35.3 million in Lewis County alone.



*An ATV ride in Martinsburg*

Map 12 shows the designated routes where ATVing is permitted. It is expected by Fall of 2009 that County Lands will once again be open to ATV use. However, the industry is currently battling over access to other lands and roadways.

A recent change in policy by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) prohibits ATVs on state owned land, specifically the NYSDEC truck trails that were popular with riders. County roads have also recently been closed to ATV use. Both of these changes are currently being contested by local advocates, with considerable support from the county. Meanwhile, Lewis County is coordinating with ATV clubs to develop a countywide ATV trail network in the absence of State lands and county roads. Their goal is to assemble networks consisting of private properties where landowners allow ATV use, connected by town roads and possibly county roads. A Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement was completed in January 2009 to determine the impacts of this proposed trail network.

In addition to addressing trail networks, local clubs and county staff work to develop an off-trail presence of the ATV industry. This includes educational programs as well as rides and events to benefit charitable causes. Currently, the Lewis County Department of Recreational Trails is partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Lewis County Sheriff's Department Recreational Deputy to begin implementation of an ATV and Bicycle safety component as part of physical education programs at local schools. The initiative is in its infancy, but the county hopes to have it as a permanent part of the schools' curriculum in the near future.

### Fishing

The county has an abundant coldwater fishery, which boasts many rivers, creeks, streams, and lakes that support a variety of trout species. The Black River, among others, is a warm water fishery that contains walleye, pike, and small mouth bass. Public access to these fisheries continues to expand through easements and boat and canoe launches.

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Reserve for Map 12.



Other Summer Activities

Beyond ATVing and fishing, Lewis County boasts other summer recreation activities such as horseback riding, mountain biking, golfing, and hiking. These recreational opportunities are available at specific facilities located on State and County Land. Lewis County is home to one of the largest horseback riding trail networks in the northeast including approximately 64 miles of trails, 100 covered tie horse stalls, and camping facilities. Canoe trails have been developed along both the Black and Beaver Rivers. In addition, the Indian and Oswegatchie Rivers and numerous ponds provide additional flat water opportunities.

**State/County Lands and Recreational Facilities**

Whetstone Gulf State Park

Named in 2007 as one of the Top 100 Campgrounds in the nation, Whetstone Gulf State Park is built in and around a three-mile-long gorge cut into the eastern edge of the Tug Hill Plateau, featuring spectacular vistas. The park has wooded campsites, a scenic picnic area along Whetstone Creek, a man-made swimming area and trails for hiking and cross-country skiing. Above the gorge is Whetstone Reservoir, stocked with tiger muskie and large-mouth bass for fishermen, and popular for canoeing.



*Whittaker Falls Park*

Whittaker Falls Park

Located east of Whetstone Gulf State Park in the Town of Martinsburg, Whittaker Falls Park offers camping and hiking opportunities, along with impressive views of Whittaker Falls as it traverses down the Tug Hill Plateau towards the Black River.

Tug Hill Wildlife Management Area

This 5,112 acre woodland tract is located near the summit of the Tug Hill Plateau in the Town of Montague. This forested area is characterized by hardwood uplands and conifer wetlands, with approximately seven miles of truck trails designed to facilitate public access. During the winter months the truck trails are great for cross-country skiing, while permitting hiking and camping during the summer months.

Lewis County Reforestation Lands

There are extensive existing trails on the county reforestation lands. In the summer and fall months the trails are used for ATVing, mountain biking, hiking and wildlife viewing. In the winter months, with allowable snow, the county intends to groom part of those trails for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and dog sledding. This will add more than 30 miles of non motorized winter recreation trails to the county.

Carpenter Road Cross-Country Ski Trails

Located on the Lesser Wilderness State Forest in the Town of Turin, these three loops with connecting trails encompass approximately 7.8 miles. These are predominantly woods trails, and are designed for the novice and intermediate cross-country skier. The Snow Ridge Inc. Cross Country Ski Trails connect with the Carpenter Road Trails adding another 6.2 miles to the network.

Osceola-Tug Hill Cross Country Ski Trail

Located in the Town of Osceola, this system has approximately 20 miles of groomed trails for novice to expert skiers. An additional 1,900 acres of State land adjacent to the ski center can be accessed by the Malloy trail. About 25 percent of the State land trails are novice, 60 percent intermediate, and 15 percent expert.

Lowville NYSDEC Demonstration Area

Located on 92 acres at the former Lowville Tree Nursery, the Lowville NYSDEC Demonstration Area is a nature trail that is good for hiking and biking in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter.

**Cultural & Historic Destinations**

American Maple Museum

Located in the Village of Croghan, this museum portrays the history of the maple industry through numerous exhibits of artifacts and equipment used to make maple syrup and its products. The American Maple Museum was founded in 1977 to preserve the history and evolution of the North American maple syrup industry. In 1980, a 3-story former schoolhouse was acquired along with a collection of antique syrup making equipment and logging tools. Other artifacts have been gathered from maple syrup regions across the U.S. and Canada.

Constable Hall

Located in Constableville, Constable Hall housed the Constable family from the day William Constable, Jr. moved into the newly constructed mansion in 1819. Five generations of the Constables lived in the house until the sale of the estate in 1947 for restoration as an Historic House Museum, owned and operated by the Constable Hall Association, Inc. The son of an army doctor from Dublin, William Jr. became one of the state's largest post-revolutionary landholders with the purchase of 4,000 acres in Lewis County. Constable Hall has retained much of its original furniture, with the Hall itself remaining unchanged in plan or architectural detail, and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.



*Constable Hall in Constableville*

The Mennonite Heritage Farm

Owned and operated by the Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association & Historical Society, the Mennonite Heritage Farm is located in Kirschnerville near Croghan, and was home to three generations of the Moser family. Brothers Joseph and John Moser emigrated from Alsace-Lorraine in the 1820's. They cleared the land, built a shelter and brought in animals. They then brought their remaining family, parents and siblings to join them in Lewis County. The heritage farm buildings have exhibits and displays of artifacts and information about the life of the early Amish-Mennonite settlers in the Croghan area (1830-1900).

Croghan Depot Museum

Located in the Village of Croghan, it is home to the Railway Historical Society of Northern New York. The museum houses artifacts, historic images, and memorabilia from its past use on the Lowville-Beaver River Railway line.

Town of Diana Museum

This facility contains a comprehensive and expanding collection of materials for viewing and research on the history of Diana and Harrisville. The museum is housed in the former Harrisville Train Depot, an historic two-story structure located in the Village of Harrisville.

Lewis County Historical Society Museum

The museum, located in the village of Lowville, includes exhibits, a gift shop, and brochures of information relating to areas of interest in Lewis County, and is housed in the historic Masonic Temple. The building also contains the offices for the historical society and the county historian's office.

State and National Register of Historic Places

Lewis County has several properties and homes of historical significance. Those sites that are listed on the New York State and National registries of Historic Places can be found in Table 20. The National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service, is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation.

**Table 20: State and National Register of Historic Sites in Lewis County**

Name of Historic Site	Location	NYS Register Date	National Register Date
Collins, Jonathan C., House and Cemetery	Constableville	9/19/1988	11/9/1988
Constableville Village Historic District	Constableville	8/12/1983	9/15/1983
Constable Hall	Constableville	6/23/1980	3/7/1973
Wilson, Edmund, House	Port Leyden	6/23/1980	11/26/1973
Methodist Episcopal Church of West Martinsburg	West Martinsburg	8/12/1983	9/15/1983
Hough, Franklin B., House	Lowville	6/23/1980	10/15/1966
Gould Mansion Complex	Lyons Falls	6/23/1980	4/19/1978
Bateman Hotel	Lowville	11/10/1993	2/18/1994
Saint Mark's Church	Port Leyden	6/23/1998	8/6/1998
Martinsburg Town Hall	Martinsburg	12/22/2000	3/21/2001
Lewis County Fairgrounds	Lowville	12/3/2001	2/14/2002
Forest Presbyterian Church and Manse	Lyons Falls	11/3/2003	9/24/2004

Source: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation