

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Town of Jay Selected for National Planning Assistance Program to Grow Outdoor Recreation Economy and Strengthen Main Street

Community workshop in September 2026 Participants will identify vision, goals, and actions.

AU SABLE FORKS, NY — The Town of Jay is one of 25 communities nationwide selected to receive planning assistance through the federal Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the USDA Forest Service, the Northern Border Regional Commission, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Denali Commission. Through the RERC program, Town of Jay stakeholders will work with a team of consultants and federal and state agency partners to develop an action plan to strengthen their outdoor recreation economy and revitalize their downtown.

“Being selected for this program is a tremendous opportunity for our community,” said Town of Jay Supervisor Matt Stanley. “Our hamlets, the Ausable River, the Jay Mountain Wilderness, and incredible scenic views make our town a unique place to live and visit, and this planning process will help us build an outdoor recreation economy that supports residents and local businesses.”

Jay’s RERC project will focus on the connections between Main Street revitalization and the sustainable growth of an outdoor recreation economy. This includes planning to develop trails with town, county, state, and private partners; ensuring that outdoor amenities are accessible for a wide range of ages and abilities; developing strategies to implement promotional and wayfinding materials to encourage responsible use of outdoor infrastructure by residents and visitors, and more.

The RERC planning process began in February 2026 and will take place over 12 months, with a two-day, facilitated community workshop as the focal point. The workshop will kick off with a public meeting the evening of Friday, September 25, and continue with an all-day session on Saturday, September 26. All community members are invited to attend both events, which will take place at the Community Center at 11 School Lane in Au Sable Forks.

Participants in the community workshop will collaborate to identify a vision, goals, and specific actions to strengthen Jay’s recreation economy and reinvest in the hamlet centers of Upper Jay, Jay, and Au Sable Forks where the town’s business and cultural activities are concentrated. Registration information and other details will soon be available on the town’s website at townofjayny.gov.

“The RERC program gives us the tools and expertise to make sure that as our recreation economy grows, it strengthens our Main Streets and benefits everyone who calls Jay home,” said Town of Jay Councilor Olivia Dwyer, who chairs the Jay RERC Steering Committee. “I encourage everyone who lives, works, and enjoys the outdoors in Au Sable Forks, Jay, and Upper Jay to join us in September.”

The local steering committee for the workshop includes community members with professional and volunteer experience in parks, recreation, and outdoor activities, as well as representatives from partners such as the Town of Black Brook, the Barkeater Trails Alliance, Jay Community News, the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism, Essex County Community Resources, Essex County Industrial Development Authority, Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Adirondack Park Agency, and the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board.

For more information, contact Town Councilor Olivia Dwyer at o.dwyer@townofjayny.gov.
Learn more about the RERC program at
epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities.

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Photo descriptions:

The view from Jay Mountain, a popular hike in the Town of Jay that features an eight mile out-and-back hike to summit the 3,600-foot peak. Photo by Tim Rowland

Cyclists frequent Route 9N as it follows the Ausable River from Upper Jay to Jay, a scenic stretch of road that is part of the Ironman Lake Placid course. Photo by Tim Rowland

During hot summer months, Jay's residents and visitors often cool off with a visit to the Ausable River by the historic Covered Bridge at Douglas Memorial Park. Photo by Tim Rowland

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