



# Sustainable Hudson Valley Highlights

## 2015

Our patient groundwork showed results in 2015 as we launched our market transformation work with a regional initiative to make it easier and more affordable to go solar. We also brought together a community of investors, entrepreneurs, policymakers and advocates to explore how water protection could be a catalyst for economic innovation in our region, and continued to work with the governance group of the Mid-Hudson Regional Sustainability Plan.

## Solarize Hudson Valley

In February, we formally launched Solarize Hudson Valley with a pilot in Kingston, followed by programs in Woodstock, Rosendale, Goshen, Warwick and Beacon. With strong staffing and a model already proven in New England, we dove into the work of selecting solar installers, designing quality workshops, engaging motivated community



groups and patiently documenting the results. At year-end, we had been directly responsible for over 160 signed contracts for more than 1.5 mW of home and business solar power. More than that, we had mobilized hundreds of volunteers and been covered by just about every regional news outlet.

## Water Wealth

The Valley is a water-rich region that prides itself on water stewardship and expertise. Water research and management may represent a multi-billion dollar part of our economy, employing hundreds of degreed experts and many more workers. This is one of the world's greatest talent pools for holistically improving the management of water and achieving water excellence in a river valley region. It is also one of the least understood, coordinated and leveraged. We devoted our spring symposium, Water Wealth, to exploring this asset and understanding potential directions for economic development that arise from water conservation and innovation.

We hosted a conference, *Water Wealth*, April 10 at Vassar College, bringing together investors, entrepreneurs, policymakers and advocates to explore how water protection could become a new engine for economic innovation. The Hudson Valley has invested more than \$65M in water research and policy between 1983 and 2010. Expertise in water protection and restoration keeps our region resilient, and gives rise to skills and services with significant economic value. How can we work together to realize the promise of a “Blue Economy,” built on the talents and technologies of water stewardship, as the next big idea for our region? Milwaukee, at the center of the Great Lakes economy and environmental restoration, has created a research and education hub for industry and graduate programs in water management and law. Rotterdam, Netherlands is renowned for its expertise in floodwater management and water engineering. Why not the Hudson Valley?

**Keynote speaker L. Hunter Lovins** is President of Natural Capitalism Solutions (NCS,) a Colorado non-profit that educates senior decision makers in the business case for a Regenerative Economy. NCS, helps companies, communities and countries implement more sustainable practices profitably. Trained as a sociologist and lawyer (JD), Hunter is a professor of sustainable business management at Bard College, and Denver University; and the chief insurgent of the *Madrone Project*. Named a *Master* at the Chinese *De Tao Academy*, she recently helped launch the Institute for Green Investment in Shanghai. Lovins has consulted for scores of industries and governments worldwide, including International Finance Corporation, Unilever, Walmart, the United Nations and Royal Dutch Shell, as well as sustainability champions Interface, Patagonia and Cliff Bar. She has briefed heads of state, leaders of the numerous local governments, the Pentagon, and about 30 other countries, as well as the UN, and the US Congress.

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