Recipes for a Cleaner, Greener Lifestyle

A Hudson Valley Resident’s Guide to Practicing Everyday Sustainability

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# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ................................................................. 02

**Materials**

Reusable Everyday Objects .............................................. 04
Repair Cafe ................................................................. 09
Recycling Specialty Items ............................................... 12

**Gardening**

Bee-friendly Gardens ..................................................... 15
Composting ........................................................................ 17

**Food**

Plant-rich Diets .............................................................. 24
Shopping at Farmers Markets ........................................... 26
Food Waste Reduction ................................................... 28

**Energy**

Solar Energy ................................................................. 31
Heat Pumps ..................................................................... 33

**Transportation**

Drive an Electric Vehicle ............................................... 35

**Community**

Climate Smart Communities Task Force ......................... 37
Civic-engagement Groups .............................................. 39
Introduction

Sustainable Hudson Valley’s mission is to speed up, scale up, jazz up and leverage action to slow and then reverse climate change while creating communities where people and nature thrive. That means we work with local partners throughout the value to educate and inspire lifestyle change, as well as planning for neighborhood and community resilience.

The Rhinebeck Clean Power Expo was held on October 6, 2019. Participating educators included members of the Hudson Valley Vegans (top left), Dorna Schroeter’s biomimicry movement (top right), Rhinebeck Community Gardeners (bottom left), JSA Financial Group’s specialty recycling (bottom right). Other booths included (featured on the next page, from left to right) Bard’s Sustainability Department, The Last Straw Rhinebeck and Dutchess Cornell Cooperative Extension.
Introduction

In 2019, we published the Clean Power Guide in collaboration with Luminary Media. This special section of the spring Upstate House magazine has reached at least 100,000 eyeballs online and through region-wide distribution. But we wanted to go farther, so we developed the Clean Power Expo event series to support face to face, hands-on, curious and creative engagement with the lifestyle options that reduce environmental footprint, like going solar, switching to an electric vehicle and using heat pumps instead of fossil fuels to heat and cool our spaces.

We held exciting Clean power Expos in Kingston, Marbletown and Beacon... but in Rhinebeck, local partners took it farther. On October 8, 2019, they created an Expo alongside the Farmers Market, including a scavenger hunt among vendor tables, so that the community could learn ways of going green, gather tools and compete for prizes while chatting with neighbors and having a great time.

The expertise and excitement that came together for this event was too valuable to let go at day’s end. So Sustainable Hudson Valley’s Julia Farawell worked with event coordinators Vanessa Bertozzi and Dorna Schroeter to bring you this resource.
Lower your eco-impact by switching to reusable items.

Why it matters

It takes about 450 years for a plastic bottle to break down and roughly 13 billion plastic bottles are disposed of each year. Many communities and states are targeting single use, disposable plastics as a bad idea to phase out. "

There is not unlimited space for our plastic waste to sit and decompose on Earth" - Katie at the Last Straw Rhinebeck.

Kellianne of The Last Straw Rhinebeck partnered with Shiwanti, owner of Cinnamon Indian Cuisine, to showcase the importance of switching to reusable personal items. This Bingo game was handed out to interested individuals attending the Rhinebeck Clean Power Expo. Try it out for yourself!
Lower your eco-impact by switching to reusable items.

Continued.

How to make it happen

You can redesign your life to get off disposables, one step at a time. We recommend replacing your disposable items with the following plastic-free items:

- A bar of shampoo and a bar of conditioner
- A steel razor
- 100% compostable toothbrushes or low-plastic electric toothbrushes
- Eco-friendly floss in a refillable or recyclable container
- Sustainable food storage options (glass jars, washable and durable to-go containers and reusable wax wraps as alternatives to plastic wraps).
Lower your eco-impact by switching to reusable items.

Continued.

How to make it happen (continued)

- **Refillable cosmetics** (like mascara and lipstick)
- **Skincare essentials sold in glass and recyclable containers**
- Compostable hairbrushes
- Steel straws (and don't forget the pipe cleaner tool to clean them!)
- Bamboo or metal reusable to-go cutlery
- A reusable water bottle and reusable thermos
- Reusable shopping bags

**Tips**

Reducing plastic waste altogether should be the ultimate goal. You can achieve this through slow transitioning, so it's not a shock to your daily routine. Promise yourself to switch your plastic razor to a steel razor one week. Then, switch your plastic toothbrush to a compostable toothbrush the next week. Continue this at the best pace for your lifestyle and wallet.

The concept of “Rethinking Waste” should be at the forefront of our minds. Rethinking Waste is a movement that redefines the meaning of consumption and reshapes our relationships with products.
Tips (continued)

Before we purchase new goods for our household, we should (1) Refuse: if there is no need to purchase a good, refrain from purchasing it. Then, (2) Reduce: in situations where you would be inclined to purchase a non-reusable item and produce more waste, bring your own reusable items instead. (3) Reuse: Before you dispose of an item at home or work, question how its life could be regenerated. For example, food containers can be given a second life, after a proper washing.
Tips (continued)

(4) Repair: most of us are used to replacing “unusable” or broken items with new items. But repairing our items is a liberating act. When we put time and effort into fixing our belongings, we develop meaningful relationships with what we own. Consider learning how to repair your goods before throwing them in a trash heap. Attend a local Repair Cafe (see Recipe #2 below). Repair Cafes are free community programs centered around giving broken items a second chance at life.

Another form of recycling is (5) Regifting: donate your unwanted goods to friends, family, neighbors, or strangers via thrift stores and recycling centers. (6) Recovery is an important step in considering the impacts of our waste. Composting can easily be incorporated in our everyday lives (see Recipe #5 below). Even so, we are not usually accustomed to disposing of our food, yard, and organic waste through composting facilities. We can change the ways our offices, universities, restaurants, and homes dispose of organic waste by incorporating composting into our facilities.

Do not forget to (7) Recycle. To properly recycle, we must educate ourselves about the ways our municipalities regulate recycling. Each town recycles items a bit differently, so be sure to investigate which items are accepted in your local recycling bins. Remember that many towns and counties offer Household Hazardous Waste events each year. At these events, items like paint, motor oil, cleaning chemicals, smoke detectors and broken electronic goods can be thrown out in an environmentally-friendly manner for free.
The Repair Cafe movement is intended to be as personally liberating as it is useful. All too often, we don’t give second thought to throwing out items we consider “unusable.” Less than a century ago, throwing out broken items wasn’t a popular option. Our culture is dependent on “fast fashion” and not only with clothing, but electronic goods and much more. Before disposing of an item, bring it to your local Repair Cafe. Chances are, the item can be salvaged and given a second life. Photo courtesy of the New Paltz Repair Cafe.

Why it matters

It takes a surprising amount of energy to make and move stuff, and to transport and recycle waste. Changing our throw-away culture is one of the fastest, easiest ways to reduce our footprint. Fixing stuff is a creative way to take back control of your spending and your material life. The Repair Cafe is a social innovation where neighbors help each other to fix broken items of all kinds in a fun environment.
Join the Repair Cafe movement.

Continued.

How to make it happen

1. Connect with local Repair Cafe chapters via local flyers around the Hudson Valley, email, or social media.

2. Gather items in your home and work spaces that need repair.

3. Save the date of a local Repair Cafe event. Repair Cafe Hudson Valley's website has a calendar of upcoming events.

4. Bring your broken and beloved items to the Repair Cafe to be fixed.

5. Learn from the masters at these events how to fix your items in the future. Consider helping others fix their items by lending your expertise and volunteering as a "repair coach" in the future.
Join the Repair Cafe movement.

Tips

Before throwing items away at home, consider if they can be fixed. Most items that we donate or toss in the garbage could be repaired and brought back to working condition. This goes for electronics, furniture, clothing, kitchen tools, and decor. Put fixable items aside to be brought to a Repair Cafe.

John Wackman, the founder of the Hudson Valley Repair Cafe Movement, will be publishing a book showcasing global Repair Cafe case studies. The book will be published around the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day, in April 2020. Follow Hudson Valley Repair Cafe for updates.

iFixIt is an organization that believes repairing our items is liberating. iFixIt is currently working on an online, free repair manual for every device. This poster is free to download (in almost every language) from their website. Photo courtesy of iFixIt.
Recycle more than you thought you could.

Why it matters

Many people buy products that come with parts that require special recycling. The process of recycling specialty items isn’t common knowledge. Specialty items include Brita filters, hearing aid batteries, watch batteries, coffee creamer capsules (and K-cups), wine corks, and more.

Often times, municipal facilities will not accept these specialty items at their recycling centers. Tossing these items feeds landfills. But there are many services that can help - and doing your homework makes you an expert for your friends and neighbors.
How to make it happen

1. Stop yourself before throwing ANY item in the garbage

2. Ask yourself if you know if the item is recyclable

3. If the answer is Yes, then recycle it properly

4. If the answer is “Unsure,” then contact JSA Financial Group and Ruge's Subaru, both in Rhinebeck. These businesses both partner with Terracycle, a recycling service for specialty items.

5. If it is convenient for you, visit these businesses to recycle your specialty items (JSA Financial Group currently accepts: hearing aid batteries, watch batteries, wine corks, Brita filters, and toothpaste tubes. Ruge's Subaru currently accepts coffee and creamer capsules, disposable cups, lids, and straws).
How to make it happen (continued)

6. If you are unable to travel to these businesses, or have items they do not accept, utilize Terracycle's Free Recycling Program to find a recycling program that best suits your needs. 7. If you are a homeowner, apartment complex manager, business, or municipal facility install Terracycle recycling stations on your premises for residents, neighbors, and locals to use!

Tips

These businesses have FREE recycling programs for their products (which can be researched further using Terracycle's Free Recycling Program directory): Burt's Bees, Brita, Bausch & Lomb contacts, Beech-nut Baby products, Arm & Hammer pouches, Barilla Ready Pasta pouches, Colgate, Honest Kids drink pouches, Entenmann's Little Bites pouches, EOS skincare, Febreze canisters, Gillette plastic razors, Hasbro plastic toys, Herbal Essence, Late July snacks, PepsiCo, Tide, Tom's health products, Vans shoes, Wellness pet food containers, and more.

Often times, it is second nature for us to simply dispose of whatever we no longer see as usable. But, many of our everyday household items can be recycled.
Why it matters

Bees and other pollinators are essential to the health and balance of our ecosystem. Excessive use of pesticides have caused bee populations to shrink in the last decade. Almost all flowering plants on Earth are dependent on pollinators to keep their species alive. Animals need pollinators to exist because bees keep food supplies and habitats alive for living beings to use. Humans need bees to pollinate their food crops, too. It is estimated that nearly one-third of food consumed by Americans relies on natural bee pollination in the growing process (EarthDay.org).
How to make it happen

Consider what humans need to survive: food, shelter and a non-toxic environment. This is what bees need to survive. By using pesticides, and disrupting bee pollination process and habitats through overly-manicuring our gardens, compromise their food and shelter. The same is true for beetles and butterflies, which can also be pollinators. Whether it is tiny or large, your property can be designed for pollinator friendliness even with small plantings and non-intrusive practices.

1. Incorporate native plants into your landscape.

2. Plant seasonal bloom varieties that keep going from spring through fall.
How to make it happen (continued)

3. Seriously avoid pesticides.

4. Leave seed heads on plants until the end of the season. Do not manicure the garden in ways that would disrupt the pollinators doing their job.

5. Leave some bare ground (avoid using heavy mulches because many bee species burrow into the ground).

Tips

Learn what it takes to grow a few things at a time rather than going crazy. Many hardy perennial plants -- like bee balm -- are easy to start with. Some pollinator friendly options have fabulous human benefits -- like berry bushes!
Compost at home and work.

Why it matters

Food waste that decomposes in landfills releases methane, a greenhouse gas that is 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide. By decomposing food waste in a personal composting system, we can recycle our food scraps by using them to fertilize in gardens. The Hudson Valley is full of programs and organizations that make it easy to donate our compost to local farms and community gardens, too. There are several methods. Choose the best one for your lifestyle or the current season: Basic composting, winter composting, and stealth composting for apartment complexes.

How to make it happen

*Basic composting for beginners:*
1. Store "browns" (leaves, yard trimmings) and "greens" (food scraps -- but NO meats, fats or bones as these attract critters). Egg shells are acceptable!)
2. Encourage microbes (this happens by continuing to add food scraps, plant cuttings, and occasional manure if you have it available)
3. Allow fresh air to flow through the pile (mix the compost periodically to add more air flow)

4. Don't let the compost get too dry (add water periodically, as needed)

5. Be patient (compost is not ready if it smells or looks like rotting vegetables. Wait until it looks more like enriched, dark dirt or mulch to add it to your garden -- a wonderful moment).

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) teaches individuals from all walks of life about the importance (and fun) of composting. Hudson Valley residents interested in adopting more sustainable lifestyle skills should try to attend one or two educational CCE events per year. Photo courtesy of Dutchess County Cornell Cooperative Extension.
Winter composting:
Remember that the decomposition process slows down in colder temperatures, but microbes stay alive all year long in well-maintained compost.

1. Collect fall yard waste (leaves, brush, and other yard trimmings) to add to your compost during the winter months.

2. Collect paper straws, newspaper, compostable bamboo products, and food scraps to add in.

3. Create a "windbreak" with a tarp for extra protective insulation.

4. For outside compost bins, utilize a "pre-compost" bucket to save yourself trips into the wintery outdoor weather. Being that you'll keep this "pre-compost" bucket indoors, you'll want to layer it with extra "browns" to keep the smell of the food scraps inside the container. Another option is putting the compost bucket in your freezer. Putting compost containers in your freezer also help cut down on fruit flies in warmer weather.

5. Since colder temperatures slow down the decomposition process, you can cut your food scraps into smaller pieces to speed up the composting process.
Stealth composting:
1. Use a garbage can or small bucket with a lid.

2. Place the container near a door, in a garage, or in your kitchen.

3. Place a smaller container inside the outer container.

4. Punch holes in the bottom of the smaller container.

5. Line and insulate the bottoms of the larger and smaller containers with wood chips, sawdust, and/or shredded paper products.

6. Only put food scraps and other compostables in the smaller container.

7. Punch holes in the lid of the larger container or leave the lid slightly ajar to allow for air flow.

8. Once the container is full, it will probably still need to continue decomposing. Start a new stealth composting bin to allow the full container to fully breakdown.

9. Don't forget to water the compost if it gets dry.

10. When the full compost settles and "shrinks" in size, move the container outdoors with the lid ajar to let rain and wind inside the container to "cure" it.
O5
Continued.

Tips

Many people wait to add their thick compost to gardens in the fall season, so it enriches their soil during the winter months and is decomposed and organically worked into the soil by the spring growing season.

For outdoor composting, you have a choice. You can create a pile in an out-of-the-way place and turn it regularly, or you can get an affordable container like the Earth Machine, which is made of recycled plastic. For an even cheaper option, get a large plastic garbage can and punch holes in the top and bottom.

The Earth Machine compost bin comes with a ten-year warranty, a pest-resistant lid, side ventilation and a locking harvest door in the front. Photo courtesy of Earth Machine.
There’s no need to be an absolute vegetarian or vegan, just to shift your focus from animals to plants as the main source of protein in your diet. A meat-centric diet contributes to about one-fifth of global emissions, whereas “plant-rich diets reduce emissions and also tend to be healthier, leading to lower rates of chronic disease” (Project Drawdown, Food: Plant-Rich Diet).

Why it matters

Animal agriculture is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions as well as water pollution, especially when it is conducted at industrial scale. And if you are trying to live a more compassionate life, you may prefer to love animals more and eat them less.
How to make it happen

1. Commit to eating less meat. If you normally eat meat with every meal, try eating one meatless meal a day. Bump that up to two meatless meals or more, as you feel ready. Treat the process like a transition and not an overnight life change.

2. Commit to eating fewer animal dairy products. Eggs, milk, cheese, butter, and yogurt are the most common dairy products sourced from animals. Many recipes call for the use of these products. But there are tons of alternatives; especially for milk, cheese, butter, and yogurt. Alternatives to eggs exist, and vary depending on the recipe they are being used for. For example, tofu with nutritional yeast or turmeric works as a delicious alternative to scrambled eggs. When baking, applesauce, mashed bananas, or arrowroot powder can be used to replace eggs.

3. Research vegetarian and vegan versions of your favorite recipes. Vegetable-based meat replacements or increased portions of vegetables and grains are good ways to reshape traditional meat recipes -- and they taste good.

4. Favor whole, unprocessed foods, for your own health and a reduced energy footprint. Reduce “food miles” from farm to table by eating local whenever possible.

5. Partake in “Meatless Mondays” and other veggie-friendly specials at local restaurants. Many restaurants offer discounted vegetarian or vegan meals, letting you sample and learn what you like.
Lower your carbon footprint with a plant-rich diet.

**Tips**

Start whenever you can, but the sooner the better.

For beginners, start by taking animal products off your plate one or two meals at a time. Being vegetarian first is often easier for most folks. Let your diet evolve and find a balance that is comfortable for you.

Engage in Meatless Mondays, which many restaurants in the Hudson Valley celebrate weekly; this can also be done as an online program that gives you regular reminders, recipes and messages of support.
Why it matters

Although big-box supermarkets are convenient, they are energy-intensive and many of their products are shipped from afar. Non-seasonal and non-local varieties of produce are transported from other states and countries. This constant, international transportation of goods produces substantial greenhouse gas emissions.

The refrigeration used in corporate food stores annually leaks about 25% of the refrigerant materials they contain (such as Freon) -- which are more potent greenhouse gases than CO2. These refrigerant leaks cause a standard U.S. supermarkets to have an annual carbon footprint equal to 333 American cars.

Shopping from local farms and farmer's markets is the most sustainable food-shopping option.
How to make it happen

1. Visit the USDA's "Local Food Directory Listings."

2. Choose from the following directories to find local food: Farmer’s Markets, Community Shared Agriculture (CSAs), and On-Farm Markets.

3. Make commitments to yourself to either attend a local farmer’s market (weekly or monthly) or join a CSA (seasonally or yearly).

4. Plan ahead by taking inventory of what you have and what you need for cooking each week/month. Research recipes that specifically use local, seasonal produce before shopping/receiving your CSA share.

Tips

Familiarize yourself with produce that can grow in the climate you live in, and incorporate that produce into recipes you enjoy. Plan diet and shopping overall to minimize supermarket runs.
08

Create a Food Waste Reduction strategy for yourself, your workplace and beyond.

Why it matters

It is estimated that 11% of greenhouse gas emissions that come from the food system could be reduced if we stop wasting food.
How to make it happen

1. Look around you and take note of the amount of food that is wasted in your home, office, restaurant, child’s school, or party.

2. At home, buy only what you need. Try to buy food with less- or no packaging. Cooking with staple foods provides you with leftovers that can be used in future meals. SaveTheFood.com is a website that provides recipes specifically for leftover food scraps.

3. For work or the office, bring in cooked meals from home. The more you purchase fast food and meals during your lunch break, the more materials go to waste. Plan and prep meals when you can.

4. Put a compost bin in your home or office. Bring a portable compost bin to a party. There are several Hudson Valley composting services that will bring your compost to farms: Community Composting Company, Compost Valley, and more.

5. If you own, or work at, an organization with an on-site food service, sign up to become a food donor with Feed Hudson Valley. If you work for a business that hosts catered events, you can sign up to be an occasional food donor. Volunteers with Feed HV will pick up the food from your location and bring it to a local shelter.
Tips

Larry Anthony, the Food Director at Rhinebeck School District, has partnered Rhinebeck’s public schools with Feed Hudson Valley to be a food donor to shelters in Dutchess county. Consider contacting your local school district to do the same.

If you can bike or use an EV to transport leftover food to shelters, you have the added bonus of not contributing to greenhouse gas emissions!

The Hudson Valley Food Bank is located in Orange County. The mission of the Hudson Valley Food Bank is two-fold: prevent useable food from being wasted and alleviate hunger in the Hudson Valley. Photo courtesy of the Hudson Valley Food Bank.
09 Use solar to power your home.

Why it matters

Our homes use fossil fuel daily each time we turn on the lights or power our devices with electricity. Solar power is renewable energy. By utilizing the power of sunlight, solar energy does not contribute to greenhouse gas emissions or pollution.

How to make it happen

1. Consult a solar professional to understand if your home is suitable for rooftop solar, on-site solar, or community off-site solar options. If you're home's roof is covered by tree shade, you should consider alternative on-site solar options. If you do not own your home, you can still participate in community on- or off-site solar programs.
09

Use solar to power your home.

Continued.

How to make it happen

2. If you’re a homeowner, find a local company to install your solar panels. If you are not a homeowner, consider using EnergySage’s Community Solar Marketplace to find local community solar programs.

3. Install solar energy at your home and save up to thousands of dollars per year on your energy bill.

Tips

For safety and to get a permit, you need to use the services of licensed solar professionals. Many solar providers offer payment plans, with different forms of financing: cash, lease, and loans.

Consult the Clean Power Guide for guidance and tips.

If you are not able to put solar panels on your roof due to shading, orientation or because you don’t own the building, look into community solar which lets you subscribe to a facility in your area.
Ditch your fossil-powered heating/cooling system for electric heat pumps.

**Why it matters**

25% of the average home's energy load is from heating and cooling. Air source and ground source heat pumps, and heat pump water heaters, are more efficient than conventional technologies and more versatile: heat pumps heat, cool and dehumidify as well.

*When the Phoenicia Library was being rebuilt, after a 2010 fire, the library replaced their oil-fueled burner with an air-source heat pump. Photo courtesy of Violet Snow / Hudson Valley One.*
Ditch your fossil-powered heating/cooling system for electric heat pumps.

How to make it happen

1. Research which type of heat pump would be right for your home: air or ground-source heat pump

2. Understand the inner workings of your home. Does your home's heating and cooling involve ducts, or is it ductless?

3. Contact local heat pump providers to get an estimate of cost. Attend a local HeatSmart event to become connected with the best providers and technicians (see Tips for more info).

4. Look into getting federal and state rebates on your heat pump. Currently, there's a 30% geothermal tax credit and NYS tax rebate of $1,200–$1,500 per ton,

5. Install your heat pump and save over $1,500 per year on your heating and cooling bills.

Tips

Sign up for a free home energy assessment through Heat Smart Ulster-Sullivan, a collaboration between Catskill Mountainkeeper and Sustainable Hudson Valley.
Trade your fuel car in for an electric vehicle.

Electric vehicles provide the possibility of driving a zero emissions car. If your charge comes from renewable energy sources, like solar or wind energy, then you can be sure that you are not contributing to fossil fuel emissions during each trip. Photo courtesy of New York State Department of Transportation.

Why it matters

Transportation is the largest segment of the Hudson Valley's greenhouse gas emissions. While train, bus and bike travel can make a difference, our lives are built around travel patterns that depend on the car. Electric vehicles are sophisticated, quiet, safe, fun to drive and less expensive to operate. Today’s all-electric vehicles typically have a range of 200 - 300 miles on a charge, and a plug-in hybrid option lets you use gas for longer trips. There are over 40 makes and models of EVs on the market today.
11

Trade your fuel car in for an electric vehicle.

Continued.

How to make it happen

1. Research the different makes and models available at local dealerships. Consider which EV suits your needs and is comfortable on your wallet.

2. Test drive an EV at a dealership or a local sustainability event. You can learn about upcoming EV events and Clean Power Expos by checking the SHV website calendar.

3. Research where charging stations are available in your local area. If you commute a distance to work each day, understand where the most convenient charging stations are located along your route.

4. Understand the benefits and costs of installing a charging station at home. Most EV’s require Level Two chargers for home stations.

5. Purchase an EV and save on fuel costs and maintenance fees for years to come.

Tips

PlugShare and ChargeHub are apps that help you identify local charging stations.
Register your town as a Climate Smart Community.

- Or join your town's existing Climate Smart Community Task Force.

In January 2020, the Rhinebeck Climate Smart Community Task Force hosted an interactive community event centered around climate change adaptation in the Hudson Valley. Vanessa Bertozzi, coordinator of the Rhinebeck CSC (right), stands beside Rhinebeck Mayor Gary Bassett (left). Photo courtesy of Matt Stinchcomb.

Why it matters

"Members of the Climate Smart Communities program are a network of New York communities engaged in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and improving climate resilience. The program provides guidance to local governments on best practices for mitigating and adapting to climate change." - NYS DEC. Today, over 8 million people are living in Climate Smart Communities.
Register your town as a Climate Smart Community.

Continued.

- Or join your town’s existing Climate Smart Community Task Force.

How to make it happen

1. Pass a resolution to become a Registered Climate Smart Community (CSC)

2. Register your community after the resolution is adopted

3. Select “actions.” Once you are a registered CSC, you can implement chosen actions on your own. Begin with the Mandatory and Priority actions, such as Creating a CSC Task Force, Assigning a CSC Coordinator, Creating a Government Operations Climate Action Plan, and more actions that can be found on the CSC website.

4. Collect Documentation after selecting your actions. Each action requires documentation for your community to become certified.

5. Submit your application. If your community does not meet requirements to become certified, CSC staff will coach you on how to become certified.

Tips

It takes time for everything to get set in place. This can be a big undertaking for communities, but it is one of the most important choices NYS communities can make. Be patient and know that great things take time.
Join group efforts to become civically engaged about environmental priorities.

In fall 2019, New York State passed the Climate Leadership and Protection Act (CLCPA). The CLCPA is the most comprehensive piece of environmental legislation ever passed by a state in the U.S. Jen Metzger, a Senator representing counties in the Hudson Valley, collaborated on the CLCPA. Photo courtesy of The River News Room.

Why it matters

Legislation is a powerful tool to establish the behaviors we need for a healthy environment, as the recently passed Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act shows. There are many local groups and organizations that utilize volunteer power to educate the public about legislation and urge legislators to pass specific bills -- or run candidates who will implement a better platform.

How to make it happen

1. Visit Legiscan.com to search for pending bills in NYS
Join group efforts to become civically engaged about environmental priorities.

2. Research and familiarize yourself with bills that are currently undergoing consideration by NYS legislators.

3. Research local and state elections. Familiarize yourself with the candidates running in the elections.

4. Join a local environmental policy activism group (See _____ for more information). Many of them have introductory videos and introductory materials online to help you become comfortable with their processes. These groups often host events to educate the public. These groups often participate in lobbying days in Albany, too.

5. Vote in elections.

6. Follow-up with legislators after bills pass or fail. Thank them for their support.

Tips

Attend meet-and-greet events to speak to candidates about their policies in person. Urge friends to write letters and call their local legislators. Throw a phone-banking or letter-writing party and invite neighbors and friends. If you decide to join a local activism group, offer to host an event in your home or local community space.
Who to contact in the Hudson Valley

Materials + Recycling

Last Straw Rhinebeck (educational + activism group)
- Website: thelaststrawrhineb.wixsite.com
- Instagram: @thelaststrawrbk

Leola Specht at JSA Financial Group (on-site specialty recycling)
- Website: jsafinancial.com
- JSA Phone number: 845.876.1923
- Address: 7 Livingston St, Rhinebeck, NY 12572

Repair Cafe Hudson Valley (volunteer community repair program)
- Website: RepairCafeHV.org
- Instagram: @RepairCafeHV
- Facebook: Repair Cafe - Hudson Valley
- Locations: Beacon, Cornwall, Gardiner, Kingston, New Paltz, Ossining, Poughkeepsie, Rhinebeck, Rosendale, Warwick, Woodstock, Pound Ridge
- When to attend: Saturday mornings (start times vary depending on location)

Ruge’s Subaru Rhinebeck (on-site specialty recycling)
- Website: rugessubaru.com
- Phone number: 845.876.7074
- Address: 6444 Montgomery St, Rhinebeck, NY 12572

Zero to Go (recycling + organics waste disposal service)
- Website: zerotogo.org
- Facebook: Dirty/Love Trash
Who to contact in the Hudson Valley

Food + Agriculture

Cornell Cooperative Extension (educational resource for sustainable actions)
- Website: CCE.Cornell.edu
- Locations: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties.

Feed HV (food donation service)
- Website: FeedHV.org
- Facebook: Feed HV

Hudson Valley Food Bank (food donation service)
- Website: FoodBankofHudsonValley.org
- Phone number: 845.534.5344
- Address: 195 Hudson Street, Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY 12520

Hudson Valley Eats (online publication about HV food establishments, food insecurity and sustainability)
- Website: HudsonValleyEats.com
- Facebook: Hudson Valley Eats
- Instagram: @HVEats

Hudson Valley Vegans (vegan community group)
- Website: HVvegans.org
- Facebook: Hudson Valley Vegans
Who to contact in the Hudson Valley

Food + Agriculture (continued)

USDA Native Plants for Pollinators (online reference for pollinator-friendly gardening)
  • Website: Plants.sc.egov.usda.gov

Xerces Society (online reference for pollinator-friendly gardens)
  • Website: Xerces.org

Rhinebeck Community Garden (participants in the Rhinebeck Clean Power Expo's composting booth)
  • Facebook: Rhinebeck Community Garden

Energy

NYSERDA-approved contractors list
  • Website: NYSERDA.ny.gov/Contractors/Find-a-Contractor

Sustainable Hudson Valley
  • Website: SustainHV.org
  • Facebook: Sustainable Hudson Valley Community
  • Instagram: @Sustainable.HV

HeatSmart Ulster-Sullivan (local campaign focused on implementing heat pumps in homes and commercial buildings)
  • Website: RenewableNY.org/HeatSmart
  • Facebook: HeatSmart Ulster-Sullivan
  • Instagram: @HeatSmart_Ulster_Sullivan
Who to contact in the Hudson Valley

Transportation

Drive Electric Hudson Valley (local campaign focused on educating consumers about the benefits of electric vehicles)
- Website: SustainHV.org
- Facebook: Drive Electric Hudson Valley
- Instagram: @Sustainable.HV

Civic-engagement

Climate Smart Communities Information (this is a program through the Department of Environmental Conservation)
- Website: ClimateSmart.ny.gov
- Email: climatesmart@dec.ny.gov
- Phone number: 518.402.8448

Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) - Southern Dutchess, Putnam and Orange Counties
- Email: midhudsonsouth.ny@citizensclimatelobby.org

CCL - Northern Dutchess and Ulster Counties
- Email: midhudsonvalley@citizensclimatelobby.org

CCL - Sullivan and Western Orange Counties
- Email: midhudsonwest.ny@citizensclimatelobby.org
Who to contact in the Hudson Valley

Civic-engagement (continued)

CCL – Westchester County
• Website: westchester@citizensclimatelobby.org

Hudson Valley Green Drinks (local events that support sustainability and community engagement in environmental issues)
• Email: HudsonValleyGreenDrinks@gmail.com
• Facebook: Hudson Valley Green Drinks

Mothers Out Front – Westchester County ((Mothers, Grandmothers and Caregivers Against Climate Change)
• Website: NY.MothersOutFront.org
• Facebook: Mothers Out Front – Westchester County

Mothers Out Front – Dutchess County:
• Website: NY.MothersOutFront.org
• Facebook: Mothers Out Front – Westchester County

Mid-Hudson Sunrise (Youth environmental and sustainability group)
• Facebook: Mid–Hudson Sunrise
• Instagram: @Sunrise.MidHudsonValley