

Volume 1 Issue
6
Sept 29, 2019

New Paltz Climate Smart Newsletter

Meetup Cleanup Your Act. Compost.

Tuesday, **October 1, 2019** 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Location: Gardiner Liquid Mercantile 128 Main St · Gardiner, NY

At this Meetup we will learn why it is so important to compost - landfill creates the powerful greenhouse gas methane and composting does not. Composting practices that minimize anaerobic conditions and maximize aerobic conditions will be the most effective at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We will introduce you to a variety of methods of composting for different situations. Fall is an excellent time to think about composting your leaves. Bring your ideas and questions to share.



Our main presenter will be Debra "Suger" Rowinski.

Climate Smart Task Force Now Meets at the Community Center

Our Climate Smart Task Force meets every third Monday of the month at 7:00. We had been meeting at the New Paltz Village Hall but we are now meeting at the Community Center. Please join us if you can. Our next meeting is **Monday October 21st**.

Documentary Fantastic Fungi Screening at the Rosendale Theatre



New Paltz Climate Smart is co-sponsoring the screening of this fantastic documentary at Rosendale Theatre on **Wednesday October 23rd at 7:15 pm**. When so many are struggling for connection, inspiration and hope, Fantastic Fungi brings us together as interconnected creators of our world. Fantastic Fungi, directed by

Louie Schwartzberg, is a consciousness - shifting film that takes us on an immersive journey through time and scale into the magical earth beneath our feet, an underground network that can heal and save our planet. Through the eyes of renowned scientists and mycologists like Paul Stamets, best - selling authors Michael Pollan, Eugenia Bone, Andrew Weil and others, we become aware of the beauty, intelligence and solutions the fungi kingdom offers us in response to some of our most pressing medical, therapeutic, and environmental challenges.

Meetup Honey, I Shrunk The Lawn!

On Tuesday September 3rd, the New Paltz Climate Solutions Meetup had their monthly meeting. The theme was "Honey I Shrunk The Lawn!" and participants learned how to reduce the carbon footprint of their yard by converting some or all of their lawn into meadow. Having a large green lawn is not climate smart due to mower emissions, petrochemical fertilizers, the use of pesticides and herbicides, wasted water, and loss of habitat for pollinators. The average gas mower creates as much pollution as eight cars driving 55 miles per hour! Over twenty people attended and learned a lot from the presenter Laura Wyeth and there were many engaging conversations. Ideas were shared about how to manage the perceptions of others too. The group was able to walk out to the meadow that was created on the SUNY New Paltz campus this year. Already there is evidence of pollinators that were not there before.



Community Solar Option Added To Our CCA

As reported previously, the Cities of Beacon and Poughkeepsie, along with the Towns of Fishkill, Marbletown, Philipstown, and the Village of Cold Spring, are participating in a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program. The program, administered by Hudson Valley Community Power, provides residential consumers and small businesses with 100% renewable electricity for their default electricity supply. Through the CCA, utility customers in these six communities have had a fixed rate on their electrical utility since July 1, 2019, that is cheaper than their previous rate from Central Hudson corresponding to a mix of renewable and non-renewable energy sources.

The Towns of Red Hook and New Paltz, together with the Village of New Paltz, have opted to join this CCA, to provide their residents and small businesses with a similar benefit of renewable energy

from New York-based sources at a low fixed rate. Hudson Valley Community Power is planning to send letters to Central Hudson customers in November, announcing that New Paltz Town and Village have officially entered into the Hudson Valley Community Power CCA. Residents and small businesses will at that time be automatically enrolled in the CCA program and do not need to do anything else. If Central Hudson customers do not wish to participate in the CCA program, they may opt out with no penalty. Central Hudson will continue to be responsible for the delivery of electricity to homes and businesses through their distribution wires, billing and repair services. The only change that will be evident on bills sent will be the supplier and the lower rate!

Rate payers who are currently purchasing their power from an energy services company (ESCO) may enroll in the CCA program only if they terminate their existing contract with the ESCO. Those individuals interested in making the switch from an ESCO and enrolling in the CCA, should contact their energy provider to learn if there is a penalty and any other issues associated with prematurely ending a contract.

In addition to the CCA program, Hudson Valley Community Power is also offering Community Solar to Central Hudson residential and small business customers, who want to support local solar power and

save on electricity costs without having to install solar panels. Those with their own solar panels are not eligible to enroll in the Community Solar Program. Under this program, utility customers are guaranteed to save approximately 10% annually on electricity for up to 25 years. Those participating in the program may cancel their contract (note cancellation may take up to ninety days to go into effect) at any time without incurring any fees or penalties. The Community Solar program is an opt-in program that requires enrollment. By participating in both the CCA and community solar programs, subscribers can benefit from both the CCA's lower, fixed energy supply rates and guaranteed savings for solar generation. Further information about the CCA and Community Solar programs can be found at: www.HudsonValleyCommunityPower.com

Student Climate Strike in New Paltz



Hundreds of people, led by students, flooded the streets in downtown New Paltz on Friday September 20th demanding swift action to address our climate crisis. They were among millions who marched around the world in what was one of the biggest youth-led movements in history — The Global Climate Strike. The intergenerational effort organized by local activist Liz Elkin was supported by the activist street band Tin Horn

Uprising, New Paltz town supervisor Neil Bettez, village mayor Tim Rogers, state senator Jen Metzger, Janelle Peotter from New Paltz Climate Smart, Jana Bergere from SUNY New Paltz, Nate Liebert of the Extinction Rebellion, Amy Kletter from U-Act, and most importantly students Tahlia & Jonah Elkin, Hope Nitz, Hannah Wynters, and Emilyn Wheeler. We look forward to amplifying these young voices!

Electric Vehicle Parade Including Over 40 EVs Inspires and Educates

Second Annual “Zero Emissions Parade” in New Paltz Celebrates Move Away from Fossil Fuels

The afternoon traffic in downtown New Paltz was treated to an intriguing sight on Saturday as over **40** electric vehicles formed a quiet, emissions-free motorcade. The cars and one electric bike drove together from Tops Plaza down Main Street to the SUNY New Paltz campus. There pedestrians, bicyclists, and the Ulster County based Tin Horn Uprising activist street band joined in for a procession through campus to the Student Union building for New Paltz’s Second Annual **Zero Emissions Parade**, or **ZEP** and Green Vendor Fair. The celebration served as a finale to the third annual **Climate Solutions Summit**, which was attended by over 300 people. Participants viewed the wide variety of electric cars and spoke with enthusiastic EV



owners. Dancing in the street, with puppets from Redwing Blackbird Theatre and music from Tin Horn Uprising, completed the festivities. New Paltz thus contributed three events, including Friday's Climate Strike, during this week of action which began with Friday's Global Strike for Climate.

Dr. Donald Christian, the President of SUNY New Paltz, led the parade, driving in a Chevy Volt. The ZEP featured many other models including Tesla Model 3 and S, Chevy Bolt, Hyundai Kona EV, Kia Niro EV, Toyota Prius Prime, BMW i3, Nissan Leaf, and Honda Clarity Plug-in. While most vehicles were driven by proud owners, dealerships also participated, including **Kingston Nissan**, **Healey Brothers Poughkeepsie**, and **Friendly Honda**. According to organizer **Samrat Pathania** of **New Paltz Climate Action Coalition**, the sponsoring organization, "This event has grown a lot since we first tried it last year. With all major automakers electrifying their cars, and a lot of education happening in our region, there is now a rapidly expanding network of charging stations and a fast growing community of drivers and enthusiasts." He also thanked Central Hudson Gas and Electric for their support in making the parade possible.

The New Paltz event was part of **National Drive Electric Week**, which also featured events in Kingston, Nyack, Poughkeepsie, Mahopac, Cold Spring and Warwick. According to **Seth Leitman**, President of the **Electric Auto Association of the Hudson Valley**, "This region is unique for the number and originality of EV events nationally." Leitman, who manages **Sustainable Hudson Valley's Drive Electric** program, has been training car dealerships to understand electric vehicle technology and bring customers up to speed. He adds, "As EV technology gets better and truly affordable, people are watching and waiting for their favorite car to be electrified. When that happens, we see a flurry of sales."

There are many ways to learn about electric vehicles. New Paltz is part of an educational partnership between the northeast states and a group of automakers, **Destination Electric**, which has placed EV information in restaurants and tourist destinations. That program also provides a website, www.driveelectricus.com, with in-depth information about every EV make and model. And **Sustainable Hudson Valley's** program offers educational events all year long, including an EV Night set for October 2 from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. at **Rough Draft Bar and Books**.

Transportation is the largest portion of the Hudson Valley's greenhouse gas emissions, as panels at the Climate Solutions Summit emphasized. **New Paltz Climate Smart** recently completed its Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and found that of the approximately 11,407 metric tons of CO2 equivalent created annually within the **Village of New Paltz**, about 8,776 or **77% is due to traffic emissions**. New York has passed a ground-breaking law requiring deep cuts in those emissions, but is still developing the policies and programs to make them real. "We all feel the urgency of climate change and we need to dramatically reduce our greenhouses gasses now by avoiding emissions and sequestering carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere." said **Janelle Peotter**, Coordinator of **New Paltz Climate Smart**. "Today's parade was fun and light to inspire the imagination, because that is what will get us through this crisis into full-scale solutions."

Complete Streets Training – Completed!

The New Paltz Bicycle Pedestrian Committee and New Paltz Climate Smart sponsored an all day training on September 23rd with a focus on what is termed “active transportation”. The training was paid for through a NYSEDA grant received by the New York Bicycling Coalition. Twenty municipal leaders attended, learned about the benefits of complete streets, took a walking tour of specific problem intersections and discussed the plan to pass a joint complete streets policy for both the town and village of New Paltz. If you are interested in participating in the creation of New Paltz’s new Complete Streets policy, please contact Janelle Peotter or any member of the New Paltz Bicycle Pedestrian Committee.

