

Volume 3 Issue 2
February 2021



Climate Smart
Communities
Certified Bronze

New Paltz Climate Smart Newsletter

Remembering John Wackman Tikkum Olam -- Repair of the World

John Wackman died suddenly on Jan 8, leaving friends, loved ones and our community shocked, saddened and grieving. John was an ardent environmentalist with a big heart and warm, ever-present smile.

Over the years, he was a regular at the Reformed Church of New Paltz's Annual Earth Day Fair and at many Caring for Creation and Interfaith Earth Action gatherings. He was active with the New Paltz Climate Action Coalition as well as many other environmental groups.



John was a leader of the repair movement and initiated and supervised New Paltz's own Repair Café at the Methodist Church. He was the inspiration and co-author of *Repair Revolution: How Fixers are Transforming Our Throwaway Culture* and was actively engaged in speaking and promoting the book. At our December New Paltz Climate Smart Book Club, John was our featured author and he quoted George Washington, "Let us raise a standard to which the Wise and Honest can repair." John himself set a standard of wisdom, honesty, and love to which we could all aspire and repair.

Donations to the **Repair Cafe of the Hudson Valley and Catskills** can be made in John's honor through Sustainable Hudson Valley, the project's fiscal sponsor, [online \(using "add a note" to specify Repair Cafe\)](#) or by mail c/o P. O. Box 3364, Kingston, NY 12402 with "Repair Cafe" in the subject line. Please direct questions about Repair Cafe to Melissa Everett: everett@sustainhv.org or Roger Moss: moss.roger@hotmail.com

John's research for his vision for an Ulster County Resource Recovery Park was sent a few days before his passing. Manna Jo Greene's office will field inquiries about this project, which is just beginning and will be a major undertaking, but truly a worthy one. Those working on a Zero Waste Implementation Plan for Ulster County will make this a centerpiece of the plan and are determined to make John's dream to become reality.

Vaya con Dios, John!

New Paltz Climate Change Solutions *Meetup:* Regenerative Agriculture and Carbon Farming Offsets

**Tuesday, February 2, 2021
6:00 PM to 7:30 PM EST**

Sign up here for the Meetup:

<https://www.meetup.com/New-Paltz-Climate-Change-Solutions-Meetup/events/276033017/>

[Link to the Online Event](#)



Please join us for this Meetup and learn about regenerative agriculture and what carbon farming offsets are. Matthew Sheffer from Hudson Carbon will be our presenter. We will learn more about what regenerative agriculture is and how it differs from conventional agriculture and



even organic farming methods. We will also be learning about carbon farming offsets and Hudson Carbon. Hudson Carbon is an on-farm soil laboratory. They study how organic regenerative farming can maximize carbon capture and restore ecosystems. There will also be time to ask questions and discuss the issue of regenerative farming in general.

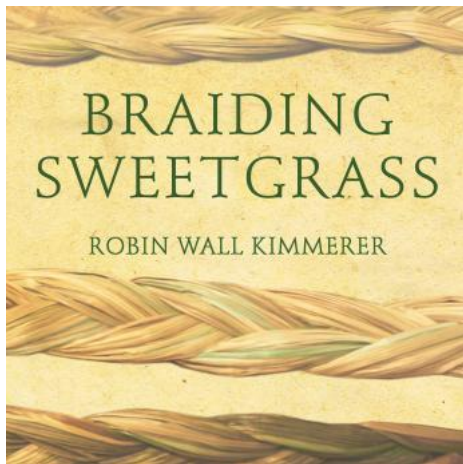
Figure to the left: Matt Scheffer water sampling at Hudson Carbon

Hudson Carbon will sell carbon offsets directly from farms and will share our expertise to scale practical solutions to restore the carbon cycle. What is the carbon cycle? Our planet naturally regulates and maintains the carbon cycle between the atmosphere and the ground. Humans have disrupted this cycle, releasing too much carbon into the atmosphere causing our planet to warm. Regenerative agriculture is one powerful solution to help re-balance the carbon cycle. When plants photosynthesize, they capture carbon from the air and bring it into the soil. This is natural carbon capture, and we are building a new marketplace for it. So you can purchase natural carbon offsets from certified farmers all over the world, all while restoring balance to our planet's natural carbon cycle.

Community Compost Update

Great news – the compost bins and pollinator garden project were approved by the Town Board! If you have a kitchen compost container that you love, please send us the brand name. We'll include it in our informational flyer that we'll give to the community. joannamdempsey@gmail.com





Climate Smart Book Club

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM EST

Sign up through our Meetup page here:

<https://www.meetup.com/Climate-Smart-Book-Club/events/276034756/>

Online event

<https://zoom.us/j/91066225574?pwd=TIVKMU9vNWkxMGE5ZzdTM2VabWMxQT09>

The February read for the Climate Smart Book Club is "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants" by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Last month we found value in listening to the voices of women in the book "All We Can Save: Truth, Courage and Solutions for the Climate Crisis" and decided this was a good follow-up book.

As a botanist and professor of plant ecology, Robin Wall Kimmerer has spent a career learning how to ask questions of nature using the tools of science. As a Potawatomi woman, she learned from elders, family, and history that the Potawatomi, as well as a majority of other cultures indigenous to this land, consider plants and animals to be our oldest teachers. In Braiding Sweetgrass, Kimmerer brings these two lenses of knowing together to reveal what it means to see humans as 'the younger brothers of creation.' As she explores these themes, she circles toward a central argument: The awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the world. Once we begin to listen to the languages of other beings, we can begin to understand the innumerable life-giving gifts the world provides us and learn to offer our thanks, our care, and our own gifts in return.

Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) Update

The NRI consultants continue to refine and finalize the maps with some amazing information on streams and waterways and trails, as well as water districts, back-up wells, and zoning being provided by our local experts. The consultants are also working to incorporate the comprehensive input that has been provided on historic resources, open space and Town-held conservation easements, Mill Brook Preserve, and rare plants. The consultants intend to have the next draft of the report and the revised story maps available for team review in Feb. The draft NRI will then be presented to the Town and Village Boards in March for their feedback.

Climate Smart Resiliency Planning Tool (CSRPT)

Our CSRPT helps us identify planning and adaptation opportunities to improve climate resilience in New Paltz through existing planning mechanisms, public engagement, and disaster preparedness. By implementing some of the recommended actions we can reduce New Paltz's vulnerability to climate hazards such as extreme precipitation, flooding, extreme heat, heat waves, and drought.

The Climate Smart Resiliency Planning Tool is organized into six sections:

- Community Plan Checklist
- Vulnerability and Risk Assessments
- Public Outreach and Engagement
- Integration of Municipal Plans
- Disaster Preparedness and Recovery
- Hazard Mitigation Implementation



Consultants from Cornell Cooperative Extension, working in conjunction with key Town and Village staff, completed an assessment in each of these areas specifically for New Paltz and generated a list of 18 potential actions for implementation to increase climate resiliency in our community.

The Climate Smart Task Force has reviewed the proposed action items and identified three feasible opportunities for near-term implementation: develop a public outreach plan, create an evacuation plan, and create a heat emergency plan. The criteria the Task Force used were that an action be specific in its scope, measurable in terms of achievement, achievable with minimal cost, relevant to New Paltz, and timely to achieve – and that it count as points towards silver certification. The Climate Smart Task Force will present the suggested implementation actions to the joint meeting of the Town and Village Boards on Feb 4, 2021. The Climate Smart Resiliency Planning Tool and report that was generated by Cornell Cooperative Extension can be accessed on the Climate Smart webpages on both the Town and Village websites.

Green House Gas Emissions Inventory (GHGI)

The Climate Smart Task Force, with the invaluable support of our student intern Conor Warren and supply of data by Town Finance Jean Galluci, has completed an update of the GHG for Town government operations for the years 2018 and 2019. The results will be shared with the Town Board at their Feb. 18th meeting and posted on the Town website after that. Stay tuned!

Zoom Garden Plot – Volunteer Opportunity!

We would like to start a New Paltz Zoom Garden Plot but need a volunteer to head this up! It's local gardeners discussing local gardening and could be really fun and informative. See this example from Warwick County: [Zoom Garden Plot](#) Send email to Janelle Peotter if interested!

Hybrid Patrol Cars for New Paltz Police Department



That the New Paltz Police Department uses a lot of electricity probably should come as no surprise since it is the only Town building that is open and staffed 24/7, year-round. And that the NPPD uses a lot of gasoline should also come as no surprise since modern patrol cars are kept running for entire shifts in order to keep the onboard computers operating continuously.

In 2018/2019, New Paltz Climate Smart conducted a greenhouse gas emissions inventory for all Town government operations. With help of Town staff, we collected the actual energy usage and costs for all the municipal buildings, facilities, vehicles, etc. that are owned and operated by the Town for the years 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2017. Just recently we completed the update of that actual data with values for 2018 and 2019 as well.

With help of a spreadsheet tool that was developed by Hudson Valley Regional Council, we were able to convert all of those energy usages to greenhouse gas emissions, expressed as tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂eq). What we learned is that the Police Department is the biggest municipal user of energy (electricity plus gasoline) and therefore the biggest municipal producer of greenhouse gas emissions.

Electricity (kWh)	2013	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average CO ₂ eq (tons)
NPPD Building	96,636	95,835	99,344	92,700	99,104	93,524	30
Gasoline (gal)							
NPPD Fleet	15,434	16,725	14,113	16,864	16,243	15,121	150

New Paltz Climate Smart has been very supportive of the Town and the NPPD recognizing the impact that employing alternate fuel vehicles could have on gasoline consumption, costs, and resulting greenhouse emissions. We are delighted that NPPD has now taken delivery of two hybrid electric/gas-powered patrol cars. By running on electric battery while idling, these cars will cut gasoline usage and emissions during a good portion of every shift they are used. **In fact the US Department of Energy estimates that a typical hybrid vehicle generates 45% less greenhouse emissions than a standard gasoline-powered car.** Our hope is that the NPPD will find the hybrid patrol cars so useful that they will continue to replace older gas-only cars with more environmentally-friendly vehicles - maybe even some all-electric models.

New Paltz Climate Smart February Calendar

Tuesday February 2nd 6:00 pm: Carbon Farming Climate Smart Meetup

[Link to the Online Event](#)

Thursday February 4th 7:00 pm: Presentation by New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force to Joint Town and Village of New Paltz boards on Climate Smart Resiliency Planning Tool recommendations.

[Livestream to watch on YouTube](#)

[Link to participate as resident of New Paltz](#)

Monday February 15th at 7:00 pm monthly Climate Smart Task Force Meeting

[Link to Zoom Meeting of Task Force](#)

Tuesday February 16th at 7:00 pm Climate Smart Book Club

[Link to Online Event](#)

Thursday February 18th at 7:00pm Presentation of updated Greenhouse Gas Inventory by Conor Warren at the Town Board Meeting.

[Link to watch Livestream on YouTube](#)

If you have any questions about anything in this newsletter, please contact Janelle Peotter, Climate Smart Coordinator at newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com



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