

**Volume 2 Issue 7**  
**July 2020**



**Climate Smart  
Communities**  
Certified Bronze

# New Paltz Climate Smart Newsletter

## Flood Plain Mapping

The US office of the International Coalition for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), of which New Paltz is a member, has been partnering nationally with [The Woods Hole Research Center](#) (WHRC) on forestry greenhouse gas protocol work. As they got to know each other, WHRC reached out to ICLEI offering their expertise (for free!) to member communities to develop flood maps that are informed by climate projections. After some discussion the US ICLEI office decided to reach out to three communities who they felt would be good candidates for this, and New Paltz is one of them. This is a fantastic opportunity to get more granular maps and data on flooding to inform decision-making related to protecting structures and/or preventing development in expanded flood zones. The deliverables of WHRC's service would be the following, at no cost:

1. 1-in-100 year flood event inundation map for each of the three pilot communities, based on the polygon or bounding box of the target area as provided by the Town and Village
2. Flood extent at different time steps throughout the 24-hour period of the 1-in-100 year flood event
3. An exhibit of flood "peaks" that can be used to create an animated graphic/video for web publishing, based on a 1-in-100 year flood event
4. A summary report describing methodology and results of the flood event

As far as expectations from the Town and Village, there is some information that WHRC will ask community planners and/or floodplain managers to provide to make the maps as accurate and useful as possible. WHRC will work with them to create the best deliverable based on their needs and capabilities. After the work is completed, ICLEI personnel will be available to provide guidance to New Paltz on how to use these data products for decision-making.

So how does New Paltz keep getting these wonderful opportunities for free support from these reputable climate-focused organizations? It is because of the hard work, enthusiasm, and dedication of all our municipal and volunteer team members and community supporters. We have been told that we - New Paltz Climate Smart - are recognized as "rock stars". We are a little mid-Hudson community but we are mighty, thanks to all of you!

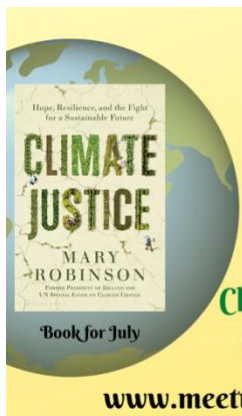
## Climate Smart Resiliency Planning Tool

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County has offered to create - at no cost to us! - Climate Smart Resiliency Planning (CSRP) Tool projects for the Town and Village of New Paltz. They have already completed CSRP Tool projects for the Towns of Shandaken and Olive and are currently working with the Town of Wawarsing. An overview of the project process and deliverables was given to the CSC Task Force at the June Zoom meeting presentation. The Cornell Cooperative Extension team will be following up with Town and Village municipal personnel to gather/clarify/correct pertinent data and information that cannot otherwise be obtained by reviewing municipal documents. The draft CSRP Tool project outcomes will be discussed with the CSC Task Force before then being presented at the joint Village/Town Board meeting in August. The Cornell Cooperative Extension team will provide the municipalities each a draft tool with recommendations for review.

## Natural Resource Inventory Update

The Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) subteam has reviewed and agreed to final base map format and design. The subteam also gave feedback to the consultants on the proposed project outline. A Zoom meeting with the consultants is planned for late July/early August.

## Climate Smart Book Club



**Tuesday, July 21st**  
**Climate Smart Book Club**  
7pm Online  
**Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future**  
[www.meetup.com/Climate-Smart-Book-Club/](http://www.meetup.com/Climate-Smart-Book-Club/)

### **Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future by Mary Robinson**

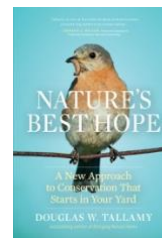
The Climate Smart Book Club continues to meet monthly on Zoom and we are reading a wide variety of books but what is really helpful is the

discussions we have had. Last month we all were really inspired by the book Nature's Best Hope – read Laura's book review below for more information. With recent events it felt important to select a book that addresses climate justice for our next read. The book we have chosen, *Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future*, is by Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland. Her work is global and she has focused on women grassroots leadership from Malawi to Mississippi. **Join us on Tuesday July 21st at 7:00 on Zoom.** <https://zoom.us/j/92753236646?pwd=YS9CanBTSE54R0tjcnVkeEROaUZOQT09> You can also sign up on our Meetup page at <https://www.meetup.com/Climate-Smart-Book-Club/events/271589665/>

## Nature's Best Hope – A Book Review/Recommendation

Doug Tallamy's first book, *Bringing Nature Home* (2007), shook up the gardening world by making the case that the great majority of the trees, shrubs, and perennials that have been planted in North American yards in the last century are not native species and do not support our local ecosystems. As an insect ecologist, he was seeing the effects of the problem first hand. Plants are the foundation of a healthy ecosystem, as they feed the insects, which feed the birds, the mammals, reptiles, amphibians, etc... Most plant-eating insects are specialists. This is because plants make chemical defenses to deter herbivores; over millennia of co-evolution, some species of insects develop a tolerance to some plant species' chemical defenses, but will then lack a defense against others. Just like in the famous case of the Monarch butterflies, whose caterpillars rely on only one food source- milkweed plants, the majority of our native herbivorous insects eat only a few species of plants. This includes our stickbugs (which are quite common, just rarely seen), and the larvae of many of our moths, butterflies, beetles, wasps, and flies. These insects are vital to bird populations; each generation of young birds are raised on these juicy, high-protein 'bugs'. Japanese barberry, mophead hydrangeas, lilacs, burning bush, and many other now 'classic' imported garden plants are inedible to our native insects. Therefore, if we want to have functioning ecosystems with healthy populations of species, we need native plants.

Here in 2020, we know that our ecosystems are in peril, that insect, bird, and amphibian populations are in dramatic decline. Aside from working to preserve lands locally and nationally, eliminate pesticide use, and support organic farming, most of us don't know what to do about it. Dr. Tallamy has returned with a new book to guide us in this effort with expert advice and an inspiring call to action. We and our humble yards are, he says, *Nature's Best Hope*. In the same clear and engaging narrative style that made his first book a phenomenon, he explains how individuals can engage in important conservation work right in the own yards- by offering plant species and habitat areas to support a diversity of species. As only 17% of our nations lands are preserved, the remaining 83% sitting in private hands is crucial to the survival of many creatures. Tallamy advocates for the creation of a "Homegrown National Park", an informal but powerful initiative of citizen efforts- each family doing what they can with the land they steward. And it's not hard: Plant a native oak tree (a keystone species that supports hundreds of other life forms). Remove invasive plants where you can and replace with native shrubs appropriate to the site conditions. Leave some areas of lawn unmowed to support native perennials, bees, ground-nesting birds, and many more. Most importantly- stop and look. Observe closely. Discover the species that are present already and learn what you can about them. Then show your neighbor. Homegrown National Park is your very own nature center, a source of endless small joys.



We highly recommend this book to anyone with a yard or garden (no matter how small), an interest in conservation, or just love of nature. This book is packed with eye-opening information and perspectives and (so rare at this time) a convincing message of hope. Check it out at your local bookshop!

Laura Wyeth  
Lecturer, Department of Biology

## Climate Reality Project Training

In view of Covid-19 the Climate Reality Project (Al Gore's program) will be replacing its three day intensive training with a virtual training lasting an hour-or-two a day from July 18 to July 26. <https://www.climateRealityProject.org/training>

I've taken the training and would recommend it to you, your friends and colleagues. I believe young people 13 and older are also eligible. Feel free to call me with any questions: James O'Dowd (845) 255-4170

## Save Up to 10% on Your Electric Bill, Support Local Renewable Energy and Support Family of New Paltz

Hudson Valley Community Power Offers Up To 10% Savings with Community Solar

As a member of Hudson Valley Community Power, the Town and Village of New Paltz are supporting the Community Solar program that increases our community's access to 100% renewable electricity, supports local development of renewable energy, all while lowering the electricity costs of our residents and small businesses. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town of New Paltz is launching their community solar program to specifically raise money for local COVID-19 relief efforts. For each enrollment in our community solar program through Ampion, our Program Administrator partner (Joule Community Power) will donate \$50 to Family of New Paltz; \$50 for every Village of New Paltz enrollee will be allocated to support a Sustainability project in the Village.

Community Solar allows both residents and small businesses to tap into the benefits of solar without needing to install their own panels. If you have your own solar panels or are already subscribed to a



solar farm, then you already receive solar credits and are not eligible to enroll in this Community Solar program. If your community is participating in our Community Choice Aggregation, or CCA, program, you can still enroll in community solar. CCA and Community Solar work well together and increase your savings, while supporting the development of local renewable energy. Any home or small business in Central Hudson territory can enroll.

To learn more or to enroll and save up to 10% on your electric bill, you can [visit our website](#), or call (845) 859-9099 ext. 4.

## Meetup Schedule

For the past 14 months, the New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force has been organizing monthly meetups on the first Tuesday of the month and using the **Meetup** platform for promotion. We have 122 members and continue to get excellent feedback on our wide variety of topics. We are not going to be meeting in July but know that we are planning upcoming Meetups and will keep you posted on the schedule and topics. In the meantime you can sign up for our Meetup here: [New Paltz Climate Change Solutions Meetup](#). We are always looking for good presenters on relevant topics but the “sweet spot” is things that people can do in their everyday lives to decrease their carbon footprint and learn climate adaptation strategies. If you have an idea for a topic or know of good presenter, please contact Janelle. Contact information below.

## Calendar

Monday, July 6<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm Complete Streets Ad Hoc Committee on Zoom  
<https://zoom.us/j/94010177762?pwd=bGRCVGlaV2hpdIRoeWJFUnZza2NvZz09>

Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm Climate Smart Task Force monthly meeting on Zoom  
<https://zoom.us/j/290898202?pwd=Ynk1TnJXWXNCbEtFTFBjcW03WEs0UT09>

Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup> 7:00 pm Climate Smart Book Club on Zoom  
<https://zoom.us/j/92753236646?pwd=YS9CanBTSE54R0tjcnVkeEROaUZOQT09>

**For more information about New Paltz Climate Smart or any content in this newsletter, please contact:**

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**Call/text 920-883-1788 or  
email [newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com](mailto:newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com)**