

Volume 3 Issue 3  
March 2021



# New Paltz Climate Smart Newsletter



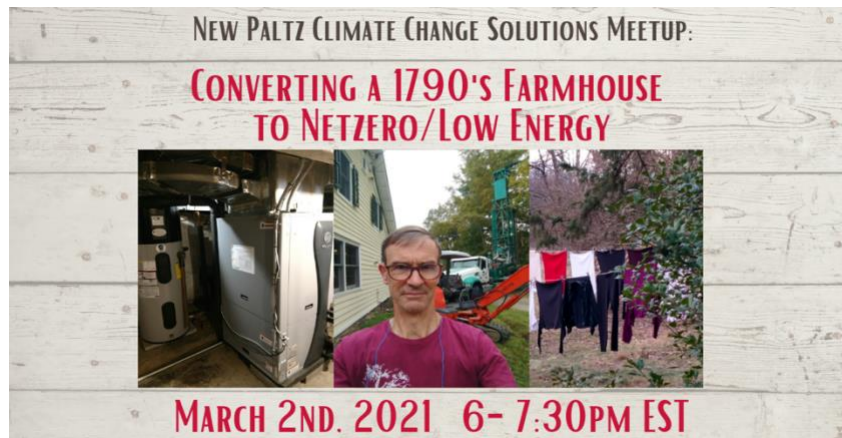
## In Remembrance of Dan Guenther...

*By Janelle Peotter*

Together with countless others, I deeply mourn the loss of Dan Guenther. Dan was a gentle giant, a warrior for climate action, a community builder, my mentor and a friend. I met Dan and Ann not long after I moved to New Paltz just over five years ago when I saw a paragraph in the New Paltz Times about the Climate Action Coalition. I attended my first meeting and was immediately hooked. Dan and Ann started the Climate Action Coalition and he inspired us to do more in every way, every day. As a mentor Dan encouraged me to learn more about the Climate Smart Communities process which I have since dove into head first. Dan cautioned us to be careful of not just working to get points for Climate Smart certification but rather take actions because they are the right thing to do! To that end our action groups and activities don't always translate towards getting more points for certification but we do them because it fits our community and a wider vision. As community builders, Dan and Ann had countless dinners at their place where they brought together people that Dan thought should meet. He believed in the power of action through hospitality! I never saw Dan walk into a meeting without bringing food to share, flowers, or my personal favorite, maple sap to drink! My only regret is that I didn't know Dan longer. I have heard wonderful stories of his infamous Halloween extravaganzas and his farming and gardening skills are legendary. Dan's legacy is to inspire all of us to not be complacent but to take action and take personal responsibility to make this world a better place. Our loss of both John Wackman in January and Dan Guenther in February leave our hearts aching and with very large shoes to fill. I know they would both want us to pick up where they left off. Let's all help do that.

## March Climate Change Solutions *Meetup:* Converting a 1790s Farmhouse to Zero/Low Energy

Since moving into a 1790s era farmhouse in 2007, Russell Urban-Mead and his family have steadily converted the home from conventional energy sources toward a carbon-neutral home. They have conserved power by sealing leaks, insulating voids, exchanging incandescent bulbs for LEDs, exchanging an oil-burning hot water heater for a hybrid electric unit, and by hanging out the laundry to dry. They have upgraded power sources by installing PV on the roof, installing



a geothermal well for heating and cooling, and exchanging a car for a used EV. All told, they are currently on track to be carbon neutral in 2021 for heating, cooling, hot water, lighting, and most transportation.

**Tuesday, March 2, 2021  
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM EST**

Join Russell for an evening discussion about how his family made this conversion, twists and turns along the way, and likely next steps.

<https://zoom.us/j/92316284194?pwd=RXh0ak5xVFdUeEpOVEp1bEZTdE5XZz09>

## Climate Smart Book Club

We had 14 people at our Climate Smart Book Club last month, including several new people. The book we read for last month, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, resonated deeply with all of us I think and will be one we discuss more over time I suspect. For this next month, rather than read another full book, we have selected an article from The Atlantic with the headline ***The Terrifying Warning Lurking in the Earth's Ancient Rock Record: Our Climate Models Could Be Missing Something Big.*** The story is written by Peter Brannen and illustrated by Brenden Pattengale.

### Next Book Club Meeting:

**Tuesday, March 16th**

**7:00 – 8:30 pm**

[Link to article we will discuss](#)



Know that we will always use the same Zoom link - it will not change month to month:

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

Likewise, the schedule is predictable: 3rd Tuesday of the month beginning at 7:00 pm.

## Introducing...

# New Paltz Zoom Garden Plot!

Our friends down in Warwick have inspired us to try something that they have had a lot of fun with there in Warwick...think of it as a kind of virtual climate smart gardening club. Here is the scoop:

New Paltz Zoom Garden Plot is a new local group planning to meet online, once a month on the 4th Tuesday of the month and our first meeting will be Tuesday March 23<sup>rd</sup> beginning at 7:00 pm. We want to collectively support each other as local gardeners and farmers to learn, develop and thrive growing organic, local food for ourselves with a climate smart lens. The group welcomes all earth loving people, all gardeners, as well as those aspiring to become gardeners.



Our intentions are to utilize the collective knowledge of this group to:

- Use local strategies to offer solutions for gardening in the New Paltz area with consideration to our local soils, weather, seasons, insects and fauna.
- Use our collective expertise in a climate smart manner to set up and manage our local home gardens, drawing on regenerative agriculture principles that help us mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Increase our understanding of global agricultural and food crisis factors while learning how these both contribute to the climate emergency and are impacted by changing climate conditions.
- To support, network, and educate both our group and the community to approach gardening and farming from a climate smart perspective.

Barbara Neiman and Robb Magee will be the facilitators and are inviting you to this monthly scheduled Zoom meeting in the link below.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87256136496?pwd=NE04UFkvVFQyQVdaUzlkTGNicnZQdz09>

Meeting ID: 872 5613 6496

Passcode: 210455

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,87256136496#,,,210455# US (New York)

Meeting ID: 872 5613 6496

Passcode: 210455

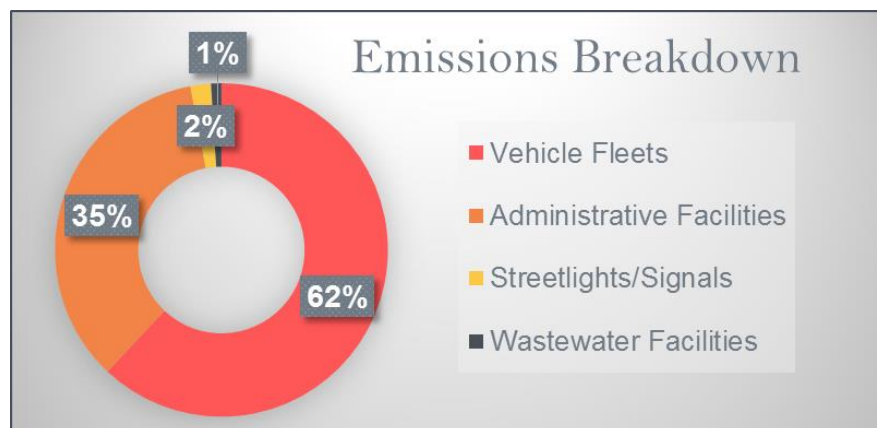
Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kcIeVUKYgc>

## Natural Resource Inventory (NRI)

The NRI consultants have finalized the maps and the penultimate version of the report. Those docs have been sent to the NRI team for final review, with final comments to be returned by March 6. The draft Story Board maps have also been received and distributed for first review. We are targeting the April joint Town and Village Board meeting to present the report, maps, and Story Board to our elected officials and any interested members of the public.

## Green House Gas Emissions Inventory (GHGI)

The GHGI for Town government operations for the years 2018 and 2019 was presented to the Town Board on February 18th. The results show that greenhouse gas emissions have continued to rise year after year to a 2018-2019 average level of 786.8 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e, up from a 2013-2014 average of 609 tons. The vehicle fleet (Police and DPW) continues to be the main driver, with administration buildings such as the temporary Town Hall, Police station, and DPW garage also



main contributors. A switch to 100% renewably-sourced electricity could potentially save 170 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e annually. The full presentation can be found on the Climate Smart page of the Town website.

### Police Department - 2018 & 2019 Average

- **151.5 tons** of CO<sub>2</sub>e from gasoline
- **48.9 tons** of CO<sub>2</sub>e from building

### DPW - 2018 & 2019 Average

- **339 tons** of CO<sub>2</sub>e from gasoline & diesel
- **61.9 tons** of CO<sub>2</sub>e from buildings



Our student intern, Conor Warren (pictured here), will next be working with the Climate Smart Task Force and Village staff to collect the 2018 and 2019 data to assess Village operations. Conor also plans to use our spreadsheet tool with his Wallkill school district, and eventually all Ulster school districts, to create GHGI for those operations. Thank you Conor!



# Seeking Nominations for our “Sustainable New Paltz” Award!

Please nominate a local New Paltz town or village business or organization that you think deserves to be honored and recognized by the Climate Smart Task Force for their commitment to being an earth friendly company that models sustainability with resources, products, and practices. This includes fully utilizing and demonstrating innovative approaches to at least a few of the 6 R's: Reuse, Reduce, Repair, Repurpose, Refuse, & Recycle.

Examples could include:

- Using sustainable materials for packaging and take-out containers
- Reducing or eliminating waste and use of non-sustainable materials in the workplace
- Eliminating all single use plastic containers
- Installing solar panels on the roof or property
- Setting up composting at their facility

Please send your nomination via email to [newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com](mailto:newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com) and include the following information:

## NOMINATION FOR RECOGNITION OF (GREEN) BUSINESS PRACTICES

Name of Business or Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of business: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Nomination: (Please describe briefly, using specific examples of how this business has incorporated earth friendly and sustainable practices into their business model)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Gardiner CCA Public Information Meetings

Our Climate Smart neighbors in Gardiner have asked us to share that they are considering joining New Paltz and other neighboring communities in a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program to provide clean, affordable electricity to local households and businesses. Please join either of the Public Information and Q&A events to learn more.

## CCA Public Information Meetings

Tuesday, March 16th, 2021

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Meeting Link: <https://tinyurl.com/gardiner16march>

Saturday, April 3rd, 2021

2:00-3:30 pm

Meeting Link: <https://tinyurl.com/gardiner3april>



**COMMUNITY CHOICE**  
Empowering communities to access cleaner and cheaper energy on their own terms.

**Town of Gardiner  
Public Meeting**

Will be held online on:  
**TUESDAY, March 16th,  
7:00 - 8:30 pm**

Meeting Link:  
[tinyurl.com/gardiner16march](https://tinyurl.com/gardiner16march)

Please join us to learn how the **Town of Gardiner** is considering joining neighboring communities in a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program to provide clean, low-cost electricity to local households and businesses.

 **LET'S CREATE CHANGE TOGETHER**

**Questions?** Please email  
[info@hudsonvalleycommunitypower.com](mailto:info@hudsonvalleycommunitypower.com)  
or call 845.859.9099 ext. 2

Event brought to you by the Town of Gardiner, Joule Community Power (a division of Joule Assets) and Hudson Valley Energy:



## New Paltz Climate Smart March Calendar

**Tuesday March 2<sup>nd</sup> 6:00 pm:** Climate Solutions Meetup with Russell Urban-Mead  
<https://zoom.us/j/92316284194?pwd=RXh0ak5xVFdUeEpOVEp1bEZTdE5XZz09>

**Monday March 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm** monthly Climate Smart Task Force meeting  
[Link to Zoom Meeting of Task Force](#)

**Tuesday March 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm** Climate Smart Book Club  
[Link to Online Event](#)

**Tuesday March 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00 – 8:30 pm** Gardiner CCA Informational Meeting  
Meeting Link: <https://tinyurl.com/gardiner16march>

**Monday March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm** Ulster County Climate Smart Committee  
<https://zoom.us/j/94174947702>

**Tuesday March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm** New Paltz Zoom Garden Plot  
[Link to Online Event](#)

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



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