

Volume 5 Issue 5
May 2023



Climate Smart
Communities
Certified Bronze

New Paltz Climate Smart Newsletter

May 2nd Climate Smart *Meetup: Bokashi Composting*



New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force & UCRRA Present: "Intro to Bokashi Composting"

Celebrating Compost Awareness Week!

**Tuesday, May 2nd, 2023
7:00 - 8:30 PM**

**In person at the
New Paltz Community Center!
3 Veterans Dr, New Paltz, NY 12561**

Unlike "conventional" composting, Bokashi is an *anaerobic* process where food scraps are placed in a sealed, air-tight container and are fermented with the aid of a specialized additive (a microbial compost accelerator). After a few weeks of fermenting, the "unfinished" byproduct of bokashi should be added to a backyard compost pile to complete the decomposition process.

For many *advanced* composters, bokashi methods have a lot to offer as a way to manage meat, bones, and dairy products. Using Bokashi can also introduce beneficial microbes to the compost pile, which speeds up the process so you can use your finished compost faster. Join the UCRRA Recycling Outreach Team to learn about the wacky world of microbes and this interesting method of composting!

This workshop is designed for intermediate composters who want to take their composting to the next level. In this workshop, participants will learn the pros/cons of this method of composting, be introduced to the science behind how bokashi works, and learn how to get started (materials needed, recipes, tips and more).

This workshop is held in partnership with New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force and will be presented by Tanesia White, Recycling Educator of the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA). **Class size is limited and participants must pre-register but we do have openings left.** The signup form is available at the following link: <https://ucrri.org/event/intro-to-bokashi-new-paltz/>

In June, our Climate Solution Meetup will focus on Backyard Forestry.

Seeking A Volunteer Climate Smart Coordinator

The New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force is now seeking a volunteer or volunteers to fill the position of Climate Smart Coordinator. Janelle Peotter has served in this role for the past five years and will be stepping down on June 1st. The central responsibility is to lead the Town and Village of New Paltz to Silver certification as part of New York State's Climate Smart Communities Program. Within that prime directive, there is a lot of room for creativity and flexibility to select actions and activities that the Task Force and the Coordinator want to pursue.

Applicants should send their letter of interest to newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com by May 9th if possible – the date of our next Climate Smart Task Force meeting. Questions about this role can be directed to any of the current Task Force members listed at the end of this newsletter or by contacting Janelle Peotter via her email at janellepeotter@gmail.com or cell of 920-883-1788.

May 16th Climate Smart Book Club

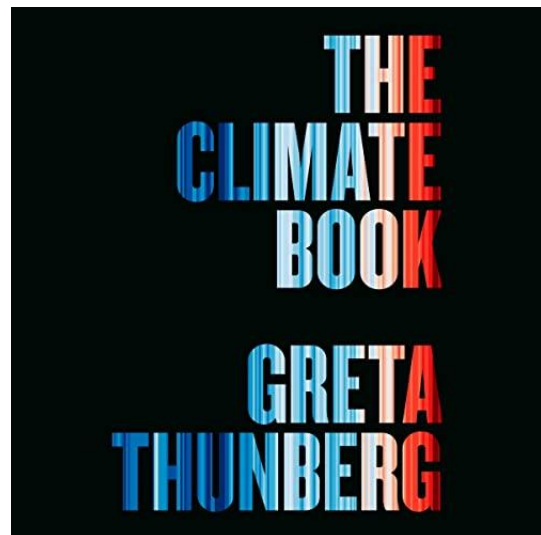
The Climate Book: The Facts and the Solutions

**Tuesday, May 16th, 2023
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM CDT**

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kc-2vqT0uG9M-KYuuK7uj7FMho-2aDbBP>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Our current Climate Smart Book Club selection is by Greta Thunberg, the world's leading climate activist. Her latest book has at its core the belief that we still have time to change the world and this is the essential handbook for making it happen. You might think it's an impossible task: secure a safe future for life on Earth, at a scale and speed never seen, against all the odds. There is hope—but only if we listen to the science before it's too late. We decided that since this is an excellent book with much to get through, we would discuss the book over two months. Our May book club will be our second discussion of the book but anyone is welcome to join us whether or not you were part of the April discussion.

In *The Climate Book*, Greta Thunberg has gathered the wisdom of over one hundred experts—geophysicists, oceanographers and meteorologists; engineers, economists and mathematicians; historians, philosophers and indigenous leaders—to equip us all with the knowledge we need to

combat climate disaster. Alongside them, she shares her own stories of demonstrating and uncovering greenwashing around the world, revealing how much we have been kept in the dark. This is one of our biggest challenges, she shows, but also our greatest source of hope.

Once we are given the full picture, how can we not act? And if a schoolchild's strike could ignite a global protest, what could we do collectively if we tried? We are alive at the most decisive time in the history of humanity. Together, we can do the seemingly impossible. But it has to be us, and it has to be now.

The book we have selected for June is *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World* by Katharine Hayhoe. New Climate Smart Book Club members are always welcome.

Electric School Bus Transition Project

A project for high school juniors is kicking off in June that will focus on the scenarios, and analysis of these scenarios, for transitioning to electric school buses. The intention is to have the students perform the analysis, develop a recommendation, and present this to school boards for consideration and long-term planning. This will benefit the school districts and the students who will be applying to colleges and universities at the end of 2023.



All school districts facing the same challenge of converting to electric school buses given the mandate that all new purchases by 2027 will be electric school buses and that total conversion will be completed by 2035. The circumstances of each school district are unique and so they must be studied case by case, but hopefully using a consistent methodology, to develop the best path forward. This project will take that challenge on and be a living project that future juniors can participate in to advance this multi-year effort and potentially expand the scope by including both needed infrastructure and microgrids for self-supply of electricity.

New Paltz School Board Candidate Endorsement

Joe Londa has been an active and capable member of the New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force having led the updating and completion of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory for New Paltz Communities and Municipalities, leading the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Taskforce to establish local laws, have given generously his time for the Earth Day Fair and Ulster County Fair to engage children in learning about greenhouse gases and climate change. Most recently he has taken on the Electric School Bus Transition Project that will engage high school juniors to analyze transition scenarios and bring a presentation and a recommendation to school boards.

He will certainly be a "green" candidate for the New Paltz School Board, but will also use his system science background to help understand the complex interconnected and interrelated problems we face in the New Paltz Central School District while supporting the mission of educating and creating people with compassion and insight. He has the endorsement of the New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force, and we urge you to vote for Joe Londa on May 16th.

BESS Energy Task Force

Grant money was pending, and prioritization has delayed the start of reviewing the proposed BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems) laws for the Town of New Paltz. The grant money has now been approved, and this should help to move the proposed BESS laws into legal review. Joe Londa will continue to monitor this and advocate for advancing it as Distributed Energy Resources (Solar Panels and Stationary Batteries) are a critical part of the electric grid transformation.

Community Choice Aggregation is Back

The Town of New Paltz on April 4 chose to accept the proposal provided by Joule Community Power to have Direct Energy Services LLC provide the energy for residential and small commercial electrical supply. Beginning July 2023, eligible Central Hudson customers in New Paltz will be receiving a blended energy mix that includes 50% renewable energy for two years at a fixed price of 11.24 cents per kilowatt hour. The April price for Central Hudson's standard mix is 12.659 cents. Residents who would prefer to receive 100% New York State renewable energy will be able to select it at a cost of 12.24 cents. The Climate Smart Task Force recommends this option. If you would like to continue receiving a standard mix similar to Central Hudson's product you can do so for 9.87 cents. Those who would prefer to opt out of the CCA can do so at any time. Eligible residents and small businesses will receive an opt-out letter shortly. If you do not respond to the opt-out letter you will automatically receive the blended mix.

In 2019, the New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force, New Paltz Climate Action Coalition, and an enthusiastic committee of local activists brought Community Choice Aggregation to the attention of the municipal boards. The Town and Village signed up for 100% renewable energy as the default supply. The contract was renewed in 2021 for about 7 cents per kWh. Energy prices spiked at the onset of the war in Ukraine. Central Hudson, which, by law, must purchase energy on the spot market, charged more than 10 cents per kWh in January 2022 and more than 21 cents in February 2022. In the Spring of 2022, the CCA's energy supplier abandoned the contract. CCA customers returned to Central Hudson's energy supply in the summer of 2022, as the cost of energy stabilized. According to Joule Community Power, Hudson Valley Community Power saved CCA customers a total of \$7.37 million between July 2021 and July 2022.

The New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force was not consulted during the negotiations with Joule Community Power for the new contract. While the prices are competitive, we do not support the choice of the blended mix for the default energy product. The Climate Smart Communities Program under the auspices of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, only supports CCA affiliations that provide 100% New York renewable energy sources as the default energy supply. **We recommend that, if you do participate in the CCA, opt-up to the 100% renewable supply.**

-Mark Varian

New Paltz Earth Day 2023: A Huge Success!

Earth Day in New Paltz on April 22nd was celebrated in a big way this year as it was the 20th Anniversary! Jim O'Dowd and others did an amazing job organizing and planning for this event. The set-up and flag installation is always a big job and it went beautifully. Students from the college as well as the high school showed up



along with a number of members of the sponsoring organizations. The weather was sunny and calm, so the flags went up in about an hour partly due to the very organized manner in which the flags were put away last year! The day of the event, students arrived promptly to help take the tables and chairs from the church basement outside to the fair ground. The work was completed in record time under a blue sky and visitors started arriving early, which was a good sign. The pace kept lively throughout the day. The Climate Smart tables, Climate Action, and UCRRA tables lined the western fringe of the grounds. Joe Londa and his greenhouse gas games were a big hit. Joe's energy and enthusiasm were infectious - kids and adults alike fell in love with him on the spot.

Holly Shader managed to make recycling and reuse exciting. She brought a pile of Hershey Kisses with her to challenge folks to set aside the aluminum wrappers to make a big enough aluminum ball to throw into the recycling bin. Holly was also busy filling in at the Repair Cafe table and she is always able to answer the science questions when people "get into the weeds".



Lynne Cherry brought a load of environmental books and pamphlets that she gave away. She set up her own table which was nearly empty by the end of the day. Lynne also made a pitch for Climate Smart, the Climate Smart Book Club and Climate Solutions Meetup.

The Climate Smart Tiffin Project, designed to reduce single use take out containers, had a display and Miriam Varian found out she was a salesperson at heart. She sold 18 tiffins!

Volunteers were so busy they didn't get a chance to see what was happening at other tables or on the stage, but the Rosendale Improvement Association Brass Band could be heard and they clearly brought a lot of energy. There was delicious food and Greenway Environmental Services had a very detailed process to recycle and compost food scraps resulting in very little garbage or food waste.

All in all, Earth Day 2023 in New Paltz was a huge success and hopefully inspired the community to deepen their involvement with local environmental issues and all things Climate Smart.

New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force Members:

Janelle Peotter	Climate Smart Task Force Coordinator
Jim O'Dowd	Task Force Member
Amanda Gotto	Task Force Member
Mark Varian	Task Force Member
Orelle Feher	Task Force Member
Joe Londa	Task Force Member
Izzy Defino	Task Force Member
Lynne Cherry	Task Force Member at Large
Liz Elkin	Task Force Member at Large
Megan Wolff	Task Force Member at Large
Julie Seyfert-Lillis	Town Board Liaison
Alexandria Wojcik	Village Board Liaison

New Paltz Climate Smart April/May Calendar

Tuesday May 2nd 7:00 – 8:30 Climate Solutions Meetup on Bokashi Composting *in person* at the New Paltz Community Center. Preregistration is required

<https://ucrra.org/event/intro-to-bokashi-new-paltz/>

Tuesday May 9th at 7:00 – 8:30 pm monthly Climate Smart Task Force meeting. We meet online. Send an email to the address below if you are interested in participating.

Tuesday May 16th at 7:00 – 8:30 pm Climate Smart Book Club: The Climate Book: The Facts and the Solutions *by Greta Thunberg*. Register in advance to receive the link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kc-2vqT0uG9M-KYuuK7uj7FMho-2aDbBP>

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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