

GETTING READY FOR 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY



April 2020 - Issue 5

FROM THE CHAIR

"Now I see the secret of making the best person: it is to grow in the open air and eat and sleep with the earth." From "Song of the Open Road," by Walt Whitman.

Four weeks BP (Before Pandemic), a friend and I attended a conference in Belfast (Maine), sponsored in part by the Maine Environmental Education Association. Their mission is "...building environmental awareness, appreciation, understanding and action in Maine." The Association's major focus is support of Community-Based Environmental Learning. At the time of the conference, the Association had just completed a statewide inventory of the many and various programs available throughout the state. Two things were clear: we are very fortunate to live in Maine, where there are so many opportunities to experience nature. Second, there is a wide selection of programs focused on nature-based learning and play for young people.



Many of you have heard the term "nature-deficit disorder," which was popularized by Richard Louv. His premise is that children are spending less and less time outdoors, immersed in nature, and they are suffering in several ways as a result. We are all concerned about the amount of time our youth spend glued to a screen. Nature-based education is a partial antidote.

The positive effects of spending time in nature are well documented and have been known for many years. They are found in many domains: improved health and well-being, which leads to diminished stress, anger and aggression; improved academic performance, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving; enhanced attention and engagement; and improved environmental stewardship and civic engagement later in life. (See "childrenandnature.org" for more information).

Isn't this a developmental opportunity we should be making available to the children in our town? Are the resources locally available to make it happen? The answer is YES to both questions. In life before the coronavirus, such programs were available after school, on weekends and in the summer, but were for families that can afford them. Post-virus, they should be available to all students throughout the year. Our local resource is White Pine Programs, a respected York institution that has offered nature-based learning for years. Anecdotes abound about lives being positively affected by exposure to learning and play through White Pine. Why aren't all York children benefiting from White Pine's programs?!

I understand that we are all preoccupied with the pandemic. And, aside from the effect Covid-19 is having on our personal lives, nonprofit organizations like White Pine are suffering tremendously. Please consider providing financial support to this great organization. It will then be ready to involve ALL of York's children in nature once normalcy returns.

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OPPORTUNITY IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Take Time To Observe

With the coronavirus spreading across the globe like a fast-moving hurricane, many Americans feel threatened, helpless and uncertain. We are not alone; the invisible pandemic is wreaking havoc in all corners of the globe by taking lives, crushing economies, separating people and inciting fear. The impacts of the crisis are global, and everyone feels the effects! We all know this. Now what can we do about it? Yes, “Stay home.” We get that, but do we have to be so passive when confronted with one of the modern world’s greatest challenges? Isn’t there something we can actually do?

Recently, several members of York Ready for 100% (YRF100) met virtually to consider how the COVID-19 pandemic will impact the group’s goals. Hearing that several media outlets report that the pandemic will likely derail the climate movement, which has been gaining real momentum, our initial sentiment was one of gloom. It may be challenging for businesses devastated by the pandemic to focus on energy-efficient practices, and it may be more difficult for climate activists to organize and spread their messages when no one wants to hear about climate change during a more urgent crisis. Then we paused. That is what the pandemic has forced us to do: to pause, to stay put and be calm. It has also forced many of us to take some time to observe. As we observe, we inevitably gain perspective.



In our observation, it is apparent that the COVID-19 crisis is similar in many ways to the climate crisis. Both crises are essentially about creating a livable planet in the short term and in the decades and centuries to come. Issues of equity, health and resilience are at the core of each crisis. Two stark differences are the speed at which each crisis emerged and the resolve to confront it. The fast-moving pandemic is helping us learn how to address the slow-moving yet looming crisis of climate change. **This is what we’ve learned:**

Individuals matter. The actions of a single individual make an impact. It takes individuals from all walks of life and all corners of the world to stop the spread of a virus and mitigate climate change. No one is free from fear of the COVID-19 virus until everyone is free. No one is free from the impacts of climate change until everyone is free. We are all connected, and we all matter.

Integrated problem-solving. We can’t solve big problems in small bubbles. Tackling global problems requires us to join perspectives, experiences, knowledge, and expertise. It requires people to work together, to cooperate, to be open-minded, to continue to learn, to accept new data, to conduct research, to acknowledge there is no quick and easy vaccine, magic pill or cure-all solution. Solving big problems is not just for elected officials. Scientists, healthcare workers, advocacy leaders, business leaders — all hold a piece of the solution, and a solution will be effective only when individuals work together during all phases of implementation. [Read more.](#)

For more information, see www.yorkreadyfor100.org or info@yorkreadyfor100.org

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IN THE NEWS

Pollution Has Slowed Around The World. Scientists Wonder How That Will Affect Maine

By Fred Bever, Reporter / Producer at Maine Public, April 1, 2020.

Atmospheric and oceanographic scientists are just as concerned as anyone about helping their friends and family, the nation and the world make it through the trials of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). But it is also their job to pay attention to a kind of grand experiment that’s underway — an unprecedented hiatus in human pressure on global ecosystems and what that hiatus could mean on the ground, and on the water, for Maine.

Paul Mayewski is the director of the University of Maine’s Climate Change Institute. He says that the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the pause button on pollution worldwide. [Read more.](#)



Jessica Conley, July 30, 2019

WASTE REDUCTION AND DIVERSION (WRAD)

Composting

Eighteen new households have signed up for Mr. Fox Composting since our promotion started, with several more starting backyard composting.

New composters Carol and Dan Libby began Mr. Fox Composting service in December 2019 with an 8-gallon bin on an every-other-week schedule. They received a free 3-gallon kitchen counter bin and 20 liner bags as part of the WRAD promotion.

Compostables and trash were weighed weekly during February and March 2020. The averages per week:

- 1.8 pounds trash (range 1.0 lb-2.6 lb)
- 9.2 pounds compostables (range 7.4 lb- 13 lb)

Composting resulted in 83% reduction of trash.

“Mr. Fox Composting service makes composting easy,” according to Dan and Carol; also:

- “Curbside pickup is reliable and quiet, especially compared to trash and recycling trucks.”
- “The countertop container fits conveniently under the sink. There have been no smells or insects so far.”
- “There is so little trash that we can put it out for pick-up every other week instead of weekly. Our trash consists largely of food-contaminated plastic wrappers.”
- “An 8-gallon bin is filled to the brim with compostables every two weeks. We anticipate using two bins in the summer when produce is more plentiful and voluminous (e.g., corn, watermelon), and family is visiting.”



Now is a great time to sign up and give composting a try! Contact [Mr. Fox Composting](#) to sign up.



Casella Waste Systems

The coronavirus pandemic has presented new challenges for Casella Waste Systems. Drivers are on the front lines providing critical health and safety services. We can do our part by being up to date on the best practices of recycling.

Please take a few minutes to check out [“Recycling Better”](#) Place only acceptable items in your blue bins. Do not bag recyclables, and make sure items are clean and cardboard is dry. Attached is a Casella flyer that you can [print](#) and make available to members of your household.

Single-Use Plastics

An increase in plastic production and pressure to remove plastic bag bans from the law threatens to take us backward. We don't want to become more reliant on products that increase the volume of plastic pollution. To understand the plastics industry motives and activities, watch the *Frontline* report **“Plastic Wars”** available for free on [YouTube](#).

The Single-Use Carry-Out Plastic Bag Ban remains in effect, and the Polystyrene Ban will go into effect May 18. Maine grocery stores continue to allow reusable bags. During this period of the pandemic we may have to bag groceries ourselves and avoid placing our bags on the counter.

We can stay safe and healthy while being mindful to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost.



(Seacoast Online)

Victoria Simon, WRAD Chair, vsimon@maine.rr.com



YORK NEEDS YOUR GREEN LIGHT! VOTE YES!!!

On **Tuesday, July 14**, (Absentee ballot request forms are available 90 days ahead of the election, residents can request absentee ballots at this time despite the postponement.)

York voters will be asked to approve three critical climate/energy initiatives:

- **ARTICLE 23:** A request for funding to develop a **Climate Action Plan**.
- **ARTICLE 22:** A request to fund a **Staff Position to Support Sustainability Initiatives**.
- **ARTICLE 81:** A request to **lease the Witchtrot Road landfill to a developer for the construction and operation of a solar array** that will power electric generation for York’s municipal buildings.



The **Climate Action Plan** will provide evidenced-based measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and preventative measures to address the negative outcomes of climate change. The plan will demonstrate how York will adapt and improve its resilience to climate hazards that impact the town today as well as risks that may increase in the coming years.

Your YES vote on Article 23 will insure York is a healthy, thriving community powered by affordable, clean, renewable sources of energy.

The **Staff Position to Support Sustainability Initiatives** will more than pay for itself. Funds from state, private and federal grants and incentive programs are available only to towns that can actually develop climate action programs – work that requires a full-time energy and climate specialist who not only knows the field, but who appreciates the urgency of the issue and the need to work with community groups and individuals to identify the best actions for the families, businesses, environment and future of our town.

Your YES vote on Article 22 will fund this position which is essential to developing the Climate Action Plan.

A **solar array on the Witchtrot Road landfill site** will provide power for York’s schools and other municipal buildings, thus reducing operational costs for taxpayers and reducing greenhouse gas emissions community wide.

Your YES vote on Article 81 to lease the landfill to a solar developer will allow this project to go forward.

These three ballot questions will allow significant progress toward clean, renewable energy and a more secure future for York.

Please give them your green light!

GREEN CHALLENGE

Green Challenge Update

Eight York households are continuing to test a web-based tool designed to help families and individuals reduce their carbon footprint. York’s largest source of greenhouse gases, by far, comes from residents’ homes and their daily actions. This web-based tool identifies and explains 67 actions people can take to reduce their footprint.

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Although COVID-19 put this test on the back-burner for a bit, progress up until mid- March included:

- Completion of a total of 74 actions;
- As a result, the amount of CO₂ released into the atmosphere was reduced by **1,290 lbs (9.66 metric tons)** on an annual basis.

Actions included:

- Adding or increasing composting of food scraps;
- Switching to LED bulbs;
- Switching to a Green Electricity option with CMP and other providers;
- Careful attention to recycling guidelines increased the amount of trash recycled;
- Reducing amount of meat in daily food consumption;
- Installing high-efficiency water-heater;
- More attention to turning off lights when leaving a room;
- Increased purchase of local goods.

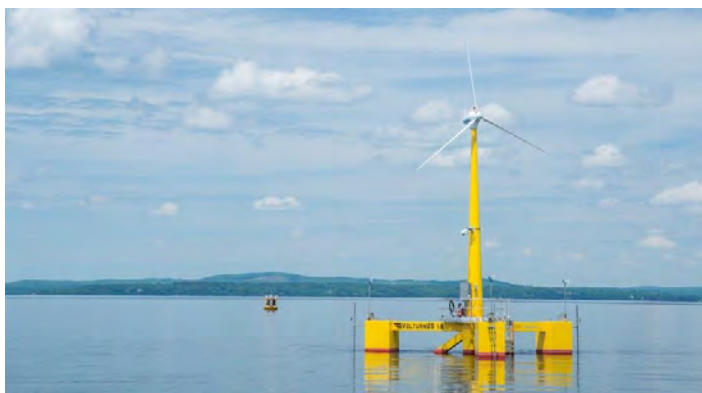
At our last meeting, we discussed how it can be hard to find time to go to the website, read about an action, and then implement it... especially when we have busy work and family schedules. But we agreed that given the importance of doing our part to help reverse global warming, we had to find ways to make time to do at least one action a week.

We also discussed using the “posting” tool for each action to share our successes and our questions with each other as we implement an action. Ultimately, we hope to get through any learning curves necessary so that when we roll this Web-based tool out town-wide it will be easier for others to implement many of the actions.

Fred Weston, fweston@maine.rr.com

OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT UPDATE

Update on Progress Toward Wind Energy from the Gulf of Maine



The vision of Habib Dagher, Ph.D., is behind the development of the Advanced Structures and Composites Center at the University of Maine at Orono. The Center is developing and testing floating wind turbines sited offshore in the Gulf of Maine. The turbines will produce power that is transmitted via undersea cables to the mainland for use by Maine homes and businesses and perhaps other New England states.

The project, called New England Aqua Ventus I, is now moving forward with a single 9.5-10MW turbine, rather than 2 x 6MW turbines to be deployed off Monhegan Island. The larger turbine better reflects the direction in which the offshore wind industry is heading and allows electricity costs to the consumer to be reduced.

The project reached an important milestone in late 2019. Following strong commitment by Governor Mills and support from the State Legislature, the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) voted unanimously on November 5, 2019, to approve the power purchase agreement between Maine Aqua Ventus (MAV) and Central Maine Power (CMP). On December 9, 2019, the 20-year power purchase agreement between CMP and MAV was signed. Executing the power purchase agreement is an important step forward as it allows the demonstration project to sell electricity to CMP. Right now, the project is working on design, development, and permitting; the goal is to start construction in 2022.

Other News from the Structures and Composites Center:

The University of Maine’s floating offshore wind technology demonstration project is one of two initiatives that were recently awarded U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) funding. The two projects (the other is in Ohio) will share up to a total of \$10 million to conduct additional innovation development to reduce technology costs and increase offshore wind energy options for consumers. Results of these projects will be part of a DOE comprehensive energy portfolio.

This latest DOE funding will also support the Center’s development of an alternative VoltturnUS floating substructure design for a 10MW to 12MW wind turbine and the new turbine off the Monhegan coast.

Meghan Collins, Communications Manager

Advanced Structures & Composites Center, University of Maine, Orono

PERSONAL ACTION

The Food and Future Fund

“If only I could do something to help on climate change *and* help people in need who are suffering because of the pandemic too.” So many of us feel this way. Here’s how you *CAN* make a positive difference for the environment and your neighbors with the same simple but powerful action.

Step 1: You start by harnessing the original solar power: hang up a clothesline to dry your laundry instead of using a machine dryer. You will save \$120 per year if you dry at home or \$500 per year if you use a laundromat. You’ll reduce **(next page)**

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your annual carbon footprint by half a ton, and your clothes will last longer too. That’s your good deed for the climate.



Step 2: Call or visit your bank to create a simple “handprint savings account.” Set up automatic monthly transfer of as much of the savings from your clothesline as you can afford, from your normal checking account into your savings account. You’ll reinvest your savings in other energy-saving, money-saving, climate-saving, handprint-creating actions.



Step 3 is the bank’s turn. Banks are encouraged to make a tax-deductible donation to organizations which provide emergency food assistance and other vital services to members of our community in their time of need. Banks are asked to *increase* this donation each time a new person opens a new handprint savings account, so *your account helps* local families in need!

Step 4: Celebrate these positive actions in a beautiful, visible way. Use something like an old t-shirt to make an inspiring flag that you fly on your clothesline. Include a colorful handprint, the logo of your bank, and “York.” Your flag says “Thank you” to your bank, and it tells all of us that you are supporting your neighbors in these challenging days. Nobody in York will feel alone when they see your “handprints for York” flag flying in the breeze. And I’ll be flying mine for you too.



EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

During this time of the Coronavirus outbreak and mandatory social distancing recommendations, educational events and programs are cancelled until further notice.

Stay well!

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

During this time of the Coronavirus outbreak and mandatory social distancing meetings are cancelled until further notice.

Zoom meetings may be held at the discretion of the team leader.

- ❖ **YRF100 Educational Team Meeting:** Third Wednesday of the month at 4:30 PM.
- ❖ **Town of York, Energy Steering Committee:** Third Thursday of the month at 7 PM.
- ❖ **YRF100 Core Group Meeting:** Fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM.
- ❖ **Town of York, Recycling Committee:** Every other Friday at 10 AM.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- ★ **Newsletter Designer** - Help us with improvement of our newsletter design and social media outreach process. Contact briseboisb@gmail.com
- ★ **Writing and Editing** - We need individuals to edit articles that are submitted to us for publication in the York Weekly, Newsletter and multimedia, also to occasionally write articles and "letters to the editor". Contact sglick@maine.rr.com
- ★ **Grandparents Group** - a group of grandparents will be convening to discuss the possibilities for climate canvassing in the fall. The goal is to make a connection with voters through our grandchildren, and urge them to vote for candidates who acknowledge the dire nature of climate change, and will provide leadership to secure a habitable planet for those who follow us. We will not be discussing candidates or political parties. Contact joaliceboth@yahoo.com or 676 9460.

YRF100% GOOD READS

Garden Inspirations

At the virtual meeting in March, York Ready for 100% members discussed choosing a book for a Zoom discussion. Since it's almost gardening season, and we want to inspire you, we've listed a few options.

Books:

***The Soil Will Save Us*, by Kristen Ohlson.**

Soil is critically important for the planet's health and for our own. "If only 11% of the world's cropland, land that is typically not in use, improved its community of microorganisms... the amount of carbon sequestered in the soil would offset all our current emissions of carbon dioxide."

- Summary from a report to NASA

***Food Fix*, by Mark Hyman.**

Readers say: This is a fact-filled read on our food system. For people new to this *New York Times* writer and podcaster, it's eye-opening, with info on what happens behind Washington's closed doors. Did you know that the SNAP program was attached to farm bills going through legislation?

***The Hidden Half of Nature*, by David Montgomery.**

From readers' reviews: The author starts with the scientific microbiome of soil, then goes on to link this to our food, gut microbes and health, interspersed with his family's own experiences.

***Organic Farming Manual: a Comprehensive Guide to Starting*, by Anne Larken Hansen.**

Review: Great overview of everything to think of when setting up and running a small-scale organic farm, from choosing land to soil health to going to market. It provides a lot of resources to find more detail and information, too; a great gardening 101 book.

***The Newman's Own Organics Guide to a Good Life*, by Nell Newman and Joseph Newman D'Agnese.**

Along with realistic, practical advice, the book shows you a simple approach to gardening tasks. It covers consumer-related steps such as supporting small farms, buying clean power, and companies that return a portion of their profits to addressing issues around climate change, so you can "vote with your dollar." A resource directory is included.

York Public Library's On-line Resources:

Thanks to Sophie at York Public Library, there are some e-resources available through YPL Cloud, and this link will bring you right to them: [Your Cloud Library](#),
(Have your library card # ready!)

Finally, the library has a new resource called [RB Digital magazines](#), so enjoy searching and perusing.

We plan to have a Zoom book meeting in mid-May, so we can all share what we read. Meanwhile, there is time to learn, build the soil in our own backyards, and grow some vegetables. Happy Spring.

Janet Drew, jdrew22222@yahoo.com and Debby Ronnquist, dronnquist@aol.com



BOOK REVIEW

Drawdown and Drawdown Review 2020



Paul Hawken's 2017 book *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming* (shortened to *Drawdown* for this review) was an international best seller, often read (I'm told) by heads of state. Bill Clinton called it one of the most important books in the world.

Paul Hawken has written eight books, published in over 50 countries in 30 languages. *Drawdown* was a New York Times bestseller.

Based on research by the group Drawdown Project, the book *Drawdown* describes the 100 most substantive solutions to global warming, including the history, carbon impact, relative cost and savings, path to adoption, and

how each action works. The goal of the research behind the book is to determine whether the buildup of atmospheric carbon can be reversed by 2050. The research is ongoing under the Project Drawdown umbrella. Project Drawdown has now issued *Drawdown Review 2020*, which updates and adds to the original publication.

Based on research and analysis of climate solutions, *Drawdown Review 2020* lists the practices and technologies that can stem and begin to reduce the excess of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. Project findings are the core of efforts to respond nimbly to the rapidly evolving landscape of solutions and the urgency of the challenge faced by humanity. A copy of *Drawdown Review 2020* is available [online](#).

We often hear that global warming is an energy problem, that the solutions are solar, wind, and electric vehicles. For the individual, that message sounds like I hope "they" do it. There's a belief that there are only a few things individuals can do beyond recycling, riding a bike and eating less meat. In fact, there is an extraordinary diversity of solutions to global warming that are at hand, being implemented and scaled. I wonder if people, politicians and businesspeople know this. Clean energy is the crucial solution, to be sure, but there is much more we can do, and we can be guided by *Drawdown Review 2020*.

At least two of *Drawdown Review 2020*'s top recommended actions are available to us every day: reduce food waste and eat a plant-rich diet. Farmers can develop silvopastures – grazing areas that mix forest and grassland, a practice that captures and retains rainfall, improves soil, protects cattle from excess heat, improves the quality of forage and leads to greater carbon sequestration, less erosion and more biodiversity. More birds control insects, and more microbiota enrich the soil. All this creates more income for the farmer. The practice is being advanced by agroforestry associations around the world. But this is only part of the Review's extraordinary reach. This book should be on everyone's reference shelf.

John Werner, jwernernjit@gmail.com

GREEN TIPS



Ditching unnecessary chemicals, unhealthy foods, unfriendly Earth practices, and bad habits/routines can all add together to make an altogether healthier you, while boosting the environment and ecosystem.

We will be introducing four simple green tips each month, one for each week of the month as a reminder of steps that can be taken to help you create a safer and healthier future. ***(next page)***

(Continue)

1. **Buy in bulk whenever possible.** Product packaging is responsible for a lot of energy expended and emissions released to produce it and creates waste when the product is opened and used. Reduce the amount of packaging you use by avoiding single-serving, pre-packaged products (drinks, snacks, candy, etc.) and buying in bulk whenever possible. Purchase bulk items and transfer them to reusable containers. Then, of course, recycle or reuse whatever packaging you can! (Source: GlobalStewards.org)
2. **Unplug gadgets when not in use.** Not only is powering off great for the devices, it's also great for our planet. **Unplug chargers** instead of letting them dangle from the outlet. Adopting these practices can save you up to \$100 annually! (Source: [Direct Energy.com](http://DirectEnergy.com))
3. **Plant a tree.** With the **50th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22**, you can celebrate by learning more about what trees grow best in our beloved state, the crucial role they all play in keeping our air breathable and how YOU can help replenish the tree population in our community and around the world.
4. **Avoid chemical fertilizers and pesticides.** They can harm the very organisms (toads, wasps, birds, bees!) that protect and enrich your vibrant garden. They contaminate the groundwater as well and have been linked to serious illness. Learn organic gardening methods- compost on the soil, companion planting to eliminate the need for artificial chemicals. (Source: Earthshare.org)

Thank you to the York First Parish Creation Care Committee for providing these tips.

