

PE9 Climate Change Education and Engagement

Climate Town Hall:

On December 9, 2020, County Executive George Latimer held “An Open Conversation on Environmental Issues” through Facebook Live where County residents were invited to ask questions or make suggestions regarding what Westchester is doing to respond to climate change and other environmental concerns.

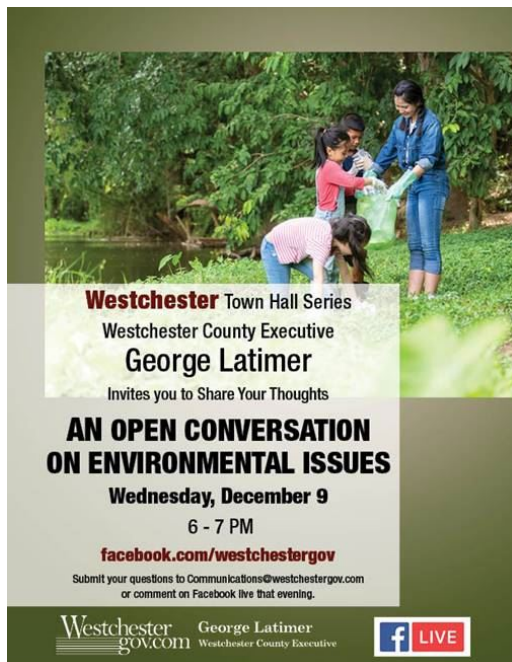
The County Executive was joined by Director of Sustainability, Peter McCartt and County Legislator Ruth Walters.

Attached below is a recording of the event and the promotional flier:

Recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h85v09HIGI4>

Promotional Flier:



CompostED:

One of the County's most ambitious projects for climate education and awareness, CompostED will be a small-scale food scrap composting demonstration and education site in Valhalla NY.

The site will provide educational opportunities for County residents, students, and municipal officials on the environmental benefits of composting, the process of composting, and explore the ability of local municipalities to incorporate food scraps into existing organic yard waste composting sites.

Attached is a photo from the ground breaking event and the press release from the same day

Press Release:

<https://www.westchestergov.com/home/all-press-releases/8730-westchester-county-breaks-ground-on-the-compost-and-education-center-in-valhalla>

Ground Breaking Photo:



Eco Awards:

The County holds an annual Eco Awards ceremony in which the County Executive and the Department of Environmental Facilities recognizes schools, students, local businesses, nonprofits, other organizations, as well as municipalities for their environmental accomplishments and sustainability efforts. These Eco Awards help spread awareness throughout the County about climate change, its effects on Westchester, and about various efforts that are going on in the area to combat climate change.

2019:

<https://www3.westchestergov.com/home/all-press-releases/7992-westchester-county-announces-the-2019-eco-award-winners-at-kensico-dam-plaza>



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George Latimer
Westchester County Executive

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Westchester County Announces the 2019 Eco Award Winners at Kensico Dam Plaza

Watch the Full Press Conference [HERE](#).

April 22, 2019 -- Westchester County Executive George Latimer and the Department of Environmental Facilities proudly announced the winners of the 2019 Westchester County Eco Awards at Kensico Dam Plaza. The awards recognized outstanding contributions to the County's local environment and sustainability, made by residents, students and schools, municipalities, businesses and other organizations.

Westchester County Executive Latimer said: "I am thankful to all of this year's Eco Award winners. Their initiatives and projects improve our County's environment and sustainability, while helping to make Westchester County a healthy, green place to live, work and visit."

County Executive Latimer was on hand to present the awards, and meet with the winners. In addition to schools, students, local businesses, nonprofits and other organizations, three municipalities also received awards for posting the highest curbside recycling rates in 2018: Town of Pound Ridge, Town of Lewisboro and City of Rye. The efforts of these municipalities and



WESTCHESTER COUNTY
ECO AWARDS

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2018:

<https://www3.westchestergov.com/home/all-press-releases/7682-westchester-county-announces-the-2018-eco-award-winners>



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NEWS DEPARTMENTS ALERTS CALENDAR CONTACT

Westchester County Announces the 2018 Eco Award Winners



June 19, 2018 -- County Executive George Latimer and the Department of Environmental Facilities are proud to announce the winners of the first ever Westchester County Eco Awards. The awards recognize outstanding contributions to the County's local environment and sustainability made by residents, students and schools, municipalities, businesses and other organizations.

County Executive Latimer said: "The Eco Awards provide an opportunity to recognize those individuals and institutions who contribute to making Westchester a great place to live, work and visit by improving and caring for our local environment."

The award winners will be officially recognized on June 27 at 3:00 p.m. at an awards ceremony at Kensico Dam Plaza. Latimer will be on hand to present the awards and meet with the winners. In addition to several schools, students, local businesses, non-profits and other organizations, three municipalities will also receive awards for posting the highest curb side recycling rates in 2017: Town of Bedford, Town of Lewisboro and City of Rye. The efforts of these municipalities and

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Clearwater Festival:

The County government is one of the main sponsors and organizers for the Clearwater Music and Environmental Festival that takes place one weekend in mid-June every year. It takes place in Croton-on-Hudson and was initially started to clean up the Hudson River from pollution and toxins. All proceeds earned from the Festival will go directly to support Clearwater's environmental research, education and advocacy efforts to help preserve and protect the Hudson River and its tributaries, as well as communities in the river valley.

<https://www.clearwaterfestival.org/about-the-festival/>

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

The 2019 Clearwater Festival will take place on Saturday and Sunday, June 15 and 16 at Croton Point Park in Croton-on-Hudson, Westchester County, NY. Festival gates open to attendees at 9AM.

Clearwater Festival (aka "The Great Hudson River Revival" or "Revival") features seven sustainably powered stages with diverse music, dance, storytelling and family-oriented programming as well as a juried Handcrafters' Village, the Green Living Expo, the Working Waterfront with small boat exhibits and rides, the Artisanal Food & Farm Market, environmental education displays and exhibits, and the Circle of Song where audience participation is the focus. The festival is wheelchair accessible and stage programming is staffed with American Sign Language interpreters.

Inspired by Pete Seeger's desire to clean up the river over forty years ago, The Great Hudson River Revival initially helped raise the funds to build the sloop Clearwater, which has since become a world-renowned floating classroom and a symbol of effective grassroots action. Today, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc. is a non-profit organization that sails at the forefront of the nation's environmental challenges. The revenue raised by the Revival goes to support Clearwater's numerous educational programs and its work toward environmental and social justice—as well as keeping the sloop Clearwater afloat.



MISSION OF THE FESTIVAL

The Great Hudson River Revival is produced by the nonprofit, member-supported, environmental organization Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc. All proceeds go directly to support Clearwater's environmental research, education and advocacy efforts to help preserve and protect the Hudson River and its tributaries, as well as communities in the river valley.

The festival has helped over 250,000 adults experience the wonders of the Hudson River from aboard the sloop Clearwater. The organization itself has gained worldwide recognition for its leadership in helping to pass landmark environmental laws, both state and federal, including the Clean Water Act. Recently, Clearwater played a key role in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPAs) decision to remove PCBs from the Hudson River. This decision compels one of the Hudson River's biggest polluters to begin removing the toxic PCBs from the water, thereby expediting the amount of time before the river is restored. In 2002, Pete Seeger, the founder of Clearwater, was named a "Clean Water Hero" for his prominent efforts in the passage of the Clean Water Act. His tireless devotion to working through Clearwater and promoting its message to effectively use the law in prosecuting polluters of America's waterways has made the Clean Water Act perhaps the most successful environmental law in the country.

Today, seeing the success of the Clearwater organization, one cannot imagine these achievements being possible without the Clearwater Festival. The Great Hudson River Revival has helped raise funds and served as a beacon toward raising awareness in support of America's First River. And it all started more than 35 years ago, when it was but the dream of a banjo-picking folksinger.



HISTORY OF THE FESTIVAL

Back in the mid-sixties, after centuries of accumulated sewage pollution and industrial dumping of toxic chemicals, the Hudson River, like many of America's most important estuaries, was declared "dead". The river's fragile ecological system was devastated. Not a single fish was found in many areas, and the level of commercial fishing had dropped so dramatically as to be regarded as nonexistent. Recognizing this incredible social and environmental tragedy, Pete Seeger, a popular musician and respected activist, decided "to build a boat to save the river". Holding small, fundraising river concerts throughout the Hudson River Valley, he literally passed his banjo among the crowd, collecting contributions to build the elegant tall ship that would become a symbol of environmental advocacy, the flagship of the American Environmental Movement, the sloop Clearwater.

This nomadic folk festival picnic continued to travel through out the Hudson River Valley, then in 1978 the gathering set down roots at a historic river park, Croton Point, on the Hudson River and was coined The Great Hudson River Revival. However, ten years later, due to pollution problems with the landfill at the park, the festival was forced to move from the river. This move resulted in a decade of exile inland at a suburban college campus. In 1998, however, the Clearwater board of directors pushed to move the festival on or near the Hudson River, and a year later the Clearwater Festival returned to its spiritual home, the shores of the Hudson River at Croton Point Park.

Since the 1960s, the Clearwater Festival has grown into the country's largest annual environmental celebration, its music, dance and storytelling, education and activism attracting thousands of people of all ages to the shores of the Hudson River.

A letter from the Clearwater organization confirming the County's sponsorship and participation in the Festival is also provided in the supporting documentation.