

## **Climate Change Education and Community Engagement Strategy**

On February 12, 2019 the Village of Pelham Board of Trustees, with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to a changing climate, passed a resolution adopting the New York State Climate Smart Communities Pledge which includes, among other elements: Informing and Inspiring the Public. The Village of Pelham Climate Smart Communities Task Force (CSCTF) and Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB) spearhead the Village's efforts in this area of Climate Change Education and Engagement, led by the Outreach Committee.

### **Goals and Scope**

The Outreach Committee of the CSCTF aims to engage individuals in the Village of Pelham and in the broader Pelham community and to engage local for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in **moving the community toward sustainability, reducing carbon emissions, improving adaptability, and mitigating the harms of climate change.**

The Outreach Committee's **carbon emissions reduction and mitigation efforts** include educating on the value of supporting alternative energy technology such as solar and heat pumps, transportation alternatives, waste stream reductions, and sustainable landscaping practices.

Efforts supporting **climate change adaptation** include educating on the value of and supporting expansion of tree canopy and resilient, sustainable plantings through our Healthy Yards initiative. The Village of Pelham is also currently engaged in assessing stormwater infrastructure needs in light of extreme rainfall and flooding events caused by climate change and educating residents on those issues.

In order to reach as many community members as possible from all age, income and engagement levels, our Outreach methods include:

- Educational presentations on sustainability, climate, and environmental topics
- Community meetups
- Volunteer recruitment to assist in CSC Task Force work
- Community tabling at local farmers' market and other town events
- Updates to the Village of Pelham website
- Local press releases
- Social media communications, though Instagram and Facebook regarding not only our own efforts but that of other local, state, and national sustainability initiatives
- Email outreach for important Village of Pelham sustainability efforts
- Monthly CSCTF/SAB meetings open to the public and updates/discussions of important initiatives in the Village Board of Trustee meetings
- Partnering with local and regional organizations

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**Community Partners**

The CSCTF Outreach Committee, representing the Village of Pelham, has worked with or plans to work with the following local, regional, and state partners:

Environmental Coalition of the Pelhams (EcoPel)  
Village of Pelham Manor  
Town of Pelham  
Town of Pelham Public Library  
Pelham Children's Center  
The Manor Club (TMC) of Pelham Manor  
Pelham Chamber of Commerce  
Pelham Art Center  
Pelham Eliminates Plastics (PEP)  
Pelham Union Free School District/Board of Education  
Sustainable Westchester  
Solarize Westchester  
New York Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)  
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC)

## Events in the Past Year (June 2021-June 2022)

### **Sunday Tabling -- Summer/Fall 2021, planned for Summer 2022**

SAB/CSCTF volunteers tabled on Sundays adjacent to the Pelham Market and at other community events during the summer and fall of 2021 and plan to do so again in 2022 to share information on ongoing campaigns which support **climate change mitigation and adaptation**:

- **EnergySmart/Clean Heating & Cooling:** Launched by the Village of Pelham in early 2021 and co-sponsored by the Town of Pelham and EcoPel to educate and engage the community and encourage adoption of energy efficiency and clean heating and cooling technologies, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Webinars were held monthly from February 2021 to May 2021 and information sharing continued through Sunday Tabling.
- **Community Solar:** Offers guaranteed savings to residents who enroll in this Sustainable Westchester program while helping to green the local electricity grid. Community Solar increases equitable access to the benefits of renewable energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Grid Rewards/Demand Response:** Incentivises residents to reduce electricity at peak demand times to avoid running old, inefficient power plants, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Food Scraps:** Pelham Food Scrap Recycling project launched April 2021, spearheaded by the CSCTF and SAB, with the goal of reducing emissions by reducing food waste.
- **Healthy Yards:** (see description below)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CSmVC0Ur9ed/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CTvc2FhsD-g/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CUAaJ0WLbYD/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CUCv4vPLZjv/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CUCv4vPLZjv/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CVatDfGrLT0/>

### **Pelham Healthy Yards**

[https://www.pelhamgov.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf3661/f/pages/pr\\_healthy\\_yards\\_0.pdf](https://www.pelhamgov.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf3661/f/pages/pr_healthy_yards_0.pdf)

Pelham Healthy Yards is an educational campaign launched by the Village of Pelham and co-sponsored by EcoPel and the Town of Pelham focusing on sustainable gardening and landscaping practices that help mitigate climate change, support climate change adaptation, and contribute to a healthier environment. These methods include: encouraging emissions-free electric equipment, planting native plants, soil restoration, tree canopy protection, and avoiding use of pesticides and chemicals. Incorporating these **sustainable landscaping practices reduces carbon emissions, supports local resilience to the changing climate, and results in healthier land, air, and water.**

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Community Meetups were held on October 10, 2021, November 14, 2021, and December 12, 2021. In 2022, virtual meetups were held by Zoom on January 30<sup>th</sup> and March 6<sup>th</sup>. On April 10<sup>th</sup>, we resumed in-person meetups and joined with the local Pollinator Pathways coordinator for a tour of Pelham's Highbrook Highline and in May we hosted a meetup at the home of a local sustainable gardener. We have also connected and "cross-pollinated" with New Rochelle Healthy Yards and other like minded Westchester groups. Our Healthy Yards mailing list numbers over 100 local community members and continues to grow. Information was shared at weekend and community event tabling and on social media, and through local businesses for sharing with clients and customers.

***Video link to initial Pelham Healthy Yards presentation***

<https://www.facebook.com/SustainablePelham/videos/305466770955701>  
<https://www.facebook.com/SustainablePelham/videos/1404526813253534/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/SustainablePelham/posts/1054373225395426>  
<https://www.facebook.com/SustainablePelham/posts/1061219024710846>

**October 10, 2021 Healthy Yards Meetup**

**• Go Electric • Preserve Trees • Plant Natives • Go Chemical-Free**

[https://www.instagram.com/p/CUvGOI\\_rqdL/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CUvGOI_rqdL/)  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CU05klBs8N5/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CVJNZDklRls/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CVbxjqaMiZv/>

We invited community members to explore and enjoy creative possibilities and innovative practices that benefit the environment, pollinators, and our well-being by limiting the use of gas-powered equipment, pesticides and herbicides, and by preserving trees and planting native species. Incorporating these sustainable landscaping practices reduces carbon emissions, supports local resilience to the changing climate, and results in healthier land, air, and water.

**November 14th Healthy Yards Meetup –**

**Electrical Equipment & Leaf Mulching Demonstration, Native Plants**

<https://www.facebook.com/SustainablePelham/videos/256009196546588>

This meet-up focused on Healthy Yards climate change mitigation efforts (emissions reduction, with electric lawn equipment as well as eliminating the need to transport leaves through on-site mulching) and also supported our adaptation efforts (reduction of flooding and environmental harm through soil restoration).

**December 12, 2021 - Healthy Yards Meetup & Garden Tour**

<https://www.facebook.com/SustainablePelham/photos/pcb.1098281584337923/1098277551004993>

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**January 30, 2022 - What is a Healthy Yard?**

<https://www.facebook.com/SustainablePelham/videos/684406472718880>

Defining a shift from conventional landscape practices that rely on gas-powered tools and ornamental, non-native plants with little ecological function to a layered ecosystem based on nature that is resilient and supports life. This shift supports both climate change mitigation (reduced emissions) and climate change adaptation (i.e. native plants support the pollinators affected by climate change, contributing to a more resilient ecosystem).

**March 6, 2022 - Invasive Plants Virtual Meetup**

Learning to identify common invasive plant species and their ecological harm on Zoom

**April 10, 2022 - Tour of Pelham's Highbrook Highline**

<https://pelhamexaminer.com/45232/showcase/pelham-healthy-yards-meetup-hears-about-restoration-of-highbrook-highline/>

Meeting at Highline to preserve public parkland through identification and manual removal of invasive species in the field and replacement with a dense shrub and herbaceous layers of soil remediating and climate resilient native planting.

**May 22, 2022 - No-Dig Turf to Meadow & Shrubland Meetup**

<https://www.facebook.com/SustainablePelham/photos/pcb.1204309063735174/1204303433735737>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CeHZFIKOVwK/?hl=en>

Turf to meadow and shrubland conversion demonstration using the No-Dig bed creation method that preserves soil health by not disturbing soil structure through tilling. Reducing turf for climate resilient native planting helps reduce emissions and support pollinators.

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**Earth Day Festival**

April 23, 2022

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CdKAO8subcD/?hl=en>

Pelham SAB/CSCTF joined the Pelham Earth Day Festival and shared information on Pelham's climate and sustainability initiatives, along with Sustainable Westchester, the local youth groups Pelham Eliminates Plastics and the Environmental Science Club and other organizations. Our volunteers had a bucket of compost for residents to see and feel, provided them with information about its availability through the Pelham municipal services and provided visitors with a liter bag of compost to take home and apply to their garden. Additionally we promoted Compost Awareness Week May 1-7, when all residents can pick up free compost for residential use. Adding compost to soil has the adaptation to increase bulk density and help establish vegetation. It reduces the need for watershed-polluting fertilizer, pesticides and water resources for irrigation.

**Adopt-a-Highway Pollinator Planting Project**

May 7, 2022

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CdUZCHjODgF/?hl=en>

Joined with other community groups in this sustainable planting initiative along the Hutchinson River Parkway.

**Website, Social Media and Email Outreach**

<https://www.pelhamgov.com/sustainability-advisory-board>

<https://www.pelhamgov.com/climate-smart-communities-task-force>

<https://www.facebook.com/SustainablePelham/>

<https://www.instagram.com/climatesmartpelham/>

Facebook: @sustainablepelham

Instagram: @climatesmartpelham

Through the website, Facebook and Instagram postings, as well as email and website updates, the SAB and CSCTF share information on climate and sustainability-related news, initiatives, educational opportunities and other events that may be of interest to Pelham residents, and encourage Pelhamites to learn more about climate and sustainability issues and to take action, both on an individual and community level. SAB and CSCTF also cross-post with EcoPel and on other local and regional Facebook pages and share information with local community groups and neighboring municipalities regarding initiatives that address the climate crisis, reduce carbon emissions, and improve sustainability, mitigation, and adaptation strategies.