2023 IMPACT REPORT





Sustainable Hudson Valley

PO Box 145 Rhinebeck, NY 12572 <u>SustainHV.org</u>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Vision to Action with the Regional Climate Action Road Map and Tool Kit	2
Education and Inspiration: The Climate Action Conference and Hudson Valley Climate Solutions Week	4
Innovative Partnerships: The Ulster Green Economy Network (UGREEN), and the Reuse Innovation Center	6
Community Programs: Repair Café Hudson Valley, Planting Power Newburgh, and the EnergyCorps and the Clean Power Guide	9
Financial Summary & Thank You to Our Sponsors	14
Looking Ahead	15

INTRODUCTION

Friends -

It's easy to be overwhelmed by "the great unraveling" as large systems fall apart and are transformed – sometimes for the better. Sustainable Hudson Valley sees ourselves as part of "the great turning," toward a renewable and regenerative reality. 2023 has been a year of fruition, as we've published the Regional Climate Action Road Map and Tool Kit and leaned into the first projects it calls for. With support of diverse agencies, organizations and individuals, we've:

- Opened up a dialogue between town and utility planners so that renewable energy siting and electric grid modernization can be done in better coordination;
- Worked with the recycling coordinators of seven counties to plan for collaboration to increase waste diversion by building out infrastructure and education, one material at a time, beginning with textiles;
- Built relationships in "disadvantaged" communities where there is an unprecedented opportunity to renew and reinvest, using federal and state climate funds not just to change the energy system but to shift the underlying patterns of ownership and control;
- Partnered with public libraries throughout the region by working with the Mid-Hudson and Ramapo-Catskill Library Systems to launch a program to create "resilience hubs" through local libraries whose staff are learning how to protect their facilities and neighborhoods from climate change impacts.

All these efforts are in motion. More work is in development, in areas ranging from clean transportation to carbon dioxide removal. We were thrilled to highlight this work in our standing-room-only spring conference, *Climate Action: Acceleration Through Coordination*.

This year we produced the third successful Climate Solutions Week with 55 events region-wide and expanded media coverage; published the annual Clean Power Guide with Chronogram Media and made it available to local campaigns all around the Valley; grew the Repair Café program and raised its profile; and implemented new special projects including Planting Power Newburgh and the planning for a Reuse Innovation Center for Ulster County.

In 2023, Sustainable Hudson Valley's staff grew to seven. Our budget was \$313,000, raised through a combination of major gifts, grassroots donations, sponsorships and program revenues. We worked this year with literally hundreds of organizations and local government agencies to implement our program to accelerate climate solutions with a "just do it" philosophy and a powerful support system. Please enjoy this Impact Report to learn more.

Warmly,

Melissa Everett, Ph.D., Executive Director

elssa Everett. Ph.D

VISION TO ACTION WITH THE REGIONAL CLIMATE ACTION ROAD MAP AND TOOL KIT







Electric Power

Buildings

Transportation

Materials Management

Agriculture Forestry Land Use

Water

Resilient Infrastructure and Communities

Economic Development

Environmental Justice

Education

In 2020-22, Sustainable Hudson Valley coordinated a deep dive into the work needed to translate New York's visionary Climate Law into on-the-ground decarbonization and regeneration. While coordinating regional comments into the Scoping Plan to guide policymaking - one of the most participatory policymaking processes in state history - we also coordinated a network of 90+ experts and advocates in figuring out the changes in nitty-gritty energy planning, transportation systems, waste management, farmer supports and more. Our goal is that the many incentives and assistance programs available from the state are actually used and help us achieve the results we need as a state.

We published a draft document in 2021, but realized that information is only power when it is accessible and used. To make a good product better, in 2023 we translated the initial Road Map into a web-based resource that can be easily updated and shared. Modeled on Project Drawdown, the Road Map and Tool Kit is organized by decarbonization and regeneration topics and "cross cutting themes" that all our work must feed, such as environmental justice, economic development and education.

To date, this is the only regional study done in New York that brings to light the practical courses of action needed - on the ground, not in policy - to implement the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. We identified a short list of catalytic projects with regional impact.

Participating Organizations

- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Dutchess County Planning
- Orange County Planning
- Ulster County Executive's Office
- Sullivan County Office of Sustainable Energy
- Hudson Valley Environmental Justice Coalition
- Clearwater
- Scenic Hudson
- FEMA Region 2
- Sustainable Westchester
- Tri-State Transportation Campaign
- Repair Café of the Hudson Valley
- Ulster County Office of Economic Development
- Dutchess BOCES Center for Climate and Sustainability Education
- Center for Post-Carbon Logistics



The most encouraging result of this work was that, before the publication was even final, groups of participants had begun to implement the recommendations. Two examples show the kind of results that are beginning to happen: Siting large scale solar, and improved waste management.

A major obstacle to building out renewable energy is identifying sites that don't encroach on farm or forest land. Collaborators Scenic Hudson, Clearwater and New Yorkers for Clean Power developed a training program to help local planners identify sites on already disturbed lands like closed landfills and commercial rooftops, to reduce pressure on farm and forest land; they have now worked with 90 people representing over 40 communities. But the partners realized that electric utilities' planning to upgrade the grid, in order to phase in renewable energy, does not have to take into account which communities want to build solar now. SHV has been able to open the door to a series of meetings with Central Hudson to discuss more coordinated planning so that the grid is ready where the communities have most political will to build renewables.

12% of New York's greenhouse gas emissions come from waste management activities such as trucking waste to distant landfills. Road Map stakeholders realized that a breakthrough would only come if local resource recovery agencies shifted their thinking to favor local solutions that are acceptable to communities. New landfills? No! We explored what it would take to achieve sharply increased diversion and saw that it started with collaboration. County recycling coordinators participating in the project agreed to think together about how to pick one material at a time and move the needle on reuse and recycling. Their first project is textiles, a material that is too often improperly recycled and ends up in piles in the global south. SHV has helped by connecting them with a social venture business that sets up collection systems and recycles all their textiles in the US, upcycling as many as possible into new products.

EDUCATION AND INSPIRATION: THE CLIMATE ACTION CONFERENCE

In March, SHV and partners hosted the first annual Climate Action Conference for the Hudson Valley at SUNY Orange's Kaplan Hall in Newburgh. A standing-room audience of 110 people was joined by several dozen remote participants. The day was organized around releasing the Road Map for use by local and regional organizations and local governments, and driving informative discussion about the hard questions of how to pay for the necessary transformations and make sure they are inclusive. Emceed by board member Rev. Limina Grace Harmon, the day featured:

- A keynote presentation on the global innovators movement coming to life to develop carbon drawdown technologies, by Leila Conners, Director of the documentary *Ice on Fire*;
- Updates on New York State policy development by Mark Lowery of the Office of Climate Change and Sameer Ranade of NYSERDA;
- An introduction to the Road Map by SHV's Executive Director Melissa Everett;
- Panels on strategy, financing and equity, and a moving "Youth Voices" segment;
- A walking tour of Newburgh featuring sites for restoration under the new Planting Power Newburgh program led by SHV and the Greater Newburgh Parks Conservancy.







"I work in the weeds of policy all the time and I keep myself going. But seeing all the solution-oriented work and this turnout, for the first time in a long time, I felt hope."

Climate Action
Conference Participant

Images: Interns Ariana Henry and Kevin Mitto present Youth Voices at the conference.

EDUCATION AND INSPIRATION: CLIMATE SOLUTIONS WEEK 2023





Hudson Valley Climate Solutions Week focuses attention on the climate emergency we are all facing together, and organizes, coordinates and promotes a series of diverse educational events throughout the region. Municipalities, businesses, and local and national organizations are invited to create and host their own event or events that relate to climate solutions. Past events have included workshops, lectures, art and music shows, site visits and field experience, film showings, group buses to NYC climate protests, and more. September 16-24th, 2023, was the 3rd Annual HV Climate Solutions Week.

Climate Solutions Week 2023 was the largest yet, with:

- 66 events
- 62 participating organizations, businesses and municipalities
- In-person events in 27 towns and cities, across 7 counties
- Regional media coverage on WAMC, WALL and Radio Free Rhinecliff, and The River Newsroom



Event Topics Included:

- Electric vehicles and EV charging
- Environmental art and activism
- Home weatherization and electrification
- Municipal river water sampling
- Tree preservation law
- EV charger funding for towns
- Repair and reuse
- Recycling
- Food waste
- Green investing
- Green fashion
- Food justice
- Eco anxiety and grief
- Greening a golf course
- Low carbon concrete

- Land restoration
- Environmental justice
- Solar energy
- B corps
- · Preparing for climate change
- Low impact food
- Cooling the planet
- Education
- CCA
- Building decarbonization
- New uses for hemp
- Green business
- State and federal environmental policy
- Biochar
- Climate Smart Communities

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS: UGREEN, THE ULSTER GREEN ECONOMY NETWORK

The Ulster Green Economy Network (UGREEN) was created by SHV, under contract with Ulster County, as a countywide green business network or association. The goal was to bring together local entrepreneurs and professionals who were already working on greening their businesses, and others who were interested in learning more and taking action. A secondary goal was to give UGREEN members, presumably some of the most activated leaders in the local green economy, a more direct line of communication with Ulster County to share what action they wanted to see from the county and what issues were most important to them.

The project was originally imagined as 3 years long, but at completion of the first year contract in early summer 2023, continued funding for the project lapsed and Sustainable Hudson Valley took a step back. The UGREEN network is currently on hold. UGREEN was developed and implemented by SHV with substantial support from Ulster County's Office of Economic Development and Office of Employment and Training, as well as from the SUNY New Paltz School of Business.

The first comprehensive inventory of businesses contributing to climate solutions and environmental benefits was performed by SHV board member Michael Sheridan, Ph.D., Associate Professor at SUNY New Paltz, with assistance from SHV interns. More than 300 companies were identified, representing industries that are already critical to the Hudson Valley's economic development.





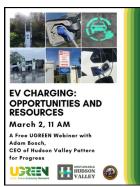
County Executive Jen Metzger speaking at The Green Business Innovators of Ulster County Awards Celebration



Michael D'Arcy, Environmental Outreach Manager for the Ulster County Department of the Environment, presents Ulster Savings Bank with a Green Business Innovator Award for their work through the UCGBC program

UGREEN brought entrepreneurs together at monthly Green Business Mixers, many at locations with innovative practices to showcase. Collaboration with local business groups in Marbletown, Gardiner and Saugerties strengthened the connectivity. Additionally, UGREEN provided a series of roughly quarterly free webinars on topics of interest to the green business community. SHV worked to connect UGREEN members with each other, and produced a monthly newsletter that announced events and gave members recognition and press for their achievements.





Promotional materials created for UGREEN: a QR postcard to join the network, for canvassing potential member businesses; a flyer for a UGREEN webinar

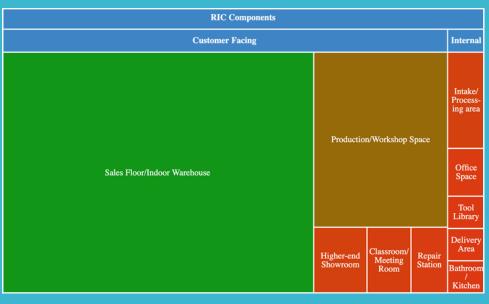
Over the course of the year, multiple direct outreach campaigns aimed at building membership were managed by Chrisso Babcock, who started as UGREEN Coordinator for SHV in early 2023. These outreach campaigns included direct phone calling of local businesses, door to door canvassing of Main Street businesses around Ulster County (using a postcard with a QR sign-up link), and regular attendance and networking at Chamber of Commerce and Business Association events. Altogether, these outreach campaigns directly reached between 180 and 230 businesses.

At the beginning of 2023, roughly halfway through the year-long contract, UGREEN had roughly 70 member businesses and had held three mixers and one free webinar. By the end of the year-long contract, UGREEN had 113 member businesses, and had offered 7 green business mixers, 5 free educational webinars, and an end of year Green Business Awards Celebration to give the county an opportunity to formally recognize the environmental achievements of some of its most active member businesses. Hosted by member Stone Dock Golf Course, the event highlighted the golf course's new EV charger and stream bank "Trees for Tribs" plantings to reduce erosion.

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS: THE REUSE INNOVATION CENTER

One of SHV's biggest sources of satisfaction in 2023 was providing Ulster County with a strategic plan for the region's first Reuse Innovation Center. While reuse businesses are nothing new, this kind of reuse ecosystem exists in only a few places. By bringing together businesses and other projects to share equipment and employees, raise their common profile, and engage in creative problem-solving, a Reuse Innovation Center strengthens the circular economy in specific ways beyond what isolated efforts can accomplish.

Repair Café of the Hudson Valley founder John Wackman dreamed of expanding the circular economy beyond the domain of repair. He discovered the first RIC in Bellingham, Washington and made contact. After his passing, several Ulster County legislators secured funding to create a concrete plan. SHV was selected to lead the project. We brought in Dave Bennink of ReUse Consulting, founder of the Bellingham RIC and a driving force behind circular economy practices such as building deconstruction and salvage. The project began by identifying the materials that would matter most - both to reduce weight and volume sent to the landfill and to capture the most economic value. The priority materials identified were: metals, clean wood, doors, appliances, architectural details, bicycles, building materials / C&D, cabinets and similar furniture, and textiles.





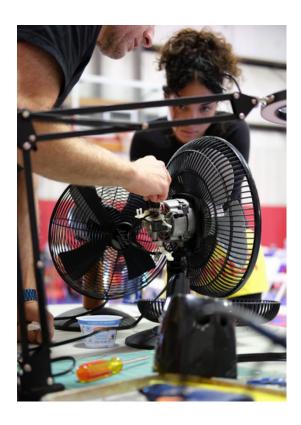
A visual proposal of the floor plan for the Reuse Innovation Center

SHV then explored the types of enterprises that reuse this range of items. We found enormous reused building materials warehouses - many started with Dave's help; upcycled fashion and textile products; numerous uses for wood and metal. We found determined entrepreneurs reusing hard-to-imagine stuff, like making garden frames out of irregular plastic tubing. And there were brilliant "obvious" discoveries like Second Hand Shrubs, which resells healthy shrubs from properties that are in transition. We also delved into the kinds of businesses that make the reuse economy work, like the delivery company CheckSammy, which helps small waste haulers improve their bottom line with services like insurance, while training them on how to divert more waste into productive use.

While most Reuse Innovation Centers are private business clusters, Ulster County's is extra innovative because it is aligned with the County's vision of sharp reductions in waste sent to the Seneca Meadows Landfill. This led us to propose the largest Reuse Innovation Center yet created, on the order of 100,000 square feet. We proposed a combination of indoor and lower cost outdoor space, with extensive parking and loading areas which could also serve as expansion space for additional enterprises. Diverse workshop spaces and a high-end showroom, including space that doubles as a training area, are integral to the project. A repair center is also part of the proposal, both to fix items that are donated and to provide service to the public. The RIC should have abundant space for recycling standard and specialty materials, making it a hub for the circular economy.

To be successful, the RIC will need supportive policies. We recommend, in particular, some level of regulation of building construction and demolition materials and support for initial deconstruction skills training. Active deconstruction in a community seeds the market for reused building materials. Ordinances like Portland, Oregon's - requiring deconstruction as the first option for historic structures - help to normalize deconstruction as a means of keeping building materials out of landfills. These options are being studied by Ulster County legislators. Not only can the Reuse Innovation Center energize the activities within it, we also recommend that the RIC serve as a hub for the circular economy more broadly. For example, developing an online marketing presence for businesses that already have their preferred locations, from the beloved jewelry fixer in Uptown Kingston to the Habitat ReStore. Through planning for the RIC, we met stakeholders representing an inspiring array of circular economy businesses.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS: REPAIR CAFÉ HUDSON VALLEY



REPAIR CAFE

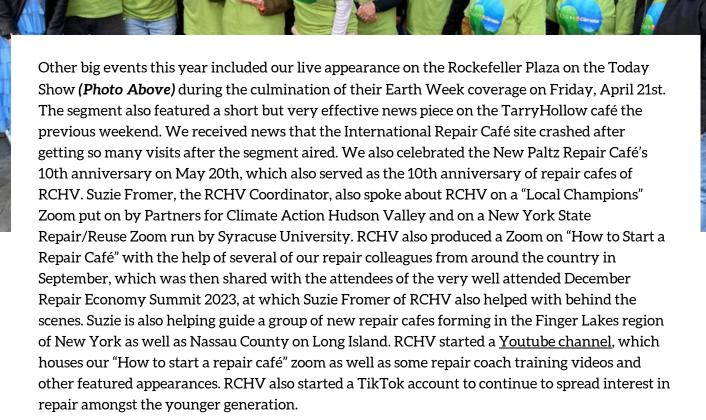


In 2023, Repair Café Hudson Valley's network of cafes expanded significantly. This year saw the return of many cafes after Covid. We also added the following 14 new Repair Cafés:

Albany (Capital Region)
Amenia (Dutchess Co.)
Colonie (Capital Region)
Columbia SE (Columbia Co).
Croton (Westchester Co.)
Hurleyville (Sullivan Co.)
Hyde Park (Dutchess Co.)
Livingston Manor (Sullivan Co.)
Mahopac (Putnam Co.)
Port Jervis (Orange Co.)
TarryHollow (Westchester Co.)
Town of Cortlandt (Westchester Co.)
Woodbury (Orange Co.)
Wynantskill (Capital Region)

2023 was a year of growing the program's capacity with recruitment and training of new "fixers," and development of systems to allow this amazing program to scale coherently.





Other significant press coverage this year included RCHV coordinator and/or organizers being featured on the following podcasts or radio shows: Wall Radio with Kate Brannan, Radio Catskill's "Radio Chatskill" and "Trailer Talk with Sabrina Artel," Radio Kingston's "Let's Talk, Kingston," Hudson Radio's "Many Shades of Green," and many, many news articles, all of which help us continue to spread the word about repair cafes.

In 2022 we held 69 cafés with an average of 40 guests with 1-2 items each. An average of 75% items were fixed at cafés which means over 3,000 items saved from landfills plus more items fixed after the cafés with advice or parts ordered. In 2023 we held 130 cafés, which means we almost doubled that impact. Attendance was typically higher this year as well, meaning many, many more items were saved from the landfill. In addition, Suzie is constantly fielding calls about new cafés for 2024, so this is a trend that is going to continue on an upwards swing. Final numbers are still being crunched but so many café visitors are first timers, so we can see that the movement is constantly spreading.

Goals for next year include expanding our network wide fixer list, visiting more new cafés in person, hosting a series of zoom training workshops (which will also be recorded and posted on our Youtube channel) for fixers in our network and beyond, and continuing to connect and collaborate with repair café organizers around the globe.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS: PLANTING POWER NEWBURGH



Planting Power Newburgh was funded with \$100,000 from Rotary District 7210 and The Rotary Foundation, and officially launched in July of 2023. A partnership was created to connect deeply rooted community based organizations with regional resources for the project's funded year and beyond, with an ongoing commitment to this work:

- Rhinebeck and Rotary District 7210 as funders and "sweat equity" partners, mobilizing Rotarians region-wide.
 Rhinebeck Rotary is the point of connection with The Rotary Foundation. Newburgh's active Rotary Club has been a welcome supporter of this work, hosting presentations, attending sessions and sponsoring a lunch.
- SHV as regional hub, reinforcing the public message and invitation to participate, and responsible for project management, tracking and evaluation of results.
- Greater Newburgh Parks Conservancy as the hands and hearts in the community, the repository of knowledge about the urban environment, with a preexisting Environmental Justice Fellows program already as well as data and hands-on skills.

For the 2023-24 program year, PPN committed to planting 300 rain gardens, 3,000 pollinator plantings, 50 shade and food trees, and 200 shoreline stabilization shrubs and small trees along the Quassaick Creek and/or Hudson River.



Kyle Conway, Teacher at Balmville Elementary School and First Vice President of NAACP Newburgh Highland Falls, teaching a learning session on environmental justice for PPN participants



A community planting day in Newburgh



A critical feature of the program is to support maintenance of the city's green canopy as well as planting new trees. Previously, watering of newly planted trees was done by GNPC volunteers and Fellows manually carrying 50 gallon containers tree by tree. With Rotary's support, the project was able to purchase a Suzuki utility vehicle to carry water and supplies. The partnership also committed itself to developing, piloting and refining a training curriculum that connects the issues of environmental justice and ecological restoration, fosters understanding of the local context, and orients participants to the methods of selecting, locating, planting and maintaining green infrastructure appropriate for this urban setting. The curriculum was envisioned as a living document for use by the project team and collaborating organizations, and for continuous improvement and updating. Kyle Conway, M.A., a civically active fifth grade teacher at Balmville Elementary School and First Vice President of the local NAACP, was selected as lead instructor. Calvary Presbyterian Church, 120 South Street, was chosen as the project's "home" for classes and organization, as an already active hub for distribution of food and meetings of community organizations.

The Greater Newburgh Parks Conservancy, our community partner, works with over 30 local stakeholder organizations and runs an Environmental Justice Fellows program in which young people are paid to learn about and restore the local environment. We could not ask for a better collaboration.





Above: the Greater Newburgh Parks Conservancy's Environmental Justice Fellows cohort

At left: a community planting day for street trees in Newburgh; a utility vehicle for watering new plantings

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS: THE ENERGYCORPS AND THE CLEAN POWER GUIDE

SHV published the Clean Power Guide with Chronogram Media again in 2023, reaching over 100,000 readers directly and supporting local learning experiences including EV Ride and Drives and mini-expos across the region during Climate Solutions Week.

To spread the practical information in the CPG, we worked through the year with a group of highly motivated student interns, the EnergyCorps. Funded with a 90% cost-share by NYSERDA's Clean Energy Workforce Development Program, these young people got a thorough education in the workings of home energy systems as well as their role in implementing the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. Through social media and by supporting community programs, the EnergyCorps helped us build public understanding of the Climate Act's value and logic, and how we can help implement it.



2023 Clean Power Guide

Clean Power Guide Year 6

Circulation: over 100,000

Reach: Hudson River Corridor

Message: "You can reduce your
footprint, modernize your home, learn

and have fun doing it."

Messengers: Collaboration between Chronogram and SHV, with the help of SHV's EnergyCorps Interns











SHV's 2023 Clean Energy Interns: Bruce Dunsmore, Joanne Louis-Paul, Kevin Mitto, Alyssa Rivera and Maeve Sheridan. Not pictured: Lizette de Alem

FINANCIAL SUMMARY & THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Sustainable Hudson Valley Income Statement (Profit and Loss) January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2023		
Board Contributions	4,020.13	
Grant Income	87,830.00	
Grassroots Donations	13,435.56	
Large Donations	54,000.00	
Local Funded programs	51,913.35	
Other Revenue	145.61	
Program Revenue	16,626.09	
Sponsorships	8,700.00	
State funded programs	13,996.80	
Total Income	250,667.54	

Operating Expenses		
Accounting	1,766.00	
Advertising	64.08	
Communications and Online Services	1,970.59	
Consulting	17,791.11	
Administrative and Office Expenses	3006.22	
Insurance	4,251.45	
Salaries and Wages	136,319.32	
Payroll & Unemployment Tax Expense	43,940.99	
Special Events Expense	1,663.30	
Website Expenses	1,630.92	
Total Operating Expenses	212,403.98	
Operating Income	38,263.56	
Net Income	38,263.56	

2023 Sponsors

















Mid-Hudson Energy Transition

















































LOOKING AHEAD

After extensive development and stakeholder involvement, New York's climate policies will significantly come online in 2024. SHV's Regional Climate Action Road Map and Tool Kit provides a common reference for the work to be done, on the ground, to reach 2030 and 2040 targets and shape our common future in the Hudson Valley.

Doing this work has opened up unexpected, promising partnerships to accelerate climate action by overcoming barriers and mobilizing resources. We will build upon these partnerships in 2024 to help reconcile the rules surrounding renewable energy siting and grid upgrades at the local level, strengthen the circular economy, help neighborhoods to improve resilience to climate stresses, and bring new networks together to address persistent challenges.

To support this work, SHV is launching a new website at the beginning of 2024. We are building on critical programs to achieve the consistent impact that the situation requires – for example, by expanding the speakers' bureau developed for Climate Solutions Week to serve as an educational resource all year long.

The second annual Climate Action Conference will be held spring 2024, showcasing our collective work and bringing the solutions community together to think creatively about systems change. Alongside partner organizations involved in creating the Road Map, we will explore a structure for implementation, known as a Collective Impact Coalition. In the fall of 2024, we will begin an annual cycle of high-profile reporting on how we are doing as a region in achieving climate goals. Sustainable Hudson Valley's "problem solving partnerships" program will evolve in support of the collaborative efforts that are needed.

Staff and Consultants

Chrisso Babcock Kyle Conway

Ben Eckstein

Melissa Everett, Ph.D.

Suzie Fromer

Cynthia Nikitin

Barbara Todd

Board Members

David Dell, Ph.D.

Perry Goldschein, J.D.

Rev Limina Grace Harmon

Maureen Hart

Lucy Johnson, Ph.D.

Edward Lawson, Jr., J.D., MBA

Victor-Pierre Melendez, M. Sc.

Michael Sheridan, Ph.D.

Interns

Bruce Dunsmore

Lizette De Alem

Joanne Louis-Paul

Kevin Mitto

Alyssa Rivera

Maeve Sheridan



County Executive Jen Metzger speaking at SHV's spring 2023 Climate Action Conference



PO Box 145 Rhinebeck, NY 12572 Sustainhv.org