



THE ENGAGED SIERRAN

NH SAVES: SUCCESS STORIES

Last month we asked whether New Hampshire Chapter members had participated in the energy audit program, as had our Chapter Director, Catherine Corkery. This program, conducted by the utility companies and supported by [RGGI funds](#), can provide funding of up to 50 percent of the cost of improvements to homes, plus low- or interest-free loans for balances. We heard back from three families who have gone through the process, and they are all reporting very positive experiences. Thank you, members, for passing on your experiences as incentive to others! Much of your information was presented to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on April 8, because nothing is as convincing as real-life examples.

Jumping on the bandwagon early was the Loosmann family in Newfields, who had their 2,500 sq ft home surveyed in March 2014, and followed up with blown-in insulation and heat escape sealing. They report a cozier home, a 50 percent savings on the upgrades (matched by the utility company from RGGI funds) -- plus Kim calculates a savings of a full tank of oil and reducing energy use by more than 3,000 Kwh this last winter. Half of the cost of the project was their responsibility. Making the payback even simpler, the utility tacked the monthly loan payment onto the regular utility bill. The result was a big improvement over drafts and space heaters!

The Newfield family in Berlin was on board in 2013, having \$5,000 worth of insulation added to their 1,000 sq ft home. They qualified for 50 percent of this cost to be covered by the NH Saves program, and the remainder will be paid off soon through an interest-free loan. Gary feels they are much happier without drafts, and the house holds heat overnight much better. They are saving on both oil and cord wood expenses. The next step for the Newfields is to install window inserts to further reduce heat loss.

NH SAVES
we all win

difference in the next heating season.

These members were directed to local contractors who are working with the various regional utilities. In each instance, they reported that the contractors were pleasant and professional. By keeping more dollars in their own communities, they supported local businesses they could rely on in the future.

Please follow the progress of [HB208](#), which seeks in part to eliminate RGGI funds used for individual and small business projects. There are few other resources for most of us to get help with these energy saving projects -- certainly not ones as accessible and easy to cope with financially. The New Hampshire Chapter of the Sierra Club stands in opposition to this bill.

SCHEDULE AN ENERGY AUDIT TODAY!

The past winter was a long one -- and we know what it cost us in energy bills. **This is the time** to contact your utility company to arrange an energy audit.

Start at [NH Saves](#) for tips on getting started with your energy improvements, recommendations on appliances, and links to contractors.

At [My Energy Plan](#) you can test your eligibility for assistance based on your current energy consumption.

By next winter, your family could be enjoying a comfortable home instead of huddling over a space heater. The savings are real, and the incentives are substantial -- no reason not to look into it.

ACTION ALERT

Climate deniers in the State House are trying to end the most successful climate solutions program in New Hampshire.

[Send a message to your state senator to support climate action!](#)



Please send a message to the NH Senate to restore [RGGI funding](#) for homeowners in New Hampshire. While the Energy and Natural Resources Committee has an amendment to maintain RGGI that goes in the right direction, the amendment actually ends funding for homeowners to make energy improvements. We are calling on the Senate to put residential programs back in. RGGI should not be picking winners and losers.

[Send the Senators a message right NOW before it is too late.](#)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

A huge thank you to all of you who submitted a financial contribution to the New Hampshire Chapter. Your investment will fund State House advocacy efforts, strong volunteer programs, and valuable partnerships with businesses and volunteer organizations.

Your support has never been more important.

Haven't sent a gift yet? It's not too late! [Give your gift online today.](#) Your gift will go directly to the NH Chapter of the Sierra Club.

LOVING YOUR GARDEN, DESPITE CLIMATE CHANGE



As we experience more erratic weather patterns, gardeners and homeowners can retrain their skills to match current conditions. Drought, unending winters, washouts, "bad bugs", diseases, etc. can be very discouraging, but there are many ways to help your yard, and the wildlife dependent on it, to thrive. [Improving your soil](#), [planting native plants](#) and eliminating the use of harmful chemicals will strengthen your habitat's ability to survive adverse weather conditions and the other ills brought on by changing weather patterns.

First line of defense for education and free advice on all things NH garden related is the [UNH Cooperative Extension](#) service, where information on all things gardening can be retrieved. For example, you can download [this PDF document](#) that clearly describes our state's trees, shrubs, and vines with wildlife value. Your local responsible supplier of plants and materials can also be a great resource, e.g. [American Beauties](#), which has endless printable resource materials.

Ask questions, take classes, learn best practices for garden defense and wildlife/pollinator attraction - become environmentally proactive in your own yard and garden!

So learn to mulch, compost or just be more aware of your neighborhood so that the wildlife we treasure has homes and adequate resources, and you have the garden of your dreams!

SUNAPEE EXPANSION PUBLIC HEARING MAY 5

Just last week, the NH Department of Economic and Resource Development (DRED) announced the approval of the Mt Sunapee Expansion with a few suggested changes. This is very controversial because of two issues:

- There are acres of old growth trees in the middle of the expansion that are worthy for protections.
- The prospect of condos and sprawl in the neighboring towns.

We are concerned about both of these issues. Mt Sunapee is a special place to animals, trees, and to us humans, too. We are skeptical that the expansion could have a positive impact on the Sunapee area.

We urge you to attend the public hearing scheduled for May 5.

Learn more online. Read:

- [Text of DRED's announcement](#) last week
- Concord Monitor [article](#), published April 16 (after the announcement)

- Concord Monitor [editorial](#) about the expansion (before the announcement)

Going to the public hearing? Let us know! Email nhsc603@gmail.com.

When: Tuesday, May 5 ~ 6pm

Where: Mt. Sunapee Resort, in the Sunapee Lodge

The public comment period is open until 4pm June 5. If you can't attend the hearing, please submit your comments. Here's how:

By Mail:

DRED Commissioner Jeffrey J. Rose
RE: Mt. Sunapee draft response
Dept Resources and Economic Development
172 Pembroke Rd, PO Box 1856, Concord NH 03301

By Email:

MountSunapeeComments@dred.nh.gov

PANCAKE BREAKFAST ADDRESSES CLIMATE CHANGE

NH Sierra Club and our partners, including the UNH Student Environmental Action Coalition, held a Pancake Breakfast and Conversation in March. Speakers discussed the climate impacts we see now and ways we can address climate changes in New Hampshire, all within the context of the maple syrup industry.

Pictured, from left: Jennifer Wilhelm, New Hampshire Food Alliance; Dr. Martha Carlson, Maple Sugar farmer and scientist; Erin Lane, USDA Northeast Climate Hub Director of Partnerships; Brad Presby, NH Maple Syrup Producers Association.



EARTH DAY SPRING CLEANING

Saturday, April 25

10am-2pm

40 North Main St., 2nd Floor, Concord

Come celebrate Earth Day with your favorite environmental group -- the Sierra Club! Just like everyone else, we need a large dose of Spring Cleaning and with your help we can create a great space for volunteers to take action.

We have a lot of recycling to do -- lots of paper and oddly electronics. Who knew? Sign up for a two hour shift to help us sift through the important and not-so-important files. Your help will make the office more functional, efficient and enjoyable. [RSVP today!](#)

EARTH DAY AROUND THE STATE

Monadnock Earth Day Festival

More than 30 area nonprofit organizations and local sustainable businesses are gathering together to showcase their contributions to the vibrancy and wellness of the Monadnock Region.

When: Saturday, April 25, 2015; 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Where: Cypress Street (next to the Food Co-op), Keene, NH

Admission: Free and open to the public

More information: [facebook.com/MonadnockEarthDayFestival](https://www.facebook.com/MonadnockEarthDayFestival)

Earth Day Celebration

Plant seeds, make paper pots and seed tapes to take home, visit farm animals, learn all about composting, take a hike with Moose Mountain Regional Greenways, walk on our trails & learn about trees, harvest spring herbs to make a spring soup and more.

When: Saturday, April 25, 2015; 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Where: New Hampshire Farm Museum, 1305 White Mountain Hwy, Route 125, Milton, NH

Admission: \$5 adult, \$ 3 child ages 4-17 yrs, museum members free.

More information: www.farmmuseum.org

SAVE THE PLANET & SOME GREEN.
JOIN AND ENJOY NEW MEMBER BENEFITS



April 2015



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