



# Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter - April 2023

<https://www.uufaithaction.org/blog/>

**UU Seventh Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Environmental Justice (EJ): Addressing disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental effects in communities of low-income residents or persons of color.**



**"Teach us to walk the soft earth as relatives to all that live." - Sioux prayer**

**"Let every breath, every word, and every step make the mother earth proud of us." - Amit Ray**

**"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make." - Jane Goodall**

**For a map showing Earth Day activities, visit**

**<https://earthday.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/8d15cc3da12d4338a109c7d64c97c02a>. Also find activities in different NJ towns by doing an internet search for "Earth Day NJ 2023."**

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## Update on New Jersey School of Conservation (NJSOC) & Summer Camp Opportunities

The New Jersey School of Conservation (NJSOC) is an Environmental Education center located in Stokes State Forest in Sussex County, New Jersey. It is currently under the management of the Friends of the New Jersey School of Conservation, through an agreement with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The NJSOC was founded in 1949, and occupies facilities in Stokes State Forest built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Many environmentalists (including **EJTF Co-Chair Peggy Middaugh!**) were introduced to the wonders of nature at NJSOC.

A few years ago during the pandemic, when the future of NJSOC was in question, **EJTF joined with others** in supporting the transfer of its management from Montclair State University (who planned to shut it down) to the non-profit Friends of the New Jersey School of Conservation, who is proceeding with new programs at the School, and we're very pleased to see the new programming taking place.

In particular this summer, they will be partnering with Trail Blazers in providing a Summer Camp (open to teenagers 13-16). Through outdoor programs, financially-accessible to all with a tiered fee scale, Trail Blazers equips and empowers youth to build values for life. They "value diverse, equitable, and inclusive spaces with unencumbered access, where all youth and families know that they belong. Realizing that many learning spaces (schools, camps, extracurricular activities) are segregated by family income or culture, [they] work to actualize a vision of a space where youth of all backgrounds can come together." Additional information is available here: <https://trailblazers.org/njsoc-impact/>.



UU FaithAction NJ  
Annual Meeting  **MAY 20th**  
10-11:30 AM | Virtual on Zoom

The UU FaithAction NJ (UUFANJ) Annual Meeting will be May 20, 2023, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. The meeting will be conducted on Zoom, and all NJ UUs are encouraged to attend! Additional information, including the agenda, is available here: <https://www.uufaithaction.org/2023/03/17/save-the-date-annual-meeting-may-20th/#more-14428>.

## ***EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES***

- **EJTF member Walt Nodolny** has had several opinion pieces published regarding the controversy related to unexplained NJ whale deaths, stating "claims that whales and wind are tied together run completely counter to facts" and "the facts show that renewable energy projects like offshore wind will be instrumental in preventing whale deaths by reducing harmful carbon emissions that contribute to climate change." He is an expert in the field, having been a professor of Marine Transportation at SUNY Maritime College for 18 years. See [p. 16](#) for links to two of his opinion pieces. In addition, members of his church, the **Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill (UUCCH)**, have been well represented at recent events related to EJTF's goals, including "NJ Green Amendment Legislator Education Day," and a rally opposing the Gibbstown Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal.

- ***Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF)***

On Saturday, April 8, the Green Earth Ministry (GEM) at the Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF) will present the "Current Revolution" short film series, with discussion afterward, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at 24 Normandy Heights Road, Morristown. Admission is free. See [p. 4](#) for additional information.

## FUTURE EVENTS - *Virtual, In-person, and Hybrid*

**[EJTF members - also watch for email announcements of events with short lead times!]**

<b>APRIL 2023</b> (with <a href="#">hyperlinks</a> to details on the following pages)						
<i>Sun.</i>	<i>Mon.</i>	<i>Tues.</i>	<i>Wed.</i>	<i>Thurs.</i>	<i>Fri.</i>	<i>Sat.</i>
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> <a href="#">"EJ: Confronting Environmental Disparities through a National and Local Lens"</a> - 12:00 p.m.	<b>4</b> <a href="#">i-Tree Open Academy</a> - 1:00 p.m.	<b>5</b> <a href="#">WGO Climate Course for Global Gastroenterology</a> - 8:00 p.m.	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <a href="#">"Current Revolution: Nation in Transition"</a> - 4:00 p.m.
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> <a href="#">LWVNJ "Voter Registration"</a> - 6:00 p.m.	<b>12</b> <a href="#">10th Anniversary Columbia Global Energy Summit</a> - 8:00 a.m.	<b>13</b> <a href="#">"Fundamentals of Food Labels: Organic... etc."</a> - 3:00 p.m. <hr/> <a href="#">"Changing Narratives about Growing Food"</a> - 8:00 p.m.	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <a href="#">Rally: Stop the Toxic Gas Compressors!</a> - 11:00 a.m.
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> <a href="#">i-Tree Open Academy</a> - 1:00 p.m.	<b>19</b> <a href="#">NJ Clean Air Council 2023 Public Hearing</a> - 9:30 a.m. <hr/> <a href="#">Pinelands Commission Climate Committee</a> - 9:30 a.m. <hr/> <a href="#">"Rain Garden 101"</a> - 12:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. <hr/> <a href="#">"The State of Play for Nuclear Energy in the United States"</a> - 3:00 p.m. <hr/> <a href="#">"Localizing Forest Adaptation Strategies to ... Threats"</a> - 4:00 p.m. <hr/> <a href="#">WGO Climate Course for Global Gastroenterology</a> - 8:00 p.m. <hr/> <a href="#">Earth Day Mini Film Fest</a>	<b>20</b> <a href="#">"Unlocking the Potential of Digital Climate Entrepreneurship"</a> - 1:15 p.m. <hr/> <a href="#">"Building Electrification: Moving toward Netzero"</a> - 7:00 p.m. <hr/> <a href="#">"Active for Earthcare!" UUMFE Earth Day Worship Service</a> - 8:00 p.m. <hr/> <a href="#">Earth Day Mini Film Fest</a>	<b>21</b> <a href="#">NJDEP EJAC Applications Due</a> - 5:00 p.m.	<b>22</b> <a href="#">Drive Electric Day Montclair 2023</a> - 10:00 a.m. <hr/> <a href="#">Earth Day Mini Film Fest</a>
<b>Calendar continues on p. 4.</b>						

**Calendar continued from p. 3**

<p><b>23</b> <a href="#">Earth Day Mini Film Fest</a></p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b> <a href="#">NJ Senate Hearing on FY2024 Budget</a> - 10:00 a.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">i-Tree Open Academy</a> - 1:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">"What You Need to Know About Permitting Reform"</a> - 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>26</b> <a href="#">"Forestry... New Pests, New Problems"</a> - 1:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">LWVNJ "Hyperlocal: Understanding Municipal and County Government"</a> - 6:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>29</b> <a href="#">Drive Electric Earth Day Event</a> - 11:00 a.m.</p>
<p><b>30</b> <a href="#">"Wild Edibles Information Walk" (NJSOC)</a> - 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>31</b></p>	<p align="center"><b><a href="#">Save the date - UUFANJ Annual Meeting, 5/20/2023, 10:00 a.m.</a></b></p>				

**"Environmental Justice: Confronting Environmental Disparities through a National and Local Lens"**  
**28th Annual Public Health Symposium**  
**4/3/2023, 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**  
**Piscataway, NJ - In-person**

This half-day Symposium (sponsored by the Center for Public Health Workforce Development (CPHWD) at Rutgers University School of Public Health and the Alpha Eta Chapter of Delta Omega Honorary Society in Public Health) will bring together leaders from academia, community organizations, and the government to examine how impacted communities historically fought for change and what lessons can be learned from these efforts. It will also explore ways New Jersey is leading the fight for environmental justice and where work remains to be done. Speakers include **EJTF partner Melissa Miles and Nicky Sheats** of the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA). Additional information, including how to register - and how to register your car for parking - is available here:  
<https://rutgerstraining.sph.rutgers.edu/phs2023/>.



**"Current Revolution: Nation in Transition"**  
**4/8/2023, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**  
**Morristown, NJ - In-person**

On Saturday, April 8, the Green Earth Ministry (GEM) at the Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF) will present the "Current Revolution" short film series, with discussion afterward, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at 24 Normandy Heights Road, Morristown. Admission is free. "Current Revolution," a series of short films from the American Resilience Project (<https://www.amresproject.org/>), explores the transition from fossil fuels to renewables with a focus on national security, economic prosperity, and environmental justice. Additional information is available here:  
<https://onrealm.org/MorristownUnita/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=Y2QxOGE5MGYtZWY0Yi00YzFjLWJlZDYtYWZiNTAwZjc2MDM5>.



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**10th Anniversary Columbia Global Energy Summit - Virtual**  
**4/12/2023, 8:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.**

"Ten years ago, the Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy [CGEP] was launched with the goal of bringing policymakers actionable insights and solutions to solve today's greatest energy and climate challenges... [it] is now a major policy institute — housing nearly 100 scholars and staff, training dozens of future energy leaders, and developing answers to the toughest problems of the clean energy transition... To kick off the celebration of our 10th anniversary, CGEP will host a special 10th Anniversary Global Energy Summit - where we will convene some of the brightest minds and important leaders to discuss turbulence in global energy markets, the growing gap between climate ambition and reality, and the tensions between today's energy needs and tomorrow's energy transition imperative." Additional information and the link to register are available here:

<https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events/2023-columbia-global-energy-summit/>.

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**"Fundamentals of Food Labels: Organic, Certified Naturally Grown, Salmon Safe, Bee Better" - Webinar**  
**4/13/2023, 3:00 p.m.**

This webinar is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The webinar will cover the basic objectives, principles, and requirements of several food labels and certification programs: Organic, Certified Naturally Grown, Salmon Safe, and Bee Better. Learn how these programs work to support conservation on crop and livestock operations, and how a producer becomes certified. A link to some additional information including how to register/join is available here:

<https://forestrywebinars.net/webinars/fundamentals-of-food-labels-organic-certified-naturally-grown-salmon-safe-bee-better/>. [Note: this event uses Adobe Connect.]

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**"Changing Narratives about Growing Food"**  
**4/13/2023, 8:00 p.m. - via Zoom**

"The soil that we need to grow food and fiber is in more danger than people realize! The steady degradation of soil worldwide is almost invisible due to widespread practices of tillage that we now understand makes the life of the microbes that support plants very miserable. Who knew? Fortunately renewal and resilience is possible, necessary, and urgently needed. This discussion will focus on action steps everyone can take immediately to work the levers of change." This webinar, sponsored by Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC), will be presented by Dr. Jean Eels, proprietor of E Resources Group, LLC, which provides "educational outreach on ag and the environment, program evaluation, and fun, funky projects with research and interpretation." Additional information and the links to register for the Zoom event, or to join the event on Facebook Live, are available here: <https://uujec.org/webinars>.

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**Rally: Stop the Toxic Gas Compressors!**  
**4/15/2023, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**  
**Ringwood, NJ - In-person**

Despite nearly three years of opposition and major risks to the climate, clean air and water, and public health, the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (TGP) was given permission to start construction of toxic gas compressors in North Jersey last fall. Fortunately, legal appeals are still pending, which means there is still time to pressure Governor Murphy to intervene and stop this project. Food & Water Watch, in collaboration with Reclaim Our Tomorrow, 350 NJ - Rockland, and others, will rally near the site where one of the gas compressors is being constructed. Additional information and a link to sign up are available here:

<https://www.mobilize.us/fww/event/555421/>.

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**Pinelands Commission Climate Committee Meeting**  
**4/19/2023, 9:30 a.m.**  
**Location is forthcoming**

Additional information on location, agenda, and other details will be available here, on the "Meetings" tab: <https://www.state.nj.us/pinelands/>.

**NJ Clean Air Council 2023 Public Hearing  
"Air Toxics: How Far Has New Jersey Come  
in Almost a Quarter Century?"  
4/19/2023, 9:30 a.m.  
Trenton, NJ - In-person**

The goal of the 2023 NJ Clean Air Council public hearing is to determine the amount of progress NJ has made in almost a quarter century of emission control and regulation of air toxics. The Clean Air Council last held a public hearing on the specific impact of air toxics in NJ in 2000. Issues the Council intends to address, along with additional information and instructions to provide written comments, are available here:

<https://dep.nj.gov/cleanaircouncil/2023cachearing/>.

The Clean Air Council has invited guest speakers to address these issues in formal presentations. Members of the public may join the conversation, and submit written comments for incorporation into the hearing report. **Written statements will be accepted until May 5, 2023.**

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**"Rain Garden 101" - Webinar  
4/19/2023, 12:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.**

Join South Jersey Water Savers (a collaboration between 9 organizations working to protect water quality) for a virtual workshop to learn more about rain gardens and how you can build one at home. When you attend, you'll have the opportunity to sign up for a 30-minute consultation where you'll work one-on-one with a Rutgers landscape architect to plan a customized rain garden for your property. Participants who build a rain garden as part of this program may be eligible for a rebate (rebate availability varies) of up to \$650, or help from Rutgers with installation. Additional information and the links to register for a webinar are available here:

<https://www.sjwatersavers.org/makeover-sessions/>.

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**"The State of Play for Nuclear Energy in the  
United States" - Virtual  
4/19/2023, 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

"The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) invites you to a briefing about the Department of Energy's (DOE's) nuclear energy programs. Through provisions in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and \$1.8 billion in fiscal year 2023 funding for nuclear energy research, development, and demonstrations, the [Biden]

Administration and Congress have strongly supported the existing reactor fleet and invested in next-generation technologies. This briefing will highlight nuclear energy programs underway from basic research to demonstration projects, including work happening across DOE's national labs." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here:

<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/041923nuclear>.

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**Earth Day Mini Film Fest - Hybrid  
4/19, 4/20, 4/22, & 4/23/2023**

Hosted by One Earth Film Festival and the City of Chicago Office of Climate and Environmental Equity, this mini-film festival will present powerful films and discussions in a weeklong celebration of Earth Day. Watch topnotch films and participate in engaging conversations that will help you understand topical issues and move toward concrete actions to mitigate climate change, address environmental justice and more. The in-person sessions are in the Chicago area, but four films (i.e., "Elemental: Reimagine Wildfire," "Follow the Drinking Gourd + Remothering the Land," "Biocentrics," and "The Street Project" - preceded by the short film "Walking for a Happier Earth") may be viewed by registering for a Virtual Watch Party for each of them. Additional information and registration links are available here:

<https://www.oneearthfilmfest.org/earth-day>.

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**"Active for Earthcare!" UUMFE Earth Day  
Worship Service - via Zoom  
4/20/2023, 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

The UU Ministry for Earth (UUMFE) is presenting this Earth Day worship service as a livestream, and all or part of it may be utilized by congregations in for a future service. "Our faith calls us into relationship with the sacred elements of Earth and to put power in the hands of the many and not the few. This Earth Day, join the [UUMFE] in meditation, song, and stories to honor nature's elements and become Active for Earthcare - a call to engage in the face of the climate crisis. This worship will be a visual feast, and the worship structure may be a bit different from what you are used to - lean into it and enjoy the journey!" For additional information see:

<https://www.uumfe.org/resources/spring-for-change-2022/spring2023/>; and registration is available here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvc--vrTouHtJ6EsV4etzBjap-yiQDrMQE>.

**"Unlocking the Potential of Digital Climate Entrepreneurship"- Webinar**  
**4/20/2023, 1:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.**

"Digital tools are being used now to optimize the performance of renewable energy and integration into the power system. Data analytics, machine learning, and advanced sensors optimize agriculture, the routing, and scheduling of vehicles to reduce fuel consumption and emissions, and monitor and reduce the energy consumption of buildings... Join LightWorks at Arizona State University [ASU] and the Security and Sustainability Forum in a 90-minute exploration of how the digital climate tech landscape is evolving and how institutions like ASU are bringing leading-edge policy, technology, and social science research to the digital climate tech field to accelerate the transition." Additional information and registration are available here:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1239556853202308182>.

**"Building Electrification: Moving toward NetZero" - Webinar**  
**4/20/2023, 7:00 p.m.**

Presented by the Sierra Club NJ Chapter, this webinar addresses "Techniques for your house to reach 'Net Zero.'" The first topic is "Best Practices: Using Heat Pumps in Energy Efficient Buildings." Bill Amann, President, M&E Engineers, will review heat pump basics, and then discuss relative efficiencies and selection criteria among many possible system designs, depending upon building characteristics, and will also discuss the most recent energy efficiency code adoption, and problems with policing. The second speaker will review design decisions for an all-electric 4-story "beach house." Additional information and the registration link are available here:

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000002NqZQAA0&mapLinkHref=>.

**NJDEP Environmental Justice Advisory Council (EJAC) Applications Due**  
**4/21/2023 - 5:00 p.m. - Submit online**

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is seeking applications from interested individuals to be considered for appointment to the Environmental Justice Advisory Council (EJAC). **(EJTF member Nancy Griffeth is a member of EJAC.)** There are seven vacancies

for three-year terms from 2023 through 2026 in the following sectors:

- Local grassroots or community groups (1)
- Statewide environmental justice or environmental advocacy organizations (1)
- Statewide social justice/civil rights or labor organization (1)
- County or municipal government or planning professional (1)
- Academia (2)
- Business and Industry (1).

Applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on 4/21/2023. Additional information and the link to complete and submit the application are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/ej/ej-council/>.

**Drive Electric Day Montclair 2023**  
**4/22/2023, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**  
**Montclair, NJ - In-person**

"Join us to see EVs, talk with EV drivers, hear about their experiences, and learn all the benefits of EVs. We'll have a variety of electric cars and pickups on display, as well as e-bikes, an electric lawn mower and snow blower, and even an electric school bus. Bring the family. We'll be just down the street from the Northeast Earth Coalition Earth Day celebration in Crane Park." There, there will be a free ice cream truck along with a fire engine for kids to explore. PSEG will be there to answer questions about connecting home charging stations to the grid, and there will be literature available about federal and state grants to help lessen the cost of buying an EV and charging station. Additional information, including a list of vehicles registered to attend and links to register to attend, or to show your vehicle, are available here:

<https://driveelectricearthday.org/event?eventid=3614>.

**NJ Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee Hearing on FY2024 State Budget**  
**4/25/2023 - 10:00 a.m. - Virtual**

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee will hold a public hearing on the FY 2024 NJ budget. The hearing will be conducted remotely, and the public may view the hearing through the State Legislature's homepage, here:

<https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>.

Note: an excellent article about the NJ budget process is available here:

<https://www.njpp.org/publications/explainer/new-jersey-state-budget-101/>.

## "What You Need to Know About Permitting Reform"

**4/25/2023, 7:00 p.m. - Webinar**

According to a recent Princeton study, more than 80 percent of the emissions reductions potential of the Inflation Reduction Act would be wasted if it isn't made easier to build the infrastructure necessary to expand clean energy. As climate activists are finding out, permitting reform is the lynchpin to unlocking our energy future. In this Elders Climate Action webinar, Dana Nuccitelli, an environmental scientist and climate journalist, will discuss what permitting reform is, why it's so important for America's climate targets, what the Biden Administration and Congress can do to achieve it, and why some climate justice organizations are concerned about it.

[https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/nc\\_apr23/](https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/nc_apr23/)

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### **Drive Electric Earth Day Event** **4/29/2023, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.** **Newton, NJ - In-person**

"Come to Sussex County Mall on Hampton Road in Newton, NJ on April 29th between 11am and 4pm to examine a display of electric vehicles (EVs). We are adjacent to the Newton Classic Car Show. EV owners and dealers will share their experience with you in collaboration with the Central Jersey Electric Auto Association in order to highlight electric vehicles during Earth Week. Your host, Skylands Group, Sierra Club NJ Chapter will have information and handouts available." Additional information, including a list of vehicles registered to attend and links to register to attend, or to show your vehicle, are available here:

<https://driveelectricearthday.org/event?eventid=3643>.

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### **"Wild Edibles Information Walk"** **Friends of The New Jersey School of Conservation (NJSOC)**

**4/30/2023, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**  
**Sandyston, NJ - In-person**

"Jumpstart a foraging habit for your soups, stews, salads, pestos and fritters! Your program leader, Joanne White, will lead you on a hike to discuss and take photos of whatever is available in woods and meadow-like areas. Although this is not an eating event, lots of follow-up information will be available including an email with photos and descriptions of items covered on the walk. There

will be references to dichotomous keys, books, nutrition, safety, ethics, gastronomy, survival and fun science. Joanne is a former science teacher with over 40 years of teaching experience, and decades of enjoying wild edibles. This program is for older teens (age 16 and up) and adults. Registration (\$12.00) is required; additional information and the registration link are available here: <https://friendsofnjsoc.org/event/spring-wild-edibles-information-walk/>.

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### **League of Women Voters of New Jersey (LWVNJ) Activist Trainings - Virtual** **Various dates**

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey (LWVNJ) is presenting a public series of virtual activist training sessions designed to equip participants "with the knowledge and skills needed to carry out dynamic organizing strategies that can effectively influence public policy and the state of democracy in New Jersey." The sessions scheduled for April 2023 are listed below and on [p. 9](#); descriptions of these and additional sessions, along with the links to register for all sessions, are available here: <https://www.lwvnj.org/training>.

### **LWVNJ "Voter Registration"** **4/11/2023, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.-via Zoom**

"The first step towards increasing voter turnout is registering voters. The Census Bureau estimated that in 2020, only 168.3 million people, or about two-thirds of the total voting-age population (66.7%) were registered to vote in 2020. Not only is there a large gap between eligible voters and registered voters, but new voters become eligible every day – maybe by celebrating a birthday, becoming a U.S. Citizen, or even moving to a new state where they need to re-register to vote. Until New Jersey passes measures like Same Day Voter Registration, voters need to register at least 21 days in advance of an election. Join this training to learn the ins and outs of setting up voter registration events, best practices for capturing data for GOTV follow-up, and the most common questions that new voters will have for you." The registration link is available here: <https://www.lwvnj.org/training>.



**LWVNJ "Hyperlocal: Understanding Municipal and County Government"**  
**4/26/2023, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.-via Zoom**

"Most people know that the actions that federal and state governments take can have major implications on the lives of millions of Americans. But what about local government? In New Jersey, thousands of municipal and county government officials are responsible for making critical daily decisions and delivering essential services to the communities they serve. Despite the tremendous power that local government has over our daily lives, most people know little to nothing about what it does or how it works. Join this training to learn about the structures and powers of the municipal and county government bodies that are making decisions for your community." The registration link is available here:  
<https://www.lwvnj.org/training>.

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**Rutgers Climate Institute Listing of Climate Seminars**

Multiple online events are listed on this site, including those from the Rutgers Climate Institute and also many climate-related events sponsored by various groups such as EPA, NOAA, and others. Currently there are limited events listed for April 2023 (a sampling is listed below), but the site includes updated information over time; check the site periodically for an updated list:  
<https://climatechange.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/range.listevents/>.

**"Localizing Forest Adaptation Strategies to Diverse Northeastern Forest Ecosystems and Threats" - Webinar**  
**4/19/2023, 4:00 pm**

"Northeastern forests span a great diversity of ecological settings and ownership types, which limits the general utility of broad recommendations for sustaining forest functions and values under changing climate and disturbance regimes. Similarly, the varied nature of climate change impacts and their interactions with other stressors, including non-native insects and diseases, present unique, site-level management challenges that complicate strategies for maintaining specific species or habitat conditions into the future." A number of strategies were tested to address these issues, "including a mix of novel tactics, such as planting

future-climate adapted species, and more commonly applied ecological silvicultural approaches designed to increase ecosystem complexity, all localized to current forest conditions and long- term forest and wildlife goals for the site. This webinar will highlight the outcomes from this work and implications for balancing objectives associated with increasing adaptive capacity, while sustaining key wildlife species and ecosystem processes, such as carbon storage and sequestration." [Note: the Zoom link will be available approximately one week prior to the scheduled date of the webinar.] A link to additional information is available here:  
<https://climatechange.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/icalrepeat.detail/2023/04/19/7627/-/webinar-localizing-forest-adaptation-strategies-to-diverse-northeastern-forest-ecosystems-and-threats>.

**"Forestry and Natural Resources Webinar - New Pests, New Problems"**  
**4/26/2023, 1:00 p.m.**

"Non-native insects are a major forest health threat across the U.S. These pests can easily be moved through infested materials and due to global trade and travel, they continue to spread across the southeast. Recently two new pests have been found in North Carolina - the spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*), discovered in June 2022, and the elm zigzag sawfly (*Aproceros leucopoda*), discovered in August 2022. Both species originate from parts of Asia and can now be found in several states across the U.S." This webinar will examine these new pests and the problems they may cause. A link to additional information is available here:  
<https://climatechange.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/icalrepeat.detail/2023/04/26/7658/-/forestry-and-natural-resources-webinar-new-pests-new-problems>.

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**i-Tree Open Academy - Virtual**  
**Various dates, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

"i-Tree is a state-of-the-art, peer-reviewed software suite from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service that provides urban and rural forestry analysis and benefits assessment tools. The i-Tree tools can help strengthen forest management and advocacy efforts by quantifying forest structure and the environmental benefits that trees provide. Since the initial release of the i-Tree Tools in August 2006, thousands of communities, non-profit

organizations, consultants, volunteers and students around the world have used i-Tree to report on individual trees, parcels, neighborhoods, cities, and even entire states. By understanding the local ecosystem services that trees provide, i-Tree users can link forest management activities with environmental quality and community livability. Whether your interest is a single tree or an entire forest, i-Tree provides data that you can use to demonstrate value and set priorities for more effective decision-making." The i-Tree Open Academy will provide a broad introduction to the i-Tree suite of tools. Several sessions have already taken place (i.e., "Introduction to i-Tree," "Online with MyTree, i-Tree Design, and i-Tree Planting," and "The view from the top: i-Tree Canopy and OurTrees") but recordings are available. Remaining sessions (i.e., **4/4/2023** - "i-Tree Landscape: Your data, maps, and equity portal," **4/18/2023** - "i-Tree Eco - the flagship tool," and **4/25/2023** - "Putting i-Tree to Work") can be livestreamed or recordings may be viewed later. Additional information and links to register and to

view recordings are available here: <https://www.itreetools.org/support/i-tree-open-academy-spring-2023>.

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### **WGO Climate Course for Global Gastroenterology - Webinars** **Various Dates, 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

The World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) is presenting a series of nine webinars related to climate change and digestive health. Several have already taken place and recordings are available. Of the remaining webinars, those that may be of interest include "Food, Water Security and Vulnerable Populations" (**4/5/2023**) and "Adaptation, Resilience, and Industry Partnership" (**4/19/2023**). Additional information and links to view previous videos and to register are available here:

<https://www.worldgastroenterology.org/education-and-training/webinars/wgo-climate-course-for-global-gastroenterology>.

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## **VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS**

### **"Beating the Weeds Without Herbicides: Soil-Friendly Organic Weed Management"** **- Video of Webinar**

In this webinar sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Mark Schonbeck of the Organic Farming Research Foundation discussed weed management in organic agriculture and highlighted soil-friendly approaches to help maintain sufficient weed suppression and satisfactory organic yields. "Weeds pose the #1 production hurdle to successful organic farming, and organic producers continually seek to optimize their weed management system for both soil health and production." A link to register to view the video is available here:

<https://conservationwebinars.net/webinars/beating-the-weeds-without-herbicides-soil-friendly-organic-weed-management>.

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### **"Transportation Equity: Community-Building in Action" - Video of Webinar**

This webinar was sponsored by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Transportation Research Board (TRB). "In these times of rapid and unprecedented change, the critical need for urgent action in advancing greater workforce diversity and development, innovation and continuous learning, and 'people-readiness' at all levels has risen to new levels. Climate change, growing inequality, increasing digitalization, new players and business models highlight the critical role of transportation careers in community-building and achieving equity-centered and sustainable outcomes." This webinar spotlighted policies and practices that address inequities and injustices caused and contributed to by transportation. Presenters discussed "the importance of diverse and authentic community participation in driving more equitable policies, programs, practices, and outcomes." The video is available here: <https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/03-22-2023/trb-webinar-career-series-3-transportation-equity-community-building-in-action>.

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## **"Grow Organic: The Climate, Health, and Economic Case for Expanding Organic Agriculture" - Video of Webinar**

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) sponsored this briefing on expanding organic agriculture. "Organic agriculture is a time-tested, scientifically-supported approach to farming and ranching that centers ecological diversity, soil fertility, and natural systems rather than chemical interventions." The briefing featured the firsthand experience of organic farmers and findings from NRDC's new report, *Grow Organic: The Climate, Health, and Economic Case for Expanding Organic Agriculture*. As Congress crafts the next reauthorization of the Farm Bill, this briefing covered how federal policies can support the expansion of organic farming and ranching. The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/032323aq>.

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## **"Whales of New York and New Jersey" - Video of Webinar**

In this webinar, part of the "Option Green" series co-sponsored by the Friends of the East Brunswick Environmental Commission, Danielle Brown, a PhD Candidate at Rutgers University and the Director of Research for Gotham Whale, introduced attendees to the baleen whales found in the coastal waters of NY and NJ, past and present. She focused on humpback whales specifically, including their increasing presence in the region and risks from anthropogenic activity. The video is available here: <https://ilove.ebpl.org/adults/events/whales-new-york-and-new-jersey-zoom/2023-03-22-230000-2023-03-23-003000>.

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## **"2023 Sustainable Energy in America Factbook" - Video of Webinar**

This webinar, sponsored by the Business Council for Sustainable Energy and the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), presented information from the *2023 Sustainable Energy in America Factbook*. "2022 was a record-breaking year for investment in the energy transition and the deployment of renewable power, battery storage, and sustainable transportation according to the eleventh edition of the Sustainable Energy

in America Factbook. The Factbook, published by BloombergNEF (BNEF) and the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE), is available to download for free by registering at <https://www.bcse.org/factbook>. The Factbook provides valuable year-over-year data and insights on the American energy transformation, with an in-depth look at the energy efficiency, renewable energy, and natural gas sectors, as well as emerging areas such as digitalization, micro-grids, offshore wind, hydrogen, and renewable natural gas. The eleventh edition of the Factbook provides new data and analysis about the performance of clean energy sectors by tracking year-on-year as well as long-term trends within the U.S. energy economy." The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/031523factbook>.

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## **"Implementing the Inflation Reduction Act & Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act" - Video of Webinar**

This webinar, sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), addressed implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. "These laws provide billions of dollars to confront the climate crisis and strengthen critical infrastructure." Panelists provided an update on the status of their implementation, described how state and local governments and organizations are accessing funds, and explained the oversight role Congress must play to maximize these investments. The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/030923camp>.

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## **"Water's Edge: The Delaware River Watershed's Challenges & Promises for NJ" - NJ Spotlight News Roundtable - Video of Roundtable**

Over the years, the Delaware River and its web of tributaries have been subjected to grave threats, ranging from pollution to threats from overdevelopment, agrarian waste, and, now, climate change. NJ Spotlight News launched an online project, entitled "Water's Edge: The Trials and Tributaries of the Delaware River Watershed," looking at the challenges facing the

watershed in NJ and the promises for its future, focusing on four key areas: the Highlands, the Pinelands, the Bayshore, and urban estuary. (See the full project here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/special-report/taking-stock-of-delaware-river-watershed-vital-to-millions-in-nj-and-surrounding-states/>.)

The project was capped with an NJ Spotlight News virtual roundtable featuring top experts and leaders, summarizing the online project and exploring what's next for the watershed. The video is available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/water-edge-delaware-river-watershed-experts-discusses-challenges-and-successes/>.

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### **"Climate Adaptation for Forest-Dependent Wildlife Webinar Series"** **- Videos of Webinars**

This 12-part "Climate Adaptation for Forest-Dependent Wildlife" webinar series was sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The series told a story about climate change and its impacts on forest ecosystems and forest-dependent wildlife species. It examined forest ecosystems and their composition and structure under a changing climate, and the influence on wildlife populations and carbon dynamics. Tools and management approaches to help facilitate forest and wildlife climate adaptation at both landscape and stand scales were addressed. The videos are available here:

<https://forestadaptation.org/learn/climate-adaptation-forest-dependent-wildlife-webinar-series>.

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### **NJDEP Sustainability Speaker Series Webinar: Building Efficiency** **- Video of Webinar**

During the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Winter 2023 Sustainable Speaker Series (S3) meeting, registrants learned about best practices to ensure building efficiency from industry experts Ken Levenson, Executive Director of Passive House, and William Amann, President of M&E Engineers, Inc. Ken discussed what the qualifications are for a building to meet Passive House standards and the importance of

proper insulation, airtightness, thermal bridge free connections, high-performance windows and doors with solar protection and high efficiency heat recovery ventilation. William shared a presentation focusing on heat pumps and electrification. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1aRfZgHkWM>.

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### **Lead-Free NJ February 2023 Membership Meeting - Video of Meeting**

Lead-Free NJ (LFNJ), an "inclusive, equitable collaborative working to ensure that our children are unburdened by lead and able to thrive in a lead-safe environment through changes to state and local policy," held their February 2023 Membership Meeting via Zoom. The agenda included: an overview of the LFNJ collaborative and updates; community hubs, a new hub, and lead impact stories; opportunity for resource sharing; a panel discussion with LFNJ partners on community efforts and opportunities; and breakout sessions on "How can LFNJ support you? ensuring equity in our work." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0N-1b7ldqZM>.

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### **NJDEP Bergen County EJ Community Engagement Session - Video of Meeting**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) invited Bergen County residents to attend an EJ Community Engagement Session regarding Environmental Justice. This community engagement session provided residents, community groups, and other members of the public a chance to meet DEP and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) senior staff and discuss environmental justice issues in Bergen County. It was one of a series being conducted by DEP in communities across NJ. The video is available here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v55IWk\\_k\\_Zw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v55IWk_k_Zw).

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## **"NJ Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan"** **- Videos of Webinars**

New Jersey's Interagency Council on Climate Resilience has been seeking public input on how the state should address extreme heat priorities and concerns as part of the development of a series of plans, known as the Resilience Action Plans, outlining the incorporation of climate resilience into state agencies' policies, programs and regulations. The first Resilience Action Plan will focus on state agency efforts to address increasing extreme heat events resulting from climate change. Public involvement will be an important step in the entire process. The Interagency Council hosted a webinar on 2/9/2023 that presented the Resilience Action Plan initiative and the Scoping Document which addresses its purpose, development process, and content. A second webinar held on 3/2/2023 further developed and discussed potential state agency actions which will build NJ's resilience to extreme heat. The Plan will pay special attention to overburdened and socially vulnerable communities, identifying state actions that focus on environmental justice and equity. Additional information, including the videos of the webinars and a link to the scoping document, are available here: <https://nj.gov/dep/climatechange/resilience-action-plans.html>.



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## **NJDEP Public Session: "Climate Pollutant Reduction Initiatives Phase II"** **- Video of Session**

Building upon the NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats (PACT) reform agenda first directed by Gov. Murphy in January 2020, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is beginning a series of public engagement sessions to explore the next phase of Climate Pollutant Reduction (CPR) initiatives. "Through CPR Phase II, DEP will seek to further reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and other climate pollutants that fuel climate change and adversely affect air quality and public health." In this first general session, DEP provided a recap of its first phase of CPR rules, introduced potential new initiatives and solicited stakeholder feedback. Presentation slides and the video of the session are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/njpact/>.

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## **NJDEP Public Session: "Advanced Clean Cars II"** **- Video of Session**

Building upon the NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats (PACT) reform agenda first directed by Gov. Murphy in January 2020, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is beginning a series of public engagement sessions to explore the next phase of Climate Pollutant Reduction (CPR) initiatives. Among other initiatives, DEP will begin considering the potential adoption of the Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) regulation implemented by the California Air Resources Board. If adopted, the ACC II regulation would require automobile manufacturers to increase their zero-emission sales of light-duty vehicles to 100 percent by 2035. During this session, DEP presented an outline of the potential rulemaking and then invited discussion and questions. Presentation slides and the video of the session are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/njpact/>.

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## EJTF's GOALS for 2022/2023

- 1. Advocating for the adoption of the Green Amendment in New Jersey through work in our congregations and as a Task Force;**
  - 2. Working toward resolving the many challenges in NJ related to food-insecurity, including but not limited to promoting regenerative agriculture, increasing accessibility of healthy food, reducing food waste, and encouraging community and family gardens;**
  - 3. Supporting 100% renewable energy and energy conservation through measures such as the Clean Energy Equity Act, and those affecting transportation and Electric Vehicles (EVs).**
  - 4. [NEW] Advocating for better health and reducing climate change for all by protecting and expanding New Jersey's public and urban forests.**
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## **NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES**

[covering 2/27/2023 – 3/26/2023]

### **ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION**

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#### **Begin the Ban on Gas-Powered Cars in NJ, Urge Green Groups**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), held a public meeting regarding its consideration of potential adoption of the Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) regulation implemented by the California Air Resources Board. If adopted, the ACC II regulation would require automobile manufacturers to increase their zero-emission sales of light-duty vehicles to 100 percent by 2035 (presentation slides and a recording of the meeting are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/njpact/>). At the meeting, environmental advocates urged DEP to fast-track the process so that the program can be adopted by the end of the year. That way, it would give car manufacturers enough time for the program to be in effect for the 2027 model year. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/environmental-groups-urge-nj-to-quickly-adopt-program-that-would-phase-out-sale-of-new-gasoline-powered-vehicles-in-2035/>

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#### **NJ Car Dealers See Obstacles in Switch to Electric Vehicles**

Besides major investments that will be needed to convert dealerships to sell and service electric vehicles (EVs), car dealers foresee issues with electric charging facilities, the global supply chain, and finding mechanics. Electrification to support EVs, which could cost up to \$1 million per dealer, is a major issue, both in terms of availability and timing. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/nj-car-dealers-face-challenges-in-switch-to-electric-vehicles/>

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## FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

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### Stop Woodbridge's 2nd Natural Gas Power Plant, NJ Residents Beg Murphy

As required by the NJ Environmental Justice Law, the project developer held a public information session for a proposed 657-megawatt natural gas electric generating facility, located in the Keasbey section of Woodbridge, NJ. Over 150 people attended the 3-hour long virtual meeting (the video of the meeting is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ppo21eCXvIM>). A number of local governments, and environmental advocates, oppose the project, stating that it "would further pollute a low income community of color that already suffers from failing air quality due to the disproportionate burden of polluting facilities already operating in their community." Meeting participants pointed out that approving this plant runs counter to Gov. Murphy's clean energy goals for NJ, and also to the environmental justice law (which is awaiting implementing regulations to be fully in effect). However, the mayor of Woodbridge, citing jobs and tax revenue and calling the plant "one of the cleanest" in the state, is in favor of the plant, as are some labor trade unions.

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/asbury-park/s/ilu74/stop-woodbridges-2nd-natural-gas-power-plant-nj-residents-beg-murphy>

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### Students, Community Leaders Rally Against Proposed LNG Terminal

In this 4-1/4-minute news video, community activists, students, and environmental advocates rallied in Camden to put pressure on the city council to oppose the Gibbstown Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal, citing increased urgency to stop it in light of the recent derailment in East Palestine, Ohio of the train carrying hazardous substances. The terminal would obtain LNG from PA, utilizing train cars and trucks carrying the highly flammable LNG through South Jersey communities, and then would ship it around the world. Eighteen other municipalities have opposed the project.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/students-community-leaders-rally-against-proposed-lng-terminal/>

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### NJ Transit Would Save Money by Building a Hybrid Backup Power Plant, Study Says

In response to the continuing possibility that NJ Transit will decide to construct a backup natural gas plant in the Meadowlands, EmpowerNJ and the Clean Energy Group commissioned a study to assess an "Alternative Renewable Energy-Based Hybrid Microgrid for NJ TRANSITGRID Project" (the study is available here:

<https://www.cleanegroup.org/wp-content/uploads/NJ-Transit-Microgrid-Analysis.pdf>). The study found that a hybrid renewable plant would cost less than a natural gas plant and could result in increased profits as well. A 4-1/2-minute news video (available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/activists-urge-nj-transit-to-scrap-plan-for-natural-gas-plant-in-meadowlands/>) shows clean energy advocates rallying outside of NJ Transit's headquarters to tout the results of this study and to urge NJ Transit to scrap any plan for a natural gas plant in the Meadowlands.

<https://www.nj.com/news/2023/03/nj-transit-would-save-money-by-building-a-hybrid-backup-power-plant-study-says.html>

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### PSE&G Seeks Approval for Next Phase in Major Overhaul of Gas Infrastructure

PSE&G filed a petition with the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) for approval of a 3-year, \$2.54 billion project that would replace aging cast-iron and unprotected steel pipes, which are prone to leaking methane, with an emphasis on overburdened communities. The project would also enable PSE&G to use renewable hydrogen gas (RNG) and hydrogen in its gas distribution system.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/pseg-seeks-bpu-approval-for-2-5-billion-upgrades-to-cast-iron-and-steel-pipes/>

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## FERC Grants Williams Transco Request to Begin Tree Removal for Pipeline Project

Despite NJ's finding that gas from this project is not needed by the state, and requests to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by environmental and state organizations for a rehearing of its previous approval of the project, FERC has issued Williams Transco a Notice to Proceed (NTP) with tree cutting for its pipeline expansion. According to the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, tree cutting began within a half hour of FERC issuing the NTP. Delaware Riverkeeper Network has filed a motion to review FERC's order, and a stay to halt a full NTP for pipeline construction.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2023/03/ferc-grants-williams-transco-request-begin-tree-removal-pipeline-project>

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## RENEWABLE RESOURCES

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### New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Launches New Community Solar Finder

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has launched an online tool (available here: <https://lookerstudio.google.com/embed/reporting/e61544cd-a71b-4121-8263-b958c4843d67/page/L3soC>) that allows NJ residents to search by zip code for community solar projects serving their community. <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2022/approved/20230227.html>

### NJ Wants More Developers for Offshore Wind Projects

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) opened the application window for NJ's third solicitation for offshore wind capacity. The BPU "recommends that any projects selected" contribute to an ongoing Research and Monitoring Initiative that focuses on regional research and monitoring of marine and coastal resources before and during offshore wind development. Numerous environmental groups issued statements in favor of this third solicitation..

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/nj-board-of-public-utilities-opens-way-for-more-offshore-wind-projects/>

## Articles & Videos on Unexplained NJ Whale (And Dolphin) Deaths

- **NJDEP Statement on East Coast Whale Mortalities** - [https://nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2023/23\\_0021.htm](https://nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2023/23_0021.htm)
- **The East Coast Whale Die-Offs: Unraveling the Causes** - In-depth article, including a 6-minute video - <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/scientists-say-no-evidence-that-offshore-wind-development-has-contributed-to-whales-strandings-and-deaths/>
- **Tensions Ratchet Up as More Dead Whales Wash Up** - 4-minute news video - <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/tensions-ratchet-up-as-more-dead-whales-wash-up/>
- **GOP Offshore Wind Hearing Underlines Battle Over Whale Strandings** - 5-minute news video - <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/hearing-hosted-by-gop-unfounded-theories-on-whale-strandings/>
- **Van Drew Asks Congress to Pause Offshore Wind Development Along Atlantic Coast** - 1-minute news video - <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/van-drew-asks-congress-to-pause-offshore-wind-development-along-atlantic-coast/>
- **No Calls for Offshore Wind Moratorium in Lacey: Here's Why** - <https://patch.com/new-jersey/lacey/no-calls-offshore-wind-moratorium-lacey-heres-why>
- **Opinion: This Is How Renewables - Even Offshore Wind - Can Help Save Whales - by EJTF member Walt Nodolny** <https://www.northjersey.com/story/opinion/2023/03/02/east-coast-whale-deaths-can-be-mitigated-by-renewable-energy/69959377007/> - [See p. 2.](#)
- **Opinion: Tall Tales - by EJTF member Walt Nodolny** - <https://njbiz.com/opinion-tall-tales/> - [See p. 2.](#)

Also of interest is the video "Whales of New York and New Jersey" ([see p. 11](#)).



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## CLIMATE CHANGE

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### Advocates Urge Tougher Rules to Stem Climate Change

Building upon the NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats (PACT) reform agenda first directed by Gov. Murphy in January 2020, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has begun a series of public engagement sessions to explore the next phase of Climate Pollutant Reduction (CPR) initiatives. In the first general session, DEP provided a recap of its first phase of CPR rules, introduced potential new initiatives and solicited stakeholder feedback. At the session (links to slides and video are available under "CPR Phase II Initiatives" here: <https://dep.nj.gov/njpact/>) environmental activists repeatedly asked for an expedited timeline for implementation of the proposals outlined by DEP.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/environmentalists-clean-energy-advocates-urge-nj-dep-move-faster-on-regulations/>

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### Murphy's Green Fund Could Finance More Clean-Energy Projects

The budget that Gov. Murphy unveiled for next fiscal year includes \$40 million "to seed a new Green Fund at EDA [NJ Economic Development Agency], which could attract up to \$280 million in private capital to advance the state's bold and new environmental goals," according to the "Budget in Brief" document. The Green Fund is envisioned to enable any matching required for federal Inflation Reduction Act funds to be available quickly so that NJ can be at the front of the line for those programs, and also eventually to be a mix of federal, state, and private funds for climate-related initiatives.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/environmentalists-new-jersey-green-fund-eda-inflation-reduction-act-of-2022/>

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### EPA Announces \$3 Million For New Jersey to Plan Innovative Climate Projects Across the State

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is awarding \$3 million for NJ to plan innovative strategies to cut climate pollution and build clean energy economies across the state." This is the first funding going to states, local governments, Tribes, and territories from the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program created by the Inflation Reduction Act. Later this year, EPA will launch a competition for \$4.6 billion in funding to implement the projects and initiatives included in the plans. NJ will be eligible to receive that implementation funding also because it opted in to receive the planning grant.

<https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20230316c.shtml>

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### Environmentalists Get Day in Court Over State's Climate-Change Regulations

In this 4-1/2-minute news video, environmental advocates led by EmpowerNJ (a coalition of which **EJTF is a member**) describe the lawsuit filed against the Murphy administration that stems from the coalition's allegations that promises made in amendments to the Global Warming Response Act are not being fulfilled. They are asking NJ to adopt rules that: 1) set a 50% greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target for NJ by 2030, from 2005 levels; 2) specifically map out and implement how that reduction is to be achieved; and 3) restrict issuance of operating permits for new fossil fuel infrastructure projects.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/environmentalists-get-day-in-court-over-states-climate-change-regulations/>.

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## Warning About Critical Threshold for Global Warming

In this 6-minute video, Robert Kopp, a Rutgers Professor who is Co-Director of the University Office of Climate Action, and a contributing author to the just-issued Sixth Assessment Report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, describes what will be needed in order to meet the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. If immediate and drastic action is not taken, the world is on track to surpass the 1.5 degree goal within 10 years.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/warning-about-critical-threshold-for-global-warming/>

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## Legislators Delay Vote on Electric Bill After Flak From Fuel Industry

A bill (S3672) that would require the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) "to establish [a] beneficial building electrification program" and would require electric public utilities "to prepare and implement building electrification plans" was pulled from the Senate Environment and Energy committee schedule two days before it was to receive a vote. One of the bill's prime sponsors, Senator Zwicker, said he "fielded so many calls about it" he wanted to hear critics' concerns before proceeding. An advocacy group backed by the Fuel Merchants Association of NJ has initiated a letter-writing and advertising campaign with the slogan "Don't Touch My Gas Stove!"

<https://newjerseymonitor.com/2023/03/10/legislators-delay-vote-on-electric-bill-after-flak-from-fuel-industry/>

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## NJBPU Opens Proceeding on Natural Gas

Gov. Murphy's Executive Order 317 requires that the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) "shall immediately initiate a proceeding to formally engage with stakeholders concerning development of natural gas utility plans that reduce emissions from the natural gas sector to levels that are consistent with achieving the State's 50 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2006 levels by 2030... and within 18 months, develop recommendations for how the natural gas industry can best meet these goals, considering cost and support for

well-paying jobs, including union jobs, necessary to deliver on these goals." The BPU has voted to begin this process, which will include future scheduled stakeholder meetings.

<https://nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2022/approved/20230306b.html>

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## FOREST HEALTH

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### Anger Grows After NJ Cuts Down Swath of Forest

The NJ Department of Environmental Conservation (DEP) Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJFW) recently undertook a project to clearcut 21 acres of mature forest to develop a habitat area for the American woodcock. On 2/1/2023, NJFW's website included a notice that this project would begin "on or about February 1, 2023" and that the American woodcock is a species of concern due to declining numbers on the eastern seaboard over the past 4 decades, "due to meadows and scrub/shrub habitats slowly maturing into forested habitats." The clearcutting proceeded, and NJ conservation groups asked for the project to stop until evaluation can take place of its suitability for woodcock habitat and to halt further degradation of the area. Tom Gilbert, a co-chair of the recent NJ task force on forest management, stated that the NJFW's action illustrates the deficiencies in how NJ oversees its stewardship of woodlands, and that stringent rules, which include public input, are needed for any projects that alter public forestlands

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/nj-conservation-groups-irate-over-state-agencys-forest-clearance-work/>

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### Murphy Administration Awards \$1.1 Million in Urban and Community Forestry Grants to Enhance Management of New Jersey's Urban Trees and Forests

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is awarding 23 Urban and Community Forestry grants to local governments and non-profit organizations for local, self-sustaining urban and community forestry programs. A list of grantees and amounts awarded are available here:

[https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2023/23\\_0022.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2023/23_0022.htm)

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## LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

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### Lead Pipe Removal Program in the Works for Chatham Borough

Chatham Borough is joining many other NJ municipalities in beginning to inventory all water residential water lines to identify lead and galvanized pipes, as required by the NJ program requiring their replacement within 10 years.

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/chatham/lead-pipe-removal-program-works-chatham-borough>

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### HUD Awards \$3.8 Million to Protect Families From Home Health and Safety Hazards in New Jersey

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded \$2 million to the City of Newark, and \$1,859,577 to Greater Bergen Community Action, Inc. (GBCA), as part of its Healthy Homes Production Grant Program. The funds are to be used to identify and mitigate health and safety hazards in the homes of low-income families. The GBCA plans to use the funding to expand on its current Lead-Safe and Weatherization program and complete health and safety interventions in 140 units. The City of Newark plans to remediate approximately 130 homes to ensure the safety of the home environment, including addressing lead level hazard reduction, among other hazards.

<https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/hud-awards-3-8-million-to-protect-families-from-home-health-and-safety-hazards-in-new-jersey/>

### Towns Are Offered High-Tech Help With Water-Quality Projects

In this 4-minute news video, NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner LaTourette describes a program under which small and disadvantaged communities can apply for free technical assistance to help them address infrastructure needs related to their drinking water systems, including lead service lines and PFAS "forever chemicals" contamination. The program, "NJ-TAP" (NJ Technical Assistance Program), in conjunction with the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, can provide free technical assistance for diagnosing problems and getting through the process for project approval, as well as for connecting communities with available funding. Depending on the individual system's needs, participants receive assistance with lead service line inventories, replacement plans, asset management planning, and technical, managerial, and financial evaluations, among other services.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/towns-are-offered-high-tech-help-with-water-quality-projects/>

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## DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)

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### Navy Tests for Carcinogens in Well Water Near Base in Monmouth County

In this 4-minute news video, representatives of Naval Weapons Station Earle and residents of areas near the weapons station describe and react to the Navy's new offers to test well water for PFAS ("forever chemicals"), which was used in firefighting foam and other products at the weapons station.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/navy-tests-for-carcinogens-in-well-water-near-base-in-monmouth-county/>



## **Feds Propose PFAS Limits Tighter Than NJ's Current Restrictions**

After years of waiting for the EPA to propose drinking water standards for PFAS "forever chemicals," during which 21 states, including NJ, proposed or adopted limits of their own, the EPA has proposed standards that are over 61% more stringent than those issued by NJ (see article below). Since these are likely carcinogens, the actual "maximum contaminant level goal" in drinking water is zero, so EPA proposed its standards "taking into consideration the ability to measure and treat to remove a contaminant, as well as the costs and benefits."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/epa-tightens-limits-on-pfas-chemicals-in-water-pfos-pfoa-pfna/>

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## **Water Companies Face Higher Costs With New EPA 'Forever Chemical' Plan**

Although some water departments and companies in NJ have already installed expensive filters that will enable them to comply with EPA proposed drinking water standards for PFAS "forever chemicals," (see article above), others will have to install costly new filters to comply, and then may well raise their rates to pay for them. Systems that are currently upgrading to comply with the NJ standards may choose to wait until the EPA standards are finalized.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/epa-water-contamination-pfas-forever-chemical-higher-costs-cleanup/>

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## **AG Platkin, NJDEP, and Division of Consumer Affairs Announce 1,4-Dioxane Contamination Lawsuit**

NJ has filed a lawsuit against the Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Ferro Corporation (Ferro), and Vulcan Materials Company (Vulcan), as well as other unnamed companies, for widespread 1,4-dioxane contamination in NJ. It is classified as "likely carcinogenic to humans," and the suit alleges both environmental and consumer fraud claims, seeking natural resource damages and punitive damages, among others. It alleges that the defendants "knowingly and willfully manufactured, promoted, and/or sold products containing 1,4-dioxane" in NJ despite knowing that the chemical was harmful and "would

inevitably reach surface water and groundwater in substantial quantities, significantly pollute drinking water supplies, render drinking water unusable and unsafe, threaten the public health and welfare, and harm other natural resources." <https://www.njoag.gov/ag-platkin-njdep-and-division-of-consumer-affairs-announce-14-dioxane-contamination-lawsuit/>

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## **EDUCATIONAL and YOUTH-RELATED**

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### **DEP Seeks Partners to Build Next Generation of Environmental Leaders From Overburdened Communities**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is looking for 5 community-based organizations to partner with for the third year of its Youth Inclusion Initiative, a 6-week program for participants ages 16 to 20, from overburdened communities. In the program, they gain hands-on experience in areas such as air monitoring, water sampling and natural resource management, and it provides them with opportunities to develop the tools to pursue a career in environmental protection, conservation and stewardship. Community-based organizations can receive up to \$100,000 to partner with the DEP on the program; proposals are due 4/12/2023.

[https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2023/23\\_0017.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2023/23_0017.htm)

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### **Rutgers and NJ Board of Public Utilities Offer Scientists Opportunity to Work on Climate Change Mitigation and Clean Energy Policy**

The Eagleton Science and Politics Fellowship at Rutgers University–New Brunswick is partnering with the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to create a Climate Action Track for Eagleton Science Fellows. Currently, the Science Fellows Program "places PhD-level scientists, engineers and health care professionals as in-house science aides in state government offices to help develop and implement science-based policies. This new partnership will pilot a Climate Action Track, directly connecting STEM-trained academics with critical public policy design and development opportunities benefiting the State of New Jersey."

<https://nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2022/approved/20230309.html>



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## OTHER

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### **Proposed Ciba Settlement 'Not About Punishment': DEP Commissioner**

In this article, NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner LaTourette describes the process (but not the calculations of natural resource damages) used in the settlement with BASF, the firm that now owns the Ciba-Geigy site. The article also provides a detailed timeline of interactions between local officials and DEP related to the settlement.

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/tomsriver/proposed-ciba-settlement-not-punishment-dep-commissioner>

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### **DEP Officials: BASF Approached State With Ciba-Geigy Deal; Land Favored Over Cash**

This article describes the details the NJ Department of Environmental Conservation (DEP) provided in response to questions from citizens at a 5-hour-long public hearing about the proposed plan for the Ciba-Geigy site. (A 4-minute news video about the public hearing is available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/toms-river-residents-skeptical-about-plan-for-ciba-geigy-site/>.)

Citizens remained skeptical about the planned settlement and the lack of local involvement in the negotiations. They are asking for additional information to be released by DEP so they can make informed comments; the public comment period has been extended to 4/5/2023.

<https://lavallette-seaside.shorebeat.com/2023/03/dep-officials-basf-approached-state-with-ciba-geigy-deal-land-favored-over-cash/>

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### **NJ Budget: Who Likes Murphy's Spending Plan? Who's Less Keen?**

Not surprisingly, environmental advocates criticized Gov. Murphy's budget for once again raiding the NJ clean-energy fund to fund NJ Transit (see Opinion at the end of the next column), although the amount to be diverted is \$10 million less than in the previous year.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/reactions-to-nj-gov-phil-murphy-2024-budget-address/>

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### **First Phase of Liberty State Park Revitalization Plan Unveiled**

In this 4-minute news video, NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner LaTourette describes plans for the "revitalization" of Liberty State Park. Sam Pesin, president of Friends of Liberty State Park, was pleased with the planned "165 acres of diverse nature habitats and miles of paths."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/first-phase-of-liberty-state-park-revitalization-plan-unveiled/>

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### **Opinion: Stop Raiding the Clean Energy Fund, Provide Permanent Funding for NJ Transit**

In this opinion piece by former NJ Senator Loretta Weinberg and Ed Potosnak, the executive director of the NJ League of Conservation Voters, they decry the habitual raid of the NJ clean-energy fund to fund NJ Transit, and the lack of a dedicated source of funding for NJ Transit.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/02/op-ed-stop-clean-energy-fund-raids-provide-permanent-funding-nj-transit/>

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### **MORATORIUM MONDAYS CONTINUE**

**Please continue to contact Gov. Murphy every Monday and urge him to declare a climate emergency moratorium on fossil fuel projects! These efforts have been successful in that a number of projects have been stopped or delayed in the past year. Either call through the EmpowerNJ number (866-586-4069) to get coaching on the topic of the week, emphasizing what is in the news, or call directly to the governor's office (609-292-6000). Over 50 environmental, citizen, faith, and progressive groups in NJ are calling on Governor Murphy to enact a moratorium on all new fossil fuel projects in New Jersey until there are rules in place to achieve 100% clean energy goals.**

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UU FaithAction NJ - Environmental Justice Task Force - <https://uufaithaction.org/environment/>  
Co-Chairs – Peggy Middaugh and Ray Nichols

Visit our website for Environmental links and resources / sign up for email alerts / join the EJTF

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