

Tarrytown Environmental Advisory Council (TEAC) 2021 Year End Report

TEAC is a volunteer, citizen-led organization established by the Village in 1974 under NY State Law (Article 12-f), to serve as a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC), one of hundreds throughout the State of NY. As such, TEAC advises the Tarrytown Mayor, the Board of Trustees and other Village Boards and Committees on any and all environmental matters that may come before the Village. In this effort, TEAC researches, reports and makes recommendations on land use, built environment, ecological integrity, environmental consequences, quality of life and public health and safety. The Council also promotes ecological sustainability in Tarrytown through public education, and is committed to working with area businesses, community leaders and neighbors to create a cleaner, greener and safer place to live and work.

TEAC currently has 9 voting members appointed by the Tarrytown Board of Trustees, a Village Trustee Liaison, and additional volunteers.

Current Council Members

Rachel Tieger, *Co-Chair and Chair of Zero Waste Committee*
Dean Gallea, *Co-Chair, Chair of Energy and Conservation Committee*
Suzy Allman, *Newsletter Publisher, Photographer*
Barbara Barnett, *Place Making Liaison*
Gloria Cepin, *Co-chair of Landscaping Committee*
Martin Hauser, *Tree Commission Liaison*
Mai Mai Margules, *Co-chair of Landscaping Committee*
Jenny O'Connor, *Chair of Community Outreach Committee*
Catherine Ruhland, *Chair of Lakes Committee*

Active Volunteers

Andrew Billo, *Energy and Conservation Committee*
Cari Newton, *Zero Waste Committee*
Annie Kravet, *Social Media Coordinator and Zero Waste Committee*
Cynthia Stegman, *Landscaping Committee*
Kerstin Erdbrink, *Landscaping Committee*
Paul Wood, *Landscaping Committee*
Tara Gore, *Social media*

TEAC hosts a monthly meeting (open to the public) the first Thursday at 7pm.

2021 was another tough year in a pandemic environment for all Village Councils/Committees, but thanks to our hardworking volunteers and participation from Village elected officials, staff and Administration we were able to organize a number of activities and projects, and accomplish a number of goals.

2021 Activities and Accomplishments

- Launched a very successful Crowdfunding in collaboration with Friends of Warner Library to raise money to install new pollinator gardens at the library and throughout the Village.
- April - Earth Month - Hosted multiple in-person socially distanced events to include: the Pollinator Garden Build at the library, an invasive vine cleanup at the Lakes, a mushroom and

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nature walk in Glenville Woods Park Preserve, and fairy house building for kids. Most events had record participation.

- Hosted monthly Tabling at the TaSH Farmers Market to promote the food scraps program, talk about Pollinator Pathways, give away reusable produce bags, and promote our Energy Smart Homes Campaign. Toward the end of the season we initiated a Waste Warrior campaign to help educate shoppers and families how to properly dispose of waste at the market.
- Co-hosted a Clean-up at Lakes in September with Hackley “Lake Keepers” and a Vines cleanup in Wilson Park.
- Organized a Riverkeeper Sweep cleanup of the riverfront area from Losee park to Piersons park and joined forces with Friends of the Riverwalk in May.
- The Landscaping Subcommittee reports 2021 was the “Year of the Garden”:
 - We installed two pollinator gardens at Warner Library, another Patriots Park and collaborated with the Village to plant natives in the tree wells along Broadway, effectively creating a Green Corridor through the Village. Our efforts were kicked off with a highly successful Go Fund Me with Friends of Warner Library set up last February.
 - In planting public pollinator gardens we created habitat and food sources for our endangered bees, butterflies and birds, while also connecting our residents with sustainable gardening practices and beautifying the Village.
 - Most recently, we held a Winter Milkweed Planting event at the Children's Garden at Warner Library. Over 40 children and their families braved winter weather to plant milkweed to help monarch butterflies this year.
 - Throughout the year we engaged in community outreach through seed giveaways and dispensing garden advice at our TEAC booth at the TASH market.
- The Lakes Subcommittee members accomplished:
 - Three clean-ups (one on Earth Day, one in September and one in November) in and around the lakes and causeway areas resulted in the collection of some 60 bags of trash. About 60 participants joined in the various efforts. Earth Day is the only day that there is an annual water-side clean-up of trash that has gotten lodged on the water's edge and in the water.
 - Two vine-cutting efforts that targeted various trees in Wilson Park and trees around the Neperan Road Lakes Parking lot. Some 15-20 volunteers participated in these efforts.
 - A wreath-making event was held in Wilson Park as part of the Earth Day offerings which attracted a handful of families on an overcast day.
 - Other notable successes were the village's publishing and posting in three separate trailside kiosks of the Lakes Subcommittee's Lakes Trails Map as well as the inclusion of the Lakes trails in the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference map, " Westchester Trails: Rockefeller Park Preserve".
- Co-sponsored a number of Swaps (organized by TEAC volunteer Cari Newton), to help keep items out of the waste stream and find good homes for unwanted items. Truckloads of clothing, toys, household items, baby items, furniture and more were donated and “swapped”. Left over items were donated to local families in need. Multiple textile recycling bins were filled with items that could no longer be enjoyed.

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- Participated in multiple Repair Cafes hosted by neighboring Rivertown villages to help extend the life of usable items, including mechanical, electrical, textile, and jewelry.

TEAC Initiatives and Ongoing Efforts

- Engaged in the Rivertowns Energy Smart Homes Campaign organized by Sustainable Westchester to promote heat pump technology and energy-saving retrofits. This includes a pending NYS \$5,000 grant once Tarrytown gets 10 properties committed to improvements. (Ongoing into Spring 2022)
- Publicized and increased Village participation in the Pollinator Pathways Campaign; "It takes a Village" to help pollinators, and Tarrytown is rising to the task.
- Launch No Mow May to help raise awareness of feeding early Spring pollinators, encouraging homeowner and municipal employees to delay mowing and to plant clover.
- Continued working on attaining a Bronze-level Climate Smart Community certification and Clean Energy Community recognition, leading to NYSERDA grant opportunities.
- Helped organize the annual Conference on the Environment for the NYS Association for Conservation Commissions (NYSACC). This was a multimedia 3-day conference targeting Environmental groups and municipal leaders across the state to inform and share information on a wide range of topics relating to Land, Water, Energy, Environmental Justice and Solid Waste. Recordings of the sessions and the Resource Library are linked on our website.
- Managed the small Community Garden at John Paulding School and tried to cultivate an inclusive collaborative atmosphere with group work days to overhaul garden beds, plant a pollinator garden, and a garden education workshop by a resident farmer.
- Grew the Food Scraps collection program participation by community outreach and collaborated with Hudson Compost Services to introduce optional contract curbside pickup.
- Installed new pollinator gardens and planted tree wells on Broadway over the Summer.
- Published the monthly TEAC newsletter, which has grown this year in terms of subscribers, contributors and open rate. We believe this growth is due to:
 - Regularly-scheduled newsletter campaigns
 - A wider range of written articles, guest articles and regular contributors
 - Newsletter sign-up sheets at TEAC events
 - New residents to Tarrytown, interested in getting involved in environmentalism
- We now regularly reach 683 mailboxes. Since January 2021, we have gained 182 new subscribers to the newsletter. Our open rate hovers around 50 percent. (For comparison, the average open rate across all industries in 2021 was 22%). 36% of our audience is considered "highly engaged" by Mailchimp, meaning they usually open and click our newsletters.
- Our regular contributors write articles in their area of expertise: pollinator gardening, renewable energy, recycling and food waste, zero waste ideas, vegan cooking, hiking/outdoors.
- Maintained our Educational Website - TarrytownEnvironmental.org We are continuously updating our website with news, events, photos and information related to our projects, along with advice to residents on a variety of environmental topics, such as energy savings, planting

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pollinator-friendly gardens, zero waste lifestyles and moving away from gas-powered landscaping equipment.

Collaboration with other Groups and Village entities in 2021

- Community Coalition (C2 - Kids Club)
- EF school
- Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance (ELLA) member
- Federated Conservationists of Westchester County (FCWC)
- Friends of Neperan Park
- Friends of the Riverwalk
- Girl Scouts
- Hudson Compost Services
- JCC
- Mothers Out Front
- NYSACC
- NYSERDA
- Riverkeeper
- Rivers Edge Theater Company
- Scenic Hudson Trails Committee
- Sleepy Hollow Environmental Advisory Committee (SHEAC)
- Sustainable Westchester
- The TaSH Farmers Market
- Warner Library and its Friends group
- Tarrytown Village: Board of Trustees, Planning Board, DPW, Parks
- Tarrytown Tree Commission
- Tarrytown Placemaking Committee
- Transportation and Mobility Committee
- TUFSD school district
- Rivertowns Intervillage CAC (collaboration with Irvington, Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, Ardsley)

Looking Forward to 2022

- Host Environmental Film Series starting in February - second Tuesday of the month at 7pm. Films will either be screened live on the second floor of the library or shared via link for at home watch parties followed by Zoom discussions
- Host Earth Day April 23 (rain date 24) with multiple village cleanups and other activities
- Research more sustainable options for the Village and businesses to manage food waste
- Work with Village to install Textile Recycling units at compost dropoff site
- Work with Village to have well marked Recycling and Waste bins and try to introduce pilot Compost recycling bins in specific public areas
- Co-host a Repair Cafe with Irvington
- Look to expand our endeavors to help Tarrytown's pollinators and beautify the Village. We have submitted a request to the Village to plant a pollinator garden in Sarah Michaels Park. We also plan to maintain and extend our green spaces along Broadway. We found that tree wells containing flowers were not littered whereas empty spaces were.
- Reach out to local businesses and homeowners to promote sustainable landscaping and pollinator plantings on their properties. We will be scheduling on-site garden consults with local residents who want help to start planting pollinator friendly plants.
- Research more locations for community solar project within the village
- Continue work with area businesses and landlords to plant more pollinator gardens
- Launch a Leaf Blower Awareness Campaign and promote Leave Leaves Alone in Spring
- Continue the Energy Smart Homes Campaign with community outreach events

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- Continue to manage the Community Garden at John Paulding in collaboration with the school Building and Grounds department
- Collaborate with the Planning Board on green building policies

TEAC is excited to be working with Mayor Brown, the Board of Trustees and our new Trustee Liaison David Kim in 2022.

Residents may check out our website TarrytownEnvironmental.org and sign up for our newsletter to learn more about our work and email us to get involved.

Submitted by Dean Gallea and Rachel Tieger for the Tarrytown Environmental Advisory Council on January 19, 2021 - Tarrytownenviro@gmail.com