

Climate Change Leadership Academy Pilot Program 2019-2020
End of Project Summary 9/25/2020

The Upper Valley Adaptation Workgroup (UVAW) launched the Climate Change Leadership Academy (2CLA) in the fall of 2019 as a pilot program to educate, inspire, and prepare 25 Upper Valley residents to take meaningful action on climate change. We received 50 applications and were thrilled to see so much interest from Upper Valley residents eager to participate in the program and we were challenged to accept only 25 people. In selecting participants, we picked a representative cohort of diverse ages, genders, backgrounds and geography. Our cohort included 12 NH residents, 13 VT residents, 9 participants under 40 years of age, 16 participants over the age of 40, 8 male and 17 female participants, all representing 16 towns in the Upper Valley.

The Academy consisted of six monthly evening sessions during which participants received training on climate change science and impacts, effective climate mitigation models, emerging climate adaptation strategies, project management, and leadership development. Each 2CLA participant committed to developing a community service project that educates and inspires others and better equips their community to adapt to or mitigate climate change impacts. We were able to quickly shift and successfully adapt our sessions to a virtual format in response to the pandemic, however we had a few participants who withdrew due to personal circumstances and challenges resulting from the pandemic. On April 8th, we (virtually) graduated 18 leaders from 15 towns in the Upper Valley and heard updates on the status of their community-based service projects. Those projects range in scale and include a guided hike at national park to educate on the impacts of climate change on forests, a poster campaign featuring farmers taking action on climate change, starting resilience groups in their community, a campaign to reduce household food waste, a community composting initiative, and many more. A summary of projects is included in the following page, please note that some projects were put on hold due to the pandemic.

The biggest takeaways from this successful pilot were that there's a lot of eagerness to take action on a local level which 2CLA allowed us to tap into, and the program facilitated connections (mentorship from Regional Planning Commission staff, business, and community leaders) that will have a lasting impact for our region. Moving forward we are committed to supporting the growth of a 2CLA alumni network, starting by planning a (virtual) fall reunion. We are also committed to continuing to cultivate aspiring leaders and preparing them to take local action on climate change through an annual 2CLA program that incorporates lessons learned from this pilot and improvements based on participant's feedback.

We plan to launch the next 2CLA program from March 2021-May 2021, which will consist of 5 biweekly sessions and a culminating graduation ceremony. Given the uncertainty and anxiety spurred by the coronavirus pandemic, we expect that our sessions will be a combination of in-person and virtual meetings and any in-person meetings will have the option for remote participation. As we redesign 2CLA, we're working on finding ways to make 2CLA more attractive to diverse audiences, creating a selection process that promotes diversity – particularly racial and socioeconomic diversity, and looking to foster learning and engagement around climate justice and other social equity issues. We will strive to reduce barriers to participation through scholarships for program fees, offering childcare, facilitating transportation for in-person meetings or internet connection hotspots for virtual meetings, incorporating 2CLA alumni voices in the leadership board of the 2CLA program, and developing a 2CLA toolkit to share our model with other communities so they may replicate our success. We greatly appreciate the support from the students enrolled in Public Policy 51: Leadership in Civil Society: Philanthropy in the Nonprofit Sector and the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College for making this 2CLA pilot program possible.

Community Projects Led by 2CLA Graduates

Climate Farmer Project – (Cecily Anderson)	I'll be creating a series of 12 posters featuring farmers in the VT, with info on how their techniques sequester carbon, cut emissions, and cool the climate. My vision is to print kits of these displays for co-ops, libraries, schools and farmers markets to use to celebrate a "Climate Farmer Month", to call attention to the ways our food choices can support climate action, and how people can take action in our own backyards.
Community Carpooling – (Rebecca Bailey, Cori Hirai, Thomas H Trunzo Jr)	Car emissions are a primary source of GHGs in our region. Our group is developing a community carpooling campaign to encourage people to drive fewer miles. Focusing on a given community, using promotion and incentives to get a critical mass of people to sign up for carpooling, using the GoVT app.
Upper Valley Plant-Based Potluck – (Caitlin Birch, Jack Hurley)	We plan to create a community club that introduces and encourages plant-based choices through sharing of plant-based dishes, informative resources on plant-based living, and fellowship between those who are experienced with a plant-based lifestyle and those who are just getting started or are open to learning more. We'll have regular potluck events featuring plant-based cooking, a website that includes event information as well as a community-generated resource library, and an active social media presence for our community. In helping participants make changes to their lifestyles, we'll be reducing the need for animal agriculture and its impact on climate change.
Promoting Electric Vehicles – (Dillon Bradley, Ben Steele)	Public campaign (posters, booths at farmer's markets) to get more people to buy electric vehicles. Transportation is the biggest producer of carbon dioxide for most people. Emphasis will be placed on the value to the consumer of an EV (long term savings) and ease of use. The environmental benefits may be mentioned but are not the focus as the thought is that consumers will convert to a new product when they understand the benefits that are in it for them.
Resilience Awareness and Implementation – (Patrick Christie)	Goal is to identify safe house/community shelter locations that can be used as a gathering point in the event of climate hazards (flooding, power outages from storms, fires, etc).
Mobilizing a Church to Respond to the Climate Crisis – (Bruce Freeberg)	At the Church of Christ at Dartmouth College, an action committee will work together during the month of March to develop an ambitious, multi-dimensional action plan in response to the climate crisis. Then, in a spirit of urgency that accords with the times, we will work to institute all components of the plan in the nine months between March 31st and December 31st.
Sharon Community Resilience Organization – (Mary Gavin)	Identifying and recruiting a group of citizens in my town to start a Sharon Community Resilience Organization and work on implementing climate projects at a town level.
Community Composting – (Casey Hess)	To bring together community members, VLS, and the local government to implement community composting.
Lebanon's Public Lands - (Christopher Johnson)	I am going to visually document all of Lebanon's Conservation Commission's public lands to encourage public engagement with our local wild places.
Library Resources to Help Communities Take Action – (Amy Lappin)	I'm creating a list of resources for 12 topics related to the climate crisis for librarians or educators to use as a starting point for displays or lessons. The resources include books, articles, dvds, websites, and programming or speaker suggestions. The idea is to make it easy for people to relate to various topics and see ways to deliver information and inspire wide audiences.
Claremont Resilience Team – (Rebecca B MacKenzie)	I am starting the Claremont (Climate) Resilience Team to create a local resilient response to the climate crisis that, hopefully, will intersect with other efforts to build a comprehensive, regional response that will grow.
Climate Change at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park – (Leah Marshall)	I am creating a guided hike through the Mount Tom Forest at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP that explores how Climate Change is projected to impact the forest (diversity, resilience) and other ways in which the National Park is expected to be impacted. As a "Climate Friendly Park," I think it's really important to engage visitors on topics like forest vulnerability to climate change, since it isn't always something people think about. Especially as they are out enjoying their hike on the beautiful trails!
Reducing — and Rethinking — Food Waste – (Nancy Serrell)	I want to spearhead a consumer education campaign, "Food Too Good To Waste", raising awareness of the amount of food wasted in our communities and supporting behavior change that reduces waste.
Climate Emergency Declarations and Local Planning – (Sarah Wood)	To show how Climate Emergency declarations can serve as a public awareness and education tool for improved local planning.