Adirondack Youth Climate Summit 2026

Workshop Descriptions

60 minute Workshops: 11:00-12:00 pm

Teacher Workshop: Making NY Inspires Work in Any Subject, Any Grade

- **Presenter:** Rachel Arbor, Gaia Scholastic/ NY Climate Education Hub
- **Themes:** Climate Education, Interdisciplinary curriculum development, Place-based learning, backwards design, NY Inspires
- **Description:** Wondering how to meet the NY Inspires Climate Education Requirement without adding more to your plate? This hands-on session shows how climate learning can strengthen what you already teach, in any subject or grade. Research shows interdisciplinary climate education boosts student engagement and well-being while supporting core academic goals. You'll explore local climate data, dive into free lessons and resources, try place-based frameworks, and practice planning ways for students to carry their learning beyond the classroom through civic action projects and Youth Climate Summits. Leave with ready-to-use resources you can bring to class tomorrow!
- **Location:** Main Conference Room

Recycling Right: Making Recycling Cool at Your School

- **Presenters:** Celia Darling, Jenna Kessler, and Anabella Cartiera, Skidmore College
- **Themes:** Waste management, recycling infrastructure, advocacy, education
- **Description:** While the EPA estimates 75% of municipal solid waste could be recycled annually, only about 31% is actually recycled—often due to improper sorting. This workshop covers creating and advocating for improved recycling infrastructure at school, accompanied by engaging community education plans.
- **Location:** Planet Adirondack

Unfold the Future: Building Science and Clean Energy Design

- **Presenters:** Bella Abbadessa (ANCA), Kayla Gutheil (ANCA), Astrid Saint-Pierre (CCE Jefferson) / North Country Clean Energy Hub
- **Themes:** Building science, energy efficiency, renewable energy, material reuse
- **Description:** Participants build their own origami houses using recycled materials and personalize them by adding clean energy components. Presenters explain how homes function as interconnected systems, discuss renewable energy options, and explore building envelopes to highlight energy efficiency and comfort beyond standard electrification.
- **Location:** Naturalist Cabinet

Creating a Community Culture of Repair

- **Presenter:** Dustin Bowman, Canton Sustainability Committee
- **Themes:** Organizing, empowering, affordability, education
- **Description:** Why buy new when you can repair what you already have? In this workshop, Dustin Bowman of the Canton Sustainability Committee will demonstrate how you can start a Reduce, Reuse, Repair movement in your community! The momentum is building in the repair arena and there are some terrific local resources to help you get started.
- **Location:** Climate Solutions

How to Create A Stellar Green Team

- **Presenter:** Tupper Lake High School Green Team
- **Themes:** youth leadership, high school green team, sustainability
- **Description:** Trying to start a Green Team at your school? Having trouble recruiting students to an existing club? Feeling stuck with what to do during club meetings? We've got you covered! In this student-led session, the Tupper Lake High School Green Team will share their advice, tips, and activity ideas for how to take your Green Team from sub-par to Stellar.
- **Location:** Flammer Theater

Lightning Round Workshops: 1:00-2:30 pm

Tree Coring Workshop

- **Presenter:** Mathias Vuille, University at Albany
- **Themes:** tree ecology, paleoclimate, climate change
- **Description:** How can you determine the age of a tree? How can you tell if a tree is healthy? How do tree cores provide evidence of climate change? Extracting tiny cores from trees allows us to answer these questions, without damaging or hurting the trees. In this hands-on outdoor activity students will learn how to core trees, how to analyze the cores and they will all get to take home the tree ring sample they cored.
- **Location:** Stickworks Sculpture

Explore your Watershed

- **Presenter:** Ali Jackson and Sabrina Koetter, Lake Champlain Basin Program / Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership and Nadia Harvieux, Finger Lakes Institute
- **Themes:** bioregionalism, water quality, watersheds, citizen science
- **Description:** Did you know that you're standing in an internationally recognized biosphere right now? The Champlain- Adirondack Biosphere encompasses the Lake Champlain watershed, Green Mountain National Forest, and Adirondack Park. Climate impacts like flooding, algal blooms, and runoff degrade local freshwater systems in the

Adirondacks and beyond. Investigate your watershed by learning about regional conservation projects to address these issues and getting a chance to do some hands-on community science with water testing! Attend this lightning workshop to receive a FREE water quality testing kit for your school.
- **Location:** Bio Building Eaves/ Pond

Spark to Flame: The Ancient Art of Fire

- **Presenter:** Melanie Sawyer
- **Themes:** survival skills, self-sufficiency, personal resilience
- **Description:** Students explore the evolution of survival science by mastering four distinct ignition methods. You will learn the historic precision of traditional flint and steel, harness the intense, high-temperature heat of a modern ferrocerium rod, and practice patience through ancestral friction fire techniques. Finally, we demystify the chemistry of fire with a safe, controlled chemical reaction ignition. This class bridges history, primitive skills, and science to ensure you can confidently build a life-saving flame in any environment.
- **Location:** Pavers Lot

Design a Climate Resilient Community

- **Presenter:** Noa Pinkston and Anthony Yourdon, The Wild Center
- **Themes:** climate resilience, community resilience, mitigation, adaptation
- **Description:** Participate in a hands-on design challenge to create a sustainable community using upcycled cardboard! Engineer mitigation & adaptations strategies to climate hazards such as flooding, extreme heat, and wild fires and implement climate resilient solutions to build a better world.
- **Location:** Climate Solutions Exhibit

Food Miles: Where Does Your Food ACTUALLY Come From?

- **Presenter:** Erica Burns, Henry II & Mildred A Uihlein Foundation & Tablelands Farm
- **Themes:** food systems, food choices
- **Description:** Trace everyday foods—from apples and milk to pickles and pasta—back to where they were grown, processed, packaged, and transported. Activities, challenges, group discussions, and a little friendly competition will help students explore food miles, food sourcing, transportation, seasonality, and the climate impacts of our food choices.
- **Location:** Climate Solutions Exhibit

Climate Stories through Data

- **Presenter:** Anna Crouse & Savannah Beachy, The Wild Center
- **Themes:** climate data, climate hazards, climate storytelling
- **Description:** Explore global NASA and NOAA climate datasets with our interactive 3-D Science on a Sphere exhibit. Two of our AmeriCorps community educators will utilize climate data to help participants explore specific climate topics more in depth.
- **Location:** Planet Adirondack

“Dear Elected Official…”

- **Presenters:** Emma Green Team, @ews_ecoemma
- **Themes:** civic action, climate communication
- **Description:** The midterm elections are coming up in November! Even if you are not of legal age to vote, you can still take civic action to make sure your voice is heard by your local elected officials. Join us in writing letters to representatives (mainly from New York State) to encourage their support for environmental issues you care about. Your words can influence policies that have a much greater impact than individual actions. Come and sign cards & petitions with us!
- **Location:** Ronja Redeye Troll

Getting the Dirt on Worms: Creating a Worm Bin for Your School

- **Presenters:** Miranda Wolf and Kristine Ellsworth, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- **Themes:** Vermicomposting, indoor composting, food waste reduction
- **Description:** Vermicomposting allows indoor, small-scale composting that is ideal for classrooms. Presenters demonstrate how to construct and maintain a simple worm bin while discussing broad actions students can take to reduce school food waste.
- **Location:** Rosa Sunfinger Troll

Upcycling T-Shirts into Usable Swag

- **Presenters:** The Wild Center’s Summiteers
- **Themes:** fighting fast fashion, upcycling, repurposing
- **Description:** The Fast Fashion industry is responsible for 10% of global carbon emissions worldwide and is also responsible for large amounts of textile waste & water pollution that disproportionately impact communities in the global south. Help us fight fast fashion by upcycling old t-shirts into bags, dog toys, and rugs.
- **Location:** Naturalist Cabinet

The Astounding Climate Benefits of Recycling Refrigerant-Cooling Appliances

- **Presenter:** Michael Helme, New Yorkers for Cool Refrigerant Management
- **Themes:** The refrigerants in appliances like air conditioners and refrigerators are incredibly intense greenhouse gases. At Coolest Recycling Drives, we provide the service of properly recycling these appliances for free and help avoid a shocking tonnage of carbon dioxide equivalents. These drives can be done with under $1000 (or can even be self-funding!), and participants from a wide range of backgrounds have found Coolest Recycling Drives are an extremely rewarding form of climate work.
- **Location:** Glacier Wall

90-Minute Workshops: 3:30-5:00 pm

Teacher Workshop: Using a Systems Thinking Approach to Understand Causes of Climate Change and Solutions

- **Presenter:** Dr. Susan Powers, Clarkson University
- **Themes:** Systems thinking, consumer products, supply chain emissions
- **Description:** Designed for teachers, this interactive session uses systems diagrams and games to examine how consumer goods (food, plastics, clothing) contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, providing actionable classroom tools.
- **Location:** Main Conference Room

Can We Trust the Data? How Weather Observations Become Climate Stories

- **Presenter:** Scott McKim, NY State Mesonet / Whiteface Mountain Field Station
- **Themes:** weather data, climate data
- **Description:** How do we know whether the data we use to understand our changing climate are accurate and trustworthy? In this hands-on workshop, students will explore how weather observations are collected, how scientists identify and account for bad or questionable data, and how individual measurements become long-term climate records. We'll visit the NYS Mesonet weather station at Tupper Lake, examine the instruments and their surroundings, and investigate how factors such as sensor accuracy, station location, maintenance, and data quality can influence what the numbers tell us. Students will work with real-world examples of weather data and consider a bigger question: How do we know when we can trust the story the data are telling us?
- **Location:** pADK and Outdoors

Microplastics Everywhere!

- **Presenters:** Tori DesRocher & Alex Pastore, Lake Champlain Sea Grant & Lake Champlain Discovery Center
- **Themes:** Microplastics, aquatic pollution, environmental research
- **Description:** Take a deep dive into microplastic pollution in the Lake Champlain basin. Students engage in fish dissections and microscopy activities to analyze plastic pollution and discover solutions for aquatic preservation.
- **Location:** Naturalist Cabinet

Climate, Place, Community: Exploring How Climate Change Unfolds Locally

- **Presenters:** Leo Matteo Bachinger, Carolyn Fraioli, NYSDEC Office of Climate Change
- **Themes:** Climate adaptation, community resilience, environmental justice

- **Description:** Using a hands-on paper map and LEGO bricks, participants simulate a fictional community experiencing climate impacts to explore how localized adaptation strategies and collaborative solutions take shape.
- **Location:** Climate Solutions

Plugged In: School Energy Detectives

- **Presenter:** Nick Hamilton-Honey, Cornell Cooperative Extension / North Country Clean Energy Hub
- **Themes:** Energy audits, HVAC systems, energy efficiency
- **Description:** Ever wonder how much energy your school is using? Learn how to conduct a walkthrough assessment of your school while using the tools of an energy auditor. Investigate The Wild Center's HVAC systems, lighting, and building envelope, and search for energy vampires. Detectives will leave with information to conduct an investigation at your school and with next steps once you have.
- **Location:** Flammer Theater & Outside