

Federated Conservationists of Westchester County Position on Climate Change

FCWC accepts the conclusions of the 97% of our climate scientists who believe that climate change is underway, that human beings are the dominant reason for it, and that its effects are already being felt. Those of us in Westchester who experienced "Super Storm Sandy" can testify to the damage done to our coastlines by the storm's waves, now at higher elevations than ever due to the sea level rise. We are also experiencing more destructive and extreme weather patterns – wind storms, droughts, floods, and greater summer heat - all caused by climate change. FCWC acknowledges that Climate Change is the major environmental challenge of our time.

FCWC believes that individual human actions, like cutting our greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide and methane particularly), can make a difference in reducing climate change effects. Therefore, we support steps in reducing emissions from our vehicles, our power plants, businesses, and our homes. And we encourage changes in behavior of all kinds. Whether your contribution is drying clothes on lines rather than using an energy intensive electric dryer; or taking a larger step by choosing hybrid or electric cars over fueled ones, or installing solar panels or wind turbines - all actions taken are important.

On the governmental level, FCWC advocates for changing our energy system to one using renewable energy and working to "cap" our carbon emissions. We also urge attention to the resiliency of our communities, our infrastructure, and here in Westchester, our coastlines, in the face of the anticipated results of climate change.

For many years FCWC has endorsed the phrase, "Think Globally, Act Locally"; this phrase is now imbued with increased urgency. To act on our concerns, FCWC conducted a "Westchester Climate Change Summit" in conjunction with Pace University Law School (and Sustainable Westchester) in September 2014. FCWC is following this conference with workshops on topics raised by the Summit throughout 2015. The first was a roundtable on The Future of Westchester Parks, Sanctuaries, and Nature Centers.

One of FCWC's main goals is education, and this summit was the ideal forum for that purpose. The event allowed for the dissemination of information, sharing of ideas, and learning from national experts about what solutions are available to municipalities.

As an issue, climate change is snarled in a knot of misconceptions, political maneuverings, and ideological fallacies – hindering public support for important climate legislation. FCWC's role is to shed light on the facts.