

Falmouth Recycling and Energy Advisory Committee (REAC)

"Energy News You Can Use" Volume 8, Issue 1, January 2020– Falmouth, Maine

- Happy New Year! Any ideas how Falmouth can be more sustainable? Use less energy? Generate less waste? We'd love to hear your ideas! Contact your Energy and Sustainability Coordinator, Kimberly Darling at kdarling@falmouthme.org with your thoughts and suggestions.
- Know of any energy, environmental, or general sustainability events not listed in the calendar below? Please reach out to Kimberly and she'll add them in!

Calendar of Local Sustainability Events, January 2020

Event	Date/Time/Location	Description
Maine Biz Five on the Future Forum 	January 7 7:30-10:00am Holiday Inn By the Bay 88 Spring St., Portland	This forum will look at Maine's future economy with a panel of Maine CEOs and leaders who will discuss how they see the marketplace performing in the new year. They will identify leading economic indicators, opportunities and challenges for Maine's future. Jeffery Fuhrer, Executive Vice President and Senior Policy Advisor with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston will keynote. More event information can be found by following this link .
What's the Catch? 	January 8 6:00-8:00pm Luke's Lobster Portland Pier 60 Portland Pier, Portland	The Maine Coast Fisherman's Association and Luke's Lobster are partnering for a special event series: <i>What's the Catch?</i> Hosted on the second Wednesday of each month (January-April 2020) this unique meet the Maine fleet and seafood experience is part social event, and part educational series; bringing together fishermen, chef, and community on Portland's working waterfront to mingle, learn, and eat! The joys of living in Maine is year-round access to bountiful, sustainable, and fresh seafood. Organizers' goal is to unite consumers with the fishermen that land Maine's seafood and raise awareness about lesser-known fish stocks. Each month will focus on one species of fish. January will feature Monkfish. When you know your fisherman, you support fishing families and coastal communities, enhance the sustainability of Maine's fisheries, and access the freshest, local seafood. To purchase tickets, and for more information click here .
Gulf of Maine Research Institute Lunch & Learn 	January 9 11:30am-1:00pm Gulf of Maine Research Institute 350 Commercial St., Portland	Each month, GMRI hosts a Lunch & Learn tour of their lab and education facility located on the Portland waterfront. This informational session—geared toward community leaders and supporters—introduces their work and is an opportunity to better understand GMRI's role in the community. Follow this link for more event information.

<p><i>"The Story of Plastic"</i> Film Showing</p>  <p>Natural Resources Council of Maine</p>	<p>January 11 6:30pm film; panel 8:00pm STAR Theatre Kittery Community Center 120 Rogers Rd., Kittery</p>	<p>All year NRCM's Sustainable Maine team has been eagerly awaiting the release of the new documentary <i>The Story of Plastic</i>, and now you will have an opportunity to see it with them! Join NRCM and the Kittery Land Trust at the Seacoast Environmental Film Festival to see the film which will be followed by a panel discussion. For more information, click here.</p>
<p>Maine Indoor Air Quality Council Indoor Insanity 5K!</p> 	<p>January 12 7:00am-12:00pm University of Southern Maine, Gorham Campus 16 University Way, Gorham</p>	<p>On Saturday, January 12 there will be an indoor 5K. Runners, walkers and kids are all welcome. There are multiple running heats scheduled, a ½ mile kids fun run, and a walking heat, too! If this isn't enough great news, get this: thanks to the event sponsors, <i>all registration fees will fund radon mitigations for low-income Maine households</i>. Start the New Year by having fun while giving back to those in need, at this event. Visit the Facebook Event page for more event information, and to register.</p>
<p>PassivHaus MAINE Evening Lecture Series</p> 	<p>January 13 6:00-7:30pm Maine Audubon 20 Gilsland Farm Rd., Falmouth</p>	<p>This lecture series will feature speaker Jacob Racusin. Jacob is co-owner of New Frameworks, offering design, construction, consultation, and education services featuring low-impact high-performance building technologies. He is also the Program Director of the Certificate in Building Science and Net Zero Design at the Yestermorrow Design/Build School and is a BPI-certified contractor. If that isn't enough for credentials, Jacob is also the author of the books <i>Essential Building Science</i> and <i>The Natural Building Companion</i>. Click here for more information.</p>
<p>The 4th Maine Aquaculture Research, Development, and Education Forum</p> 	<p>January 17 8:00am-5:00pm Hutchinson Center 80 Belmont Ave., Belfast</p>	<p>The 4th Annual Maine Aquaculture R&D&E Forum will be held at the University of Maine Hutchinson Center in Belfast. Hosted by the University of Maine Aquaculture Research Institute and the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center, this forum will include sessions, posters, and technical workshops focused on emerging topics in Maine aquaculture, ranging from workforce development to recirculating aquaculture systems. More event information can be found by clicking this link.</p>
<p>Business Breakfast Forum: "You Can't Get There from Here"</p> 	<p>January 22 7:30-9:00am Portland Public Library 5 Monument Way, Portland</p>	<p>A burst of development has been happening in Portland near the waterfront—including new hotel and office buildings—which is straining the city's traffic network. But some innovators are tackling these challenges head on. This forum will focus on transportation in Portland. Coffee by Design will serve a complimentary selection of coffee roasts and teas to attendees. For more information click here.</p>

<p>Falmouth, Cumberland and Yarmouth's Annual HOME ENERGY FAIR</p> 	<p>January 25 10:00am-3:00pm Falmouth Elementary School 58 Woodville Rd., Falmouth</p>	<p>Join Falmouth REAC, alongside the towns of Cumberland and Yarmouth, for the Annual Home Energy Fair. Vendors include those in the field of home energy, waste reduction, energy efficiency, alternative fuels, insulation, weatherization, financing and so much more. Admission is free, and children's activities are provided, so bring the whole family! There is also a chance to win door prizes from local businesses in all three towns, in addition to door prizes from exhibiting vendors.</p> <p>For more information, contact Kimberly Darling kdarling@falmouthme.org or call 207-699-5337. We look forward to seeing you there!</p>
<p>Legislative Clean Energy Lunch—Challenges and Opportunities</p> 	<p>January 28 10:30am-1:00pm Legislative Council Chambers Maine State House, Augusta</p>	<p>Join the Northeast Clean Energy Council's Dan Bosley, and E2Tech, for a lunch presentation in the Legislative Council Chambers of the Maine State House. Meet and get to know your legislators and discuss region-wide clean energy challenges and opportunities. This is a drop-in event and may include informal Maine House and Senate tours. There is no charge for this event for E2Tech members, but organizers are asking that you register. Which, you can do by following this link.</p>
<p>Sustainable ME—Simplify</p> 	<p>January 28 6:00-7:30pm Curtis Memorial Library Morrell Meeting Room 23 Pleasant St., Brunswick</p>	<p>Join organizers at this event to learn to simplify and better appreciate the things in your life with CeCe Camancho. In this talk, CeCe will share some of the tips she uses to improve the lives of her clients as part of her private consulting practice. She will also chat with the audience about how to let go of items in a sustainable way to create meaningful space for what matters most in our lives. Living with less has helped many people to cultivate more joy and meaning. Join this group to learn how to be one of these humans as we embark on this new year. Participation is free and open to the public. For more information, call or email questions and suggestions: (207) 725 5242 x228, honsrud@curtislibrary.com</p>

Energy News

Deadly Propane Blast Voted Top Story of 2019 in Maine—In September of 2019, a deadly propane explosion that killed a firefighter, injured many others and brought devastation on a community in Western Maine was voted the state's top story of 2019 by the Associated Press and its member organizations. One of the original articles can be found [at this link](#).

Are Private or Public Electric Utilities Cheaper? –On average in the United States, residential customers of consumer-owned utilities have rates 13 percent cheaper than customers of investor-owned utilities, according to the American Public Power Association, a trade group for consumer-owned utilities. But in Maine, it's the opposite. Find out why that is, by [reading more here](#).

Maine is Working to Increase Road Funding and Reduce Emissions. Politics are Keeping them Separate—How Maine weighs in on a regional effort to curb transportation emissions could have consequences for parallel efforts to increase funding for roads and bridges and reduce carbon emissions generally, according to elected officials. The governor has tasked a new Maine Climate Council with making the state carbon-neutral by 2045, and that effort includes a subgroup on transportation. However, it hasn't discussed the transportation initiative in depth yet, instead focusing on the bigger picture of how people travel themselves around the state and how to create the "biggest impact" with the least amount of controversy and cost. [Click here to read more.](#)

Virginia Company Proposed 30 Wind Turbines for Eastern Maine—The proposed turbines would be spread out on three sides of a 7,000 acre plus area, of mostly state owned and protected land, Downeast Wind project officials said at a Columbia town meeting Thursday. Opponents of the turbines, many of whom are owners of camps of Schoodic Lake, said the turbines would negatively impact the enjoyment of an area where the same families have gone for generations. For the full article, [follow this link.](#)

Central Maine Power Launces Customer Service Ad Campaign—Central Maine Power has launched a branding and workplace initiative to counter recent negative publicity. *The Power On Campaign*, which includes radio and television ads, portraying the importance of reliable electricity in people's daily lives, is intended to bring about change to the company in efforts to help and improve customer service. [Read more here.](#)

In Other News...

Maine Task Force Recommends More Widespread Water Testing for 'Forever Chemicals'—Members of the Task Force are recommending that nearly 400 community water systems in Maine be required to test for an emerging class of 'forever chemicals,' and that manufacturers disclose when per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are intentionally used in their consumer products. The Task Force recommended continuing to test municipal sludge from wastewater treatment plants before it can be used as fertilizer. The group split over whether Maine should follow the lead of other states that are setting their own health standards for PFAS in drinking water. For the full article, [follow this link.](#)

Wildflower Meadow will Blossom in Franklin Street Median—To prepare the Franklin Street median, the City of Portland put tarps down in early October and removed crab apple trees that weren't doing well, Jeff Tarling, the City's arborist stated. The urban meadow in the Franklin Street median between Cumberland Avenue and Congress Street, plantings set to begin in the Spring, won't be the city's first effort to reintroduce colorful, natural open spaces, but it is likely the first one that many Portland residents and visitors will see daily. The meadows will serve a dual purpose of reducing operating expenses for upkeep, while creating habitat for bees, birds and butterflies. The city already has created pocket urban meadows at Deering Oaks, the Eastern Prom, Fort Gorges, Ludlow Pond, North Street, PATHS, Payson Park, Riverton Trolley Park and Labyrinth, and the Western Prom. The meadows are mowed once each year in November. [Read more here.](#)

Camden Select Board to Consider Harbor Fee Increases, Switching Streetlights to LEDs, Accepting Resiliency Grants—the Harbor Committee has recommended that the town increase the float and mooring fees for nonresidents and residents. Regarding streetlights, a proposal has been received, for the cost of converting all the lights, of \$118,051. Another \$36,225 would be spent on acquisition of equipment from Central Maine Power, for a total project cost of \$154,276. Meaning, over a 20-year period, the town is expected to save \$842,279 in costs compared to the current system; 76% reduction in energy costs, or \$36,572 in the first year.

Regarding grants, Camden has received three matching grants, "for projects related to improving resiliency to climate change and restoring habitat within the Megunticook Watershed," according to Town Manager, Audra Caler-Bell. The grants include: 1. Island Institute Shore Up Grant, \$10,000: Montgomery Dam and Harbor Park Seawall Engineering and Design 2. Maine Coastal Program Coastal Communities Grant, \$40,000: Montgomery Dam and Harbor Park Seawall Engineering and Design 3. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Coastal Resilience Fund Grant, \$139,000: Megunticook River Fish Passage and Flood Prevention Site Assessment and Design. Ms. Caler Bell is quoted saying, "it's quite an achievement for Camden to have received so much external funding for projects that address resiliency to climate change. This speaks volumes of the importance of the Megunticook Watershed in Camden's efforts to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climate change." [For the full news story, click here.](#)

Maine Wants to Recycle More Agricultural Plastic Waste—Maine wants to find a way to keep more of the plastic used by agricultural greenhouses out of landfills with a new recycling program. The University of Maine Cooperative Extension will utilize a \$38,000 grant to develop a statewide pilot program to recycling this type of plastic. The goal is to collect at least a third of the state's annual greenhouse plastic waste and work with an end-user who can convert the material to new material. The collection period for this pilot will run from May to September of 2020. To read this full short article, [click here](#).

Sustainable New Year's Resolutions

Quite honestly, these are some of the easiest things you can do and should be a way of living now; but incase not, below are some gentle reminders!

- 1. REUSABLE THINGS ARE SO IMPORTANT; DITCH SINGLE-USE ITEMS**—from shopping bags, PRODUCE bags, water bottles, coffee mugs (YES, your local coffee shops will fill up one you bring from home, most likely at a reduced price!), drinking straws, and even sponges you can throw in your washing machine/dish washer. Ditch single/limited-use items and use reusables every chance you can.
- 2. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR APPLIANCES**—yes, modern technology is great, and convenient. Yet, we have incorporated unnecessary steps for added convenience. Here's what I mean...turn off the drying cycle on your dishwasher; it's a huge energy suck and not necessary. Open the door after the washing cycle and let them air dry; or use a dish towel to dry them. Also, wash your clothes on cold cycles to save energy by lessening the demand for hot water, and really check to see how damp your clothes are before tossing them into the dryer. There are so many different types of fabrics, and they should be treated differently; nylon, polyester and wool are a few that are considered "quick dry" fabrics and do not need to be put in the dryer. Not only will you save some energy when you start air drying, you'll add (much needed during this time of year) *moisture into the air!* Here is a list of [16 things you should never put in the dryer](#).
- 3. DON'T LEAVE YOUR BATHROOM FAN ON!** got kids who do this, all, the, time? Think about it—when you leave that bathroom fan on, you're literally pulling warm air right outside! I stopped using mine all together this time of year. On that last note of moisture in the air, I like to let the steam travel through my house when showering. Allow the heat and moisture to stay inside! Here are [7 electric use mistakes that will cost you](#), the fan being one!
- 4. STOP BUYING PLASTIC JUNK; YOU DON'T NEED IT; Also, PLEASE SHOP LOCAL**—we have reached an ultra-convenient time in society where it is too easy with quick deliveries and too tempting with cheaper prices to not shop online...but is it, really? And guess what, every time you make the choice to shop online (not from a local source), because it's convenient, or cheaper, for you, you're literally robbing Maine's local workforce. Please stop buying things you don't need (from Amazon); and when you do make purchases, please shop local; it matters!
- 5. BEFORE YOU TRADE IN YOUR VEHICLE, DETERMINE WHAT IS MOST SUSTAINABLE**—I drive a Kia Sportage which averages about 30mpg on the highway and fits my outdoors lifestyle (and my 110lb dog) perfectly. My vehicle's a 2012 with 190,000+ on the engine. I recently had the transmission fixed because my AWD wasn't working. Now, a lot of folks told me to trade it in! But, would that really be the most sustainable thing to do? Not only did I get the repair done for a very reasonable price (I worked with a local salvage yard to procure used parts, and my mechanic friend did the work), my vehicle is almost paid off! If I were to trade it in and sign myself up for another sizable loan, I would be in a much worse place financially. Sustainability is a balance of the environment, society, AND economics. When the time comes, I will purchase an electric vehicle, but, for now, I plan to run my vehicle for as long as I can. I recently found [this study](#) which helps justify my decision, stating in simple words, *it is more sustainable to use your car until the end of its lifetime; 15 years of use as opposed to replacing it after 5 years."*
- 6. PAY ATTENTION TO FOOD WASTE!** inventory your refrigerator and cabinets/pantry before heading to the grocery store. This will reduce spending money on things you may already have and reduce wasted food. Also, try to only cook as much as needed, unless you plan to eat leftovers. And of course, compost any food scraps either at home, through a private company, or drop them off at either the Transfer Station or the new kiosk at Community Park! Here are some EPA planning, storing, and prepping tips on [reducing wasted food at home](#).

Did you know...

...that, in October, 725 people were fed at Falmouth's Community Supper? And, of all the waste generated, 334 gallons worth of material was composted, two large recycling bins were filled, and only 1 ¾ bags of trash were sent to the dumpster? It takes a village, but when we work together and share common goals, we can achieve so much to reduce our waste!

...that urban meadows are becoming increasingly popular across the country? In Tennessee, there are 3,807 miles of blooming flowers along highways and roadways. In Delaware, highways are lined with wildflowers, and the Georgia Department of Transportation now plants only native flowers along its highways.

...that in our rural state of Maine, roughly half of the state's carbon emissions come from vehicles? Experts suggest this is due in part to public transit being less developed than the rest of the region.

...that the Maine Department of Transportation is estimating an annual shortfall for road and bridge maintenance of \$232 million?

...that the gas tax hasn't increased since 2011? However, due to the new Transportation Climate Initiative under Governor Mills, Maine Public states that drivers could see a 5 to 17 cent-per-gallon increase in the Initiative's first year, depending on emission targets.

...that Maine forced its electric utilities to sell off their power plants in the late 1990s to create a free market and encourage competition in the supply of electricity? Meaning, you could shop around for the supply portion of your electricity bill if you wanted. But, the delivery of electricity — the equipment that brings power to homes and businesses — remains closed to competition.

...that New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont all have set their own health standards for PFAS in drinking water? Maine state officials have endorsed using a 70 parts per trillion federal "health advisory level" that critics contend is outdated and inadequate to protect public health.

...that the Swiss government has mandated limits on exhaust gas emissions, and developed a target agreement between the Swiss Association of Car Importers? The Swiss government's calling for a reduction in the specific fuel consumption has led to a considerable reduction in the exhaust emissions of newly registered Swiss passenger cars over the last 10 years.

...that when applying the concept of life cycle thinking, exhaust emission reductions in Switzerland may be outbalanced with an increase in specific car manufacturing expenditures and/or a longer use of the car? Thus, from the point of view of an individual car owner, a prolonged car use may be the environmentally preferable option.

...that if you are looking for a new vehicle, there are factory, manufacturer's, AND Efficiency Maine rebates on electric vehicles? Check out this link for [Electric Vehicle Initiatives](#) from Efficiency Maine.

REAC'S Mission: The Town of Falmouth Energy and Recycling Advisory Committee advises the Falmouth Town Council on matters relating to the town's solid waste recycling program, energy efficiency and other related matters deemed appropriate by the Council. Duties shall include but not be limited to the following: (1) Endeavor to save local taxpayer dollars through increased energy-efficiency of municipal facilities and operations; (2) Prioritize the ad hoc Falmouth Green Ribbon Committee's 2010 recommendations that the Council wants to pursue; (3) Educate Falmouth residents and businesses about energy-efficient, waste-reducing, clean energy opportunities and choices; (4) Enhance and promote the town's recycling program; (5) Promote the use of clean, renewable energy sources in Falmouth's public and private facilities through education and outreach; (6) Work with surrounding communities on potential regional energy efficiency and clean energy strategies; (7) Monitor new developments and options in the fields of energy and waste management as technologies evolve and change; educate the public and advise the Council on same; (8) Research and report policies to accomplish the above goals and/or other related goals deemed appropriate by the Town Council.