

Youth Environmental Summit (YES!)



Workshop Descriptions

Real-Time Workshops on October 29, 2021

Keynote: Expedition Sailing, Science and Solutions for a Clean Ocean!

If you look for trash and microplastic in the marine environment, you will find it. This pollution is nearly ubiquitous and making its way through the marine food web - onto our plates. National Geographic Explorer and Explorers Club Fellow, Rachael Z. Miller is working to keep both macro and microplastic out of our public waterways. Rachael and her team at the Vermont-based ocean-protection nonprofit, Rozalia Project for a Clean Ocean, are at the leading edge of marine debris and microplastic research, solution development and solution implementation using a combination of expedition science and innovation to make an impact. They've worked from the Gulf of Maine to two expeditions spanning the length of the Hudson River, the shores of Lake Champlain, the banks of the Winooski and Mad River and thousands of miles in-between.

In this presentation, learn about the path Rachael and the Rozalia Project team took to go from learning about the problem of microfiber pollution, in particular, to developing the Cora Ball, a consumer-scale solution to microfiber pollution. She will define the problem, lead you through first-of-their-kind expeditions investigating microplastic along the entire Hudson River, from the mountains to the sea, and leave you with actions everyone can take to protect our one, big ocean to which we are all connected - even all of us here in Vermont.

Presenter: Rachael Zoe Miller is an expedition scientist, inventor, National Geographic Explorer and Explorers Club Fellow working to protect the ocean. She is the Founder of Rozalia Project for a Clean Ocean, a nonprofit working on the problem of marine debris and co-inventor of the Cora Ball, the world's first microfiber-catching laundry ball. Rachael leads teams on expeditions whose scientific results are published in peer-reviewed journals and education programs that inspire thousands of people of all ages. She's presented at venues worldwide including on the TedX stage and at The Explorer's Club. Rachael captains the 60' sailing research vessel, American Promise, certified hundreds of people to be sailing instructors, trained Navy SEALs to find unexploded mines using underwater robots, pitched to audiences at Our Ocean and Plastics Europe and mentors young scientists at the New York Harbor School. She lives in Vermont, loves the snow as much as the sea and does her best thinking on skis, bikes and paddleboards.

Keynote: Climate Change & Vermont's Farming Future

Wetter springs, longer summer dry spells and droughts, warmer winters and a longer growing season - climate change in the Northeast means that agriculture has been, and will be, facing multiple changes and challenges. Resilient systems will be critical to maintaining economic and environmental sustainability in the face of increased precipitation, more extreme storms and warming temperatures. The UVM Extension Farming and Climate Change Program exists to investigate the practices that lead to these benefits and how they can be integrated into Northeastern agriculture. Join Professor Joshua Faulkner to explore how Vermont

farmers are being affected and learn about what they are doing to not only adapt to the challenges, but also to help fight climate change.

Presenter: Joshua Faulkner coordinates the Farming and Climate Change Program in the UVM Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture. He does applied research and outreach on soil, water, and agricultural nutrient related issues across Vermont and provides technical assistance to farmers on practices and innovative solutions to improve the management of these resources. His work spans from the farmstead to the watershed scale.

Skill-Building Workshops:

How to Become a Youth Climate Leader and Take Action on Energy

Come to this workshop if you are interested in learning more about how to TAKE ACTION on ENERGY/CLIMATE in your school or community. We will look at Vermont's big picture on energy and check out some examples of Student Led Energy Action Projects from Vermont, and hear from the youth leaders who made them happen. We will then get you thinking about what you might need to start your own project to get energy projects done in your school or community. We will then give you some tools and contacts to help get your energy/climate action project rolling, and can even support you along the way!

Presenters: Mariah Keagy, Vermont Energy Education Program and Veronica Lindstrom, Burlington HS student

What Kind of Changemaker Are You?: The 4 R's with 350VT

With today's overlapping crises such as climate chaos, racial injustice, and the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that not only will it take everyone to change everything, but it will also take collective action to bring about system change. Join organizers from 350VT to learn about four different styles of changemaking - reform, resist, reimagine, recreate. Using recent real-world examples, participants will discover where they feel alignment and how they can be part of the movement for climate justice. Together, we will co-create a just, livable future for all!

Presenters: Abby Mnookin and Siddhesh Mukerji, 350VT

Communicating Climate Change

This workshop will allow you, as an attendee, to open up about your experiences and feelings when it comes to communicating climate change. By starting with an overview of what climate change is and what The Climate Consensus does to help the conversation, the workshop will lead attendees into a discussion about communicating the sciences. This discussion will give attendees the chance to talk about their own successes, struggles, and anything in between as it pertains to communicating climate change or communication in general. The Climate Consensus' student presenters will discuss their own experiences along with sharing tips that have helped them navigate communicating the science. The Climate Consensus works to empower the next generation of scientists to speak up for the truth and the future and we hope to spread that to those who attend our workshop!

Presenters: Gabrielle Brown, Maison Dejesus & Patrick Wickstrom, The Climate Consensus, Northern Vermont University

How to Listen (Courageously)

How do we learn from people who are different? How do we listen to the needs of people experiencing exclusion and fear? In our work to protect watersheds and the planet we need to work together for justice and sustainability. In this workshop we will practice a set of skills at the heart of listening and community building. If you are hosting a community conversation or gathering signatures this workshop will give you tools to encounter the uncomfortable with courage.

Presenters: Ned Swanberg and Siddhesh Mukerji, Central Vermont Climate Action

New Pre-Recorded Workshops for 2021

Reduce Waste at Your School: Why It Matters, Strategies You Can Use and More!

The world of waste is exciting and empowering because every person can make a difference that matters. Come learn about the power of collective action and how you and your school can protect the environment and your community by wasting less. Get inspired and learn some key strategies to send less stuff to the trash. Presenter: Emma Stuhl, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Solid Waste Program

Introducing the Regeneration Corps!

Regeneration Corps is a learning collaboration between high school-aged students in Vermont and leading organizations in resilience and agriculture. Our curricular focus is on the intersections of social justice, climate change and regenerative agriculture through the lens of a Just Transition. Regeneration Corps offers an opportunity to get our hands dirty, learn practical skills from community experts in agriculture and social justice, and dig into some of the most complex and challenging issues of our time while earning credit toward your diploma. Whether you have an interest in helping organize your entire generation into a force for a stable climate and a just food system, or feel that you might as well get some school requirements taken care of while enjoying the outdoors, we'd love to work with you! In this introduction workshop we'll address our primary topics and provide some engaging and interactive components.

Presenter: Cat Buxton, Regeneration Corps

Communicating Climate Change: 5 Things Everyone Needs to Know

How can you explain climate change to a skeptic, a friend, or someone who doesn't know anything about it? This workshop will provide students with a *heuristic* for explaining climate change to people of all ages, education levels, and backgrounds. We will explore the "5 things everyone needs to know about climate change" so students can go into their community and talk with people about the basics of climate change science, how we got here, and where we need to go in a succinct, accessible, and memorable format.

Presenter: Andrew Ahern, Brattleboro Office of Sustainability/ECO AmeriCorps

The Life Cycle of Single Use Plastic and Its Impact on the Environment

Our life cycle of single use plastic workshop will show all of the different steps in the creation of plastic and how after use it creates a big environmental impact. We will discuss the use of fossil fuels to create the plastic, we will then discuss how the creation creates ground pollution, soil pollution, water pollution and contributes to the ongoing climate change crisis. We will also discuss how plastic creates a ton of waste and that it injures wildlife, habitats, and it just creates a lot of trash. We will also talk about how plastic takes an incredibly long time to decompose and that it leaves an enormous amount of toxic microplastics.

Presenter: Mariela Swiech, Hazel Knox, Makenna Bolding, Rory Fitzpatrick, Eleanor Whitney, Ben Byrne, Our Piece of Green Environmental Club, Northfield Middle High School

Peecycling for Clean Water & Sustainable Farms

In this workshop, we will explain how recycling human urine as a fertilizer can help solve one of the greatest ecological challenges in the US today: watershed nutrient pollution. Urine contains all of the vital nutrients that plants need to thrive. Instead of flushing urine downstream, where it fertilizes harmful algal blooms, we can reclaim it to fertilize farms and support local food systems. The Rich Earth Institute operates the first and largest community scale urine nutrient reclamation program in the US. We will present the facts about urine recycling – why it's needed and how it works, and how students can get involved.

Presenter: Jamina Shupack, Rich Earth Institute

TRY for the Environment – Become a Teen Teacher!

TRY stands for Teens Reaching Youth and is an environmental leadership opportunity for students in grades 7-12. It is an environmental education program taught by teens and designed to increase environmental literacy and responsibility in younger youth. TRY for the Environment connects young people to real-world environmental problems by allowing them to be key change agents contributing to real-world solutions. Come to this session to learn about changes to the TRY program for the 2020-2021 school year and how you can become an environmental education teacher to younger students in your community!

Presenter: Lauren Traister, UVM Extension 4-H Program

More Pre-Recorded Workshops from YES 2020

Plants on the Move: The Growing Problem of Invasive Species

Do you ever wonder where some of the plants you see around your school and backyard come from? Some of these plants have been introduced from other continents and have been spreading throughout the landscape causing changes to the local ecosystems. In this workshop, you will learn some of the common plant invasive species in the Champlain Valley and what they are doing to Vermont ecosystem. You will also learn about some activities that you can do to remove invasive species in your area and how to participate in finding and reporting invasive species in your neighborhood.

Presenter: Jane Molofsky, Department of Plant Biology, University of Vermont

The Future of Wastewater and Drinking Water in a Changing World

You depend upon it every day for your health, and the health of the environment around you, but have you ever really taken the time to wonder where your water comes from and where does it go? Most people flush and forget it or collect a glass of water at the tap and never give it a second thought. This workshop will go over the importance of wastewater and drinking water protection, treatment, the threats faced with climate change, as well as how to get into this essential field for human and environmental health.

Presenter: Cristin Ashmankas, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

How to Throw a Zero Waste Event

Are you throwing a small event for a couple hundred people? Or are you planning for a couple thousand? Regardless of the size, there are always ways you can reduce waste while inspiring attendees to engage in zero waste behaviors. Join Marina McCoy, a Zero Waste & Recycling Expert and Founder/CEO of Waste Free Earth, to learn how to identify key waste contributors, work with all stakeholders for the event, integrate reusable systems, and learn to empower others to incorporate zero waste behaviors within their daily life.

Presenter: Marina McCoy, Waste Free Earth

The Climate Crisis and its Solutions: Truth in Ten

This workshop will explain the impacts of climate change, ranging from health to jobs to racial inequalities and then show the steps needed to overcome both these symptoms and the real issue at the root of it.

Presenter: Sylvia Burkman, student & Climate Reality Project

The Radical Forest Manager

This presentation is about the role that forests and forestry play in our world, and especially in the context of a changing climate and social and environmental justice. The presentation will also describe steps one can take to be a "radical" forest manager.

Presenter: Ethan Tapper, Chittenden County Forester, VT Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation

Restoring Wetlands in Vermont: Ecological Design for Habitat and Water Quality

This session will begin by discussing wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide. Participants will study an example of a wetland restoration project completed by Vermont Land Trust, & have a chance to design their own restoration project, using maps and a variety of data layers including soils, geology, and land cover. Presenter: Allaire Diamond, Vermont Land Trust

The Challenges of Youth Organizing and How to Overcome Them

Now perhaps more so than ever, it is important that we, the youth of our world, stand up for what we believe in. Rising water levels, mass extinctions, extreme natural disasters, and institutional inequalities show that we still have so much to fight for. But although organizing is necessary, it is not easy. This workshop is for anyone, whether you consider yourself an activist or not, to learn new skills to overcome challenges you might face as a young person seeking to improve your community.

Presenter: Veronica Lindstrom, student, Burlington High School

Bug Houses: What, Why, and How?

We will present a bug house we made, teach participants how to make their own, and explain why they are beneficial.

Presenter: Abernathy Bunting, student, South Burlington High School

Racial Justice & Climate Justice

How are racial justice and climate justice connected? In this workshop, we'll spend some time together exploring how the conditions that allow the exploitation of people also allow for the exploitation of the planet -- and talk about meaningful solutions to build a climate movement that are rooted in racial justice. Come and meet Champlain Valley Union High School students who are members of their school's Environmental Action Club, Racial Alliance Committee, and Social Justice Group to hear how equity and environmental issues intersect and how we are working together at our school to foster positive change.

Presenters: Elsa LindenMeyr, Greta Powers, Sunthoshini Premasankar, and Carolina Sicotte, students, Champlain Valley Union High School

Becoming a Citizen Scientist Using iNaturalist

This workshop will teach participants about the crowd-sourced citizen science app iNaturalist and will include: a basic overview of citizen science, how iNaturalist is used to monitor biodiversity, different aspects of the website available for users, and the basics of uploading the first observation.

Presenter: Julie Pupko, ECO Americorps member, Vermont Center for Ecostudies

Soak Up the Storm: Understanding Stormwater and Green Infrastructure

Learn about the role surfaces play in water movement during storm events. Explore how impervious and pervious surfaces slow or speed up the movement of stormwater. Students will view different stormwater simulations and model various green stormwater infrastructure practices.

Presenters: Caroline Blake and Ashley Eaton, UVM Extension Watershed Alliance

Recycling Your Way to a More Sustainable Lifestyle at Home and in School

Recycling, a practice we can engage in practically every day, can be an important piece of living a more sustainable lifestyle, whether you are at home or in school. This presentation will cover the dos and don'ts of "blue bin" recycling in Vermont for metals, glass, paper products, and plastics, and why it is important, from an ecological, economic, and humanistic standpoint, to not only engage in recycling, but to get it right! You'll also learn what recyclables from VT may be recycled into, and what you can do to enhance recycling practices at school and at home.

Presenter: John Jose, Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District

Food Scrap Collection at Schools—Get Started or Step It Up

The world of waste is exciting and empowering because every person can make a difference that matters. Come learn about the power of collective action and how you and your school can protect the environment and your community by improving your school's compost collection system. This year is an especially good time to improve the classroom collection systems, which will continue to be useful even when lunch returns to the cafeteria. Build soil! Reduce greenhouse gases! Our combined efforts add up.

Presenters: Alyssa Eiklor and Emma Stuhl, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Solid Waste Program

Waste Reduction Starts at Home—Do Good, Save Money, and Have Fun

Looking for ways to make a difference from home? Try out some relatively easy, fun, and sometimes delicious strategies to reduce waste at home. Learn how to figure out what's getting wasted and how to replace single-use items (that fill the trash can) with reusables, improve your compost & recycling, and get other people on board. We'll share some of our favorite tips, like carrying around a "zero waste" kit, ways to keep food from going bad (so you have time to eat it), and how to figure out if you can fix something instead of replacing it. Individual efforts add up—reducing waste conserves water and energy, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and helps protect habitats and ecosystems.

Presenters: Alyssa Eiklor and Emma Stuhl, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Solid Waste Program

Electricity and Climate Change

This workshop will provide an overview of the generation and delivery of electricity and externalities associated with electricity generation, transmission, and usage. We will focus on renewable power generation technologies that support sustainability, the reduction of greenhouse gasses, and are scalable in Vermont. We will close with a discussion on how all Vermonters directly impact the daily total amount of power generated and ways we can reduce our emissions footprint through efficiency, electrification, and conservation initiatives.

Presenters: Michael Lazorchak, Stowe Electric Department, and students from Stowe

Signs of the Seasons with Audubon Vermont

Have you ever noticed the leaves turning in Fall or the migration of birds in the Winter? Then you've made phenological observations! Phenology is the study of life cycle events of plants and birds and how they are impacted by climate change. In this workshop you will become a community scientist! You'll be introduced to the National Phenology Network and their data collection app, Nature's Notebook. The goal is to get you outside to record your phenological observations where you live and contribute to a national database!

Presenter: Sarah Hooghuis, Audubon Vermont

And we have included lots of EXTRAS as well! So scroll to the bottom of the YES Flipgrid to check them out!