



# Orientation to the Cornell Climate Stewards Program

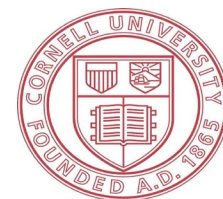
Module 1



**Cornell  
Cooperative  
Extension**



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**



**Cornell University**



**Welcome!**

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# Cornell Climate Stewards Pre-Assessment

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- As an Extension program, we will be conducting pre- and post- assessment of the topics covered in this course.
- Please take 15-minutes to fill out the pre-assessment now, if you have not already completed it!
- Remember, don't worry if you don't know the answers! This is not a test! But it is VERY Important that every steward trainee fill this out before we start the program:

[https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1RnBCsQH5wdaloy](https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1RnBCsQH5wdaloy)

# Zoom Housekeeping



- Stay on **Mute** during the presentations: we'll ask folks to unmute to share questions.
- Keep your **Video** on if possible: we like to see everyone!
- Use the **Chat** to ask questions or share.
- We will use breakout rooms: we'll invite you, just accept the invite.
- If you need help with Zoom, let us know!
- <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>



# Orientation Topics

- Welcome/Brief Introductions/Ground Rules
- Why We're Here – The Grand Challenge
- Share your Community Story
- The Cornell Climate Stewards Program
- Being a CCE Volunteer
- How to use Canvas
- The Cornell Connection
- NYS Climate Smart Communities Program
- Putting It All Together: Volunteer Projects
- Wrap Up



# Introductions



# Brief Introductions

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- Introductions of our Cornell Climate Stewards team.
- Volunteers: tell us your name, community, and county or borough you're associated with.





# Ground Rules for Class Discussion

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Throughout the training:

- Commit to learning, not debating.
- Allow everyone the chance to be heard.
- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Listen actively and with an ear to understanding others' views.
- Critique ideas, not individuals.
- Comment in order to share information, not to persuade.
- Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups.
- Don't ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.
- Others?

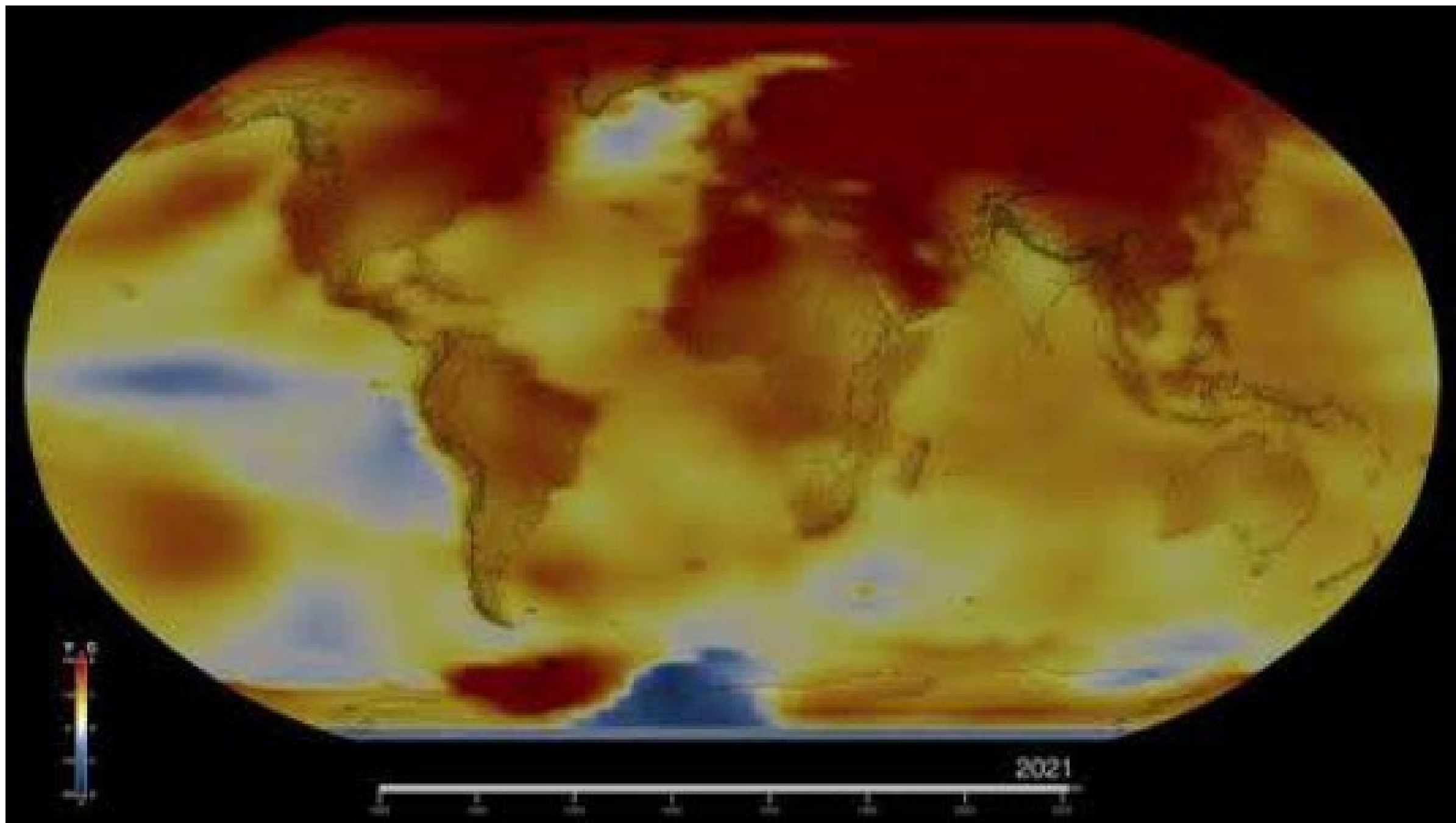




# Why We're All Here: The Grand Challenge

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- Global atmospheric carbon dioxide levels set a new record high in 2023: 419.3 parts per million - 50% higher than before the Industrial Revolution, the highest level in 800,000 years.
- Global temperature has increased 1.1C since the period of 1850-1900.
- 2024 was the warmest year since records began in 1850.
- The 10 warmest years since 1850 have all occurred in the last decade.
- Earth systems are changing: e.g. atmosphere/oceans warming, sea ice declining, glaciers retreating, more extreme weather.
- According to the WMO, more than two million people have fallen victim to weather events driven by a changing environment since 1970 – 90% of them in developing countries. \$3.6T in damages has been caused.
- Humans are the cause...**But We Can Help Solve the Challenge!**



# Environmental Change Affects Everything...

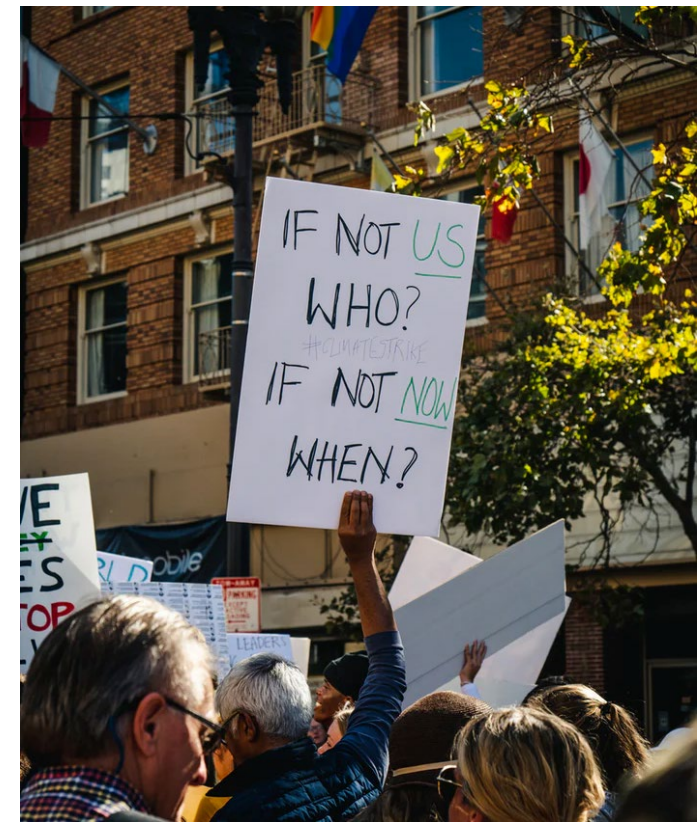




# ... and Action Begins with Each of Us...

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## in Each of our Communities





# Group Activity

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Share your Community Story

# Share your Community Story!

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Share and discuss with the group:

- Introduce yourself.
- What impacts of a changing environment are you seeing in your community?
- How do you think the community will change over time?
- Why are you interested in the program?

One volunteer from each group: share with the larger group.



# Program Background and Importance





# USDA/NIFA Grant: Feasibility Study

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## Research Questions:

- Are communities prepared or taking action to prepare for the impacts of a changing environment?
- What do communities need to be better prepared?
- Can trained master volunteers help their communities?
- What factors would impact the success of an Extension Master Volunteer Program on this topic?
- How would a successful Extension Master Volunteer Program be structured?



# Why was the Program Needed?

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- Most communities in the NE are not adequately prepared, or taking action to prepare for the impacts of a changing environment.
- Some work on planning, but don't have funds to implement plans.
- Mitigation: Tackle low hanging fruit (e.g. changing lighting in buildings).
- Adaptation: May make infrastructure changes to address immediate impacts (e.g. flooding), but not longer-term adaptation planning.
- Communities and local municipalities have low capacity/need support.
- Trained Extension volunteers can help their communities.



# How Can Volunteers help at the Local Level?

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Overwhelming need for an Extension Master Volunteer program to help local communities:

- *“It’s imperative that we begin to educate the populace more deeply on climate change.”*
- *“Communities may invest in planning and some of them have really great plans but then they don’t have money to implement things...they don’t have the capacity to apply for the funding or manage grants, particularly because we have so many very small communities.”*
- *“If there was a person that could be the liaison between the community’s leadership and implement that program for them, that would help them be able to do that because a lot of our communities don’t have a whole planning team let alone the climate adaptation team so they can be supplemented with some volunteer assistance. I think that would really start getting things done on the ground.”*



# Cornell Climate Stewards Program

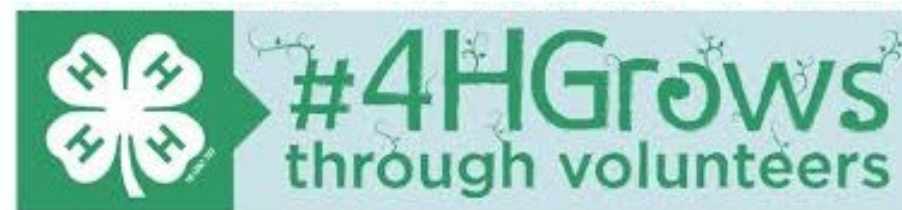
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Main goal: train and empower New York State volunteers to support their communities with planning and implementing mitigation, adaptation, and/or education projects at the local level, using research-based information and tools.



# Extension Master Volunteer Programs

- Modeled after successful Cooperative Extension System master volunteer programs nationwide:
  - Master Gardener Volunteers.
  - Master Naturalists / Master Foresters / Watershed Stewards.
  - Master Composters.
- Why have these programs been so successful?
- How do Extension Volunteers differ from other volunteers?





# Why Are Volunteers So Important To CCE?

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- Each year thousands of volunteers across New York State extend and amplify the efforts of Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- Volunteers bring a diversity of experiences, knowledge, and skills to CCE programs and their communities.
- Volunteers help CCE support important programs we would otherwise be unable to provide.

# How Can Climate Stewards Help?

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- Learn research-based information.
- Learn how to communicate effectively.
- Provide education: engage communities and youth.
- Identify local needs.
- Facilitate projects.
- Help with grant writing and reporting.



*“A lot of our local communities don’t have the capacity for doing some of the climate change adaptation and planning work themselves or even the education and outreach that’s necessary to recruit their community and citizens to take action steps..”*

- Community member providing input to the program

# Overview of the Program



# Mission & Vision Statements

Cornell Climate Stewards vision and mission:

The program vision is for NYS local communities to be actively addressing the impacts of a changing environment.

The program mission is to train and empower NYS volunteers to support their local communities with this work.





# Outline of 12-Week Training Modules



# Training Component

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- 24 hours total training.
- Learning objectives for each week.
- Each week:
  - Review materials from previous week.
  - PowerPoint lecture.
  - Break(s).
  - Case study.
  - Activity/Discussion.
  - Preview next week.
- Evaluation pre/post-training.
- Syllabus is posted on Canvas.



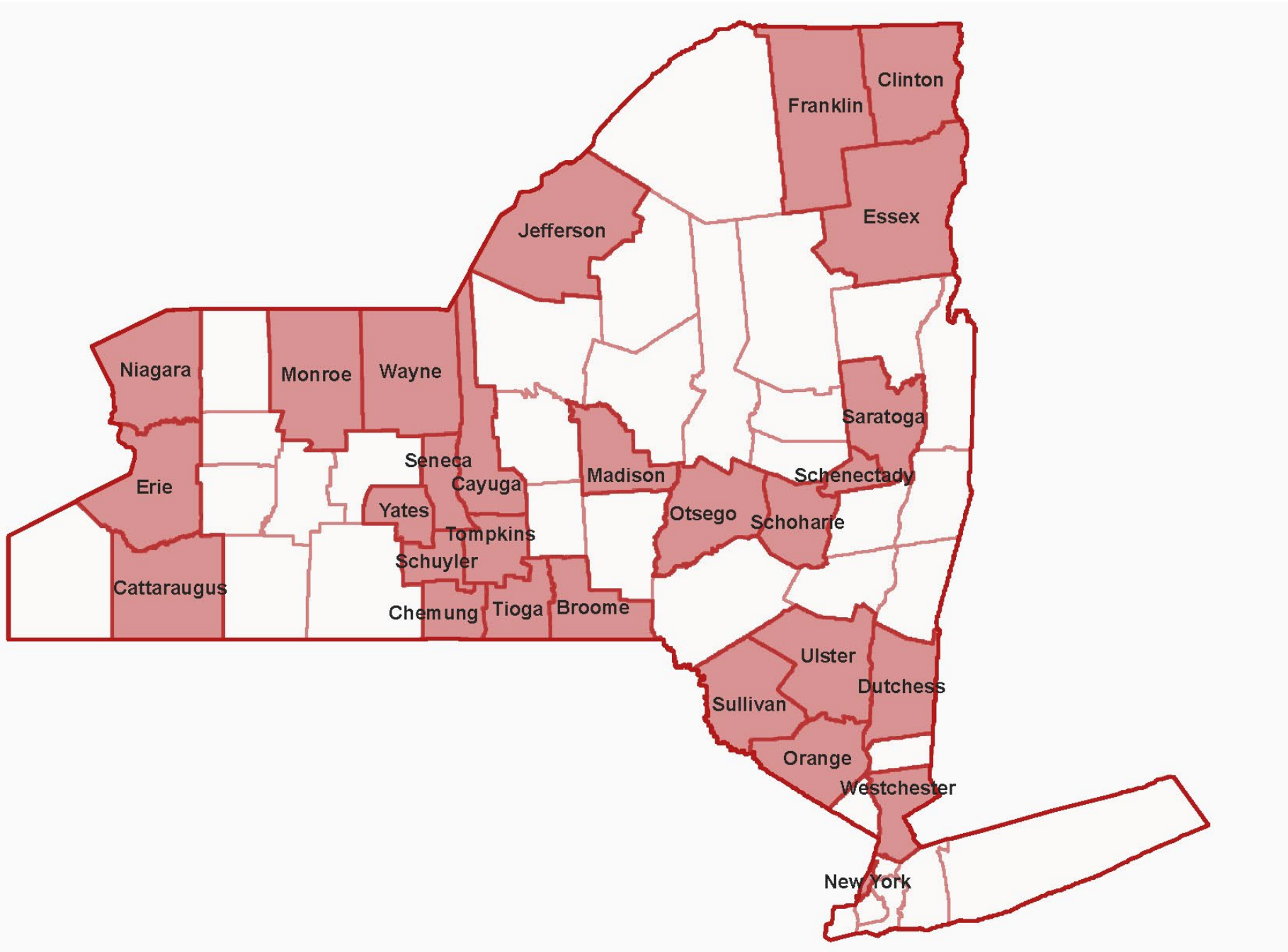
# Volunteer Component Requirement

- Complete 40 hours community service project in year one, with 40 hours of service in subsequent years to remain a Cornell Climate Steward.
- Volunteers work on their own (or in a group) to implement their chosen project in their community, working to support local municipal or community groups on a mitigation, adaptation, or education project.
- Regular check-ins with Extension staff.
- Volunteer recognition.



# Outcomes To Date







# Outcomes

“For every measure (ten questions) of understanding of climate change concepts, or comfort with material, and connectedness, the training program returned **positive increases in knowledge and attitudes** between participants before taking the course and after (measuring understanding, capacity, comfort leading projects, and connections to other community members)”.

*“I loved this program. I still have a lot to learn but this was a great, well organized, and well- presented program that has motivated me and set me on a path to community engagement and advocacy.”*

*“I was glad to be connected to a community of folks who can act as a support network for carrying out climate change actions at the community scale.”*

*“I have a better understanding of the depth of the climate change science. Also, I have a sense that I can support community projects even if I am not a scientist. There are opportunities to address climate change for everyone who is interested and motivated to help!”*

# Volunteer Projects & Success Stories

- Developed Town of Hurley Community and Government Greenhouse Gas Inventories completed in 2022.
- Education about plant-based diets.
- Education for community groups.
- Leading a task force to introduce batteries into the local electric grid, in transitioning the electric grid to clean energy sources.
- Creating pollinator pathway gardens in the city.

## CLIMATE STEWARD SPOTLIGHT SERIES



### [Climate Steward Spotlight – Nancy Jacobson](#)

Smart Fertilizer Management Practices Lead to Smarter Agriculture Dr. Nancy Jacobson taught biology and a course on global warming for over 20 years at Ithaca College. She retired several years ago in order to spend more time as a volunteer at Citizens' Climate Lobby including as the lead of their Agriculture Action Team. She has worked ...

[Read More](#)

<https://climatestewards.cornell.edu/category/news-insights/climate-steward-spotlight/>



# CLIMATE STEWARDS STORYMAP



Spreading Knowledge and Inspiring Young Minds...



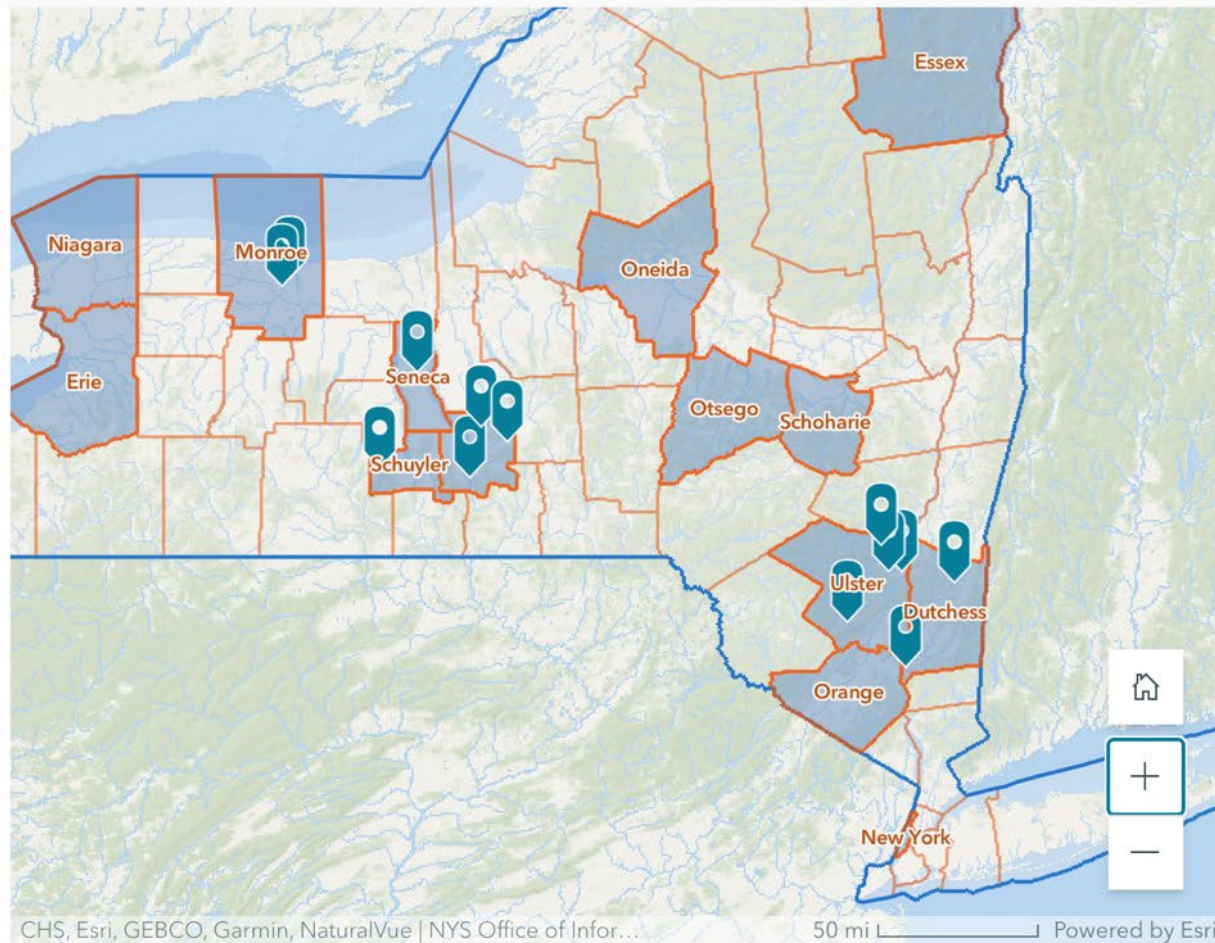
Wetland Management and Beaver Protection



Developing Pollinator Pathways at Beacon Schools



The Celebration of Lifelong Learning From a Climate...







# Break!

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5 minutes

**Being a  
Cornell Climate  
Steward  
Volunteer**





# What's Required to be a Volunteer?

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- Since you are here, you should have done the following:
  - Submitted volunteer Application.
  - Signed volunteer Agreement and Code of Conduct.
  - Completed volunteer Criminal Background Check.
- Successfully complete the training component: 12 learning modules, readings, class participation, volunteer project planning.
- Successfully complete the volunteer component: at least 40 hours per year to become/remain a Cornell Climate Steward.



# CCE Code of Conduct

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Maintain a responsible relationship with Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Maintain a respectful relationship with individuals encountered through volunteer activities.

Maintain a safe and healthful environment for program participants.

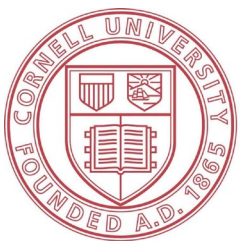


# Materials & Logos

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Once you start your community projects, any presentations you develop and provide, or any materials you develop to distribute should be reviewed by our CCE Team prior to distribution. You can use the CCS logo on any presentations or materials – just don't modify them!



Cornell University

**Cornell  
Cooperative  
Extension**



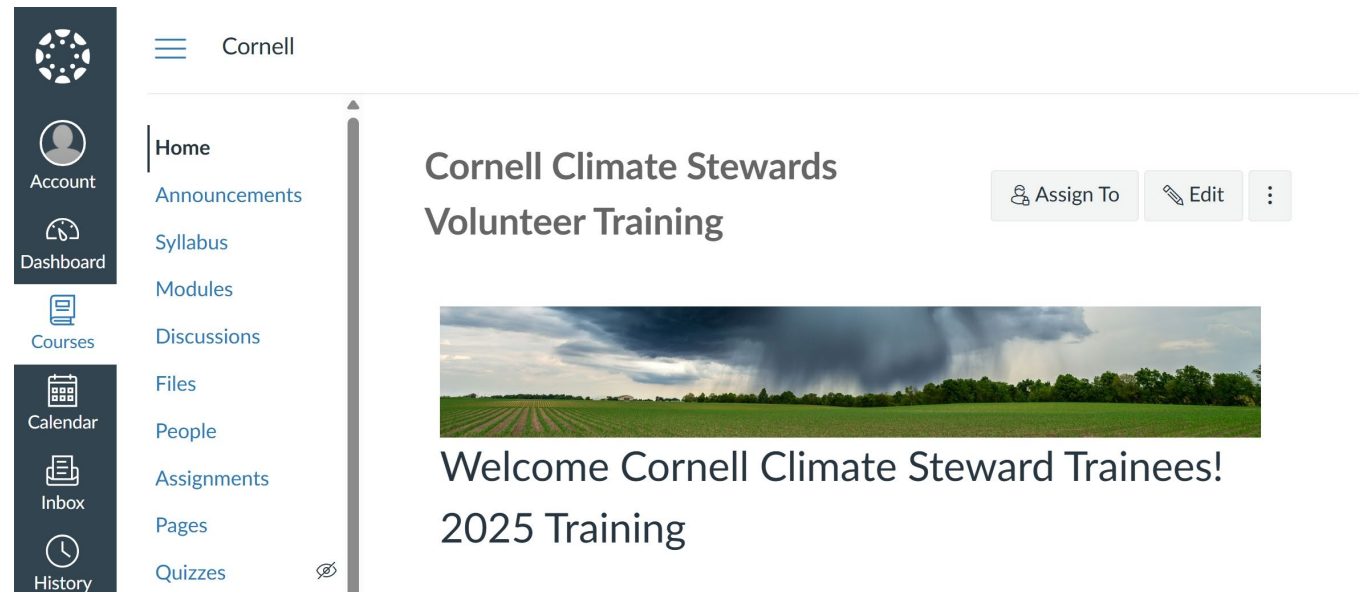


# Tracking your Volunteer Hours

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- **Important:** Climate Stewards are expected to maintain records of volunteer service as well as to report key pieces of information about the events, projects, and activities in which they participate and the hours they dedicate.
- Reporting is done through quarterly online surveys.
- Stay tuned for further guidance.

# Let's Learn to Use Canvas



The screenshot displays the Canvas LMS interface. On the left is a dark navigation sidebar with icons and labels for Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, and History. The main content area shows the course title 'Cornell Climate Stewards Volunteer Training' with 'Assign To', 'Edit', and a menu icon. Below the title is a banner image of a green field under a cloudy sky, followed by the text 'Welcome Cornell Climate Steward Trainees! 2025 Training'. A vertical scrollbar is visible on the right side of the main content area.


Cornell

Home

- Announcements
- Syllabus
- Modules
- Discussions
- Files
- People
- Assignments
- Pages
- Quizzes

Cornell Climate Stewards  
Volunteer Training

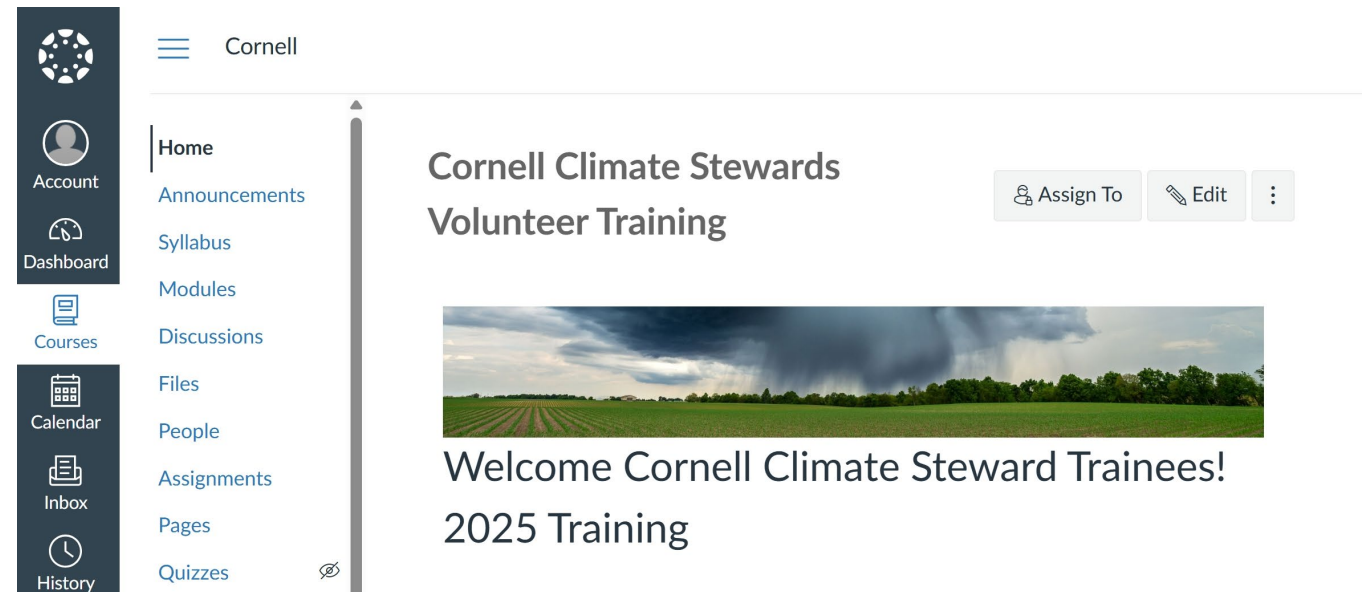
Assign To Edit



Welcome Cornell Climate Steward Trainees!  
2025 Training

# Using Canvas

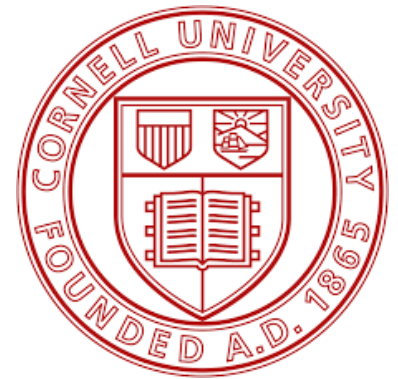
- Accept email invitation.
- Create an account.
- Login to the course.
  - Link to Zoom for live sessions.
  - Materials for modules:
    - PowerPoint presentations.
    - Recording posted after class.
    - Readings/Assignments.
    - Links to resources & videos.
  - Discussion Board.
  - Email us for help!



The screenshot displays the Canvas LMS interface for a course. On the left is a dark navigation sidebar with icons and labels for Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, and History. The main content area shows the course title 'Cornell Climate Stewards Volunteer Training' with 'Assign To', 'Edit', and a menu icon buttons. Below the title is a banner image of a green field under a cloudy sky, followed by the text 'Welcome Cornell Climate Steward Trainees! 2025 Training'. A top navigation bar includes a hamburger menu icon and the text 'Cornell'.

# The Cornell Connection





# The Land-Grant University System

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- Morrill Act: **The Land-Grant College Act of 1862**, provided grants of land to states to finance the establishment a university in each state.
- Research: **The Hatch Act of 1887** established a cooperative bond between USDA and the nation's land-grant universities allocating annual federal funding for **research**.
- Did you attend a land-grant university?
- What is the land-grant university in NY?

# Land Grant Universities map

**USDA** National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE





# So, What is Cooperative Extension?

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- *Extending* the reach of research from the land grant system to communities in every state.
- NY = Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) = every county and NYC.
- CCE puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping New York State families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.
- <https://cce.cornell.edu/>



# Cornell Cooperative Extension

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# What is Extension Education?

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- The learner is making the choices.
- Helping people help themselves...helping communities help themselves.
- Partnership.

## What is not Extension Education?

- Counseling, Advising, Advocacy (the educator is making the choices).

# Six Principals of Adult Learning...

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Adults are:

1. Internally motivated and self-directed.
2. Bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences.
3. Goal oriented.
4. Relevancy oriented.
5. Practical.
6. Like to be respected.





# What is Community Education?

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- Lifelong Learning.
  - Community Involvement.
  - Shared Leadership & Decision Making.
  - Self-Determination and Self-Help.
  - Educational Partnerships and Collaborations.
- Formal and Informal Experiences.
  - Efficient Use of Community Resources.
  - Democratic Processes.
  - Leadership Development.
  - Institutional Responsiveness.





# Remember, As A Cornell Climate Steward:

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## You Should:

- Utilize research-based information.
- Share the material you have been trained on.
- Refer to Extension Experts for answers you don't know.
- Keep personal opinions to yourself.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Utilize CCE approved materials.
- Accept reimbursement for approved costs you incurred.

## You Should Not:

- Promote specific brands, business, products, people.
- Share your own information or views.
- Take things personally, don't make it personal.
- Represent yourself, your company, or your lifestyle.
- Change program materials on your own.
- Accept payment for volunteering.

# Remember you are representing Cornell Cooperative Extension values

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- Providing information and assistance to help communities help themselves.
- Research-based, non-biased.
- Non-partisan: work with all community members.
- Collaboration.
- Volunteerism, community engagement.
- Education, not partisan advocacy.
- But you can “advocate” for science for decision making, be involved in democratic participation, and advocate for relevant projects or policies.



# Cornell Skills for Success



## INTEGRITY

### Interact With Integrity

- ▶ Staff foster a workplace in which people are respected and engaged.
- ▶ Leaders support and model integrity.

## INCLUSION

### Contribute Positively To An Inclusive Environment

- ▶ Staff act to help others feel like they belong.
- ▶ Leaders promote a culture of belonging.

## VISION

### Support The Organization's Shared Vision And Mission

- ▶ Staff are trusted to move university and team goals forward.
- ▶ Leaders inspire and articulate connection of the team's goals to the university mission.

## COMMUNICATION

### Communicate Clearly And Consistently

- ▶ Staff advance a workplace where people are informed and heard.
- ▶ Leaders facilitate communications between staff, colleagues, and leadership.

## INITIATIVE

### Act And Take Initiative

- ▶ Staff take ownership of their work and results.
- ▶ Leaders empower staff with the support to take initiative.

## JUDGMENT

### Display Sound Judgment In Problem Solving

- ▶ Staff find solutions to deliver results.
- ▶ Leaders use sound judgment to balance innovation with results.

## GROWTH

### Proactively Seek Growth Opportunities

- ▶ Staff are committed to continuous development.
- ▶ Leaders coach staff in their professional growth.

# NYS Climate Smart Communities Program

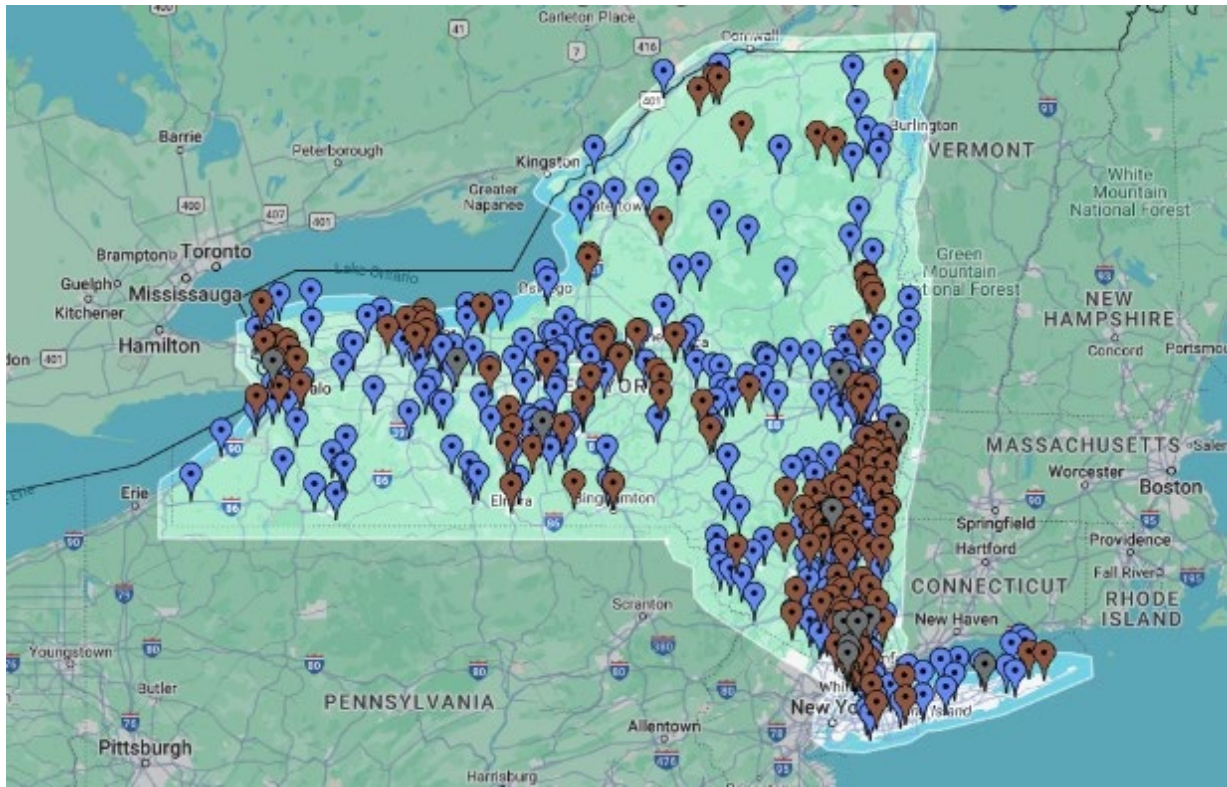


**Climate Smart  
Communities**

<https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>

# NYS Climate Smart Communities Program

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**NEW YORK**  
STATE OF  
OPPORTUNITY™

**Climate Smart  
Communities**

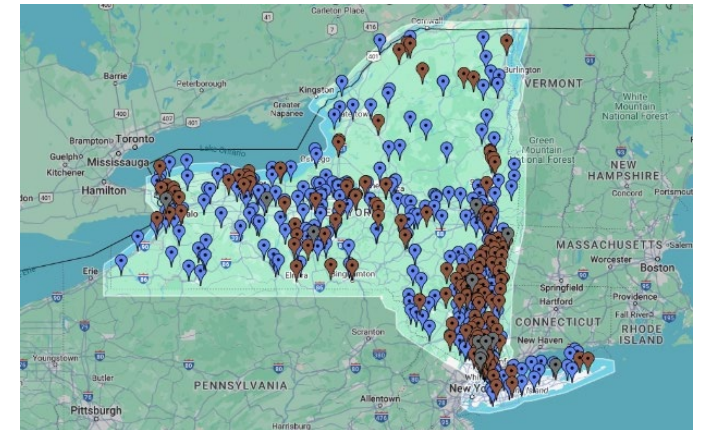
<https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>

# NYS Climate Smart Communities Program

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By adopting the Climate Smart Communities Pledge, as of May 2025, **440** NY municipalities (representing over **9.5M** people) are taking local action.

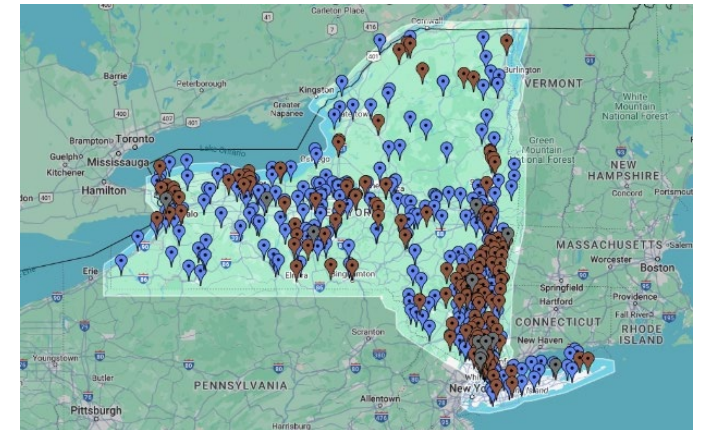
1. Registered Climate Smart Communities: voluntary initiative; municipality adopts CSC Resolution.
2. Certified Climate Smart Communities: complete certification actions: Bronze (**148**), Silver (**18**).



# Do you Know?

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- Is your municipality a Climate Smart Community?
- What date did it join?
- Registered or Certified?
- Who leads the work?
- What is the status of planning or implementation?
- <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>







# Putting It All Together





# Brainstorm!

- What kinds of projects could you take on?
- Depends on your skills and interests, and the needs in your community!



## VOLUNTEER SKILLS AND INTERESTS

Thank you for your Interest in becoming a Cornell Climate Stewards Volunteer. Please fill out this information below with as much detail as possible and return it to your program facilitator, to help us determine your skills and interests - what makes you "tick" as a volunteer.

### Personal Information

Name: .....

Address: .....

Phone/Cell: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Email: .....

Preferred contact?    Phone            Email            Cell            Text            Mail

Occupation: .....

Skills: .....

Hobbies: .....

Interests: .....

What are your primary motivations for wanting to become a CCE Climate Stewards Volunteer?

.....  
.....  
.....

What are you hoping to get out of the program?

.....  
.....  
.....

About how much time per week could you work on a volunteer project after the training is complete?

- 1-4 Hours
- 5-8 Hours
- 9-14 Hours
- 15-20 Hours
- More than 20 Hours



# Possible Projects

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Let's start to think about your project...

- Help your community become a registered CSC; form an environmental task force.
- Mitigation: organize a Solarize campaign.
- Adaptation: Identify riparian areas that need planting.
- Education: Work on a public education project.
- Administrative: Help your municipality write a grant.

Cornell Climate Stewards Initial Project Planning Guide

Initial Climate Stewards Project Plan

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Potential Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Short Project Description: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: What are the intended outcomes/benefits you want to achieve for your community?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why is this project needed?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Participants/Groups: What groups/individuals need to be involved?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Actions/Activities: What specific actions/activities be needed?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Next Steps:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

© Cornell Climate Stewards Program **3**





# Tracking your Volunteer Hours

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- **Important:** Climate Stewards are expected to maintain records of volunteer service as well as to report key pieces of information about the events, projects, and activities in which they participate and the hours they dedicate.
- Reporting is done through quarterly online surveys.
- Stay tuned for further guidance.




# Communicating with your County Extension Leader...

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- All materials must be approved by the organization (speak with your volunteer coordinator).
- All programs and events we commit to must be approved by the appropriate CCE staff.
- Additional trainings or regular meetings may be a part of your program's requirements.

# It's not all work!! Volunteers Having Fun...





# Next Week: Background Science

- Introduction
- Earth as a system
- The carbon cycle
- Change through time
- How we know
- How to analyze graphs & data
- Uncertainty and variability
- Reliable sources



# Thank you! Any Questions?

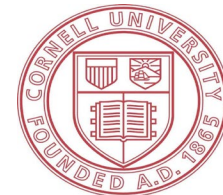
Funding for the Cornell Climate Stewards program was provided from the Environmental Protection Fund as administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation



**Cornell  
Cooperative  
Extension**



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**



Cornell University



# **Breakout Rooms**

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