

# Audubon International

Sustainable Communities Summit 2008  
Upstate New York - Capital Region

**June 11, 2008**  
**The Crossings, Colonie, NY**



## **Introduction**

As the environmental challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century loom large and the need to address issues like global warming and the conservation of water and other natural resources for future generations becomes increasingly urgent, Audubon International is poised to help. “More and more, people are seeking to be an active part of the solution, rather than an inactive part of the problem,” says Kevin Fletcher, Ph.D., Executive Director for Audubon International. “That’s where Audubon International comes in. From individual action to community-wide initiatives, Audubon International has helped people help the environment for the past 21 years and we will continue to foster more sustainable communities for present and future generations.”

Audubon International is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) environmental education organization dedicated to fostering more sustainable human and natural communities. All of our programs and activities are intended to further our fundamental goal of fostering environmentally responsible development and land management, with emphasis on protecting and sustaining land, water, wildlife and natural resources where people live. Working with nature, and not against it, makes both environmental and economic sense.

In order to fulfill the mission, Audubon International staff create and manage programs that promote biological diversity, ecosystem management, ecological restoration, and sustainability. Through environmental education, conservation assistance, research, and environmental planning, Audubon International promotes stewardship action and positive environmental change.

Through award-winning education and certification programs, Audubon International has helped over 5,000 businesses, golf courses, schools, communities, and new developments improve environmental performance and manage natural resources responsibly on more than one million acres of land. Audubon International is best known for building bridges to those often ignored by the environmental movement in order to drive environmental change. In 1991, a partnership with the golf industry was created to improve golf’s environmental game, and, in 1993, a similar partnership was created with developers to improve environmental citing, design, and management of new developments. “When we first began working with golf courses, and then again with developers, we were questioned by some of our environmental colleagues who were concerned about us working cooperatively with people who were seen as polluters and pillagers of the environment,” recalls President Ronald Dodson. “Most organizations had chosen the stick over the carrot, but our approach has since become a model for change. Very simply: it works.”

In 2003, Audubon International launched the first in a series of Sustainable Community Summits. Five years later, one-hundred community leaders from the Greater Capital Region of New York State gathered for a full day set of panels, lessons, advice, and leadership on making our communities more sustainable. What follows is a brief summary of that full-day dialogue.

# Audubon International

## Helping People Help the Environment

### ***Our Vision***

We envision our communities becoming more sustainable through good stewardship of the natural environment where people live, work, and recreate.

### ***Our Mission***

We provide people with the education and assistance they need to practice responsible management of land, water, wildlife, and natural resources.

### ***Principles for Sustainable Resource Management***

Our programs, services, and initiatives are based on Audubon International's *Principles for Sustainable Resource Management*, which are:

- Encourage resource management practices that have the greatest positive impact on plant and wildlife species, water, and the ecosystems that sustain life.
- Strive to use resources that are most easily renewed.
- Strive to eliminate or reduce the use of resources that are difficult or impossible to renew.
- Encourage activities that result in identifying new resources and technologies and enhance our current resource base in ways that will maximize positive impacts on the overall quality of life and the environment.
- Encourage human activities and practices that conserve water and protect or enhance water quality on a local and global basis.
- Encourage human activities, practices, and land uses that support healthy ecosystems that maintain and enhance biodiversity.
- Consider the geographic and ecological contexts in which our actions take place, and at the same time strive to manage resources within the natural limitations and opportunities defined by ecosystems and geographic boundaries.

# Community Engagement, Planning & Action Initiative

Today Audubon International (AI) is assisting more than 2,500 golf courses in twenty-four countries to protect and showcase the *nature of the game*. One hundred forty-five development projects in the U.S. and in eight countries, covering more than 72,000 acres of land, are receiving technical assistance to build in concert with the environment.

In addition, AI works with more traditional audiences, like schools and homeowners, who want to sustain local wildlife and conserve resources. In recent years, Audubon International has also begun to offer strategic planning assistance and a framework for education and action to municipalities and larger resort communities to foster a healthy environment, quality of life for citizens, and economic vitality.

As towns, cities and villages everywhere face mounting economic, social, and environmental challenges, community leaders are increasingly embracing the concept of sustainability as an integrated way to achieve healthy and vibrant communities, now and for future generations. Through the Community Engagement, Planning & Action (CEPA) Initiative, we help community leaders and stakeholders to embrace environmental stewardship and sustainability as a central element of planning, policies, and practices.

## **Goals:**

### ***Facilitate Best Practices***

*Assist communities in becoming models for sustainability by helping community leaders and managers to better integrate environmental stewardship and sustainability goals in community-wide planning, policies, and practices.*

### ***Drive Change***

*Document and publicize the environmental, economic, and social outcomes of model communities to inspire change elsewhere.*

### ***Offer New Solutions***

*Identify existing policy barriers (e.g., governmental, economic) that hinder the establishment of more sustainable communities as well as alternatives to overcome these barriers.*

## ***We Work With***

- Towns, Cities, and Counties
- Mixed-Use Private Communities
- Neighborhoods
- Destination Resorts
- Community Organizations
- Planning Agencies

# Panel 1: Economic Development & Cross Sector Leadership

**Moderator: David Lewis - SUNY Albany**

**Panelists: Judith Saidel - Tech Valley Civic Forum**

**Catherine Hedgemen - Stakeholders, Inc.**

**Gary Davidson - Horizon Wind Energy**

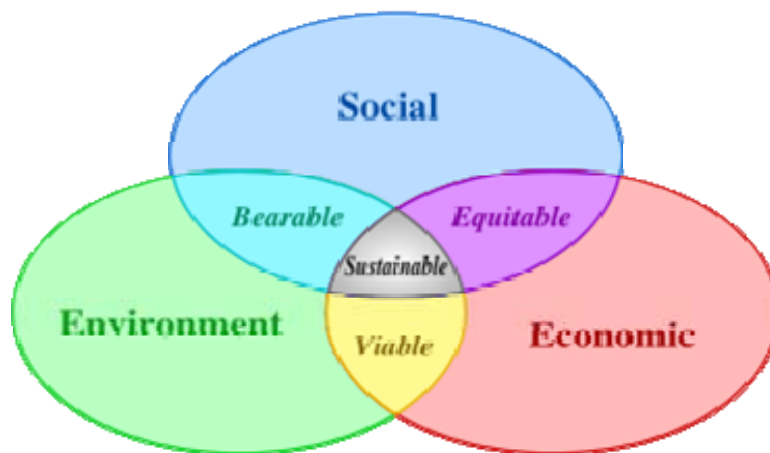
**Dennis Mosley - Arbor Hill Development Corporation**

## Key Issues/Points:

### Defining sustainable development

- Ensuring that the basic needs of all people - today's and future generations - are met, while respecting the limited capacity of the natural environment.

### Conceptual Illustration of Sustainable Development



Source: Brundtland, G. (ed.), (1987), "Our Common Future: The World Commission on Environment and Development.", Oxford, Oxford University Press.

### Economy vs. Environment

- We do not have to choose between the economy and the environment. Sustainable development practices provide communities with opportunities to capitalize on emerging markets - new energy technologies, green building design and products, conservation efforts, recycling, brownfields redevelopment, open space and water quality protection, environmental education, etc.

## **Collaboration between All Sectors**

- The triple helix/paradigm of government/academia/industry has led to major innovations (silicon chip, internet, medical advances), but with respect to local development issues it leaves out some key stakeholders - nonprofits, citizens, etc.

## **Proposed Solutions:**

### **Bring ALL Stakeholders Together**

- Collaboration should start early on during the planning/decision making process. Communities can create joint zoning/planning boards, joint comprehensive plans, etc. However, vulnerable populations and youth are often left out of the process and need to be engaged early on.

*NYS example - Tech Valley Civic Forum. Involved stakeholders from all sectors - business, government, non-profit and education - with the purpose of developing cross sector task forces to be drivers of action in the areas of community outreach, creating new economies, cultivating a tech valley workforce and creating metrics for success.*

### **Engage Youth and Minorities in Economic Development Efforts**

- Seek out involvement across the generational and socio-economic spectrum; outreach and education to the “entrenched” underclass; seek out role models/leaders living within a community; provide courses/training in middle/high school and community colleges focusing on emerging technologies, civic engagement, community planning; support small, local businesses that provide local or “green” products.

### **Seek Out ‘Green Collar’ Job Opportunities**

- The development, manufacturing, installation and maintenance of new energy technologies, green building design and products and other emerging markets provides new jobs across a wide spectrum of the workforce.

*NYS example - Horizon Wind Energy. Currently 1% of the nation’s energy comes from wind, but estimates gauge that could increase to 20% by the year 2030, employing over 500,000 people. In small, rural upstate communities where the agriculture sector is struggling, a new wind farm can bring much needed jobs to an area.*

- Emerging energy technologies, such as wind power and biofuels development, hold promise for rural communities. But, just as important as focusing on the creation of new job markets in your area, is nurturing a sense of place in the youth and marketing your community as a great place to live as well.

## Resources:

NYS Economic Development Council - <http://www.nysedc.org/>  
Tech Valley Civic Forum (SUNY College of Nanoscale Science & Engineering) - <http://cnse.albany.edu/index.cfm>  
The Stakeholders - <http://www.thestakeholders.org/>  
Arbor Hill Development Corporation - 241 Clinton Avenue, Albany, (518) 463-9993  
Horizon Wind Energy - <http://www.horizonwind.com/home/>  
Center for Economic Growth - <http://ceg.org/>  
Albany County Dept. of Economic Development, Conservation and Planning - <http://www.albanyny.org/Government/Departments/DevelopmentPlanning.aspx>  
Empire State Development - <http://www.nylovesbiz.com/>  
Capital Region Independent Business Alliance - <http://criba.org/>  
Tech Valley Global Business Council - <http://acchamber.org/councils/globalbusinessnetwork.aspx>  
Business Development Center (Rensselaer County) - <http://www.rensselaergateway.com/>  
Albany Center for Economic Success - [www.acesincubator.org](http://www.acesincubator.org)  
Small Business Development Center - <http://www.nyssbdc.org/centers/centers.cfm?centid=2>  
U-Start Business Incubator - <http://www.union.edu/Resources/Technology/U-Start/>  
Schenectady County Community Business Center - [www.sccbc.org](http://www.sccbc.org)  
Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce - [www.ac-chamber.org](http://www.ac-chamber.org)  
Columbia County Chamber of Commerce - [www.columbiachamber-ny.com](http://www.columbiachamber-ny.com)  
Columbia Hudson Partnership - [www.chpartnership.com](http://www.chpartnership.com)  
Greene County Planning and Economic Development - [www.greeneplanning.com/](http://www.greeneplanning.com/)  
Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce - [www.saratoga.org/chamber](http://www.saratoga.org/chamber)  
Saratoga Economic Development Corporation - [www.saratogaedc.com/busassistance.html](http://www.saratogaedc.com/busassistance.html)  
Schenectady County Chamber of Commerce - [www.schenectadychamber.org](http://www.schenectadychamber.org)  
Schenectady/Glenville Empire Zone - [www.sgedz.org](http://www.sgedz.org)  
Warren County Economic Development Corporation - [www.warrencounty.org](http://www.warrencounty.org)  
Washington County Local Development Corporation - [www.wcldc.org](http://www.wcldc.org)

## **Panel 2: Housing & Redevelopment**

**Moderator: Patrick Clear - ECOS**

**Panelists: Philip LaRocque - NYS Builders Association**

**Debra Devine - NYS Division of Housing & Community Renewal**

**Lisa Nagel - Saratoga PLAN**

### **Key Issues/Points:**

#### **Homes vs. Jobs**

- Homes are where jobs go at night...Employers are concerned about quality housing for their employees that is also affordable. High housing costs can sometimes have a negative impact on business growth.

#### **Green Building Technology**

- Developers, communities and individuals all have a role to play when it comes to investing in and seeking out greener buildings and homes, greater energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources.

#### **Responsible Development**

- There are opportunities for citizens to become engaged in the decision making processes that determine where development will occur in their community. Particularly since New York is a home rule state and a great deal of planning and zoning authority rests with the municipality - communities must empower themselves and become part of the process.

#### **Wants vs. Needs**

- Higher density development is traditionally promoted by the environmental and planning sectors as a necessity of sustainable development, but it is not always embraced by the general public.

### **Proposed Solutions:**

#### **Getting Developers Involved in the Green Building Movement**

- The New York State Builders Association (NYSBA) provides support to the ENERGY STAR Program by recruiting homebuilders and other partners into the program. NYSBA also assists with the design of program policies and procedures and conducts technical builder training for the program.

- The New York ENERGY STAR Homes Program employs proven technologies and advanced building practices to use approximately 30% less energy than conventionally built homes. Only those homes that meet strict high-efficiency standards are certified as New York ENERGY STAR Homes.

### **Community Involvement to Guide/Facilitate Greener Development/Affordable Housing Projects**

- Communities must make a conscious decision to address these issues and remain committed to the decision. Community leaders can use comprehensive plans, other planning documents or programs such as AI's Sustainable Communities Program to include sustainable development criterion and set forth what they hope to achieve. In order for a plan to work, communities need to educate citizens, developers and funding sources and gain local support for affordable housing and sustainable development.
- Communities can also work in tandem with developers to facilitate the development process when a project meets the sustainability standards they have identified in their planning documents. This could include having projects that are shovel ready, creating growth zones to expedite the SEQRA process and being willing to negotiate tradeoffs with developers to include affordable housing.

### **High-Density Housing Needs Coincide with the American Dream**

- Even with all we know about density and sprawl, there will always be people who want to live in a single family home with a lot of land, particularly families with children. However, it is expected that there will be a shift to urban areas, especially among young professionals and empty nesters, if services such as transportation, shopping, arts and entertainment exist.
- The trend/focus seems to be on revitalizing urban centers and locating development and redevelopment of buildings near existing infrastructure and services and creating more walkable, livable communities. It is recognized that not everyone wants to or should live in cities, but with limited government resources available and the costs of fuel, it is likely that these funds would be directed to areas where there are existing resources and public transportation. It is becoming less likely that government will continue to fund sprawl-related developments.
- Communities need to take a hard look at where they are now and where they expect or want to be in the future. Comprehensive planning is a must and regional planning that addresses transportation options is critical. Open space should be preserved and funding for existing and future infrastructure needs should be addressed. Planning groups should set goals, establish timetables and include public comment periods all through the process.

## Public Education Regarding Existing Incentives

- People's first impression when talking about renewable energy is often that it is too expensive. In reality, NYS offers many tax credits and other incentives available to both lower and moderate income groups. Visit NYSERDA to learn more about tax credits for solar projects and the costs and benefits of a solar energy system, and to solicit their help for suggestions for an outreach campaign in your community.

## Resources:

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) <http://www.nyserda.org/>  
NYS Builders Association <http://www.nysba.com/>  
Energy Star <http://www.energystar.gov/>  
NYS Division of Housing & Community Renewal <http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us/>  
Saratoga P.L.A.N. <http://www.saratogaplan.org/>  
Affordable Housing Partnership <http://www.ahphome.org/>  
New York State Association of Realtors, Inc. <http://www.nysar.com/>  
Carrowmore Community Assistance, Inc. <http://www.carrowmore.org/>  
Housing Resources of Columbia County [www.housingresources.org](http://www.housingresources.org)  
TRIP (Troy Rehabilitation & Improvement Program, Inc.) NeighborWorks Home Ownership Center <http://www.triponline.org/>  
NYS Affordable Housing Corporation <http://www.nyhomes.org/>  
HUD U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development <http://www.hud.gov/>  
NYS Department of State <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/>  
Division of Local Government Services <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/index.htm>  
Division of Community Services <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/dcs/index.htm>  
Division of Coastal Resources <http://nyswaterfronts.com/index.asp>

## **Panel 3: Transportation & Regional Planning**

**Moderator: Fred Realbuto - Audubon International**

**Panelists: Chris O'Neill - Capital District Transportation Committee**

**Rocky Ferraro - Capital District Regional Planning Commission**

**David Lewis - SUNY Albany**

### *Key Issues/Points:*

#### **Preparing for Growth**

- The Capital Region has experienced modest growth over the last 30 years. Recent studies and initiatives suggest the opportunity for much more rapid population and employment growth.
- If we experience the growth that regional leaders are pursuing, how can we maintain a quality region - walkable communities, vibrant urban areas, preservation of open space, etc. - while avoiding the negative consequences of growth and the costs of sprawl?

#### **Impacts of Alternative Development Scenarios**

- The Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC), the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) and the University at Albany Department of Geography and Planning have collaborated to conduct research and studies funded through the Center for Economic Growth to identify the Region's characteristics, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities as they pertain to transportation, development-related policy choices and land use on a regional scale. New Visions 2030, The Plan for a Quality Region: <http://www.cdtcmo.org/rtp2030/summary.pdf>

#### **The Transportation Infrastructure/Regional Planning Connection**

- More dispersed development patterns means higher infrastructure costs, in particular for education.
- The faster the Capital Region grows, the more critical it is to manage growth to avoid escalating infrastructure costs.
- Under the Region's current growth trend scenarios, the costs to maintain existing infrastructure would be borne by a smaller and less wealthy population. By taking a more concentrated approach to growth and development within the Capital Region, private costs for services like water, wastewater and other infrastructure, would be less.

- Mutual aid assistance agreements for fire and emergency services may not ensure adequate personnel and property protection in fast growing suburban and rural areas dependent on volunteer staffing - accelerating the need to professionalize some currently volunteer districts.

## Proposed Solutions:

### **Implementation**

- A regional vision for concentrated development patterns must rely on collaboration with local communities, the business community and developers.
- A “top down” approach will not work - instead, partnerships must be established. The CDTC and the CDRPC seek to engage local communities and development partners in a continuing dialog.

### **Evaluating Performance**

- How can we evaluate the performance of a “smart growth” land use program on the transportation system? The Capital District Transportation Committee uses a qualitative performance measure, called community quality of life. This measure is used at different scales - regional, corridor and project level. This measure has been evaluated in Linkage Studies as well as in the regional New Visions Plan.

### **Increasing Opportunities for/Awareness of Public Transportation**

There are several bus companies that provide service to the Capital District from the Capital region and surrounding counties. CDTA is the bus company that is most visible and provides daily bus service to many area residents. CDTA offers a free LINK to other bus companies in the area:

- Northway Express provides weekday commuter service from Saratoga County to Albany County, stopping at most park-and-ride lots along the Northway and as several locations in downtown Saratoga Springs and Ballston Spa.
- Brown Coach provides weekday commuter service from Montgomery County (Fonda and Amsterdam) and western Schenectady County to the city of Albany, stopping at several park-and-ride lots including Thruway Exit 26.
- Schoharie County Public Transportation provides weekday commuter service from Schoharie County and western Schenectady County (Duanesburg) to the City of Albany, stopping at several park-and-ride lots.
- Yankee Trails provides weekday commuter service from Bennington, VT and parts of Rensselaer County (i.e. Hoosick Falls) to the city of Albany, stopping at several locations within Vermont and Rensselaer County.
- Columbia County Public Transportation provides weekday commuter service from Columbia County (i.e. Hudson, Kinderhook, Valatie) to the city of Albany, stopping at several locations within Columbia County.

## Community Planning That Reflects Emerging Trends

- Community planning should accommodate the trends that are clearly emerging as a result of the changing economy and sensitivity to the environment. The region should support smart growth with transit/pedestrian friendly design and pursue 'big ticket' initiatives (example: Bus Rapid Transit, High Occupancy Toll lanes) that give transit and carpoolers an advantage.
- Public transportation can be a viable option for densely populated areas, but is not visible for all areas of the Capital District. Outlying areas are very difficult to serve, especially for non-commuter service. High quality transit service is most successful in higher density corridors with transit friendly, walkable land use design patterns. The CDTC New Visions Plan has identified this as one of the benefits of smart growth and concentrated development - the opportunity to provide high quality transit.

### Resources:

NYS Center for Economic Growth [www.ceg.org](http://www.ceg.org)

Capital District Regional Planning Commission [www.cdrpc.org](http://www.cdrpc.org)

Capital District Transportation Committee <http://www.cdtcmpo.org/>

Capital District Transit Authority <http://www.cdta.org/index.php>

New York State Department of Transportation [www.nysdot.gov](http://www.nysdot.gov)

Metropolitan Transportation Authority <http://www.mta.info/>

Regional Plan Association - NY NJ CT <http://www.rpa.org/>

Adirondack-Glens Falls Transportation Committee <http://www.agftc.org/>

New York Planning Federation [www.nypf.org](http://www.nypf.org)

New York Bicycling Coalition [www.nybc.net](http://www.nybc.net)

American Public Transportation Association - NY Transit links

[http://www.apta.com/links/state\\_local/ny.cfm](http://www.apta.com/links/state_local/ny.cfm)

## **Panel 4: Community Level Engagement & Planning**

**Moderator:** Judith Saidel - Tech Valley Civic Forum

**Panelists:** Peter Bronski - Audubon International

Nan Stolzenberg -Community Planning & Environmental Associates

Rocky Ferraro - Capital District Regional Planning Commission

### *Key Issues/Points:*

#### **Overcoming Division and Resistance**

- Planning, zoning and taxes can be divisive issues for elected officials and residents in any community, but an approach that includes education and a collaborative effort involving all stakeholders can help a community move forward with a common vision.
- Community resistance comes in all shapes and forms. NIMBY (*not in my back yard*), CAVE (*citizens against virtually everything*), BANANA (*build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything*).

#### **Existing Plans/Zoning Regulations = Current Development Patterns**

- A comprehensive plan evaluates what a community has (through GIS data, mapping, inventories, etc.), what a community wants/needs (a long range vision, consensus), and what a community needs in order to get there (tools to implement the plan, landuse regulations, zoning, education, etc.).
- Current development is shaped by existing zoning regulations. Comprehensive plans should be living documents and must include a timeline for revisions. Administrations change, community needs and populations change - and the plan for the community should be able to reflect that. The comprehensive planning process must include opportunities to revise, update and take stock - using performance indicators as a way to gauge progress.

### *Proposed Solutions:*

#### **Getting Started - Community Engagement**

- Successful public education requires a multi-faceted approach, not just town meetings. Whatever your message is, make it pervasive - on the town website, in a town newsletter, in pamphlets at town facilities (i.e. town hall, library), writing a regular column in a local community newspaper, etc.

- To start a sustainable community movement that is self-sustaining, you need to institutionalize sustainability in ways that circumvent the inevitable turnover in elected officials and municipal staff. Do this by a) making sustainability a core component of your community's long-term comp plan, and b) forming a diverse committee of stakeholders that provide continuity to an effort over time. Delegate responsibility throughout the committee so no one individual is unduly burdened.

### **Creating a Sense of Stewardship**

- Reconnecting people with nature starts with having nature for them to connect with. In order to achieve that, communities must invest in open space preservation - whether through the local government, a local land trust or both. Open space preservation should emphasize accessibility and connectivity. Can you get from place to place on trails and bike routes? Are protected open space properties distributed throughout a community, and can members of the community safely and easily access those properties? Once an open space network is in place, communities can further the connection by incorporating environmental education into public education and get everyone out in the field.

### **Addressing Common Elements of Failure**

It's important to recognize that you and others like you are the "change agents" within your local government, and your goal is to create a "sustainability culture" within your community—starting with your own local government as a role model. Where to begin? Start by addressing eight common failures for environmental organizational change:

- ***Failing to Create a Sense of Urgency*** – Moving people or communities in a new direction can be a little like moving an iceberg. Effective sustainable community champions find ways to create a sense of urgency. Incorporating the principles of sustainability<sup>1</sup> into local government has to be viewed as a critical part of your community's long-term success, and a critical part of each person's job. It's also critical to secure top leadership support for your sustainability efforts. If employees see upper management or elected leaders treating sustainability as a side issue, then they will too.
- ***Not Creating a Guiding Coalition (Team)*** – You can't go it alone. Build a "sustainability team," selecting people from all levels and departments—and include the right community members.
- ***Underestimating the Power of a Vision*** – People want to feel as if they are a part of something bigger than themselves. Create a bigger vision for your community—starting with your government operations as the model.
- ***Under-Communicating the Vision*** – Once you've developed a "vision message," make sure that vision is communicated to staff, and to town and city residents. You may think that people have heard or read what you're saying, but most environmental messages are under-communicated.
- ***Not Addressing Obstacles*** – Most environmental efforts fail in towns, cities, and villages because they are viewed as side issues. Remove these obstacles along the way.

It is imperative to generate a great deal of buy-in from the entire community. By the time citizens gather to create the details about the vision for their community, many of the potential obstacles should already have been addressed.

- ***Failing to Create Short-Term Wins*** – Keep you and your staff motivated throughout any sustainable communities planning and visioning process. Have a long-term vision, but set short term goals. Meet them. Publicize and celebrate those shorter term successes. Then, set new goals.
- ***Declaring Victory Too Soon*** – At the same time, don't settle on limited results. Create models throughout the process. When you talk about community sustainability, these places – role models, examples, leaders – are demonstrations of it actually happening in practice. They are places to look to for inspiration, ideas, motivation, support, and education.
- ***Not Anchoring Changes in the Culture*** – Use projects and performance goals to change behavior, but use management systems, rewards programs, and training programs to reinforce and embed that behavior in staff. As an environmental champion, part of your job for ensuring success is managing the environmental culture that you've created.

### Resources:

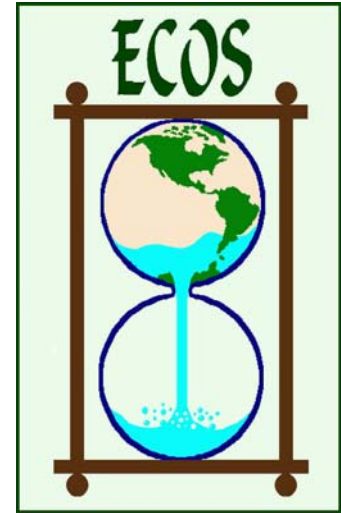
Audubon International [www.auduboninternational.org](http://www.auduboninternational.org)  
Albany County Dept. of Economic Development, Conservation and Planning - <http://www.albanyny.org/Government/Departments/DevelopmentPlanning.aspx>  
Greene County Planning and Economic Development - [www.greeneplanning.com/](http://www.greeneplanning.com/)  
NYS Department of State <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/>  
Division of Local Government Services <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/index.htm>  
Division of Community Services <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/dcs/index.htm>  
Division of Coastal Resources <http://nyswaterfronts.com/index.asp>  
Schenectady County Planning Department <http://www.schenectadycounty.com>  
Saratoga County Planning Department [www.co.saratoga.ny.us](http://www.co.saratoga.ny.us)  
Hudson River Valley Greenway [www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us](http://www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us)

# Summit Sponsors

## **ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse, Inc**

“The Capital Region’s nexus for environmental awareness.”  
Founded in 1972, the mission of ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse, Inc. is to provide environmental information and educational opportunities that enhance the appreciation of the natural world, to build a community that is aware and knowledgeable about environmental issues and to advocate for informed action to preserve our natural resources. ECOS publications include Natural Areas guide books for Albany, Saratoga and Schenectady counties as well as other regional guides to outdoor recreational resources and environmental education.

For more information, visit: [www.ecosny.org](http://www.ecosny.org)



## **Horizon Wind Energy**

Horizon Wind Energy develops, constructs, owns and operates wind farms throughout the United States. Based in Houston, Texas with regional offices in New York, Oregon, Illinois, California, Denver and Minnesota, Horizon has developed more than 2000 MW and owns over 1300 MW of operating wind farms. Horizon is currently developing a portfolio of more than 10,500 MW in over a dozen states. Horizon is owned by Energias de Portugal (EDP), the largest Portuguese utility.

For more information, visit: [www.horizonwind.com](http://www.horizonwind.com)

## **Lafarge Industries**

Lafarge North America is the largest diversified supplier of construction materials in the United States and Canada, producing and selling cement, ready-mixed concrete, gypsum wallboard, aggregates, asphalt, and related products and services. These products are used in communities across North America to build homes, apartments, offices, schools, hospitals, banks, museums, roads, highways and bridges, as well as parks and swimming pools. Lafarge North America is not only a leader in product innovation and sustainable manufacturing practices, but also leads the industry in environmental restoration and preservation efforts across the United States and Canada. Lafarge is committed to conducting business in a way that has minimal impact on the environment, and that is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. They encourage their facilities to further exceed these requirements by honoring one site every year with the Lafarge North America Environmental Recognition Award.

For more information, visit [www.lafarge.com](http://www.lafarge.com)



## **Sustainable Communities Summit Speaker List**

**Peter Bronski** - Senior Associate, Audubon International

**Patrick Clear** - Executive Director, ECOS, Environmental Clearing House, Inc.

**Debra Devine** - Director, Office of Policy Research and Development, NYS  
Division of Housing and Community Renewal

**Gary Davidson** - Director of Public Affairs, Horizon Wind Energy

**Ron Dodson** - President, Audubon International

**Robert Elliott** - Deputy Secretary of State, NYS Department of State

**Rocco Ferraro** - Executive Director, Capital District Regional Planning  
Commission

**Kevin A. Fletcher, Ph.D.** - Executive Director, Audubon International

**Catherine M. Hedgemen** - Stakeholders, Inc.

**Philip LaRocque** - Vice President, NYS Builders Association

**David Lewis, Ph.D.** - Assistant Professor, Department of Geography & Planning,  
State University of New York, Albany

**Paula A. Mahan** - Supervisor, Town of Colonie

**Diane Metz** - Community Planning Coordinator, Saratoga P.L.A.N.

**Dennis Mosley** - Executive Director, Arbor Hill Development Corporation

**Christopher O'Neill** - Senior Transportation Planner, Capital District  
Transportation Committee

**Fredrik Realbuto** - Director of New York Operations, Audubon International

**Judith Saidel** - Executive Director, UAlbany Center for Women in Government  
& Civil Society

**Nan Stolzenberg** - Planner, Community Planning & Environmental Associates

## **Audubon International Post-Summit Plan: Actions to Take as a Result of the 2008 Sustainable Communities Summit**

At the conclusion of the 2008 Sustainable Communities Summit and while compiling this brief summary of the event itself, Audubon International staff worked to identify the best next steps for the organization to take in meeting our Vision and Mission in New York State. More specifically, actions were identified to clearly respond to the problems and proposed solutions presented in this summary report, while also achieving the goal of our Community Engagement, Planning and Action Initiative—to *help community leaders and stakeholders [in New York State specifically] to embrace environmental stewardship and sustainability as a central element of planning, policies, and practices.*

The following actions were identified:

- Increase the level of direct training and seminars to town board, planning board, and other local decision-makers throughout the state to help understand:
  - A basic process for fostering more sustainable policies and practices in communities;
  - Ways to measure and track sustainability efforts within communities;
  - The use of Audubon International's Site & Landscape Classification Scheme as a tool to help in land use planning and new development permitting; and
  - Elements of more sustainable siting, design, construction, and management in development projects.
- Develop and support the development of free online resources and tools to assist community leaders in New York State to foster sustainability goals in planning, policy-development, and decision-making.
- Develop and host additional Sustainable Communities Summits in other parts of New York State (and across the United States)—with the 4<sup>th</sup> Summit to be held on June 3, 2009 in Henrietta, New York.
- Communicate more effectively and seek partnerships with groups and chapters in New York connected with such groups as the American Planning Association, U.S. Conference of Mayors, New York State Association of Towns, New York Planning Federation, and others.
- Develop a periodic e-newsletter service and website to deliver relevant information, resources and tools, and to keep interested community leaders connected with each other in order to share ideas beyond this and other Sustainability Community Summits.
- Increase membership in New York in Audubon International's Sustainable Communities Program—using these community members as models for change in other communities their leader per-sharing, case study development, etc.

## 2008 Sustainable Communities Summit—NYS Capital Region

### *Opportunities and Challenges Facing New York State Communities*

Audubon International hosted its third Sustainable Communities Summit, Wednesday, June 11, 2008 at The Crossings in Colonie, NY. In an effort to examine the opportunities and challenges of growth facing New York State communities, this one-day leadership summit provided a forum for dialog about working toward communities that are economically viable, socially vibrant and environmentally sustainable.

Nearly one-hundred community leaders from around the Capital Region attended the event, which examined some of the challenges, barriers, opportunities, and models for making community sustainability the norm. Panels of experts from

various fields were on hand to address what were identified to be critical topics to achieving sustainability in communities in this region of the New York—including housing, transportation, green building, balanced and ecologically-sensitive planning, and community engagement. The event was sponsored by Selkirk Cogen Partners, Lafarge Industries, and Horizon Wind Energy.

To read the full 2008 Sustainable Communities Summit report visit: <http://auduboninternational.org/PDFs/2008summitreport.pdf>



2003

Full day sustainable community and sustainable land development workshop hosted in partnerships with North Carolina State University.

2004

Audubon International hosted cooperative extension leaders and staff from the southeastern United States outlining best management practices in planning and land development at Audubon International program member sites.

2005

Sustainable Communities Leadership Summit held in partnership with University of Florida's Program for Resource Efficient Communities and Walt Disney World Resorts.

2008

University at Albany, the Capital Region Planning Commission and others partnered with Audubon International to provide a one-day leadership workshop for sustainability efforts in New York's Capital Region.

2009

Rochester Institute of Technology and the Pollution Prevention Institute hosted the second New York State Sustainable Communities Summit with Audubon International.

### Audubon International's History as a Sustainability Summit Facilitator

A central component to Audubon International's *Community Engagement, Planning, and Action Initiative* is the facilitation of sustainability meetings and summits with community leaders and local governments. The goal of these leadership summits is to provide lessons and meaning regarding the goal of sustainability in local communities. Working with local university, business, and municipal partners, Audubon International has worked to provide an open forum for community leaders to meet, talk, learn, and share.

If you, or the leaders in your community, are interested in working with Audubon International to facilitate a community leadership forum, please contact Suzi Sakowski at [szakowski@auduboninternational.org](mailto:szakowski@auduboninternational.org) or 518.767.9051 ext.124. ●