



The Village of Briarcliff Manor

Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC)

- and -

Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)

January 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter!

The Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) wish all of you a very happy new year!

This past year marked meaningful progress in the Village's efforts to integrate sustainability into its long-term planning. Over the course of 2025, the Village has made significant efforts to involve residents in conversations about the incorporation of sustainability elements into its updated **Comprehensive Plan**. This plan serves as a long-term roadmap for Briarcliff's future, shaping future growth, land use, development, and infrastructure with sustainability in mind.

In 2025, **SAC** continued its collaborative work with key community partners, including the **Briarcliff Manor Recreation Department**, the **Briarcliff PTA**, and the **Briarcliff Manor Public Library**. These partnerships provided residents with educational programs, resources, and a variety of opportunities to learn about and adopt green practices in their daily lives. **EAC** also had an active year working with the Village to ensure best environmental practices while planning and designing new public spaces and helping install native pollinator gardens in existing spaces.

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Message from the Board of Trustees

Briarcliff continues to get greener!

The Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) are actively expanding their roles to cultivate a deeper environmental sensibility throughout our Village.

SAC, tasked with nurturing a more sustainable future, has continued to weave "reduce, reuse, and recycle" into the fabric of our community, promoting simple and effective ways to help make our Village more environmentally friendly. Through engaging educational programs and lively events to learn about clean energy, recycling, and zero-waste practices, SAC is gently guiding residents towards greener lifestyles, demonstrating that environmental stewardship can also translate into significant cost savings. SAC's popular swap events once again kept a wide range of items out of our landfills, recycling sports equipment, holiday decor and Halloween costumes among our residents.

This year, SAC partnered with the Village to secure a Municipal Food Scraps Recycling Grant of \$35,500. This funding will help establish a new food scraps drop-off site at the Buckout Road DPW site, anticipated to open in spring 2026. Our Clean Energy Communities campaigns also attracted significant grant money. Funding from the Drive Electric, Clean Heating and Cooling, and Community Solar campaigns supported newly insulated ceilings at Village Hall, and the installation of efficient heat pumps for our Emergency Services Departments. Additional grant funding covered energy audits of our municipal buildings and a new electric car for the Village.

EAC continues to be a vigilant guardian of our environment, carefully assessing the environmental impact of proposed projects throughout the Village. EAC worked with DPW to redesign the grounds at our Public Library, choosing hardy plantings that will better withstand weather and drought, and ensuring our public spaces remain beautiful at low cost to resident taxpayers. The EAC also began work with the Board of Trustees, the Planning Board, and the Local Development Corporation to shape the proposed public plaza at 1150 Pleasantville Road, across from Village Hall, including the greenspace using native species and an integrated pollinator pathway. At 235 Elm, the EAC is reviewing planned plantings and environmental building features of this site, one of the largest construction project applications the Village has reviewed in decades. As we continue to update land use policies, EAC's deep knowledge and experience in the best environmental practices will help inform our local laws.

We encourage all who are passionate about environmental stewardship to join the conversation. SAC meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Village Hall Court Room; EAC meetings convene on the fourth Thursday.

As our community develops, we will continue to do our part to protect our planet, with the added benefit of cost savings as we implement best environmental practices in our Village.

Board of Trustees

Sustainability Updates in Briarcliff Manor

In 2025, SAC continued its fruitful collaborations with the **Briarcliff Manor Recreation Department**, the **Briarcliff PTA**, and the **Briarcliff Manor Public Library** to promote simple and effective ways to help make our community greener. Our swap events, our Earth Day 2025 celebration, and our annual movie event offered a range of opportunities to learn about clean energy, recycling, and zero-waste practices. The annual Community Bonfire and Holiday Sing Along event organized by the Briarcliff Manor Recreation Department featured our first **zero-waste station**, a fun, hands-on learning experience where enthusiastic SAC volunteers showed residents how to correctly segregate all the waste generated at the event.

It was exciting to see the funding earned in 2024 through SAC's Clean Energy Communities campaigns being used to improve **energy efficiency** in municipal buildings. The much-anticipated establishment of a **food scraps drop-off site at the Briarcliff DPW** in spring 2026 will help divert food waste from the trash pipeline to generate compost. Since food scraps comprise almost a quarter of all solid waste generated in our community, tackling this issue makes clear environmental and economic sense.

Apart from SAC-driven campaigns, the Village also secured funding for the **installation of electric car chargers** at Village Hall. These EV chargers use the ChargePoint app to activate and pay for charging (\$0.40/kwh). Additional EV chargers will be installed at the Scarborough train station and will provide residents with convenient access to clean transportation infrastructure, supporting both everyday travel and the community's broader sustainability goals.

The EAC continued to work with the Village on several planting projects. We designed and helped to install a **new native pollinator garden** at the Library, enhanced Pocket Park with additional plantings, led public tours of the Village's native gardens, and facilitated a “**vine squad**” clean-up group at the Youth Center. In collaboration with neighbors in Ossining, we launched a **Pollinators Pathways website** to catalog residential and municipal native plant gardens. EAC members continue to advocate for and assist with “green” design in the built environment and ecologically beneficial land management on both private and public lands.

SAC Activities Recap (Halloween Costume Swap)



On October 4th, SAC partnered with **Macaroni Kid** and the **Briarcliff Manor Recreation Department** to organize the annual Briarcliff Halloween Costume Swap. We thank the Briarcliff residents who generously donated more than 100 costumes for this event, thereby diverting them from the landfill. Kids were excited to “shop” for their costumes at a fun community event. Huge shoutout to our high school volunteers, Sinduja Narayanan and Grace Freeman, who ran our booth and helped kids pick out their costumes.



SAC Activities Recap (Movie Night)



On October 24th, SAC collaborated with the **Briarcliff Manor Public Library** to organize the screening of “Buy Now! The Shopping Conspiracy” The documentary was an eye-opening description of the environmental damage caused by over-consumerism in today’s world where slick marketing and technology promotes a cycle of endless buying and wastage. In addition to community members, students from the BHS AP Environmental Sciences class and members of the Tree Hugger Club also participated. The audience agreed that the movie raised some important questions, and we all have a role in making our communities greener.

(Zero-Waste Station at the Community Bonfire and Holiday Sing Along)



SAC's tips to cut back on consumption

- Repair items instead of replacing them (Look for a local **repair cafe**-a free community event where volunteer repair coaches help you fix broken items)
- Shop at thrift or consignment stores
- “Shop” on Buy Nothing Facebook pages
- Borrow or rent items that you will use infrequently
- Always choose reusable (water bottles, grocery bags, coffee cups)

SAC Activities Recap (Holiday Take it or Leave it)



On December 5th/6th, SAC partnered with the **Briarcliff Manor Recreation Department** to organize Briarcliff Manor's annual **Holiday Take it or Leave it** event. Swap events like these foster a sense of community while helping keep holiday decorations out of the landfill.

We thank everyone who donated generously. We thank our volunteers who worked hard to organize the "sale" and help the "shoppers".



Briarcliff Manor Public Library HVAC Success Story

Seth Leitman (SAC member)

The Village recently completed a major renovation of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) at the Briarcliff Public Library and Community Center. This wasn't just about fixing broken equipment; it was about embracing a holistic vision for the future of public building management. The facility reopened on October 1, 2025 with dramatically improved climate control and energy performance.

Libraries, community centers, and other public facilities serve diverse populations with varying comfort needs, and most operate on tight budgets that make energy efficiency crucial. This upgrade represents a forward-thinking approach that prioritizes both user comfort and environmental responsibility, ensuring that the facilities not only meet today's standards but also anticipate the needs of future generations.

Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) technology represents the next generation of HVAC efficiency. These systems offer precise temperature control that traditional HVAC simply can't match. Older HVAC systems often consume 40-60% of a building's total energy budget. However, modern efficient systems can cut these costs dramatically while improving performance. This Village building also serves as an emergency cooling and heating center during extreme weather events. Therefore, reliable, efficient HVAC becomes a community resilience issue, not just a comfort concern. The new VRF system should deliver approximately 40% energy savings compared to the previous HVAC equipment. This translates to significant annual cost reduction for the community.

Energy efficiency improvements also reduce peak demand on the electrical grid. Meanwhile, this helps prevent brownouts during extreme weather and supports overall grid stability. The system's smart controls automatically adjust operation based on occupancy patterns and weather conditions. Additionally, maintenance requirements decrease compared to traditional equipment, further reducing operational costs. Performance monitoring capabilities allow facility managers to track energy use in real-time. Therefore, they can optimize settings and identify opportunities for additional savings.

State Senator Pete Harckham and Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg secured funding for this critical infrastructure upgrade through the CREST (Clean Renewable Energy Storage and Transmission) program. Additionally, Senator Harckham and Assemblyman Levenberg's advocacy secured resources for multiple community infrastructure improvements.

State-level support proves crucial for local sustainability projects. Furthermore, these programs help smaller communities access technologies that might otherwise be financially out of reach. This type of investment pays dividends beyond immediate energy savings. Instead, it builds local expertise, supports green jobs, and establishes supply chains for efficient building technologies.

Hudson Valley Heroes Series

Spotlight on Shannon Roback, PhD (Riverkeeper)

Sinduja Narayanan (10th grade, BHS)

Shannon Roback is an environmental scientist and director of the Science Program at Riverkeeper, an organization dedicated to protecting the Hudson River and its tributaries. Her passion for clean water began in college when her love for surfing made her notice trash in the ocean and pollution from sewage overflows after rainfall. Realizing how these contaminants affected human health, she changed her major to environmental health science and began researching how pollution impacts people and ecosystems.

At Riverkeeper, Shannon leads a science team that monitors water quality at more than 250 sites across the Hudson watershed. Volunteers collect samples from boats, and the results are shared publicly to identify pollution sources and track changes in water health. The organization also works with legislators, lawyers, and local communities to strengthen clean water laws, hold polluters accountable, and promote public awareness.



Since joining Riverkeeper two years ago, Shannon has expanded monitoring efforts by adding 47 new testing locations and launched the Hudson River Water Quality Monitoring Collaborative, a partnership of scientists, officials, and community groups who share data and develop solutions. Her team now measures nutrients and pigments that indicate harmful algal blooms, data that supports infrastructure upgrades and cleaner water policies.

Shannon encourages residents to get involved by volunteering, reporting pollution, or signing petitions at **Riverkeeper**. She believes that lasting progress depends on public action—when people care about their river, meaningful change follows.

Five Ways to Practice Sustainability During the Holidays

Grace Freeman (10th grade, BHS)

Here are 5 simple ideas to waste less and enjoy more this holiday season!

- **BAGS** - Use reusable tote bags for holiday shopping to minimize plastic/paper waste.
- **WRAP** - Reusable gift bags/baskets are a great alternative to wrapping paper and can be used repeatedly.
- **FOOD** – Buy local foods whether you’re hosting a big group or just cooking for the family. Donate or compost leftovers.
- **LIGHTS** - Use LED lights to decorate your house. They are more efficient, safer, and last longer than traditional incandescent lights.
- **GIFTS** – Try your hand at edible or homemade gifts for friends and family. It’s the thought that counts, not the price tag/brand.

Challenge yourself to follow one (or more!) of these steps to have a sustainable holiday season!



Gift boxes and bags for my friends and family. No wrapping paper in sight!



You won't catch me holiday shopping without a tote bag



LED lights on my Christmas tree!



My family uses this Lomi composter to quickly reduce food scraps and tea bags into earth that we then use outside in the garden!

Native Plant Spotlight

Woody Plant *Cornus sericea* (Red osier dogwood)



Though we typically think of dogwoods as trees, this is a dogwood with a shrubby growth habit. Characteristic of natural wetlands and riverbanks, red osier dogwood has a striking appearance in winter when its bright red branches stand out against white snow. Typically growing 5-8' tall, it can be planted in moist to wet soils in part shade and even tolerates occasional flooding. It has fragrant white flowers and is of high value to birds and butterflies, though deer also enjoy munching on it.

Image credit: Enchantedgardensdesigns.com

Herbaceous Plant *Chasmanthium latifolium* (Northern sea oats)

Despite its name, the native range of Northern sea oats is actually a bit south of Westchester County, but it is still a great choice as an ornamental grass of winter interest. Also, given future climate projections, plant species from a more southern distribution could become better adapted to local environmental conditions. Northern sea oats is a native perennial grass growing 2-3' tall and has showy flat seed heads that turn golden-brown and persist through winter. Birds are attracted to this plant as a winter food source. It is also a host plant for several species of moths and butterflies. Loamy to sandy damp soils in partial shade is preferred. Northern sea oats is known to spread – keep this in mind when planning your garden!



Image credit: A Franklin County Master Gardener; The Columbus Dispatch

Upcoming Events

Here are some of the many events we have planned for 2026

Briarcliff Sports Swap: In partnership with the Briarcliff Manor Recreation Department (February 2026)

Briarcliff Manor Earth Day Celebration: In partnership with the Briarcliff Manor Recreation Department and the Briarcliff PTA (April 2026)

Receive alerts for all our sustainability events by subscribing to our **calendar on the Village website**

Join us at our meetings to learn what we are working on, and to see how you can contribute to making Briarcliff cleaner and greener!

SAC meetings: First Thursday of every month. 7:00 pm, Village Hall Court Room

EAC meetings: Fourth Thursday of every month. 7:00 pm, Village Hall Court Room

For more information, email us at

SAC@briarcliffmanor.gov or EAC@briarcliffmanor.gov. Visit us at

[**Sustainability-advisory-committee**](#) and [**Environmental-advisory-council**](#)

SAC

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