We believe that if we’re going to meet the challenges posed by the complex social problems we face, the work must begin close to home: by aligning our life models with our values, re-building community connections, and working together to create tangible social change.

The Ecological Citizen’s Project works to “grow citizen-led action to produce a more just, healthy, democratic and sustainable way-of-life.” We do this by convening community members to learn more about collective problems, developing and supporting campaigns for change, and elevating hopeful stories of progress that help build the social movement.

Your early support helped us begin our work. Looking over the last year, highlights include:
Community Choice Aggregation

The ECP worked in partnership with Renewable Highlands to educate community leaders about the economic and environmental benefits of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), which led the City of Beacon, Village of Cold Spring, Town of Fishkill and Town of Philipstown to pass local laws enabling CCA. CCAs allow municipalities to pool electric utility accounts of residents and small businesses to gain bargaining power to negotiate energy supply agreements. As these communities continue to work with the team that implemented New York’s first CCA in Westchester, our citizen-led effort has the potential to move 25,000 homes and businesses to a cheaper, more renewable electricity supply.

The ECP worked with Renewable Highlands to educate local elected officials on the potential benefits of a CCA, conducted outreach to local business, environmental, and homeowner organizations, and developed a general education campaign that reached 20,000 homes and small businesses in the Hudson Valley.

Fossil Fuel Divestment

The ECP collaborated with the Put a Price on It campaign to convene student environmental leaders from regional colleges and universities to learn more about carbon pricing and share winning strategies for institutional fossil fuel divestment. Participants in the one day convening on Longhaul Farm included representatives from 350.org-NY, Barnard College, Fordham University, Iona College, Marymount Manhattan College, Middlebury College, SUNY-New Paltz, Vassar College, and William Paterson University.

Presentations were given by the Barnard divestment team, who had recently won their effort to have Barnard College divest, Lizzy Khan, NE Organizer of the Put a Price on It Campaign, and neighbor Bevis Longstreth, former SEC Commissioner and divestment advocate. Following the convening, Vassar College Divest strengthened their argument using evidence presented at the convening and Vassar College’s Committee on Investment Responsibility recommended divestment to the Board of Trustees after a five year campaign.
Carbon Dividends

Following a convening that identified carbon pricing as the top priority for national action, the ECP worked with neighbor David Gelber (Creator, Years of Living Dangerously) to educate community leaders about the case for Carbon Dividends, a proposed bipartisan path to climate action that would put a price on carbon and return the revenues directly to American families as a dividend. Our efforts included numerous educational briefings with Rep. Sean Maloney (D, NY-18) and Rep. Dan Donovan (R, NY-11). In July, 2017, Rep. Maloney publicly announced at a Town Hall that he is exploring bipartisan partnerships to draft carbon pricing legislation.

To read the ECP’s Case for Carbon Dividends white paper, please visit ecologicalcitizens.org/carbondividends.

Plans 2018

We learned a great deal from our first year of work with young people and community members who are looking for new ways to become part of the solution. We’ve learned the wisdom of the idea that you must “think globally and act locally.” While international and national decisions are important, for most of us they are beyond our control. We don’t have the luxury of waiting. We must focus our work where change is possible right now: within ourselves and within our communities. This belief guides our plans for our next year of work:

Community Congress

With participation in voting low and political cynicism high, it is clear that we need to imagine new ways of being a citizen in the twenty-first century. We won’t be able to meet our challenges without a huge expansion of civic energy. We’re launching the Community Congress initiative, an experiment in 21st Century democracy that provides opportunities for community members to share ideas about how to strengthen their community, identify
common priorities through a community-wide vote, and presents findings to community leaders to spark community action. The Philipstown Community Congress pilot will complete the voting process in November, 2017 and we have begun to explore partnerships with key leaders to establish the Peekskill Community Congress in Spring, 2018.

**ECP Podcast: Next Stop Now**

Too often, people think of social change as something that only occurs when decisions are made in far-off halls of power. But history shows that change is often the result of pioneers who decide to live their personal lives by their deepest values, even if it goes against the status quo of their time. As others follow these new paths, transformative change becomes possible. To catalyze change, we need to hear and be inspired by the courage and actions of today’s pioneers.

We’re currently developing the *Next Stop Now* podcast series, which aims to lift up personal stories of “people that change their life in order to change the world” for launch in Spring, 2018. We’re working in partnership with Isabel Angell, Associate Producer of NPR's nationally syndicated *The Takeaway*.

While we haven't launched the series publicly, you can take a sneak-listen at [ecologicalcitizens.org/nextstopnow](http://ecologicalcitizens.org/nextstopnow).

**Sustainable Communities**

As the consequences of climate change increasingly affect our lives, how do we mobilize collective action to turn the ship in our communities right now? We believe the answer will include creating a focused effort to reduce GhG emissions across multiple personal and community activities, measuring tangible progress, and ensuring environmental action also supports the local economy. We’re currently exploring partnering with other organizations to support a Philipstown-wide sustainability initiative, which would begin with conducting a community-wide baseline of GhG emissions, developing an action plan, and measuring emission reductions over time. Maybe we can become a national model of what it looks like when a whole community becomes a sustainability pioneer together.
We are thankful for the community support of our work in all forms; those that tell their stories of change, participate in community convenings, step forward to lead change campaigns, and provide the financial support to make all of these initiatives possible.

As a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, we have been lucky to receive donations from like-minded community members and institutional support from the Malcolm Gordon Charitable Fund administered by the Open Society Institute and the Endeavor Foundation. Thank you.

But as we look to the coming year’s work, the reality is that we will need more of this support to increase our impact. Your support will help us fund the Peekskill Community Congress, launch the podcast series, and explore what it will take to create a sustainable community. We thank you for your support in the past. If you are able, we hope you will continue to support the work of our future.

To becoming ecological citizens,

Jason K. Angell
Executive Director

Jocelyn L. Apicello
Program Director
ECP Board of Directors

**Matt Brown.** Matt is Co-Founder of Global Zero (2006-present), the leading international movement for the elimination of nuclear weapons that includes 300 world leaders and half a million citizens worldwide. Many political leaders have endorsed Global Zero, with President Obama declaring, “Global Zero will always have a partner in me and my administration.” He is the former Secretary of State of Rhode Island (2002-2006) and Executive Director of City Year Rhode Island, a national service program. He received his Bachelor's degree from Columbia University and his Juris Doctor from Yale Law School. Matt is Board President and Secretary of the Ecological Citizen’s Project.

**Dahni-El Giles.** Dahni-El currently works at Hampton Creek, the plant-based food startup in San Francisco, CA. He’s a 1995 Oliver Scholar, a 2004 Coro Fellow, and a 2016 Bleeker Fellow. A self-described attorney and strategist passionate about sustainability and impact, he co-founded DonorsChoose.org in 2000, serves as Board Director, Treasurer, and audit committee member at ScriptEd.org. He also served as Senior Commercial Counsel at Kraft Foods. He earned an A.B. from Harvard in 1999 and a J.D. from Georgetown in 2004. Dahni-El is Board Vice President of the Ecological Citizen's Project.

**Jocelyn Apicello.** Jocelyn is co-founder and co-operator of Longhaul Farm, a human-powered, ecologically-sustainable micro-farm which incorporates natural growing methods, bio-dynamic techniques, principles of ecological stewardship and community engagement. She is also currently an adjunct professor of public health in William Paterson University's Department of Public Health and in Bard College's Prison Initiative Program. Jocelyn earned her DrPH from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health in 2013. Jocelyn is co-founder and Board Treasurer of the Ecological Citizen's Project.

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To make a donation, please address check to “Hudson Valley Seed”, include “Ecological Citizen’s Project” in the memo, and mail to Ecological Citizen’s Project, PO Box 24, Garrison, NY 10524.