

THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE REPORT

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE PROJECT, BUFFALO

It's simple. Food is vital to good nutrition and a healthy life. Yet, for some, good nutrition can be a challenge.

Food insecurity is the disruption of food access due to a lack of financial and other resources. Whether it be a lack of steady and sufficient income, inadequate public transportation, or no grocery stores in a given area, limited access to enough healthy and affordable food impacts 40 million Americans, including more than 12 million children. Food deficiency has been shown to affect things such as school performance and worker productivity. Food insecurity touches individuals and families in every corner and community of the United States, but it disproportionately affects low-income communities and communities of color, and is influenced by other social health issues like affordable housing and unemployment.

While there are state and federal services that provide nutritional assistance to millions of low-income and struggling families, more needs to be done to address this critical and

growing need. Local organizations like the Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP) in Buffalo confront these issues by fostering the fair distribution of healthy foods and promoting economic opportunities in



Teens preparing winter beds.

communities that struggle with access to affordable, nutritious food. DEC awarded MAP's Growing Green Program (GGP) \$75,000 in the Office of Environmental Justice's most recent round of Community Impact Grants to help tackle the growing land vacancy, high youth unemployment, and food security needs of Buffalo's West Side community.

MAP's program focuses on employing youth to work in urban farming and aquaponics, sustainable food production, healthy eating, and supporting local farms and businesses. The key components of the program are farm education through hands-on training, outreach, and youth enterprise, a mobile market to bring fresh, locally grown food to

communities, and community education. To date, MAP has trained 16 young participants in sustainable urban agriculture, food systems, and social enterprise. In addition, the group has worked closely with partners to increase local food procurement in the Buffalo Public Schools by helping to grow membership in the Good Food Buffalo Coalition and advocating for the adoption of the Good Food Purchasing Program by the school district by the end of 2019.

To learn more about the Massachusetts Avenue Project, visit <http://mass-ave.org/>, or follow them at <https://www.facebook.com/MassachusettsAvenueProject/>.

ON THE FRONT LINES: Visit Great Camp Santanoni in the Adirondacks

The Adirondacks are one of America's natural treasures. The beauty of these mountains in all seasons is matched by the world-class outdoor recreation they offer – from hiking to skiing to boating, and much more. It's a great place to visit, but for those who may not be ready for

steep mountain hikes or long paddling adventures, there's a great place to start.

Anyone who explores the Adirondacks may notice several grand "compounds" along the St. Regis River and Saranac Lake. These Great Camps were constructed in the latter part of the





Newcomb Lake

19th Century for wealthy vacationers, built with local materials, and designed to complement the wild surroundings. The Adirondack Great Camps have become synonymous with the Gilded Age, an era of rapid economic growth, industrialization, and immigration.

Many of these camps are still in existence and remain in the hands of private individuals. Some are historic landmarks, and a few are open to the public for tours. Camp Santanoni, in the town of Newcomb, was built by the Pruyns, one of New York's most prominent families. It stands as one of the oldest, largest of all the surviving Great Camps in the Adirondacks. A National Historic Landmark, it is open year-round for recreation and a history lesson from Charles "Chuck" Vandrei, DEC's Historic Preservation Officer.

DEC manages Camp Santanoni as historical property in partnership with the town of Newcomb and the nonprofit historic preservation organization, Adirondack Architectural Heritage. The site, which acts as an outdoor museum, was purchased from The Nature Conservancy in 1971. DEC began restoring the property in the 1990s.

Camp Santanoni is a popular cross-country skiing and snowshoeing destination, with three annual winter weekend events. "It's a great ski destination," Vandrei said. "If we have snow by Thanksgiving, we're going to have snow through May."

If you're in the area, make sure to visit the SUNY-ESF managed Adirondack Interpretive Center and participate in one of the programs regarding the cultural and natural history of the Northern Forest. If you're not a big fan of high peaks, but still want a good hike, the Newcomb Lake-Moose Pond Trail, while boasting various heights, does not ascend more than 125 feet.

"You come here to enjoy not only the architecture and how it fits into the landscape, but also to experience the natural world in the same

way that the Pruyne family did," Vandrei said.

Interested in visiting the Great Camp? Visit our website (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/53095.html>).

Do you want to learn more about DEC, our dedicated staff and the lands we manage? Check out "On the Front Lines" (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6xirBOO47IWtU_ZZDT702w) monthly on DEC's website, Facebook and Twitter pages.

FIND YOUR ADVENTURE

BY KAYLA BAKER, EXCELSIOR FELLOW, ADVENTURE NY



DEC plays a vital role in both protecting our natural resources and providing opportunities for people to enjoy them. Under Governor Cuomo's Adventure NY initiative, (http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/adventurenymini.pdf), DEC is making critical upgrades to State campgrounds and facilities to better

serve people who want to enjoy our outdoors. DEC is also implementing and expanding outreach efforts to encourage more New Yorkers and visitors to connect with nature and outdoor recreation.

Adventure NY is supporting the completion of more than 75 projects over the next three

years ranging from improvements to youth camps and environmental education centers to new boat launches, duck blinds, and hiking trails. From camping to hiking and fishing, your next great NY adventure is closer than you think (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/62.html>)

Learn more about Adventure NY on the DEC website (https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/adventureny.pdf).

RETHINKING FAST FASHION

BY ALANAH KEDDELL-TUCKEY,
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

Trends, by their nature, come and go. In the world of fashion there are season-based styles, temporary crazes from celebrities and internet influencers, and generational fashion fads. To simplify, what is in vogue changes regularly, so fashion is adapted to take these trends from the catwalks to the storefronts as quickly and cheaply as possible.

Fast fashion, like fast food, is largely inexpensively made, mass produced, and tends to have a disproportionate burden on lower-income people. While the prices are low, cheap clothing comes at a cost. The production of cheaper clothing tends to be outsourced to lower- and middle-income countries (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6307129/>). People who work in or live near textile manufacturers experience higher levels of environmental health issues.

Additionally, the production of polyester, a petroleum byproduct and the most widely used textile fiber, involves a heating and cooling process that produces carbon and uses large quantities of water (<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/water-consumption-fashion-industry>). There is also the issue of labor exploitation and hazardous conditions in factories that produce textiles and garments (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/24/style/survivors-of-rana-plaza-disaster.html>)

It's not only where we get our clothes, but also what we do with our clothing when it has worn out





its welcome. Most of our pre-loved clothing is discarded. Developed nations, like the U.S., tend to eliminate excess clothing by donating it to developing nations. Cheaply made items are not meant to last long and do not have the same value on the second-hand market. Those items simply end up shredded or in landfills.

To their credit, there are brands that have acknowledged their environmental impact, but we, as consumers, also bear some of the responsibility as well. The fashion industry is consumer-driven, so we need to start by examining our own consumption:

- Reduce the amount of clothing you wear;
- Shop smarter;
- Find classic pieces that fit your style;
- Shop sustainable and ethical brands;
- Buy from consignment shops, and
- Take care of your clothes.

Are you looking to upgrade your wardrobe with sustainable styles? Here are a few suggestions if you are looking for shopping you can feel good about:

Pact is a clothing company that combines sustainable, fair trade business practices with low prices. From apparel for the family housewares and true tone underwear; you can benefit the planet and look good doing it. **\$** (<https://wearpact.com/>).

If you're you have a bit more to burn and you like fashion with a timeline, look no further than Everlane. Not only do they provide comfortable and stylish clothing in a variety of sizes, they partner with ethical factories around the world and conduct compliance audits to ensure that workers are paid a fair wage and textiles are ethically sourced. **\$\$-\$\$\$** (<https://www.everlane.com>)

For the eco-chic with a little more wiggle room in your fashion budget, Reformation's clothing and accessories combine effortlessly beautiful style, size inclusivity, and sustainability. Who says you can't have it all? **\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$** (<https://www.thereformation.com/>)

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

BY ALANAH KEDDELL-TUCKEY, PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

Life can be expensive. Paying for housing, transportation, school, or food can be overwhelming. If you're a person looking to live a more sustainable, environmentally friendly life, it can feel impossible. You want to eat clean and organic, and upgrade to environmentally friendly versions of everything, but the demands of your wallet might not always veer to the eco-friendly. Believe me, but making strides towards an environmentally conscious lifestyle can save me money in the long-run. However, it's those short-term upfront expenses that don't always work with my budget. It doesn't have to be that way. While there are larger items that will simply need to wait, there are little things you can do every day that help the planet and don't require a ton of cash. Here are some ways I've worked to green my life and save money:



Make & Take

I am a busy mother of four with even busier kids. We're eat-on-the-go type, which is not always conducive to a healthy lifestyle or budget. To save money and avoid waste, we bring snacks and treats from home. Fresh fruit, sandwiches, salads, and drinks can easily be stored in a cooler. Utilizing reusable snack and sandwich bags, and beeswax and cloth wraps help avoid plastic and film waste and save money.



Make Your Own Cleaning Products

As I previously mentioned, I have children. I also have pets, so something always needs to be cleaned up at my house. Buying cleansers feels convenient, but if you can mix vinegar, water, and essential oil, you can make your own multi-purpose cleaners. I use baking soda to get rid of carpet stains and pet smells. Here are a few other cleaning products you can make with just a few inexpensive ingredients (<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/cleaning/tips/a24885/make-at-home-cleaners/>)

- Avoid using vinegar to clean surfaces comprised of marble, granite, or soapstone, knives, or wood furniture as it will ruin natural shine and finish. Also, do not use for spills that involves eggs as the acid reaction may make it harder to clean.
- If you purchase cleaning vinegar, do not consume it or use it to cook



Take Shorter Showers

As an active family of six, we take a lot of showers and baths. To conserve water and save money on our water bill, we try keep a five-minute limit for showers whenever possible.



Set To Cruise

I use cruise control on the highway and long trips to save on gas and mileage while keeping a consistent legal speed.



Eat More Vegetables

In my family, we fill half our plates with fruits and vegetables at each meal. Eating more vegetables or fruit than meat will save you money and help to combat environmental damage from industrial farming.

APPLY FOR FUNDING

Are you a community-based organization looking to fund a project? OEJ offers grants to not-for-profit organizations to address environmental harms in low income and environmental justice communities. For additional information on OEJ grants and a complete list of previous project awardees, please visit our website: www.dec.ny.gov/public/31226.html.

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

Do you have concerns about the environment where you live? Do you want to make your voice heard? Do you want to stay informed about the different environmental issues affecting the state of New York?

JOIN OUR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LISTSERV

Go to: www.dec.ny.gov/public/65855.html and sign up to receive regular updates from the Office of Environmental Justice. Stay current on the issues that are important to you. As always, you can contact the Office of Environmental Justice with any concerns by sending an e-mail to: justice@dec.ny.gov.

Please include:

- Your location/address
- City, town, village or borough
- The environmental concerns you wish to address
- List the potential source if you know
- How or whether you wish to be contacted

HELP US SERVE YOU

REGISTER TO VOTE

VISIT WWW.ELECTIONS.NY.GOV



ORGAN DONORS SAVE LIVES
REGISTER TODAY

donatelife.ny.gov

Contact us:

DEC Office of Environmental Justice
625 Broadway, 14th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-1500

518-402-8556 justice@dec.ny.gov

EJ Hotline 1-866-229-0497

Sign up for updates and
follow us on social media!

Sign up today on DEC's homepage to
receive e-mail notices from the Office
of Environmental Justice.

dec.ny.gov

 DEC on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/NYSDEC

 DEC on Twitter:
twitter.com/NYSDEC

Basil Seggos
Commissioner

OEJ Staff:
Rosa Mendez
Director

Karen Engel
Green Infrastructure Coordinator

Rodney Rivera
Special Assistant

Alanah Keddell-Tuckey
Public Affairs Specialist

David Witt
Indian Nations Affairs Coordinator

Adanna Roberts
Citizen Participation Specialist

Dana McClure
Environmental Program Specialist Trainee 2



Department of
Environmental
Conservation