

‘This fight is winnable’: New York City March to End Fossil Fuels inspiring local events

By [BELLA LEVAVI](#), Staff Writer Published: 9/14/2023 1:31:47 PM

Franklin County activists are organizing a local march, rally and standout in conjunction with the New York City March to End Fossil Fuels.

Participants in New York City, and at other marches across the country, are calling to stop new fossil fuel projects, phase out current fossil fuel drilling, declare a climate state of emergency and transition to renewable energy. The push comes just days before the United Nations’ Climate Action Summit on Sept. 20.

Shelburne Falls

On Sunday, Sept. 17, at 1 p.m., Shelburne Falls residents will host their own March to End Fossil Fuels. Walkers will convene at Memorial Hall at 51 Bridge St.

“For those of us who can’t make it to New York, this march is a great local opportunity to show our support for the movement for climate justice,” said Lynn Benander, president of Co-op Power. “This is a pivotal time. Our understanding as a people of who we are on the planet is changing. We have an opportunity to choose a way of life that does not extract from the environment or from communities, and it’s important that we come together.”

After those participating in the march have gathered and walked to the Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School bandshell, a rally will take place. The rally will feature speakers and poets from 2 to 3 p.m. Speakers include Benander, Shelburne Selectboard member Andrew Baker and Shelburne Energy Committee Chair Tom Johnson, who will share their insights and expertise on climate change and the importance of transitioning away from fossil fuels.

“The Shelburne Energy Committee is working hard to lower our carbon footprint, and this march is an opportunity to build support,” Johnson said. “We are at a time in history when [carbon dioxide] levels are very high and we need to make changes.”

Following the speakers, rock, blues and reggae fusion band Eric and the Wildfire will perform at 3 p.m.

The event is open to all ages, and also gives attendees the opportunity to participate in a letter-writing campaign and art making.

“As a parent, I am always thinking about the world I am leaving my children,” said organizer Paul Bennett. “It’s important that we fight for our children and grandchildren rather than tell them later that we just let a climate catastrophe happen. I want my children to enjoy the beauty and nature that I have taken for granted. We need to stand up to the interests that are stopping the move to renewable energy. This fight is winnable if enough of us can make our voices heard.”

Similarly, Shelburne Falls resident Maya Winfrey expressed her enthusiasm for the upcoming march, stating, “I’m thrilled to take my kids to this rally for their future environment. It’s heartwarming to see that this event is family-friendly, and I believe it’s crucial to involve our children in these important conversations about the climate crisis.”

Greenfield

On Saturday, Sept. 16, from 11 a.m. to noon, the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice will hold its weekly vigil on the Greenfield Common in solidarity with the climate march in New York City.

This action hopes to draw attention to the connection between fossil fuels and war.

“The Saturday vigil gives local residents not joining the New York City march the opportunity to publicly call for reduction of military spending and emissions,” a statement from Traprock reads, “and prevent both nuclear war and a related climate meltdown by signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.”

Supporters push for cutting the Pentagon budget by at least \$100 billion, and shifting the savings to the Green New Deal and other environmental justice and human needs programs; reporting greenhouse gas emissions from military operations and weapons production; and reducing U.S. military emissions by 50% by 2030, the Biden administration’s goal for U.S. emissions.

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