

Climate&Me



YOUTH CLIMATE LEADERSHIP ROADMAP

June 2025

A climate toolkit for Maine students

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is overwhelming. This roadmap was created to give students a place to start. Everything in this guide was designed in consultation with Maine students who play a part in climate action.

Young climate leaders across Maine shared their advice, tips, and knowledge on how to strengthen your climate leadership skills.

CLIMATE CHANGE IN MAINE

Warmer temperatures

The past four years have ranked among the 10 warmest on record.



More precipitation

Between 1-2 additional days per year with 2+ inches of precipitation.



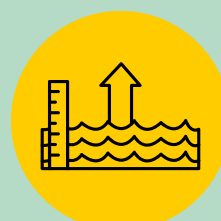
Shorter winters

Winters now are 2 weeks shorter than the period between 1901-2000.

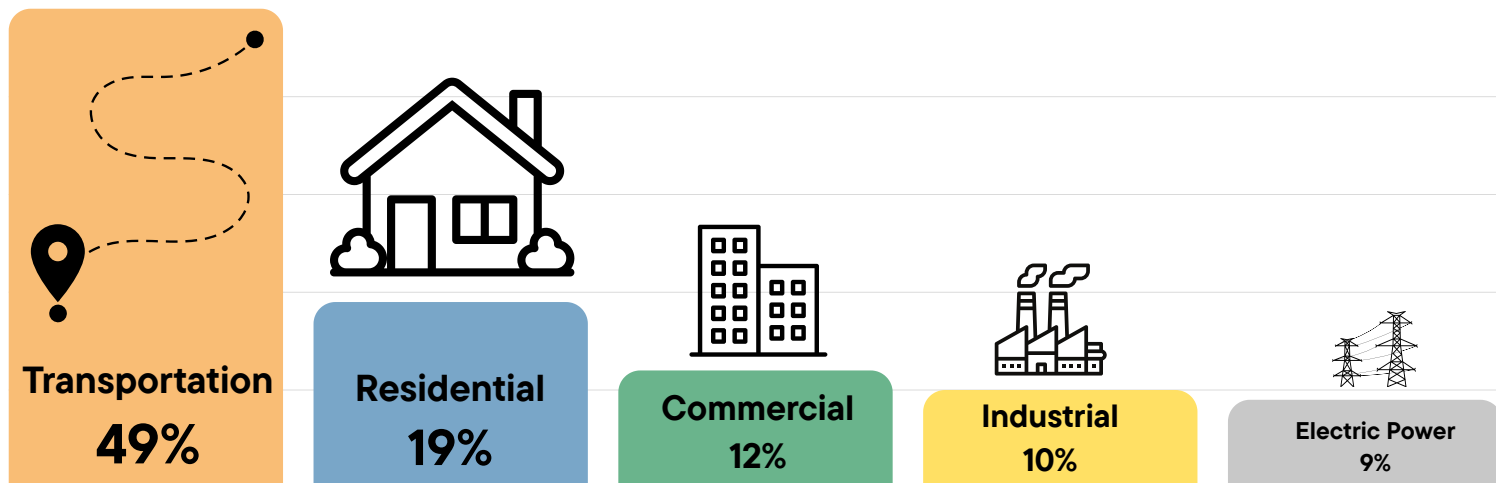


Rising sea levels

Sea levels are 8 inches higher than a century ago



WHAT ARE THE TOP SOURCES OF CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS FROM FOSSIL FUELS IN MAINE?



CLIMATE LEADERSHIP SKILLS

GETTING STARTED

1



FOLLOW YOUR INTERESTS



Charlie Cooper

"...because if we slot ourselves into the areas we work best in, we can work together as a community and make some major differences."



Sage Tocci



Autumn Carmona

"...and find your specialty! There is something out there for everyone."

2



FIND COMMUNITY



Amara Ifeji

"...teachers, and professionals who can support you."



Eddie Nachamie

"...because collaborations and projects can start from unusual and unexpected places. Think outside the box to find people to work with."

3



START LOCAL



Maya Faulstich

"...to help you learn and find experiences to get involved with."



Naomi Lopez



Roz O'Reilly

"...and identify shared values with stakeholders to establish mutual interest."

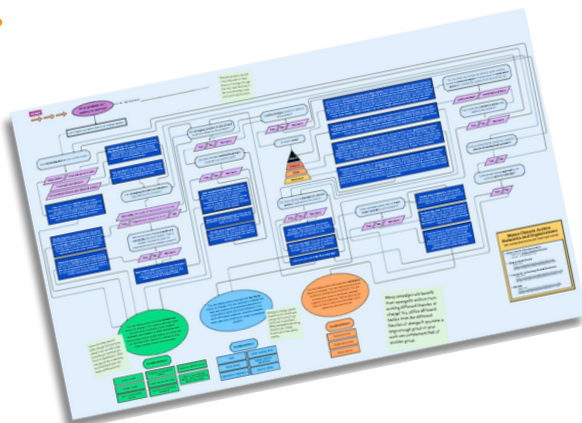
CHARLIE COOPER

Theories of change to find your place in climate action



You can align your personal interests, skills, and how you like to engage with the world to find climate action that is sustainable and fulfilling for yourself!

Click [here](#) to follow Charlie's flow chart to get tips on framing your personality traits and interests for climate action.



Scientists divide these theories of change into three categories:

1

Top-down: working with the government, policies and law to drive change

2


Bottom-up: cultivating community connection, learning skills to reduce impact, and building equitable systems

3

Resistance: standing against harmful practices

Charlie was inspired by these theories of change as a framework for climate work, which led him to create a flow chart guide to action.

“All different forms of action are valid. There are tradeoffs, but you can engage in climate work in any one of these three forms.”



Charlie Cooper is a recent graduate from the University of Maine, studying environmental science and theories of change. As president of Divest UMS, he was a leader of the successful student campaign to divest the finances of the University of Maine System from the fossil fuel industry. He spent three years as a resident steward of the Terrell House Permaculture Living and Learning Center, where he led workshops and empowered community members to strengthen their relationship with the natural world by learning practical gardening skills and engaging with local ecologies.

SAGE TOCCI

Discover your eco-personality



WHAT IS AN 'ECO-PERSONALITY?'

Your eco-personality consists of the traits that make you, you – and how those unique characteristics can bring strength and diversity to climate work.

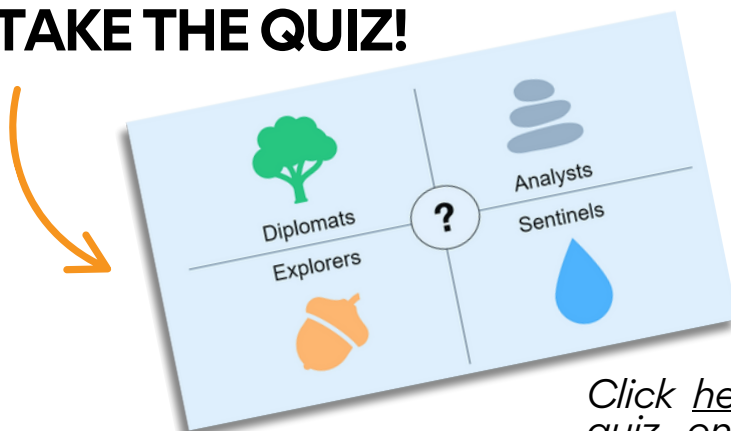
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

Understanding yourself and your personality traits can help you discover how you prefer to lead, plan, communicate, and collaborate with others.



Climate action projects benefit from diverse groups and perspectives. Your eco-personality is important and can contribute to climate action!

TAKE THE QUIZ!



Click [here](#) to take Sage's eco-personality quiz online to understand what unique traits you bring to climate action!



Sage Tocci is passionate about climate action because she believes the environment is precious and inherently valuable. She is a senior at the University of Southern Maine, where she studies environmental science and chemistry. Her work focuses on community-centered environmental research, public engagement, and applied fieldwork.

AUTUMN CARMONA

Using art to practice climate communication



DIY: CREATE A CLIMATE COMMUNICATION VISION BOARD

1

Write (or cut and paste) the words “climate change” in the middle of your posterboard

2

Now, think of what draws you to climate action:

- gardening?
- politics?
- finance?

3

Flip through your collage materials to find visuals related to your topic and begin to glue them to your posterboard outward from “climate change.” For example: farming → local food production → reducing food waste → climate friendly agriculture, and so on.

Climate action is so broad! Being able to find your own specialty is important, so you can be as productive as possible in your conversations.

Check out Autumn's climate vision board!



YOU WILL NEED

- collaging material (old magazines, books, newspapers – you can usually find these at your local swap shop!)
- tape and/or glue-sticks
- scissors
- posterboard
- markers

Autumn Carmona is passionate about climate action because it is a part of our daily lives in ways we may not even notice. Her niche is in designing permaculture food systems that will be self-sustaining in the future and small-scale community action that focuses on regeneration, energy efficiency, and localization. Autumn is a Botany major at the University of Maine, with a concentration in permaculture and regenerative studies.



AMARA IFEJI

Communicating to build community



Make sure people can see themselves in the issue and problem and make sure they have agency by relating it to aspects of their lives.

WHAT IS LIVED EXPERIENCE?

The firsthand knowledge and insights one gains from direct involvement in situations, events, or experiences. Because of direct experiences with issues, this knowledge and insight can inform and improve climate policies, programs, and projects.

TAILOR YOUR NARRATIVE TO DIFFERENT AUDIENCES.

Amara found that in high school, her peers were in climate courses because they wanted to be. Outside of school, you will be communicating with people who may not see themselves in the climate space.

CENTER YOUR LIVED EXPERIENCE



Young people don't need to be experts in climate science to get involved, because they are experts in their own lived experiences. This mindset helps Amara overcome feelings of impostor syndrome, especially when she is one of the youngest people in the room.

Amara Ifeji is an internationally awarded leader in climate and environmental justice. The barriers she faced in accessing environmental experiences fostered her commitment to securing equitable access to the outdoors for all. Amara is currently pursuing a Master of Science at the University of Oxford in Nature, Society, and Environmental Governance, and a Master of African Studies, also at the University of Oxford.



EDDIE NACHAMIE

Collaborating & organizing for climate resilience



THE POWER OF FACILITATION

Facilitation is essential in being able to create a welcoming, inclusive, and educational space when you collaborate. For Eddie, this means creating casual meetings where everyone has the opportunity to share their thoughts by “intentionally asking for perspectives from every person.”

Have you ever been to a meeting with a clear purpose and agenda, with time for everyone to get the chance to make their voice heard? That’s thanks to good facilitation, a hidden superpower of many climate leaders.




You can do large, collective action without consensus first. Just make sure everyone understands the outcome.

TIPS ON COLLABORATING



Collaboration often leads to working with people with different backgrounds and from various generations. It’s important to meet people where they are by understanding their perspective instead of trying to convince them of what you think is right.

To identify key individuals to work with, have one point person in your coalition who students can talk to easily and provide additional help, tips, and resources.



Climate action has called to **Eddie Nachamie** since the time he began caring for a small vegetable garden during high school. This led Eddie to a disaster deployment in Southern Montana responding to historic flooding which accelerated his drive to create change by showing him the stark reality of our changing climate. Now at the University of Maine, Orono, Eddie's life has been defined by an urge to create change within his community and move more people towards climate action by working with volunteers in the Terrell House garden, hosting educational events focused on sustainability and permaculture, and conducting research at UMaine.



MAYA FAULSTICH

Advancing sustainability in local government



If you want to contact local council members, their email addresses should be on your municipality's website. Chances are, since we live in Maine and most of our municipalities are pretty small, you might know one of your municipality's council members. One of my teachers and my best friend's mom both sit on Yarmouth's town council!

HOW DO MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS WORK?



- Municipal Councils and Select Boards hold public meetings, adopt and amend ordinances, approve contracts, and adopt budgets.
- Town Managers and Mayors oversee departments and implement policy.
- Committees are made up of volunteers, rather than elected officials or employed people. They advise the municipal council and staff on policy in specific areas, and make and implement plans for the municipality. Many municipalities in Maine have climate, resilience, and/or sustainability committees that students can join!

HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1

Most cities and municipalities have either a select board or a council – start by Google searching who is on your municipality's board or council, as well as when and where they meet.

2

Look on your municipal website to see if there is a local climate action plan and/or committee. If not, email your municipal councilor to ask why not. If there is, ask when their next meeting is to see if you can attend with your eco club.

3

Did you know that your municipality can apply for a climate grant from a state program called the Community Resilience Partnership? [Check here](#) to see if your municipality is enrolled – if they're not, email your municipal councilors or local resilience committee to encourage them to apply!

Maya Faulstich is from Yarmouth, and advocates for climate justice through policy and culture change. She co-leads her high school's Environmental Action Club and is an active member of the Yarmouth Climate Action Board. Her passion mainly lies in addressing our "throw-away culture" by creating systems of reuse that eliminate our need for disposability. When she's not writing testimony or washing dishes for her reusable dishware program Dishes on Demand, you can find her skiing or writing songs.



NAOMI LOPEZ

Driving climate action at school



We, as students, can have a larger collective impact on climate change at our schools.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

1

Work with your friends. If you sense you're not being taken seriously, Naomi says it's important not to be deterred. She found that coalition building can help people understand what you are doing and increase support to show school administration the importance of your work. "Don't be afraid to make a little noise."

2

Know your audience. When communicating with your club, being organized and clear about your timeline and goals is key. Storytelling is important when you communicate with stakeholders – don't be afraid to use the first person perspective.

Blog posts, social media, and newsletters are helpful to get the word out about your project. Naomi also learned the value of fundraising and grant writing in her work.

CREATE A MODEL FOR OTHERS



Determined to take more action, Naomi and her friend realized that schools are powerful spaces for learning and change – and are large energy users and waste producers. They saw their school as an ideal place to start, hoping they could create a model for other students to follow. This led to the creation of an online tool called the [High School Sustainability Guide](#), which includes a carbon footprint calculator that students can use to calculate their school's carbon footprint.



Naomi Lopez is a junior at Bowdoin College pursuing an Environmental Studies and Psychology coordinate major and an Education minor. She works as an Eco Representative for Bowdoin's Sustainability Office, where she organizes events and opportunities for students to engage with local sustainability initiatives. Naomi is interested in environmental advocacy, school sustainability, and youth activism.



ROZ O'REILLY

Understanding stakeholders & their values



Roz's climate action work involves engaging people, which can feel difficult in a rural place like Maine. Find organizations and groups that already exist and take advantage of them, and expand them to reach those you need to.

Make connections with other people. Getting involved and networking can help make critical connections and find opportunities. Roz noted that you can start small: for example, sign up for a local event and then introduce yourself to the event organizers.



STEP 3

Start Local

Principal

- Money matters: I need to be careful with school funds.
- Student success: I want projects that help students learn.
- School image: I care how our school looks to others.
- Getting the most value: I need to make every dollar count.
- Avoiding conflict: I worry about projects that might cause issues.

Teacher

- Class time: I need to focus on teaching my subject.
- Peaceful classroom: I avoid topics that might cause conflict.
- Learning goals: I need this to connect to what I teach.
- Teaching freedom: I want to decide what happens in my classroom.
- Parent support: I worry about what parents might think.

School Board

- Community opinion: I listen to what parents and neighbors want.
- Seeing results: I need proof that something works.
- Taxpayer money: I need to be able to explain how we spend public money.
- District goals: I need this to fit in district's plans.
- Public perception: I think about how different groups will react.

Facilities Manager

- Easy operations: I need systems to work without constant attention
- Simple upkeep: I prefer things that are easy to maintain
- Reliability: I don't want disruptions to how things work now
- Staff time: My team already has enough to do

UNDERSTANDING COMMON
STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR VALUES





Roz O'Reilly is an Orono High School senior and community organizer with JustMe For JustUs, a non-profit dedicated to empowering rural youth across Maine in climate justice work. Her work focuses on strengthening rural community resilience through youth-led climate initiatives. Roz believes that meaningful climate advocacy emerges from understanding one's own story and relationship to place, particularly in Maine's rural communities where environmental challenges intersect with questions of social and economic justice.

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