



RCLS

**RAMAPO
CATSKILL
LIBRARY
SYSTEM**

Sustainable Libraries Initiative Certification Program Presentation



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About RCLS



The Ramapo Catskill Library System is located in Middletown, NY. The organization's mission is to deliver high-quality, cost-effective consolidated, and cooperative services to support member libraries in meeting the needs of their communities.



The Sorting Team
Joanna, Marla, and Ryan



YOU'RE INVITED TO
THE RCLS STAFF
SUSTAINABILITY
CELEBRATION!

Getting Started

- Staff were invited to participate in an initial meeting and then decided if they'd like to join the Sustainability Team. RCLS ended up with at least one person from every department.
- The fun kicked off with a waste audit where we learned that RCLS staff are keeping the local Dunkin' in business!
- Once we hit the 50% completion mark, it was time to celebrate! All staff were invited to have soup, sandwiches, and latkes.

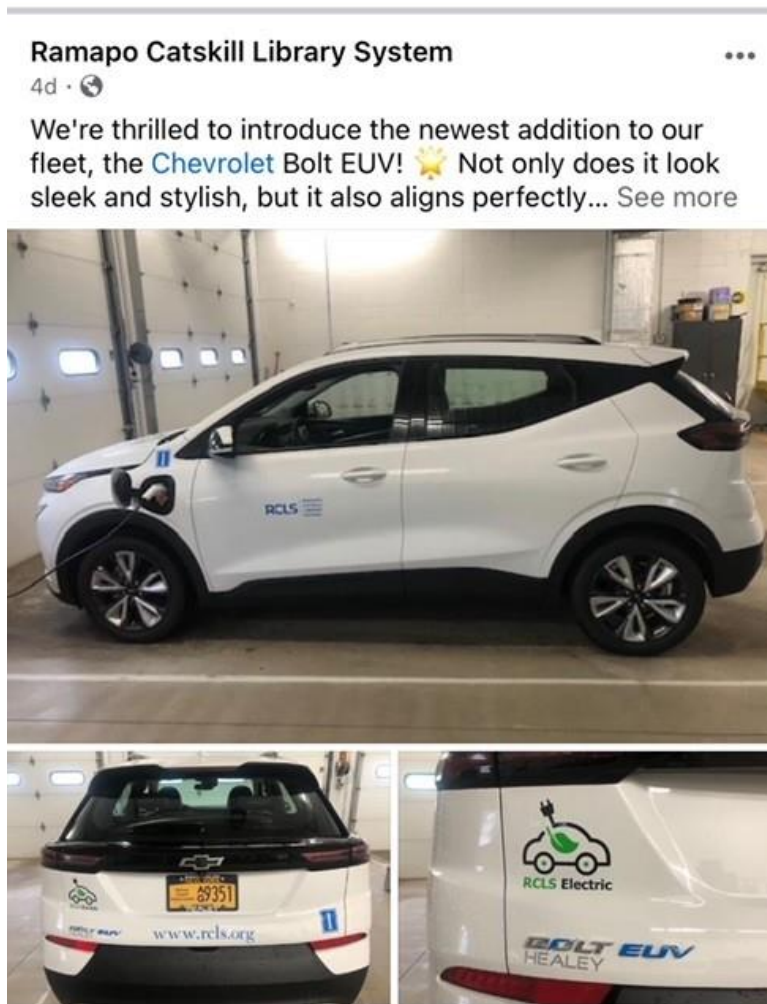
Indoor and Outdoor Spaces



- To ensure safe and sustainable indoor and outdoor spaces, RCLS developed an outdoor Site Management Plan and an Indoor Air Quality plan. The Site Management Plan include guidelines on snow removal, erosion control, waste management, use of native plants and control of invasive species. The Indoor Air Quality Plan helps ensure staff work in a healthy environment through regular assessments and maintaining equipment such as boilers, fans, and filters, as well as guidelines for cleaning products.
- What didn't work? Our first attempt at a pollinator garden was enjoyed by local deer. Additionally, after contacting several farms with CSA programs, we found RCLS was not a large enough organization to have a site drop off.

Transportation

- To ensure fuel efficiency, RCLS regularly assesses the delivery routes and vans. We have switched from diesel to gas as the technology has become more efficient, and are committed to using electric delivery vans when the technology is able to fit our range and needs.
- We have leased a fully electric vehicle for consultants to use when visiting member libraries.
- Further initiatives include a map that shows which libraries are along rail trails, complete with audiobook recommendations, as well as the purchase of [carbon offsets](#).



Walk, Bike, Run to Your Library!

Did you know that several RCLS member libraries are near rail trails? When you are out exploring one of the many rail trails in the area, stop at a library to rest, refill your water bottle, use wi-fi, and more! If you see a book you want to read when you stop, you can borrow it using your RCLS member library card, even if you are not a member of that library! If you happen to have books from one RCLS library in your backpack, you can lighten the load by returning them to any of the 47 member libraries.

We recommend visiting library websites for hours of operation prior to visiting.

What is a Rail Trail?

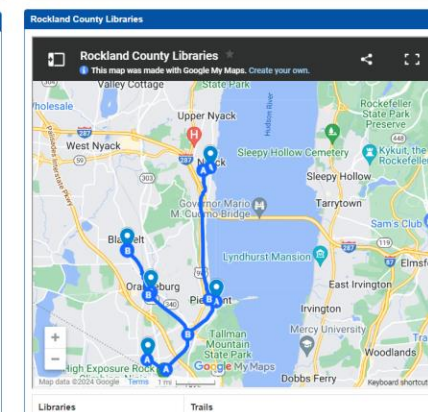
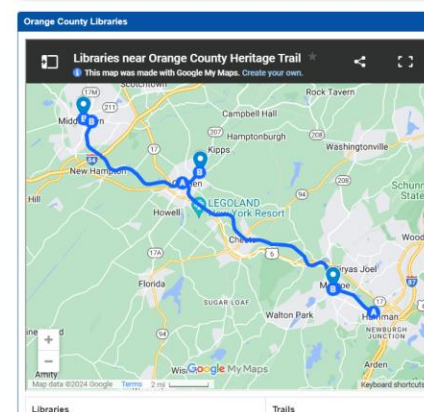
From Rails to Trails Conservancy

Rail-trails are multipurpose public paths created from former railroad corridors. These paths are flat or gently sloping, making them easily accessible and a great way to enjoy the outdoors. Rail-trails are ideal for many types of activities—depending on the rules established by the local community—including walking, bicycling, wheelchair use, inline skating, cross-country skiing and horseback riding.

Reading Recommendations

Do you need entertainment for your adventures? View the links below for book recommendations, and click here to download an audiobook from our collection on Libby. Visit your library's website for additional options.

Books with Bicycles	1-Hour Reads: Audiobooks for Kids	Let's Go For a Run
3-Hour Audiobooks	5-10 Hour Audiobooks	Happy Trails



[Click here to view the Library by Trail page](#)

Energy and Water

- Energy use in the building has remained steady despite increasing the number of staff in the building. This is due to an increase in awareness of appliance use.
- We found that implementing an item from another section helped with this- when we purchased quality coffee for the staff kitchen, the number of other coffee pots in offices decreased.
- RCLS has a leak detection system in two key spots: the file closet & server room. If a leak is detected, designated staff receive an alert via text and email.
- In our 10-year capital improvement plan, RCLS has budgeted to replace remaining toilets and appliances to use less water and energy, prioritizing HE and WaterSense products.



**REPORT ANY LEAKS TO
BUILDING MAINTENANCE**

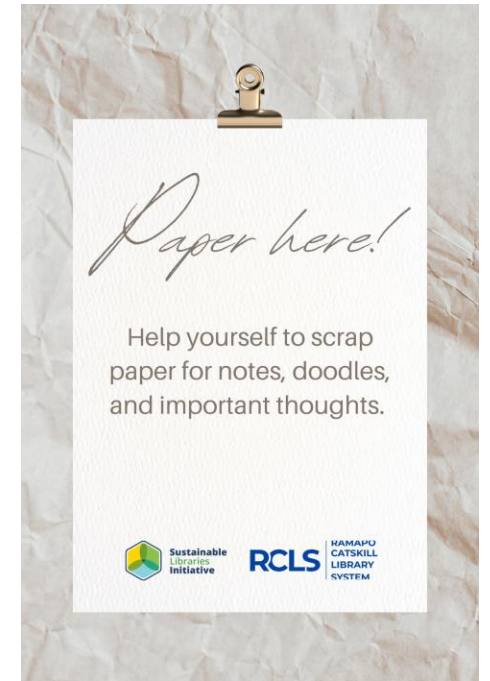


WATER SAVING TIP

Turn off the faucet while lathering and scrubbing your hands to save two gallons of water per minute.

Materials

- The RCLS team completed 14 recommended tasks!
- The Business Office team cleaned out and inventoried the supply closet making it easier for staff to see what we already have and what supplies we need.
- Solid waste disposal training with Orange County DPW made it clear what can and cannot be recycled, and many staff looked up recycling procedures for the county where they live.



Materials (continued)

"This has made my workday so much better! I love this and thank you!!"

-RCLS staff member after learning about the excellent coffee

- RCLS partnered with a local coffee shop to provide fair trade coffee to staff and guests. We also eliminated single use pods, instead using reusable Keurig compatible cups.
- Compost is now available in the building for staff, and a travel bin is used by the outreach team when holding events at member libraries. Additionally, RCLS partnered with Orange County to grow food scrap drop off programs at community farmers markets.





Collective Impact

- RCLS has lasting partnerships with several local businesses to ensure food for board meetings and events are catered by local restaurants. We are happy for the opportunity to support our local economy.
- Non-profit partners past and present include the American Red Cross, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Orange County, and Sullivan 180. Though these partnerships, RCLS has hosted blood drives, screenings of the film *Resilience*, which is about adverse childhood experiences, and promote library services to wider audiences.
- RCLS launched an early literacy initiative with State Assemblyman Karl Brabenec to provide local hospitals with Baby Bundles to give to new parents. The bundles include information about digital resources, a onesie, and a high contrast board book.

Social Cohesion

- All RCLS staff participated in an EDI session at a full staff training that focused on microaggressions. Additionally, many staff took part in a 6-part training on equity, diversity, and inclusion. As a result, a double-blind job application process was implemented to decrease implicit bias with the goal of increasing diversity within the office.
- RCLS created a system-wide program called the RCLS Road Trip that encouraged patrons to visit as many of the 47 libraries in the system as possible. The goal was to increase library use, library card holders, and knowledge of the unique services our libraries provide. Over the course of the summer, 114 people completed the Road Trip.
- At the staff holiday party, those who volunteer in their community were recognized and gifted a \$25 gift card to Adams Fairacre Farms.



Resilience Planning


- The Teen Librarians group completed a Disaster Preparedness training with the [NYS Citizen Preparedness Corps](#). Information on the Preparedness Corps. was sent to all RCLS libraries
- RCLS partnered with Mid-Hudson Library System and Sustainable Hudson Valley to host a community resilience intro webinar followed by a 4-part in-depth series on how libraries can help with community resilience.



LIBRARIES AS COMMUNITY RESILIENCE HUBS *Webinar*

Climate change is the "grandest challenge of our generation." Learn how libraries can contribute to community resilience with world-renowned Resilient Places Strategist, Cynthia Nikitin from Sustainable Hudson Valley.

OCTOBER 19, 2023
AT 10.00 – 11.30 AM



Financial Sustainability



- The RCLS annual budget is calculated with the consideration for the level of income needed to support our constituents. State Aid, not being fully funded, does not fully support our constituents, which is why RCLS has implemented an annual RCLS Service Fee to sustain services to member libraries.
- RCLS has determined that a "Cash Flow Reserve" of \$1,400,000 is needed to cover operating expenses from January 1st until State Aid is received around August/September. RCLS also has 15 other Board assigned or reserve funds so that cash is available for: Building improvements, Vehicle Reserve, Employee Benefit Accrued Liability & Taxes, and IT funds, all with the purpose of ensuring long term financial sustainability.
- RCLS offers employees health benefits through NYSHIP and Aflac. Additionally, all employees have the option of joining the NYS retirement system and the NYS deferred compensation program.



Business Office Team



Continuing Education

- During a website re-design, RCLS added a sustainability section where library staff and members of the community can go to learn more about sustainability services. Resources include information on the triple bottom line, tips for sustainable summer reading programs, community resilience resources, and more.
- RCLS regularly promotes member libraries on social media, including when a library holds a sustainability themed program or introduces a new service that promotes sustainable practices.
- Member libraries had the opportunity to apply for a Resilient Community Mini-Grant that builds on lessons learned during a 4-part Community Resilience Hub series.





Centerpiece from the 2023 RCLS Annual Meeting

Highlights

- Staff are thinking more sustainably in the office and at home.
- The RCLS Board was put to work updating policies, procedures, plans, and the employee handbook. In addition to a Sustainability Policy, all job descriptions include a sustainability clause, we have incorporated a sustainability section into our Programming and Procurement Policies, and more.
- RCLS staff wanted to be a part of these changes, even if they could not dedicate time to being on the committee.
- We were happy with how much we were already doing, including NO irrigation system, LED lighting, solar panels on the roof, a work from home policy, and paying staff a living wage.
- Sustainable practices in our Annual Meeting, included less paper, and potted plant centerpieces for attendees to take home.



RCLS Library SLI Members

- **Haverstraw King's Daughters Public Library- Certified**
- **Mamakating Library- Certified**
- Albert Wisner Public Library
- Finkelstein Memorial Library
- Gardiner Library
- Monroe Free Library
- Palisades Free Library
- Pearl River Public Library
- Valley Cottage Library

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What's Next?

- Another try for the pollinator garden!
- Capital investment plan- update more bathroom fixtures
- Expand consulting services to libraries
- Expand our partnerships to additional counties