



Energize Acton News

February 2026

What is in this issue?

- Upcoming Events
- New Website Platform
- Quick Action of the Month
- Book/Website of the Month
- A Climate Thought
- Plant-Based Recipe of the Month



Mon., Feb. 2, 7-8pm, zoom -- **MA Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer 2026 Update**. Sponsored by Congregation Or Atid, Wayland. Info and sign-up [HERE](#).

Tues., Feb. 3rd, 6:30pm, zoom – **Energy Savings, Upgrades, and Efficiency Series: 1) Income Eligible and Moderate Income Programs**. Sponsored by the Acton Sustainability Office. Info and registration at bit.ly/rezincentsives and on the Town of Acton FaceBook page. Also, see the session 2) **Energy Efficiency for Small Businesses**, Feb. 10th at 4pm (bit.ly/smallbizs); and session 3) **Efficiency for Multi-Family Buildings**, Feb. 11th at 1pm, (bit.ly/propmanage).

Thurs., Feb. 5th, 5-7pm, Danny's Place, West Acton -- **Hackathon Flood Solutions Showcase: 1) Manage Beavers and 2) Storm Drains**. Sponsored by AB STEAM. Info and registration, click [HERE](#).

Wed., Feb. 11th, 7pm, Zoom -- **From Wasteland to Wonder: Easy Ways to Heal Earth in the Sub/Urban Landscape**. Sponsored by Grow Native Massachusetts. Info/registration [HERE](#).

Wed, Feb 18th, 7:00-8:00pm, zoom -- **Solar without Federal Incentives: Why It Still Works!** Sponsored by MassEnergize. Info/registration [HERE](#).

Sun., March 1st, 11am & 1pm, Acton – **Clean Energy Home Tour: Focus on Solar Shingles!** Sponsored by EnergizeActon.org. Come see this new technology and LOTS more! Address sent upon registration. Info/Sign-Up [HERE](#).

Wed., April 8th, 8am-5pm, Bentley University – **Third Annual Community Climate Leaders Conference**. Sponsored by MassEnergize. A great opportunity to learn/network. Info/registration [HERE](#).

CLEAN ENERGY HOME TOUR

Focus: Solar Shingles!

SUN., MARCH 1, 2026

11am and 1pm Acton, MA Tours

- Also see
- ✓ Heat Pumps
 - ✓ HP Hot Water
 - ✓ Induction Cooking
 - ✓ EV Charging



Go to [EnergizeActon.org](https://energizeacton.org) for info/sign-up.

Webinar Series

Energy: Savings, Upgrades, and Efficiency



Special Incentives for Residents: Income-Eligible & Moderate Income Programs

Tues. February 3rd, 6:30PM

Register: bit.ly/rezincentives

Improving the Bottom Line: Energy Efficiency for Small Businesses

Tues. February 10th, 4PM

Register: bit.ly/smallbizs

Reducing Costs for You and Your Tenants: Efficiency for Multifamily Buildings

Wed. February 11th, 1PM

Register: bit.ly/propmanage

Hosted by the Acton Sustainability Office



SOLAR WITHOUT FEDERAL INCENTIVES:

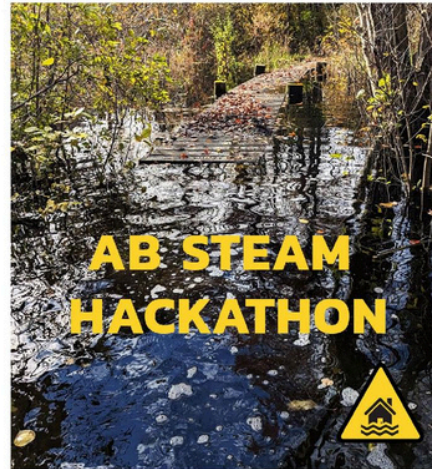
WHY IT STILL WORKS AND WHAT OPTIONS EXIST

February 18, 2026
7pm - 8pm (EST)



Register: tinyurl.com/home-solar-webinar

www.energizeacton.org



ACTON FLOODING

Student Solutions Showcase

Join AB STEAM for light refreshments from 5:00-5:30pm and final student presentations at 5:30pm featuring flood-solution ideas for Acton Conservation areas, roads and culverts.

AB STEAM Flood Solutions HACKATHON

THURSDAY
February 5, 2026

5:00pm to 7:00pm

All Welcome

Danny's Place
543 Mass Ave
Acton MA

AB STEAM



ABsteam.org/hackathon



For people of faith-- Sun., Feb 1st, is **Tu B'shvat**, the Jewish festival of trees. And check out **The Rights of Nature** webinar from the CT Interreligious Eco-Justice Network on Feb. 3rd from 7:00-8:30pm.



Web Platform Change for EnergizeActon.org

With sadness, EnergizeActon.org will soon say goodbye to our current website platform, which is a site custom-built by MassEnergize.org. Originally, MassEnergize envisioned many communities statewide signing onto this platform, each community with teams and households joining the local website to see actions “Done” and yet “To Do,” and tracking the carbon savings made by individuals and by the community as a whole. The reality is that only about 30 communities or organizations became part of the network, which is still a great latticework of concerned citizens, just not much of a financial base. Also, many people utilized the websites for information and guidance, but did not necessarily join EnergizeActon.org or the other communities’ websites. We understand! Many of you already have long lists of memberships. Plus folks worry about being bombarded by emails. So the wonderful “To Do” and “Done” buttons, linked to carbon savings, were underutilized. And the “Teams” function never picked up steam. To be honest, the Energize Acton volunteers could have done a better job of promoting these cool functions, but we were often trying to keep up with other tasks.

Bye
Teams

Mothers Out Front Acton Livable future for all children	6 members	
	63 actions completed (10.5 / member)	
	56.7 Metric Tons of CO2 (9.4 / member)	



To Do

Done



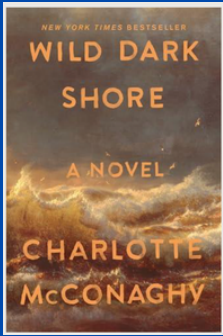
Our new web platform will be a WordPress site and the formatting of the website will look much the same; however, we will no longer have the “To Do/Done” functions. This also means that we will not know what actions you take. In the past, if we encountered important information related to a specific technology, e.g. the new winter heat pump rate, we could write to those of you who had recorded heat pump installations and let you know about this change. In the future, we will have to be more creative about communication!

Please be patient with us over the next couple months as we work out any quirks of this transition. As we settle into the WordPress website, we will try to think of new and different ways to acknowledge our climate actions as individuals, households, and as a community. You inspire us with your enthusiasm for and commitment to a livable climate! Thank you so much for all that you have done. Onward!



Wednesday, April 8th at Bentley University.
Get inspired! Learn! Network! Sign-Up [HERE](#).

BOOK of the MONTH



Wild Dark Shore, a novel, received rave reviews for its exploration of love, loss, and resilience in a climate-changed world. It's called a real page-turner. An NPR staff pick for 2025.

Website of the MONTH

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has long fought for natural resources. They also have great toolkits, including "How to Make Your Community More Resilient to Climate Disaster."



A Climate Thought: Resilience at Home and in the Community

The article, "How to Make Your Community More Resilient to Climate Disaster," mentioned under our "Website of the Month," begins with a sobering look at how community networks make a difference in a time of crisis. In 1995, Chicago suffered a multi-day heat wave in which over 700 people died, mostly individuals in poor neighborhoods of color. Sadly, the local Chicago government response, at the time, was very weak. However, the article points out that one neighborhood, Auburn Gresham, also struggling economically, did not suffer the same losses, largely because of strong community ties. The author writes, "During a crisis, neighbors are often the first responders, and active block clubs, churches, and small businesses in Auburn Gresham created a social safety net. These connections helped people spring into action, check in on each other, and provide person-to-person services when formal systems failed."

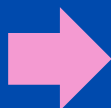
The importance of neighborhood connections has been key in responding to and bouncing back from climate events around the world. The recent season of *This Old House*, from Asheville, NC, demonstrates this dynamic during and after the historic rains/flooding of Hurricane Helene.

In a time when federal crisis response mechanisms are less robust, how can Acton be ready for future climate challenges? We have been blessed, so far, to be spared fires, overpowering heat, hurricanes, and serious flooding, although the September 2023 microburst was a taste of severe weather. The Acton Sustainability Office, in connection with the MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council), is working on enhancing local resilience. New local government programs are taking shape. In the meantime, here are some helpful resources.

- "How to Make Your Community More Resilient to Climate Disaster," National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), August 2025.
- "16 upgrades to make your home more climate-resistant," The Zebra, December 2025.
- "Resilience Toolkit – Homeowners," Resilient Cambridge, City of Cambridge, MA, 2026. This is quite a detailed chart of homeowner prep.



**Quick
Climate
Action**



Borrow an **induction cooktop** from the library & try out this super efficient way to cook without harmful off gases. Or go to Mass Save to get \$500 off an approved induction stove.

Plant-Based Recipe of the Month

Lentils are the butt of jokes in some households, but this dish from [The Milk Street Cookbook](#) is delicious. The onions are the key! Skip the yogurt for a vegan dish.



Rice and lentils with caramelized onions is a much-loved food in the Middle East. This is our take on the version we tasted in Lebanon. The rice and lentils are simmered together in the same pot, with the lentils getting a 10-minute head start so both finish at the same time. Meanwhile, the onions are fried until crisp and deeply caramelized—almost burnt, really—to coax out a savory bittersweet flavor. Serve mujaddara hot, warm or at room temperature with a dollop of plain yogurt. It's a delicious accompaniment to grilled or roasted meats, but it's also hearty enough to be the center of a vegetarian meal.

Don't use French green lentils (lentils du Puy) in place of the brown lentils called for. Even when fully cooked, green lentils retain a firm, almost al dente texture, while brown lentils take on a softness that combines well with the rice. Don't worry if the onions turn quite dark at the edge of the skillet; deep browning is desirable. But do stir the browned bits into the mix to ensure the onions color evenly. However, if the onions brown deeply before they soften, lower the heat a notch or two and keep stirring until the pan cools slightly.

Lebanese Lentils and Rice with Crisped Onions (Mujaddara)

Start to finish: 50 minutes / Servings: 4

- 4 medium garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
- 4 bay leaves
- 2½ teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground allspice
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1 cup brown lentils, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup basmati rice, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 medium yellow onions, halved and thinly sliced
- 1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced
- Plain whole-milk yogurt, to serve

- 1. In a large Dutch oven** over medium-high, combine 5 cups water, the garlic, bay, cumin, allspice, 1 tablespoon salt and 1 teaspoon pepper. Bring to a boil, then stir in the lentils and reduce to medium. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally and adjusting the heat to maintain a simmer, until the lentils are softened but still quite firm at the center, about 10 minutes.
- 2. Stir in the rice and return to a simmer.** Cover, reduce to medium-low and cook until the liquid is absorbed and the lentils and rice are tender, about 25 minutes.
- 3. Meanwhile, in a 12-inch skillet** over medium-high, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the onions and cook, stirring only occasionally at the start then more frequently once browning begins at the edges of the pan, until the onions are deeply caramelized and crisped, 10 to 15 minutes; adjust the heat if the onions brown too quickly. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the onions to a paper towel-lined plate and spread evenly. Sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon salt and set aside; the onions will crisp as they cool.
- 4. When the lentils and rice are tender,** remove the pot from the heat. Uncover and lay a kitchen towel across the pan, then replace the lid and let stand for 10 minutes.
- 5. Using a fork,** fluff the lentils and rice, removing and discarding the bay. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Stir in half the scallions, then transfer to a serving bowl. Top with the fried onions and remaining scallions. Serve hot, warm or at room temperature with yogurt on the side.