



Energize Acton News

October 2026

What is in this issue?

- Upcoming Events
- The United Nations – *Limiting Overshoot*
- Good on Renewables/Tough on Ocean Temps
- A Climate Thought – Hopeful Pessimism
- Book, Website, Action, Recipe of the Month



Fri., Oct. 2nd, noon, online – **Shave the Peak: Save Energy When It Matters Most**, sponsored by the Green Energy Consumers Alliance. Even though summer is past, we can learn from this year's heat waves and how to lower electricity rates next summer. Info/sign-up [HERE](#).

Sat., Oct. 3rd, 10am-3pm, Gardner Field – **Visit the “Earth Fortune-Teller”** /Energize Acton table at the postponed Oktoberfest. Info [HERE](#).

Tues., Oct. 6th, 4:00–6:00pm, Rapsallions – **CLEAN ENERGY HOUR**, sponsored by EnergizeActon.org and the Acton Sustainability Office. Enjoy free appetizers and free guidance with the Acton Clean Energy Coaches. Info on utility bill discounts/plans. EV drivers also on hand. Info/sign-up [HERE](#).

Wed., Oct. 7th, 7:30-8:30pm, online – **2026 El Niño: A Discussion with Ocean Experts**, sponsored by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Understand better the potential impacts of this super El Niño and how to prepare. Info/registration [HERE](#).

Sun., Oct. 11th, 10am-1pm, A-B Farmers Market, Elm St – **Energize Acton “Community Table.”** Stop by at the last Farmers Market of the season. Info [HERE](#).

Wed., Oct. 14, 7-8pm, online – **Emerging Clean Energy Tech**, sponsored by EnergizeActon.org and MassEnergize.org. Updates on balcony solar, in-window heat pumps, and small battery storage with Amanda Barker from the Green Energy Consumers Alliance. Info/registration [HERE](#).

Wed., Oct. 28th, noon-1pm, online – **Heat Pumps and Time-Varying Rates**, sponsored by the Green Energy Consumers Alliance. Learn about winter discount rates and new VTR. Info/sign-up [HERE](#).

CLEAN ENERGY HOUR

Tues, Oct 6th | 4-6 PM
Rapscallion Covered Patio
5 Strawberry Hill Rd



WORRIED ABOUT UTILITY BILLS?

Drop in with questions about energy efficiency and our Clean Energy Coaches will be there to help! They advise on topics from home weatherization and heat pumps to EVs and solar.

Free appetizers, first come first served

Hosted by the Acton Sustainability Office and EnergizeActon.org



ONLINE WEBINAR

EMERGING CLEAN ENERGY TECH

Practical new options for cutting home energy use—even for renters and condo owners.



Balcony Solar



In-Window Heat Pumps



Battery Storage

When
Oct. 14, 2026
7:00PM

Speaker
Amanda Barker
Green Energy Consumers Alliance

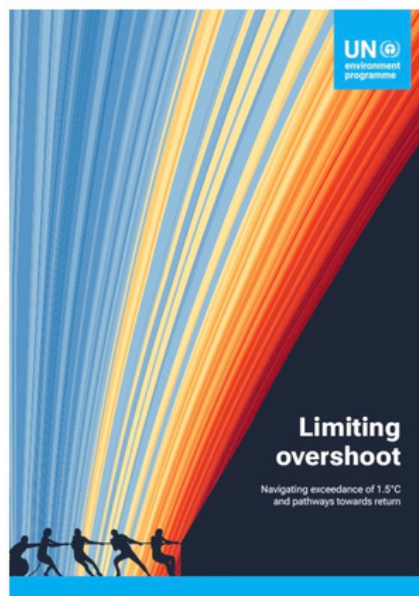
Register at
bit.ly/clean-energy-tech



A Scientist's Summary of the New U.N. Report on Climate

At the beginning of September, the United Nations released its latest climate report, ***Limiting Overshoot***. Here is their introductory statement, "Limiting global warming to 1.5°C remains a cornerstone of the Paris Agreement, yet under current policies and alternative near-term trajectories, exceedance of 1.5°C is now widely assessed as unavoidable." Marine biologist and climate activist, Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, summarized the report in her substack, ***WHAT IF WE GET IT RIGHT?*** Here are her takeaways.

- **We will pass 1.5°C of planetary warming.** We are heading for 2°C of heating, which will create serious challenges for agriculture, stability at the poles, ocean rise, and storm intensity.
- **Carbon Dioxide Removal is not the answer.** Whether via natural means, i.e. forests, or industrial processes, CO2 removal is not enough.
- **Fossil fuels have to go.** There is no other way to ensure public welfare and resilience.



- **Agriculture needs attention.** Industrial farming both affects and is affected by climate warming. Deforestation, topsoil loss, and fertilizer are issues, along with/ water.
- **We need to invest in resilience --big time!** The UN authors write, "Adaptation is not optional; it is essential." (83)
- **All is not lost!** "The challenge is to act while recognizing uncertainty; not waiting for uncertainty to disappear." (89)

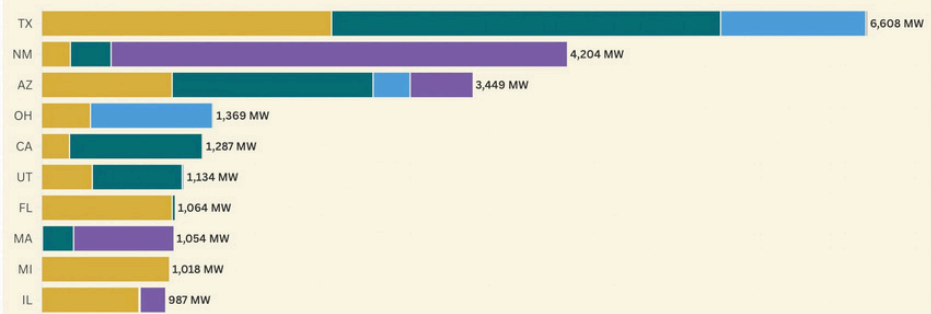
Good Climate News

Despite headwinds in the U.S., over 90% of new grid capacity added from Jan.–June 2026 is in the form of renewables. In fact, according to [Canary Media](#), two-thirds of new electricity generation is coming from solar and battery storage. The big leader? Texas, followed by New Mexico and Arizona. Massachusetts is 8th in renewables.

Solar and storage are still the main attraction

Top 10 states by capacity additions January–June 2026, in megawatts

■ Solar ■ Batteries ■ Natural gas ■ Wind ■ Other

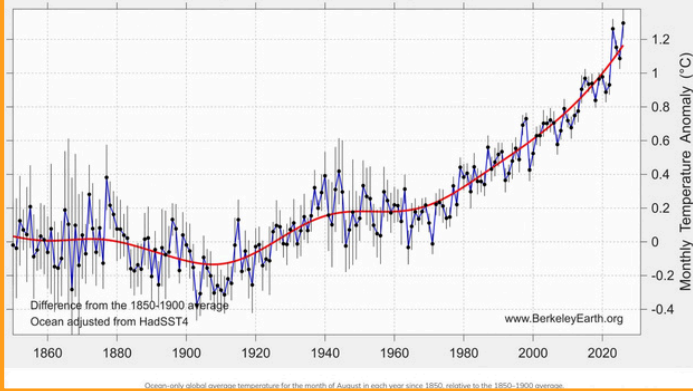


Source: [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#) • Chart by Canary Media

Tough Climate News

August ocean temperatures hit an all-time high. [BerkeleyEarth.org](#) writes, not only did 75 countries set new records but, for 22 of those countries, the amount of increase was shockingly high. Debra Rienstra notes in her [Refugia Newsletter](#), “A hot ocean is problematic in many ways, causing sea level rise, stronger storms, ecosystem damage, and food web disruption for humans and creatures.”

Berkeley Earth - Ocean Only - August



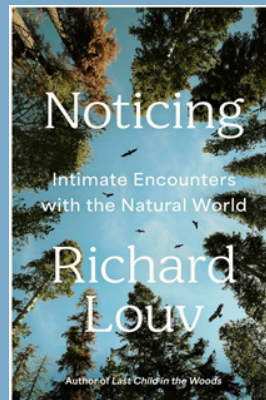
Wendell Berry 1934-2026



Photo from Foodtank.com

Wendell Berry was a farmer, environmentalist, and writer, most famous for his book, ***The Unsettling of America***. Also a respected poet, he will be remembered for celebrating & defending the soil, along with the fabric of community that grows with local farms and local economies.

Book of the Month: Noticing



Like Wendell Berry, renowned author Richard Louv asks us to slow down and to discover, in Berry's words, “The Peace of Wild Things.” Louv also wrote the amazing Last Child in the Woods, a call for new priorities. How can we love and protect what we do not know?

Organization of the Month:



In acknowledgement of the new UN climate report, check out the [Climate Action Tracker](#) organization, that looks

at how countries are meeting their Paris Climate Accord obligations. There is very interesting data, some hopeful and some quite sobering. Of course, you might guess where the U.S. stands.

A Climate Thought: Hopeful Pessimism

Last month I was feeling particularly discouraged about care for this amazing planet. Yes, the big picture felt bad to me, but I suppose the smaller, local encounters affected me more, pushing me into a slump. You know, when you talk with a loved one or close friend, or even with colleagues where you expect similar values, but realize that you are at the far end of a very long bridge, seeing the world totally differently. Are you working on immigration or democracy and feel this, too? I wrote to my niece in the U.K., who is also a rebel pen-to-paper kind of gal, and did something I try hard not to do—expressed a sense of defeat. My niece is a wonderful, determined, creative sort of person. Rachel works as a financial advisor, but her passions are fossils, baking, reading, and hiking on beaches with her Brit husband and beloved Staffordshire bull terrier, Hamilton. Unlike her aunt, she is not an activist. After the Brexit vote, Rachel and her husband lost any political spark. What was the point?

Before Rachel wrote back, I started reading a book that she had pushed me to tackle—***Wild Dark Shore***, by Australian author Charlotte McConaghy. I knew that the novel dealt with climate, but I had left it in the stack, fearing it would be too grim. Oh, gosh, what a stunningly beautiful story! Hard, yes, but incredibly full of life, full of fierce caring. Then last week I got a card from Rachel, reflecting on their summer. The U.K. experienced six massive heat waves in 2026. This is a country where few homes or businesses have air conditioning. My niece wrote to me about heat pumps as if she were a member of Energize Acton! She lamented lost blackberries, shriveled in the high temps, but shared plans for future gardens. She tried to cheer me up by explaining that U.S. policies are making Britain pursue renewable energy with more gusto. Finally, Rachel mentioned an author talk by Mara van der Lugt, about the book, ***Hopeful Pessimism***. My niece was moved by the author. Rachel wrote, “The central premise is that optimism leads to complacency whereas pessimism is more useful, especially when considering the climate crisis, and that true moral action comes from accepting depressing realities and striving for change, without certainty or expectation.” It does not sound all that positive, does it? However, my niece found this outlook comforting and even joined the English Green Party. And I found it comforting that hopeful pessimism does not scare her or dismay her. We can dare to love our world, and to act strategically, even if the odds are long.

Local author, Julie Carrick Dalton (***The Last Beekeeper***, ***The Forest Becomes Her***), said something similar last week at the Discovery Museum, reflecting on connecting children with nature. (Please, this is my rephrasing of what I remember.) What if the children fall in love with butterflies, but a summer arrives with only four butterflies? Do we adopt a false optimism and ignore what our observations teach us? Do we fall prey to defeatism and consign butterflies to doom? Or do we fight like hell for those four butterflies? The novel, ***Wild Dark Shore***, chooses the last option. This is what Rachel might call a commitment of caring, without certainty or expectation. Despite the moments of discouragement, this is what I choose, too. For each of us the path is different, this path of caring. For example, it could be canvassing for a candidate, standing vigil, trying to be more energy efficient with heat pumps, or taking a child into the woods. But also, enjoy the beach with your dog, watch those insects, write a letter. We are all connected . . . wild coastlines, heat waves, four butterflies, and fierce love. Onward. KRW

THE PLANT-FORWARD RECIPE OF THE MONTH: SPLIT PEA, FENNEL & SPINACH SOUP



This split pea soup is nothing like the heavy, overwhelming soup I remember as a child. While this is a lovely bowl for cooler weather, the fennel and spinach bring the vibrant memory of fresh summer flavors. This is another recipe from the sadly defunct *Vegetarian Times* magazine.

- 2 cups chopped fennel (1 bulb or 5 fennel stalks, fronds removed)
- 1 large onion, chopped (+/- 2 cups)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup dry white wine (divided)
- 15 oz dried green split peas
- 1 tsp fennel seeds (divided)
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 5 oz fresh baby spinach

Coat a saucepan with cooking spray or olive oil. Add fennel and onion and sauté for 8 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add ½ cup of wine and simmer 2 minutes.

Add split peas, ½ tsp fennel seeds, thyme, bay leaf, and 7 cups of water. Bring to a boil then reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer 50 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the remaining ½ cup wine and cook uncovered for another 10 minutes or until the split peas are tender. Stir in the spinach and cook until wilted (+/- 2 minutes).

Remove the bay leaf and purée the soup with an immersion blender until smooth. Season with salt and pepper as desired.

Toast the remaining ½ tsp of fennel seeds in a small skillet until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Serve the soup garnished with toasted fennel seeds.



Action of the Month:
UTILITY BILLS!

Are you paying too much? Consider getting an “Energy Bill Check-Up” with All In Energy. This non-profit is committed to helping people understand their utility bills and get the best rates on their utility charges.

Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram.