

Sustainable Monument 2025

**A Living Document for Integrating Sustainability
into Monument Mountain Regional High School**



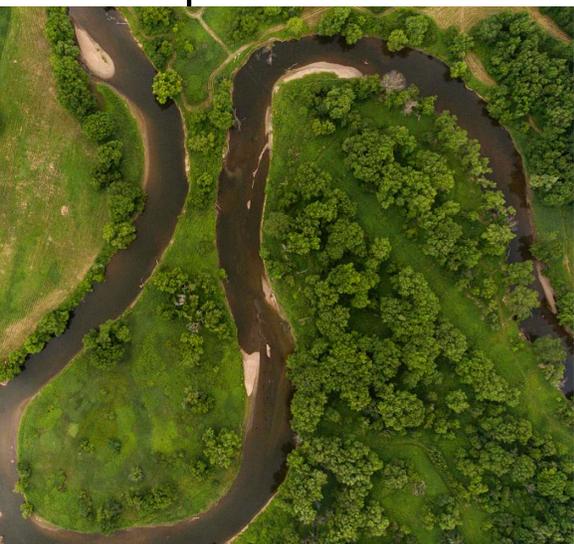
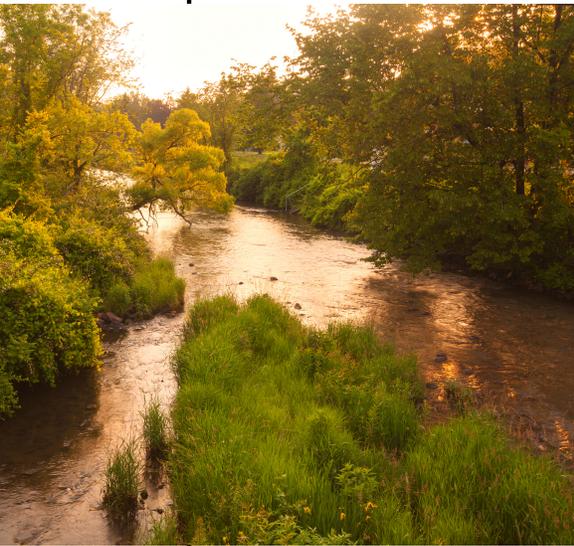
*Written Collaboratively By A Team
Of Faculty, Staff, Students, And
Community Partners
Last Updated on July 13th, 2020*

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Preface



The Housatonic River • Photos from Getty Images (top), Housatonic Heritage (center), and BNRC.org (bottom)

“For this valley, the river must be the center. Certainly, it is the physical center; perhaps, in a sense, the spiritual center. Perhaps from that very freeing of spirit will come other freedoms and inspirations and aspirations which may be steps toward the diffusion and diversification and enriching of culture throughout this land.”

- W. E. B. Du Bois: “The Housatonic River”

By growing up in the Berkshires, we have been afforded the opportunity to explore and appreciate the natural world around us. As Du Bois states, an appreciation of place is the foundation for a unified, just, and educated community. These three aspects of community are no longer an option, they are a necessity. In 2020, the year of vision, we have seen what happens when unity, justice, and education are forgotten. Lives are lost to both a new virus and an old system. We must learn to live by the words of Du Bois. Through education of sustainability, social, and environmental justice, we come much closer to being the free, inspired, and diverse community that Du Bois fought for.

Not only is learning about these topics crucial to our success, it is also our responsibility on both an individual and collective level. As a school community, we must create a fair, and sustainable place for both the people and the land. To truly achieve sustainability, it must be designed for all. This is the duty of every member of the Monument community and essential to having a sustainable school.

Written by Monument Mountain students Samuel Schroeder, Diego Salinetti, Abbey Boyd, and Keegan Leach

Introduction

The term ‘sustainability’ is commonly used in many capacities, thus it is important for us to define this term within the context of our school. Generally, ‘sustainability’ is used by any person or entity that wishes to inhabit characteristics of environmental consciousness. The UN World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainability as:

“...[meeting] the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Sustainability is about the world that we are leaving for our children, their children, and their grandchildren. The effects of our actions must not result in a world that is unlivable and unjust for these future generations. For Monument, this means that sustainability must be embodied by all aspects of our school system and accessible to all students. This ensures that students are learning to be engaged citizens and understanding how their actions matter, becoming strong advocates for sustainability and justice throughout the school, district, and community.

Students planting seedlings at Woven Roots Farm



With this in mind, the definition of sustainability for Monument is stated as:

“The institutional practices, physical evolution, and educational curriculum of Monument will meet the needs of our current school community while ensuring the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This will be achieved by accomplishing a net-zero impact on the environment (including energy, water, waste, and carbon), ensuring a positive impact on the school community’s health and performance, and establishing a standard for all graduates to be socially conscious and environmentally literate citizens.”

Our Vision

Our vision for the future of Monument Mountain Regional High School is one that is healthy, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable. The goal of Sustainable Monument 2025 is to paint a picture of our high school that not only inhabits the characteristics that we strive for annually, but to establish shared values, social norms, and practices that embody long-term sustainability. We recognize that that is a living document, able to be amended as we gain new understandings.

In order to accomplish our ambitious and impressive goals, we must incorporate all important aspects of a thriving and effective school. We have utilized the same framework provided by the Whole School Sustainability Framework that breaks down the concept of sustainability into three major pillars. These three major pillars are Physical Place, Educational Program, and Organizational Culture. Each of these pillars is connected to one another and cannot be stand-alone endeavors.

The three pillars are broken down further into subcategories, each of which touches on specific areas of the school that are critical for true sustainability. The pillars and their subcategories are organized into the framework in an easy-to-read and digestible way. This framework, which follows this section, can be utilized by staff, students, and community

members to ensure that the school as a whole understands the goals of Sustainable Monument 2025, and as such, play a role in seeing it come to fruition. This framework can be displayed throughout the school, appear in school documents, and be referenced regularly in order to reinforce the importance of the three pillars and their subcategories.

Following the framework are the Guiding Principles, which further clarify the pillars and subcategories in order to outline specific steps and outcomes that will transition Monument toward sustainability. These principles should be referenced by all stake-holders when it comes to decision-making and planning for the future. By doing so, the future of Monument Mountain will allow all members and visitors to sense the culture of sustainability and the student-centered educational

Monument students harvesting from the Project Connection greenhouse.



philosophy from the school environment and community behavior.

To picture this, you can envision that there would be plants spread through the school, that the air will be clean and that trashcans would not be as commonplace as recycling and composting stations. Students would welcome newcomers and offer to show them around their school and have the ability to articulate the purpose of sustainability features throughout. It wouldn't be uncommon to find a teacher engaging students in interacting with these features, such as monitors that show energy usage patterns or students performing experiments in the gardens.

Students and staff alike would collaborate in the decision-making process around a student's learning paths, allowing students to take advantage of the many opportunities available to them. Opportunities would range from hands-on learning in the greenhouse, to independent-learning opportunities to explore and study a concept, to the many practical learning experiences offered both inside the school and out in the community.

The school lunch would be a mixture of greens from the school's agriculture program, which includes a hydroponic garden, classroom projects, and the greenhouses on campus. The maintenance staff assist students that are handling the compost from the cafeteria, which serves as an important fertilizer for the school's agriculture program.

The gentle hum of air-source heat pumps will provide comfortable heating and cooling zones throughout the school, which will be powered by solar panels over the parking lot and throughout campus. The solar panels provide not only electricity but also a learning opportunity for students that are interested in renewable energy or installing and maintaining such advanced structures.

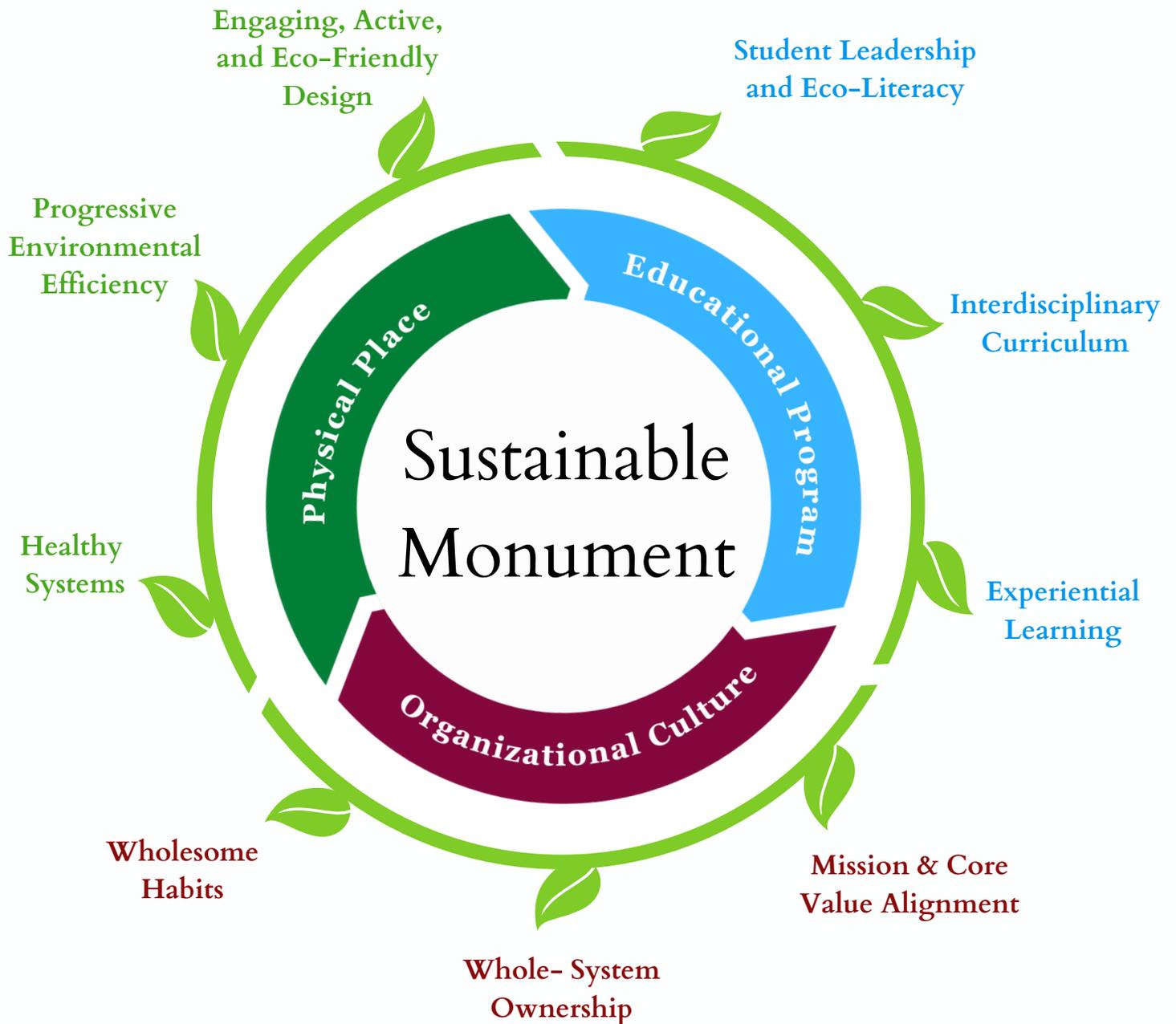
Teachers and staff would meet periodically to grow their interdisciplinary lessons. The main office will also exemplify sustainability, where it would be common practice to conserve paper and purchase paper that is made primarily with recycled content.

In order to see this vision come to fruition, it is important to expect that the transition will not be without hurdles. It is important for those reading this document and seeing it come to life to understand that this journey will need to be approached with creativity and great patience. And with all members of the community and important stakeholders supporting this effort, it will be achieved with integrity and compassion for both people and the environment.

Photo courtesy of David Tran



Sustainable Monument Framework



Guiding Principles

Physical Place



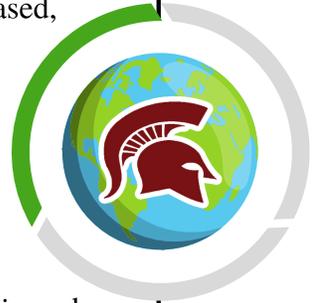
Healthy Systems

a. We ensure that all systems within and around the built environment promote health, wellness, and inspiration

1. Our school HVAC system utilizes the most stringent air quality standards
2. Our school incorporates innovative technologies for handling our waste water
3. Our school provides organic, student-grown food for student breakfasts, lunches, and snacks
4. Our school alternates between meals that are plant-based and animal-based, and sources any food that isn't grown on-campus from local sources

b. Our forests, meadows, fields, and wetlands that surround the building are recognized as living systems with incredible educational value

1. Paths and trails are consistently and consciously used for physical education, mental health and breaks between extended class periods
2. Paths and trails are also maintained by students through land stewardship and trail building programs/classes
3. Our school takes responsibility for keeping the fields, trails and outdoor classrooms clean and free of litter and any synthetic fertilizers or chemical treatments



Progressive Environmental Efficiency

a. We achieve net-zero impact on environmental resources

1. Our school actively works towards a net-zero energy building by utilizing renewable energy resources and refusing to use or rely on fossil fuels by 2025
2. Our school reduces water use by way of both basic and innovative technology such as gray water recycling by 2025
3. Our school will achieve carbon-neutrality by the end of 2035

Physical Place

Progressive Environmental Efficiency, continued

b. We conserve resources, understanding the value of conservation, and the consequences of consumption

1. Our school conserves resources by employing energy-efficient technology, establishing behaviors that limit the need for resource consumption, and evaluating practices that do not meet our core values
2. Our school produces little to no consumer solid waste by way of emphasizing reusables, refusing single-use items and packaging, and composting food scraps
3. Our school uses reusable dishware and silverware in our dining areas and develops a sustainable system for clean-up which is realistic for both students and cafeteria staff

c. Infrastructure will be built to encourage low/zero fossil fuel use transportation

1. Our school provides electric vehicle and E-Bike charging stations
2. Our school encourages and supports biking to school by providing open and accessible bicycle racks
3. Our schools values and invests in electric bussing and student transportation

d. We construct alternative energy production facilities on-site

1. Our school uses photovoltaic and solar hot water panels for electricity and hot water generation
2. Our school uses air-source or ground-source heat pumps for heating and cooling



Engaging & Active Eco-friendly Design

a. We will maximize the potential for environmental connection, emotional, and physical wellness with the existing building

1. Our school has outdoor classrooms that are consistently utilized and also promote social distancing as appropriate
2. Our classrooms are designed with large windows to connect students with the outdoor environment and for passive heating and cooling
3. Our classrooms are free of harmful substances such as harsh cleaners and dangerous chemicals



Engaging & Active Eco-friendly Design, continued

b. Our new or renovated school will prioritize communal spaces while fostering physical and emotional wellness

1. Our school during renovation/new construction, will utilize materials and a design that is local, 'natural', proven to reduce stress, encourage mindfulness, and has no residual chemical effects (i.e. off-gassing)
2. Our school records and highlights the provenance of certain pieces/materials of construction
3. Our school design derives inspiration from the surrounding landscape
4. Our school has classroom spaces that are flexible with ergonomic furniture and ambidextrous tools
5. Our school is designed with open spaces, maximum natural light and is conducive to smooth transitioning and gathering

Educational Program



Experiential Learning

a. Students engage in experiential and project based learning within the school building

1. Teachers implement project-based curricula throughout all subjects
2. Students are active, striving to solve problems and complete projects
3. Students are involved in developing and improving sustainable systems within the school such as composting, trails, recycling, and energy consumption
4. Students collect, interpret, and present data on waste, emissions, water quality and more to support and inform the sustainable transition of the building while building professional competencies on sustainability that can serve them into the future

b. Students engage in experiential and project-based learning around the school building

1. Students grow food for the cafeteria and the community using regenerative practices
2. Students study local living laboratories and explore challenges between human activity and natural systems
3. Teachers utilize the natural areas surrounding the school as an educational resource
4. Our school recognizes these living laboratories as a low-cost and ideal learning resource



Educational Program

Experiential Learning, continued

c. Students engage in experiential and project based learning in the community

1. Students identify and help solve local ecological problems
2. Students are involved with climate and environmental justice initiatives in the community
3. Students have opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, volunteering and other forms of community involvement
4. Teachers utilize community resources to enhance curriculum, with community members giving presentations and working with classes to connect students with real-world issues and information

Interdisciplinary Curriculum

a. Interdisciplinary curriculum will be collaborative, connected and meaningful

1. Teachers deliver content through interdisciplinary units by way of a spiraling curriculum
2. Teachers collaborate to develop interdisciplinary classes and units with aspects of sustainability and/or outdoor learning
3. Environmental justice is taught as its own class (SS/SCI double credit) or a topic integrated into existing classes
4. The student experience is fully connected and realistic. Topics learned from one teacher apply directly to other classes

Student Leadership and Eco-Literacy

a. Students have a leading role in shaping Sustainable Monument and creating changes in the school

1. Students have internship opportunities to continue the work of Sustainable Monument
2. Upper-class levels lead by example, showing incoming students how to be a part of a sustainable school, establishing a pattern that continues and reinforces itself
3. Student involvement, interest, and passion is what drives this change along with support from staff, faculty, and administration within the school



Student Leadership and Eco-Literacy, continued

b. Graduates are Eco-Literate students

1. Students have a specialty within subjects such as humanities, anthropology, ecology, agriculture, horticulture, biology, or sustainability
2. All aspects of the school curricula relate to and involve sustainability and/or outdoor education in some way
3. Students mastery of a certain subject culminates in their senior year in the form of a capstone project, internship, or other independent educational venture

c. Students acquire skills, credits, and certifications useful for college or a career pathway

1. Students can realistically fulfill credit requirements while being engaged in an internship, independent study, or other practical opportunity
2. Students receive certifications through classes and programs that will benefit them in employment after high school
3. Eco-literacy will be attained by all students regardless of class level, afterschool availability, and graduation requirements

Organizational Culture



Mission & Core Value Alignment

a. All stakeholders within the school system take ownership and are invested in the sustainability of our school

1. Our administration leads our school by supporting and modeling practices that reflect our core values
2. Our teachers and staff model the core values and help expand upon successes
3. Our students learn what it means to be a part of a sustainable school and grow into positions of leadership over their high school career
4. Our school has consistent messaging throughout the campus and within all school resources to create clarity and alignment



Organizational Culture



Whole-System Ownership

a. Sustainability is embraced within the school, district, and community

1. Our goals are clearly communicated to all students, teachers, staff, administration, school committee, and the community
2. Students take ownership over sustainability in the school through classes, volunteering, and internships
3. Teachers take ownership of sustainability in the school through curriculum development and enforcing core values
4. Administrators, staff, and leaders take ownership of sustainability through decision-making processes and supporting other sustainability efforts in the school



Wholesome Habits

a. Our school fosters and develops sustainable practices

1. Our school will provide a just and fresh food program while simultaneously fostering student awareness of food systems and qualities
2. Our school will prioritize rethinking, reducing, and repurposing before making purchasing decisions
3. Our school will provide staff with ongoing professional development and support to foster wholesome habits

b. Our school values and promotes the understanding of justice in all of its forms, including environmental, racial, social, and economic justice

1. Our school will actively work to acknowledge and dismantle systems of racism and oppression within the educational system
2. Our students will understand the direct connection between environmental, racial, social, and economic justice
3. Our school will not only educate but also advocate for environmental, racial, social, and economic justice in the community



Roadmap to Sustainability

The guiding principles that are listed above are ambitious, specific, and require planned progress in order to be achieved. In order to keep these goals at the forefront and to promote this progress, the principles have been broken down into the general categories listed below. Each category has a timeframe with respective action items for achievement. As the school progresses through these steps, these timeframes can be amended and updated to ensure that there is continued momentum in the transition to sustainability

Roadmap Categories:

Whole School Leadership

Curriculum Transformation and Growth

Student Involvement & Leadership

Integrating Community Partnerships

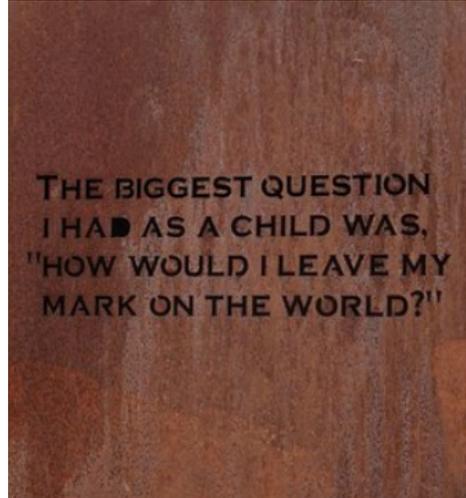
Initial Sustainability Assessment

Progressive Action towards Sustainability

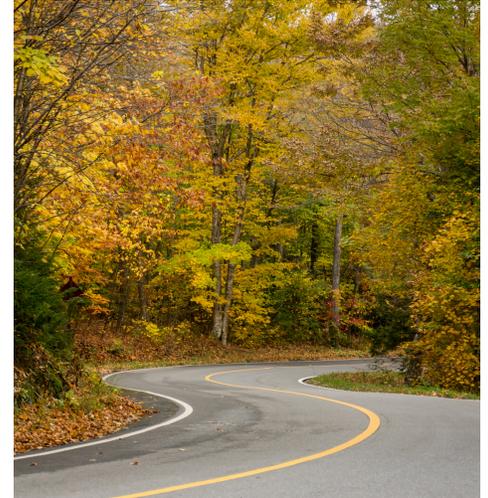
Monument Mountain • Photo from Getty Images



Metal sculpture from the school main entrance.



Road to Mount Greylock • Photo from Getty Images



Whole-School Leadership

Timeframe	Action Item
Summer 2020 <i>Continuous</i>	Communicating the Vision - All members of the school understand, embrace, and communicate the vision of a Sustainable Monument. Each decision and action made considers and adopts sustainability without hesitance and with support from one another.
Summer 2020 <i>Yearly</i>	Curriculum Transformation - Teachers develop, implement, and connect curricula to sustainability, including anti-racism training and assessments. Teachers incorporate project-based learning, interdisciplinary curricula, and experienced-based projects into the education of every student. More details about this transformation are outlined below.
August 2020	Form Sustainability Accountability Team - A Team consisting of administrators, staff members, community members, students (Student Sustainability Team), and school committee members is formed at the summation of formulating the Sustainable Monument 2025 roadmap and at the beginning of implementation. This committee meets at least quarterly throughout the year in order to reflect, evaluate, re-motivate, and celebrate the goals and accomplishments of the school as it pursues sustainability.
Fall 2020 <i>Continuous</i>	Supporting the Whole School Transition - The School and District Leaders, from administration to students, practice language and learn skills that support the transition to sustainability. Actions to achieve this include adapting the Code of Conduct, teaching new procedures and practices to current school members, mentoring new teachers and staff, and ear-marking staff meetings for training and updates on the transition to sustainability. There is no shortage of communication and support for this transition.
Fall 2020 <i>Continuous</i>	Whole School Modeling - All members of the school role model the vision of sustainability. Practices such as composting in the kitchen, achieving safe food practices when utilizing food from school gardens, and encouraging the planting of pollinating gardens are just a few of the ways sustainability can be initially incorporated. The school also symbolizes sustainability in all forms of outreach, such as on the website, in the student handbook, through active conversations with one another, and through passive expressions.
Summer 2020 <i>Continuous</i>	Making Financial Decisions based on Core Values - Both the school and relevant district departments will utilize financial decisions to ensure a just and efficient transition to sustainability. The most effective goals with the lowest of costs, or 'low hanging fruit', will be pursued first in order to gain the most momentum.
July 1st, 2021	Comprehensive District-wide Adoption - Muddy Brook, Monument Valley, and the District Office will analyze their own needs and requirements for a just transition to sustainability, and will adopt their own sustainable plan in order to bring the District together on this important path.

Monument Mountain Environmental Team • School Year 19/20



Curriculum Transformation & Integration

Timeframe	Action Item
Summer 2020 <i>Continuous</i>	<p>Stipended Opportunities for Curricular Development - Beginning with a small cohort of teachers from a variety of disciplines, curricula will be developed that support the goals of the Educational Program pillar, including but not limited to: Interdisciplinary lessons, project-based learning, and experienced-based projects. This framework development will continue over time and will expand to different subjects and electives in order to achieve a connected educational system within the school.</p>
Fall 2020 <i>Continuous</i>	<p>Professional Development - Engage teachers in professional development opportunities that would allow them to grow their curriculum and integration of various teaching strategies, especially as they relate to incorporating sustainability, anti-racism, interdisciplinary curriculum, and student-led learning opportunities.</p>
Fall 2020	<p>Integrate an Interdisciplinary Sustainability Unit for 9th Grade Students - All 9th grade students will be exposed to this interdisciplinary unit through multiple courses. This unit will ensure that all students receive the same messaging about the school’s goals for sustainability, as well as teach them the core values, the science and the history behind the importance of this work.</p>
Fall 2020 <i>Continuous</i>	<p>Implement Hands-On Learning - Students will be led by their teachers to solve problems related to current events and local issues. Students will learn by doing, and will be given resources and support from the curriculum in order to assist in their learning. Resources include utilizing the outdoor learning spaces, incorporating the community in classroom projects, and exploring solutions through experimentation.</p>
School Year 20/21	<p>Integrate Student Involvement and Leadership - Student leadership and involvement in their learning pathway and in activities outside of the classroom curriculum are integrated so that students can achieve both learning related to a subject area and credit towards graduation. Opportunities such as internships, independent study, and capstone projects will be integrated and will allow for student personalization. (See Student Involvement & Leadership Timeline)</p>
Summer 2021	<p>Expand Upon Current Class Options - Our school grounds currently house an abundance of outdoor resources such as a large greenhouse, a no-till garden, and ample space for agriculture. Expansion of, and/or the blending of, current course options in different capacities and intervals would allow students to access these areas, as well as to have a major within a wider range of subjects such as humanities, anthropology, ecology, agriculture, horticulture, biology, or sustainability.</p>

Monument Mountain People & The Environment Class



Student Involvement & Leadership

Timeframe	Action Item
June-August 2020	Develop Student Leadership and Mentor Program - Students and staff members will coordinate to set up opportunities for students to become leaders and involved in the school educational program. This will involve setting up internships, teaching assistant opportunities, and professional development.
Sept - Oct 2020	Generate a Goal Setting Template - A template is generated with a rating system and timeline for students to generate their learning goals through leadership and extracurricular opportunities. This template is generalized for students to pursue a wide array of opportunities both within the school and out in the community.
Sept-May 2020/21	Integrate Greater Student Involvement and Leadership Opportunities - Students will have the opportunity to participate in any or all of the following: classes that involve sustainability, faculty meetings, student meetings, student government, and other groups. Students will also be invited to present at school assemblies and events, as well as be involved in the organization of events and community offerings both in and out of the school.
May-June 2021 <i>Annually</i>	Student Reflection and Progress Monitoring - Students will have multiple checkpoints to use their goal-setting template and to measure their success on their learning path. Students will have active participation in planning their class enrollment and in their goal setting for the following year. School staff members will conduct reflections, assessments, and surveys with students individually and as a population to measure the success of these action steps. If needed, transition plans will be put into place for new internship opportunities, new staff, and new administrators.
<i>Continuous</i>	Students Continue to Lead and Get Involved- Students will continue working with community partners in a variety of capacities. Other opportunities that students will engage in include volunteering, attending community events, educational conferences, and youth summits, and planning school-wide events.

Greenagers Building Community Raised Beds



Students studying solar panels at Discovery Elem, VA



Sustainability Intern Charlie Medieros • SY 19/20



Integrating Community Partnerships

Timeframe	Action Item
<p>Fall 2020</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Fall:</i> Planning for Spring Semester</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Spring:</i> Planning for Summer and Fall</p>	<p>Establish or Hire a Community Partnership Point-Person - This staff member within the school is in charge of communicating with, doing background checks for, organizing the intake process for, and meeting with community partners. This point person would also organize the educational opportunities that are then coordinated into the service-learning catalog.</p> <hr/> <p>Host Career Readiness and Community Partnership Days- By way of assembly, a fair, or other organized event, community members can have face-to-face interactions that also highlight potential learning opportunities with students. There are clear pathways for students in each grade, such as capstone projects for seniors or introductory sessions with freshmen. Highlight connections from Middle School experiences and opportunities, and possibly including student mentorship.</p> <hr/>
<p>Summer 2020</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Annually</i></p>	<p>Communicate Opportunities with Students - At the same time as organizing class schedules, guidance counselors also present a diverse service-learning catalog for students to pick different opportunities from, such as internships, vocational learning, capstone opportunities formally as a part of their academic experience. This should include pictures, timeframes, student capacity, and credit opportunities.</p> <hr/>
<p>End of the School Year</p>	<p>Community Partnership Reflection - With the Community Partnership Point-Person, community members, students, and staff, meet or conduct a survey that reflects upon the year of service-learning.</p>

Greenagers crew members planting raised bed gardens in the community.



Initial Sustainability Assessment

Timeframe	Action Item
Sept - Oct 2020	Perform a Pre-Assessment - Utilize a pre-created school environmental assessment to get a baseline of current information and practices.
September 2020	Gather the Student Sustainability Team - A collection of students that are educationally linked by way of independent study, internship, or other path are gathered to participate in the assessment process.
Sept - Oct 2020	Assessment Creation - The Student Sustainability Team generates an in-depth Sustainability Assessment to perform in collaboration with the Sustainability Accountability Team. Include a mechanism for measuring progress toward long term goals such as Net-Zero by 2025 and Carbon Neutrality 2030.
Sept - Oct 2020	Determine Members of the Sustainability Accountability Team - A collection of teachers, staff, administration, and community members that are dedicated to performing the assessment with the Student Sustainability Team.
November 2020	Perform Sustainability Assessment - Members of the Student Sustainability Team and Sustainability Accountability Team collaboratively perform the Sustainability Assessment.
Dec 2020 - March 2021	Create an Action & Integration Plan - The Student Sustainability Team, with Sustainability Accountability Team input, cultivate an action plan to address priority sustainability tasks.
April 2021	Present Results - The Student Sustainability Team and Sustainability Accountability Team will present the results to Staff at a Faculty Meeting, the School Committee, as well as present during a forum for community members.
May 2021	Student Recruitment - Students are recruited for the Student Sustainability Team for the next school year.

Seedlings planted by students on Woven Roots Farm



Progressive Action Towards Sustainability

Timeframe	Action Item
Sept - Oct <i>Annually</i>	Set Goals - Members of the Student Sustainability Team and the Sustainability Accountability Team meet to review the End of Year Reflection to help define the necessary next steps. They will utilize the template created and will review and refine available tools to accomplish set goals.
Nov- April <i>Annually</i>	Action Steps - Perform the action steps outlined in the Goal Setting Form/Template, such as hiring a specialist, conducting a professional energy audit, acquire a quote for solar installation, write grants, and collect more data.
Monthly	Data Tracking - Performed by student leaders or as part of a curriculum, keep track of various measurable details within the school, such as Recyclables, Compostables, Energy Consumption, Water Consumption, and more.
November & April <i>Annually</i>	Sustainability Assessment - Members of the Student Sustainability Team and Sustainability Accountability Team collaboratively perform the Sustainability Assessment.
May <i>Annually</i>	End of Year Reflection - With Student Sustainability Team and Sustainability Accountability Team . Review our goal templates, reflection surveys and other tools.
May - June <i>Annually</i>	Present Results - The Student Sustainability Team and Sustainability Accountability Team will present the results to Staff at a Faculty Meeting, the School Committee, as well as present during a forum for community members.



Earth Cube Compost Bin at MM and MB



Reusable Water Bottle • Photo from Getty Images



100% Electric School Bus • Photo from Proterra.com

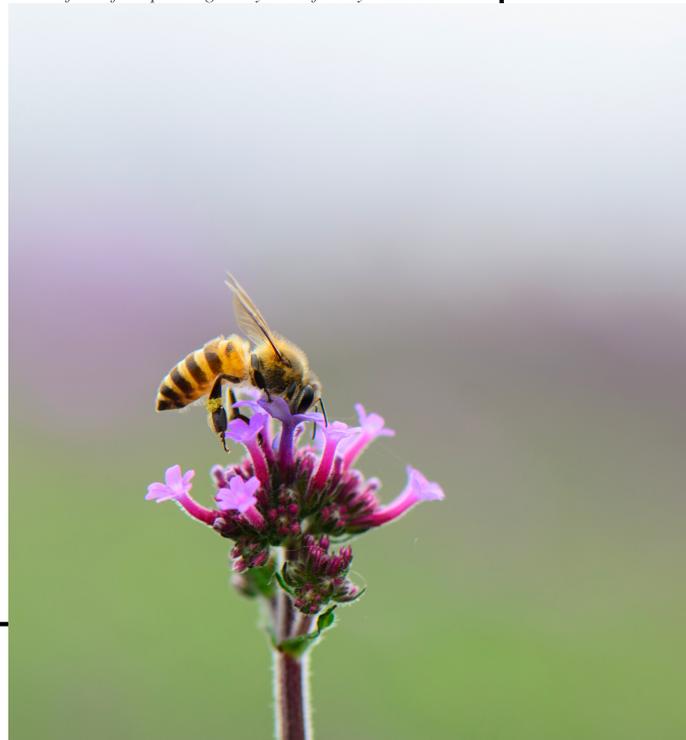
Supporting Opportunities

Grant Opportunities

The following grant opportunities are just a small sample of available grant programs to assist Monument in our transition to sustainability. As new opportunities emerge, we will add them to this list for possible exploration.

Grant Name	Amount & Description
Henry P. Kendall Foundation	\$10,000+ - Funding available for farm to school programs.
Kids Gardening Grant	\$1,000+ - Many different grants throughout the year, ranging in prize amount and grant award criteria, focuses on students planting and gardening
Green Pitch Challenge	\$500 - \$1,000 + -Students submit videos about their initiative in an effort to win grants to support their initiatives.
Mass Ag in the Classroom	<\$1,500 - Grant program for a variety of agriculture-related projects.
Whole Kids Foundation	Various - Multiple grant opportunities, from garden grants to salad bar programs.
Whole Kids Foundation: Bee Grant	\$2,000 -Grants for schools to integrate beekeeping into their school, whether outdoor hives or indoor observation hives.
Seeds for Education	\$100-\$500 - Grants specifically for native gardens and hands-on-learning.
School Center Inc.	\$300 - \$1,000+ - Students present their project to the school committee to acquire funding for their project, encouraging students to go beyond the current curriculum.

Photo from free photo gallery: manfredxy



Supporting Opportunities

Award Opportunities

The following award opportunities are a snapshot of what is available in a variety of categories. Monument Mountain as a school, its teachers, or its students would be eligible for these and similar awards as Monument progresses towards sustainability.

Grant Name	Amount & Description
President's Youth Environmental Award	An award for students that have worked to protect human health and the environment.
EOEEA's Excellence in Energy and Environmental Education Awards	Students, schools, districts, teachers, programs that progress towards environmental sustainability are eligible to win this award from Massachusetts' Secretary of Energy and Environment
Eco-Carpentry Challenge	Students can participate in a challenge that reinvents used furniture and are entered into an event to showcase the creation. Awards are given in different categories.
NEEEA: Nomination of an Educator or Program	Awards for environmental responsibility, encouraging students to make informed decisions, etc.
Green Difference Award	An award for any leaders, students, schools, and more for making a difference in their school community. \$2,500 Scholarships for senior awardees are available.

Photo Courtesy of Woven Roots Farm



Supporting Opportunities

Community Support and Partnerships

We at Monument Mountain are fortunate to have the community resources and natural environment that surrounds us. Located in Berkshire County, there are countless organizations, entities, foundations, and volunteers that are available and excited to support Sustainable Monument 2025 as we transition to sustainability. On this page you will find a list of these community resources that have collaborated with Monument both in the past and currently, as well as those that can be partnered with in the future. As our programs grow and our school discovers new partners, this list will be expanded to include the new partnerships.

Students learning different trades with Greenagers



Students learning from Mathieu Boudreau at Woven Roots Farm

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
Woven Roots Farm and
Educational Center
Gideon's Garden
Berkshire Environmental Action Team
Berkshire Zero-Waste Initiative
Greenagers
Great Barrington Sustainability Committee
Berkshire Grown
Trustees of Reservation
MassAudubon at Pleasant Valley
Berkshire Botanical Garden
Local farmer's markets
Great Barrington Agricultural Commission
Berkshire Natural Resources Council
Great Barrington Land Conservancy
Housatonic Valley Association
Hoffman Bird Club
350 MA
Future Farmers of America
Hitchcock Center for the Environment
...and more!

Conclusion

Throughout the writing of Sustainable Monument 2025, our team of authors have faced many hurdles and challenges that were unlike any other. The start of these conversations around sustainability and agriculture started in the winter of 2020, when a group of teachers, students, staff, and community members met in the school during a free period. Within weeks of the start of this conversation, the COVID-19 pandemic shook the world and turned our lives upside down. For our Sustainable Monument team, we had to transition from meeting in-person to having meetings online using a video-chat platform. The initial awkwardness was overshadowed by our need to keep the momentum going and finish what we started.

As our team continues to work online, the pandemic still rages on throughout our country; and the Black Lives Matter movement is taking a stronghold. Superintendent Peter's Dillon's June 4th response to the murder of George Floyd (and countless others) resonated deeply, "The combination of the impact of COVID-19 and systemic violence are weighing heavy on us... I'd like to see our moral obligations transcend our political ones...We need listening, action, and healing more than ever." The pandemic and the painful exposure of systematic violence reveals the backbone of societal systems that have been put in place, designed through an intentional lens of inequity and mistreatment. This has helped us to double-down on our efforts to bring a holistic voice to sustainability - one that recognizes and amplifies the interrelationship between environmental, racial, social, and economic justice.

We all understood that the transition to sustainability cannot wait for the world to "return to normal". There has never been, and will never be, perfect timing for anything. It is the responsibility of our administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community to find ways to ensure that our transition to sustainability can move forward despite the very-real challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With this in mind, our team recommends that the stake-holders within Monument Mountain, collectively with partners of the effort, find a creative way to fund and hire a Sustainability Coordinator. This Coordinator's purpose would be to do what other staff members cannot: follow through on the above-mentioned timeframes, implement strategies, follow-up on time-sensitive projects, write grants, keep track of the school's progress, and so much more. The Coordinator's duties will change as the demands change, and these may even grow to include all schools within the Berkshire Hills Regional School District. Our team feels strongly that, without a leader in the school day-in and day-out, the goals of Sustainable Monument 2025 will not be upheld as strongly as they need to be in order to achieve success.

In addition to the Sustainability Coordinator, our team recommends that a Sustainability Accountability Team be created that is a mixture of staff, teachers, students, and community members. This cohort will be responsible for overseeing the Coordinator, as well as for making larger decisions that cannot be left to one member within the school. This committee will be able to act upon the discovery of gaps in support and will be able to make strong recommendations to administrators and the school committee when it comes to critical decisions in the transition to sustainability. This accountability team will meet regularly throughout the year to ensure their goals are met and that everyone is doing the best they can during this unique and adventurous effort.

For those who are new to Sustainable Monument 2025, and for those who are uncertain if the goals are truly realistic, we encourage you to thoroughly ponder this question: "If not now, when?" Our definition of sustainability outlines that our purpose is to ensure that our world is livable for generations to come. If we do not act now, even if it requires a slow start, we are only putting-off the inevitable. We, as a team, are excited to see how Monument transforms under these goals and efforts, and know that Sustainable Monument 2025 is not only possible, but is extremely desirable. Just as we encountered during this endeavor to write this roadmap, our transition will have challenges and hurdles to face. It is our belief that no matter what comes our way, that Monument will be able to triumph and truly become Sustainable Monument.

Authors

Students



Sam Schroeder • Class of '21

Sam is a musician, athlete, and passionate about sustainability. You can usually find Sam playing Ultimate Frisbee, hiking up a mountain somewhere, or dancing in his kitchen. Sam is a strong believer in the importance of sustainability and outdoor education.



Keegan Leach • Class of '21

Keegan has a great love of the outdoors. His enjoyment of activities such as mountain biking, hiking, trail running, skiing and fishing has led to his deep appreciation of nature. This, in turn, has led to a realization of the need for sustainability. He is extremely excited to see how sustainable monument can grow.



Abbey Boyd • Class of '22

Abbey is a passionate student that is committed to improving the school for her peers. Abbey is involved with many student groups such as student government and restorative justice. Through the combination of her passion for the school and her love of the outdoors, Abbey has enjoyed working on this project and looks forward to its continuation.



Zoe Holmes • Class of '22

Zoe is entering her sophomore year at Monument. She has been working on sustainability through student government and helped to introduce a composting system at the school last year. She loves backpacking and swimming, and is committed to protecting the beautiful wilderness of the Berkshires. Zoe is passionate about climate action and looks forward to making progress towards transforming her school, district, and community.



Diego Salinetti • Class of '22

Diego is an all-star cross country athlete that has been able to experience portions of the high school campus that many students don't get to enjoy. For a number of years, he has been actively involved in various areas of youth leadership, including a focus on youth leadership for athletes and restorative justice facilitation. He has participated in the Youth Environmental Summit and the Greenagers Agricultural Apprenticeship Program. As a farmer, he has come to understand the significant relationship between environmental health and personal health.

Faculty & Staff



Sean Flynn • Guidance

Sean is an alumni and parent of students and graduates of Monument Mountain, and has been a guidance counselor and faculty member at Monument for over 20 years. He believes that our school has a responsibility to ensure that agriculture and sustainability play a central role in the education of its students, and that it is an essential priority to put reflective practices into place. He also believes that Monument Mountain and Berkshire Hills district can lead the way for other schools and districts to follow.



Elsa Herraes Hernandez • Science

Elsa holds a masters degree in Biotechnology and a PhD in Molecular Oncology. After years working in research, she realized that the best way to make a difference in the world is to educate future generations. Sustainability is a holistic way of living that needs to become ingrained in all of us from an early age in order to be effective. We need to integrate it across educational disciplines to give true meaning and understanding as to how our choices impact planet Earth.



William Florek • Horticulture

Will is the Horticulture instructor for MMRHS. Will believes that sustainability is a part of our future and that the understanding and learning horticulture can help create and maintain environments that take care of all living organisms.



Gordon Soule • Social Studies

Gordon is a graduate of MMRHS 1985, Springfield College BS 1989 and University of Northern Colorado MA 1993. He has taught at MMRHS for 25 years as a Social Studies Teacher. He attributes his love of nature to growing up in the Berkshires and his grandfather taking him into the woods when he was young. He believes it is critically important to value and protect our natural resources. Gordon says that he is fortunate to be able to teach classes and be a part of programs and initiatives, such as People and Their Environment, Berkshire History, Project Sprout, and Sustainable Monument, that reflect his values and support stewardship of our environment.



Tom Kelly • Project Connection

Tom is a Program Manager for Project Connection at the Berkshire Hills Regional School District. Project Connection offers free after-school programs that focus on activity based experiential learning which helps the students meet academic and social and emotional needs. Tom has been a valuable perspective throughout the process of developing Sustainable Monument 2025.

Authors

Community Partners



Mary Stucklen •

Berkshire Zero-Waste Initiative

Mary is the Program Director of Berkshire Zero-Waste Initiative, a branch of a non-profit located in the Berkshires. She is passionate about sustainability and working with the community for a better future.



Jen Salinetti •

Woven Roots Farm

Jen Salinetti co-owns and operates Woven Roots Farm & Education Center, a regenerative farm, CSA, and community learning space in present-day Tyringham, MA. For over 15 years, Jen has offered workshops and courses that develop relationships to land, build skills of resilience, promote regenerative growing practices, and amplify pathways to social justice at the farm and in the local school system.



William Conklin • Greenagers

Will is Executive Director of Greenagers and co-owner of Sky View Farm, a diversified livestock farm. Additionally, Will serves on the boards of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area and on the Berkshire County Farm Bureau. He believes it is essential to our culture and society that our schools and youth lead the way in modeling sustainability and social justice and that the two are inextricably linked.



Jen Bloesch • Gideon's Garden

Jen is the Program Director at Gideon's Garden, a youth-run farm in Great Barrington, in which all the produce is donated to food pantries. Jen has a background in local food advocacy and Christian ministry, and much of her work focuses at this particular intersection. In her spare time, Jen enjoys many outdoor activities, including bird watching, bicycling, and hiking. She is thrilled to be part of this team to improve the sustainability of Monument Mountain High School.



Mathieu Boudreau •

Woven Roots Farm

Mathieu Boudreau is the Assistant Farm Manager at Woven Roots Farm and Education Center in Tyringham, MA. After receiving his BA in Environmental Studies and Sustainability at Drew University, Mathieu returned home to Berkshire County where he has spent the last seven years involved in community outreach, education, and regenerative agriculture. Mathieu is a Monument Mountain alumnus and currently lives in his hometown of Stockbridge, MA.



School Committee Members



Bill Fields

Bill is a retired educator from Monument Mountain who taught Social Studies at the school for 40 years (1969-2009). He nows serves the school community as a member of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District School Committee. He also serves as the co-chair on the Monument Mountain Next-Steps committee, a committee in charge of planning the future of the Monument Mountain school building, which has emphasized sustainability as a component in the past.

Special Thanks

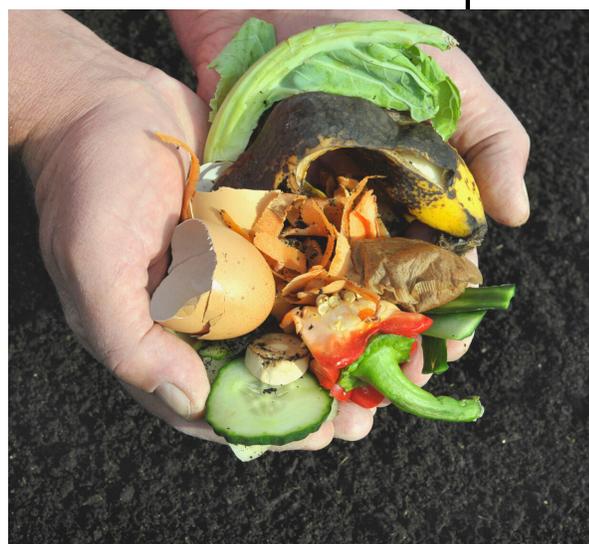
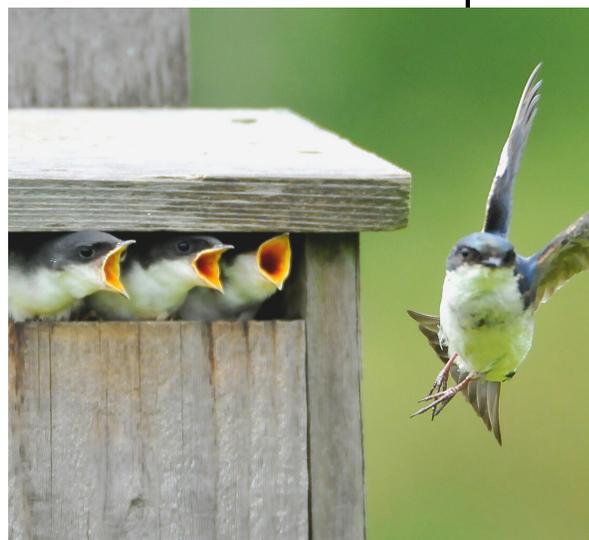
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- Ryan Kelly
- Natalie Narotzky
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