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EDITOR'S PICK

# Summit looks to unite NH's environmental organizations

By Katelyn Sahagian | [ksahagian@nortofoboston.com](mailto:ksahagian@nortofoboston.com)  
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John Gage, coordinator of the Citizens' Climate Lobby of New Hampshire, stands at the Carbon Cash-Back Coalition table outside the polls at Windham High School on town election day in 2020.

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Windham resident John Gage, coordinator of the Citizens' Climate Lobby of New Hampshire, says groups like his are at a disadvantage when it comes to influencing lawmakers on climate policy.

They are often outmaneuvered by well-funded, professional lobbyists representing fossil fuel interests. Gage and other likeminded environmentalists are hoping the inaugural Keep NH Green Summit, scheduled for Aug. 12, can make some headway toward

changing that imbalance.

“Citizen volunteers don’t have the money or the power individually,” says Gage. “Our chance to get our voices heard is to join together, be coordinated in communicating with legislators, and say how they can best represent us.”

The summit-goers will gather at Prescott Farm Environmental Education Center in Laconia, where 160 acres of field, forest and gardens on 3-plus miles of nature trails make an ideal location for the gathering.

Gage is excited to be representing his organization, while also anxious to learn what other organizations are working on. The full-time volunteer for Citizens’ Climate Lobby started with the group a decade ago, when his regular work as a biologist led him to read more about the environment.

Citizens’ Climate Lobby’s main focus is on a carbon tax — how it could be implemented in the U.S., as well as its costs and benefits. Gage said he’s excited to discuss the lobby’s work with people who already are invested in the environment.

“This will be a very sympathetic crowd to the climate problem,” Gage said. “Those are great places to share information about the actions people can take.”

The event includes informal networking, with each group to present information about its goals. Breakout groups will work on ways to approach legislators and make convincing arguments.

There will be presentations on energy efficiency, net metering, electric vehicle charging stations, Poly- and Per-fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in water systems, landfill siting and the “advanced recycling” of plastics.

“I’m excited they’re putting events like this together because it’s a way for people who care about different environmental concerns to learn about climate change,” Gage said. “Climate is a very big, complex problem that affects us all, but there are simple things we can do to help make the big changes we need. Talking about the problem and solutions is really important.”

The summit is being organized by Save Forest Lake, a group fighting to block a proposed 180-acre landfill near the lake in Dalton, and many other New Hampshire environmental groups.

To learn more about the summit or to register, visit [saveforestlake.com](https://saveforestlake.com).

Katelyn Sahagian can be reached at [ksahagian@nortofboston.com](mailto:ksahagian@nortofboston.com)

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