

# Greenwashing: When “Green” Isn’t Really Green

Today, many corporations are eager to call themselves environmentally friendly. But not everything that sounds green truly is. A growing number of companies engage in what is known as greenwashing; promoting an image of sustainability without making real changes to reduce their impact on the planet.

One of the most common ways they do this is by purchasing Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) or carbon offsets. These credits make it look like a company is using clean energy, even when their daily operations still depend on fossil fuels or create large amounts of waste. On paper, it sounds impressive. In reality, it often changes very little.

If a major company setting up operations in our county, or locally, plans to fulfill its promise of being “100 percent renewable,” it may rely on Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). That could mean partnering with developers like Palmer and supporting projects such as the Maple Harvest Wind Project to make those green claims appear true.

The problem is that projects like the Maple Harvest Wind Project have very little public support. Most local residents are strongly opposed because of concerns about landslide risks, declining

property values, environmental damage, and a developer with limited experience. When corporations back these kinds of projects just to meet sustainability goals on paper, communities are left to bear the real costs.

Why it matters:

Greenwashing makes it difficult to know which companies are genuinely protecting the environment and which are only using marketing tactics. It can also shift focus away from true innovation and accountability.

What you can do:

- Look beyond slogans and advertising claims
- Research how a company actually produces and uses energy
- Look for independent certifications or reports that verify their sustainability claims
- Ask questions about transparency, emissions, and waste reduction

Being informed helps us hold corporations accountable and support the ones that are truly committed to protecting the planet and our communities.

## NYSFOLA Hosts 5th Annual CNY Regional Conference

### Caring for Our Lakes, Wetlands, and the Life Within

On September 12, 2025, the New York State Federation of Lake Associations (NYSFOLA) hosted its 5th Annual Central New York Regional Conference at Dwyer Memorial Park in Preble, NY. The full-day event gathered lake association volunteers, environmental professionals, researchers, and government representatives to explore science-based strategies for protecting New York’s lakes and watersheds. Highlights included presentations by Dr. Andrew Brainard (Upstate Freshwater Institute) on aquatic plant ecology, Olivia Green and Catherine Gibson (The Nature Conservancy) on wetlands, and Tom Hughes on wildlife within watershed ecosystems. Afternoon sessions featured septic-system management, new wetland permit guidance, and hands-on water-sample analysis with Dr. Gregory Boyer (SUNY-ESF).

“This conference is a celebration of the people and partnerships that protect our lakes,” said Tarki Heath, NYSFOLA Vice President and lead organizer. David Carr, Executive Director of NYSFOLA, added that the event “exemplifies our mission to empower local lake associations with science-based tools and collaborative networks.” The conference, held in partnership with the Kettle Lakes Association, Madison County Lakes, and the Skaneateles Lake Association, closed with a raffle and a guided boat tour of Little York Lake—capping off another year of shared learning and stewardship in Central New York.

