



GROW Ecological Commission
Quarterly Report
April – June 2025

In Quarter 2 of 2025 (April-June), the GROW Ecological Commission continued its mission to advise the Village of Westchester and help educate the community in environmental programs and practices to improve the quality of our air, water, land, reduce greenhouse gases, minimize waste, and reduce energy consumption. The following was accomplished in Q2 2025:

GROW Goals 2025

Commissioners discussed priorities for 2025 and will focus on: Education/Engagement, Advisement, Climate Action Plan

Commissioners

- Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase, Chair (Commissioner: Feb 2022 to Feb 2028, Co-Chair Feb 2022 to Feb 2023, Chair: to Feb 2026)
- Nikki Way, Co-Chair (Commissioner: Feb 2023 to Feb 2025, Co-Chair: to Feb 2026)
- Mariana Nicolae (Sept 2023 to Sept 2026)
- Walt Wojcik (Feb 2024 to Feb 2027)
- Kari Roberg (March 2024 to March 2027)
- Demitrus Evans (March 2025 to March 2028)
- Alexandra Silva (March 2025 to March 2028)

Community Engagement

Events

- Climate Movie Night, “Feeding Tomorrow” documentary, April 24th, 2025
- GROW helped at Food Pantry Table during Paper Shredding and Electronic Recycling Event April 26th, 2025
- Composting Table at Prairie house May 11th, 2025
- Stickney Metropolitan Water Reclamation Tour by GROW and residents, May 15th, 2025
- Westchester Juneteenth at Gladstone Park with GROW Table, June 21st, 2025

Newsletter Articles

GROW continued to utilize the Village of Westchester newsletter and e-news to reach residents. The newsletter is delivered monthly to 7,200 residences, and the e-newsletter is emailed weekly to 3,700 subscribers. Topics covered in Q2 include:

- April 2025 – [Curious About Composting?](#)
- May 2025 – [Ways to Live Without Plastics](#)
- June 2025 – [Slow Mow Summer](#)
- Monthly features: Recipe of the Month, Green Fact, green actions, event promotions

Fiscal Year 2025 Stipend Allocation

Commissioners discussed ideas and voted to approve the spending of the Fiscal Year 2026 stipend of \$2,000 provided by SBC Waste Solutions. The following purchases were approved:

- GROW approved money for future SCARCE event, Community Tabling events and Community Outreach materials.



Grants

- Buckthorn Grant was approved by the Chicago Regional Tree Initiative. Buckthorn (invasive species) will be removed along the 290 expressway at Wedgewood by Norfolk, and native species will be planted.
- Community Energy Grant RFQ was posted in first quarter and in April 2025 for energy plan consulting services. The Village Board approved paleBluedot consultants for this project.

Policy and Infrastructure

Greenest Region Compact (GRC)

The Commission formed two-person subcommittees for the topics of Climate, Energy, Municipal Operations, and Water. Steps were established to review all line items of the GRC, identify action items, regularly review status, and share updates with residents. The GRC is a framework established by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

In Progress

Additionally, a number of events and projects are in the planning stages.

- Planning for fall events and community engagement
- Creating tabling opportunities and establishing education materials
- Establishing procedures for budget requests and approval of stipend allocation
- Continuing to work on the Greenest Region Compact, action items, and ways to engage with residents and nearby communities
- Sustainable Purchasing Statement is under review by Village as part of responsible bidder ordinance overhaul
- Evaluation of Climate Action Plan by the Village continues

Visit www.westchester-il.org/grow to see GROW's meeting agendas, meeting minutes, articles, and presentations. Meetings are generally held the first Thursday of each month at 6:30pm at the Village Hall. Please join us then and/or reach out to GROW@westchester-il.gov to share your environmental priorities for the Village of Westchester.