



**Saw Mill River Audubon**  
**Statement on Solar Power Project Siting**  
**Fall, 2021**

Saw Mill River Audubon strongly supports properly-sited photovoltaic solar power that avoids, minimizes, or mitigates impacts to birds, other wildlife and their habitats.

As with all forms of renewable energy, we expect the planning and approval process to consider potential impacts under the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#).

Saw Mill River Audubon strongly affirms the wisest planning approach prioritizes solar power projects sited on existing infrastructure—such as parking lots or building roofs—rather than allowing the loss of existing wildlife habitat and community open spaces.

Of particular concern is the clearcutting of wooded areas. Saw Mill River Audubon strongly affirms the following statement from the Pace University Climate Center:

*Trees are important for sequestering carbon, and also for protecting biodiversity, preventing heat island effects, and providing a healthy environment in urban and suburban areas. Biodiversity is especially difficult to quantify and track, cannot be directly valued against other metrics like carbon reductions, and, as a result, is chronically undervalued, contributing to ecosystem losses. Given that biodiversity is severely at risk and that many decades are required to fully replace all the environmental services provided by mature tree stands, tree removal should only be done sparingly.*

[Source: Pace University Climate Center letter to Town of Mt. Pleasant, June 1, 2021.]

For established solar energy sites, Saw Mill River Audubon strongly encourages up-to-date land management using a native perennial and grass cover rather than a sterile lawn or gravel substrate. This management approach benefits pollinators, birds and other wildlife, reduces the need for herbicides, provides an additional positive climate impact, and requires overall less maintenance.