
Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)

MEETING MINUTES


Working and Natural Lands Working Group

Forests Sub-Group

Meeting Date: March 10, 2020
Meeting Time: 2:00 — 4:00 p.m.
Meeting Location: Connecticut Forest & Park
 Association,
 16 Meriden Rd.
 Rockfall, CT 06481

ATTENDANCE

Sub-Group Member	Title	Organization	Present
Eric Hammerling, Chair	Executive Director	Connecticut Forest and Park Association	✓
Tim Abbott	Regional Conservation and Greenprint Director	Housatonic Valley Association	☎
Mark Ashton	Director of School Forests	Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies	✓
Patrick Comins	Executive Director	Connecticut Audubon Society	☎
Thomas Easley	Assistant Dean of Community & Inclusion	Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies	∅
Robert Fahey	Assistant Professor	University of Connecticut, Natural Resources and the Environment	✓
Edward Faison	Senior Ecologist	Highstead	☎
David Gumbart	Director of Land Management	The Nature Conservancy, CT	✓
Lisa Hayden	Landowner Outreach Coordinator	New England Forestry Foundation	✓
Charles Leigus	General Manager	Supreme Forest Products, Inc.	✓
Amy Paterson	Executive Director	Connecticut Land Conservation Council	✓
Herb Virgo	Executive Director	Keney Park Sustainability Project	∅

Associated Staff	Title	Organization	Present
Christopher Martin, Sub-Group Staff Assistant	Director/State Forester	Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	√
Jaimeson Sinclair, Sub-Group Staff Assistant	Director, DEEP Air Bureau, Engineering Division	Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	
Cary Lynch, Staff Lead, WNLWG	Research Analyst, Office of Climate Change Technology & Research	Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	√

AGENDA & NOTES

I. Welcome and Announcements (5 minutes) 2:00PM Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, CFPA

Introductions Chair Hammerling gave an update on the March 9th [Governors Council on Climate Change \(GC3\)](#) meeting. The Chair reported it was helpful to get an update on the larger effort and what other GC3 working groups are focusing on. The Chair emphasized the need to identify /communicate cross-cutting issues with other working groups.

II. Agenda Items

Cutting Edge Science/Carbon Storage Baselines (existing & needed) (60 minutes)

Presentation from Cary Lynch, Research Analyst, Office of Climate Change Technology & Research, DEEP. Discussed current carbon accounting methodologies, future emission reduction target goals and challenges with some of the modeling. C. Lynch described issues with the EPA model and anomalies with USDA FIA carbon accounting for Connecticut. Other states seem to be more reliable. Inputting Land Use Land Cover (LULC) and forestry data in annual emissions and carbon storage would likely help Connecticut meet 2030 GHG emission targets. To that end DEEP, through a grant with the [U.S. Climate Alliance](#) is pursuing better carbon accounting methods with assistance from The Nature Conservancy and Clark University. This grant with US Climate Alliance should help Connecticut obtain better LULC & Forestry carbon sink measures. P. Comins reports NOAA is releasing high resolution land use land cover that may be helpful for this effort. P. Comins emphasizes the need to keep private forest lands forested. The Chair requests top three pieces of missing information to help form questions and answers to research. Biggest gap seems to be in understanding underlying assumptions and source data to be able to utilize EPA’s SIT tool. General discussion on how Connecticut should conduct monitoring. M. Ashton emphasizes the need to maintain a resilient forest in order to mitigate carbon effectively over time.

Cutting Edge Science: E. Faison reports recent studies show greater structure and forest complexity stores more carbon and there is less carbon in managed verse unmanaged forests. Harvested carbon is not sufficient to replace carbon storage when it is left in place even if younger forests are sequestering carbon at a higher rate. R. Fahey states other studies show forests can become a source of carbon and a net GHG emitter when forest productivity reaches zero. Models are based on existing forests that are not old forests. L. Hayden emphasizes all forests are not the same, but that everyone can agree on the need for more forests. T. Abbott emphasizes the need to consider biodiversity and the role forests play as connecting corridors needed for climate induced wildlife migration.

M. Ashton reports recent studies in soil respiration, methane release in forests, and carbon stored in forest products. Forests that maximize carbon sequestration and storage are not necessarily resilient. Southern New England forests are different than northern New England Forests which is the focus of many recent studies. Functional forest attributes face new threats amongst considerable unpredictability; for example, Spotted lantern fly, Emerald ash borer, and Southern pine beetle. General discussion on how to deal with unpredictability. E Faison notes recent studies of regenerating forests after insect attacks demonstrate resiliency.

III. Future speakers, invited experts - discussion (15 minutes)

M. Ashton offers numerous suggestions for future speakers and will follow-up. L Hayden suggests a presentation on cross laminated timbers and new wooden building design as ways of storing carbon would be beneficial. Several members offer to present information specific to their areas of expertise. Did not identify speakers for the last 2 scheduled meetings, but will continue receiving suggestions for speakers between meetings to be discussed at the next meeting on 3/24.

IV. Additional Information Needs (15 minutes)

Combined with III, and will be continued at next meeting.

V. Public comments (20 minutes)

Ralph Jones, Hamden Alliance for Trees: Appreciates the Sub-Group's overall efforts and improvements in audio quality for participating remotely. Highlights equity and environmental justice. Equity is difficult to know when it is achieved. Who got left out? It is understandable that the Sub-Group is taking a people-centric approach, but need to also ensure the Sub-Group is speaking for the trees, animals, soil, and etc. Glad to observe the Sub-Group recognizes trees have many reasons for being in addition to carbon storage and sequestration.

Sue Masino, Trinity College & co-Chair GC3 Science and Technology Working Group: Native American forests had more carbon and biodiversity. Suggests expert speakers on Native American land-use and perspectives. Offers to present on forests and mental health. Informs about Woods Hole having a 15 year tracking GIS layer on land-use. Beneficial to compare different data bases and how they track natural disturbances.

Diane Hoffman Hamden Alliance for Trees: Appreciates the opportunity to learn about carbon sequestration and forest resilience.

VI. Next Steps and Adjourn (5 minutes)

Next steps. March 24th meeting at 2:00 p.m. – 4p.m. @ CFPA

Adjournment: Meeting adjourns approximately 4:03PM