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# **Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Working and Natural Lands Working Group**

#### **Forests Sub-Group**

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**Meeting Date:** April 7, 2020

**Meeting Time:** 2:00 — 6:00 p.m.

**Meeting Location:** Zoom Meeting,  
<https://ctdeep.zoom.us/j/701920204>,

Meeting ID: 701 920 204

Dial by your location +1 646 876 9923

#### **ATTENDENCE**

Sub-Group Member	Title	Organization	Present
Eric Hammerling, <b>Chair</b>	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	
Shelley Green (TNC) on behalf of 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)

*Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, CFPAs*

Chair Hammerling gave an overview of the GC3 structure particularly the Working and Natural Lands Workgroup as established by Governor Lamont's Executive Order #3 and its four sub groups Forests, Rivers, Wetlands, and Agriculture & Soils. More information on Executive Order #3, the GC3, and all of the Sub Groups is available on the GC3 webpages on DEEP's website. Chair Hammerling mentioned current consideration to scheduled meetings and timeframe in light of COVID-19 and concern for limited public participation caused by ongoing meetings only being held virtually and available to those with Zoom access.

The chair reviewed proper zoom etiquette urging all to mute their audio and reviewed the three minute per public comment procedure.

*Roll Call & Brief introduction of topic & speakers*

### II. Agenda Items

#### **Forest management, carbon storage, sequestration, connectivity, biodiversity. Adaption and resiliency (5 presentations 20 min each w/ 10 min Q&A) (150 minutes)**

*Zoom showed up to 60 participants during the following presentations.*

1. Maria Janowiak, Deputy Director Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science - *Climate Change and Connecticut Forests: Management Options for Adaptation and Mitigation*
2. Ed Faison, Senior Ecologist, Highstead - *The role of unmanaged forests in climate mitigation and adaptation: the benefits of proforestation*
3. Robert Fahey, Assistant Professor, University of Connecticut, Natural Resources and the Environment - *Forest and land management priorities for Connecticut in relation to global change*
4. Alan Organschi, Principal, Gray Organschi Architecture - *Carbon storage in wooden building materials*

5. Jennifer H. Shakun, CF, Climate-Forest Specialist, New England Forest Foundation - *Using Our Forests to Combat Climate Change: A Systems Approach*

### **III. Public comments**

**(30 minutes)**

Chris Donnelly, reemphasized points made in two presentations regarding the necessity to consider societal costs of anticipated urban construction and the need to offset GHG construction material. Life cycle analysis demonstrates tall wood buildings have much lower manufacture and construction carbon footprint and provide long-term carbon storage. Forest products are a low energy alternative to traditional steel and concrete.

Tim Hawley emphasizes the need to increase “Exemplary Forestry” and the systems approach as described by Jennifer H. Shakun, New England Forestry Foundation.

***From Zoom Chat Box:***

Mary Pelletier : These are all excellent visual presentations, with respect to forest management and usage. Given that forests in cities are managed, yet not necessarily for intensive forest products. Will there be additional (future) presentations on how we “manage” and conserve forests in urban-suburban opportunities to conserve and revitalizes forests along riparian corridors, that protect water quality and provide habitat + provide educational and additional ecosystem service benefits.

Mary Pelletier : Thus I am hoping this group expands upon new ways of “managing” conserving and revitalizing living forests within cities and suburbs so as to offer citizens living in high-density urban areas new healthy ways to connect to nature - along with offering migratory corridors for wildlife, birds and aquatic creatures

***From Email:***

Diane Hoffman; I attended the zoom Forestry subgroup meeting today from 2-5:30. It was extremely interesting and thought provoking.

***Additional Written Comments:***

From: Margaret Miner, consultant, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut

Thank you for the informative and well-run meetings, and the opportunity to comment. My modest experience with forest management was in my work at the Roxbury Land Trust, at Rivers Alliance (in cases in which forest cutting was related to protection of water sources), and as a board member of CT League of Conservation Voters (in connection with legislation pertaining to forestry, open space, and water resources). I have some familiarity with biomass energy projects (the least beneficial use of wood).

With respect to dealing with climate change, my default position is: we need every tree we can get. There are exceptions, of course. We do not want dying trees falling into playgrounds. But all over the world, children are being taught to plant trees to save the planet. That's a good idea.

**Forests Protect Water, Earth, and Air**

Most of the presentations in the April 7 meeting of the Forests group understandably focused on the carbon-sequestration function of trees. But more attention is needed to the function of trees and forests in protecting both natural waters and water supply. This is especially important in in

Connecticut, where, by law, our future sources, are basically limited to upland headwaters, wetlands, and small streams. Increasingly, future supply will depend on high-quality aquifers. Forested land is the best and most cost-effective means of protecting these water resources. I hope this aspect of the value of forests should be reflected prominently in the final recommendations.

On the Water Planning Council Watershed Lands Work Group (for drinking-water watersheds), where I serve, water companies and enviros are united in advocating for protection of vegetated open space. Most science studies show that the best land cover for water protection is woods.

Trees and forests enhance air quality, stabilize topsoil, and shelter diverse wildlife. These functions should be preserved in any forestry plan. Worldwide, we should be topsoil hoarders. With respect to aquatic life, freshwater species and obligate species are fast disappearing. When is the last time you saw a salamander?

### **Pesticide Use & Other Risky Management Practices**

This may have been covered earlier under discussion of BMPs, but the use of pesticides in forestry should be addressed. Timbering often leaves both wet and dry areas in bad shape. In some cases, the harm may be temporary. The results may even be good. With pesticides, we do not know all the effects, good and bad, but we have learned they can be harmful to health. Their use should be limited.

### **To Everything There Is a Cost.**

The presentations included some expert and interesting ideas on various types of forest management, wood extraction, and wood use that would be environmentally benign, at least in theory. All the speakers and Group members appeared to have the shared goal of not diminishing carbon sequestration through forestry. But the goal was linked to a number of claims that certain types of extensive wood cutting and wood uses would be compatible with effective carbon sequestration. These claims tended to be painfully complicated and question-provoking. As some people commented, these arguments depended on everything (all projections) going exactly right, which is not likely to happen. A number of claims depended on variations of the idea that one can cut trees and replant without diminishing environmental benefits. This, too, requires more science analysis. The goal of resiliency was put forward as unassailable, but implementation calls for scrutiny. Resiliency in the past has been used as a substitute for positive change. (No need to cut back on fossil fuels, just make the world more resilient.)

In my view, the Highstead presentation on, and calculation of, the ecological and health benefits of undisturbed forests were sounder on the science.

### **Jobs and Profits**

There was little discussion of the key political and financial fact that people have jobs and make money cutting down trees. The ventures range from timbering through to fine woodwork. Do the exigencies of climate change mean that some of these jobs are going away or will be transformed? Probably yes. The Yale presenter and others described certain wood-based materials that would not use much high-quality wood. (I heard no mention of using recycled materials.) The presenter also offered a partial vision of a different perhaps better approach to building and developing neighborhoods in the future, but money details were lacking. Reforms in forestry to respond to climate change could, in principle, lead to new, good jobs. What would these be?

Thank you for your attention.

Margaret Miner Margaret.miner@charter.net

**BREAK at 4:48PM. Meeting reconvenes at 4:55PM**

**IV. Sub-Sub Groups – review & discussion (20 minutes)**

Chair Hammerling reviews recommendations spread sheet developed from the 2011 Climate Change Preparedness Plan Report. Reviews the focus, timeline and task of the three sub-sub groups:

**Best Management Practices:** Edward Faison, David Gumbart, Charles Leigus

**Research, Monitoring, & Education:** Mark Ashton, Patrick Comins, Robert Fahey, Lisa Hayden

**Policy, Legislation, Regulation and Funding:** Tim Abbott, Amy Paterson, Herb Virgo BMP.

Chair Hammerling suggests a simpler approach just on the first four columns by combining urgency within the forest column. For every very important forest sub group item additional contact will be added. There will be more to consider and will be done at later time. Coordination with the other sub groups to fill in the sheet for greater context. Attached pdf with minutes

**V. The Final Report to GC3 – Discussion (30 minutes)**

Chair reviews the contents table of contents outline. Chair emphasize Forests Sub-Group will report out to both Adaption and Mitigation GC3 subgroups. Chair seeks input from Cary on additional insights on carbon baseline calculations based upon land-use. Lisa Hayden comments on 2015 recommendations paper posted on CFPS Forest Sub group resource page.  [GC3 Recommendations for Forests and Carbon Sequestration Silver 2015.pdf](#)

**VI. Next Steps and Adjourn (5 minutes)**

Chair Hammerling reviews and confirms upcoming meeting schedule. The next one being virtual April 21 meeting 6-8PM April 21.

General future presenter scheduling discussion. Lisa Hayden offers a 5 to 10 minute presentation on New England Forestry Foundation forest landowner outreach and education programs.

Vulnerable communities meeting focus should consider people and wildlife habitat

Attached and included with these minutes is the latest draft of table of context.

Concern expressed that virtual meeting may not be best to bring Sub-Group members together to discuss and distill recommendations,

Next meeting will be April 21, 6PM to 8PM via a Zoom Meeting

<https://ctdeep.zoom.us/j/372518987>

Meeting ID: 372 518 987  
One tap mobile  
+16468769923,,372518987# US (New York)

**Adjourns 5:35PM**