

**Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)
Science & Technology
MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Date: October 17, 2022

Meeting Time: 12:00 - 1:30 PM

Zoom Recording: [Science & Technology Working Group Meeting Recording](#)

ATTENDANCE: GC3 Working Group Members in bold

Name:
Alanis Allen
Mark Ashton
Ashley Benitez
Amy Blaymore Paterson
Thomas Bontly
Laura Bozzi
Diego Cerrai
Evan Dantos
Chris Elphick
Rebecca French
Joseph Marrone
Susan Masino
David Murphy
Katie O'Brien-Clayton
Jim O'Donnell, <i>Chair</i>
Malaquias Peña
Anji Seth
Mark Urban
David Wagner

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome: Ashley Benitez, DEEP Liaison

Ground Rules:

- Meeting is recorded and a link will be posted
- Announcement that the chat is public record, but may be used for questions and comments by working group members

- Working group members are asked to post their names and affiliation in the chat
- Reminder that the discussion portion is reserved for working group members
- Announcement that non-working group members should mute and turn video off until public comment

Introduction: Jim O'Donnell, Chair

- Introduces himself and his professional work and interests
- Working group introduces themselves individually, including their credentials and professional title

Review of S&T Charge: Rebecca French, Director, Office of Climate Planning

- For 2022, this working group is charged with providing scientific and technical expertise to each working group
- Each working group has a Science & Technology liaison to provide expertise
- There are no reporting responsibilities for 2022 for this working group
 - Annually, GC3 does report to the Governor for other working groups
- Timeline review:
 - Each group will meet with the Equity and Environmental Justice working group in November
 - In December, working groups will present their findings
- There are two subheadings for the GC3: Mitigation and Resiliency and each working group operates under those umbrellas
- Working groups should include cross-cutting themes in mind
 - Utilize equity lens
 - Align with municipal and regional climate mitigation and adaptation efforts
 - Be informed by science
 - Leverage new and expanded state and federal climate programs (significant shift in the landscape since 2020)
- Question – Susan Masino: Is our responsibility the three-month period? What topics will we cover?
 - Rebecca French: Yes, but 2023 may look different.
 - Jim O'Donnell: Will circle back to topics
- Question – Laura Bozzi: What are the asks of the other working groups?
 - Rebecca French: 2022 is a building year. The focus for this year is on implementation, which includes learning about what is going on right now and the motivation behind that. Some groups include policy sub-groups, but time is challenging for this year's groups. Federal funding opportunities have shifted the landscape dramatically.
 - Jim O'Donnell: Reiterates that funding makes implementation more urgent. Science & Technology has a unique opportunity to ensure that implementation is done well. The working group can also foresee where gaps may exist.
- Question – Anji Seth: How does the state election play into this discussion?
 - Jim O'Donnell: We must do the best we can, but this is a political process, and this group is not called for in statute

- Rebecca French: GC3 is an executive order but the Office of Climate Planning and Rebecca's position is not politically appointed

Liaison Updates:

Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry, Mark Ashton

- Have had one meeting each on agriculture and forestry
- For the agriculture meeting, they discussed developing monetary incentives for farming, agroforestry, alternative energy sources, developing programs to replace equipment, and other initiatives
- For forestry, the group discussed ways of maintaining the forest and promoting reforestation, the urban forests, resilience in forests, and other initiatives

Mitigation Strategies, Thomas Bontly and Anji Seth

- Focused on monitoring and tracking implementation of projects in DOT involving federal funding
- Heard about developing DEEP's Comprehensive Energy Strategy
- Heard about initiatives like EV charging on the interstate, transitioning to electric buses, and others

Public Health & Safety, Laura Bozzi

- This group has met twice thus far, reviewed the 2020 recommendations, and focused their conversation on heat, mental health, and food security
- Believes there is interesting opportunity to look at health benefits through the mitigation lens

Resilient Infrastructure & Nature-based Solutions, Mark Urban

- Focused on new funding opportunities including the DEEP climate fund and other federal funding
- Poll indicated preferences by working group priorities, which were largely around flooding
- Recent meeting highlighted New Haven and Meriden resiliency case studies
- Thinks S&T could provide support to groups applying for funding

Equity and Environmental Justice, Ashley Benitez

- First meeting has not yet occurred (10/17)
- Charged with ensuring that each working group utilizes the equity lens throughout their process
- Groups will be presenting to EEJ in November
 - During these meetings, they can discuss strategy about how to incorporate equity

Questions and Discussion: *For full comments please see the Zoom recording and/or audio transcript*

- Jim O'Donnell: Are there science or technology questions that need to be addressed in the other working groups?

- Mark Ashton: Notes we are good at implementing and not as much at monitoring. Recommends creating monitoring programs simultaneously as funding becomes available. Also notes that federal data is sparse.
- Joseph Marrone: For resilient infrastructure group, it is challenging to understand the co-benefits of initiatives. Suggests the state define these terms.
- Chris Elphick: Discussed carbon storage and the flux of greenhouse gases and how little is understood across the state, which Chris identifies as a gap
- Susan Masino: Reiterates the need for monitoring and identifying the full picture of challenges and risks, in addition to benefits
- Anji Seth: Notes we lack representation from social sciences and there is more evidence on how social science affects the climate conversation and suggests ensuring these folks are present during these kinds of processes
- Laura Bozzi: Agrees that social science experts are key to the conversation and notes that many climate and health initiatives are new and not well-tested, so there is an opportunity for monitoring and evaluation here. External evaluation could be helpful to reduce the burden on state agencies
- Susan Masino: Communities, people, and behaviors are foundational to science endeavors
- Thomas Bontly: CES will guide investments and infrastructure, but having outside experts evaluating bang-for-buck may be a good idea
- David Wagner: Would be interesting to invite various scientists to speak on areas of technology where we may lack as a group
- Jim O'Donnell: How are environmental justice issues represented in science?
 - Mark Urban: Appoint an EJ advocate for each group so that someone is holding the group accountable
 - Anji Seth: What does a diverse S&T group look like? We need to create that in order to have diverse perspectives in the group.
 - Rebecca French: Notes the Biden Administrations' Justice 40 initiative and how agencies are wrestling with how to ensure communities benefit from programs

Public Comments: *For full comments please see the Zoom recording and/or audio transcript*

Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director of Connecticut Land Conservation Council:

- Believes in the community connection between land trusts and people
- Wanted to underscore the importance of data solutions on ecosystem services in the context of nature-based solutions
 - Conservation is challenged by the lack of data
- Also wanted to highlight the intersection of climate change and biodiversity loss

Adjourn and Next Steps:

Jim O'Donnell:

- Summarized conversation into 9 main points that the group can focus in on during the next meeting

Resources:

[Comprehensive Energy Strategy \(CES\)](#)

[Subscribe to DEEP Newsletter](#)

[Phase 1 Report](#)

Chat Record:

00:18:37 Mark Ashton - Yale University: Hi all- my name - Mark Ashton - Yale University - Professor of Forest Ecology and Silviculture

00:20:04 Ashley Benitez - Climate Planning, CT-DEEP: Working Group members: Please introduce yourself in the chat as well.

00:20:09 Mark Urban: Hello - I'm Mark Urban, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UConn

00:20:44 Laura Bozzi | Yale Ctr on Climate & Health: Hi everyone. Laura Bozzi, director of programs at the Yale Center on Climate Change and Health

00:21:35 David Murphy, CIRCA: David Murphy, Director of Resilience Engineering, CIRCA

00:21:51 Susan Masino: Hello - Susan Masino, Professor of Applied Science at Trinity College

00:21:55 Diego Cerrai: Hello - I'm Diego Cerrai, Assistant Professor at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and I am Manager and Associate Director of the Eversource Energy Center. Topic area: Weather, Climate, Impact Modeling

00:25:28 Ashley Benitez - Climate Planning, CT-DEEP: Working Group members only. Please have camera on.

00:27:35 Susan Masino: Apologies in advance in case you missed my earlier message - I will need to reenter by phone at some point. Also I forgot to mention I was previously a member of Science and Tech working group.

00:29:33 David Murphy, CIRCA: And I forgot to mention that I was in the public health and safety working group (probably because of the many public water system issues)

00:30:28 Chris Elphick (UConn EEB): Also, I was previously a member of the wetlands working group

00:32:56 David Wagner: Hello all, David Wagner I am professor ecology & evolutionary biology with expertise in conservation biology, invertebrate biodiversity, and effects of climate changes on plants and animals.

00:44:41 Ashley Benitez - Climate Planning, CT-DEEP: If you would like to sign up for public comment, send a direct message to me.

00:50:00 Mark Urban: <https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2022-election-forecast/governor/connecticut/>

00:52:23 Anji Seth: Thanks, Mark. Phew!

00:52:24 Susan Masino: switching to phone!

01:11:24 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: @mark The New England Forestry Foundation received one of the USDA Climate Commodities grants that I think may be going after some of these questions, I hope.

01:12:17 David Murphy, CIRCA: Re: the BCA: CIRCA will be working on this with the seven Resilient Connecticut Phase III projects underway. I can elaborate offline.

01:14:29 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: @chris I have heard other states flag the lack of data for carbon flux from natural habitats for states trying to integrate those habitats into greenhouse gas inventories.

01:15:07 Chris Elphick (UConn EEB): Yes, the EPA blue carbon committee I was on was for all of New England and it seemed like a widespread problem

01:21:56 Rebecca French, CT DEEP:
<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Energy/Comprehensive-Energy-Plan/Comprehensive-Energy-Strategy>

01:24:40 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: I wanted to flag that while in 2020 the Governor's Council was the only climate planning process happening, there are not multiple planning processes ongoing, like the Comprehensive Energy Strategy. We are going to try highlight those other planning processes in the GC3 working group meetings, but individual working group members may want to engage in those other planning processes directly.

01:25:04 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: In fact, DEEP encourages you to do that if you have interest and availability.

01:25:38 Ashley Benitez - Climate Planning, CT-DEEP: If you'd like to provide public comment, please send me a direct message. You may also provide public comment during this period in the chat.

01:25:40 Thomas Bontly: Thanks Rebecca!

01:26:24 Anji Seth: Rebecca, could you point us to how we might directly engage with say the comprehensive energy strategy?

01:26:50 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: The website link above shows you where to find meetings and email lists.

01:27:31 Anji Seth: thanks.

01:28:45 Chris Elphick (UConn EEB): My sense is that Mark's concerns about monitoring, especially in response to management action (and then using it for adaptive responses), are widespread - especially in all of the ecosystems that I'm familiar with.

01:29:18 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: The Office of Climate Planning has an email list where we post public comment opportunities. Sign up for the Climate Solutions Newsletter. Check the Climate Solutions box to receive climate change and GC3 news, information, and updates.
<https://confirmsubscription.com/h/j/19E73F2E0479003B>

01:29:29 Mark Urban: We need monitoring, modeling, mitigation as a dynamic strategy

01:34:25 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: You can find the equity lens developed by the Equity & Environmental Justice working group here: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3_Phase1_Report_Jan2021.pdf

01:37:29 Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: Thanks again for the opportunity to participate, and for your time in volunteering for this important work.

01:37:33 Laura Bozzi | Yale Ctr on Climate & Health: In the short term, do we have a member from the EEJ WG who is also on this WG (as the liaison)?

01:41:05 Thomas Bontly: Yes, thank you Ashley for facilitating all this!