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**Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)  
Working and Natural Lands-Forests Breakout Session  
MEETING MINUTES**

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**Meeting Date:** September 29, 2020

**Meeting Time:** 4:00 pm

**Meeting Location:** Zoom

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Present</b>
Eric Hammerling			√
Alec Shub			√
Lisa Hayden			√
John Hudak			√
Joseph Orefice			√
Frank Cervo			√
Robert Fahey			√
Tomas Worthley			√
Carol Youell			√
Bernie Noonan			√
Maso Trumble			√
Michael Rouleau			√
David Gumbart			√
Doris Johnson			√
Jill Humphreys			√
Alan Poirier			√
Jos Spelbos			√
Eric Hansen			√
Susan Barney			√
Susan Masino			√
Chris Donnelly			√
Pat Piano			√
Diane Hoffman			√
Chris Martin			√
Beth Bernard			√
Charles Leigus			√
Jane Seymour			√
Amy Paterson			√
Jeremey Clark			√
Anji Seth			√
Ralph Jones			√
Peter Sonia			√
Peter Picone			√
Jerry Milne			√
Cary Lynch			√
Aaron Goode			√

## Breakout Session NOTES

*Facilitated by Eric Hammerling, Connecticut Forest and Park Association*

Eric Hammerling opened discussion by asking for questions or comments regarding his presentation or the report on forests.

- Joseph Orefice
  - Wood products being imported to Connecticut, rather than being grown here, are from places with bad things in terms of forest management like illegal logging, indigenous land rights being loss
  - How much of the report can still be adjusted and where was the input from the forest industry on this?
- Eric Hammerling
  - Tried our best to have as balanced of a report as we could with people participating in the sub-group with a wide variety of backgrounds
  - In terms of comments and being open to way to improving the report, the answer is absolutely
  - Eric Hammerling encouraged submitting written comments that are as specific as possible, for example pointing out issues on specific pages
- Joseph Orefice
  - Joseph Orefice summarized that his overall concern is that the report is going to be used to restrict forest management in Connecticut, on lands that we know how to manage very well, at the expense of people around the world who are subject to areas of low forest governance
  - Rather than highlighting how forests can be used as a green resource like firewood which can be used to directly offset fossil fuels
- Thomas Worthley
  - Reflecting on what Joseph Orifice said, suggested that it is a perfectly reasonable management decision to not do anything for a while, however, these management decisions should be open to reevaluation in the future
  - Wording needs to be added to the report that emphasizes how using forest management techniques will enhance specific goals of the types of forests we want to grow
- Frank Cervo
  - I love the emphasis in the report on using a balanced approach, however, later on in the report there comes on an emphasis on taking away options
  - For example, creation new forest reserves where the options are restricted
  - When you restrict your options for management when you put the forest in a reserve, you reduce your ability to react to things that may not have been foreseen like climate change which will have unpredictable impacts
  - Sustainable practices should be promoted for private lands as well
- Ralph Jones
  - The risk of trees falling during and after storms frightens residents
  - Increasing trees around cities are in tension with that

- How do we increase urban trees while avoiding these issues?
- Michael Rouleau
  - I do not really think trees become a public health hazard until they are very large
  - By the time that happens, they have had decades of positive impacts
  - As a tree is small and growing I do not think it is a health hazard
- Ralph Jones
  - In a financially strapped state, how do we fund the recommendations?
- Eric Hammerling
  - There are recommendations in the report on this question but one example is the current community investment app
  - We would suggest increasing the fee by 10 dollars which would provide funding for tree planting and maintenance
- Pete Picone
  - Comment regarding the PA 490 act
  - Asked if there would be a way to create a 490 during any month, so that it would not have to fall on October 1 to file
  - Also wondering if there is a way to create a provision so that when a person passes land down to lineal descendant, they would not have to repay taxes on the land that the previous related owner had already paid
- Eric Hammerling
  - There have been recommendations for the acreage requirement of 490 to be lowered
  - Some municipalities do not like this because they see it as a way for land owners to contribute less money
- Pete Picone
  - It could be helpful in presentations to add economic values to examples to help quantify them
- Carol Youell
  - It is hard to predict the future and so many issues are site specific and therefore, it is better to leave decisions on adaptive management strategies to certified forest managers
  - The role of Connecticut certified foresters on the implementation of management strategies should be stated in the report
  - I don't think the report should be commenting on civil cultural practices because the future is so uncertain
  - Keeping adaptive management upfront is important, it cannot be one size fits all
- Eric Hammerling
  - Agrees about the role of certified foresters in deciding civil cultural practices and that management cannot be one size fits all
- John Hudak
  - Wanted endorse one of the recommendations in the report that did not come out in the presentation
  - Hamden just clear cut 12 acres forest land for a solar array
  - It is troubling to compromise forest for other goals

- Chris Donnelly
  - The urban issues within the report and private land issues should have been separated into different parts of the report rather than being together because they are very different
  - Issues like equity and environmental justice lose out when they get lumped in with urban forest issues
- Anji Seth
  - There is a lot of uncertainty about the future but in terms of global warming there is not a lot of uncertainty about the coming decades
  - We know that forests are a carbon sink and forests between the age of 80 and 200 or more years are some of the biggest carbon sinks on the planet
  - The idea that we should not set aside intact forests to just be forests without management is not a crazy idea, especially because there is so little forest set aside right now to be protected
  - Planting young forest is not going to replace what a mature forest would be able to do in the next 30 years
- Eric Hammerling
  - Responding to chat comment that 21% of state forests are currently set aside as permanent reserves
  - 21% is not quite accurate because they are not actually permanent. This number includes old forest management sites but those could be changed to be managed differently in the future, so they are not completely permanent.
- Jane Seymour
  - What numbers were used to determine that not managing forests would create a meaningful impact to climate mitigation?
- Patrick Comins
  - There was a lot of conversation with in the group, regarding the difference between sequestration and storage potential for old and new forest growth
  - There was also a lot of discussion about the actual use of wood products, whether it be a use that stores the carbon or a use that releases the carbon like burning the wood
- Eric Hammerling
  - Referred to the report for the included citations
- David Gumbart
  - There was not a bias within the group when it came to limiting the ability for land owners or the state to manage the land through timber harvest
  - Protecting forests is the first goal, however, active forest management and use of wood products is very logical and will have long-term benefits
  - Potentially misconception in regards to this could be a syntax issue
- Eric Hammerling
  - We welcome recommendations about how to make the report more clear
- Lisa Hayden

Eric Hammerling ended the breakout session around 6:30 pm.

**NOTE:** All Agendas and minutes and working group reports can be found [here](#)

### ***Chat Record***

17:36:04 From Ralph Jones : Eric -- two different questions, when you get a chance

17:40:24 From Patrick Comins : yay I'm here

17:40:31 From Patrick Comins : Technical glitch

17:40:37 From Patrick Comins : great job on the presentation Eric!

17:44:01 From Patrick Comins : I have had some input from some that feel there isn't enough emphasis in the report on management nor the importance of the forest products industry as an alternative to development of private forestlands

17:44:49 From Peter Picone : Thank you for all the hard work your committee is putting in on this important forest resource topic. I would like a moment to ask a question/comment.

17:45:49 From Carol Youell : I would like to comment on report.

17:50:43 From John Hudak : Me too

17:51:27 From Patrick Comins : Forest reserves are good and important, but I also think management in some areas, particularly on private land are important, but also on state lands in some places. We have to take a balanced approach. I think successional homogeneity is a big problem for our forest.

17:52:33 From Joseph Orefice : For comparison sake: the agriculture working group had 2 farmers, the director of the Farm Bureau, CT NOFA, and the Dept of Ag head as representative in the group. Yet the forest group had 0 representation from the Society of American Foresters, DEEP Division of Forestry, the CT Timber Producers Association, nor any privateland foresters.

17:52:52 From Chris Donnelly : Eric - I would like to make a short comment.

17:53:11 From Anji Seth : Eric, I have a few comments if possible.

17:53:56 From Joseph Orefice : I have another meeting but will submit written comments as well. Thanks for taking the hot seat Eric

17:54:43 From Chris Martin : During our presentations it was noted the very importance to gain buy in and participation locally to increase urban canopy cover.

17:54:49 From Robert Fahey : One of the primary compromises that the working group made around reserves was that there would be a goal to first study a proposal from a socio-environmental standpoint (including effects on the forest economy, etc.) rather than starting with a recommendation per se.

17:56:58 From Frank Cervo : There is a company called "City Bench" in New Haven which works to turn street trees and other city trees which must be removed into durable (and often quite beautiful!) wood products. These wood products represent a long term carbon sink, and a way to make great use of what would otherwise be a waste product. Increasing this effort would be difficult, but hugely beneficial and could help address Ralph's concerns

17:58:20 From Susan Masino : second need for funding, which will fund a lot of different types of jobs. Given the time I just wanted to backtrack to previous topic and say that I agree we need different techniques but also need much more research and more long term data. Forests operate on long timescales. We also need areas for nature, for all of the reasons. We can certainly prioritize some areas primarily for products, some areas primarily for research, and some areas for nature. The latter is a relatively small portion of the landscape but it is absolutely critical. We have 1.8 million acres of forest.

18:00:51 From Diane Hoffman : Regarding fear of trees- people need to really understand all the benefits of trees that enhance their lives daily and contribute to their overall health to offset the fear they feel a few days a year.

- 18:02:19 From Chris Martin : to Pete's point there are PA 490 exemptions for transfers to family members although somewhat limited to immediate family members.
- 18:03:03 From Chris Donnelly : My basic comment - I feel that there should be a separation within the report between landcover forest issues and urban forest issues. They differ as to priorities, approaches, solutions and community involvement. I find it blunts both blending them together. For example, I would like to have seen a discussion of how landcover forests approaches relate to equity ad=n===
- 18:03:39 From Chris Donnelly : sorry - equity and environmental justice considerations.
- 18:03:51 From Jeremy Clark : To add to Peter Picone's comments on PA490; In an effort to increase incentives for private landowners to maintain forestland as forest, and not subdivide (fragment) wooded parcels, consider having the current 25-acre minimum parcel size to 10 acres, or 5 acres. Perhaps acreages under 25 acres do not get as low of an assessed value as those above 25 acres. This would greatly benefit smaller wooded lots within more suburban areas that would provide greater good to more closely located urban cities of Connecticut.
- 18:04:22 From Jerry Milne : In the Society of American Foresters comments, they believe there is an overly strong emphasis on a passive hands off approach that is a step back from the principles of multiple use mgmt. that have been successfully used for over 60 years.
- 18:05:32 From Susan Masino : Ecosystems services could be added to the new greenbond investment program. That would make CT a leader on this issue.
- 18:16:10 From Lisa Hayden : As a member of the Sub-Group who works for NEFF I will say that we had several debates about the emphasis on various management or non-management approaches. I would encourage folks to submit written comments highlighting what specific recommendations you feel should be added, changed or strengthened. We appreciate everyone's input!
- 18:18:42 From Frank Cervo : According to the report, 21% of State Forests are currently set aside as permanent reserves
- 18:21:54 From Susan Masino : mine was a comment not a question and I can send written comments.
- 18:22:40 From Jerry Milne : The report is misleading. 56% of the land in State Forests with mgmt plans is designated as passive mgmt.
- 18:26:14 From Chris Martin : Sorry folks. We need to look at all DEEP properties held in public trust. Natural Area Preserves, WMAs, State Forests, and State Parks. Also some current Natural Area Preserves receive intervention to ensure the values that created them are sustained...think Pitch Pine ecosystems and Gold's Pines in Cornwall.
- 18:26:17 From Patrick Comins : here are the resources we referenced:  
<https://www.ctwoodlands.org/public-policy/climate-change-forest-resources-forests-subgroup>
- 18:28:54 From Jeremy Clark : The report states that there are 168,960 acres of State Forests. It also indicates that of the State Forests with management plans (64,960 acres), that the amount of passively managed acreage is 36,249, or 21.4% of the total State Forest acreage, but fails to say that this is 56% of the acreage under management (36,429/64,960).  
Given this data, if all 168,960 acres of State Forests were under management plans, that same percentage of 56% (94,618 acres) would likely be passively managed also. This would increase the total acreage of Passive Forest Management in Table 1 to 130,500 acres and the % of Total by DEEP Land Passively Managed to 59% (not 33%). (Credit to Jerry Milne)
- 18:29:59 From Jerry Milne : The report needs to include all
- 18:30:53 From Jeremy Clark : Yes, indeed Jerry, needs to include all State-owned property, including DOT, prisons, airports, etc. The above numbers refer to State Forest only, not including Parks, WMAs, NAPs, etc
- 18:32:09 From Chris Martin : Yes Very much appreciate everyone's engagement!
- 18:32:18 From Amy Paterson : Thanks, all!

18:32:19 From Anji Seth : Thank you!

18:32:21 From Lisa Hayden : Thanks all!