
Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)

MEETING MINUTES

Working and Natural Lands Working Group

Forests Sub-Group

Meeting Date: January 31, 2020
Meeting Time: 2:00 — 5:00 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	√
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	

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

2:00PM Chair Eric Hammerling welcomed Sub-Group participants and attendees from the public, and provided [Governors Council on Climate Change](#) (GC3) and Working and Natural Lands Work Group Forest Sub-Group (WNLWG – FG) background, public participation, and meeting ground rules. The WNLWG – FG will seek full membership consensus for decisions and recommendations as a goal with consensus being defined as “I can live with this.” Chair Hammerling emphasized the importance of active participation, and being respectful of membership time commitments by keeping the agenda moving forward.

II. ROUNDTABLE INTRODUCTIONS

- Members introduced themselves, provided some personal background and interest in forests, and added information on their professional affiliation & experience.

III. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION IN CONNECTICUT, PROGRESS TO DATE

- Presentation - Refinement of the Charge** Chair reviews E.O.3. , provided time table, level of member commitment, and goal to have a near final draft report by June 2020. Acknowledgement that WNLWG – FG deliverable will be reported to both the GC3 Adaptation/Resiliency and Mitigation Committees.
- Problem Definition** - General discussion regarding suggestions & questions of report format, policy recommendations, suggestions on organizing the effort including smaller focused breakout groups. Cary Lynch discusses challenges and opportunities on baseline carbon accounting based upon land-use type and the agencies efforts to obtain better data.

WNLWG – FG discusses possibilities of making recommendations of forest-related goals for 2030 and beyond that might later be added to the [PA 08-98 AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT GLOBAL WARMING SOLUTIONS](#). General discussion on different regional carbon models & methodology. WNLWG – FG member Comins emphasizes need to significantly increase forest conservation goals. Member Abbott calls for updating Green Plan with bold new goals related to forests, climate, and connectivity. Member Ashton notes considerable new science since [2011 Connecticut Climate Preparedness Plan](#) that should be incorporated into current recommendations.

- Summary of Work to Date** - General discussion on reading list, additional resources, 2011 CT Climate Preparedness. Chair highlights [Building a Low Carbon Future for CT, GHG](#)

[Reduction Strategies and Recommendations](#) (December 2018) Page 40 emphasizing the need to identify both adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Natural and working lands consist of forests, farms, rangelands, and wetlands that sequester carbon and support Connecticut's economy, communities, and ecosystems. Collectively, these lands provide us with an important carbon sink. Connecticut should work with the other New England states to measure and account for changes in land-use practices to inform smart growth and protect valuable core forestland and prime farmland. Connecticut and three other New England states have already committed to U.S. Climate Alliance goals to: improve inventory methods for land-based carbon flux; identify best practices to reduce GHG emissions and increase resilient carbon sequestration; advance programs, policies, and incentives to reduce GHG emissions and enhance resilient carbon sequestration; undertake actions that will maintain natural and working lands as a net sink of carbon and protect and increase carbon storage capacity, while balancing near- and long-term sequestration objectives; and integrate priority actions and pathways into state GHG plans by 2020. DEEP should work with land trusts, forest owners, and working lands managers to help adopt carbon accounting methodologies that further support sustainable land-use practices.

Chair explains the construct of NNLWG including other Sub-Groups, and other concurrent efforts including carbon grants and the 2020 Forest Action Plan.

IV. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 3 OBJECTIVES AND GC3 STRUCTURE, DELIVERABLES, AND TIMELINE

- **Expected Deliverables** - General Discussion
- **Proposed Timeline** - General Discussion
- **Identify Preliminary Information Needs** - General Discussion on WNLWG – FG information needs including soils carbon sequestration and public drinking water supply related issues. Call for members to forward relevant research papers to Chris Martin for centralized sharing. Member Faison shares various strategies for forest carbon storage based upon tree age and forest management considerations. Member Comins acknowledges carbon storage within durable forest products. General discussion on how much Connecticut woodland is conserved from conversion to residential/commercial development.
- Considerable discussion of necessity to provide common term definitions; mitigation, adaptation, resilience, risk tolerance, connectivity... Member Ashton and others to offer working definitions for WNLWG – FG member consensus.
- WNLWG – FG not only to suggest recommended interim steps, but also to describe expected outcomes and desired state.
- Sub-Group Staff Assistant Martin to accept and compile and centralize research papers, websites, and other resources for WNLWG – FG members. Martin to send WNLWG – FG calendar and roster to members.
- Future Focused Meeting topics (not in priority order):

- 1) Review 2011 climate change preparedness plan recommendations, progress to date, continued relevance, and “what is missing?”
 - 2) EO3 5b 2,3,4: recommendations for a) funding and financing mechanisms to advance recommended strategies, and b) aligning with municipal/regional adaptation efforts;
 - 3) Carbon storage baselines and existing/needed data for future projections
 - 4) Forest management to maximize carbon storage, sequestration, connectivity, and biodiversity,
 - 5) Forest protection goals (acreage conserved from development/conversion) including strategies to pay for it,
 - 6) Cutting edge science (what has changed since 2011 that could impact recommendations of the Forests Sub-Group),
 - 7) Adaptation & resilience – proactive actions to reduce risk and effects of climate change, and
 - 8) Equity/air quality/energy use reduction/infrastructure installation/maintenance and related urban forest issues.
- **Develop Meeting Schedule** - WNLWG – FG members agree on the following meeting dates. Seven of anticipated ten meeting dates committed.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
February 27, 2020	2:00PM – 4:00PM	deKoven House (27 Washington Street in Middletown)
March 10, 2020	2:00PM – 4:00PM	Connecticut Forest & Park Association or TBD
March 24, 2002	2:00PM – 4:00PM	Connecticut Forest & Park Association or TBD
April 7, 2020	2:00PM – 4:00PM	Connecticut Forest & Park Association or TBD
April 21, 2020	6:00PM – 8:00PM	Connecticut Forest & Park Association or TBD
May 7, 2020	1:00PM – 3:00PM	Connecticut Forest & Park Association or TBD
May 21, 2020	6:00PM – 8:00PM	Connecticut Forest & Park Association or TBD

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Diane Hoffman, Hamden Alliance for Trees. Calls upon WNLWG – FG to consider equity, propose big bold solutions, and focus on the needs and benefits of urban forests.
- Ralph Jones, Hamden Alliance for Trees. Requests definition of a “forest” ... rural, suburban, rural, all? Need to define terms. WNLWG – FG should consider the role of suburban forests, a dominate land-use type in Connecticut. Include necessary protections in addition to resilience. Concerned with little emphasis on protecting existing suburban tree assets and the urban forest intersection. Encourages need to define resilience. Where is the balance between utility line clearing and maintaining healthy trees. Shows [Winter/Spring 2020 - American Forests](#) magazine issue focus on economic inequity and tree cover in cities. Notes

Connecticut keynote address at CT Agricultural Experiment Station event regarding evolution of CT forests and the change of quality over time.

- Raymond Hinchcliffe, Berlin Land Trust and the [Center for Biological Diversity](#). Requests reports discussed. States carbon baseline do not matter and the oldest trees store most carbon. Shares copies of [Wild Carbon | Northeast Wilderness Trust](#).
- Chris Donnelly, DEEP Urban Forestry Staff. Offers new Connecticut tree law books to WNLWG – FG members. Provides the following state attributes for consideration; 1) CT 58% forested, 2) 78% of Connecticut is under a canopy of a tree 3) Connecticut is unique as most forested and heavily populated state. Requests WNLWG – FG clearly define “forest”. Conditions of the forest vary around the state.
- Susan Masino, Professor Applied Science Trinity College (by phone). Agrees with protecting as much as forest as possible, research forest research, forest products, nature, and respite, Requests WNLWG – FG review established data bases, new data bases including [Core Reserves in the Eastern Wildway - Wildlands Network](#). Additional considerations; below ground carbon, biodiversity, and medicinal/public health possibilities. There is much unknown and best approach is to first do no harm.

Next steps. February 27th meeting at 2:00 p.m. to focus on definitions for common understandings and review 2011 Climate Change Preparedness Report.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourns approximately 4:30PM