
**Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)
WORKING AND NATURAL LANDS WORKING GROUP
WETLANDS SUB-WORKING GROUP
MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Date: February 27, 2020

Meeting Time: 9 am

Meeting Location:

DEEP Marine Headquarters

333 Ferry Road

Old Lyme, CT

ATTENDANCE

Working Group Member	Title	Organization	Present
Leslie Kane	Managing Director	Audubon Connecticut	Y
Rick Bennett	Science Director	USFWS	Y
Chris Elphick	Professor	UConn: Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	N
Julianna Barrett	Associate Extension Educator	UConn Sea Grant & NEMO	N
Michelle Staudinger	Science Coordinator	USGS, Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center	N
Kimberly Lesay	Transportation Assistance Planning Director	CT DOT Office of Environmental Planning	N
Jeff Shamas	Wetland and Soil Scientist	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin	N
Rudy Sturk	Senior Manager	CT Green Bank	Y
Stephen Lecco	CEP, AICP, Senior Analyst	GZA	Y
Alex Croft, Representing Gwen MacDonald	Ecological Restoration	Save the Sound	Y
Denise Savageau	Director	Greenwich Conservation Commission, retired	Y
Jamie Vaudrey	Assistant Research Professor	Department of Marine Science, UConn Avery Point	Y
Ann Hartchen, Representing Aicha Woods	City Planning	New Haven	Y
Peter Auster	Senior Research Scientist	Mystic Aquarium	N

Associated Staff	Title	Organization	Present
Rick Jacobson	Bureau Chief	DEEP, Natural Resources	N
Jenny Dickson	Division Director	DEEP, Wildlife	Y
Cary Lynch		DEEP, Energy Research and Planning	N

Public Attendees	Affiliation	Comments
None Present		n/a

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome and Announcements

- Welcome and announcements presented by Leslie Kane

Agenda Item(s)

Leslie Kane, Sub-Working Group Chair and Managing Director, Audubon Connecticut

- Member introductions and review of areas of expertise
 - Name and affiliation
 - What do you think you bring to this conversation? Why do you want to play a role in the Wetlands discussion for the GC3?
 - What questions do you have? Information you need to be most impactful in the conversations on Wetlands and Climate Change? What initial thoughts do you have on what information is key to understanding wetlands through the lens of natural solutions?

- Review of objectives and timeline

To what extent can WETLANDS contribute to carbon neutrality by helping achieve net emission targets during our transition to a decarbonized energy sector?

Areas of consideration include: mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.

- flooding and flood storage
- biodiversity for adaptation strategy
- Adaptation and resilience: wetlands as a tool- their role in mitigating floods in increasing storms is critical;
- Need clear communication with the public (e.g. public needs to understand that healthy wetlands, barrier islands, and saltmarsh protects them)
- Vector-borne diseases and wetlands: balancing public health concerns

Our charge is to talk about the mitigation aspect of which carbon sequestration in soils is an important part.

- Educational component: the standard functions of wetlands – vernal pools or tidal wetlands or red maple swamps – are critical for carbon sequestration.

Scope:

Wetlands – Connecticut has an Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act

- A legislative initiative may be to strengthen the act and specifically mention the role of inland wetlands in carbon sequestration and climate mitigation?
- What changes could we consider at the federal level to WOTUS and Clean Water Act? Can we use definition of inland wetlands by soil type and water courses – swamp, bog, etc.? Are there gaps in the statutory definitions? We can define more widely to meet biological

definitions.

- Tidal Wetlands Act – are there parallels? There is consensus to consider near-shore areas (i.e. areas 10’ deep or less).
- Wetlands have a function within a landscape. We need to look at how they function within the landscape (e.g. vernal pool can’t operate without the landscape connections).
- We should consider marsh migration. We need to go beyond the universe we know now; where are the future areas of marsh habitat? We need to consider the implications of Siting Council approval of projects located within tidal marsh migration zones—are there recommendations to enhance mitigation, adaptation, resilience, and sequestration? Are there key areas to set aside for marsh migration? Consider the need to adjust transportation routes to allow for marsh migration.
- Oyster aquaculture in Connecticut is more aligned with a natural process; there dispersal on the bottom and oysters are trawled. They do help with sequestration; in our region, attenuation is not the key benefit they provide.
- Definitions of various wetland habitat types were included in the Connecticut Wildlife Action Plan and are rolled up from regional habitat classifications. They may provide an aid to definitions of areas to consider in discussion.
- Proposed Timeline
 - See handout “Working and Natural Lands Working Group, and Sub-Working Group (SWG) Schedule”
 - The work of the Wetlands SWG essentially needs to be completed by early June 2020
- Discussion of 2011 report actions and their status in the sub-working group framework was initiated.
- Next steps
 - How will we incorporate SLAM (Sea Level Affecting Marshes Management)? Invite Dave Kozak to present.
 - What is the role of mosquito management and marsh restoration? Invite WHAMM staff to present (Roger Wolfe)
 - Check with Michelle Staudinger about NECASC efforts pursuant to transportation system changes and inland migration—are there examples to share with the group?
 - How will we incorporate the Atlantic Coast Joint Ventures (ACJV) Coastal Wetland Conservation Plan? – Invite Aimee Weldon to present.
 - Continue refinement of 2011 action prioritization and revision
 - Review of Table of Contents
 - Future meetings will try and be set for the third Friday of each month
 - Next meeting date: Thursday March 19th 1:30- 3:30 pm; Location: Avery Point UCONN Campus

Public comments:

No public comments received

NOTE: No slides or presentations are available on GC3 web page: www.ct.gov/deep/gc3