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

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**Meeting Date: April 17, 2020**  
**Meeting Time: 10:00 am**  
**Meeting Location:**  
Teleconference

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>Working Group Member</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Present</b>
Leslie Kane	Managing Director	Audubon Connecticut	Y
Rick Bennett	Science Director	USFWS	N
Chris Elphick	Professor	UConn: Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	N
Julianna Barrett	Associate Extension Educator	UConn Sea Grant & NEMO	Y
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	N
Stephen Lecco	CEP, AICP, Senior Analyst	GZA	N
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
Anne Hartjen	City Planning	New Haven	N
Peter Auster	Senior Research Scientist	Mystic Aquarium	Y

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
David Kozak	Environmental Analyst	DEEP, Water Protection and Land Reuse	Y

Public Attendees	Affiliation	Comments
Robert LaFrance	Audubon Connecticut and GC3 Finance Working Group	Carbon sequestration may be a good area of overlap for the finance working group to examine  Marsh migration may require financial investment or mechanism and will be looked at the finance working group
Mary Pelletier	Park Watershed Association, 8 Elizabeth Street, Hartford	Very concerned about urban/suburban watersheds and development impacts  This issue seems to fall through the cracks with the wetlands, rivers, and forest working groups  It is difficult to become aware of meeting times and hard to know the best way to provide comments to these groups

## AGENDA & NOTES

### Welcome and Announcements

- Welcome, announcements, and roll call presented by Leslie Kane

### Agenda Item(s)

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

### Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) Presentation:

David Kozak, CT DEEP Water Protection and Land Reuse

- Model helps predict how Connecticut's Coastal Marshes will respond to sea level rise
- Another important consideration is the impact of sea level rise on coastal roads
- Sea level rise is not the most immediate threat to coastal marshes; past degradation and water quality impairment—especially nitrogen loading—have more immediate impacts on health and resilience
- Multi-faceted threats have been a long-term issue; addressing threats can solve multiple problems (e.g. addressing road flooding can include habitat restoration)
- Marshes can serve as coastal flooding pathways to residential and commercial areas;

road reconstruction and tide gate modifications can be important tools to address this

- Marsh migration areas in Connecticut are limited due to glacial constraints—we lack the coastal plains found along other parts of the Atlantic coast; it is critical to make sure development does not encroach on Connecticut’s much narrower coastal plain zone which occurs before the larger glacial deposit zone is reached
- SLAMM produces two types of results: deterministic (single sea level rise and marsh values) and probabilistic (multiple sea level rise and marsh values)
- SLAMM can be used to identify larger potential marsh migration areas, but many model responses assume areas around marshes will remain available for marsh migration; this is probably not likely—landowners will probably not allow it to occur
- A lot of high marsh loss is anticipated
- Some of Connecticut’s most resilient marshes include: Stratford Great Meadows, Ferry Point, Nells Island, and West River Marsh
- The question and answer period identified the need to develop a better inventory of tide gates, their age/function, and their proximity to roads for possible inclusion in future road repair or upgrade projects and the need for model enhancements to improve spatial resolution and “hydro enforcement” (the dam inventory is robust can could be incorporated)
- A review of the Working and Natural Lands Working Group conference call was presented
  - Timeline adjustments may be forthcoming
  - New ways to incorporate public participation and facilitate implementation of equity and environmental justice goals
- A robust discussion of the potential of “Telephone Town Hall Meetings”
  - Could work through community leaders to engage the right audiences
  - Groups could get 15 minute blocks to provide input or raise concerns
  - We could explore both lunch time and evening sessions to better fit diverse schedules
  - Process could be expanded to reach other target partner groups (e.g. IWWCs, shellfish commissions, etc.)
  - The selected process will need to include both inland and coastal wetland constituencies and will need to follow the public process established for the GC3 initiative.

### **Next steps**

- Areas of overlap with other groups still needs to be clarified; Leslie and Jenny will share with other Working and Natural Lands Working Group Chairs to clarify.
- Team will continue to populate the documents (Table of Contents) and Leslie will try to simplify what is available for review and edits
- The overall GC3 schedule was discussed reflective of current Covid-19 Executive Orders; adjustments may be made on the back end of the project timeline.
- Ways to better facilitate meeting notices and schedules were discussed and will be implemented for all upcoming meetings.
- Staff will contact EEJ leads for assistance in creating a Telephone Town Hall process

○ **Next meeting dates:**

**Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1:00- 2:00 pm;**

Topic: Presentation on Subaqueous Soils: the Coastal Zone Survey

Speaker: Debbie Surabian, USDA-NRCS

Location: virtual

**Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1:00-3:00 pm;**

Topic One: Presentation on Carbon Sequestration in Coastal Marshes

Speaker: Dr. Beth Lawrence, UConn

Topic Two: Making its Mark: the Fate and Transport of Nitrogen  
and Carbon in the Long Island Sound Estuary

Speaker: Penny Vlahos, UConn

Location: Virtual

**Public comments:**

*Noted Above (Public Attendee Table)*

**NOTE:** Slides/presentation will be made available on GC3 web page: [www.ct.gov/deep/gc3](http://www.ct.gov/deep/gc3)