
Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)

MEETING MINUTES

Working and Natural Lands Working Group

Forests Sub-Group

Meeting Date: February 27, 2020
Meeting Time: 2:00 — 4:00 p.m.
Meeting Location: deKoven House
 27 Washington Street
 Middletown, CT 06457

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	√
Herb Virgo	Executive Director	Keney Park Sustainability Project	∅

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 and Announcements (5 minutes)

2:00PM Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, CFPA

General Introductions

Agenda Items

II. Definition of Terms (20 minutes)

Common understanding of ecological terms that relate to climate adaption and mitigation of forests. Definitions provided by Mark Ashton, Robert Fahey, and Edward Faison, UMASS/UVM ([Forest-Carbon-Booklet UMass UVM 2020.pdf.](#)), Society of American Foresters, USDA FS R & D.

Adaptation: How forests react over time to all impacts including climate, fragmentation, insect disease, and pollution.

Carbon sequestration: The process of removing carbon from the atmosphere for use in photosynthesis, resulting in the maintenance and growth of plants and trees. The rate (or amount and speed) at which a forest sequesters carbon changes over time. In the northeastern United States, carbon sequestration [rates] typically peak when forests are young to intermediate in age (around 30–70 years old), but they continue to sequester carbon through their entire life span.

Carbon storage: The amount of carbon that is retained in a carbon pool within the forest. Storage levels increase with forest age and typically peak in the northeastern United States when forests are old (>200 years old). [Forest-Carbon-Booklet UMass UVM 2020.pdf.](#)

Competitive hierarchy: longer lived species are site restrictive and will dominate specific sites reducing structural diversity and complexity.

Diversity Theory (negative density dependence hypothesis): Forests have evolved complexity over time including the adaptation and resistance to native insects and disease.

Forest carbon mitigation: Action taken to alleviate potential adverse effects of climate change by increasing carbon sequestration in forest ecosystems.

Intermediate disturbance hypothesis: Relates to forest succession. How forests adapt and interact to site disturbance and climate. Guided by length in between disturbances and severity of disturbance. Forest diversity simplifies over time to late successional species.

Redundancy: A form of resilience. Multiple species comprise the same functional role.

Resilience: Rate of recovery from a disturbance. The ability of forest to absorb impacts over time. The capacity of an ecosystem to return to its previous pre disturbance condition.

Resistance: Affiliated with resilience. The capacity to absorb disturbance and remain unchanged.

III. Review 2011 Climate Change Preparedness Plan (60 minutes)

Chair Hammerling leads review of the recommendations presented in the 2011 Connecticut Climate Preparedness Plan. The group identifies forest relevant recommendations and ranks urgency.

Chair Hammerling requests Forests sub-group members to assign themselves to additional focus groups concentrating on three categories identified within the 2011 Climate Preparedness Plan and bring forth recommendations for additional action needed on forest relevant actions.

Best Management Practices: Edward Faison, David Gumbart, Charles Leigus

Research, Monitoring, & Education: Mark Ashton, Patrick Comins, Robert Fahey, Lisa Hayden

Policy, Legislation, Regulation and Funding: Tim Abbott, Amy Paterson, Herb Virgo

IV. Additional Information Needs (10 minutes)

What is missing? Focus groups asked to dive deeper identifying what is missing? Chair Hammerling will provide spreadsheet with agreed upon relevant items and urgency level filled out for more details to be identified by focus groups. Focus groups to meet towards end of scheduled meetings May 7th.

V. Public comments (20 minutes)

Margaret Miner: Thanked the Forests Sub-Group for recognizing the importance of upland headwaters and headstreams which Connecticut is losing at a horrible rate. Encouraged the careful protection and management of forests including defining leave trees. Expressed concern over forest fragmentation. Emphasized driveways are also a source of pollution such as deicing chemicals.

Allen Poirier: Expressed appreciation for the Sub-groups expertise. Emphasized the importance of mitigation. Recommends educating the public of the role forest can play towards de-carbonation.

Alison Guinness: Recommends the Sub-Group to further define the role that energy providers can have on Connecticut's tree population. Street trees are important. Roadside tree clearing changes entire character of communities and impacts how climate change reveals itself. Important to ask electric utilities what they are doing to mitigate and adapt to climate change regarding roadside vegetation management.

Austin Dziki: Policy and legislation recommendations should place high emphasis on regional planning. Increase role of forest products at landscape scale as an important climate change strategy to conserve forests

Chris Donnelly: Attended Environmental Equity Meeting encourages communication across different lenses. Asks questions for the Sub-Group to consider: Is this about climate change through a forest lens? Is the group addressing how forests change or how society should respond to climate change and forests? What is the timeframe? Are all trees forests? Trees have different functions in different areas. Discussions should be in that context.

Diane Hoffman (by zoom audio) Hamden Alliance of Trees agrees with the important role energy providers have on climate change. Huge impact on street trees, Would like greater discussion on urban forest canopies. Cooling stations on spreadsheet with urban trees should be considered.

Ralph Jones, Hamden Alliance for Trees: Asks the Sub-Group to not neglect the urban and suburban forests and the impacts DOT and utilities are having on street trees. They need protection.

VI. Next Steps and Adjourn

(5 minutes)

The Forests Sub-Group discussed upcoming meeting topics and dates. Made some adjustments to better accommodate member’s schedules.

DATE	TIME	Theme/Topic	LOCATION
March 10, 2020	2:00PM – 4:00PM	Cutting Edge Science/Carbon Storage Baselines (existing & needed)	Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA)
March 24, 2002	2:00PM – 4:00PM	Equity/air quality, energy use reduction, green infrastructure installation/maintenance, related urban forestry issues	CFPA
April 7, 2020	2:00PM – 6:00PM	Forest management, carbon storage, sequestration, connectivity, biodiversity. Adaption and resiliency	CFPA
April 21, 2020	6:00PM – 8:00PM	Vulnerable communities that may be disproportionately impacted by climate change.	CFPA
May 7, 2020	1:00PM – 3:00PM	Forest protection goals (acreage protected from conversion). Funding and Financing recs.	CFPA
May 21, 2020	6:00PM – 8:00PM	Aligning with municipal/regional adaptation efforts	CFPA

Chair Hammerling shares CFPA resource library web page: [Climate Change Forest Resources - Forests Sub-Group | Connecticut Forest & Park Association](#)

Member Comins requests a presentation on the Nature Conservancy Climate resilience index

Next meeting: March 10th meeting at 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. CFPA

Adjournment: Meeting adjourns at 4:00PM.