

Maine Climate Council Coastal and Marine Working Group (CMWG)

Tuesday, October 31, 2023

9:00am-12:15pm

Department of Marine Resources, West Boothbay Harbor, ME

Meeting Summary

The Coastal and Marine Working Group for the Maine Climate Council met at the Department of Marine Resources laboratory in West Boothbay Harbor. This was the first meeting of the newly formed CMWG that included members who participated in 2019-2020 as well as new members. Members were present in-person and on Zoom. See appendix for meeting participants.

Meeting Objectives

- Introduce Working Group members to each other
- Learn about the Maine Climate Council update process and expectations of the Working Group to revise *Maine Won't Wait* strategies
- Reflect on progress addressing key coastal and marine priorities since 2020 plan
- Explore process for Working Group to accomplish our work

Welcome & Agenda

Co-chairs Curt Brown (Ready Seafood) and Carl Wilson (DMR) gave a brief welcome, providing some context of the working group. Laura Singer (facilitator) provided an overview of the objectives for the meeting and the agenda for the day.

Setting the Stage – Overall Maine Climate Council Update Process

Amalia (Molly) Seigel from the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) gave an overview of the broader Maine Climate Council process:

- Introduced the six working groups
 - Buildings, Infrastructure & Housing
 - Coastal & Marine
 - Community Resilience
 - Energy
 - Transportation
 - Natural & Working Lands
- Maine's climate goals are to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 and state law targets reducing greenhouse gas emissions 45% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.
- Important dates in 2024 plan timeline:
 - Jun 2024 – *Working Groups (WG) recommend updates to existing strategies or new strategies to address gap areas*
 - Sept 2024 - Maine Climate Council meets to consider strategies
 - Dec 1st, 2024 – Updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) delivered to Legislature
- Stages of process of the working group process:
 - Taking stock of progress to date, existing *Maine Won't Wait* (MWW) strategies, and equity recommendations
 - Prioritizing WG effort – where will WG spend its time?
 - Updating strategies using guided templates for discussion
 - Reporting back to Climate Council a list of updates strategies using similar language and details to MWW

- New charges to integrate equity:
 - Consult priority populations to make equitable recommendations (i.e., groups most impacted and left out of discussions)
 - Review and consider equity monitoring metrics to track process towards equity outcomes
 - Establish numeric goals and targets for priority equity outcome metrics

Discussion:

Comment (Nick B.): How can we keep recommendations from WG and CC to inform our work?

Comment (Ivy F.): the content into detailed strategies – how do we balance desire to keep an excellent plan without losing magic in the detail that allows us to continue collaboration and utilization of the plan?

- *Carl W.:* we had a shorter timeline last time around, but as a group, this time around I think it will be good to focus on recommendations early to hone in on maximum impact by the time deadlines come around.

Comment (Susie A.): Wondering if GOPIF or co-chairs have official guidance on how we prioritize on the next CAP

- *Molly:* Laura will be leading this process, and WG have their own recommending priorities that are in fact listed in the statutes, and these can hopefully be provided for us in future meetings.

Comment (Laura S): someone from chat asked if we have a tribal member yet;

- *Molly:* It's a work in progress. GOPIF has reached out to invite tribal members.

Comment (Ben M.): To add on Nick's point, if we don't have anything listed for one of the strategies, can we make any unrelated additional recommendations?

- *Molly:* If there was a majority priority for this WG that comes up from the conversation, and it doesn't show up in the presentation or material moving forward, there's no reason you couldn't make a recommendation that isn't listed in those strategies (i.e., there are no restrictions).
- This WG can have room to focus on other priorities as necessary and participate in other WG meetings, and it's important to do so.

Comment (Nick B): conversations started late in the last round; figuring out how to have those conversations early between WGs is important.

Comment (Bill N): We'll have to trust that our priorities are going to contribute and play their part in meeting the broader goals outside the current WG

Introductions – Getting to Know Each Other

The WG members did a round of introductions and shared with each other their thoughts on what a successful update of *Maine Won't Wait* would look like.

In person (name, employment, involved in 2020 CMWG, favorite candy):

- Jes Waller, DMR, involved in 2020, Mars candy
- Curt Brown, Ready Seafood, involved in 2020, 100-gram
- Carl Wilson, DMR, involved in 2020, tootsie rolls
- Matt Davis, DMR, not involved in 2020
- Becca Peters, DMR, involved in 2020, Mars candy

- Bill Needleman, Portland Waterfront Coordinator, involved in 2020, non-denominational candy
- Lydia Crafts, ME State Legislature, served 3 years on marine resource (and transportation) committee, Mars candy
- Curtis Bowen, Casco Bay, involved in 2020, Mars candy
- Jeremy Gabrielson, Maine Coast Heritage trust, not involved in 2020, passed on candy
- Jessica Joyce, Tidalbay Consulting and DMR shellfish advisory council, not involved in 2020, prefers local candy
- Marissa MacMahan, Manomet, not involved in 2020, 100-gram
- Melissa B, DMR, not involved in 2020, no candy
- Meredith White, DMR, not involved in 2020, 100-gram
- Nick Batista, Island Institute, involved in 2020, Butterfinger
- Gayle Zydlewski, Maine Sea Grant, involved in 2020, Mars candy
- Rob Holmburg, Roger Williams U, not involved in 2020, Crunch Bar
- Ivy Frignoca, Friends of Casco Bay, involved in 2020, prefers local candy
- Michelle Staudinger, UMaine, not involved in 2020, Butterfinger
- Angela Brewer, DEP, involved in 2020 in different group, passed (getting chocolate later
- John O'Connell (walk in), (missed role), not involved in 2020, candy unannounced
- Wendy Garland, DEP, not involved in 2020, 100-gram
- Edge Venuti, student at UMaine in Env. Sci., not involved in 2020, Crunch bar
- Anne Noll, Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center, not involved in 2020, passed on candy
- Susie Arnold, Island Institute, involved in 2020, anything chocolate
- Amy Winston, Coastal Enterprises Inc., not involved in 2020, Baby Ruth
- Chuck Bennet, lobster and bait fisherman/dealer, not involved in 2020, tootsie roll
- Molly Seigel, GOPIF, not involved in 2020, Mars candy

Zoom attendees:

- Bev Johnson, Bates College, involved in 2020, Hershey's "all the way"
- Heather Hamlin, UMaine, not involved in 2020, Tootsie rolls
- Sen. Marianne Moore, District 6, not involved with this WG in 2020, dark chocolate
- Kathleen Billings, Town of Stonington, not involved in 2020, Mars candy
- Gabe McPhail, ESC, not involved in 2020, dark chocolate peanut butter Bixby bar
- Christine Beitzl, UMaine, not involved in 2020, candy unknown
- Kate Klibansky, Island Institute, involvement and candy unknown
- Tiffany Strout, ME State Legislature, not involved in 2020, anything chocolate or sour patch kids
- Jocelyn Runnebaum, ME Nature Conservancy, (not sure on past involvement), chocolate (general)
- Cameron Reny, ME State Legislature, not involved in 2020, Reese's PB Cup
- Carla Guenther, ME Center for Coastal Fisheries, not involved in 2020, candy unknown
- Kathleen Leyden, DMR, involved in 2020, candy unknown
- Ben Martens, ME Coast Fisherman's Association, (not sure on past involvement), non-denominational candy

What would a "successful" update of the plan look like to you? (may include repeats):

- Action items and details that agencies can implement into our work
- Bringing new energy and ideas to the table and various voices heard
- Strong effort for monitoring for decision making
- Make climate change part of the conversation in DMR, DEP

- Provide tangible outcomes between actions on the ground/local and resources that can make it happen
- Making work translatable to local communities
- Mechanism for dealing with uncertainty and to help communities adapt
- Applicable to local needs and listening to those
- Linked to actions that can be accomplished in near terms
- Adaptation needs of waterfront businesses on front line are needed as a priority – facing unique challenges
- Make sure equity actions are integrated
- Integration across WGs
- Implementing plan and updating where appropriate
- High quality monitoring, particularly on mudflats and using current research that is coming out
- How does OSW affect working waterfronts
- Ecosystem services, both managed and unmanaged species
- Prioritization on balance of human communities with nearshore habitats
- Issues dealing with new large waterfront infrastructure
- Runoff, wastewater discharge
- Equity and environmental justice
- Inclusion of rural communities in these conversations
- Messaging around public communication of goals and strategies
- Preparation of coastal communities in face of right whale regulations
- Why are we not seeing more action
- Interest in blue carbon
- Protect the environment as well as the fishing industry
- Economic resiliency to climate change (adaptation)
- Sustainable communities
- Considerations for how climate science can integrate into fisheries management
- Keep literature from being solely “gloom and doom” to keep hope in the communities who are being impacted by climate change and its effects
- Promoting seafood and its role in local diets

Taking Stock – Progress on Existing Strategies

Carl and Curt summarized the 2020 CMWG strategies that were part of *Maine Won't Wait* and provided an update on the progress made.

- The focuses for the CMWG in 2020 were related to Strategies D and E.
 - Strategy E:
 - Recommendation #1: Protect Natural and Working Lands and Waters
 - Recommendation #2: Develop New Incentives to Increase Carbon Storage
 - Recommendation #3: Expand Outreach to Offer Information and Technical Assistance
 - Recommendation #4: Enhance Monitoring and Data Collection to Guide Decisions
 - Strategy D:
 - Recommendation #1: Take advantage of new market opportunities
 - The Equity Subcommittee also generated recommendations associated with Strategy D & E.
- Update on Progress:

- \$35mil was received through Bipartisan Infrastructure Laws
 - Supports heritage fishing industries
 - Culvert work done to increase sea-run fish passage
- Maine Climate Science Information Exchange (MCSIE) created in 2022, focused on agriculture and food systems, forests, forest products, marine resources and coastal communities
- Investing in Maine's working waterfront and fisheries
 - Seafood dealer and processor program (\$16mil) helped seafood dealers and processors recover from cov-19 pandemic
 - Seafood economic accelerator – roadmap for resilience in Maine seafood economy
- Protecting Maine's marine species - Work being done towards improving data for managed fisheries due to NA right whales
- Carbon sequestration – EPA estimates ME sequester 22% of NE blue carbon, but 2022-23 DEP surveys in Casco Bay and Midcoast region are seeing declines in eelgrass
- *New and cont. opportunities:*
 - Support science and monitoring needed for decision making
 - Incorporate climate adaptation into state policies
 - Support adaptation and resilience initiatives in marine economy and infrastructure
 - Encourage blue carbon opportunities

Discussion:

Comment (Carl W): we need to stay on task for actionable items

Comment (Laura S): you came up with the above list of opportunities?

Response (Carl): We (Carl and Curtis Brown) came up with this while working with GOPIF

Comment (Ivy): we need to remember the effects that our coastal behavior has on marine ecosystems, and so management and monitoring needs to incorporate these habitats across diff depts.

Comment (Bill N.): Are these focused opportunities going to cover all of the topics that need to be addressed as they are written?

Long-term Monitoring and Blue Carbon (Ivy F.):

- With a focus on equity this time around, we need to think of the social science parameters that are important and incorporate those aspects into the monitoring efforts.

Comment (Curtis Bowen): in this new round we need to focus on ways to make comments from fishermen's perspectives heard and present

- Talked about an ongoing effort to make an affordable and accurate method for monitoring ocean acidification state-wide

Comment (Chuck Bennet): When talking to fishermen, no one wants to talk change because they're often under the gun. So this is something to think about when having these discussions with the fishing community.

- On the blue carbon strategies – a pretty dense strategy was created in 2020, which resulted in a blue carbon WG. One of the great success is that salt marshes and eelgrass habitats are now on a 5-yr bottom mapping cycle.

Comment (Jeremy): In 2020 we had our questions set out. At this point we have solutions that we can implement, and that will be an interesting part of the work this year. From a tidal mudflat

standpoint, much of the habitats are owned by other stakeholders (DOT, IFW), so it will involve collaboration for any actionable work

Conversation (Carl, Ivy, Curtis Brown, Jeremy): the coupling of monitoring and observational data gives us the best chance of understanding blue carbon and climate change

Comment (Bev): plans are needed for saltmarsh migration in the face of sea level rise due to climate change

Comment (Nick B): seems like this would overlap with the DOT and transportation WG

Comment (Ivy): now includes rockweed, not just salt marshes and eelgrass

Fisheries and Aquaculture (Jes W.):

- Themes: Long term data for industry, ecosystem approaches, evaluate policy and regulatory structures
- Rebuilt the Division of Ecology and the Environment
- Huge push for open data portals with program context
- Public Health, Nearshore Resources Program and Aquaculture Program
- DMR-UMaine climate and fisheries faculty, climate-focused program reviews

Comment (Nick): in 2019 the permits in aquaculture were faster than they are today, so I think we need to make sure that with growth of the community we need to speed up the timeframe for leasing

Comment (Bill): I second Nick's comment.

Comment (Ivy): If we speed up permitting process, we need an appropriate plan for aquaculture monitoring

Response (Carl): It may be good to occasionally have presentations from various groups to keep everyone on the same page as to program framework and limitations

Working Waterfront and Infrastructure (Nick B.)

- Elevated concerns for working waterfront issues due to climate change and increasing social pressures (housing pressures, gentrification, etc.)
- In 2018-19 working waterfronts were becoming a topic of discussion, but not to the degree they have become. The landscape has changed.
- Zoning struggles complicate working waterfront communities.
- 5-6 significant reports have come out highlighting the unique struggles of working waterfronts.
- Some big projects have happened in the last several years to support communal working waterfront infrastructure.
- CMWG work
- **Climate ready infrastructure** – understand and address impacts on working waterfronts to sea level rise and storm surges
- **Infrastructure that supports others in adapting to climate change** – build resilience in businesses to withstand environmental change which provides a critical location to other businesses
- **Location for GHG mitigation projects** – stabilizing energy costs to respond to shifts in ecosystems or social pressures on land.
- **Privately owned infrastructure providing a public good** – many private waterfront infrastructure provides public good, but are often left out of community resilience related work

Comment (Ben): Emphasized that lawsuits are a big part of the equation in our current situation. Also, working waterfronts are a municipal issue and many fishermen are having to move to a different municipality that they can afford, and are thus an outside voice on waterfront issues. It's important to understand that those we may want to invest in are moving out of their spaces.

Comments (from Jessica, Nick, and Bill): Zoning **needs** to be part of this conversation. We need to increase the funding for Working Waterfront protection if we're hoping to scale up. As we adapt, there may be opportunities for working waterfronts to slide in and provide value to property owners who might have had a hotel or other. We need to frame them as a transitional use.

Comment (Michelle): How do we incentivize natural infrastructure? How do we change GHG calculators to incorporate the larger effects of say, a solar field (Kathleen Billings) over a forest?

Comment (Kathleen Billings): It's hard but important to make sure surrounding communities understand the importance of working waterfronts. Stonington is dealing with developers coming in.

Comment (John): Our coastlines are getting plowed by these big developments, and the amount of large infrastructure and pavement in our local community is creating environmental issues that are something our community hasn't seen previously.

Comment (Anne): There needs to be more focus on getting the word out to others to inform and educate students and the general public about the importance of updated and resilient working waterfronts.

Comments (Jeremy): another important tie-in would be the energy group and the infrastructure needs that are going to be needed with OSW and to make sure we can retain working waterfront resiliency

Comment (Ivy): How does our youth perspective feel about these conversations? Her voice is very relevant

- *Response (Edge):* I think these are good conversations, but I don't have a lot of information on many of these topics, but I think they're good?

Comment (Carl): OSW is a trade-off subject. I don't think we should avoid those hard topics.

Next meetings and steps

The next meeting should be late November if possible, let us know if you want to host it.

- For homework, review MWW and equity report.
- Come to prioritize Strategies D and E
- Figure out if you want to participate in a specific subgroup

Comment (Carl): I suspect people will break out into their subgroups in the next meeting.

Conversation (Jessica and Molly): Regards to funding opportunities related to community resilience

Comment (Ivy): Question regarding options for scheduling meetings

Response (Curtis Brown): It can get complicated quickly but that's a fair ask and we will do what we can

Comment (Anne): If we can't do an online or in-person meeting, is there a way to make sure our comments are received?

Response (Curt and Laura): Absolutely, we're working on a google folder and will make sure everyone has access

Appendix: Attendance

Working Group	Members	
Carl	Wilson	Department of Marine Resources
Curt	Brown	Ready Seafood
Marianne	Moore	Maine State Legislature (via Zoom)
Cameron	Reny	Maine State Legislature (via Zoom)
Tiffany	Strout	Maine State Legislature (via Zoom)
Lydia	Crafts	Maine State Legislature
Nick	Battista	Island Institute
Jocelyn	Runnebaum	The Nature Conservancy (via Zoom)
Curtis	Bohlen	Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
Ivy	Frignoca	Friends of Casco Bay
Jeremy	Gabrielson	Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Beverly	Johnson	Bates College (via Zoom)
Bill	Needelman	City of Portland
Gayle	Zydlewski	Maine Sea Grant at the University of Maine
Susie	Arnold	Island Institute
Wendy	Garland	Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Angela	Brewer	Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Rebecca	Peters	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Jesica	Waller	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Meredith	White	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Carla	Guenther	Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries (via Zoom)
Amy	Winston	CEI
Robert	Holmberg	Roger Williams University
Ben	Martens	Maine Coast Fishermen's Association (via Zoom)
Chuck	Bennett	Independent lobsterman
Michelle	Staudinger	University of Maine
Heather	Hamlin	University of Maine (via Zoom)
Christine	Beitl	University of Maine (via Zoom)
Natalie	Johnson	Maine Maritime Academy
Edge	Venuti	Sunrise County Climate Coalition / Maine Youth for Climate Justice
Anne Langston	Noll	Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center
Kathleen	Billings	Town of Stonington (via Zoom)
Gabe	McPhail	Resilient Communities, L3C (via Zoom)
Jessica	Joyce	Tidal Bay Consulting / DMR Shellfish Advisory Council
Marissa	McMahan	Manomet
Staff/Observers:		

Matt	Davis	Department of Marine Resources
Kathleen	Leyden	Department of Marine Resources, Coastal Program (via Zoom)
Melissa	Britsch	Department of Marine Resources, Coastal Program
John	O'Connell	