

Maine Climate Council
Natural and Working Lands Work Group Meeting Notes
Wednesday, November 29, 2023; 9:30 am - 12:30 pm
Deering Building, Room 101, Blossom Lane, Augusta

At this meeting, the Work Group:

- Introduced the focus areas – land, food, forest carbon
- Discussed the integration of equity considerations in the WG’s and subgroups’ work
- Shared the deliverables template that will provide structure to the subgroups’ outcomes
- Provided an opportunity for public input

- Co-chairs Commissioner Beal and Tom Abello welcomed Work Group members and all present introduced themselves.
- Facilitator Jo D. Saffair reviewed revised Working Agreements that included a proposed decision-making process. WG members endorsed this document as revised.
- Subgroup Presentations
 - Andy Cutko, Craig Lapine, and Jo D. Saffair gave introductory presentations on the 30% land conservation by 2030, 30% Maine food consumption by 2030, and forest carbon focal areas of the update process. General comments included a suggestion to engage the 15 largest landowners in the state to partner on achieving the land conservation goal; clarifying what could be counted as protected; including self-provisioning as part of the food count; developing an updated understanding of existing forest carbon programs; addressing logger challenges as a result of climate change.
- Equity Recommendation Presentation
 - Jo D. Saffair and David Ludwig gave a presentation on the Maine Climate Council Equity Subcommittee’s recommendations that pertain to the Natural and Working Lands Work Group, and how equity considerations are to be integrated into each Work Group’s updated recommendations. General comments included the suggestion to add local food consumption to MCC’s Natural Resource equity metric; ensuring subgroup meetings are as accessible to the public as full Work Group meetings; and working to broaden representation on the subgroups to ensure diverse perspectives are represented.
- Deliverable Template
 - Jo D. Saffair reviewed the expectation of the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) regarding the general format of the final product from the Work Group in June. This template will be further modified by GOPIF and an updated version will be shared with the Work Group when available.
- Public Input
 - Appalachian Mountain Club noted that a consensus report is beneficial, citing the example of the NWL recommending an Ecological reserve increase but it not being included in Maine Won’t wait due to a dissenting perspective.
 - Maine Forest Service noted the new Forest Carbon Specialist will soon be joining MFS.
- Next Steps

- The Work Group will meet as three subgroups for the following four months: December through March. Meeting dates for all subgroups can be found at <https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/council/workinggroups/lands>