

Maine Climate Council
Natural and Working Lands Work Group Meeting
Forest Carbon Subgroup Meeting Notes
Friday, December 15, 2023; 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
DACF's Bolton Hill Facility, 2870 North Belfast Ave., Augusta

At this meeting, the Subgroup:

- Reviewed the history of forest carbon recommendation development
- Discussed progress made and/or existing barriers for each recommendation
- Chosen a few key recommendations to focus on during the update process
- Agreed on an approach to proposing concrete updates to the Open Space Tax Program
- Provided an opportunity for public input

The following numbers correspond to the recommendations in the Maine Forest Carbon Task Force (FCTF) final report.

#1. Review Current Harvest Levels. **Ivan Fernandez, Adam Daigneault, and Jereme Frank** agreed to update figures to reflect new FIA data, and provide estimates based on various acreage categories (including <10,000-acre ownerships).

#2. Review Practice-Based Forest Carbon Programs. The Subgroup delegated this to **Andy Whitman** for ongoing tracking to serve as an up-to-date clearinghouse for landowners. Won't be possible to summarize fully in 4 months, but may be possible to identify key variables/risks/failure points and develop a brief summary of these issues in the next month or two.

#3. Identify Climate-Friendly Forest Management Practices. The Subgroup viewed this work as largely complete. More recent learnings focus on the distinctions in stocking between northern and southern Maine and how that influences which forest management practices are most beneficial in each region. In both regions, of greatest importance is avoiding forest conversion.

#4a. Increase Technical Assistance to Landowners. The Subgroup would like to focus on this more, exploring ways to further capitalize on MFS's increasing staff capacity (while recognizing 2 field forester positions are still vacant). Areas of discussion included increasing alignment with NRCS and collaboration with SWCDs, outreach to agricultural producers, outreach to new forestland owners unfamiliar with forest management, and possibly identifying entities that could partner with MFS to increase landowner outreach.

#4b. Develop and/or Offer Financial Incentives to Landowners. The Subgroup acknowledged that this recommendation hinged on an understanding of forest carbon programs currently available to landowners, and that the field of options has evolved since the FCTF report was issued. It will be necessary to have further information on existing options in order to assess the value of Maine partnering with an entity to develop a program tailored to Maine landowners.

