

*Maine Climate Council | Community Resilience Working Group (CRWG) Meeting Summary from January 19, 2024

Welcome

- Goals of meeting are to discuss Mitchell Center's and others' efforts to engage priority populations in the work of the CRWG, discuss the impacts of recent storms in Maine, and identify metrics of community resilience for the Maine Won't Wait (MWW) 2024 update.

Mitchell Center, University of Maine

Outreach to priority populations

- Mitchell Center staff and students presented their ongoing work to amplify diverse voices and ensure that priority populations have opportunities to provide input to CRWG, in accordance with Equity Subcommittee 2023 recommendations and subsequent work.
- WG members and public participants provided feedback about additional groups to consider engaging and how best to engage them, including those with mental health challenges exacerbated by climate change and those from rural areas or with economic insecurities.
- Engaging with some priority populations may best be done by partnering with formal or informal grassroots organizations and existing community programs. Examples include van pool services for those with limited mobility, shoreline cleanups, community workdays, etc.

Recent Storms

Discussions of recent severe storms, impacts, and responses

- Maine received five federal disaster declarations in 2023 and may potentially receive two more for recent storm damage. Maine typically sees one disaster declaration per year, or less.
- Damage reporting is essential for quantifying the extent of impacts and for qualifying for maximum amount of federal disaster assistance. So far, \$30 million in damages have been reported from recent storms, although not all have been verified and that number is subject to change and final determinations of eligibility for disaster relief.
- Attendees were divided into smaller breakout rooms to share more detailed feedback on recent storm impacts, and preparedness and response successes and areas for improvement. Generally, storm forecasting was good, but many resources were overwhelmed with the scale of the response. Emergency communications varied across the state and were effective in some areas but were limited in others.
- Physical infrastructure (the built environment) and social infrastructure (relationships, governance, community networks, and communications channels) are both critical when planning for resilience.
- We now have a unique opportunity to rebuild – will we rebuild exactly as things were before, or will we rebuild to withstand current and predicted future conditions?

Goals and Metrics for the State

Existing work

- US Climate Alliance, other states have already created many metrics of physical, environmental, and social resilience from which we can draw. Metrics should be specific and measurable to the extent practical.

Discussion for possible metrics for the State

- Goal is for the MWW 2024 update to focus much more heavily on resilience than the 2020 plan.
- Improvements can be made to outreach, education, and communications at relatively low cost but with high impact.
- Metrics for MWW 2024 update should be specific but still be understood by general audiences and policymakers alike. Additional work will refine these in the coming weeks.
- Potential metrics may be grouped around the themes of physical infrastructure, social Infrastructure, public health, economic, environmental.
- All of these themes covered various equity goals of MWW, including:
 - Chapter F Equity Goal #2 – Support planning, monitoring, and education for climate-related health hazards in disadvantaged and frontline communities
 - Chapter F Equity Goal #3 – Increase access to information provided via state natural hazard emergency alert systems for disadvantaged individuals within Maine communities
 - Chapter G Equity Goal #1 – Identify and invest in climate resilient infrastructure in frontline and disadvantaged communities (infrastructure was very broad in this chapter: buildings, communications)

Next Steps

- Participants shared many pages of feedback on storm impacts, lessons learned, and potential metrics. CRWG staff and co-chairs will analyze this information to find common themes and to prepare goals and associated metrics for CRWG review at next meeting.
- Upcoming meetings will be from 9 am to 12 pm (unless otherwise noted) on the following days:
 - Friday, February 9, 2024: virtual, [Register Here](#)
 - NEWLY SCHEDULED MEETING: 9 am to 12 pm on Thursday, February 29, 2024: virtual, [Register Here](#)
 - Friday, March 22, 2024: virtual, [Register Here](#)
 - Friday, April 26, 2024: in person with virtual option

Shared Resources:

- Yale Climate Opinion Maps: <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us/>
- Some information on social determinants of health: <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>

- The Connection Initiative: <https://www.connectioninitiative.org/>
 - It is in addition to 211 and is meant to be more local and embedded.
- The Climate Adaptation & Resilience Outcomes Tool (CAROT) (UMaine SharePoint Excel) is a Maine Specific tool providing a set of resilience criteria, outcomes, and metrics. Communities can use this downloadable Microsoft Excel-based workbook to define and measure success over time. https://umainesystem-my.sharepoint.com/:x/g/person/adam_daigneault_maine_edu/EbJX-9OcfWdOkgCAcu9kSh4B1QoGqLyEIFZSfR2UMlOTWA?rttime=B0Q2FwwZ3Eg (fixed)
 - As well as a chapter in the Community Resilience Workbook, which includes metrics and evaluation: <https://extension.umaine.edu/climatesolutions/maine-community-resilience-workbook/assessment-planning-implementation-evaluation/>
- A list of some of the faith-based organizations in Maine: <https://mainecouncilofchurches.org/>
- Maine Ready exists as a platform for folks to sign up and be called up by Emergency Management Agencies: <https://www.maineready.org/>
- Climate Change Institute Lecture Series: PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND CULTIVATING RESILIENCE on Monday, February 5, 2024, at 12 PM. Zoom Link: Please contact Hathaway.N@gmail.com
- This article from Vermont is a sobering case study in how the difference in economic resources/civic institutions played out in disaster recovery: <https://vtdigger.org/2023/07/21/a-tale-of-two-cities-some-see-inequities-in-barre-and-montpelier-recoveries/>