

Coastal and Marine Working Group

Monday, January 22, 2024

Notes: Working waterfronts and infrastructure subgroup (11:00 am – 12:00 pm)

Next meeting: Thursday, Feb 15, 9:00 am. DMR Boothbay

Agenda:

- Discussion of equity outreach presentation from U Maine
- Report back on latest Community Resilience Working Group conversations, particularly around the storm and managed retreat related topics
- Discussion about collaboration with the fisheries and aquaculture group

Attendees (* = CMWG member):

- Kathleen Billings*
- Nick Battista*
- Bill Needleman*
- Jessica Joyce*
- Melissa Britsch
- Catherine Mardosa
- Carl Wilson*
- Curt Brown*
- Ed Billings*
- Laura Singer*
- Jesica Waller*

Action items:

- Could our group plan to attend the next Community Resilience Working Group meeting and maybe ask for agenda time to discuss how WWFs fit into managed retreat? **Action item:** Nick will ask
- Add a link to the CMWG/WWF & Infrastructure Google Drive about Portland's coastal resilience overlay! **Action item:** Bill will provide
 - o [Portland Resilience Zoning - Proposed Approach for Public Review \(squarespace.com\)](https://squarespace.com)
- **Action item:** Nick will share links to the Fisheries and Aquaculture strategy documents with the WWF & Infrastructure subgroup
- Future meetings for the WWF & Infrastructure subgroup: One or maybe two before the February 15 meeting. **Action item:** Nick will schedule
- **Action item:** Ask Laura Singer – will we be able to expand the plan with a new strategy related to working waterfronts and access? We aren't supposed to add too much to the plan, but resilience is a big theme right now. We can probably proceed for now.

General discussion:

- This group wants to be part of the managed retreat discussion

- We are looking at the templates and working on a strategy about working waterfront protection and resilience
- Resilience preparedness is a big focus for the climate plan update
 - o We have an opportunity to think big about WWFs and resilience
- **Note:** the most impacted WWFs are privately-owned. Unique problem. How do we help them? There isn't an easy program to use.
- Private vs public resources. How can public WWFs support private, and vice versa?
 - o People are working together to accommodate those who lost access, but it is hard.
- People are wondering whether they can build filled-in piers instead of pile-driven since they seemed to weather the storm better. Do we need to change our infrastructure to be more resilient?
 - o Permitting is a barrier to flexible responses. Bans on filling exist for good reason, but can we make permitting more flexible to support rebuilding more resilient WWF infrastructure? Need to support infrastructure that is resilient to storms.
 - o Permitting is also slow. People want to get back on the water ASAP.
- WWFs need enough space (and flexible space) to accommodate repairs in their normal course of business, not just responding to disasters

Equity discussion

- Members should do the survey being created by UMaine
- There wasn't much to go over, so the group agreed to discuss equity considerations in more detail during the next meeting
- **Note:** We need to think about the groups who are missing from the UMaine list of groups that they are working with to reach priority populations
 - o Formal groups and informal groups
- WWF groups often already feel left out of state processes

Community Resilience Working Group update

- Storm damage was discussed
- They didn't discuss managed retreat in detail, but it is on the schedule for the next meeting
 - o That group doesn't just focus on coastal issues
- Could our group plan to attend and maybe ask for agenda time to discuss how WWFs fit into managed retreat? **Action item:** Nick will ask
- Add a link to the CMWG/WWF & Infrastructure Google Drive about Portland's coastal resilience overlay! **Action item:** Bill will provide:
 - o <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a75f43a692ebee1159413d/t/65649bd49349b12c5dcb/bfab/1701092318291/Portland+Resilience+Zoning+Proposed+Approach.pdf>
 - o The layer sets a precedent for treating uses differently based on their water-dependency
 - o Managed retreat shouldn't be applied universally – WWFs need to be on the coast

Working with the Fisheries and Aquaculture group to beef up connections to the marine economy and working waterfronts and provide strategies to the CMWG

- They are fine with us joining. **Action item:** Nick will share links to the documents with the WWF & Infrastructure subgroup

- Goal: Provide a consolidated set of recommendations from the two subgroups to the larger CMWG.
- We will lead on the WWF strategy and can pull them in once we have something to share.

Fishermen's Forum

- Opportunity to mention recent storms and share resources. The session plan isn't finalized and we will mention the CMWG.

Next meeting

- One or maybe two before the February 15 meeting. **Action item**: Nick will schedule

Strategy discussion – using the GOPIF template

Link to template:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1la49eh9talr40VGpODmweNk4niC0Am8N/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=103075557565763153475&rtpof=true&sd=true>

- Question: For the actions, how specific/quantifiable should we be? We need to be flexible. Can they be open-ended or very specific?
 - o Base ours on the last plan
 - o The actions need detail so they can be implemented
 - For WWF stuff, we might need some deeper details to go with the info that goes into the plan. Maybe a supplemental document? Like where should a WWF grant program live? What state agency would run a WWF resilience program?
 - Question #5 in the template has space for additional details
- WWFs are very broad, but we tend to silo ourselves with fisheries and aquaculture
 - o We need to expand our thinking beyond fisheries and aquaculture uses
 - o Inland water-based infrastructure also needs resilience help
 - How do we define "coastal?" Can "WWF" expand to include water-dependent businesses more broadly?
- Road systems and infrastructure are essential for lobster transport and the marine economy in general
 - o How is DOT going to adapt to the future?
 - o DOT may be more involved with WWF infrastructure in the future – commercial fishing can now access port funding
- Much of the culvert adaption in western Maine came about after big storms. Maybe WWFs will be on the same track now.
- Idea: Split the strategy into a public strategy and a private strategy. Both pieces need to be in the conversation
 - o Make clear that we are focusing on private properties for commercial use. If we put funding into private properties, should we include a requirement that commercial use be maintained? Like the Working Waterfront Access Protection Plan covenant, but maybe not as strict?

- o **Action item:** Ask Laura – will we be able to expand the plan with a new strategy? We aren't supposed to add too much to the plan, but resilience is a big theme right now. We can probably proceed for now.
 - o If we can't get a strategy specific to helping natural-resource-based activities be resilient, how do we get WWFs and resilience into the plan?
- Canada has very strong and well-built public piers for commercial use. They are a backstop for economic activity. Maybe we should consider similar investment in our public infrastructure? Possible federal funding investment opportunity.
 - o Investing in public infrastructure as a backup to private infrastructure
- **Issue:** public infrastructure needs to be resilient. Public funds need to be spent to make properties resilient in the future. We shouldn't have public piers being reinforced but not rebuilt high enough, like Isle Au Haut's pier, which is new but was 2ft underwater in the last storm
 - o Easier to tell people what to do with public facilities. Maybe we need to make the requirements more clear
 - o Do WWAPP properties need to be made to be resilient? Do they need funded so they are resilient in the future?
- Not enough public funding for all of our resilience desires, especially for private properties. We need to help businesses make smart investments.
 - o People want to know how high to rebuild, or what to do. What should people think about when rebuilding to be more resilient?
 - o How do we support people who don't maintain their structures? They will want to build back, but we need to make sure they build back resilient and stay resilient.
 - It's hard to tell people what to do with their private properties. Don't want to create an incentive to not be resilient and get funding to rebuild anyways.
 - o **Need:** a white paper and/or simple instructions to help people know what to do. Maine Coastal Program is working to translate this report: [Penobscot Bay Summary Report 12 23 19.pdf \(maine.gov\)](#)
 - Also need to make the white paper very readable and accessible
 - o Also a need for short-term structures to maintain access. Infrastructure for immediate response
- **Idea:** Lots of details to consider for the outlines of a fund for WWF resilience! This group needs to think more about this
- **Idea:** with the federal climate resilience money, do we have an opportunity to take advantage by aggregating a lot of projects?
 - o There is a port resilience funding opportunity. We would need a state-wide plan and state investment
 - o Or a new fish pier bond?
 - o Now is a good time to be thinking about resilient infrastructure and what the coast could look like in the future. We need to plan!
- **Idea:** coastal access isn't just WWF infrastructure. Access to the coast is important, too, like for shellfishing.
- Bring Pat into the WWF/Infrastructure subgroup – have him join the next meeting briefly?

- Gratefulness for Pat's outreach to communities after the January storms
- Permitting streamlining and permitting reform is as important as infrastructure adaptation. Both things go together.
 - E.g. the Portland Fish Pier wouldn't be permissible today.