

Maine Climate Council Coastal and Marine Working Group

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Darling Marine Center, 193 Clarks Cove Rd, Walpole

Meeting Summary

The Coastal and Marine Working Group (CMWG) of the Marine Climate Council met at the Darling Marine Center in Walpole, Maine. The meeting began with a discussion of how the CMWG will integrate equity considerations into subgroup recommendations across three priority themes: Fisheries & Aquaculture, Working Waterfronts & Infrastructure, and Monitoring & Coastal/Marine Habitats. Subgroups then went into breakout groups to further integrate equity language into recommendations and begin synthesizing draft strategies, recommendations, and actions into a condensed package which will combine with other subgroups to form the final CMWG recommendations to the full Climate Council, which will be submitted in June. Members were present online and in-person. See the appendix for a list of meeting participants. Slides from the meeting can be found [here](#).

Objectives

- Integrate equity considerations into draft strategies, recommendations, and actions for all three priority subgroups.
- Discuss intersections of cross-cutting strategies across subgroups for conciseness and clarity.
- Prepare to deliver final subgroup recommendations and actions to the full CMWG subcommittee by the first week of May.

Welcome

Co-chairs Curt Brown and Carl Wilson gave a brief welcome and overview of the CMWG's progress. This was the seventh meeting of the CMWG and significant progress has been made in that time. Cross-cutting meetings have also been underway with the Land Use cross-cutting subcommittee and the Community Resilience Working Group. Carl emphasized that coastal and marine issues are cut across all other Working Groups and this process is an opportunity to imbue discussions of climate responses with coastal issues. The facilitator, Laura Singer, gave an overview of meeting objectives and agenda. She also noted the goal of the meeting to work through language that each subgroup wants to put forward for inclusion in the CMWG recommendations, and that ultimately co-chairs and staff will have the final pen. GOPIF will then work with the Maine Climate Council on final language for the update of the Maine climate action plan.

Discussion: Equity considerations for the CMWG

Prior to this meeting of the CMWG, Laura sent all participants a list of questions to consider during group discussions of equity. The three equity questions were:

1. What are concerns and needs of vulnerable groups in relation to recommendations?
2. How might aspects of recommendations inadvertently do harm to certain vulnerable groups?
3. How could you address these potential harms and/or adjust language to be more respectful?

Subgroups were asked to take these questions to breakouts and discuss how they could integrate into recommendations, strategies, and actions. This breakout was prefaced with a group discussion of how equity is imbued in the broader work of the Maine Climate Council. Laura noted that GOPIF is taking this issue very seriously working with the UMaine Mitchell Center on an [Engagement Plan](#) to support the Climate Council's equity goals. Carl noted that at the subcommittee level work can often be constrained and when it comes to equity it can be hard to capture the big picture. Carl reiterated that these conversations are valid, difficult, and deserve time to work through.

Maggie Kelly-Boyd from GOPIF then gave an overview on the progress of the Mitchell Center on its Engagement Plan. She reiterated that the goal of the Mitchell Center is to support engagement with priority populations and those most impacted by climate changes in Maine.

- The Mitchell Center has updated the Engagement Plan and is working with numerous local organizations to deliver its goals.
- Focus groups, listening sessions, surveys, interviews, etc. are all currently in progress with priority populations and the Wabanaki nation.
- The Engagement Plan is intentionally taking a long time to implement as the principal tenant is building trust.
- Preliminary findings of the Mitchell Center will be presented at the next CMWG meeting on May 15.
- A full report from the Mitchell Center will be delivered to the Maine Climate Council in Summer/Fall 2024.

Marissa McMahan from Manomet is a member of the CMWG that also sits on the Equity Subcommittee of the Maine Climate Council. She thanked the Chairs and Laura for creating space at the beginning of this meeting to discuss equity concerns. She said that the concerns often brought up during this process, timelines and missing voices, have been communicated to the equity subcommittee leadership.

- All feedback and concerns about equity elevated during this meeting will be brought up to the equity subcommittee leadership meeting next week.
- Materials are available on the [shared Google Drive](#) on equity. One useful tool is the equity framework, the thought process for reviewing language and recommendations to guide conversations.
- There are four types of equity: procedural, distributional, structural, and cultural.
- There are voices missing from this conversation. It is worthwhile to call out places where more input would be valuable.

Gayle Zydlewski from UMaine mentioned that all three equity questions circulated by Laura prior to the meeting (listed above) were asked of the full Maine Climate Council by the Mitchell Center already. She noted that:

- The Mitchell Center recommendations will not include Tribal communities. Although there are those in this conversation and space that are aware of what approach Indigenous peoples will take in reviewing recommendations.
- Rather than focusing on economic-centric rhetoric, focusing on the environment first as the supporter of economies is a promising lens for equity considerations.

Ivy Frignoca echoed Gayle's sentiments on centering on the environment, mentioning that there are other value systems to consider, including sustenance.

Carla Guenther from Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries offered that other inclusive language would include cultural value but noted that there is often historical harm associated with that connection. She said, "sometimes if you go too far down inclusion you lose the intent."

Nick Battista from the Island Institute noted that the CMWG is already a nod from the Climate Council to equity, as its geographic focus and emphasis on small businesses and disadvantaged communities is evident.

Bill Needelman from the City of Portland mentioned that until we address affordable housing, none of the goals of the Climate Council will be achievable. He said that somewhere in the document there needs to be a nod to affordable housing as a driver of inequity.

Dr. Michelle Staudinger from the Darling Marine Center noted the [Tribal Adaptation Menu](#) written by tribal nations is a resource potential for this process. A version for the Wabanaki people is currently being worked on. She also offer a link to the [WAMPUM Framework](#) as a potential useful too.

Michelle also noted:

- Preventative actions are so important.
- We need to address the incentive structure of climate financing. Right now you need capital upfront to take resilience actions (e.g. converting to heat pumps). In underserved communities that doesn't exist. This structure needs to be flipped.

Ben Martens from Maine Coast Fishermen's Association noted that climate change is not the only "big bad" and that low income communities want to solve other problems first. He also noted:

- There are people who were invited to participate in this process who said "no."
- We should not just check a box on equity.
- There are political statements being made about this process that we don't fully understand and that is an issue.
- Going through and identifying spaces in which other people can share their perspectives is critical.
- Concerns over the timeline of equity inclusion in this process.

Jocelyn Runnebaum noted the importance of disrupting white dominant culture while discussing equity concerns.

- Take a moment to understand the power dynamics in this room and in the entire Climate Council process.
- We need to be mindful of white government culture and how we have conversations that reflect what each of us as individuals frame our reflections and recommendations within.

Break into Subgroups

After the group discussion on equity, Laura prefaced the breakout sessions. All subgroups would talk further about implementation of recommendations, strategies, and actions. After the breakouts, subgroups would reconvene to discuss. As a group, she noted, we need to be comfortable and have consensus on what a distilled list would include. She asked all subgroups to make their notes and edits in the shared Google Drive so that everyone could see and access together as a larger subcommittee.

Reconvene the Subgroups into full CMWG

Overview from the Working Waterfronts & Infrastructure subgroup:

- Many bullets are listed out under each strategy, there is still work to be done in distilling.
- More work needs to be done on implementation, impact, and some word smithing.
- This subgroup has two more meetings between now and May 15.
- Walked through each strategy and identified language that could be adjusted under the lens of equity. Conversations on equity also illuminated other substantive language missing from the strategies and recommendations.
- Talked a lot about access and its relation to more than working waterfronts but also public access, clam flats, monitoring, fisheries management, etc.
- Q: When you increase monitoring do you increase access? How frequently do we monitor and can this be increased?

Overview from the Fisheries & Aquaculture subgroup:

- Very productive talk, but struggling with tweaking existing language vs. bringing in larger recommendations and systems thinking.
- This is a political document at the end of the day, there are parts that we might want to emphasize natural resources for their intrinsic value, but instead we should maybe emphasize economies and jobs.
- Discussed how as climate change impacts intensify, conflict in communities will as well. How can DMR and other agencies anticipate this conflict and prepare for it?
 - o Examples of this kind of conflict:
 - A meeting in Harpswell about whether to put a moratorium on all aquaculture.
 - Offshore wind development in the Gulf of Maine.
 - Likely conflict this summer on working waterfronts as more vessels use fewer access points, a new trend communities will be facing.

Overview from the Monitoring & Coastal/Marine Habitats subgroup:

- Spent a good amount of time talking about equity concerns and what it means to allow equitable access to information and the coast.
- Who gets to ask the questions that drive our monitoring and who decides what information we should collect? There are no social scientists in our group, which is a demonstrated bias of this subgroup.
- Working on how to narrow down recommendations but also reflect critical thinking.
- Climate migration provides a lens to think about coastal access through a climate lens.
- Mental health is a huge gap in support for climate impacts, we need to foster communities to develop the internal capacity to support themselves and each other. Towns have to make a seemingly unending series of decisions related to resilience and adaptation. How do we support this process?
- Logistically, the subgroup assigned everyone a role to establish short, medium, and long term goals for each strategy.
- This subgroup will meet on May 9 to bring all detailed strategies together.

Final Remarks & Timeline

May 3: Carl and Curt would like pens down on recommendations, strategies, and actions.

- Just the strategy table.

May 10: Carl and Curt will return strategy tables to subgroups for review.

May 10: Suggested pens down on implementation actions.

May 15: Next meeting of the CMWG. Group discussion of final strategy table.

May 15: Mitchell Center presentation to the CMWG.

Note: After May 15 there will still be time to revise the implementation section and incorporate learnings from the Mitchell Center before recommendations are submitted to the full Climate Council on June 18.

Appendix: Attendance

Working Group	Members:	
Carl	Wilson	Maine Department of Marine Resources (Co-chair)
Curt	Brown	Ready Seafood (Co-chair)
Susie	Arnold	Island Institute
Nick	Battista	Island Institute
Christine	Beitl	University of Maine (via Zoom)
Curtis	Bohlen	Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
Damian	Brady	University of Maine, Darling Marine Center
Angela	Brewer	Maine Department of Environmental Protection (via Zoom)
Amanda	Ellis	Maine Department of Marine Resources (via Zoom)
Ivy	Frignoca	Friends of Casco Bay
Jeremy	Gabrielson	Maine Coast Heritage Trust (via Zoom)
Wendy	Garland	Maine Department of Environment (via Zoom)
Jessica	Gribbon-Joyce	Tidal Bay Consulting
Carla	Guenther	Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries
Ben	Gutzler	Wells Estuarine Research Reserve (via Zoom)
Ben	Martens	Maine Coast Fishermen's Association
Marissa	McMahan	Manomet
Gabe	McPhail	Resilient Communities, L3C
Kathy	Mills	Gulf of Maine Research Institute
Bill	Needelman	City of Portland
Rebecca	Peters	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Cameron	Reny	Senator, Maine Legislature
Jocelyn	Runnebaum	The Nature Conservancy (via Zoom)
Michelle	Staudinger	University of Maine
Josh	Stoll	University of Maine (via Zoom)
Edge	Venuti	Sunrise County Climate Coalition/ME Youth for Climate Justice
Jesica	Waller	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Meredith	White	Maine Department of Marine Resources (via Zoom)
Amy	Winston	Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
Gayle	Zydlowski	ME Sea Grant

Staff/Observers:

Melissa	Britsch	ME Coastal Program/ME DMR
Julia	Barron	University of Maine (via Zoom)
Hsiao-Yun	Chang	University of Maine
Matt	Davis	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Devin	Domeyer	ME Coastal Program/ME DMR
Blaise	Jenner	Maine Department of Marine Resources (via Zoom)
Maggie	Kelly-Boyd	GOPIF (via Zoom)
Tolulope	Oyikeke	University of Maine (via Zoom)
David	Plavin	Public Observer (via Zoom)
Olivia	Richards	Island Institute
Sarah	Risley	University of Maine (via Zoom)
Laura	Singer	Consensus Building Institute/SAMBAS Consulting, Facilitator
Helena	Tatgenhorst	The Nature Conservancy (via Zoom)
Chas	Van Damme	Gulf of Maine Research Institute (via Zoom)
Abby	Westberry	Public Observer (via Zoom)