
Amplifying Voices: Representing Diverse Perspectives

— Natural and Working Lands
Working Group —

May Progress Check-In

Reminder of the Project Goal



March 2023

To ensure the populations in Maine most impacted by climate change are aware of and have the opportunity to influence State climate programs and policies by iteratively and intentionally engaging these “priority populations” in the Maine Climate Council process in ways that are meaningful for each population.

**Note:* We will reconnect with Equity Subcommittee on May 9th to discuss work in progress.

Updated Timeline

1. Report to WG about 1st round of engagements -- mid-May 2024
2. Second round of engagement activities -- Summer 2024
3. Report to MCC about 2nd round -- September 2024
4. Reflection discussion with WG & MCC members from priority populations -- September 2024



Thank you for your earlier input

Thank you to the **31** members of NWL who responded to our survey of Working Groups!

You shared with us specific interest in hearing from:

- small natural resource industries/resources
- climate frontline communities
- Youth, Tribal members, BIPOC, new Mainers, lower income

And confirmed interest in specific questions (we'll return to those shortly)

Original Priority Populations List from GOPIF

- Low income households, including renters, home owners, and mobile home residents
- Older adults and youth
- Black or POC communities
- Tribal communities
- Low income communities
- Disadvantaged communities
- People with limited English proficiency, including New Mainers
- Recipients of LIHEAP, LIAP, or other energy assistance benefits
- People with mobility challenges
- People without access to reliable transportation
- Migrant farm workers and other outdoor workers
- Businesses in the natural resource industries like agriculture, forestry, and fishing who are operating at the economic margin or suffer disproportionate climate risk
- Un/underemployed people who are also representatives of a priority population or are transitioning from prison or recovery
- Minority, women-owned or veteran owned business enterprises (MWBVEs)
- Rural communities and small towns with limited staff or fiscal capacity
- Climate-frontline communities

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A note on Engagement with Maine's Tribes

- Tribal preference for Government to Government interaction
- Important to consider and empower Tribal Sovereignty moving forward
- Thank you to Dr. Darren Ranco, Jasmine Lamb, Natalie Michelle, Ambassador Bryant for their time and continued efforts in empowering the voices of Wabanaki Tribes.

Our efforts, in brief

Examples of Engagements

- Conference session at the Maine Sustainability and Water Conference
- Focus groups and surveys of Maine Citizens (n=382; 86% priority pop, our focus today)
- Events with Community Partners (ex: 'Climate Change and Food Justice with Community Organizing Alliance)

Some of our Community Based Partners

- Kennebec Valley Community Action Partnership (KVCAP)
- The Maine Council on Aging
- PassivHaus
- The Community Organizing Alliance (COA)
- Coastal Enterprises Inc (CEI)
- Sunrise County Economic Council (SCEC)
- Maine Environmental Education Association
- Center for an Ecology Based Economy (CEBE)



Key findings: Maine Climate Council Involvement

- While current participation may be low, interest in participation & outcomes is high
- **Support/Resources needed to be involved:**
 - Additional Information
 - Financial support (from a mix of rural and urban respondents)
 - Flexible scheduling, understanding of time
- **Trust in Climate Information from the State**
 - While a majority of folks we've talked to say 'Yes' - there are those saying 'most of the time; sometimes; or No'
 - Some of the lack of trust is because "I don't understand"



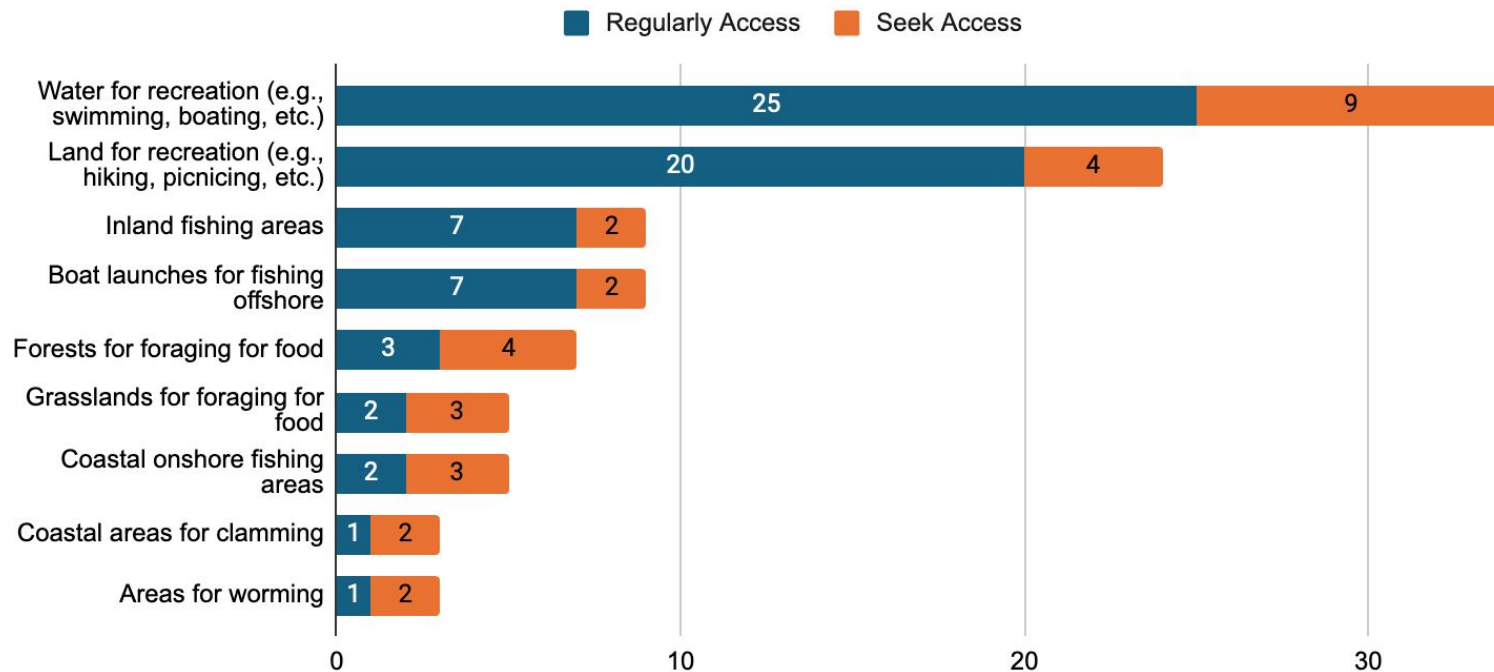
When asked ‘What are the biggest needs for you/ your community?’:

10% noted a *NWL related issue* including:

- Healthy/Local Food
- Clean Water
- Preservation and/or conservation of natural spaces; Sustainability

An additional 12% noted *Climate Change*

Q1: What are perceptions, barriers, preferences, and possible interventions related to access to and use of green space, natural and working lands and waters, including working and recreational waterfronts?



Number of Responses (44 people total responded to the block)

Q1: What are perceptions, barriers, preferences, and possible interventions related to access to and use of green space, natural and working lands and waters, including working and recreational waterfronts?

Barriers to access

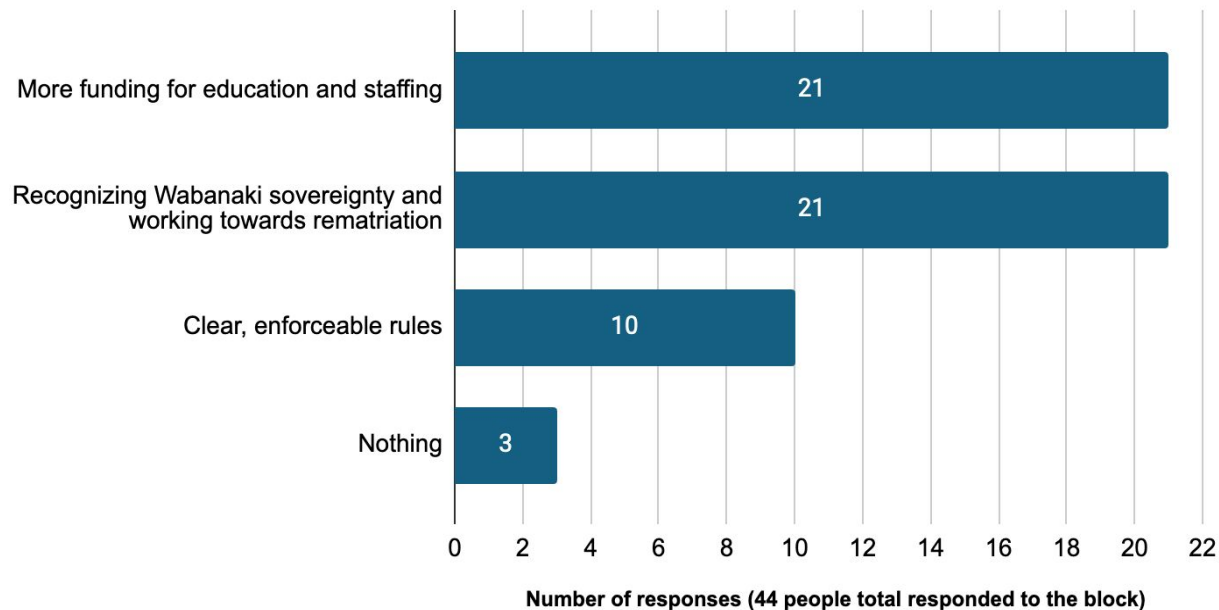
- Lack of information about what's available
- Cost of access (parking, fees - often high due to tourism)
- Transportation to resources sites (recreational and working)
- Processes to gain access may prohibit use (forms, application fees, communicating with administrators)

Barriers to use

- Changes to former ways of using resources: increased tick populations/browntail moth; lack of frozen ponds, etc. ; lack of snow

Improvement of Access and Protection

- Clearer information about times of access, how to get there
- Public Transportation, especially for older people
- Changes to licensing rules/ processes to increase accessibility
- More funding for enforcement. In our community enforcement entities are working at max capacity
- Make more public money (more) available to match private donations.
- More efficient use of existing funding.



Q2: What could help you and your community to eat more locally produced food? What programs are successful at increasing access to Maine foods? Are there foods that are difficult to find in Maine?

Opportunities for more local food

Price of local food is a barrier (especially meat and vegetables)

May be hard to find culturally preferred food

Some areas are 'food deserts' (convenience stores only)

Information on products at grocery stores is strongly desired! Hard to tell sometimes what's local

Empower people to produce their own food (community gardens, etc.)

Helping with Access: Maine Harvest Bucks connected to SNAP benefits; special programs for seniors to access local foods



Q3: What are the barriers to entry, opportunities, and drivers of change to increase diversity and access to natural resource industry careers, including forestry, for priority populations and disadvantaged communities?

Barriers

Lack of awareness of opportunities

For Youth: In natural resources spaces youth can feel isolated - adults are excited when youth are there, but enthusiasm doesn't always translate to mentoring/guidance

For New Mainers: language barriers, lack of transportation and unfamiliar with state resources/background

Opportunities and Drivers of Change

Creation of citizen committees: community coming together

Training programs in multiple languages

Hire folks that represent underserved communities to relay opportunities and resources (to youth, new Mainers, etc.)

What's next....As you work on your recommendations

1. How can we be helpful to you? (anything you saw here today that you'd like follow up on?)
2. Second round of engagement activities -- Summer 2024
 - a. Are there groups you really need to hear from, or hear more from?

Thank you!

