

## Maine Climate Council Coastal and Marine Working Group

Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Ready Seafood, 1016 Portland Rd. Saco

### Meeting Summary

The Coastal and Marine Working Group (CMWG) of the Maine Climate Council met at Ready Seafood's processing facility in Saco, Maine for their final in-person meeting. The meeting began with a welcome from the co-chairs followed by a presentation from Dr. Caroline Noblet of the University of Maine's Mitchell Center on equity considerations and the preliminary findings of engagement with priority populations. Working group participants then reflected on the presentation, reacted to the combined working group subcommittees' recommendations and actions, and finally reviewed highlights from the document's proposed executive summary and their implications. Members were present online and in-person. See the appendix for a list of meeting participants. Slides from the meeting can be found [here](#).

### Meeting Objectives

- Receive feedback from Mitchell Center's preliminary outreach and engagement and consider implications in our work
- Review and agree on broad recommendations and actions
- Consider important context of our work for executive summary
- Share next steps in Maine Climate Council process
- Celebrate outcome of dedicated efforts of Working Group members

### Welcome

Co-chairs Curt Brown and Carl Wilson gave a brief welcome and overview of the CMWG's progress. This was the eighth meeting of the CMWG and significant progress has been made in that time. The facilitator, Laura Singer, gave an overview of meeting objectives and agenda, and shared three broad themes created based on combined language from four subcommittees (see below). She also noted the goals of the meeting to process feedback from the Mitchell Centers' equity topics information and collectively review the working groups recommendations and actions that will soon be finalized and provided to the Maine Climate Council. Final recommendations and actions will be the product of collaborative efforts of working group co-chairs and subcommittee leads, and the working group's final deliverable will then be provided to GOPIF for ultimate refinement prior to submission to the Maine Climate Council.

Three broad themes:

- 1) Support pathways to adaptation of Maine's fisheries, aquaculture and seafood industries.
- 2) Invest in building healthy and resilient communities and critical place-based infrastructure.
- 3) Seek opportunities to monitor, conserve and increase resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems.

## Preliminary Findings from Mitchell Center Outreach

### **Presentation, Dr. Caroline Noblet: Amplifying Voices**

- Mitchell Center developed engagement topics based on equity subcommittee report (ESC)
- Mitchell Center now communicating feedback on equity considerations to working groups (WGs)
- Conversations are continuing based on established Wabanaki relationships; tribes want interactions to be at the government to government level, so not appropriate to list tribes under priority populations with other groups; important to recognize tribal sovereignty, decision-making processes, address historic injustices; May 29<sup>th</sup> meeting scheduled to continue these conversations
- Mitchell Center is reporting back to WGs in mid-May, will engage in second round of conversations during summer to provide WG recommendations to priority populations, will report back to MCC in September
- Thank you to CMWG for earlier input on priority questions
  - Top identified priority: Talking to ME people about their preferences for access to working waterfront and natural lands
- Mitchell Center was able to develop contracts with nine community-based organizations
- Mitchell Center completed 29 engagements for 1<sup>st</sup> round of conversations—over 1,000 members of priority populations were reached using a variety of engagement approaches
  - *Statewide survey of Maine citizens*: greatest amount of involvement in MCC were older adults, 68% that participated in engagement may want to be involved in Climate Council processes on the future; of these 68%, many would need accommodations for their schedules, additional information and financial support to become involved; 86% of respondents trusted climate change information coming from State of Maine; biggest needs: 10% wrote about a related issue including healthy/local food, clean water, preservation of natural spaces
  - *Perceptions about using green spaces*: most respondents regularly access water for recreation, less so land for recreation, less so inland fishing areas and boat launches for offshore fishing; very few for coastal access for nearshore boating or harvest
  - *Barriers to access*: competition with tourists, cost of access, language barriers, processes to gain access may prohibit use
  - *Barriers to use*: changes to way that resources are being used (caution needed with ticks, ponds and lakes not freezing over), safety concerns about using resources (water pollution and swimming, hunting)
  - *What could be improved in terms of access*: more signs to educate about protecting areas, clearer info. about times for access, public transportation
  - *What could be improved in terms of protecting these areas*: clear, enforceable rules, recognizing Wabanaki sovereignty, more funding for efficient education and staffing
  - *Local foods*: most think they can find local food, about 35% from local sources current being attained by survey group; many cited having access to local food from reduced price resources; noted that prices keep rising, especially for meat and vegetables; some areas of Maine only have convenience stores (“food deserts”); hard to know what is local at grocery stores; Maine Harvest Box a useful program

- *Barriers/needs to access natural resource funding and technical resources:* harder to get funding for maintenance projects, application processes are hard to understand, data issues (towns don't have GIS capabilities), hard to do assessments based on minimal municipal capabilities
- Cross-WG learning: the Natural and Working Lands WG has similar equity topics as CMWG

**Feedback from WG members**

**Question/Comment:** Nick Battista: CMWG is making equity recommendations that address priority populations addressing climate change. How can we be sure that our recommendations that are also noted by other WGs are clearly equity recommendations? Especially based on information we just heard today.

**Answer/Response:** Caroline Noblet: Important to share a CMWG written response based on Mitchell Center content.

**Question/Comment:** Bill Needleman: Since Mitchell Center report is late in the Climate Action Plan revision process, we need to make sure that Mitchell Center expertise provides MCC with this content since CMWG efforts are essentially done.

**Answer/Response:** Caroline Noblet: Maybe GOPIF staff on-line can respond.

**Answer/Response:** Maggie Kelly-Boyd: Acknowledged that this equity information is coming in late but will be included in MCC's work, especially at June and Sept. meetings.

**Question/Comment:** Ben Martens: Added that fishers and aquaculturists are part of food systems, also multicultural communities that consume a lot of seafood.

**Answer/Response:** Caroline Noblet: Acknowledged.

**Question/Comment:** Gayle Zydlewski: We included in recommendations the absence of the tribal voice, but not sure we captured that completely. Important to note this for May 29<sup>th</sup> meeting. Really want to include tribal considerations and voice.

**Answer/Response:** Caroline Noblet: Acknowledged. We want to respect tribal voices and sovereignty. Meeting soon to determine how to move forward. Can carry specific recommendations forward to MCC from CMWG with respect to Wabanaki voice.

**Question/Comment:** Curtis Bohlen: We missed voices that can bring us back to reality with our recommendations. Nothing in Habitat and Blue Carbon recommendations about getting access information out to priority populations, and not entirely sure now how to do that.

**Answer/Response:** Nick Battista: Not too big of a leap still to improve engagement language in recommendations.

**Question/Comment:** Kathleen Billings: Towns are struggling with how to reach everyone in their communities. Working waterfronts are really at a tipping point. We have to protect what we already have.

**Question/Comment:** Michelle Staudinger: Why is locally-sourced food so expensive? How can the local community members take advantage of local food when it's more expensive than food from Mexico, e.g.?

**Answer/Response:** Caroline Noblet: Most successful programs may be CSAs—how can we support more informal market?

**Question/Comment:** Carl Wilson: Going back to Bill’s comment, what recommendations can you make to help us take advantage of intragovernmental communications (referencing tribal interactions) so we can hear and act on equity recommendations from this study? Need iterative process, especially as door is closing on Climate Action Plan revision process.

**Answer/Response:** Laura Singer: Co-chairs process isn’t done, and needs to bring message forward to GOPIF and MCC.

**Answer/Response:** Carl Wilson: But no feedback to CMWG from priority populations is allowed in process given the current timeline.

**Answer/Response:** Caroline Noblet: Short-term actions include sharing WG recommendations with priority populations, who will respond to CMWG material directly to MCC. Long-term actions include revisiting climate action planning every four years, so maybe next time we can start this process sooner.

**Question/Comment:** Bill Needleman: This climate action process is on-going, as are equity needs. CMWG recommendations for access and equity are well-aligned. Can’t always be in preservation mind set, need to adapt access as climate change progresses.

**Question/Comment:** Gabe McPhail: Equity recommendations and sequence are not ideal, but procedural equity is being incorporated regardless in ESC recommendations. Distributive equity is also being discussed and will incorporate all working group recommendations in a way that works for majority of priority populations, to consider state and local aspects of needs.

**Question/Comment:** Jocelyn Runnebaum: Should we have very pointed recommendation that indicates that state should focus on government to government communications within context of who holds power? Climate action implementation should involve framework that involves priority populations engagement.

**Answer/Response:** Caroline Noblet: The way the process is designed, Mitchell Center gets recommendations, shares them with priority populations, lets ESC and GOPIF know what Mitchell Center is hearing within given timeline.

**Answer/Response:** Laura Singer: There needs to be a way to provide a framework/guidance for how to implement recommendations in an equitable way.

## Overview of Recommendations and Actions

Talking points included the following:

- Are there any concerns with how these were combined?
- Is there room for additional consolidation?
- Do these represent our collective work and discussions?

Laura Singer indicated that the four subcommittees’ recommendations fell into three broad categories, and the group needs to look these over to determine if anything was missed or not clarified well enough. Some blending of recommendations has already occurred, so does the resulting content work for everyone? The final document from the CMWG will include implementation details.

WG responses to these points follow:

**Question/Comment:** Anne Langston: Could essential words like “fishing” or “aquaculture” get lost when document is rolled up to MCC?

**Answer/Response:** Nick Battista: I don’t think that will happen for this Climate Action Plan revision, and there are coastal and marine-related people on the MCC, so we need to trust the process. Even if words don’t show up in Action Plan, concepts will move forward.

**Question/Comment:** Susie Arnold: WG needs to provide recommendations in order of prioritization, use active language, include date and timeframe for actions, avoid passive language, be specific, and reference federal funding opportunities where they exist.

**Question/Comment:** Jocelyn Runnebaum: When is the opportunity to wordsmith this language?

**Answer/Response:** Laura Singer: Let’s do that today in this meeting.

**Answer/Response:** Carl Wilson: We need to live with what is in this document even if the words are not perfect.

**Question/Comment:** Michelle Staudinger: It’s amazing to see the language all coming together. Still feel like the language is not “climate forward”. The document needs to use the word “adapt” repeatedly, to acknowledge active change. Don’t see that reflected. Think it’s useful to use term “climate adaptation” more.

**Answer/Response:** Curtis Bohlen: Totally agree with Michelle. Many ideas are repeated amongst WGs, so I don’t know where they land in structure. How do we make this more meaningful by consolidating strategically?

**Answer/Response:** Laura Singer: She will be checking with SC leads.

**Answer/Response:** Bill Needleman: Need to trust the editing process. Feels like the executive summary captures the right content. Not sure we need to include all the buzz words.

**Answer/Response:** Ben Gutzler: Doesn’t see redundancy as a bad thing. Some bridging can be done but repetitiveness of key terms and phrases is valuable.

**Question/Comment:** Carla Guenther: Do Susie Arnold’s stated language recommendations apply to all language or just to headings or summarized text? We aren’t being cohesive/internally consistent with recommendations as currently written. Ex. Strategy D.3. There are missing statements for equity across recommendations. This is our opportunity to tighten up this document.

**Answer/Response:** Curt Brown: Susie’s recommendations apply to all document language.

**Answer/Response:** Jes Waller: This is our opportunity to retain redundancy.

**Answer/Response:** Nick Battista: OK to have a clunky document now to improve chance of inclusion later.

**Question/Comment:** Nick Battista: Are we doing enough to prepare for right whale regulations and implications of those? Not much eye catching in political process in this document. Strategy D.3.d is a big recommendation and we need to prioritize this.

**Question/Comment:** Curtis Bohlen: Regulatory considerations are a common theme and need. Last time the Climate Action Plan addressed energy projects specifically, and this time climate adaptation needs to be that focus.

**Answer/Response:** Michelle Staudinger: Would like to see language about “responsible regulation”, and need to include important structure to reducing barriers but in a cautious way that considers all implications.

**Answer/Response:** Jocelyn Runnebaum: Need to be clear that we don’t want to lower barriers, and that we are committed to mitigation or reestablishment of working waterfronts. Don’t indicate that there are trade-offs. (Not referencing a specific recommendation.)

**Answer/Response:** Bill Needleman: Resource protection regulations are retrospective. Need to recraft legislation to consider climate change impacts.

**Question/Comment:** Jocelyn Runnebaum: Recommendation Strategy E Recommendation 1 AND Strategy G Recommendation 1 and 4 could both address long-term planning needs and coordination across multiple levels of government to adapt to climate change

**Question/Comment:** Susie Arnold: In light of Community Resilience WG recommendations, may want to address gaps that are not addressed in either place.

**Question/Comment:** Kathleen Billings: Has there been discussion with State about land use decisions in terms of adaptive strategies (i.e. decisions that are beyond municipal capabilities)?

**Answer/Response:** Michelle Staudinger: Need to include language to leverage partnerships.

**Answer/Response:** Bill Needleman: Need thinking that goes beyond four years. Ex. of Commercial St. in Portland and SLR impacts on businesses. Need longer term visioning in this document.

**Answer/Response:** Nick Battista: Need to indicate that State catalyzes relationship with municipalities.

**Question/Comment:** Jessica Joyce: Sustenance fishing isn’t mentioned anywhere. May fit into existing recommendations (Strategy D.3)? How can we better support this? Ex. of municipal regulation of surf clam harvest. Suggested draft language to include sustenance fishing as part of Strategy D/Rec. 3 (perhaps as E) - *Collaborate with coastal communities to maintain opportunities for sustenance fishing/shellfish harvesting in the intertidal (or nearshore env-) through licensing and preserving shore access.*

**Question/Comment:** Curtis Bohlen: The term “stakeholder” is considered offensive. This should be replaced in report.

**Question/Comment:** Gayle Zydlewski: To Strategy D.1.e, can we say something about affordability given the Mitchell Center feedback on food costs?

**Question/Comment:** Nick Battista: Strategy G.3.e could fit under E.3.

**Answer/Response:** Curtis Bohlen: We did also echo workforce development needs in that G.3.e strategy. Lab capacity was a specific need that was carried forward, but this is a bigger theme.

**Answer/Response:** Nick Battista: Don’t see workforce development needs noted in enough places.

**Question/Comment:** Michelle Staudinger: Strategy D.3.d: should reconsider wording to be less ominous. Should be more positive, more balanced. Need to address regulatory barriers where they make sense.

**Answer/Response:** Ben Gutzler: My language, can be improved.

**Answer/Response:** Nick Battista: Pushing back. We should not water this language down. This is a very scary issue for communities. Economic disruption to come is major.

**Answer/Response:** Laura Singer: There are pages of implementation language behind this, so we should wordsmith where it makes sense.

**Answer/Response:** Jocelyn Runnebaum: Even with opportunities allowed from species range shifts, there are regulatory challenges. Suggested different language to be less heavy handed and acknowledge uncertainty and role of support: *Support and prepare coastal communities to respond to ecosystem shifts and the resulting regulatory uncertainty associated with climate change*

**Answer/Response:** Michelle Staudinger: Cited psychological acknowledgement of gains and losses with changing fisheries opportunities.

**Question/Comment:** Carla Guenther: Strategy 3.A: Provide support for and engage with communities. Do we know what the socioeconomic impacts are? We should ask and not assume. Messages need to be sharpened.

**Questions/Comment:** Jocelyn Runnebaum: To Carla, Nick, and Michelle's points: *Asses coastal communities needs and socio-economic impacts as they respond to ecosystem shifts and the resulting regulatory uncertainty associated with climate change*

**Question/Comment:** Kathleen Billings: Stonington did an economic development strategy with consultant. There is a need to provide technical assistance to municipalities in light of upcoming regulation changes. All communities are different.

**Question/Comment:** Curtis Bohlen: Strategy E: There is duplication that needs to be resolved, especially in A and E.

## Review of Executive Summary & Caveats

Laura Singer summarized WG comments provided on process thus far, and further referenced the three broad themes (listed above in Welcome):

- There is a need to carry forward work that went into detailed recommendations
- There is a need to increase use of terms “coastal” and “marine” specifically
- Winter storms provided clear focus on needs for coastal infrastructure
- WG is challenged by Mitchell Center engagement timing relative to CMWG process
- Work has occurred with other WGs to integrate recommendations, and more is needed moving forward
- The CMWG report will be broad and comprehensive while still laying out specifics
- Important to stress that adaptability to opportunities = resiliency to future changes
  - Michelle Staudinger: adaptation and resiliency are very different
- Resounding thoughts from today: access still needs to be highlighted, climate forward language, capacity building

WG responses to these points follow:

**Question/Comment:** Carla Guenther: Need to flip economic onus, move away from individual members of the public.

**Answer/Response:** Michelle Staudinger: Low income groups can't take advantage of some opportunities without up-front support.

**Answer/Response:** Jocelyn Runnebaum: Need to support (financial, technical) community leadership to adapt to climate change in their unique communities; need to catalyze bottom-up changes.

**Answer/Response:** Nick Battista: Frontline communities vulnerable to climate change need to be clearly connected to STS work; impacts from climate change are being borne by individuals, which has larger economic implications.

**Answer/Response:** Curtis Bohlen: The burden does not always fall on individuals; commercial businesses fall in this area, too; there is a delicate balance required to have this conversation.

Carl Wilson suggested that the CMWG has the ability to move ahead by leading with a main political hook, which is funding coastal infrastructure. Does the group have heartburn about this?

**Answer/Response:** Nick Battista: There is good rationale for supporting the fishing community and working waterfront infrastructure.

**Answer/Response:** Jocelyn Runnebaum: Coastal communities and marine ecosystems connections are essential to make.

**Answer/Response:** Bob Baines: Access and infrastructure are key points to emphasize.

**Answer/Response:** Curtis Bohlen: We need to recognize interconnectivity between built environments and coastal ecosystems.

**Answer/Response:** Carl Wilson: We would benefit from the subcommittee co-leads participating in the editing process. The draft final will be distributed and feedback solicited.

## Final Thoughts, Next Steps and Thank You

- June 5<sup>th</sup>: final WG report due to GOPIF
- June 18<sup>th</sup>: MCC meeting where WG recommendations are brought forward.



## Appendix: Attendance

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Members:</b>	
Carl	Wilson	Maine Department of Marine Resources (Co-chair)
Curt	Brown	Ready Seafood (Co-chair)
Susie	Arnold	Island Institute, Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Bob	Baines	Maine Lobstermen's Association, Maine Climate Council
Nick	Battista	Island Institute
Kathleen	Billings	Town of Stonington
Curtis	Bohlen	Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
Angela	Brewer	Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Amanda	Ellis	Maine Department of Marine Resources (via Zoom)
Jeremy	Gabrielson	Maine Coast Heritage Trust (via Zoom)
Jessica	Gibbon-Joyce	Tidal Bay Consulting (via Zoom)
Carla	Guenther	Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries
Ben	Gutzler	Wells Estuarine Research Reserve
Heather	Hamlin	University of Maine (via Zoom)
Ann	Langston Noll	Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center (via Zoom)
Ben	Martens	Maine Coast Fishermen's Association (via Zoom)
Marissa	McMahan	Manomet (via Zoom)
Gabe	McPhail	Resilient Communities, L3C (via Zoom)
Bill	Needelman	City of Portland
Rebecca	Peters	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Cameron	Reny	Senator, Maine Legislature (via Zoom)
Jocelyn	Runnebaum	The Nature Conservancy (via Zoom)
Michelle	Staudinger	University of Maine
Jesica	Waller	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Meredith	White	Maine Department of Marine Resources (via Zoom)
Amy	Winston	Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (via Zoom)
Gayle	Zydlowski	ME Sea Grant

### **Staff/Observers:**

Ed	Billings	Town of Deer Isle (via Zoom)
----	----------	------------------------------

Nick	Branchina	Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (via Zoom)
Hannah	Brazier	Maine Department of Marine Resources (via Zoom)
Hsiao-Yun	Chang	University of Maine
Louise	Chaplin	University of Maine Mitchell Center (via Zoom)
Stephen	Dickson	Maine Geological Survey, Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (via Zoom)
Paul	Elconin	Public Observer (via Zoom)
Maggie	Kelly-Boyd	GOPIF (via Zoom)
Heather	Kenyon	Friends of Casco Bay
Kathleen	Leyden	ME DMR, Maine Coastal Program (via Zoom)
Catherine	Mardosa	University of Maine Mitchell Center (via Zoom)
Caroline	Noblet	University of Maine Mitchell Center (via Zoom)
Olivia	Richards	Island Institute (via Zoom)
Laura	Singer	Consensus Building Institute/SAMBAS Consulting, Facilitator
Melissa	Smith	Maine Department of Marine Resources (via Zoom)
Jiaze	Wang	University of Maine (via Zoom)
Abby	Westberry	Public Observer (via Zoom)
Emily	Whitmore	Public Observer (via Zoom)