

Agriculture & Ecosystems Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council September 22, 2021 Meeting – Special Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: September 22, 2021 8:00 AM
Location: Meeting was hosted virtually on Zoom with a physical location at the ANR offices in Montpelier. Meeting was recorded and [posted online](#).
Subcommittee Members Present: Abbie Corse, Billy Coster, Alissa White, Ryan Patch, John Roberts, Charlie Hancock, Iris Hsiang, Jake Claro, Judy Dow, David Mears, Lauren Oates
State Staff Members Present: Marian Wolz, Jane Lazorchak, Ali Kosiba, Marli Rupe, Bob Popp, Judson Peck, Alex DePillis, Pat Field (CBI)

8:00 AM Greeting

8:05 AM Review of Spreadsheet “What’s Missing” & Disagreements – facilitated by Pat Field, notes taken in PowerPoint.

- Forestry strategies: Charlie brought forward some suggestions on the forestry actions, including some new suggested actions on using farm and forest insulation materials. Group discussed that the new suggestions would need to be consolidated and cleaned up, and that development of procurement standards for biomass generators would be important but too complex to develop as a Subcommittee and share specifically within the action.
- Subcommittee discussed “old forests”, age classes of forests, passively managed forests, and appropriate strategies for addressing protection/conservation of forest according to these different categories both within and external to current strategies. Subcommittee discussed role and pros/cons of changes to UVA policies in recommendations. Subcommittee decided that aspirational changes (e.g. of tax codes) could be important to forestry work and important to highlight, but that Subcommittee doesn’t have expertise to specifically recommend nuanced changes – instead would like to recommend “exploring” these concepts. Charlie will rework language and send back out.
- **Process discussion:** if there is no/minimal controversy, comments were/will be incorporated into language of the full spreadsheet by staff without need for discussion. Subcommittee discussion will focus on disagreements/controversies that are identified in individual comments, and staff will attempt to capture the results of those discussions in the final version. Any unresolved comments will be retained in the final version as notes for the Friday meeting, and these conversations will be resolved via consensus thereafter. Process discussion will be continued, as this process as described was not satisfactory to all members.
- “Invasives”: Subcommittee discussed how to find balance and create diversity in communities in the face of introduced species. Robust discussion, consensus not found, topic shelved.

- Act 250 – discussion of recommendations, some of which are major changes, to ensure that Subcommittee agrees on all suggestions. New language developed to replace some of the lines under discussion.
- State Climate Office – discussion over structure of ongoing climate coordination within state government, and ideal role of a separate climate office as compared to individual divisions within Agencies. Subcommittee held concerns over power, clear communication, and engagement of folks on the ground, discussed importance of sharing that information with the Climate Council. “Create spaces and systems to promote communication, efficiency, collaboration, (etc)...” was proposed as a re-write.

9:55 AM Next Steps and Process

- Subcommittee will share complete matrix with VCC. Marli Rupe will take the lead on organizing staff to develop separate tab for each Pathway, with Strategies and Actions divided between those sheets. This spreadsheet will likely include “Overall” tab showing all Pathways and associated Strategies. Notes will be kept if unresolved.
- On Friday, Subcommittee will meet earlier than scheduled and continue discussing these topics, before deciding what to present via a slideshow to VCC on the following week.

10:10 AM Public Comment

- Public comment received by Zack Porter, Mark Whitworth, Annette Smith, and Scott Sanderson.

10:25 AM Meeting Adjourned

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