

# Agriculture & Ecosystems Subcommittee Equity Review/Rubric Scoring Instruction

MINUTES

OCTOBER 22, 2021 10:00AM – 11:50AM ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING/CONFERENCE CALL

## DISCUSSION

The Agriculture and Ecosystems Subcommittee worked with Kiah Morris to apply the Just Transition Guiding Principles/Scoring Rubric on selected high priority actions.

## OVERVIEW

Kiah Morris and the Agriculture and Ecosystems Subcommittee (Ag&Eco) Members worked together in evaluating the '*Forest Sector Plan*' and '*River Corridors and Flood Plains*' pathway actions.

- Discussed and completed the self-assessment questions developed by the Just Transitions Subcommittee to help put the Guiding Principles into practice.
  - Just Transitions Guiding Principles set the framework to better ensure that the recommendations set forth are not just comprehensive but inclusive.
  - The exercise aims to better identify, understand, and address the social impacts, types of impacted populations, and engagement process of individual policy recommendations to ensure a Just Transition for Vermont.

## FOREST SECTOR PLAN

Develop a strategic plan for the forest economy, modeled on the Farm-to-Plate strategic plan for the next ten years.

- *In addition, several members reiterated the need for this plan to specifically address the current language and processes being used; therefore, evolve with implementing and empowering equitable terminology and methodologies to ensure a progressive recommendation.*

## ADDRESSED IMPACTED AND FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES

- Discussed which frontline and impacted communities might be most impacted by this recommendation:
  - ◆ Anyone involved with forest products economy.
  - ◆ Landowners, loggers, primary/secondary producers, consumers, farmers.
  - ◆ Indigenous community.
  - ◆ Houseless populations living in the forest.
  - ◆ Those living downstream from riparian zones.
  - ◆ Headwaters, rivers, streams & ecosystems.
  - ◆ Interior Forest Species.
  - ◆ Rural communities dependent on forest related employment.
  - ◆ Outdoor sports and recreation.
  - ◆ Forest ecosystem and Southern Vermont, Centennial Woods, Intervale - (*ex: development not being regulated accordingly, overdeveloping, etc.*)
  - ◆ Animal migration/crossings.
  - ◆ Archeological sites.
- Examined the specified communities currently experience inequity around this issue.
  - ◆ People in frontline communities' experience inequity due to a lack of forum to share and discuss their concerns/ideas (co-effects).
  - ◆ Framework of the forest economy who are dependent on the global economy to set pricing and markets which dictate economic benefits and risks.
  - ◆ Those affected by intentional deforestation to displace houseless populations.
  - ◆ Impacted workers affected by the shutdown of paper mills, thus causing dislocation and no plan for transition.
  - ◆ Unions and organized labor were also not present to help better protect worker right.
  - ◆ Marginalized communities affected due to their dependance of local work.

- ♦ BIPOC, communities facing barriers of land access for ownership and/or recreation.
- ♦ The animal community, along with the air quality, water quality, and wildlife that is negatively impacted.
  - ✓ Availability to harvest food and other products are reduced
  - ✓ Intervale land has been polluted that those living there cannot harvest or cultivate the land.
- ♦ Forests and forests workers.

**ANALYZED THE BURDENS AND BENEFITS** = *there are remaining self-assessment questions that need to be completed.*

- Discussed whether this recommendation maintains existing inequities, makes them worse or improves the status quo?
  - ♦ The recommended action sets the stage to improve the status quo; however, the economy cannot be the main driver for the change at the cost of sustainable economic development, social equity, racial justice, etc. This action will also need to encompass a shift in the philosophy and language used by the forestry sector and entire state.
    - ✓ Need to be mindful of how the action is written and carried out - (environmental justice).
  - ♦ The Farm to Plate plan looked at the analysis regarding equity and economy.
    - ✓ However, need to not develop the economy at the expense/harm to the environment. Important to have economic development that helps the environment at the same time. Educating and implementing environmental equity by eliminating harmful language and processes.
    - ✓ In addition, it was also noted that some of the BIPOC community did not feel included in the Farm to Plate process and members of the subcommittee expressed that through this reflection, changes will be made moving forward concerning inclusivity.
- *To recap, after discussing the above referenced self-assessment sections, a member of the subcommittee shared, if we (humanity) should be considering seven generations ahead, then we also need to be thinking at least three generations back. Because, only then can we have a better understanding, reflecting from the past, and looking at the present, on knowing how to best move forward.*

**ENSURING EQUITABLE AND JUST ENGAGEMENT** = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

**FUNDING AND DATA** = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

**IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES** = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

The Ag&Eco Subcommittee Members were encouraged to complete the remaining self-assessment questions for the *Forest Sector Plan*. The responses from the self-assessment questions can then be used as a guide for completing the *Scoring Rubric*, which will help refine and identify area(s) of strength and challenges.

## **RIVER CORRIDOR AND FLOOD PLAINS**

Focus on adaptation and responding to extreme weather events preventing water plains and forests being over developed, so headwaters and flood plains are not impacted.

**ADDRESSED IMPACTED AND FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES** = *there are remaining self-assessment questions that need to be completed.*

- Discussed which frontline and impacted communities might be most impacted by this recommendation:
  - ◆ Those living downstream and on waterways
  - ◆ Farmers - soil health due to flooding and erosion and the vulnerability that exists. Yet, this is some of the richest/fruitful soil, so impacts how farmers proceed.
    - ✓ Potential suggestion of solely farming continuing, but not necessarily increasing and or continuing structures.
  - ◆ Wildlife community in the streams.
  - ◆ Town centers built in floodways.
  - ◆ Communities that are allowing development on flood plains (ex: Intervale, Burlington and Rygate).
  - ◆ Mobile home communities, precariously housed without an ability to migrate due to flooding. Need a plan to potentially relocate folks, while keeping in mind a balance with building restrictions.
  - ◆ Seniors/older adult living facilities in floodplains.
  - ◆ New construction of low-income housing in floodplains.
  - ◆ Windham County
  - ◆ Business owners and those who choose to build/establish businesses in flood plains.
  - ◆ Need specific demographic info.
  - ◆ Municipalities for costs to repair.
  - ◆ Individual homeowners.
  - ◆ Montpelier.
  - ◆ Schools in flood plain areas.
  - ◆ Increased insurance rates that may price folks out.

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**FUNDING AND DATA** = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

**IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES** = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

The Ag&Eco Subcommittee Members were encouraged to complete the remaining self-assessment questions for the *River Corridor and Flood Plains*. The responses from the self-assessment questions can then be used as a guide for completing the *Scoring Rubric*, which will help refine and identify area(s) of strength and challenges.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The Ag&Eco Subcommittee has identified and completed an extreme amount of prep-work regarding their high priority actions for inclusion in the CAP (Climate Action Plan). It is understood that more work is needed, (ex: completing the remaining self-assessment questions and applying answers to the Scoring Rubric, etc.).

Ag&Eco Subcommittee Members were encouraged to ask and seek guidance from other committees, colleagues, etc., for any gaps still needing to be addressed, specifically with completing the equity lens process for high priority actions.

Ag&Eco Subcommittee Members expressed concern regarding the CAP deadlines enforced by the State of Vermont and the unrealistic timeline allotted to complete all the required tasks, in preparation for the drafting deadline. In general, 'just needing more time' has been a shared sentiment. A lot of productive work has been completed thus far and should not go unrecognized. The knowledge, expertise, and passion that each of the subcommittees

	<p>contribute is remarkable; therefore, Ag&amp;Eco members where/are encouraged to call out specific areas needing more time to develop out, when drafting their portion of the CAP.</p> <p>Ag&amp;Eco will continue to complete the Scoring Rubric for any remaining high priorities, one-on-one and during the next two upcoming subcommittee meetings.</p>
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ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Continue to prep and work on tasks for drafting deadline.	All	11/01/2021

**RECAP/OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

<b>FOLLOW-UP</b>	Implement New Meeting Time on Fridays (9a-12p) for the Agricultural and Ecosystems Subcommittee to complete the required time-sensitive tasks.
<b>SPECIAL NOTES</b>	Next Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 10/29/2021 at 9am (via Zoom)