

Ag and Ecosystem Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council
9:00 AM August 26, 2024
Minutes

Location:	The meeting was recorded and posted online here .
Subcommittee Members Present:	Billy Coster, Jaiel Pulskamp, Stephen Leslie, Jake Claro, Andrew Milliken, Earl Hatley, Judy Dow, Ryan Patch, Senja Erickson, Alissa White, Abbey Willard
State Agency Staff Present:	Evan Horne, Marli Rupe, Liz Amler
Minutes by:	Evan Horne

9:00 Welcome and Approve Agenda

- Billy Coster welcomed the subcommittee and shared the August 26 agenda.

9:05 Approve Meeting Minutes from July 31 Subcommittee Meeting

- Meeting minutes for the July 31 subcommittee meeting approved as drafted.
- Billy Coster also introduced David Plumb from the Consensus Building Institute and Climate Action Office staff members Evan Horne and Liz Amler to the subcommittee.

9:10 Subcommittee Plan Moving Forward

- Overview of the New Subcommittee Schedule
 - Billy Coster shared information on the updated guidance from the steering committee, including timelines and prioritization.
- Forming Task Groups to Prepare for Subcommittee Meetings
 - Billy Coster described what task groups are and how groups can get more structured work done outside of the subcommittee meetings. Billy proposed three task groups related to the three themes organized in past meetings.
 - Jaiel Pulskamp recommended that subcommittee members read through the guidance document, which was very helpful.
 - David Plumb shared that these task groups can be called anything, but they are a way to better prepare for future subcommittee meetings.
 - Judy Dow expressed concerns over task groups being used without input from the entire subcommittee and the potential lack of transparency to the public.
 - Billy Coster commented that task groups are not intended to remove the public from the conversation. Billy shared that all recommendations will be returned to the subcommittee for approval, where the public can comment.
 - Jaiel Pulskamp commented that there is a plan to discuss future times for the subcommittee to meet to have more time for the public to comment.
 - Judy Dow commented that there was not an opportunity for the subcommittee to pick themes and for subcommittee members to select task groups. Dow also

mentioned that there were pathways not accepted by the council last time that might be missing.

- Ryan Patch commented that this is not a legislative group and has experience with task groups in the past that allows for the work to get done.
- Early Hatley commented on their concerns for biomass and payments for ecosystem services and is unsure where they fall into the different themes.
- Judy Dow commented that the subcommittee should decide whether to make task groups open to the public or not.
- Billy Coster commented that these are working groups where meetings may not happen but a sharing of documents and emails.
- David Plumb and Billy Coster clarified the roles of ANR staff for task groups and that the subcommittee members are the ones doing the work regarding pathways, strategies, and actions. David continued to clarify how subcommittees can use task groups.
- Alissa White commented that space to do homework in task groups would be helpful but also recognizes that contentious issues should be brought to the larger subcommittee where everyone can comment.
- Andrew Milliken agreed with Alissa that smaller groups are needed to do the homework and make better use of subcommittee meetings.
- Senja Erickson commented they agree task groups would be beneficial in moving the subcommittee forward.
- Stephen Leslie commented that they understand the need for subcommittees and task groups based on experience while allowing for public comment.
- Jake Claro commented that there is an overall time crunch, and that could result in a lack of transparency or public comment. Having time to dedicate pointed skills and expertise to task groups is the best approach moving forward while also trusting this subcommittee to uphold integrity and transparency.
- Judy Dow expressed further concern over whether to allow public input in task group meetings and the opportunity to include new pathways, strategies, and actions.
- David Plumb commented that task groups have the opportunity to be transparent. David also commented that the guidance document shares information on prioritizing specific actions.
- Billy Coster commented that there isn't a list of actions the subcommittee recommended that did not make it into the previous CAP.
- David Plumb clarified that the work over the next two months isn't about prioritization. It's about reviewing and revising the previous pathways, strategies, and actions and adding anything new.
- Judy Dow commented on a recent meeting regarding biochar and wants to make sure topics like these receive input from the public.

9:45 Public Comment

- No public comment.

9:50 Next Steps

- Subcommittee Task Groups
 - David Plumb commented that subcommittee members should share their concerns if there are any lingering questions regarding task groups and themes.
 - Jaiel Pulskamp commented that they are unsure where sequestration fits into the themes.
 - Ryan Patch commented that the analysis and tracking of the mechanisms that do sequestration fits well in the first theme.
 - Jake Claro commented that task groups should be open to converging ideas across groups. Jake Claro suggested a new name for the first theme, “Reduce GHG emissions and increase carbon sequestration from ag and forestry practices.”
 - Andrew Milliken commented that multiple actions will fit into several themes in a way that reinforces the importance of those actions.
 - Judy Dow commented that folks should be mindful of the language used.
- Meeting
 - Billy Coster commented that moving forward, the subcommittee hopes to pick a consistent day and a time that works for most people.

10:00 Adjourn