

Biomass Task Group
August 10, 2022
Minutes

8:30 AM Introductions and Reminder of Protocol of the Group and Approval of Minutes
From [7/13 Meeting](#)

- *Be present with a clear mind & open heart*
- *Listen generously across difference, with the boundary of self-care*
- *Ask for what you need → with a boundary around expecting all of your needs to be met by others*
- *Speak your truth while tending to the impact of your words*
- *To honor complexity → with a boundary against hard assumptions*

Minutes were approved

8:35 AM Upcoming Meetings

- 8/24 - Consideration of biomass management in forest management (Confirmed)
- 9/14 (Potential) - Dr. Juliette Rooney-Varga is a Professor of Environmental Sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Director of the Climate Change Initiative, and Co-Director of the Rist Institute for Sustainability and Energy. Because Vermont's electricity sector is only marginally powered by natural gas (and oil to an even lesser extent), comparisons to those fuels are not particularly helpful in the electricity context. The more likely electricity sources to be displaced in Vermont by biomass are hydropower, nuclear, solar, and wind. Dr. Rooney would speak about the relative GHG outcomes of those sources compared to biomass.
- Dr. Jerome [Laganriere study](#) allows us to compare biomass LCA emissions to two of the fossil fuels that are most relevant to Vermont (natural gas and oil) for both electricity and thermal applications.
- Health implications of wood biomass and the [Buonocore study](#)
- Listening Session with residents from around McNeil Power Plant

The task group agree to add an additional meeting on 9/14 where we will make time to hear from Dr. Rooney and also follow up on health issues associated specifically with McNeil.

8:45 AM CPG Permit Conditions and Role of VFWD in Review of Chip Harvests, *John Austin, Lands and Habitat Program Manager, and Tim Appleton, Wildlife Biologist, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and Tyler Mousley, Forester, Ryegate*

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has been engaged in reviewing timber harvest notifications from Burlington Electric Department since 1981 and with Ryegate since 1992. The authority granted to the Department extends to deer winter habitat, wetlands, riparian habitat for streams, rivers, lakes and ponds, significant natural communities, and habitat for threatened and endangered species. The purpose of the conditions in their Certificate of Public Good (CPG) and the notification process is to ensure that timber harvest operations that sell wood to these two facilities do not impact these wildlife habitats. Distinctions were made between the criteria in Act 250 and the authority the Department has through this process. Staff generally spoke to it as a productive relationship where they could generally work to advance wildlife life management interests in these projects.

Questions arose about the percentage of wood these two facilities procured in VT verses neighboring states and Ryegate agree to provide that [data](#).

10:00 AM Process for Drafting Recommendations and Timeline

A small group will work to determine what components of the scope the task group can draw conclusions on based on work to date and where the recommendations will focus on next steps into the new year. All of the recommendations will be vetted and discussed in public task group meetings.

10:15 AM Adjourn