

**Maine Islands Coalition Meeting
COVID19: Maine's Climate Council
Friday, July 24th, 2020
10-11:30**

Swan's Island

Donna Wiegler, co-chair

Cliff

Roger Berle, co-chair

Isle au Haut

Kendra Chubbuck

Peggi Stevens

Vinalhaven

Gabe McPhail

Andy Dorr

Matinicus

Eva Murray

Chebeague

Donna Damon

Donna Colbath

Frenchboro

Lauren Jennings

Long

Mark Green

Cranberries

Ingrid Gaither

Legislative Representatives

Chris Rector, Field Representative

Angus King

Special Guests

Bob Anderson, Great Lakes Islands
Alliance

Brian Ambrette, Governor's Office of
Policy, Innovation and the Future

Sharon Daley, Maine Seacoast

Mission

Island Institute

Suzanne MacDonald

Kate Tagai

Emma Wendt

Emma McGurren

Susie Arnold

Nick Battista

Craig Olsen

Maine Island Coalition Welcome

Thank you for joining us and providing your expertise and insight into the conversation. These calls are hosted by the Maine Islands Coalition. This is the tenth call. We started out with weekly calls then changed to bi-weekly and now monthly, as we recognize that even during a pandemic, summer is still a busy season. All the notes to the other calls can be found on the Maine Island Coalition Webpage on the Island Institute site here:

<http://www.islandinstitute.org/maine-islands-coalition>

We want to remind MIC members that there is a closed Facebook group where you can ask questions and share resources with other island communities.

Zoom Meeting Best Practices

- Introduce yourself via chat box, edit name to include affiliation for participant list
- Mute your phones, use the chat box for questions and resources, we'll share notes
- Stay on at the end if you'd like to continue the discussion
- Use the chat box to ask follow-up questions, share resources
- Use the direct message feature in the chat box to connect with people directly

Legislative Updates

Senator King's Office: New initiative called SEAMaine through an EDA grant. Similar to the initiative for the forest economy called FORMaine. It's an opportunity to look holistically at the marine economy: Aquaculture, wild caught, processes, to make sure we are extracting every dollar from what we are producing. If it turns out like the forest study it will lead to efficiency, sustainability and diversification of the sector. If you have any questions you can reach out to Chris Rector here: Chris Rector, Regional Representative, US Senator Angus King, Chris_Rector@king.senate.gov Cell number 207-653-8368, 4 Gabriel Drive, Augusta, ME 04330. Feel free to reach out to me if there are federal issues of concern.

Partner Organization Updates

Island Institute:

Nick Battista: The Broadband Bond passed. Over 200,000 Mainers said they needed better internet. Over 100 businesses, groups and communities came out to support the bond and a lot of them were new to supporting broadband work. \$15 Million Dollars will be available later this fall, early winter. A good bit of work has to be done to certify the election, but the bond passing isn't official until the Secretary of State certifies the election. They want the money to be available for Town Meetings and the build season next spring. They are hoping for more money to come, the \$15M is matched by \$30M in funds.

Chris: We are still cautiously optimistic that there will be federal money passed for infrastructure which will be in addition to the money raised and matched by the state.

Suzanne MacDonald: We have been talking about Census and census participation. We did some digging into what the data means. They are counting all buildings, so the numbers are low because of that, but there have been increased participation across the board. The numbers are still 25% or below. Even for the unoccupied buildings or the summer residences, it is important to fill this out.

Response Rate Map:

<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>

Census Outreach:

<https://2020census.gov/en/partners/outreach-materials.html>

Spread the word:

<https://2020census.gov/en/how-to-help.html>

6 reasons to respond to the census about seasonal homes (from Pam):

If a person is renting out the property or will not be there this summer due to COVID-19, the owner might not want a Census worker visiting the seasonal or rental home. Therefore, if owners respond to the Census for seasonal or weekly/temporary rental locations, they will prevent having a Census worker knock on the door after July 16.

By law, every household in the U.S. is required to respond to the Census.

Towns benefit from knowing which properties are no longer being used as permanent homes since that helps with local planning and resource distribution.

Towns benefit when the owner responds to the Census because that serves as a confirmation that the household exists and is still active, even if no one lives there full time. The number of households sometimes influences distribution of some federal resources, even though the count of population is the most important number for most resources.

Knowing there are seasonal/second homes helps in building a case for private and public resources since even temporary residents use local resources.

Having seasonal homes counted helps the town's self-response rate on the national map. People looking to invest in a community like to see an engaged community.

If you live at multiple places throughout the year, count yourself at the address where you live and sleep most of the time. If you split your time evenly between two or more places, count yourself where you were staying on April 1, 2020. However, a census response is required from each and every property. For any property you own but only use part of the time, follow these instructions: 1. Visit www.my2020census.gov 2. Enter the Census ID or address for this secondary property 3. Enter "0" for the number of people living at this property 4. Hit Next, and when a "soft error" occurs, click Next

again5. Select “No” when asked to confirm no person lives at this property6. Select primary reason – Seasonal (most likely)7. Complete! If you have already completed the 2020 Census for your primary residence you can exit at this point.

Lauren: I actually talked to the census taker; we’ve had two on the island. He asked me a lot about other houses on the island. I spoke with the worker and he never asked me to fill anything out at all, so I don’t know what the 9% is or isn’t.

Is there a way to find out or know what the census workers are doing or can do?

Craig Olsen: We lost Kevin on July 5th, for those communities who he has served, you know what a lifeline he was. Kevin was sole owner of the business, so we are working with the accountants to make sure things get sorted out. His wife has taken a temporary leave from her work to serve as president of the company to keep it going until there is a plan. We are offering as much help as can.

Suzanne: We had a webinar earlier this week featuring Hannah Pingree and Rob Snyder that was wide ranging on issues along the coast.

Sea Coast Mission:

Douglas did Kevin Water’s service which is a great loss for Penobscot Island Air. Weekly Church services. Island Reader for 2021. Suspended the weekly zoom calls because people were too busy, perhaps will restart in the fall. The Sunbeam is out of the shed and will get into the water the first part of August. Eldercare zoom calls happen every week. There are a lot of regulation changes. Working with food pantries to get food out to three different islands.

Main Topic: Maine’s Climate Council

Brian Ambrette, Governor's Office on Policy, Innovation, and Future

<https://www.maine.gov/future/about>

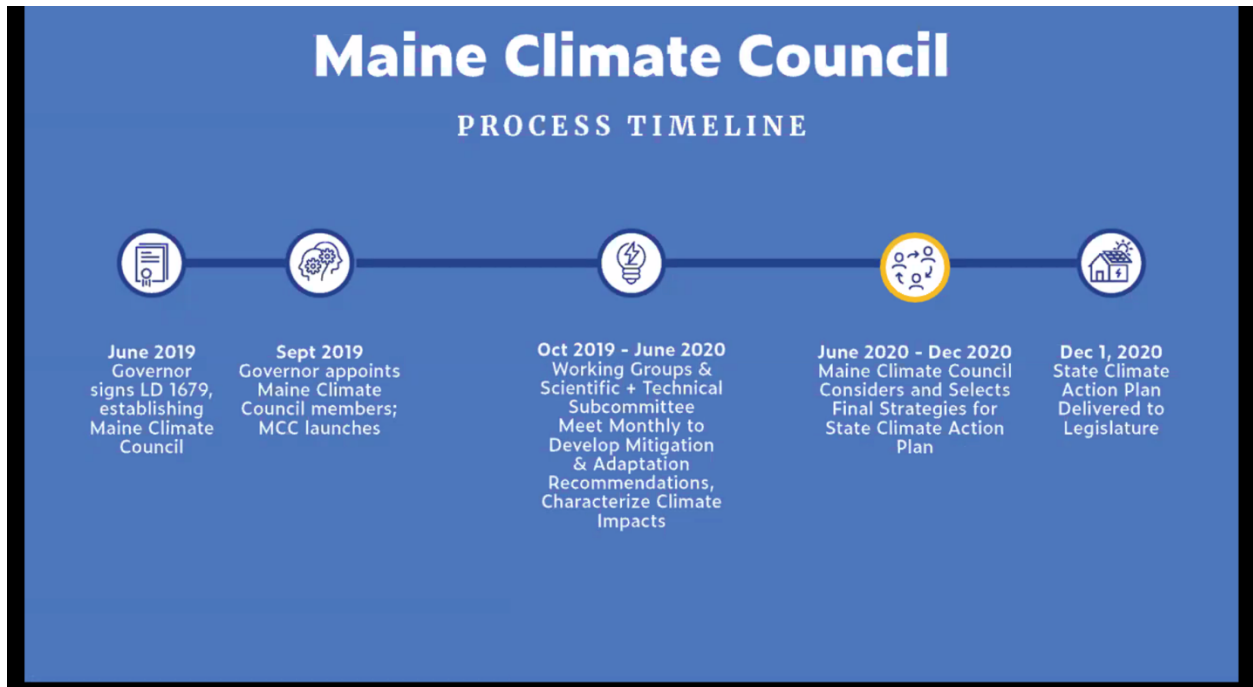
The Office of Policy, Innovation, and the Future is seeking input so we asked Brian here today, along with others who are involved in the Climate Council so we can have a discussion and increase understanding of the Climate Council work in order to get as much feedback to them as possible.

With Covid19, climate change may feel distant, but they are similar crisis. Neither will go away with wishful thinking, we can’t assume that others are going to solve it, but we need to be active in coming up with solutions. Both have outsized negative impacts on communities that have the fewest resources to deal with them.

Governor Janet Mills and the legislature set ambitious carbon goals in 2019. They set up the Climate Council to plan for an implement these goals. The Emissions in Maine peaked in 2002. We are down 33% from the peak. We are also below the 1990 baseline of emissions. We have tackled the low hanging fruit, so a lot of hard work is still ahead of us. Transportation and residential building heating take up 54%, and there is a lot of work to do in these sectors. We

also have goals around adaptation and resilience in order to protect and strengthen the things that are important to us.

Climate Council Timeline:






For the first eight months, the work was being done in six working groups. There are about 250 members across all six groups with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and stakes in the process all contributing their expertise to build recommendations to the 32-member council. The Council received those recommendations in June.

Three working groups really focusing on reducing greenhouse gas emissions:

- Buildings, infrastructure & Housing
- Transportation
- Energy

Working Group Recommendations

 Buildings, Infrastructure & Housing	 Transportation	 Energy
<p>Improve the Design and Construction of New Buildings</p> <p>Improve the Efficiency and Resiliency of Existing Buildings</p> <p>Lead-by-Example in Publicly-Funded Buildings</p> <p>Cleaner Heating/Cooling Systems</p> <p>Decarbonize Industrial Processes</p> <p>Modernize the Electric Grid</p>	<p>Electrify Transportation (Electric Vehicles)</p> <p>Reduce Emissions of Internal Combustion Engines (Fuel Efficiency)</p> <p>Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled</p> <p>Adapt Critical Transportation Infrastructure</p> <p>Explore Ways to Fund Transportation Needs and Emissions Reductions</p>	<p>Ensure clean energy supply to meet Maine's 100% renewable goal</p> <p>Initiate a stakeholder process for electric sector implementation</p> <p>Long-term contracting for highly efficient combined heat and power (CHP)</p> <p>Institute a Renewable Fuel Standard for all heating fuels with incentives</p> <p>Develop new financing options to meet clean energy and emissions targets</p>




There were themes that cut across the working groups:

How do we do more using less energy

How can we electrify things that are currently powered by fossil fuels?

How do we clean the grid?

Working Group Recommendations

 Community Resilience Planning, Public Health & Emergency Management	 Coastal & Marine	 Natural & Working Lands
<p>Update land use laws for Resilience</p> <p>Improve technical assistance and funding for community resilience</p> <p>Funding for infrastructure adaptation</p> <p>Invest in Public Health Monitoring</p> <p>Education about climate and health</p> <p>Reduce impacts from high intensity weather events</p> <p>Improve health systems' ability to adapt</p>	<p>Track coastal & ocean climate impacts</p> <p>Build resilience in the seafood sector</p> <p>Technical assistance for coastal communities & marine-dependent industries</p> <p>Conserve wetlands and aquatic vegetation that naturally store carbon</p> <p>Nature-based solutions for ecosystem management</p> <p>Climate-ready working waterfronts</p>	<p>Protect working and natural lands to support a robust forest and agricultural economy and increase carbon storage</p> <p>Incentives for private land management that supports climate goals</p> <p>Technical assistance on natural solutions to land owners and managers</p> <p>Update state programs and policies to address climate goals</p> <p>Strengthen research, development, and monitoring of climate practices.</p>

Three working groups focused on resilience:

Community resilience, planning, public health and Emergency management

Coastal and Marine

Natural and Working Lands.

There were themes that cut across the working groups:

- Technical assistance

- How can we work with nature? Nature based solutions

- Public health

- Updating State laws and programs including comprehensive planning and zoning.

We are in the phase where we are looking for feedback from everyone across the state. There are many ways to give feedback. [Climatecouncil.maine.gov](https://climatecouncil.maine.gov)

Take the general survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/maineclimaticouncil>

And/or the survey's for each working group: <https://climatecouncil.maine.gov/surveys>

There was a toolkit sent in the mail, but they are available from the website as well:

<https://climatecouncil.maine.gov/toolkit>

and we hope people will download this and use it to talk about the Climate Council work with friends and family. There are also events going on, follow us on social media. The public engagement is going on this summer and is important.

There are three other tracks going on:

- Further analysis: Greenhouse gas models

 - Cost of doing nothing

 - Cost/benefit

- Equity Assessment: UMaine George Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions

 - This is to make sure the recommendations are taking into consideration issues and concerns from marginalized communities and the outreach is robust to those communities so their voice can be heard in the plan.

Next meeting is September 9th. Meetings are open to the public. Information on how to join the meeting will be available on the website.

Andy Dorr: I don't think I need to convince anyone on the call why this matters to our communities. I was involved on the Coastal and Marine committee which was great given the concerns of the Vinalhaven Community. The Climate Council is primarily trying to find ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and on Vinalhaven we hadn't used that frame before or put that as our highest priority. We are looking at infrastructure investments and mitigation/adaptation with a lens to the long term investment. There were 40 people on the working group so we created sub-committees. There were a dozen goals and objectives that got presented that got whittled down to 3-4. There were a lot of good ideas being generated. What happens when you do make changes to transportation or the businesses that can't afford flood insurance. I would encourage you to reach out to work group members to get ideas that came out in the working groups that can give ideas for community work that can be tackled now, or good ideas to try an implement.

The Island Institute had 4 Staff on the working groups

Suzanne: Buildings, Housing and Infrastructure

Perspective: let's talk about the people using the buildings and the communities in which they sit, not just the buildings themselves. We can do efficiency measures, but they aren't always accessible, especially for small communities.

Susie: Science and Technical Sub-Committee and the Coastal and Marine Working Group

Perspective: we are working on science communications coming out of the climate council. Working on the science and strategies coming out on sea level rise.

Blue Carbon- <http://www.islandinstitute.org/working-waterfront/coast-offers-climate-mitigation-potential>

Model for adapting to ocean climate change- Mook Sea Farm-
<http://www.islandinstitute.org/blog-post/mook-sea-farm-problems-are-raw-material-innovation>

sarnold@islandinstitute.org Please let me know if there are strategies that you would like us to dig into further in the webinar!

Sam Belknap: Community resilience, planning, public health and Emergency management

Nick Battista: Coastal and Marine Working Group, Fisheries Subgroup

Perspective: We talked a lot about what is already happening, what needs to happen at the state level and how policies may impact the fishing sector and working to mitigate the impacts of any changes.

Discussion:

Eva: When you read about efforts made to address climate change, one of the subjects that comes up is how damaging aviation is and I think we need to make sure in anything that the state does recognizes a difference between little aviation and big aviation. Rules that are made to try and restrict Delta, end of affecting Penobscot Island Air or Cape Air. We can't broad brush aviation since we rely so heavily on bush pilot type air transportation.

https://www.capeair.com/about_us/cape-air-sustainability-programs.html

Mark: The potential benefits of the Hydro Quebec Line coming through could be part of the solution here.

Brian: Dan Burgess is tracking the Clean Energy Connect. The Governor did sign a deal with Hydro Quebec to bring energy to Maine through that corridor. If you would like to know more I can connect you with Dan.

Donna: We don't talk about climate change out on Swan's. It would be great to have more education that addresses what climate change is and what it means for the islands. We all rely on ferry boats and when you are the only car on a big boat in January it seems like a

waste of resources, but if you are the resident getting home on that ferry you are glad to have it. I'm glad to see the research going into hybrid ferries. The comment that we all have to do our part as individuals resonated.

Suzanne: Ferries take up .01% of the state's transportation emissions. News on hybrid ferries: <http://www.islandinstitute.org/working-waterfront/casco-bay-lines-board-votes-new-dieselectric-peaks-boat>

Gabe: December 2020 moving everything to the legislator and how will that impact the recommendations?

Brian: By law we are required to have a plan to the governor by December 1st which is in time for the next legislative session. It will be a hard lift with the state budget in the shape it is in. The plan due on December 1st is a 4-year plan and we are charged to come back every 4 years. We are also building in a plan to make these recommendations happen within the plan. We are also trying to come up with creative ways to get the work funded, or different ways then we thought at first.

Island Updates:

- 1. What is the biggest thing you want people to know?**
- 2. What do you need help on?**

Matinicus:

We are getting support from a lot of other agencies and are in a good place right now. Our biggest concern is the air service and there isn't anything we can tangibly do. We just need to wait patient until the air service decides what they need.

Swan's Island:

We have a normal summer schedule and it never would have happened if the Frenchboro representative lobbying for his community. We need help with leadership. Leadership is always a struggle and until we do something about it, we are always going to be behind the eight ball.

Frenchboro:

We are tiny out here, but a couple of weeks ago we had a group called, "The Stalwart Women of the Island" gather together to talk and see what is going on and see each other as supports within the community and bridge some of the divisions. The women wanted to continue the group which is positive. Leadership is a challenge. There is a huge burden on those who do take on the leadership roles. We have a lot of empty houses and a high tax rate which is a strain.

Isle au Haut:

Everyone on Isle au Haut received a ballot to vote on the solar project and increase the monthly service fee. There is awesome leadership currently on island. I think it takes females to run. We need more women running things. Covid19 is still my biggest concern, as we have a

lot of people coming to the island. It's a lot of honor system. By and large we are doing well, but the burden is on a few people.

Islesboro:

People feel like there are more people than ever. Summer folks who would normally come for a week are coming for the whole summer but they seem to be pretty good about wearing masks. The Maine Municipal Association asked us to fill out a survey on what towns have filled out for Covid expenses. We have spent over \$77,000 out of our contingency funds on that, but we have gotten federal and state funds to help cover the unexpected expenses.

Vinalhaven:

The signed off on the DOT Municipal Partnership Grant to move forward on the Downtown improvement project. Community conversation around law enforcement as we just voted down the entire law enforcement budget. The frustration that has built up over the years about the level of service from the county and we need someone to facilitate that. The select board gave the SLR committee permission to expand their purview to all aspects of climate change. I am hoping that it can be broader than just an island workgroup and take into account the climate council recommendation.

Monhegan:

Tourist season is in full swing. Have had to carry out people in full PPE. Mott is going to resign as first assessor in October. Received \$100K grant from Keep Maine Healthy for education.

Long Island

So much burden on so few folks. The selectmen are just up to their eyeballs with these things, but it is a common issue. Things are going pretty well. There are people here for longer. Its busy but not crazy. Concerning that people are gathering. The medical center is reopening. Chebague has set up on on island testing program that we are looking to replicate.

Cliff Island

Very quiet. Our store is still closed. The teacher apartment is nearly complete and going well. Hoping the teacher can move in at the end of August. Yvonne got us a copy of the monhegan lease so we can replicate that rather than inventing it. We get increased ferry service but there aren't a lot of people riding on it. We like the increased service.