



CSG/ERC Planning Meeting: Working Group to Discuss an Agriculture and Forestry Sequestration Initiative in the Northeast

Friday, December 20, 2019

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location:

Hudson Hall, at the Historic Hudson Opera House

327 Warren Street

Hudson, NY 12534

Objective: The purpose of this planning meeting is to explore the possibility of creating a multistate initiative on agriculture and forestry sequestration. As a first step, participants will discuss a potential agenda for a regional conference in 2020 that will convene northeastern state officials and experts in soil health and agricultural and forestry carbon markets.

Agenda

10:00 a.m.: Welcome and Introductions

New York State Assemblymember Didi Barrett

Maryland State Delegate Dana Stein, Vice Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee

Massachusetts State Senator Marc Pacheco, Founding Chair, Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change; Co-Chair, CSG/ERC Energy & Environment Committee

10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.: The Sequestration Potential and Co-Benefits of Carbon in Soil and Forestry

This session will feature a few brief presentations, followed by a roundtable discussion, on the possibilities for enhancing the content of carbon in soils, forestry, and wetlands, and how the process could play a vital role in the global drawdown of atmospheric greenhouse gases, with a particular focus on options to increase the practice in the Northeast. Questions to be addressed include: How widespread is the practice of carbon farming in the Northeast, and how much unrealized potential remains? Are there standardized methodologies for measuring results? What is the potential impact of aggressive sequestration practices on net emissions? What additional ecosystem services does carbon sequestration bring, including enhanced crop yields, water quality and conservation, and reduction of other greenhouse gases? What are the main barriers hindering adoption of healthy soil practices among the farming community? The presentations will be followed by a roundtable discussion.



Moderator:

Maryland State Delegate Dana Stein, Vice Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee

Presenters:

10:15 a.m.: Sara Via, Professor and Climate Extension Specialist, University of Maryland

11:00 a.m.: Alex Rudee, Associate I, U.S. Climate Initiative, World Resources Institute (via videoconference)

11:30 a.m.: Jad Daley, CEO, American Forests (via videoconference)

12:15 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. Break

12:45 – 2:00 p.m.: Working Lunch: Developing Northeastern Agricultural and Forestry Carbon Markets

This session will include 1-2 brief presentations describing nascent efforts globally and in the United States to develop carbon markets for agriculture and forestry, followed by a roundtable discussion on different options for monetizing sequestration practices in the Northeast. Questions to be addressed include: What types of incentives should states consider? What are the specific regulatory hurdles that could hinder the development of markets in individual states? What can the region learn from national and subnational market-based efforts underway in California, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere? What is the most feasible way to develop an efficient, results-based system, i.e., one that maximizes sequestration potential through a variety of means, including forestry and healthy soils, at minimal cost? Could a multistate initiative incentivize private carbon markets to focus on the Northeast by, for example, standardizing methodologies? Could states jumpstart market creation by using public funds, or proceeds from a future Transportation and Climate Initiative?

Moderator:

New York State Assemblymember Didi Barrett

Presenters:

12:45 p.m.: Michelle Manion, Lead Senior Economist, World Resources Institute (via videoconference)

1:15 p.m.: Cathy Macdonald, North American Climate Solutions Director (and colleagues), The Nature Conservancy (via videoconference)



2:00 – 3:00 p.m.: Developing an Agenda for a 2020 Conference to Consider a Multistate Initiative

Moderator: Massachusetts State Senator Marc Pacheco, Founding Chair, Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change; Co-Chair, CSG/ERC Energy & Environment Committee

This roundtable discussion will explore the framework for a possible broader regional conference in 2020 to address the creation of a multistate agriculture and forestry sequestration initiative. Participants will discuss their objectives for a future initiative, and consider questions about how to forge an agreement on carbon sequestration that would involve different practices with possibly different goals among the states. Most importantly, participants will discuss their expectations for the near-term outcome of a regional meeting, and a possible timeline for subsequent efforts.