

## **Carbon Sequestration from the Ground Up: Opportunities in Northeastern Farms and Forests April 23-24, 2021**

Natural and working lands have a unique role to play in addressing climate change, and in the Northeast, groundbreaking work is occurring in both the public and private sectors. On April 23-24, 2021, CSG East's State Legislative Climate Alliance working group is pleased to co-host a virtual conference, in partnership with the nonprofit environmental organization Scenic Hudson, to explore the innovative efforts that are underway in our member states. Through panel discussions and roundtable conversations, participants will identify best practices related to carbon sequestration on natural and working lands, seek opportunities to enhance regional communication, and consider potential actions that could lead to synergistic policies in member states.

### **Day 1: April 23, 2021**

**10-10:10 a.m. Welcome:** Rona Cohen, Program Manager, CSG East Energy & Environment Program

#### **Introductions:**

- Massachusetts State Senator Marc Pacheco, Chair, CSG East State Legislative Climate Alliance
- Ned Sullivan, President, Scenic Hudson

**10:10 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

**I. Overview of the Sequestration Opportunity:** This panel will focus on the critical role that sequestration in natural and working lands must play to help states achieve their carbon reduction goals, particularly as an increasing number of states strive to become net neutral by midcentury. Presenters will provide an overview of recent research from the International Panel on Climate Change, National Academy of Sciences and others that have defined a global opportunity for sequestration to provide one-third of the cost-effective emissions reductions needed to keep the Earth's temperature below 2 degrees Celsius. They will also summarize strategies outlined by the US Climate Alliance to achieve this goal on a national level and in the Northeast, while enhancing collaboration between states and the federal government, and a snapshot of what the latest science can confirm and has yet to discover about the potential of these strategies.

**Moderator:** Ned Sullivan, President, Scenic Hudson

#### **Speakers:**

- Dr. Sacha Spector, Environmental Program Director, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
- Jennifer Phillips, Senior Policy Advisor, Natural and Working Lands and Resilience, U.S. Climate Alliance

**10:30-10:40 a.m. Q & A**

**10:45 a.m.**

**II. Roundtable on State Healthy Soils Legislation and Programs.** Many Northeastern states, including Maryland, Massachusetts, Vermont and New York, have established or are planning to implement healthy soils programs. This panel, consisting of state legislators, academics, and representatives from executive agencies, will provide an overview of these efforts and any quantifiable results that they can share, as well as a discussion of the challenges they have encountered in terms of funding, farmer outreach, and methodologies.

**Moderator:** Vermont State Representative Carolyn Partridge, Chair, House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

**Speakers:**

- Dr. Sara Via, Professor and Climate Extension Specialist, University of Maryland
- New York State Assemblymember Didi Barrett
- Ryan Patch, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
- Briana Alfaro, Soil Carbon Field Researcher, NOFA-NY & Soul Fire Farm

**11:25-11:55 Q&A**

**12:00 p.m.**

**III. Roundtable on Forest Carbon Opportunities:** This panel will feature a discussion of existing state programs and other innovative efforts to design accessible, economically feasible forest carbon storage programs for small-to-medium sized landowners, and in urban areas.

**Moderator:** Maryland State Delegate Dana Stein, Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

**Speakers:**

- Robert Sherman, Policy Manager, American Forest Foundation
- Molly Henry, Senior Manager for Climate and Health, American Forests
- Jo D. Saffair, Maine Forest Carbon Task Force

**12:30 – 12:55 p.m. Q & A**

**12:55 – 1:00 p.m. Wrap-up**

**Speakers:**

- Massachusetts State Senator Marc Pacheco, Chair, CSG East State Legislative Climate Alliance
- Ned Sullivan, Director, Scenic Hudson

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**Day 2, April 24, 2021**

**10:00 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.:**

**Introductions and Summary of Day I:** Massachusetts State Senator Marc Pacheco, Chair, CSG East State Legislative Climate Alliance; Ned Sullivan, President, Scenic Hudson

**10:10 a.m.: Panel on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Agriculture**

**Moderator:** Pennsylvania State Representative Christopher Rabb

**Speakers:**

- Gerald Torres, Professor, Yale Law School
- Dr. Ali Fares, Professor, Prairie View A&M University

**10:35 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.: Q&A**

**10:55:**

**IV. An Overview of Public and Private Carbon Offset Market Opportunities,**

**Methodologies and Constraints:** In the United States, California is the only state that operates a compliance offsets market, as part of its economy-wide cap-and-trade program, but the voluntary offsets market has been growing rapidly. These efforts could receive a significant push from the Biden administration, which wants to provide some \$30 billion in aid from USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation to pay farmers to capture carbon in soil, and has proposed creating a carbon bank that would buy credits from farmers and sell them to corporations for offsets. In the private sector, a growing list of companies, including Shell and Amazon, have announced major investments in nature-based offsets to meet internal carbon reduction goals and showcase their green credentials. Last year, Microsoft announced it would devote \$1 billion to speeding the development of carbon capture technologies.

**Moderator:** Massachusetts State Senator Marc Pacheco, Chair, CSG East State Legislative Climate Alliance

**Speakers:**

--Aaron Paul, Director, Forest Carbon Origination, Bluesource  
--Cindy Chiang, Sustainability and Partnerships, Pachama

**11:20 a.m. - 11:35 a.m.: Q&A**

**11:40 a.m.**

**V. State Acton and Potential Federal Collaboration:** The Biden administration has outlined the goal of “decarbonizing the food and agricultural sector and leveraging agricultural to remove carbon dioxide from the air and store it in the ground.” At the same time, the President has proposed to conserve 30% of the nation’s open spaces, including forests and other reserves, by the year 2030, as central to his climate strategies. This session will include discussions with state agricultural leaders who will summarize ideas and strategies being developed to coordinate joint state-federal action.

**Moderator:** Andy Bicking, Director of Government Relations and Public Policy, Scenic Hudson

**Speakers:**

--Richard Ball, Commissioner, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets  
--Dr. Barbara Glenn, Chief Executive Officer, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture

**12:05 p.m. – 12:20 p.m.: Q&A**

**12:20 p.m.**

**VI. Moving Forward:** The Northeast Carbon Alliance and The Council of State Governments are committed to collaborating on regional approaches to encourage sequestration practices. This session will feature a facilitated discussion about observations made during this conference, identification of synergies among actions in the state, federal and private spheres, and potential policy concepts to enhance joint efforts across state borders.

**Facilitators:**

--Ned Sullivan, President, Scenic Hudson

--Massachusetts Senator Marc Pacheco, Chair, CSG East State Legislative Climate Alliance

**Responders:**

--Vermont State Representative Carolyn Partridge, Chair, House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

--New York State Assemblymember Didi Barrett

--Dr. Sacha Spector, Environmental Program Director, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

**12:55 p.m.:**

**Closing comments:**

--Ned Sullivan, President, Scenic Hudson

--Massachusetts State Senator Marc Pacheco, Chair, CSG East State Legislative Climate Alliance