

VIRTUAL

2022 Regional Conservation

Partnership Network Gathering

Climate Justice & Resilience:

Getting to How

November 17, 2022



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Important Links & Resources

2022 RCP Network Gathering Engagement Map

Are you interested in networking with other RCP Gathering participants? Are there skills you'd like to develop further? Do you have skills you would like to share with others? Fill out [this form](#) to connect with other participants and explore the [Networking Map](#) to learn more about other conservation peers in your region.

Tech Support

Need help navigating Zoom or attending the event? Our event staff is online and on call to support you:

- **Support chat:** <https://www.tidio.com/talk/earthcoast> (Preferred)
- **Support email:** eventsupport@earthcoast.live
- **Support phone:** (720) 770-1725

Continuing Forestry Education Credits

Attendees are eligible to receive 3.5 Continuing Forestry Education credits through the Society of American Foresters (SAF) certification program. If you are interested in receiving credits, please remain until the end of the gathering and fill out the [sign-in sheet](#).

Find Us on Social Media

Follow [@wwconserve](#) and [@highsteadfoundation](#) on Instagram, join the [RCP Network LinkedIn Group](#), and look out for [#RCPGathering2022](#) on posts relating to this year's virtual events.

Upcoming Events

Conservation Finance Learning Lab

Join Highstead and the Conservation Finance Network for the upcoming five-part Conservation Finance Learning Lab webinar series focused on innovative approaches to conservation funding and financing. The free webinars will take place from December 2022 to April 2023 and will feature panel discussions, case studies, and networking opportunities for participants to take a deep dive into actionable, innovative approaches to conservation funding and financing. [Learn more and register here.](#)



THE CONSERVATION
FINANCE NETWORK

2022 RCP Network Gathering Schedule

9:00 am	Welcome on behalf of the RCP Network , Bill Labich, Senior Conservationist, Highstead
9:05 am	Networking and Connecting
9:30 am	Keynote Address: Why and How to “Build a New Table” in Conservation Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Neenah Estrella-Luna – StarLuna Consulting • Chris Cato – Eagle Eye Institute Moderator: Bill Labich – Highstead
10:15 am	Breakout discussion: Considering and Applying What was Shared
10:45 am	Self-care break
11:00 am	Panel I: Relationship Building for Conservation and Climate: How to form transformational relationships with new partners Moderated Panel: Stories of Relationships Built <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geordie Elkins – Highstead and Doreen Abubakar – Community Placemaking Action Network (CPEN) • Jennifer Albertine – Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust and Andre Strongbearheart Gaines, Jr. – Nipmuc Tribe Moderator: Amy Blaymore Paterson – Connecticut Land Conservation Council
11:45 am	Breakout discussion: Our reflections on Relationship Building
12:15 pm	Lunch Break with *trivia* and a self-care suggestion
12:45 pm	Leopold Conservation Award Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John and Carolyn Wheeler, 2022 Leopold Conservation Award New England Recipients • Brian Donahue, Wildlands, Woodlands, Farmlands & Communities • Lance Irving, Leopold Conservation Award Program Director, Sand County Foundation
1:15 pm	Panel II: Collaboration for Conservation and Climate: How organizations are collaborating to build Climate Justice and Resilience into their work and community Moderated Panel: Stories of Collaboration for Climate Justice and Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melanie Gárate – The Stone Living Lab (SLL) and Boston Harbor Now • Reginald Saint Fortcolin – Aspetuck Land Trust and David Brant – Aspetuck Land Trust • Erin Witham – Downeast Conservation Network and Renee Gray – Town of Lubec, ME Moderator: Katharine Burgess – Smart Growth America
2:15 pm	Breakout discussion: What <u>are or could be</u> Our Stories of Collaboration for Climate Justice and Resilience?
2:45 pm	Final Word: Uplifting Young Voices and Re-Framing a Conservationist’s Potential for Cultivating Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cassandra Bull – National Farm to School Network
3:00 pm	Adjourn

Standards of Engagement

The 2022 RCP Network Gathering aims to increase participants' understanding of Climate Justice and Resilience and is an environment for learning. Together we can embody a culture of respect.

If you're finding the meeting to be difficult at any time, feel free to take a break or message [Katie Blake](#) or [Bill Labich](#).

R = Take Responsibility for what you say and feel. Use “I” statements, such as “I think,” “I feel,” “I noticed,” “I wonder,” or “I believe.”

E = Use Empathetic listening and look for common ground.

S = Be Sensitive to differences in perspective and communication styles. Make room for others to speak.

P = Ponder what you hear and feel before you speak.

E = Examine your assumptions and perceptions.

C = Keep Confidentiality.

T = Trust that everyone is attending the Gathering with positive intent.

[RESPECT Acronym adapted from Civic Reinventions, Inc.](#)

Keynote Panel & Speaker Biographies

KEYNOTE PANEL

Why and How to “Build a New Table” in Conservation Work

Why does climate justice relate to your work in conservation and how can you advance it in your region? Our keynote speakers will invite us to think differently about climate justice and our role in advancing it. How can we build new relationships and integrate equity and inclusion values into our planning and programming? Through stories and discussions, the speakers will help us gain new perspectives and awareness of the need and potential designs for a new table—or something else—where we can come together with future friends and colleagues and co-cultivate just, healthier, and more climate-resilient communities.

KEYNOTE PANELISTS



Chris Cato – Eagle Eye Institute

Chris has over 30 years of experience in community organizing, organizational development, youth development, and outdoor leadership, with a focus on environmental awareness and a connection with nature as his bedrock for personal and professional development. He was raised in Boston and spent half his summers in the foothills of the White Mountains attending a camp for Boston boys. Later on, Chris became the camp administrator and board member for both the lead agency and the camp alumni association. Chris has served as an outdoor leadership instructor, trainer, and advisory board member for the Appalachian Mountain Club's Youth Opportunities Program and is a member of the committee of the board for the Trustees of the Reservations. Chris is also the co-founder of YouthBuild USA's global green initiatives. He is currently a Leadership Development Consultant and Board President of [**Eagle Eye Institute**](#).

Chris' involvement with Eagle Eye Institute (promoting nature for all youth) first as a partner, then as a visionary, is focused on illuminating the role that time in nature can play in the key intersections of our life, especially for people and communities that have limited awareness and or access to time in nature.



Dr. Neenah Estrella-Luna (She/Her) – StarLuna Consulting

Dr. Neenah Estrella-Luna is an anti-racism and social equity-focused researcher, educator, and advocate. She has led or co-led a variety of studies addressing questions related to social justice, social resilience, environmental justice, community development, and democratic governance. Dr. Estrella-Luna works with community-based organizations and policymakers to develop and advocate for policies and practices to support equity, inclusion, and justice. She's also an active member of the Massachusetts Advisory Committee for the US Commission on Civil Rights. After 15 years in academia, Dr. Estrella-Luna is now the principal of [**StarLuna Consulting**](#).

Keynote Panel & Speaker Biographies

MODERATORS



Katie Blake (She/Her) – Highstead

As a trained Conservation Biologist, Katie has over 20 years of experience in landscape ecology, environmental outreach, conservation planning, and scientific research. In her role as Conservationist at [Highstead](#), Katie supports RCPs across the Northeast in their efforts to increase the pace and scale of conservation by way of capacity building, network coordination, and leadership of various landscape-scale initiatives. Katie holds a Master's degree in Conservation Biology from Antioch University New England and a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Mount Holyoke College. At home, Katie delights in tending to her homestead with her husband Jeremy and daughters Tziporah and Tahlia.



Bill Labich (He/Him) – Highstead

Bill has led Highstead's [Regional Conservation Program](#) since 2007, helping to develop the capacities of Regional Conservation Partnerships (RCPs) and regional partners to conserve more land collaboratively and in the service of more resilient communities and regions. Bill coordinates the RCP Network and the Northeast Forest Network and co-coordinates the Northern Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership—all three of which he co-founded.

Bill came to Highstead with 20 years' experience engaging forest landowners, municipal officials, RCPs, and the public in the elements of whole landscape conservation and stewardship, working for the Connecticut Audubon Society, New England Forestry Foundation, and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

Morning Panelist & Speaker Biographies

Relationship Building for Conservation and Climate: How to form transformational relationships with new partners

Moderated Panel: Stories of Relationships Built

PANELISTS



Doreen Abubakar – Community Placemaking Engagement Network (CPEN)

Doreen Abubakar, a lifelong New Haven resident and activist, created the **Community Placemaking and Engagement Network (CPEN)** as a catalyst for community relationship-building, leadership development, and public health in the low-income Newhallville neighborhood of New Haven. Focusing on family fitness and outdoor recreation to positively impact the social determinants of health, CPEN established the Learning Corridor along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, a linear park and designated section of the East Coast Greenway. The Learning Corridor features a resident-maintained public green-space and Audubon-certified pollinator garden, access to the linear park, a space for festivals and community gatherings, and a bicycle storage facility where community members can access bicycles (and helmets) for use on the trail and in the community. Doreen is also an award-winning environmental educator who leads 4-H programs and teaches fishing for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. In 2011 she founded the West River Water Festival, a popular annual summertime event featuring canoe rides and watershed education.



Jennifer Albertaine (She/Her) – Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

Jenn works for the **Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust** where she is responsible for the integration of climate and land justice into every aspect of the organization, including identifying and changing policies and practices that have led to inequitable land tenure demographics. Before Mount Grace, she had a career in academia that focused on human-environment interactions associated with climate change, environmental pollution, and food systems—all from the perspective of human health and social justice. She has held positions at Mount Holyoke College, Harvard Forest, and she has a Ph.D. in Plant and Soil Sciences from UMass Amherst.



Georgie Elkins – Highstead

Georgie graduated from Temple University where he studied horticulture and naturalistic design. Shortly after graduation, he joined Highstead Arboretum in 1996 as a Horticulturist. In 2012 he returned to Highstead to oversee operations, and to collaborate with stewardship, ecology, and conservation staff on projects around landscape restoration and education. [Highstead](#) was a founding partner of the Hudson to Housatonic RCP and Georgie has participated in various initiatives that have grown out of it including Pollinator Pathway and the Ecotype Project.



Andre Strongbearheart Gaines, Jr. – Nipmuc Tribe

Andre is a citizen of the Nipmuc people. He serves as a cultural steward for his Tribe, is a father, public speaker, traditional dancer, Indigenous Activist for Indigenous rights, carpenter by trade, and educator. With 15 years in recovery from drugs and alcohol, Andre is a recovery sponsor and integrated life coach for those in need. Andre's work focuses on bringing traditional knowledge back to Indigenous Peoples. Some of this consists of how to flesh and brain tan hides to make items such as drums, buckskin, and blankets. He is also the resident artist for the [Ohketeau Cultural Center](#) based in Ashfield Massachusetts.

MODERATOR



Amy Blaymore Paterson – Connecticut Land Conservation Council

Amy joined the [Connecticut Land Conservation Council \(CLCC\)](#) in 2010 as its first Executive Director. She serves as the co-chair of the State of Connecticut Natural Heritage, Open Space, and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board. She was a member of the Environment Committee for the Lamont/Bysiewicz Administration transition team, the Forests Sub-Group of the Governor's Council on Climate Change, and the Policy on Resilient Forests for Connecticut's Future (PRFCT Future) Working Group, and is currently a member of the Working Lands Alliance Steering Committee and the Board of Directors of the Keney Park Sustainability Project.

Afternoon Panelist & Speaker Biographies

Collaboration for Conservation and Climate: How organizations are collaborating to build Climate Justice and Resilience into their work and community

Moderated Panel: Stories of Collaboration for Climate Justice & Resilience

PANELISTS



David Brant – Aspetuck Land Trust

David graduated from the University of Michigan with a BA in Political Science. He managed a llama ranch in Montana before starting a CSA Farm in VT in 1992. He worked with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board to develop neighborhood parks, and in 1995 founded Youth Farm in Minneapolis to teach children about gardening and healthy eating. In 2004 he created a private sector summer jobs program for youth for the City of Minneapolis growing it into the second largest program of its kind in the country. He has served as Executive Director of [**Aspetuck Land Trust**](#) since 2008.



Melanie Gárate (She/Her) – The Stone Living Lab (SLL) and Boston Harbor Now

Melanie is the Director of Climate Engagement at the [**Stone Living Lab \(SLL\)**](#) and [**Boston Harbor Now**](#). She began her career as a marine ecologist examining how people impact climate change. Through her research, she was struck by the disproportionate environmental impacts on low-income communities, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, which sparked her passion for environmental justice work. Now, her work focuses on increasing the resilience of people impacted by climate change. With community equity and health as a priority, she focuses on enhancing climate solutions within the Harbor via nature-based solutions and social change.



Reginald Saint Fortcolin (He/Him) – Aspetuck Land Trust

Reggy is the Conservation Outreach Manager for [**Aspetuck Land Trust**](#).



Erin Witham (She/Her) – Downeast Conservation Network and 12 Rivers Conservation Initiative

Erin coordinates the [Downeast Conservation Network](#) and the [12 Rivers Conservation Initiative](#), two Maine RCPs. She has a non-profit background where she has done everything from bookkeeping to cartography to surveying road-stream crossings. Throughout her career, bringing people and organizations together has always been the favorite part of her work. In 2017, Erin returned to school to receive her Master's Degree in Sustainability Science from UMass-Amherst. While at UMass, Erin attended her first RCP Network Gathering and she has been hooked ever since!



Renee Gray – Town of Lubec, ME

Renee is the Town Administrator for the Town of Lubec, Maine.

MODERATOR



Katharine Burgess – Smart Growth America

Katharine is the Vice President of Land Use and Development at [Smart Growth America \(SGA\)](#), where she oversees SGA's Land Use programs including LOCUS, the Form-Based Codes Institute, and the National Brownfields Coalition. Prior to Smart Growth America, she led the Urban Resilience Program at the Urban Land Institute where she built up the organization's program of work addressing how buildings, cities, and communities can be more prepared for the impacts of climate change. Katharine holds an MSc in Regional and Urban Planning from the London School of Economics and a BA from Williams College.

Final Word Speaker Biography

Uplifting Young Voices and Re-Framing a Conservationist's Potential for Cultivating Community



Cassandra Bull – National Farm to School Network

Cassandra is an artist, farmer, and activist originally from Saratoga Springs, New York. She is a recent graduate of Tufts University's Master in Environmental Policy and Planning and has undergraduate degrees in Agricultural Technology and Fine Arts, a combination that allowed her to creatively explore our individual and collective power as stewards of the planet. Her professional experience has focused on local food systems, community engagement, and policy impact. She has served as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer, in leadership roles in multiple grassroots organizations, and was in the 2022 Academics for Land Protection in New England cohort.



The Leopold Conservation Award celebrates voluntary conservation and provides a prominent platform to recognize farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners as conservation ambassadors. Private landowners are nominated or apply for the award based on their land ethic and ability to showcase that conservation and production have a symbiotic relationship. The region-specific program represents the very best in conservation on private working lands.



John and Carolyn Wheeler – Wheel-view Farm of Shelburne, MA 2022 Leopold Conservation Award New England Recipients

John and Carolyn Wheeler raise rotationally grazed beef cattle, grow apples for cider, produce maple syrup, and manage a forest. By preserving **Wheel-view Farm**'s ecological significance it's become a showcase for sustainable land management. Their conservation methods improve water, soil, and wildlife habitat, while sequestering carbon. The Wheelers have removed invasive weeds from the landscape and power their farm with solar arrays.



Lance Irving – Sand County Foundation

Lance Irving took the helm of Sand County Foundation's Leopold Conservation Award Program in 2016 after more than 15 years of experience in the outdoor sporting goods industry, and prior to that as a professional wilderness hunting and fishing guide. As chief sales and marketing officer at two outdoor manufacturing companies, Lance became a recognized leader in the industry for successfully identifying market needs and expanding the customer base by focusing on clearly defining a brand message and forming strategic partnerships. Since arriving at Sand County Foundation, Lance has grown the number of states participating in the Leopold Conservation Award program from 8 states in 2016 to 24 states in 2022.



Brian Donahue – Wildlands, Woodlands, Farmlands & Communities

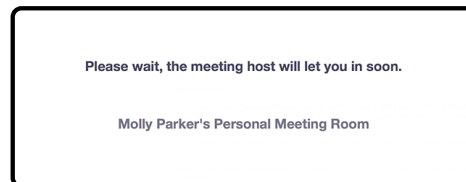
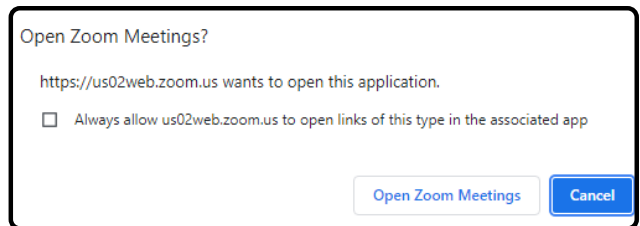
Brian Donahue is Professor Emeritus of American Environmental Studies at Brandeis University, and a farm and forest policy consultant. He holds a PhD from the Brandeis program in History. He co-founded and for 12 years directed Land's Sake, a non-profit community farm in Weston, Massachusetts, and now co-owns and manages a farm in western Massachusetts. He sits on the board of The Massachusetts Woodland Institute, and The Land Institute in Salina, Kansas. Brian is author of *Reclaiming the Commons: Community Farms and Forests in a New England Town* (1999), and *The Great Meadow: Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord* (2004). He is co-author of *Wildlands and Woodlands* and *A New England Food Vision*.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

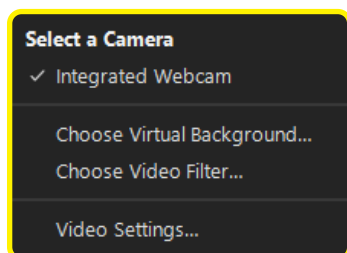
- An internet-connected computer, laptop, or device with webcam.
- A confirmation email from Highstead, containing the Zoom link/ID number to join the meeting.
- A phone (if you're unable to receive audio via your computer, laptop, or device).

ACCESSING ZOOM

- To join the meeting, click the link in the confirmation email provided by Highstead.
- You will be directed to the Zoom website. From here, you will need to click 'Open zoom.us?'
- You will then be placed in a waiting room until a member of the meeting staff admits you into the meeting room.
- Be sure your Zoom name is updated. If needed, you can rename yourself by clicking on the three dots in the top right-hand corner of your video box and selecting "Rename."
- Feel free to say hello in the chat!

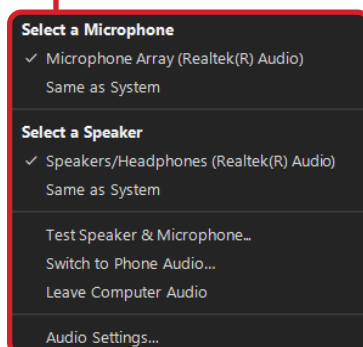
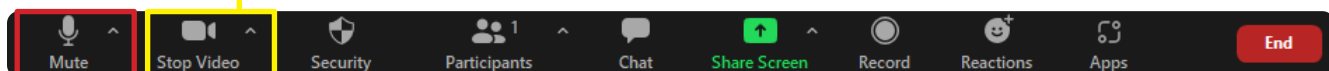


ZOOM TOOLBAR



START/STOP VIDEO & VIDEO SETTINGS

- You can turn your camera on or off with the Start/Stop Video button.
- By clicking on the "^" next to the Start/Stop video button, you can change webcams, access your Zoom video settings, or select a virtual background (if enabled).

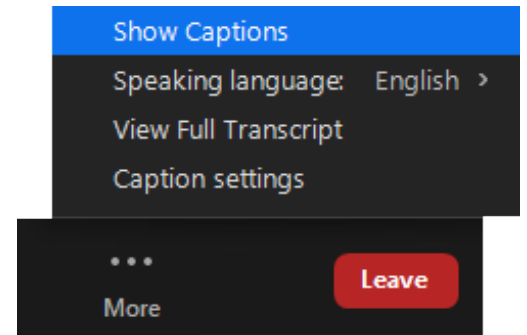
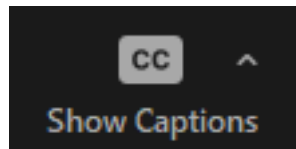


MUTE & AUDIO SETTINGS

- Click Unmute when having a discussion in breakout rooms.
- Click the "^" to the right of the Mute button to test your microphone and speaker. If you have headphones or a headset you can select them as your microphone or output source here.
- To prevent patchy audio when your internet connection is unstable, click "Switch to Phone Audio..." and call the provided number to listen and speak through your phone. Be sure to enter Meeting ID and Participant ID to make sure your phone audio is connected to your video.

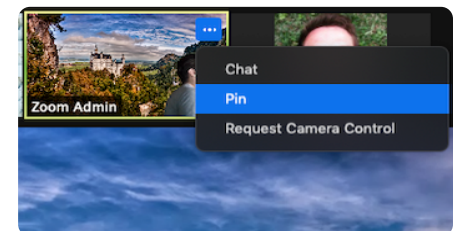
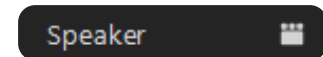
CAPTIONS

- On the main menu bar, click the Show Captions or Captions button.
- You may need to tap the More button first to see the Show Captions option.



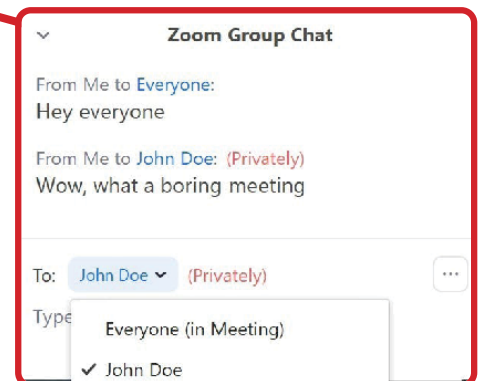
GALLERY/SPEAKER & VIDEO LAYOUT

- To switch between Gallery View (screen is split between all attendee tiles) and Speaker View (the person speaking fills the screen), toggle the Speaker View/Gallery View button in the top right corner of the screen. We recommend using speaker view during the presentations.
- To the right of this button is the full-screen button.
- If you would like to focus on one speaker, hover over the top right corner of their tile and a “. . .” will appear. Click that and select “Pin Video” from the dropdown menu.
- To un-pin their video, click on the button in the top right corner of the screen and select “Remove Pin.”



CHAT

- When you click the chat button, a chatbox like the one on the right will open.
- Here you can send a message to everyone, or a private message to anyone directly.
- Helpful links and resources can also be shared in-chat by panelists or attendees. Be on the lookout for these!



TECH SUPPORT

Need help navigating Zoom or attending the event? Our event staff is online and on call to support you:

- **Support chat:** <https://www.tidio.com/talk/earthcoast> (Preferred)
- **Support email:** eventsupport@earthcoast.live
- **Support phone:** (720) 770-1725

MORE INFORMATION

[Zoom Tech Support](#)
[Zoom Help Center](#)

[Getting Started](#)
[Tutorials](#)

[Mobile Guide \(iOS\)](#)
[Mobile Guide \(Android\)](#)

Zoom Etiquette Guide

Mute your microphone

To help keep background noise to a minimum, make sure you mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

Be mindful of background noise

When your microphone is not muted, avoid activities that could create additional noise, such as shuffling papers.

Position your camera properly

If you choose to use a web camera, be sure it is in a stable position and focused at eye level, if possible. Doing so helps create a more direct sense of engagement with other participants.

Limit distractions

You can make it easier to focus on the meeting by turning off notifications, closing or minimizing running apps, and muting your smartphone.

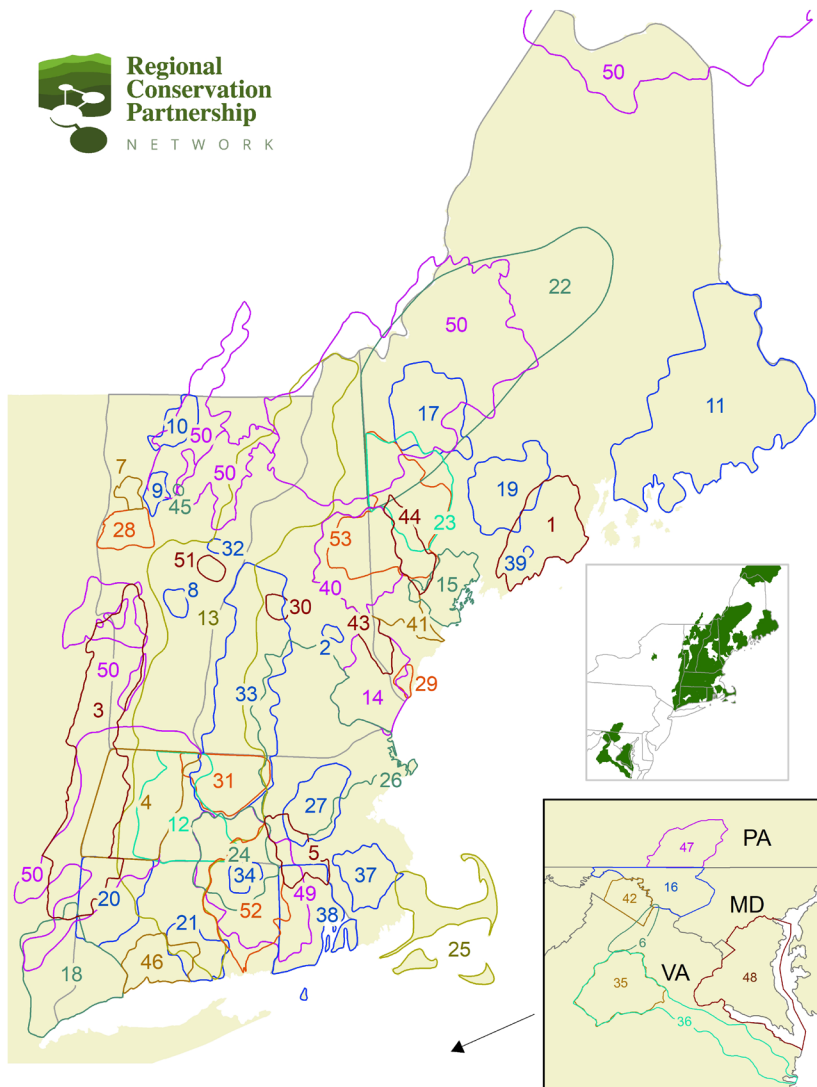
Avoid multitasking

You'll retain the discussion better if you refrain from replying to emails or text messages during the meeting and wait to work on that PowerPoint presentation until after the meeting ends.

Prepare materials in advance

If you will be sharing or referring to content during the meeting, make sure you have the files and/or links ready to go before the meeting begins.

Map of the RCP Network



- 1 - 12 Rivers Conservation Initiative
- 2 - Belknap Range Conservation Coalition
- 3 - Berkshire-Taconic Regional Conservation Partnership
- 4 - Berkshire Wildlife Linkage Partnership
- 5 - Blackstone Watershed Collaborative
- 6 - Blue Ridge Conservation Alliance
- 7 - Champlain Valley Conservation Partnership (CVCP)
- 8 - Chateaugay No Town Conservation Project
- 9 - Chittenden County Uplands Conservation Project
- 10 - Cold Hollow to Canada Forest Link Project
- 11 - Downeast Conservation Network
- 12 - Forever Farmland Initiative
- 13 - Friends of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge
- 14 - Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership
- 15 - Greater Portland Conservation and Trail Initiative
- 16 - Heart of Maryland Conservation Alliance
- 17 - High Peaks Initiative
- 18 - Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership
- 19 - Kennebec Woodland Partnership
- 20 - Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative
- 21 - Lower CT River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange
- 22 - Maine Mountain Collaborative
- 23 - Maine West
- 24 - Mass-Conn Sustainable Forest Partnership
- 25 - Massachusetts Coastal Pine Barrens Partnership
- 26 - Merrimack Conservation Partnership
- 27 - Metrowest Conservation Alliance
- 28 - Mid Champlain Valley RCP (MCV RCP)
- 29 - Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative
- 30 - Newfound Land Conservation Partnership
- 31 - North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership
- 32 - Orange County Headwaters Project
- 33 - Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership
- 34 - Quiet Corner Initiative
- 35 - Rappahannock-Rapidan Conservation Partnership
- 36 - Rappahannock River Roundtable
- 37 - Resilient Taunton Watershed Network
- 38 - Rhode Island Woodland Partnership
- 39 - River-Link
- 40 - Saco Headwaters Alliance
- 41 - Saco Watershed Collaborative
- 42 - Safe Water Conservation Collaborative
- 43 - Salmon Falls Watershed Collaborative
- 44 - Sebago Clean Waters
- 45 - Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor Project
- 46 - South Central Regional Land Conservation Alliance
- 47 - South Mountain Partnership
- 48 - Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance
- 49 - Southern New England Heritage Forest Partnership
- 50 - Staying Connected Initiative
- 51 - Taylor Valley Conservation Project
- 52 - Thames River Basin Partnership
- 53 - Western Maine Partners

Information from Bill Labich, Highstead. RCPs 20221107 With Other Potential RCPs outside New England.mxd

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RCP NETWORK? CHECK OUT THESE LINKS AND RESOURCES:

- Interactive RCP Network [Map](#)
- The RCP Network [Website](#)
- Wildlands & Woodlands [Website](#)
- The Highstead [Website](#)
- RCP Handbook ([Full PDF](#)) ([Summary](#))
- Wildlands and Woodlands, Farmlands and Communities Report ([Full PDF](#)) ([Summary](#))
- Engaging Landowners in Conservation Guide ([PDF](#))
- [Sign up](#) for the RCP Network E-Newsletter



2022
RCP NETWORK
Gathering