

Maine Climate Change Funders Forum

The Climate Change Funders Forum (CCFF) provides a unique opportunity for philanthropists within the region to learn collectively about efforts in Maine and New England to address climate change and consider how to strategically align funding to make an impact. The goal of the Climate Change Funders Forum is to see Maine-focused environmental funders commit more resources to organizations doing high priority efforts. We believe that increased knowledge, combined with the closer relationships funders are developing with each other, are key elements of success.

Background

In October 2014, the Horizon Foundation, with support of the Environmental Funders Network, initiated a series of funder gatherings aimed at creating a shared understanding of the breadth and types of climate change work being done by Maine-based nonprofits; where Maine could play a role on national policy issues that have a direct impact on state efforts; and what might be specific grant-making opportunities prioritized by urgency, leverage and the potential for coordination among funders.

Since that first October gathering, roughly 12-18 environmental funders have met regularly to learn how they can support nonprofits in areas of climate change work currently underway. The learning has been targeted in four areas:

1. Community resilience and what concrete actions can be taken at the local level;
2. Forest management and it's role in mitigating climate change;
3. Policy initiatives focused on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative; and
4. Weatherization and energy efficiency work.

Additionally, funders have learned more about one another's climate investment focus and begun to more narrowly identify initiatives and projects for joint support.

Results

Funds raised to support high priority climate change actions in 2015 included \$100,000 to support the update of the RGGI report for use in lobbying for the Clean Power Plan and \$45,000 to support Maine Conservation Voters work to influence Maine's Senator Susan Collins to support the Clean Power Plan. Building on this momentum, funders have contributed \$120,500 in 2016, including an additional \$80,000 to support the RGGI Project Series, \$15,000 to develop a framework for community-based clean energy program, \$15,500 for Maine's Green TIMO initiative and \$10,000 to support the Climate Change Funders process.

Future Initiatives

The Climate Change Funders forum has had tremendous success in aligning resources to address critical needs of nonprofits working on climate change issues. Building on this success, we will continue to work in sub-committees on the four key issues areas identified as critical leverage points for funders to impact change. Our work plan for 2017 includes convening the Climate Change Funders approximately quarterly based on the needs of the funders and critical milestones in the sub-committee work. We will also send periodic e-mail communication with the Climate Change Funders to share relevant events in the region and new funding opportunities as they arise.