

ARROWSIC CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

August 18, 2026

Present: Karen Robbins, Jenna Howard, Clarke Cooper, Keith Salcines, Jesse Nankin McMahon, Paul Schlein. Guests Shellfish Committee Chair Lisa Margonelli and [Skye Butterson-Dunn](#) from the Island Institute.

The meeting was called to order by Phine at 5:35 p.m. Phine had to depart before 6:00.

Microgrids

Guest presenter Skye Butterson-Dunn leads the Resilience Energy Team supporting coastal island resilience at Island Institute and spoke to us after reviewing Arrowsic's climate action plan. ([The Arrowsic Climate Action Plan](#) outlines 8 resilience-related energy actions our community wishes to take: grid hardening, exploring community solar, microgrid and islanding, residential solar and battery upgrades, generators, and participating in regional energy projects, plus emergency preparedness.) Ahead of the presentation, Karen Robbins gave Skye a tour of Arrowsic and Georgetown including the low lying areas.

Resilience is the ability to quickly recover from disruptions like storms and flooding which can cause grid and road disruptions, power outages and isolation, which impact people and critical services. Skye covered:

- Resilience: how well do we withstand and recover from disruptions
- Reliability: how often does power go out
- Autonomy: control over supply

The CMP load hosting capacity map was shared. There are several main points of vulnerability in Arrowsic. There is an overview of relevant regulatory agencies including FERC. ISO-New England is responsible for the energy market and resource mix; regionally 60% natural gas, 22% nuclear, 11% renewable. What Maine actually generates is made up of 43% natural gas, 19% hydro, 16.7% wind, and on. Skye notes companies CMP and Versant do not generate electricity; they only handle transmission and distribution. The PUC regulates utilities and Maine's retail electricity framework. There are independent models in Maine including Isle au Haut and Fox Island Electric Co. who manage their own generation and distribution. In Deer Isle, Versant supported local infrastructure investments to increase reliability. Islesboro is a long island with a geographic Narrows, a section that gets washed out in storms, disconnecting north and south. The north needed a financial investment to create a microgrid for emergencies.

Microgrids can be off-grid or interconnected to the grid. Homes can be their own microgrid, a community can be one, etc. Matinicus and Monhegan are their own microgrids with generation, lines, maintenance, and transportation. In Georgetown, for example, just the town center could be a smaller hub. There are four features of microgrids: 1. Local generation, 2. Infrastructure and controls, 3. local loads, and 4. storage.

There is a ladder for energy resilience in communities:

1. Reducing energy demand is where we start to lower loads

2. Make existing grid more resilient
3. Individual backups (batteries, generators)
4. Shared local energy (municipal or co-op pooling)
5. Microgrid/islanding

Skye mentions how other communities are meeting resilience goals: Efficiency Maine has some programs to support very minor generation or storage. Newcastle has a battery lending program to power low loads like medical devices. She notes Martha's Vineyard attempted to use bidirectional charging but it wasn't successful. Swans Island had their own grid but they had to join Versant because of cost. Matinicus uses solar generation and is looking into super-capacitors. Monhegan uses diesel and their generator is on loan from Lincoln County Emergency Management.

Across the Maine grid, there is a growing need for heat pumps which heat and cool homes, plus increased electric vehicles. There is increased generation as well. Weatherization becomes a key need in this conversation.

She suggests asking a series of questions: What loads are you interested in supporting? Ex. Georgetown Central School and Arrowsic Fire Station. Who is making decisions, who can shepherd a project through design, permitting, financing and construction? What resilience do you want? What would it take to achieve it? What solutions would provide the most value? Is a microgrid one?

Island Institute is aware of the [ETI Energy Transitions Playbook](#) who can provide expert planners. Eastport and Islesboro worked through this program on energy resilience projects. Applications are open now through November 18 to use tech support for a \$20,000 toward a strategic energy plan and funding deeper dives into specific feasibility after that.

Karen is aware of a grant that allows for 6 hours of support service from the [Data Innovation Project out of USM](#) for each town on the project of our choice. Survey development and analysis is something they can do. Karen and Skye ask the group to identify why we would consider going down a microgrid path. Suggestions from the group are: *We want to be more green. We don't want to be without power for over 24 hours. We want more energy independence, reducing our own footprint. We want to ensure the fire barn is always powered. When power is down, ensure Arrowsic could pick up the slack for key households and responders.* Could we design a survey to figure out what the needs are? Lisa suggests wording: "When the power goes out, what do you worry about?" Keith suggests: Have you had concerns for your own generators or fuel during storms?

Karen asks Skye to help us determine who Arrowsic's CMP technical contact might be.

Minutes

Clarke makes a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Karen seconds. All are in favor.

Mail

Water testing Invoice #10220668 for \$85 was received and was approved to pay.

Water Quality and Cleanup Schedule

Karen and Clarke will go out this week and 8th of September for water testing. Paul will clean SPCA Aug 22nd, Clarke on the 29th, Jenna on Sept 5th which will be the last week of cleanup.

Pesticide Survey Follow-Up

After several emails since July's meeting, Karen supports the idea of asking Gary Fish to focus the fall talk on alternatives to pesticides to tackle the top (3-5) pests in a balanced way. Jesse suggests a conversational spirit with opportunity for lots of questions. Paul suggests 45 minutes of presentation followed by 45 minutes to Q&A. [Paul drafted a potential outline for review and comment.](#) Keith suggests we supply a short list of questions to be answered. We would need to create a formal letter to retain Gary, according to Karen. Paul connected the cooperative extension but didn't hear back. Paul's takeaway from the survey was that homeowners are applying pesticides and 78% of respondents were concerned about the use of pesticides. Paul says his thinking has evolved to hoping we can provide more education about how pesticides poison the ground and the air. Keith asks if postponing to early spring might be the best time for the presentation. The commission considers a series focusing on community health and biodiversity first with Jay Feldman from Beyond Pesticides in November and an actions/alternative presentation with Gary Fish as part of the series in the spring, perhaps in April. Karen moves to ask Paul to communicate with Gary and Jay to confirm availability for November and for him to determine how to best set us up for alternatives conversations in the spring. Paul will consider this and get back to Karen this week, noting that his main interest is seeing the community test for pesticides. Gratitude is expressed for the work on this talk/series.

Winter Moth Tape

Paul will give us an update when he has one about what the Ontario company needs in order to advertise the availability of 30 rolls of tape to Arrowsic residents.

BioBlitz

Our next bioblitz will take place Sunday at 10:00am with KELT participating. Small mammal traps have been set for research purposes.

Between Meetings Decisions

This item is tabled until September's meeting.

Commissioner Terms

Karen asks commissioners to share when they started their term. Her term is up in December and she will be sworn in again.

Nature Notes

Jenna notes seeing a porcupine mother with one or two babies this week. Karen identified a fisher captured on Jenna's trail camera. Clarke notes a mother raccoon and four kits in the big oak that makes her home in the woods. Jesse's hummingbirds are eating her out of house and home.

Paul moves that we adjourn at 7:49 p.m with Keith seconding. Our next meeting will be held September 15.

Respectfully submitted by Jenna Howard.