

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

June 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes

A telemeeting of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG) was held by Zoom

An audio recording (16 MB) is available at:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2021/2021-06-15_WPCAG_Audio.mp3

A video recording (296 MB) is available at:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2021/2021-06-15_WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Karen Burnaska	Save the Sound
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Virginia de Lima	USGS CT Water Science Center
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition
John Hudak	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
Patrick Kearney	Manchester Water & Sewer
Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Tom Tyler	MDC

Other Participants:

Judy Allen	Save Our Water CT
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville and Jewett City Water Cos.
Margot Burns	RiverCOG
Len DeJong	Kleinfelder
Corinne Fitting	DEEP
Kelvin Green	Western CT Council of Governments
Alexandria Hibbard	DEEP
Dave Kuzminski (alt.)	Portland
Richard Meskill	Meriden Public Utilities
Christine O'Neill	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Kelsey Wentling (alt.)	CT River Conservancy
Bruce Wittchen	OPM

Members Absent:

Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Eric Hammerling	CT Forest and Park Association
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
David Knauf	Darien Health Department
Joan Nichols	CT Farm Bureau Assoc.
Jeff Pugliese	Middlesex Chamber of Commerce
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel
Vacancy	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.

1. Call to Order

Josh Cansler asked everyone to introduce themselves and called the meeting to order at 1:35.

2. Approval of draft 5/25/2021 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [5/25/2021 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Carol Haskins abstaining.

3. Water Planning Council Update

a. Water Planning Council Update

Josh Cansler said it appears that everything covered at this month's WPC meeting is addressed later in this agenda and the group proceeded to the next section.

b. Implementation Work Group (IWG) Update

Virginia de Lima said there is a flurry of reports from the topical sub-work groups. First, she asked the WPCAG to bless the [final recommendations](#) of the private well water quality group. She provided an overview, highlighting the recommendation that private wells be tested for arsenic and uranium when the well was constructed and testing for the same substances (including arsenic and uranium at time of property sale, and asked if there was any concern and there was none. Virginia pointed out that the IWG had recommended the addition of "unanimous" in describing the topical group members' support for the final recommendations.

Virginia also described the [draft report](#) + [appendices](#) of the drought topical group and explained that the goal is for IWG and WPCAG members to review it concurrently. She asked members to provide any comments to Alicea Charamut and Josh Cansler by 6/22 and said comments will be reviewed at the July IWG meeting. She pointed out that some of the recommended changes have already been implemented by the interagency drought group.

- Follow-up regarding Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE) work

Virginia de Lima said Gannon Long, Iris Kaminski, John Hudak, and Alicea Charamut have volunteered to work on a survey of [Alliance for Water Efficiency](#) (AWE) rates workshop participants. There was a discussion of what would be useful and Virginia asked John Hudak to take the lead.

- Other IWG matters

There was no further discussion.

4. Old Business

a. Water-related legislation update

Josh Cansler noted the end of the legislative session and invited any comments. Denise Savageau mentioned [HB 6496](#), *An Act Concerning Certain Soil-Related Initiatives*, had passed and highlighted its relevance to erosion & runoff,

including solar facility siting. She also mentioned the inclusion of municipal storm water authority language in [HB 6441](#), *An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation*. Denise also mentioned expanded opportunities for the [CT Green Bank](#).

Karen Burnaska mentioned HB 6666, *An Act Concerning The Department Of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Various Revisions To The Public Health Statutes*, and described its requirement to provide copies of local land use applications affecting public supply watershed lands to DPH and affected water companies.

b. Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) update

Dan Lawrence said the Western [Water Utility Coordinating Committee](#) (WUCC) met and the work groups he has described previously continue to meet. He noted the challenge faced by groups that depend on volunteers. He added that the Central WUCC also met and the Eastern WUCC is scheduling a meeting. Jonathan Avery pointed out that the Central WUCC meeting actually will be tomorrow and highlighted that it and the Eastern WUCC must develop new leaders.

c. [Interagency Drought Work Group](#) update

There was no report.

5. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

- Update – WPC consideration of [Final Draft Report](#)

There was a discussion of work group goals, including changing the [CT Siting Council](#) application process to require that applicants submit additional information regarding projects proposed on sites in public water watershed lands. Denise mentioned a meeting on [solar siting](#) to be held at DEEP tomorrow and said she will circulate information. John Hudak said he will attend on behalf of Josh Cansler and Alicia Charamut, and going forward. Josh added that he had asked John to sit in for him and Alicea because they are unavailable and mentioned that John is stepping down from the nominating committee.

b. Source Water Protection Workgroup

There was a discussion of the objectives in preparing a source water outline and of Alicia Charamut's request for assistance in writing sections. Denise Savageau highlighted that the goal is to produce an overview, not a step-by-step description. She noted DEEP's and DPH's many responsibilities in this area, but the goal is to condense that to 2-3 paragraphs, less than a page. The focus is on efforts specific to source water protection. There was a discussion of timing, with the expectation being to complete this within six months.

c. Solar Siting Work Group

There was no discussion.

6. New Business

a. Hydrilla

Denise Savageau introduced the subject of [Hydrilla](#) and highlighted that a new genotype has been identified in the CT River and noted concerns about its spread to drinking water watersheds, noting that hydrilla can host cyanobacteria. She said there is an [opportunity for funding](#) and she wanted to bring this to the group to make people aware.

Margot Burns provided further background and said additional information is available via the links in the circulated document. There was a question about how to report hydrilla sightings and Margot recommended reporting them to the [agricultural experiment station](#). She also described hydrilla's life cycle and said we are fortunate that hydrilla tubers have not yet been observed here. She noted the impacts on natural areas, marinas and water quality and said it has been detected on boats to Lakes George and Champlain.

Denise Savageau said the broad impacts elevate this to emergency status. The goal today is not for the WPCAG to take action but for attendees to take this to their other groups. She described the federal appropriations process and said the goal is to have other senators sign on to Sen. Blumenthal's funding request, which provides more clout. She thanked everyone working on this.

7. Public Comment

John Hudak said the [South Central CT Regional Water Authority](#) will be submitting an update to its 1994 application to renew its diversion permit for the North Cheshire Wellfield on the Quinnipiac River aquifer in the coming weeks. Review of this 1994 renewal application was recently reinitiated by DEEP, as prompted by the Commissioner's goal to reduce the number of pending legacy permits. He explained the history of the current permit and said they are not proposing to increase the maximum allowed withdrawal. Current pumping restrictions based on river flows are proposed to remain in place. He noted that Meriden and Southington water departments will also be submitting updated permit renewal applications for their legacy diversion permits within this aquifer that were issued in the same time frame.

Len DeJong congratulated everyone for the work being done and noted that New Hampshire has reduced its allowable limit for arsenic in water to 5 parts per billion. Josh Cansler reminded everyone of the request for comments regarding the drought group report and for volunteers to assist with the source water outline. He also mentioned the ongoing return to in-person or hybrid meetings.

8. Next Meeting Date

Josh Cansler read the dates of upcoming meetings:

WPCAG: July 20, 2021, 1:30

WPC: July 6, 2021, 1:30
IWG: July 13, 2021, 1:30

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:26 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM