

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

March 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes

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

A video recording is available at:

https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2022-03-15_WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Karen Burnaska	Save the Sound
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Virginia de Lima	USGS CT Water Science Center
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
John Hudak	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
David Knauf	CT Association of Directors of Health
Dave Kuzminski (alt.)	Portland
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Tom Tyler	MDC

Other Participants:

Ally Ayotte	PURA
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville and Jewett City Water Cos.
Chris Bellucci	DEEP
Corinne Fitting	DEEP
Rich Hanratty	CT Water Co.
Gannon Long	Operation Fuel
Sonia Marino	CT Association of Directors of Health
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Kelsey Sudol (alt.)	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Bruce Wittchen	OPM

Members Absent:

Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Eric Hammerling	CT Forest and Park Association
Jeff Pugliese	Middlesex Chamber of Commerce
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel

Vacancies

Agriculture

1. Call to Order

Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order at 1:31, started the recording, and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of draft 2/15/2022 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [2/15/2022 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Presentation: WUCC Source Protection Story Map

Dan Lawrence mentioned previous discussions of the ongoing efforts by [water utility coordinating committees](#) (WUCCs) and said this will be the first of three monthly presentations to the WPCAG. Aaron Budris showed the [draft WUCC Source Protection Story Map](#) they have been developing, which begins by describing the WUCC process that led to the approval of each WUCC's coordinated water system plan in 2018.

Dan Lawrence pointed out that not many people are aware of WUCCs, so the first two pages of the story map explain the different roles of WUCCs and of local officials. The third page describes how land use can impact water supplies and the fourth describes notification requirements for projects potentially affecting water sources. Dan said those requirements might not be enforced uniformly. He also highlighted the availability of information on that page, including links to mapping and to notification documents. The fifth page is an FAQ regarding local notifications.

The sixth page of the story map identifies a number of local options for proactively protecting water sources. The seventh page is a placeholder for a page that will provide guidance regarding sources of water for new development and the final page provides more links. Aaron Budris invited feedback and requested local photos to replace the stock photos used in this draft. Dan Lawrence said next month's presentation will cover interconnections and the following meeting will cover processes for new water systems.

Alicea read a question someone had submitted: "should notification requirements be strengthened?" Aaron said it could be helpful for future sources. Denise Savageau described a source water protection white paper being written and asked that the story map also reference the [CT Source Water Collaborative](#).

Sonia Marino said health directors should also receive such notifications. She mentioned instances of health directors not being notified of potential problems with source of their public water because the source was in a different municipality.

Virginia de Lima asked who the audience will be for the story map and Aaron said it's oriented towards local officials and developers. Martha Smith asked how the story map will be distributed and Aaron said that is still being discussed. There was further discussion of story maps being posted on DPH and other websites and Dan Lawrence described the rationale for this approach. The group at this point also discussed the need to restart the recording after a connection problem.

Dan Lawrence said other work includes discussions with DEEP and DPH regarding short duration interconnections and sales of excess water, such as might be needed when water system equipment is taken offline for maintenance or during drought.

4. Water Plan Updates

a. Water Planning Council Update

Alicea Charamut said much of what can be discussed here is covered by other sections of the agenda. She also mentioned the public comment period for federal funding and said she and Dan are considering inviting a representative of the [CT Green Bank](#) to a future meeting.

b. Implementation Work Group Update

Virginia de Lima said further discussion is needed regarding the proposed water chief position and noted that the WPC appreciates the work being done. She provided an overview of what has been done and what is expected at the next meeting.

Virginia mentioned upcoming water workshops and Denise Savageau described work shop planning. Virginia mentioned that IWG member Lou Burch is leaving and Alicea said she is looking for a possible replacement, noting that she will remain the alternate for that member. Virginia left the meeting and a motion was made and seconded to renominate Virginia to represent the WPCAG on the IWG and the motion passed unanimously.

Denise Savageau mentioned the work of the Outreach and Education topical sub work group described other water-oriented story maps. Virginia commented on the overlap between the WPCAG and IWG and said this is an ongoing issue. She noted that the number of meetings could be reduced if the two groups were combined and there was a discussion of why WPC agency staff are not on the WPCAG but are on the IWG. Virginia described the Rivers Advisory Council, a predecessor to the WPC.

5. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Revisit [Conservation/ratemaking barriers workgroup proposal](#)

Alicea said the scope has been broadened and there was a discussion of expectations. Alicea noted that this is a piece of other conservation conversations. Denise Savageau said this needs to be a priority but is a difficult conversation. Alicea pointed out that there are methods for stabilizing water company revenues. She noted that she wants outdoor water watering limited to two days per week but this raises revenue concerns at utilities. The goal for this group is to offer strategies and recommendations.

Dan Lawrence said feedback is needed and mechanisms must be established and, if not done by regulations, then it should be by PURA. He asked where the barriers are and how they vary across different systems. Virginia suggested an approach presenting issues in a bulleted list showing the varied opinions. Margaret Miner pointed out that there have been several runs at this and added that it has to focus at the level of individual companies, there is not a one-size-fits-approach.

Dan Lawrence said they must consider how 2-day watering affects revenue. Tom Tyler pointed out the different circumstance of different companies, highlighting that the MDC currently has a 1000-day supply. Alicea Charamut clarified that the approach would be to lay out issues and barriers, not to suggest that there is a single solution. John Hudak recommended also looking at what is working, noting that Regional Water has a rate stabilization fund.

There was further discussion of different companies facing different issues and Alicea said she is hoping for a vote today. There was further discussion of specific changes to the work group proposal and a motion was made and seconded to approve the proposal as revised. The motion was approved unanimously.

b. Watershed Lands Work Group

Karen Burnaska provided an overview of the work group's recent meeting. She highlighted SB [SB 240](#), the road salt bill, and said DEEP testified that it does not have the resources to implement it. She also mentioned drinking water supply bill [SB 248](#), which includes electronic notifications, and said there was a good discussion but the bill had not yet been scheduled for a public hearing [*Note: on 3/17 it was scheduled for a 3/21 hearing*]. Karen added that DPH's legislative proposal for well testing still lacked a bill number [*Note: The proposal was raised as [HB 5484](#) on 3/16*]. Karen said the work group will meet again in June.

Margaret Miner said she had asked about protections for [AA class waters](#) not currently used public supply source water. Responses from Aquarion and the Regional Water Authority focused only on their source water. She would like water companies to do more and said municipalities can be the weak link.

Dan Lawrence said there needs to be more education for municipalities and added that some AA waters will never be used as a public water supply. Margaret recommended that this be discussed further and Alicea Charamut said the current approach should be reconsidered, noting changes in precipitation. Karen mentioned the recommended addition to the legislative land conveyance form, which has been discussed at a number of previous meetings, and said it is happening this year.

c. Source Water Protection Work Group: [Source Water Protection Outline](#)

Alicea said there are no updates and she and Denise Savageau are looking at additional options.

d. Solar Siting Work Group: [Draft Solar Siting Recommendations & Work Plan](#)

Alicea she will bring this up at the next meeting and mentioned DEEP's [Sustainable, Transparent and Efficient Practices for Solar Development](#) (STEPS).

6. Old Business

a. [Water Utility Coordinating Committee](#) (WUCC) update

Dan Lawrence mentioned the presentations to be given at the next two WPCAG meetings. He also said the Western WUCC will meet in April or May. He noted that an important topic is the development of new systems 200 ft from existing systems. They should be fair to developers, but avoid cross-subsidization. Jonathan Avery said the Eastern WUCC is meeting 5/18 and Dan added that all WUCCs are receiving requests.

b. Interagency Drought Work Group update

Bruce Wittchen provided a brief update regarding the [Interagency Drought Work Group](#), which is continuing its work on the recommendations in the [report submitted by the Drought Topical group](#). He said they are still considering changes in the plan and in procedure that can be made most quickly. There was a discussion of the benefits of the group having a regular monthly meeting schedule with the freedom to cancel a meeting when not needed.

c. Nominating Committee

Carol Haskins posted a list showing membership terms and there was a discussion of when this year's slate is due.

d. Hydrilla update

Alicea Charamut mentioned the availability of federal funding and described [HB 5143, An Act Establishing An Office Of Aquatic Invasive Species](#). She noted that the bill would create the Office of Aquatic Invasive Species within the CT Agricultural Experiment Station. She questioned if that is the right place for it and noted that other agencies and the [Invasive Plant Council](#) should have roles. She pointed out that invasive plants have economic impacts.

Denise Savageau noted the connection between invasive aquatic species and cyanobacteria blooms. She said some water companies have the capacity to look into this; some do not. There was a discussion of the extent of the strain of milfoil that has become a significant problem in the Connecticut River and Alicea Charamut mentioned the CT [Council on Environmental Quality](#)'s new [invasive species report](#).

e. SWP Prioritization Discussion

There was a discussion of this being tabled to this month's meeting at last month's meeting and of circulating the most recent list. Virginia de Lima said it is important to short circuit any excuses for not moving forward and Alicea mentioned that the planning role is shared with the [Governor's Council on Climate Change](#) (GC3).

7. New Business

Alicea Charamut mentioned the upcoming water event on 3/21/2022, the day before World Water Day and said further information is available at www.ourwaterct.org.

8. Public Comment

There were no additional comments.

9. Next Meeting Date

Upcoming meetings will be:

April 5, 2022:	WPC
April 12, 2022:	IWG
April 19, 2022:	WPCAG

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM