

## Water Planning Council Advisory Group

### June 21, 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/2022-06-21\\_WPCAG\\_Video.mp4](https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2022-06-21_WPCAG_Video.mp4)

#### Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	<a href="#">Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments</a>
Karen Burnaska	<a href="#">Save the Sound</a>
Josh Cansler	<a href="#">Southeastern CT Water Authority</a>
Alicea Charamut	<a href="#">Fisheries Advisory Council</a>
Virginia de Lima	<a href="#">USGS CT Water Science Center</a>
Carol Haskins	<a href="#">Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition</a>
John Hudak	<a href="#">South Central CT Regional Water Authority</a>
Fred Klein	<a href="#">CT Power and Energy Society</a>
David Knauf	<a href="#">CT Association of Directors of Health</a>
Patrick Kearney	<a href="#">Manchester Water &amp; Sewer</a>
Dan Lawrence	<a href="#">Aquarion</a>
Margaret Miner	<a href="#">Rivers Alliance</a>
Darryl Newman	<a href="#">CT Nursery &amp; Landscape Assoc.</a>
Kelsey Sudol (alt.)	<a href="#">Lake Waramaug Task Force</a>

#### Other Participants:

Paul Aresta	<a href="#">CEQ</a>
Ally Ayotte	<a href="#">PURA</a>
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville and Jewett City Water Cos.
Chris Bellucci	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
Lauren Bergman	CT Water Co.
Ali Hibbard	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
Adrian Huq	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Sonia Marino (alt.)	CT Association of Directors of Health
Christine O'Neill (alt.)	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Joe Szerejko	MDC Independent Consumer Advocate
Bruce Wittchen	<a href="#">OPM</a>

#### Members Absent:

Eric Hammerling	<a href="#">CT Forest and Park Association</a>
Denise Savageau	<a href="#">CT Association of Conservation Districts</a>
Tom Tyler	<a href="#">MDC</a>
Brenda Watson	<a href="#">Operation Fuel</a>

#### Vacancies

Agriculture  
Business & Industry – Association

#### 1. Call to Order

Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order at 1:34 and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

## **2. Approval of draft 5/17/2022 Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [5/17/2022 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Carol Haskins abstaining because she had not attended the meeting.

## **3. Discussion: [State Water Plan Update & Prioritization](#)**

Alicea Charamut proposed that an ad hoc work group meet at 1:30 on 6/28 to consider a summary she is preparing to help this discussion. She is bring together recommendations from the state water plan, the [Governor's Council on Climate Change](#) (GC3), and [water utility coordinating committees](#) (WUCCs). There was no opposition.

## **4. Water Plan Updates**

- a. Implementation Work Group Update
- b. Topical Sub-Work Groups
  - o [Outreach & Education](#)
  - o Water plan implementation/tracking
  - Other IWG matters

Virginia de Lima said the implementation/tracking work group report will be discussed at the next WPC meeting. She thanked people who contributed towards it and noted that the WPC wants a summary and presentation. Ali Hibbard of DEEP and Dan Aubin of DPH can present it.

Virginia mentioned recent webinars sponsored in part by the outreach & education group. She said the group is now reviewing the [water website](#) and will recommend improvements. Virginia added that there is interest in forming a new topical subgroup to look at needs for data from the US Geological Survey (USGS) and potential funding. DEEP's Chris Bellucci would lead that.

- c. Structures for state water planning and implementation  
[Draft Water Chief Roles & Responsibilities](#)

There was no update.

## **5. WPCAG Work Groups**

- a. Watershed Lands Work Group
  - [Testimony for GAE multiple conveyance bills 4/12/2022](#)
  - [6/13/2022 draft Miner edits to GAE letter re land conveyances](#)
  - [Watershed Lands meeting – draft 6/10/2022 notes](#)

Karen Burnaska said the group had a good meeting on 6/10 and noted the three links included on this agenda. She explained that the group maintains notes, not minutes, and invited any corrections to the [linked notes](#). The group is open to anyone interested in participating.

Karen provided an overview of the motivation for preparing the [linked draft letter](#) to the legislature's [Government Administration & Elections](#) (GAE) Committee and described the letter. She described the new supplemental questionnaire developed by the work group and WPCAG and its adoption last year by the GAE Committee. Karen said the letter requests the supplemental information be posted prior to the public hearing deadline and that the language of conveyance bills include the requested information. She invited comments

John Hudak recommended that “sources” and “aquifer protection areas” be added in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph:

... if there is an obvious risk to public water sources (for example, if the conveyance is in an aquifer protection area or the watershed of a reservoir),...

There was a discussion of how broad the information request is intended to be: should it be limited to current public water sources? Alicea pointed out the specific wording used in the questionnaire and there was further discussion of the desired scope. Margaret Miner said some requests and bills were unclear about the proposed use of land to be conveyed or did not include it. Karen noted that all proposed land conveyance requests included the questionnaire, but not all questionnaires were complete.

There was further discussion and clarification that the intent is not to expand the questionnaire but to request it be followed. It was also pointed out that water used for drinking water is not the only category of water of concern.

Virginia de Lima asked if the WPCAG has the authority to send the letter to the GAE Committee or if the WPC has to. Karen Burnaska said she expected the WPCAG to send it and there was a discussion of whether the WPC agrees with the letter and who will send it.

David Knauf questioned if the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of the letter should use a stronger word than “hope”:

To continue efforts to alert the public on land conveyance bills, we **hope** that in following years, the questionnaire and supplement will be posted on the CGA website prior to the deadline for submission of written testimony for a bill’s public hearing.

David also asked about the scope of water issues it is intended to apply to and Margaret Miner said it is intended to be broad, not limited to drinking water, but they are not looking to expand the questionnaire. Carol Haskins suggested referencing the higher quality categories in [DEEP’s water quality classification system](#) – A and AA for surface waters and GA and GAA for ground waters. There was a discussion of how that would apply to public water supply wells along B-quality rivers and it was noted that those would be addressed by their higher quality ground water classification.

John Hudak pointed out that an even broader questionnaire would enable it to address other considerations, such as the presence of important rattlesnake habitat on property requested for conveyance. There was a discussion of who reviews the information provided on a questionnaire and of the desire for the public to be able to comment on it.

Chris Bellucci provided additional background regarding designation as Class A, pointing out that it was the default classification for streams lacking data, and not all are high quality. There was further discussion of the term “high quality” and of using the wording suggested by Carol. The draft letter will be updated and sent to the WPC for review.

Margaret Miner said a separate issue discussed by the watershed lands group is [DEEP’s water permitting](#). She provided an overview of discharge permit categories and of differences between them and asked if they are protective enough and if it is a topic the work group should look at. Alicea Charamut said it would be interesting to lay out the permits to see how they apply. Chris Belucci offered to bring the right people from DEEP if the group does this. There was general agreement to proceed with that.

- b. Source Water Protection Work Group: [Source Water Protection Outline](#)
- c. Solar Siting Work Group: [Draft Solar Siting Recommendations & Work Plan](#)

There was no discussion.

## 6. Old Business

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

Dan Lawrence said the WUCCs will likely meet 2x per year, unless there is business requiring additional meetings, and the implementation group will meet 4x per year. They are working on interconnection language. Jonathan Avery and Dan spoke of the WUCCs bringing in new leaders but more are needed.

Margaret Miner recommended distinguishing between emergency interconnections assembled in a crisis and those that are permanent installations. She described Sprague’s interconnection with Norwich and mentioned the burden on exclusive service area holders to provide water. Dan offered to discuss interconnection terminology with Eric McPhee of DPH and Doug Hoskins of DEEP and bring that back to this group. He noted that the terminology depends on the frequency and amount of interconnection use and there was further discussion of permitting issues.

- b. Interagency Drought Work Group update

Bruce Wittchen provided an update regarding the [Interagency Drought Work Group](#), noting the agencies continue to consider possible changes proposed in response to the recommendations in the [report submitted by the Drought Topical group](#). He also mentioned that New London and Windham Counties are now categorized as being in Stage 1 drought and noted differences in CT’s, MA’s, and RI’s approaches to drought

declarations. There was a discussion of conditions and Dan Lawrence offered to demonstrate Aquarion's modeling approach when out of drought.

c. Nominating Committee

Alicea Charamut said John Hudak is retiring in August and this might be his final meeting as a member of the WPCAG. She said he has been an incredible contributor and leader for this group and people thanked him for his work. Carol Haskins said the nominating committee will consider possible replacements and thanked John for recommending someone. She noted that Jeff Pugliese has a new job in a different sector, so the committee also must find someone representing a business & industry association. They also are looking for someone to represent agriculture and must confirm whether each Class 1 member, whose terms expire at the end of the year, want to renew. The committee will probably meet in July.

d. Hydrilla update

Alicea Charamut said there is no update regarding funding, but mentioned that the Connecticut River Conservancy's CT steward, Kelsey Wentling, who has been working this issue is becoming the MA steward. Alicea added that she expects a rough year with Hydrilla because of the weather.

**7. New Business**

There was no new business.

**8. Public Comment**

There were no additional comments.

**9. Next Meeting Date**

Alicea Charamut read the dates of upcoming meetings, noting that the original July WPC meeting date has been changed to Thursday, July 28 and reminding everyone that the subcommittee meeting discussed earlier will be 6/28. She will distribute the document comparing the water, GC3, and WUCC plans at the end of the week.

June 28, 2022:	WPCAG subcommittee
July 28, 2022:	WPC
July 12, 2022:	IWG
July 19, 2022:	WPCAG

**10. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM*