

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

November 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/2022-11-15_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
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Virginia de Lima	USGS CT Water Science Center
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition
Dave Kuzminski (alt.)	Portland Water & Sewer Commission
Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Steve Vitko	South Central CT Regional Water Authority

Other Participants:

Paul Aresta	CEQ
Ally Ayotte	PURA
Kim Czapla	DEEP
Rich Hanratty	CT Water Co.
Ali Hibbard	DEEP
Iris Kaminski	
Keyla Palala	Operation Fuel
Katie Schlick	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Martha Smith	Rivers Alliance

Members Absent:

Eric Hammerling	CT Forest and Park Association
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
David Knauf	CT Association of Directors of Health
Tom Tyler	MDC
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel

Vacancies

Agriculture
Business & Industry – Association

1. Call to Order

Dan Lawrence called the meeting to order at 1:33 and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Dan confirmed that a quorum of members was present.

2. Approval of draft 10/18/2022 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [10/18/2022 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Alicea Charamut, Virginia de Lima, Fred Klein, Darryl Newman, and Steve Vitko abstaining.

3. Water Plan Updates

a. Annual Report Summaries

Virginia de Lima described the template that has been developed for groups leaders to complete and the information will be compiled into a draft report for the WPC to consider in December. The intent is for the WPC to be able to vote on a final report at its January meeting and the report can be submitted to the legislature by mid-January.

There was a discussion of the distribution of that template to the various groups and subgroups and how the information will be compiled and how the report should be organized. Virginia de Lima said this report will be a test run of the concept and, in the future, any new groups formed will be able to follow the structure of the WPC report, simplifying this process. Alicea Charamut suggested creating a Google form. There was a discussion of options for simplifying the process and Virginia pointed out that the aim is to capture the essence of the work for the legislature.

b. Water Planning Council Update

Dan Lawrence provided a brief overview of this month's WPC meeting.

c. Implementation Work Group Update

Denise Savageau said some minor changes were made to the outline, based on comments from the WPC, and Virginia de Lima mentioned that DPH has expressed concerns about the confidentiality of private well contamination data and there was a brief discussion if the issues. Virginia also mentioned the [Outreach & Education](#) group's review of the state website and outlined concerns that will be brought to the WPC.

Virginia mentioned that the new water data group met for the first time and someone from the USGS provided a presentation on USGS data collection. That group will meet monthly. She noted the need to look at the funding gap and said the group is focused on stream flow and ground water gaging because other state programs focus on water quality.

There was a discussion of water companies and others being required to fund monitoring of water affected by their operations and Virginia de Lima said gaging free-flowing streams is key, but potential funders are not as clear. She noted that most of the stream flow information requests received at USGS are from recreation users. She also explained why USGS monitoring wells are often clustered in a small area.

Alicea said there is nothing new to report regarding the water plan update and staffing and Denise said people should prepare to support this legislatively. Margaret Miner asked if the WPC will advocate and there was a discussion of the legislative process. Dan Lawrence mentioned the coordination between the water plan preparation process and

the [Water Utility Coordinating Committee](#) (WUCC) planning processes the last time. Darryl Newman asked that water plan talking points be provided for preparing his organization's testimony supporting funding for water planning.

4. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Karen Burnaska said the group will meet 12/9. There will be an update from the [Rivers Alliance](#) and discussion of processes for state land conveyances by the legislature and by agencies. She noted that the group will likely continue to meet quarterly in 2023.

Margaret Miner described what she has recently learned about the land conveyance process used by state agencies. She provided an overview of this work group's previous efforts regarding legislative land conveyances and identified concerns regarding agency transfers, highlighting that the process is out of sight and is not placing restrictions of future uses. Margaret mentioned recent transfers that did not raise concerns but some in the [current Environmental Monitor](#) do. She said neighbors, towns, and organizations should be notified.

Alicea Charamut contrasted the information provided regarding legislative land conveyances with the information provided regarding agency land transfers. Margaret said it still is not enough information and pointed out what she considers to be deficiencies. She said the [Council on Environmental Quality](#) is the place to work this out.

Dan Lawrence mentioned recent spills in Monroe and Norfolk and there was a discussion of potential impacts. Margaret Miner mentioned the expectation for shielding private well contamination data and there was a discussion of disclosure laws for real estate transfers. Alicea Charamut noted that the supervisor position is vacant in DEEP's land management program.

b. Source Water Protection Work Group: [Source Water Protection Outline](#) – no updates

There was no update.

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

There was no update.

d. **Now Forming:** [Conservation Pricing and Rate Recovery Analysis Work Group](#)

Alicea Charamut said some people have responded to a request people interested in participating in this group.

5. Old Business

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

Dan Lawrence said the WUCC implementation group will meet tomorrow. They have completed the work they brought to WPCAG meetings earlier this year and DPH is reviewing it now. He described how WUCC meetings are being coordinated and

mentioned the approval of some noncommunity water system requests. There was a discussion of coordination between WUCCs and the state's broader water planning and of approaches to interconnections.

b. Interagency Drought Work Group update

Bruce Wittchen said the [Interagency Drought Work Group](#) (IDW) met this month and decided to reduce all counties to Stage 1 from Stage 2. There was a discussion of remaining signs of dry conditions, including small streams being drier than usual and some water utilities still having drought restrictions in place. Denise Savageau pointed out the limited availability of water data for evaluating drought in SE CT.

Alicea Charamut said she attended the [recent Northeast Drought Early Warning System \(DEWS\) meeting](#) and is proud of CT's handling of drought. She noted the similarity with MA's approach and pointed out that VT does not have a drought plan. There was a discussion of the comparison between CT's and other state's approaches and of issues CT's IDW keeps in mind when considering data.

c. Nominating Committee

Carol Haskins said the group met and, because they have not received feedback from the WPC, they plan to submit the slate of members to the WPC for its December's meeting. She listed and described potential members they have identified, including Joe Violette of the Waterbury Chamber of Commerce, and Erica Fearn of the [CT Environmental Council](#), who attended last month's WPCAG meeting. She noted that they are waiting for Erica to confirm her interest.

Carol mentioned that a replacement will be needed for Virginia de Lima, who is not continuing with the group. Virginia's alternate is UConn's Mike Dietz but he does not have the time to be the primary member. Chet Arnold, formerly of UConn's [Center for Land Use Education and Research](#) (CLEAR), also declined. There were discussions of also checking with other CT Universities and of considering Kira Jacobs of EPA, who is very familiar with water issues in CT. Carol invited further recommendations and there was a discussion of also checking with the USGS to fill the scientific position. A motion was made and seconded to nominate Joe Violette and Erica Fearn and the motion passed unanimously.

d. Input for WPC Annual Report

There was no further discussion.

e. Prioritization and State Plan Comparisons

Dan Lawrence said he and Alicea are looking to start this process and said more people will be needed. There was a discussion of plans to be considered and the process to be used. There also was a discussion of an informal review done by DEEP.

f. Hydrilla update

There was no update.

6. New Business

There was no new business.

7. Public Comment

Alicea mentioned a [petition for declaratory ruling](#) that the MDC submitted to abandon its interest in the Colebrook Reservoir, a situation that was discussed at an earlier meeting of this group. She provided an overview and said a [public hearing is scheduled January 5, 2023](#). Denise Savageau said conservation districts have been asked to be part of a pilot drought program through the US Forest Service and briefly described the project and process.

8. Next Meeting Date

Dan Lawrence noted that December's WPC meeting has been moved to Dec. 2 and read the listed the upcoming meetings:

December 2, 2022:	WPC
December 13, 2022:	IWG
December 20, 2022:	WPCAG

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM