

Interagency Drought Workgroup (IDW)
Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2022, 2:00 PM Teleconference

Meeting agenda:

<https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/13688>

Drought Conditions Report: None prepared for this meeting

Current Conditions: <https://portal.ct.gov/Water/Drought/Data-and-Reports>

Meeting Recording:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/Drought/2022/2022-03-03_IDW_Audio.m4a

CT Agency representatives:

DEEP: Bill Foreman, Helene Hochholzer, Doug Hoskins
DEMHS: Ken Dumais, Doug Glowacki
DoAg: not present
DPH: not present
OPM: Martin Heft, Eric Lindquist, Bruce Wittchen
PURA: Maria Szul

Federal Agency representatives:

USGS: John Mullaney, Tim Sargent

Other participants:

None

1. Call to order

Martin Heft called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM.

2. Seating of voting members

Martin Heft identified the quorum of agency representatives: DEEP – Doug Hoskins; DEMHS – Ken Dumais; and OPM – Martin Heft.

3. Minutes – February 3, 2022

A motion was made and seconded to approve the [draft 2/3/2022 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously.

4. Review of Hydrologic Conditions

John Mullaney said there has been improvement at many sites, but [ground water levels](#) remain below normal at some points near the NY border. He added that [stream flows](#) are normal or above and Eric Lindquist said [county-level precipitation](#) ranged from 115% to 186% of normal last month. Bruce Wittchen pointed out that county-wide averages can hide

smaller areas that are dry and said he had seen national-scale mapping showing small portions of CT being drier near the boundary between Fairfield and Litchfield Counties along the NY border and near the boundary between Hartford and Litchfield Counties along the MA border. John Mullaney agreed and highlighted that the real-time well in Greenwich is on a hill and can be an early indicator of dry conditions.

5. Review of [CT Water Planning Council topical work group recommendations regarding the CT Drought Preparedness & Response Plan and its implementation](#)

Martin Heft provided an overview of OPM staff's work to identify recommended changes to the state's drought preparedness and response that can be implemented quickly (see attached). He asked that the other agencies review the [spreadsheet of recommendations](#) to determine if any others can also be addressed quickly.

Doug Hoskins asked if OPM's approach was to identify the low-hanging fruit, not necessarily the highest priorities for change. Martin said it was and provided an overview of why OPM proceeded in this manner. Doug Hoskins noted that proceeding with the easiest recommendations will help us get the process down. There was a discussion of the adoption process, including voting, and that working out the process with simple changes now should help streamline the process for the future adoption of more challenging changes in the future. Martin asked each agency to send any additional recommendations for immediate change prior to the next meeting.

6. Public comment

There were no public comments.

7. Other business

There was no other business.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:21.

Charge #	Recommendation Summary	OPM suggested action
1.02A 4.01 4.02	Maintain allowances for regional declarations and professional judgement in the State Drought Plan.	Clarify wording in the drought plan to specify that drought will be assessed on a regional scale, with counties being the default (but not required – allows for flexibility in the future)
1.05 4.20	Press release/messaging/materials checklist / templates	Use previous materials as templates and include in online drought portal (SharePoint)
1.06 4.04 4.05 4.06	FOI Requirements: Conclusions of each IDW meeting should be consistently reported and clear. Data upon which conclusions were based should be included in official meeting materials.	Use process established in 2020. Establish flow chart.
2.01 4.25 4.26	The IDW should establish a regular schedule of meetings.	Note that the actual language in the report's Appendix D says to "schedule" monthly meetings, which can be canceled, but the group should meet at least once per year. The plan should specify that regular meetings be scheduled by 1/31 each year.
2.02A 4.27	OPM should remain the lead agency for the IDW and serve as Chair. The IDW should also have a designated staff coordinator located within OPM	Specify in drought plan.
2.02B 4.28 4.29	A lead and backup member should be designated on each agency on the IDW.	Specify in drought plan
2.04	The operations of the IDW should be updated in the Drought Plan. Recommended language is included in Appendix D of recommendations.	Review & modify suggested language supplied in Appendix D of the topical subgroup report.
3.01	Model ordinances	Forward to WPC for decision
3.02	Water supply enforcement authority	Forward to WPC for decision
3.03	Each town should have a Municipal Drought Liaison	DEMHS is doing this, so regulation/statute change seems

	(MDL) which should be required by state regulation or statute.	unnecessary. Ask DEMHS to provide wording re authority and/or process for the drought plan. Does this need to be mentioned in any DEMHS plans?
4.12	Snow drought research and triggers	Forward to WPC for decision
4.17	After-action assessments	Forward to WPC for decision
4.19	IDW should determine a consistent set of procedures for communications that should define timing and responsibilities.	Create a simple flow chart/visual graphic to demonstrate the flow of authority/communications/responsibility.
N/A	Eliminate the drought stage terms – just use the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5	OPM suggestion
N/A	Membership – split DEEP and PURA to separate voting agencies with representation	DEEP suggestion

DRAFT