

Interagency Drought Workgroup (IDW)  
Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2022

Meeting agenda:

<https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/13694>

Drought Conditions Handout:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/Drought/2022/2022-09-08\\_Drought\\_Conditions.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/Drought/2022/2022-09-08_Drought_Conditions.pdf)

Meeting Video (CT-N):

[https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/IDW\\_video\\_2022-09-08.mp4](https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/IDW_video_2022-09-08.mp4)

**CT Agency representatives:**

DAS: Shane Mallory, Doug Moore  
DEEP: Kim Czapla, Bill Foreman, Helene Hochholzer, Doug Hoskins\*  
DEMHS: Ken Dumais\*, Bob Kenny  
DoAg: Simon Levesque\*  
DPH: Steve Harkey, Lori Mathieu\*, Ryan Tetreault  
OPM: Eric Lindquist\*, Bruce Wittchen  
PURA: Ally Ayotte, Maria Szul\*

\* - denotes voting member

**Federal Agency representatives:**

NWS/NOAA: Deanna Marks, Britt Westergard  
USGS: Dee-Ann McCarthy, John Mullaney

**Other participants:**

Julie Banks, Christopher Levesque, John Moritz

**1. Call to order**

Eric Lindquist said he will be acting chair in Martin Heft's absence and called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.

**2. Seating of voting members**

Eric Lindquist identified the quorum of agency representatives: DEEP – Doug Hoskins; DEMHS – Ken Dumais; DoAg – Simon Levesque; DPH – Lori Mathieu; and OPM – Eric Lindquist.

**3. Minutes – August 4 and 18, 2022**

Separate motions were made and seconded to approve the [8/4/2022](#) and the [8/18/2022](#) meeting minutes and both motions were approved unanimously.

#### 4. Business

##### a. Review of hydrologic conditions

Eric Lindquist referred to the [9/8/2022 Drought Conditions Handout](#) and pointed out that many of the data are obsolete due to the amount of rain since the beginning of the month and uncertainty about how streams, ground water, and reservoirs will be affected. He showed the Stage II Matrix included in the handout. Britt Westergard provided a brief overview of the precipitation data through 8/31 and of month-to-date data for September.

John Mullaney provided an overview of stream flow and ground water data, highlighting that there were some record 7-day low flows prior to the recent rains and others were tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest. He noted that streams will return to base flows that are limited by ground water levels. There was a discussion of how long it would take to see the lasting effects of the rain and John said it could be 5 days but depends on many factors, contrasting the difference with last year, when soils were already wet before heavy rain.

Steve Harkey described reservoir data from the previous week, prior to the rain, pointing out the continued slow decline. He listed some systems of concern, illustrated on the map of water systems that have issued conservation requests. He pointed out that high demands for outdoor water uses will decrease into winter. He provided a status update on the current number of private well modification permit requests reported to DPH by Local Health Departments and highlighted that two water haulers reported making deliveries to people having water problems. There was further discussion of water system drought stages.

Doug Hoskins pointed out the golf course paragraph in DEEP's section of the handout and said the request raises policy issues. We may be seeing more conflicts. Doug said DEEP has stopped its releases to the west branch of the Farmington River and added that fire danger has been reduced but it is unknown how long that will persist.

Simon Levesque mentioned the ongoing issue with Palmer Drought Index data, which was described at previous meetings, and noted that some of the data he provided do not reflect the recent rain. Eric Lindquist mentioned a satellite data issue interfering with the VegDRI data. Lori Mathieu mentioned a question from a farmer who had been getting water hauled from Norwich Public Utilities but NPU will no longer allow it. She said she will discuss this with Simon.

##### b. Drought stage recommendations

Eric Lindquist noted the improvement in the latest edition of the [US Drought Monitor](#) but recommended making no changes to the current drought stages and instead wait and see what happens following this week's rain. Lori Mathieu and Simon Levesque agreed, but Doug Hoskins said he was concerned about the contrast with the change being made in the USDM.

There was further discussion of conditions and the changed USDM. Eric said the group could consider reducing the drought stage in Windham County. He invited a motion and Lori made a motion to not change the current stages but to meet again in a week to review conditions again. The motion was seconded. Bruce Wittchen recommended the

group not obligate itself to meet again next week and instead monitor conditions and decide if a meeting is needed. He pointed out that the current Stage 3 does not impose mandatory water use restrictions.

Lori Mathieu modified the motion to not require a meeting next week but to have agencies monitor conditions to determine if a meeting is appropriate. The modified motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

c. Drought Plan Update

Eric Lindquist said the WPC approved the updated drought plan. He highlighted that PURA is now a voting member of this group and noted that there were various other changes, including some that this group had already begun doing. The next step with the plan is to tackle some changes that will require more effort but said the group has learned a lot doing the recently approved update.

Lori Mathieu welcomed PURA as a voting member and recommended the group brainstorm regarding the matrix used for drought stage determinations. There is a lot of work to do. John Mullaney recommended the group consider the changes that better address differences in drought duration and intensity. Steve Harkey added that some factors should be weighted more heavily and Eric Lindquist echoed what John had said about needing to handle rapid, intense drought as well as lasting, less intense drought.

d. Drought plan implementation update

Eric Lindquist provided an update regarding the drought action team, staff from some of the state agencies involved with drought, who meet every 1-2 weeks to review what state agencies are doing and what the plan expects of them. He also mentioned collaboration with the Dept. of Administrative Services regarding the plan's expectations for water conservation at state facilities.

e. Next regular meeting – October 6, 2022

Eric Lindquist said the next meeting will be October 6 unless a special meeting is scheduled.

**5. Public comment**

There were no public comments.

**6. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:17.