DRAFT Meeting Notes for the State Water Plan Implementation Workgroup
July 11, 2023; 1:00 PM

Zoom Meeting

**Members**: Virginia de Lima (Chair), Mike Dietz (UConn), Kelsey Sudol (Northwest Conservation District), Chris Bellucci (DEEP), Bruce Wittchen (OPM), David Murphy (CIRCA), Ally Ayotte (PURA), Lori Mathieu (DPH)

**Note Taker(s):** Ali Hibbard (DEEP)

**Public:** Becca Dahl (OPM), Kim Czapla (DEEP), Ethan Werstler

**Meeting Started: 1:00 p.m.**

**Topics of Discussion**

**Changes to Agenda**

* No changes to the agenda

**Approval/Modification of notes from previous meeting**

* Notes from the previous meeting were approved.

**Implementation Workgroup Membership**

* An alternative member needs to be identified for the Department of Public Health (DPH). During previous meeting discussions, workgroup members decided that members from state agencies should have an alternative in place if a member cannot attend.
* Mike Dietz will step down as his commitments have changed, but he will continue to participate in the Outreach and Education workgroup. Steve Rupar is stepping down as well. Both Mike and Steve were subject matter experts members.

**Possible Change in Meeting Date/Time**

* The Implementation Workgroup (IWG) previously discussed changing the regular meeting time. The workgroup has decided to leave the meeting time as it is – 1:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month.

**New Topical sub-workgroup to look at website**

* The proposed new workgroup that would create new content for the State Water Plan (SWP) website may not be necessary now. State agency employees have been meeting to update the meeting and workgroup information available online and anticipate working on minor website changes now through December. The plan is to meet every three weeks until the changes to the website are complete. The need of a possible new workgroup on this topic will be revisited in the future.

**Water Planning Council Retreat – July 12th at Dinosaur State Park**

* At the time of this meeting, 21 people have sent in an RSVP.
* The agenda will include reviewing the progress to date of various implementation measures, discussing what has not been implemented yet, what obstacles exist for implementing, and how to overcome those obstacles.

**Spreadsheet with Progress on workgroup recommendations**

* The group had an open discussion on the effectiveness of sub-workgroup recommendations. Some questions that were posed to the group:
	+ If we have not seen the effort we were hoping for after workgroup’s have wrapped up, how can we be sure that recommendations are implemented?
	+ If recommendations are not appropriately implemented, how can there be accountability to change the approach for the next time around?
* Feedback on the 2020-2021 Private Well Sub-Workgroup:
	+ There were two main goals when the sub-workgroup was formed. One was to create an electronic database for well records going forward, and it was discovered that the Department of Consumer Protection already had that project underway. Currently, information on newly drilled wells goes into this database. There has not been a unified effort to digitize old paper records of wells, although Eastern Connecticut State University had a class project to digitize one town’s records (Weston). Well drilling data also goes to local health districts and DPH. Massachusetts is a successful example of a digital database of private well records. The second goal was evaluating the water quality parameters for potable water tests, and the sub-workgroup recommending adding uranium and arsenic to the test. Those specific parameters were not added as a testing requirement for real estate transactions. The law that added this new change also added funding for an additional staff person to work on private wells. More funding is needed to fully implement the recommendations of the sub-workgroup.
* Feedback on the ongoing Outreach and Education Sub-Workgroup
	+ An obstacle for the sub-workgroup is they need a clear system of how to post and circulate information that is created. There is not currently a dedicated place for resources to be housed.

**Priorities for future use**

* One of the exercises for tomorrow is “what’s missing” from the SWP. If something is missing from the plan, it may still be implemented by state agencies.
* There are many priorities of the SWP, and if the Water Planning Council (WPC) and stakeholders could select three top things to focus on, that could help with implementation. It could also help to secure funding to have an organized approach around doable actions. That could help the WPC develop a clear workplan that we all work on together. “If everything is a priority, than nothing is a priority”.
* The WPC is missing a clear public face. Communication improvements are needed to aid in collaboration with outside groups and within agencies. There are many resources at UConn or the Institute of Water Resources that can help aid in implementation.
* Overall, the SWP shouldn’t compete with other plans, but support other plans. Leveraging all the experience that exist in the universe of “water” in Connecticut can continue and strengthen implementation of the SWP.
* Some things have changed or risen in awareness since the SWP was written – PFAS, air quality, drought, infrastructure money. There are many plans and executive orders that already exist addressing these topics. Focusing on connecting the resources together can help tie together issues and aid in implementation.
* Where can the WPC tap into funding? That might help lead us where to go.

**Public Comment**

* No public comment

**Meeting Adjourned: 2:53 p.m.**

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 8th at 1:00 p.m.**