DRAFT Meeting Notes for the State Water Plan Implementation Workgroup
September 12, 2023; 1:00 PM

Webex Meeting

**Members**: Virginia de Lima (chair), Kelsey Sudol (Northwest Conservation District), Denise Savageau (Connecticut Association of Conservation Districts), Chris Bellucci (DEEP), Bruce Wittchen (OPM), Anne Hulick (Clean Water Action)

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

**Public:** Ethan Werstler, Nicholas Velseboer (CEQ), Kim Czapla (DEEP)

**Meeting Started: 1:01 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. Virginia de Lima abstained.

**Outreach and Education Workgroup**

* The workgroup met on September 5th
	+ During their meeting, the group settled on a theme for next year. The focus will be on observing the 50th anniversary of the Safe Drinking Water Act and the 20th anniversary of the Aquifer Protection Act.
* Originally, a lunchtime webinar was planned for October 12th focusing on climate change and forest lands. The date will be pushed back due to a Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) training that day which ties up possible speakers.
* Mike Dietz prepared a rough draft handout on drought which the workgroup will review during their next meeting.
* Eric Lindquist attended a training on flash drought and the workgroup would like him to present this new information at a future meeting. Exact date to be determined.
* State agency staff are continuing to work on the State Water Plan website.
* The October meeting needs to be rescheduled. More information on the workgroup’s next meeting to come.

**USGS Data Collection Sub-workgroup**

* The draft report is complete and out to the sub-workgroup currently. The sub-workgroup should submit comments to Chris Bellucci through email by September 29th.

**2023 Annual Report to Legislature**

* The Water Planning Council (WPC) has requested a draft of the annual report by mid-November, so the report should be started in the next few weeks.
* The report submitted in early 2023 was a 5-year update. The report submitted to the legislature in January 2024 will only cover a single year.
* There is an annual report template from the previous report that should accelerate the process.
	+ It is unclear if the reporting process can be automated for this year. Dan Aubin of DPH previously had ideas for automating the process, but he is no longer involved in this group.
	+ It could be possible to automate different “trees” in a survey to help collect statistics that automatically separate out work conducted by state agencies, non-profits, or different workgroups under the WPC.
* Virginia will send out an email to interested volunteers to start the process of putting the report together.

**Water Planning Council Advisory Group and Implementation Workgroup**

* The [legislation](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_474.htm#sec_25-33o) that lays out the membership of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG) states that the membership “may include” certain categories. The term “may include” may mean that there is some leeway on who sits on the advisory group.
* Both the State Water Plan Implementation Workgroup (IWG) and the WPCAG have a similar structure with sub-workgroups filed within the main workgroup. When the groups merge into one, there shouldn’t be much of a change in how sub-workgroups operate.
	+ Both the WPCAG and IWG have long term workgroups within, such as Outreach and Education and Watershed Lands.
	+ Also, both have ad-hoc workgroups such as the USGS Data Collection sub-workgroup and the Source Water Protection sub-workgroup.
* An important question to consider is how the annual report will be completed moving forward solely under the WPCAG. This may be a question posed to the WPCAG or WPC.
* A notable difference between how the WPCAG and IWG operate is that state agency staff sit on the IWG as members but are not members of the WPCAG.
	+ It would be beneficial to have state agency staff attend the WPCAG monthly meetings to answer agency specific questions or provide perspective.
	+ There was also the point that agency staff do not need to be members of the WPCAG, as they are represented on the WPC already.
* When the IWG dissolves, it would be helpful to have a flow chart explaining the different sub-workgroups. This would make it easier for the public to be involved in sub-workgroups. Sub-workgroup members do not need to be members of the WPCAG.
* The conservation shifted to discussing how the State Water Plan is implemented and used, which can help decide how to move forward without an IWG:
	+ The overarching value of the State Water Plan is that it coordinates work. Even if state agency goals change, certain issues would still be covered by the State Water Plan.
	+ Implementing the State Water Plan helps to keep numerous issues a topic of discussion.
	+ The State Water Plan came as a result of a possible water supply concern. Should the State Water Plan be used for emergency planning, or just help to guide decision making?
	+ There are many tasks in the State Water Plan, but not all can be implemented at the same time. Using a survey would help to pull in input from more people to figure out future prioritizations.

**WPCAG**

* No update given

**Public Comment**

* No public comment

**Meeting Adjourned: 2:38 p.m.**

**Next Meeting: October 10th at 1:00 p.m.**