DRAFT Meeting Notes for the State Water Plan Implementation Workgroup
October 10, 2023; 1:00 PM

Webex Meeting

**Members**: Virginia de Lima (chair), David Murphy (CIRCA), Denise Savageau (Connecticut Association of Conservation Districts), Bruce Wittchen (OPM), Kelsey Sudol (Northwest Conservation District), Ally Ayotte (PURA), Janice Ehlemeyer (Lower CT River Valley COG)

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

**Public:** Ethan Werstler, Kim Czapla (DEEP), Iris Herz Kaminski

**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.

**Water Planning Council October 3rd Meeting**

* There were no major updates shared on the Water Planning Council’s (WPC) October 3rd meeting.
* A comment was made that it is unclear what the funding situation is – Martin Heft (OPM) mentioned previously that the WPC does not plan on submitting a funding request this year. Instead, a funding request will be put in the following year.

**Outreach and Education Workgroup**

* Eric Lindquist attended the last meeting on October 2nd. He gave a presentation on flash drought. The workgroup is looking to incorporate some of the information on flash drought on factsheets that are being developed for homeowners with private wells.
* The workgroup originally planned to host a second workshop this fall on forests resources and climate change. But the date selected conflicted with a DEEP Environmental Conservation Branch retreat. Therefore, the workgroup will explore doing a lunchtime webinar relating to flash drought.
* The next meeting is scheduled for November 7th from 9:00-10:00 a.m.

**USGS Data Collection Sub-workgroup**

* The draft report is complete. Comments closed on September 29th for workgroup members. The comments received will be incorporated, and the next version of the report will be circulated to the Implementation Workgroup (IWG) for review as soon as possible.

**2023 Annual Report to Legislature**

* A group has formed and is meeting to draft the 2023 State Water Plan Annual Report to the Legislature.
* An intake form was sent to the chairs of sub-workgroups to provide 2023 updates.
* Martin Heft requested that the annual report be limited to two pages. Last year the report had a one-page executive summary, and the report itself was nine pages.
* The topic of whether state agency progress towards implementing the State Water Plan should be included in the report was discussed:
	+ The consensus is that state agency staff should be prepared to bring forward 1-2 specific action items being worked on for the annual report.
	+ There are 17 requirements of the State Water Plan, and it is probably that state agencies are contributing to implementation of those requirements. Ali will search older WPC files to see if there was a former tracking system to keep track of this.
* There are nonprofits and other stakeholders that conduct work which could contribute to the 17 requirements of the plan. A survey could be developed and sent out to these groups to gather that data. But the results may be biased as surveys may be more likely to be filled out by groups that are either staffed or large enough to have a website with up to date contact information.

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

* There is still uncertainty on how the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG) and the IWG will merge. There is a consensus between the WPCAG and IWG that merging the two groups makes sense.
* The transition will most likely happen at the first of the 2024 year.
* In terms of membership, there are four people who may be displaced by the merger:
	+ Janice Ehlemeyer, David Murphy, Virginia de Lima, and Anne Hulick.
	+ Virginia will reach out to the three others to see if there is interest in being accommodated within the WPCAG.
	+ The WPCAG has some vacancies and needs alternates. Some members can be moved around to fit in with people that would like to be involved.
	+ The WPCAG meetings and discussions are open to non-members and the public.
* Virginia, Alicea Charamut (Rivers Alliance), and Dan Lawrence (Aquarion) are planning to meet on October 13th to discuss the group merger
* Possible new workgroup ideas were discussed:
	+ There is currently a Source Water Protection sub-workgroup under the WPCAG. The sub-workgroup is tasked with drafting a white paper on source water protection in Connecticut. There was a suggestion that this should become a standing group, similar to the Outreach and Education Workgroup
	+ With discussions of a future State Water Plan update someday, there was a suggestion for a new workgroup to come together now to go over what should be included in a plan update. Bruce will write a paragraph proposal on the workgroup and present it to the WPC to see if it is something that should move forward.
	+ Former workgroups have made numerous recommendations over the years, but it is difficult to say how many recommendations have been implemented or adopted. A possible workgroup could review how previous recommendations have been implemented. A key consideration is to be able to measure progress with a recommendation, the recommendation needs to be measurable.
	+ A formerly proposed workgroup was the Tracking and Report Phase 2 sub-workgroup. The proposed workgroup did not move forward but was originally tasked with developing metrics and a tracking system on implementation of the State Water Plan. The purpose of this sub-workgroup was to make it easier to put together the annual report.

**WPCAG**

* No update given

**Public Comment**

* No public comment

**Meeting Adjourned: 2:27 p.m.**

**Next Meeting: November 14th at 1:00 p.m.**