

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

May 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

A telemeeting of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG) was held by Zoom

A video recording is available at:

https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2023-05-16_WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Karen Burnaska	Save the Sound
Bonnie Burr	Agriculture
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Patrick Kearney	Manchester Water & Sewer
Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Tom Tyler	MDC
Steve Vitko	South Central CT Regional Water Authority

Other Participants:

Paul Aresta	CT Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville & Jewett City Water Cos.
Ally Ayotte	CT Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA)
Lauren Bergman	CT Water Co.
Kim Czaplá	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Rebecca Dahl	CT Office of Policy & Management (OPM)
Rhea Drozdenko	CT River Conservancy
Rich Hanratty	CT Water Co.
Ali Hibbard	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Iris Kaminsky	New Haven
Justine Phillips-Gallucci	CT Office of Policy & Management (OPM)
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Lisette Stone	CT Dept. of Public Health (DPH)

Members Absent:

Eric Hammerling	CT Forest and Park Association
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Association
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
David Knauf	CT Association of Directors of Health
Jon Morrison	USGS CT Water Science Center
Lynn G. Ward	Waterbury Regional Chamber
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel

Staff:

Bruce Wittchen	CT Office of Policy & Management (OPM)
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1. Call to Order

Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order at 1:31 and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of draft 4/18/2023 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [4/18/2023 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Dan Lawrence abstaining because he had not attended the meeting.

3. Updates

a. Water Planning Council (WPC) Update

There was no update.

b. Implementation Work Group (IWG) Update

Alicea Charamut mentioned the current vacancy for a representative of the WPCAG on the IWG and described efforts to fill the position. Denise Savageau mentioned the Outreach & Education work group's April workshop, [Preparing for Drought in CT](#), and said the planned second workshop has been postponed to the fall. She also noted that she and others will attend an upcoming workshop in NJ.

Denise mentioned that DEEP is looking at the [state Water website](#) and she described interest in forming a subgroup to look at website needs. She also mentioned interest in forming a new tracking & implementation workgroup, but noted that DPH's Dan Aubin, who had a key role in the previous group, cannot participate in this one. Denise mentioned the USGS data workgroup and Alicea provided an overview of recent meetings and said the next will be on Monday.

c. State Water Plan and staffing update

There was no update.

d. Water Plan Update Priorities Discussion

Dan Lawrence said the meeting is tentatively scheduled to be 8:30 – 10:00 (later changed to 9:00 – 11:00) on June 16 and explained that the intention is to look back at previous priorities and consider what future priorities should be.

4. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Karen Burnaska said the next work group meeting will be by Zoom on June 9th, at 9:00, and will include updates on new legislation, [water utility coordinating committees](#) (WUCCs), and other topics the group has been involved in. Karen then read the state water website's description of the work group assignment:

The Water Planning Council established the WPCAG Watershed Lands Work Group in 2012 to review and determine the adequacy of current statutory/regulatory provisions to protect public water supplies and maintain Class I and II lands, as well as comparable lands that are not owned by water companies.

Karen outlined previous recommendations by the group and its more recent work, highlighting work regarding transfers of state lands. She also mentioned the group's interest in the [MDC Colebrook](#) situation. Karen said the Government Administration & Elections (GAE) Committee advanced eight legislative conveyances and Margaret Miner added that the committee said that the East Haddam and Cheshire conveyances might require additional language. Margaret noted that a proposed Beacon Falls conveyance did not advance.

Margaret Miner provided an overview of concerns regarding the land conveyance process, in which the state does not impose conditions on the future use of properties to avoid impacting the market value without considering the potential costs of not imposing conditions. She listed questions that should be addressed, including whether needed information is made available and how to determine properties' value. \

- b. Source Water Protection Work Group: [Source Water Protection Outline](#)

Denise Savageau said the group met today with at least ten people. She said the intention is to prepare a white paper and she outlined the topics, roles, reports, and plans to be addressed. The group went over various documents today and might have a DPH intern available to assist. The group will meet monthly..

- c. Solar Siting Work Group: [Draft Solar Siting Recommendations & Work Plan](#)

There was no report.

- d. Conservation Pricing and Rate Recovery Analysis Work Group

Alicea Charamut said the group met 5/4 and the next meeting might be moved to a Friday.

5. **Old Business**

- a. Legislative update (see [2023-05-11 Bill Update](#))

Alicea Charamut mentioned the list linked in the agenda and asked if there is any additional legislation to discuss. Daryl Newman pointed out the significance of invasive species and need for someone to coordinate the needed actions. Alicea Charamut said Sec. 68 of [PA 22-118](#) created such a position and Daryl said that was limited to aquatic invasive species. Denise Savageau agreed about the need to also consider terrestrial species and there was a discussion of the division between interest in aquatic and interest in terrestrial species.

- b. [Water Utility Coordinating Committee](#) (WUCC) update

Dan Lawrence said the WUCC implementation group will meet in-person at the MDC Training Center and one of the topics to be discussed will be the calculation of available water. He added that there might be additional meetings of the individual WUCCs that day. Lisette Stone mentioned related documents that DPH will be releasing for review. Dan Lawrence said the Western WUCC received requests for two new noncommunity systems and Jonathan Avery said there is nothing to report from the Central and Eastern WUCCs.

c. [Interagency Drought Work Group](#) update

Bruce Wittchen said Becca Dahl has been appointed Drought Coordinator and Becca updated the group on the work of the interagency group and of the group of agency staff who are reviewing the 2022 drought and will recommend drought plan changes. Alicea Charamut showed the [USGS's daily stream flow data](#) for that day and Denise Savageau said data are limited for the small coastal watersheds and also mentioned the lack of data regarding impacts on wells.

Dan Lawrence said Aquarion is adding a stream gage upstream of its reservoir serving the Mystic system, which he noted is flashy. Alicea showed [USGS ground water measurements](#) and Bruce Wittchen pointed out that most wells are measured only monthly and those last measured before the much of the most recent precipitation and show lower levels than the real time wells. He also pointed out that the real time well levels, although currently normal or above, are dropping rapidly. Becca Dahl described the Interagency group's review of rapid onset/flash drought and Denise Savageau noted the implications of an increase in winter drought due to the impact on water levels through the rest of the year.

d. Nominating Committee

There was no update.

e. Hydrilla update

There was no update.

6. New Business

There was no new business.

7. Public Comment

Iris Kaminski asked for a source of further information about the invasive species concerns discussed earlier and Daryl Newman provided a link to the webpage for the [CT Invasive Plant Working Group](#). Daryl also explained that it is an ad hoc group and said a coordinator position is necessary to get boots on the ground. Becca Dahl provided a link to the CT River Conservancy's [Water Chestnut page](#).

8. Next Meeting Date

Alicea read the dates of upcoming WPC, IWG, and WPCAG meetings and she and others also mentioned dates of upcoming meetings of some work groups:

June 6, 2023: WPC
June 13, 2023: IWG
June 20, 2023: WPCAG

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:23.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM