

## Water Planning Council Advisory Group

### June 20, 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/2023-06-20\\_WPCAG\\_Video.mp4](https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2023-06-20_WPCAG_Video.mp4)

and

<http://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=21915>

#### Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	<a href="#">Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments</a>
Karen Burnaska	<a href="#">Save the Sound</a>
Bonnie Burr	Agriculture
Josh Cansler	<a href="#">Southeastern CT Water Authority</a>
Alicea Charamut	<a href="#">Fisheries Advisory Council</a>
Carol Haskins	<a href="#">Pomperaug River Watershed Association</a>
Patrick Kearney	<a href="#">Manchester Water &amp; Sewer</a>
Fred Klein	<a href="#">CT Power and Energy Society</a>
Dan Lawrence	<a href="#">Aquarion</a>
Margaret Miner	<a href="#">Rivers Alliance</a>
Darryl Newman	<a href="#">CT Nursery &amp; Landscape Assoc.</a>
Denise Savageau	<a href="#">CT Association of Conservation Districts</a>
Kelsey Sudol (alt.)	<a href="#">Lake Waramaug Task Force</a>
Tom Tyler	<a href="#">MDC</a>

#### Other Participants:

Paul Aresta	<a href="#">CT Council on Environmental Quality</a> (CEQ)
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville & Jewett City Water Cos.
Kim Czapl	<a href="#">CT Dept. of Energy &amp; Environmental Protection</a> (DEEP)
Rebecca Dahl	<a href="#">CT Office of Policy &amp; Management</a> (OPM)
Rich Hanratty	CT Water Co.
Ali Hibbard	<a href="#">CT Dept. of Energy &amp; Environmental Protection</a> (DEEP)
Justine Phillips-Gallucci	<a href="#">CT Office of Policy &amp; Management</a> (OPM)
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Lisette Stone	<a href="#">CT Dept. of Public Health</a> (DPH)

#### Members Absent:

David Knauf	<a href="#">CT Association of Directors of Health</a>
Jon Morrison	<a href="#">USGS CT Water Science Center</a>
Lynn G. Ward	<a href="#">Waterbury Regional Chamber</a>
Steve Vitko	<a href="#">South Central CT Regional Water Authority</a>
Brenda Watson	<a href="#">Operation Fuel</a>

#### Vacancies:

Recreation

#### Staff:

Bruce Wittchen	<a href="#">CT Office of Policy &amp; Management</a> (OPM)
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## 1. Call to Order

Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order at 1:33, noting that co-chair Dan Lawrence had joined by phone, and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

## 2. Approval of draft 5/16/2023 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [5/16/2023 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Carol Haskins abstaining because she had not attended the meeting.

## 3. Updates

### a. Water Planning Council (WPC) Update

Dan Lawrence said the WPC's next meeting will be a retreat on 7/12, to be facilitated by former WPCAG member Virginia de Lima. Alicea Charamut mentioned Virginia's recent request for input regarding goals & objectives for that meeting and what people would like to see as an outcome. She also mentioned the subcommittee that met Friday to discuss priorities for a state water plan update.

Denise Savageau noted the lack of funding from the recently completed legislative session and recommended strategizing funding. Fred Klein recommended including new priorities, such as climate change impacts on water.

### b. Implementation Work Group (IWG) Update

Denise Savageau provided an overview of the meeting and mentioned that 50 years of the Clean Water Act and 20 years of Aquifer Protection are themes under consideration by the Outreach & Education Work Group. She also mentioned drought communication needs, highlighting messaging regarding private wells. Denise noted changes in work group assignments and described actions underway regarding the website. Kelsey Sudol added that the IWG also discussed water plan prioritization.

### c. State Water Plan and staffing update

Alicea Charamut and Dan Lawrence described the 6/16 subcommittee meeting and Dan said he is compiling responses to the request for people to identify 5-10 priorities. He also noted the interest in the *One Water* concept. Alicea added that a lot of people have mentioned funding for a plan update and staffing being a priority and there was further discussion.

There also was a discussion of improving the distribution of subcommittee meeting information. Alicea described the guidelines she is preparing for for group leaders and Bruce Wittchen described work the agencies are doing to improve the distribution of such information and its availability on the water website.

## 4. WPCAG Work Groups

### a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Karen Burnaska read the 2016 recommendations for watershed lands and also described the group's recent meeting. She highlighted two key points: the significance of public supply watershed lands not owned by water companies and the conveyance of state lands that are in water supply source areas.

Karen also mentioned the [MDC Colebrook](#) situation and that a conservation easement will be placed on 5500 acres of MDC land as part of the MDC's application to abandon the reservoir as an emergency water source. Tom Tyler said he does not think the agreement has been signed yet, but he has not been involved. He added that the MDC is not interested in conveying watershed lands. Alicea Charamut highlighted the amount of work that has been done regarding land conservation.

Denise Savageau pointed out the overlap between this group and the source water group that she'll speak about next on the agenda. Margaret Miner said the *One Water* concept is important and added that a land conservancy can convey lands, so a conservation easement adds a level of protection beyond just conveying land to a land conservancy.

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

Denise Savageau noted the tie between this and the previously discussed group. This group continues to work on its white paper and Denise said a DPH intern is working with an artificial intelligence (AI) generated draft. Denise provided an overview of the involved groups and reports and also mentioned the [CT Source Water Collaborative](#) and [US Source Water Collaborative](#).

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

There was no update.

- d. Conservation Pricing and Rate Recovery Analysis Work Group

Alicea Charamut said the group canceled this month's meeting due to conflicts and will meet again.

## 5. Old Business

- a. Legislative update (see [2023-06-16 Bill Update](#))

Alicea Charamut said [HB 6941](#), *An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, And Making Appropriations Therefor, And Provisions Related To Revenue And Other Items Implementing The State Budget*, is not listed in the bill update but its Sec. 198 includes language related to what raised concerns in Sec. 2 of [SB 985](#), *An Act Incentivizing Housing Production*. She described improvements made in HB 6941 but pointed out that there still is only one hearing and it includes no consideration of water and sewer service needs.

Denise Savageau provided further details, noting that the listed commissions or board that would review an application can refer it to another board or commission for further review but that is not required. Denise said this is a slippery slope and added that the affordability requirement is limited.

Alicea Charamut said [SB 998](#), originally An Act Establishing A Tax Abatement For Certain Conservation Easements, was amended with a Sec. 525 changing jurisdiction over small community and other sewerage systems from DEEP to DPH. DEEP will lose and DPH will gain positions from this. Alicea added that [SB 100](#), *An Act Establishing An Account In The General Fund To Provide Grants To Towns That Need PFAS Testing And Remediation* and [HB 6480](#), *An Act Establishing A Working Group On The Restoration Of Eel Grass*, both passed. [HB 6809](#), *An Act Concerning Financial Incentives For Certain Streamside Buffers And Training For Inland Wetland Commission Members*, did not. Margaret Miner said none of the neonicotinoid or rodenticide bills passed.

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

Dan Lawrence said the [WUCC implementation work group](#) will meet July 19 and said WUCC's continue to receive applications for new public systems serving small facilities such as breweries, wineries, and wedding facilities. Jonathan Avery said the Central and Eastern WUCCs are receiving similar requests and they plan to also meet on July 19..

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

Becca Dahl said the group met June 8 and none of the state was found to be in a drought stage. She said staff of the work group are completing the after-action report for last year's drought and are also identifying potential changes to the drought plan regarding data collection/management, movement between drought stages, and improved coordination with neighboring states. The next meeting will be 7/6. There was a discussion of conditions being dry, the [data](#) reviewed by the group, and the judgment need for implementing the plan.

d. Nominating Committee

There was a discussion of Karen Burnaska and Eric Hammerling leaving the WPCAG due to Karen's retirement and Eric moving to a new job. Carol Haskins said the committee will meet and noted that they will also consider organizations other than the CT Forest & Parks Association to represent recreation interests. Denise Savageau said the group should also consider the [Trust for Public Land](#) and [CT Land Conservation Council](#). Karen Burnaska thanked the people she has worked with during her years with the WPCAG.

e. Hydrilla update

Alicea mentioned an US Army Corps of Engineers work regarding CT River hydrilla and (see <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects-Topics/Connecticut-River-Hydrilla/>) and said progress is being made.

## 6. **New Business**

Dan Lawrence said he is compiling a list of the priorities people provided to him and it will be circulated. Alicea said the state has lost ground in some priority areas and said the WPC should consider how it communicate with the legislature's, contrasting the outreach with what agencies did regarding PFAS. She said things are not moving forward. Dan said he agrees with many but not all points raised. He sees a lot of changes since the current plan

was adopted and added that funding for a water chief should be a priority. Alicea said the WPC should be willing to talk with legislators and Denise contrasted the approach of the WPC with the approaches of the individual agencies. She also said DEEP climate change legislation has depended on the efforts of non-government organizations. Alicea and Dan will talk with Virginia de Lima about WPCAG priorities.

**7. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**8. Next Meeting Date**

Upcoming meetings include:

July 6, 2023:	Conservation Pricing Work Group
July 11, 2023:	IWG
July 12, 2023:	WPC Retreat (replaces regular July meeting)
July 18, 2023:	WPCAG

**9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:11.

*Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM*