

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

August 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes

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

Agenda: <https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/18563>

Video: https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2023-08-15_WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Bonnie Burr	UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Association
Patrick Kearney	Manchester Water & Sewer
Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
David Knauf	CT Association of Directors of Health
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Kelsey Sudol (alt.)	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Steve Vitko	South Central CT Regional Water Authority

Other Participants:

Jonathan Avery	Hazardville & Jewett City Water Cos.
Ally Ayotte	CT Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA)
Paul Aresta	CT Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
Nicoletta Blevins	
Kim Czapl	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Becca Dahl	CT Office of Policy & Management (OPM)
Ali Hibbard	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Iris Kaminski	
Justine Phillips-Gallucci	CT Office of Policy & Management (OPM)
Coleman Pushlar	
Martha Smith (alt.)	West River Watershed Coalition

Members Absent:

Jon Morrison	USGS CT Water Science Center
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Tom Tyler	MDC
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel

Vacancies:

Business Association (Non-Water Intensive)
Land Protection
Recreation

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 1:35 and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of draft 7/18/2023 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [7/18/2023 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Fred Klein abstaining because he had not attended the meeting.

3. Updates

- a. Water Planning Council Updates
 - 7/12/2023 WPC Retreat (see [draft report](#))

Alicea Charamut showed the draft report and highlighted Appendix D (pg 10), which lists participants' responses to the question of whether the WPCAG and Implementation Work Group (IWG) should remain separate or be combined. She encouraged everyone to read the draft report and noted that the WPC meeting on 9/5 will be remote, not in person as previously planned.

- b. Implementation Work Group Update

Denise Savageau provided an overview of the previous week's meeting and mentioned that it included a discussion of whether the IWG and WPCAG should remain separate. She noted that people are busy and there are many meetings. She also pointed out that the WPC's retreat didn't include the expected prioritization topic. Denise said the WPC does not speak with the collective voice of the agencies and noted the need to be able to talk with the legislature.

Denise also mentioned that Mike Dietz prevent him from continuing as IWG co-chair and described the IWG's discussion of the WPC potentially working with UConn's Institute of Water Resources. Kelsey Sudol added that there was some discussion of how to streamline the efforts of the WPC and its various subgroups and she also noted the interest in working with interns. Kelsey and Denise provided updates on activities of the IWG subgroups and Denise emphasized that it would be helpful for those efforts if the WPC priorities discussion happen soon.

4. WPCAG Work Group Updates

- a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Margaret Miner said the next meeting will be Sept. 8 and mentioned possible topics, including DEEP's [Release-Based Remediation Regulation Development](#). She emphasized that the current approach would treat source water areas like other lands. Margaret also mentioned that a new co-chair is needed following the retirement of Karen Burnaska but noted the level of work expected of person.

Alicea Charamut mentioned DPH's recent approval of the [MDC's request to abandon water allotted to the MDC in Colebrook Reservoir](#), emphasizing that DPH does not

consider the water to be suitable for public water supply. There was a discussion of DPH's determination and David Knauf said there might be a wastewater discharge upstream. There was further discussion of that and of the easement preserving 5500 acres of MDC land.

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

Denise Savageau said the draft report prepared by a DPH intern is under review and will get further, including by the WPCAG. She explained some of the ideas behind the report and potential connections with the [CT Source Water Collaborative](#). The report is being reviewed to identify any gaps and they will seek input from others. Denise also mentioned that a schedule conflict will require changing the group's September meeting date.

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

Alicea Charamut DEEP issued draft requests for proposals for its [grid scale competitive procurements](#) but with a short turnaround time for public comments. She showed comments she had submitted herself and said a majority came from Watershed Lands Work Group discussions. Denise Savageau provided further background regarding the process and noted that all source waters are to be considered now, not just aquifer protection areas. Alicea said the weighting in the proposed scoring process will not adequately encourage siting on previously disturbed sites. She also mentioned concerns regarding the treatment of hydropower. Margaret Miner added that the analysis of environmental and decommissioning costs was too narrow and there was a discussion of externalities.

d. Conservation Pricing and Rate Recovery Analysis Work Group

The group was unable to meet this month and will meet again in September.

5. Old Business

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

Dan Lawrence said the canceled meeting of the [WUCC implementation work group](#) was not rescheduled and it is approaching time for the next meeting. He mentioned that Western WUCC co-chair Russ Posthauer has resigned and must be replaced. Jonathan Avery said meetings of the Eastern and Central WUCCs scheduled the same day as the implementation group meeting were also canceled and provided an overview of the process WUCCs use to consider the applications they receive for small systems.

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

Becca Dahl said the state is not in any drought stage and that the [US Drought Monitor](#) has eliminated the "abnormally dry" classification from the last remaining area of CT, which had been in Lower Fairfield County. Agency staff are completing the 2022 drought after-action report and are working on the next drought plan update. There was a discussion of impacts of July's precipitation.

c. Nominating Committee

Carol Haskins said the group will schedule a meeting, probably on 8/30, and outlined the next steps for the group, pointing out current vacancies and mentioning WPCAG whose terms expire at the end of the year and must be reappointed.

d. Hydrilla update

Alicea Charamut mentioned [US Army Corps of Engineers \(USACE\) work regarding CT River hydrilla](#) and said a study using red dye in the river is underway. Denise Savageau said Hydrilla is not limited to the CT River watershed and mentioned that it can serve as a host for cyanobacteria. There was a discussion of the unique strain observed that lacks the tubers of others.

Fred Klein commented on the increased seaweed, murkiness, and wood he observed sailing recently. Alicia mentioned three recent deaths due to *Vibrio vulnificus* infection and there was a discussion of media reports and a DPH notice being incorrect. Bonnie Burr highlighted that *Vibrio* has not been detected in CT oysters and David Knauf explained that one person died after eating shellfish originating out of state and two people died after being in Long Island Sound with open wounds.

Denise Savageau commented on the various water quality impacts to Long Island Sound and reservoirs following recent flooding. She mentioned that there are many potential contaminants and emphasized that what is on the land can get in the water, highlighting the algal blooms resulting from high levels of nitrogen. She pointed out that non-point source pollution is addressed in the state water plan.

6. New Business

There was no new business.

7. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

8. Next Meeting Date

Upcoming meetings include:

September 5, 2023: WPC (1:30)
September 12, 2023: IWG (1:00)
September 19, 2023: WPCAG (1:30)

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:36.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM