

Interagency Drought Workgroup (IDW)
Meeting Minutes

August 3, 2023

Meeting agenda:
<https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/18657>

Drought Conditions Handout:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/Drought/2023/IDW_2023-08-03_Handout.pdf

Meeting Video:
https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/IDW_2023-08-03_Video.mp4

Members and Agency Staff (* - denotes voting member):

DEEP: Bill Foreman, Doug Hoskins*, Olney Knight
DEMHS: Doug Glowacki*, Bob Kenny
DoAg: none
DPH: Eric Lindquist, Ryan Tetreault
OPM: Rebecca Dahl, Martin Heft*, Justine Phillips-Gallucci, Bruce Wittchen
PURA: Ally Ayotte *

Other State Agency Representatives

none

Federal Agency representatives:

NWS/NOAA: Bill Leatham
USGS: John Mullaney, Dee-Ann McCarthy

Other participants:

Ethan Werstler

1. Call to order & Seating of voting members

Martin Heft called the meeting to order and confirmed the quorum of agency representatives: DEEP – Doug Hoskins; DEMHS – Doug Glowacki; OPM – Martin Heft; and PURA – Ally Ayotte. An IDW member or alternate was not present for DoAg and DPH, but other DPH staff were present.

2. Minutes – July 6, 2023

A motion was made and seconded to approve the [7/6/2023](#) meeting minutes and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. State Drought Coordinator Report

Martin Heft said Becca Dahl was having difficulty logging in to the meeting, so the full update will be delayed, but invited other updates. Doug Glowacki said the 14-day outlook is for 4-5” of precipitation, which is well above normal. Bob Kenny said DEMHS is working through its regional coordinators to continue its maintenance of the municipal drought liaison list.

Bill Leatham provided an overview of the slides he had submitted for today’s [handout](#), highlighting that rainfall was well above normal for July, especially in northern CT. Looking back six months, southern CT has been the driest part of the state but even that area is 80% of normal.

Becca Dahl joined the meeting at this time. John Mullaney provided an overview of conditions, noting that all but one of the USGS monitoring wells and all streams were normal or above. He highlighted that water levels rose at many wells, which is unusual in July, and noted that the same had happened in 2021, which also had a wet summer.

Becca Dahl referenced other information in the [handout](#), including the Palmer Drought Index and US Drought Monitor, and said neither indicates dry conditions any longer. Martin Heft invited any motions to change the state’s current drought classification, which currently has no drought stage in any county, and no motion was made.

Martin mentioned the recent meeting of some state agency staff with Sylvia Reeves and Becca Dahl explained that Sylvia came to CT to discuss the Drought Early Warning System (DEWS) and National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS). Sylvia covers the Northeast, which encompasses New York and New England, and used to work at DEMHS.

Becca said Sylvia’s [presentation](#) was circulated prior to this meeting and provided an overview, noting that they covered nuances of the [CT drought plan](#) and public perceptions. Becca recommended people visit the [NE DEWS website](#) and mentioned planning for a tabletop exercise in 2024 to test the drought plan moving into higher level stages of drought.

4. Business

- a. Post-2022 Drought Actions
- b. [Drought Plan](#) Review

Martin Heft asked Becca Dahl for an update on the after-action report. She said the agency staff group worked on this at its July 20 meeting and it is back in her hands for final edits. The goal is to have a clear delineation between that report and the recommendations that will be developed for changes in the drought plan and in its implementation. An updated draft after-action report should be circulated in the next couple weeks and be ready for a vote in September. There also was a discussion of expectations for the subsequent state drought plan review, which will lead to recommendations for changes, based in part on experiences with the 2022 drought.

- c. CISA Extreme Weather Trends and Impacts, Connecticut Focus

There was a discussion of the report, [CISA Extreme Weather Trends and Impacts](#), that Sylvia Reeves had shared. Doug Glowacki noted that Atlantic Ocean temperatures are going up dramatically and provided some background about the possible cause and effects. He described the higher levels of water vapor in the stratosphere, which we will

be watching for the next couple years. There has been little in the news about it, but if it continues people will likely hear about it.

Doug Hoskins referenced back to what he considered an important point in Silvia Reed's above presentation – that one of the objectives for DEWS is to not just respond to droughts but also be able to predict them more accurately. One of the things being looked at is ocean systems and their impact on continental weather. He also noted how warm the water was in Long Island Sound for a recent cross-sound endurance swim.

d. Other

There was no further discussion.

5. Public comment

There were no public comments.

6. Next Meeting – September 5, 2023

Martin Heft noted that the next meeting will be Sept. 5.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:29.

DRAFT