

Interagency Drought Workgroup (IDW)
Meeting Minutes

October 3, 2024

Meeting agenda:

<https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/23400>

Drought Conditions Handouts:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/water/drought/2024/24-10-03-idw-handout---july-2024.pdf>
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/water/drought/2024/24-10-03-idw-handout---august-2024.pdf>
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/water/drought/2024/september-2024-drought-conditions-report.pdf>

Meeting Video:

[https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2024-10-03 Interagency Drought Work Group Meeting Recording.mp4](https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2024-10-03%20Interagency%20Drought%20Work%20Group%20Meeting%20Recording.mp4)

Members and Agency Staff | * - denotes Voting Member | ^ - denotes Drought Coordinator

DEEP: Melissa Fahnestock, Doug Hoskins*
DEMHS: Doug Glowacki*
DoAg: Simon Levesque
DPH: Reni Axelrod, Steve Harkey*, Ryan Tetreault
OPM: Martin Heft*, Rebecca Dahl^, Bruce Wittchen, Justine Phillips-Gallucci
PURA: Maria Szul*

Other State Agency Representatives

None

Federal Agency representatives:

NWS/NOAA: Joe Dellicarpini
USGS: Pat McNamara, John Mullaney, Tim Sargent

Other participants:

1. Call to order & Seating of voting members

Martin Heft called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm and confirmed the quorum of agency representatives: DEEP – Doug Hoskins; DEMHS – Doug Glowacki; DPH – Steve Harkey; OPM – Martin Heft; and PURA – Maria Szul.

2. Minutes – July 11, 2024

A motion was made by Doug Hoskins and seconded by Doug Glowacki to approve the 7/11/2024 meeting minutes and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. State Drought Coordinator Report

Becca Dahl provided a brief overview of conditions, as described in the provided July-September 2024 Conditions Report. She highlighted wetter-than-normal conditions for July and August. For September conditions, she noted dry conditions and lower precipitation, high fire danger throughout the month, and that about 2/3's of the state is ranked DO in the U.S. Drought Monitor. She noted that streamflow and groundwater conditions were mostly normal.

Steve Harkey acknowledged significant rain in the summer coincided with the higher demands for water. Reservoirs throughout the state are currently at 89.5% full, 109.9% of normal conditions. Ryan Tetreault noted anecdotal evidence of shallow private wells in Eastern CT. Doug Hoskins confirmed additional anecdotal evidence of shallow wells and added that UConn is currently at Stage 1 of their drought plan, with voluntary measures on water conservation. He noted an additional water supply in Southbury is at their first drought stage, and that in East Lyme groundwater supplies are lower.

Joe Dellicarpini agreed with the conditions report and noted that now expecting cooler-than-average and drier-than-average conditions in October. No drought stages were recommended.

4. Business

Reni Axelrod presented on her research regarding municipal drought liaisons and municipal drought ordinances. Overall, she made recommendations to improve outreach and communications with municipal drought liaisons and to consider working with the regional Councils of Government on developing coordinate drought plan responses.

Martin Heft noted that the Water Planning Council Outreach and Education Workgroup is working on a drought information sheet and shared a preliminary draft of their fact sheet. Noted that the intent is now to separate out this current fact sheet to two fact sheets, one on private wells and drought, and one on flash drought. He also noted that there will be a webinar on drought on October 17th, hosted by the Outreach and Education Workgroup.

Becca Dahl provided an update regarding state agency staff planning for an upcoming drought tabletop exercise: She met with DEMHS training staff on developing this exercise and all have recommended scheduling the tabletop exercise for Fall 2025, allowing for more time to conduct educational workshops with external stakeholders on the State Drought Response Plan. She plans to reconvene all state agency staff at the end of October.

5. Other Business

Tim Sargent brought up that Planning Regions will be replacing the eight counties in their reporting system as county equivalents, targeting February 2025. This is because USGS keeps the county codes for the U.S. Census Bureau, which recently changed to this alignment. Data will be reported out based on Regional Planning Organization instead of county. Pat McNamara added that this was a request from the State in 2017, and began being used in 2022. Martin Heft added that the Councils of Government are responsible for administration on the Planning Regions, and that the Water Planning Council / IDW have not yet decided on whether or not to switch to using the Planning Regions geography.

Relevant Links:

[Regional Planning Organizations RPO \(ct.gov\)](#)

[EN06JN22.001 original size.png \(1677x1222\) \(federalregister.gov\)](#)

[Federal Register :: Change to County-Equivalents in the State of Connecticut](#)

6. Public comment

There were no public comments.

7. Next Meeting – November 7, 2024

Martin Heft noted that the next meeting is scheduled to be November 7, 2024.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm, moved by Doug Hoskins and seconded by Maria Szul.

DRAFT