

**CT Water Planning Council  
Regular Meeting  
November 4, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

**Video:** [https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/251104\\_Water\\_Planning\\_Council-November\\_Meeting\\_Recording.mp4](https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/251104_Water_Planning_Council-November_Meeting_Recording.mp4)

**Members Present:**

Martin Heft (chair)	<a href="#">CT Office of Policy &amp; Management</a>
Christopher Roy	<a href="#">CT Dept. of Public Health</a>
Christopher Bellucci	<a href="#">CT Dept. of Energy &amp; Environmental Protection</a>
Janice Beecher	<a href="#">Public Utilities Regulatory Authority</a>

**Other Participants:**

Paul Aresta	<a href="#">Council on Environmental Quality</a>
Lauren Bergman*	<a href="#">CT Water Company</a>
Nicoletta Blevins*	<a href="#">Regional Water Association</a>
Josh Cansler*	<a href="#">SE CT Water Authority</a>
Ryan Carboni	<a href="#">Council on Environmental Quality</a>
Alicea Charamut*	<a href="#">Fisheries Advisory Council</a>
Kim Czaplá	<a href="#">CT Dept. of Energy &amp; Environmental Protection</a>
Kathy Czepiel*	<a href="#">Save the Sound</a>
Erica Fearn*	<a href="#">CT Irrigation Contractors Association</a>
Betsy Gara	<a href="#">CWWA</a>
Carol Haskins*	<a href="#">Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition</a>
Ali Hibbard	<a href="#">CT Dept. of Energy &amp; Environmental Protection</a>
Ray Jarema*	<a href="#">Town of Berlin Water Control</a>
Iris Kaminski	<a href="#">Yale School of Public Health</a>
Pat Kearney*	<a href="#">New Britain Water Department</a>
Ron McDaniel	
Alison McHorney*	<a href="#">CT Office of Consumer Counsel</a>
David Murphy	<a href="#">Resilient Land and Water</a>
Justine Phillips-Gallucci	<a href="#">CT Office of Policy &amp; Management</a>
Aimee Petras*	<a href="#">Farmington River Watershed Association</a>

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Hannah Reichle	<a href="#">MetroCOG</a>
Denise Savageau*	<a href="#">CT Association of Conservation Districts</a>
Lisette Stone	<a href="#">CT Dept. of Public Health</a>
Steve Vitko*	<a href="#">Regional Water Association</a>

*\*denotes representative or alternate of Water Planning Council Advisory Group*

**Staff:**

Becca Dahl	<a href="#">CT Office of Policy &amp; Management</a>
Bruce Wittchen	<a href="#">CT Office of Policy &amp; Management</a>

**Call to order and Seating of Council Members – Chairman Martin L. Heft**

Council Chair Heft called the virtual meeting to order at 1:30 pm, outlined meeting procedures and confirmed the presence of a quorum. He also welcomed Janice Beecher as the new council member from PURA. He thanked David Arconti for his past year of service to the WPC.

Janice Beecher shared her background – she recently joined PURA as an interim Commissioner and looks forward to working with and learning from the WPC.

**Approval of minutes – [October 6, 2025](#)**

*A motion was made by Christopher Roy and seconded by Christopher Bellucci to approve the minutes of October 6, 2025. Janice Beecher abstained. The motion passed.*

**Public comment on agenda items**

No public comment.

**Business**

1. [WPCAG Vacancy Appointments](#)

Council Chair Heft noted that there are no recommendations for filling the vacancies but that this is a standing item and leave this as a reminder that the Recreation position is still open, as are some alternate positions.

2. [Discussion topics:](#)

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a. 2025 Annual Report

Council Chair Heft shared that he has started compiling this report, which goes out to the legislature each year. All workgroups have been emailed to provide an update for this year's report, and the report will be discussed and voted on at the December WPC Meeting.

b. 2026 Theme

Council Chair Heft noted that he included in the meeting packet, notes about the 2026 Theme, as has been discussed in previous meetings. These theme ideas include nonpoint source pollution and climate resiliency. Will be discussed further during the Outreach and Education Workgroup's report.

Chris Bellucci noted that he was glad to see nonpoint source pollution as a theme and is happy to provide staff support from his unit to support this theme.

c. 2026 Goals

Council Chair Heft noted that he shifted from including a workplan to focusing on goals for the next year. Many of these are in progress and will be touched on during the WPCAG report. Overall, will continue to work on these three major goals – reviewing State Water Plan recommendations, developing opportunities for partnerships, and exploring funding for implementation and updates [of/to the State Water Plan].

3. Legislative Committee Updates

a. SA 25-12 [Riparian Buffers Working Group](#)

Council Chair Heft shared he sits on this Working Group on behalf of OPM and there have been two meetings so far. The meetings have focused on reviewing New England State riparian buffer laws and DEEP's resources for their inland wetlands and watercourse program. They will meet again tomorrow afternoon (11/5/25).

b. PA 25-97 [Working Group to Study Sewage Disposal](#)

Council Chair Heft noted the Working Group has established three

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subcommittees – the regulations and legal subcommittee, the process and funding subcommittee, and the nitrogen and environment subcommittee. He noted that DEEP and DPH are involved with this working group and that this has been a topic of interest mentioned in previous meetings.

4. Other Business

a. CTWEA and CT COST presentations

Council Chair Heft shared that he recently participated in two workshops regarding wastewater and state funding sources, one at the CT Water Environment Association conference and one at the CT Council of Small Towns conference. Council Chair Heft noted that while at the workshops he discussed the State Water Plan and the State Conservation & Development Policies Plan to bring these plans into the discussion and highlight the work of the WPC.

5. Next Meeting – December 2

Council Chair Heft shared that there will be several items to vote on at the December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. He noted that we will have a draft Annual Report out to review and vote on. Additionally, the WPC will vote on the 2026 Theme, the 2026 Goals, and adopt the 2026 Meeting Schedule. Council Chair Heft proposed switching meetings to the morning instead of the afternoon.

## **Workgroup Reports**

1. [Water Planning Council Advisory Workgroup](#)

WPCAG Co-Chair Alicea Charamut shared a powerpoint presentation recap on the WPCAG Retreat on Tuesday of last week. She noted that details on the retreat will be forthcoming in a report, but today she is providing an overview of the retreat and discussion. She expressed thanks to RWA for hosting, Virginia De Lima for facilitating, and all who took survey, and noted that there were 18 people in-person and two people online for the WPCAG Retreat.

Alicea shared that the retreat started with the following question – *When you imagine successful water planning in CT what outcomes or changes do you see?* – and that garnered many diverse answers.

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She also shared that 13 people responded to the survey – which was geared towards ranking the State Water Plan recommendations – and that the group reviewed survey responses, with a focus on discussing the top ten ranked recommendations overall.

Alicea noted that at the retreat, the following three recommendations were discussed in detail:

- *Reaffirm support for the protection of Class I and Class II lands, as well as watershed property protected for water supply*
- *Address maintenance and resiliency planning for water and wastewater infrastructure to address aging infrastructure and risk due to climate change*
- *Identify methods to encourage long-term water conservation activities, coordinate drought planning by utilities, and develop model ordinances for municipalities that support statewide drought planning*

She also shared that the retreat closed out with the question: *what issues pertaining to water either weren't given due consideration during the development of the last state water plan or have emerged as an important issue since it was finalized?* – which brought up some emerging and current issues like climate change and data centers. Alicea also noted that it may be helpful to repurpose the survey and/or bring it to new audiences – like the state agencies – for further discussion.

Council Chair Heft thanked Alicea for the work on developing the retreat and facilitating the discussion.

WPCAG Co-Chair Steve Vitko added that conversations at the retreat were respectful and constructive. He said he's hoping to consider gathering responses for the survey to refine answers and feedback. He noted that they may consider additional retreats moving forward to continue the conversation.

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a. Standing:

i. Nominating Committee

Carol Haskins noted that there is a new vacancy, in the science and academia category – Nicole Diezel will be stepping down and Virginia De Lima will step in as the alternate.

ii. [Outreach and Education Workgroup](#)

Denise Savageau noted that they held their final workshop held on October 17<sup>th</sup>, good attendance and reception, overall good traction on the workshops this year. She noted that the Workgroup is working on getting the videos up online for the recording. Discussed drought and water quality issues.

She shared that the workgroup met this morning and covered the following:

- [WPC YouTube account](#): The account is now active. Ali Hibbard from DEEP will be managing this account and will migrate all recordings of workshops onto this platform.
- Developing the State Water Plan Stewards Program: discussing how to create a stewardship program to understand what other groups are doing that may support the goals of the state water plan (ex: water quality testing and oversight)
- Draft Outreach and Education Workgroup 2026 workplan: Focused on the potential theme *Envisioning Resilient Watersheds* – and potential workshop topics for the next year like non-point source pollution, watershed restoration, source water protection, and nature-based solutions.

Council Chair Heft noted that the WPC will vote on the theme at the next meeting and noted that he appreciates that the proposed workplan includes several topics that have previously been discussed.

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Chris Bellucci added that he recently attended a nonpoint source workshop and coastal resiliency was a big topic at this meeting, which could be incorporated into the Workgroup's plans as well.

Jan Beecher notes that she appreciates the theme – perhaps *Realizing Resilient Watersheds* – she recommended emphasizing collaboration in discussing watershed issues, so it would be good to include the various stakeholders

Denise shared that the workgroup also discussed creating additional content for the YouTube channel. She noted that meetings will continue to be held on the first Tuesdays of the month at 9 am (unless a change is needed to adjust for the WPC) and they're always accepting new members.

iii. [Watershed Protection Workgroup](#)

Steve Vitko shared that he and Kathy Czepiel will be meeting to discuss the outcomes of WPCAG retreat and reaffirming support for watershed lands connected to water supply, prior to the next Workgroup meeting which is scheduled for December.

Kathy Czepiel added that the next meeting will be on Friday December 12<sup>th</sup> at 9 am and they look forward to a robust discussion continuing from the WPCAG retreat.

2. [Interagency Drought Workgroup](#)

State Drought Coordinator Becca Dahl noted that at the last meeting on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, the IDW recommended moving Fairfield, Middlesex, and New Haven counties into a Stage 2 Drought Advisory. She shared that this recommendation was acted on and declared by the Governor on October 7<sup>th</sup> via press release. She noted that there has been more precipitation recently which is hopeful, but that the data will need to be assessed and will be discussed at the IDW's next meeting on Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm.





## **Public Comment**

Denise Savageau offered public comment on an emerging issue of Affordable Housing and water infrastructure. She did provide the WPC with information on this via email. Council Chair Heft noted that there is a legislative special session planned for November 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> that should include discussion on affordable housing/a revised housing bill, and that the state agencies are monitoring this.

## **Adjourn**

*Christopher Roy made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Christopher Bellucci. The motion passed unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 2:28 pm.

*Minutes prepared by Becca Dahl, OPM*

