

Interagency Drought Workgroup (IDW)

Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2025

Meeting agenda:

<https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/27548>

Drought Conditions Handout:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/water/drought/2025/250508-idw-handout---april-conditions-report.pdf>

Meeting Video:

https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/250508_Interagency_Drought_Workgroup_Meeting_Recording.mp4

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

DEEP: Pete Aarrestad, Melissa Fahnestock, Doug Hoskins*, Olney Knight, Shalyn Zappulla
DEMHS: none
DoAg: none
DPH: Eric Lindquist*, Ryan Tetreault
OPM: Martin Heft*, Rebecca Dahl^, Justine Phillips-Gallucci, Bruce Wittchen
PURA: Maria Szul*

Other State Agency Representatives:

none

Federal Agency representatives:

NWS/NOAA: Deanna Marks

USGS: Dee-Ann Crozier
Maria Skarzynski

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: DoAg – none ; DEEP – Doug Hoskins; DEMHS – none; DPH – Eric Lindquist; OPM – Martin Heft; and PURA – Maria Szul.

2. Minutes – April 3, 2025

A motion was made by Doug Hoskins and seconded by Maria Szul to approve the 4/3/2025 meeting minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. State Drought Coordinator Report

Becca Dahl provided a brief overview of conditions, as described in the April 2025 Conditions Report provided.

She reminded the group that the state is currently in a Stage 1 Drought, since the last meeting in April.

She noted the improvements within the USDM over the month, with the majority of the state in D0, with some northern portions of the state in D1 by the end of April. She also shared the most recent USDM map dated May 8th, showing further improvements with removal of drought stages in the central portion of the state, and degradation to D0 in the southwest and eastern portions of the state.

Precipitation values have totaled about 4-5" throughout the state for April, coming in between 0-2" above normal precipitation. She also shared the CoCoRaHS map for the first week in May, showing at least 2" of rain throughout the state, and over 4" of rain in the west-central portion of the state.

She shared the real-time streamflow map for the day, noting the overlap of significant rainfall for the week and much above normal and record-high streamflow values.

Based on the April streamflow data, there seem to be notable improvements. She shared that groundwater is still lagging behind to an extent, possibly due to the seasonality and timing of 'leaf-out'.

Becca shared the VegDRI map for May 4th noting that it might "look scary" with moderate to severe drought being displayed, however, this is an start-of-the-season anomaly due to the late 'leaf-out'/'greening' of the vegetation this season, skewing satellite imagery to detect drought.

She shared the Stage 2 Trigger Summary table – noting that this use is to provide a comparison to previous months despite not being currently in Stage 2 Drought. She reviewed the tables included within the April Conditions Report.

Reservoir levels are doing well and range from the high 90s to over 100 percent of normal.

Fire Danger is currently Low and has oscillated between Low, Moderate, High, and Very High in recent weeks.

Dee-Ann Crozier shared that Tim Sargeant and John Mullaney retired earlier than planned, and that she and Maria Skarzynski will be taking on the role of reporting out for the IDW. She shared that six of the nine real-time groundwater sites are above normal as of today, noting that there was enough precipitation to recharge these sites. Of the remaining three groundwater sites, two were at normal levels and one below normal, which is a bedrock well that tends to lag behind. Dee-Ann noted that this is not a baseflow and conditions will likely come back down unless precipitation continues at a similar rate.

Becca made the recommendation to remain at Stage 1 drought across the state.

Martin Heft asked for any clarifications or additions from agency partners.

Doug Hoskins agreed with Becca's recommendation in being cautious and noted that the extreme conditions brought on by climate change can cause conditions to change more rapidly.

Martin Heft concurred with remaining status quo, in Stage 1 drought.

4. Business

- a. 2025 Drought Plan Tabletop Exercise: Becca shared that she touched base with Doug Glowacki at DEMHS, there is still potential to address drought this year, including in the annual EPPI exercise which is expected to take place in the Fall

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Public comment

There were no public comments.

7. Next Meeting – June 5, 2025

Martin Heft noted that the next meeting is scheduled to be June 5, 2025 and that staff will continue to monitor conditions, and the group is permitted to call a meeting if needed.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:27 pm, moved by Eric Lindquist and seconded by Doug Hoskins.