

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
Lake Saltonstall, 100 Hosley Avenue, Branford
(Meet at the Fish Shack)

AGENDA

Regular Meeting of Wednesday, October 9, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – September 11, 2024 meeting
3. RWA Police update: Capt. Paul Ruggiero
4. Updates on land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
5. Other land items
6. Reminder: volunteers for upcoming Authority meetings:
 - a. October 24, 2024 - Jamie Mowat Young
 - b. November 21, 2024
 - c. December 19, 2024
 - d. January 23, 2025
7. Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, November 13, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.
8. Adjourn

*In the event of rain *ONLY*, the meeting will be held at 90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut. To view meeting documents, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/tvu5cy9m>. For questions, contact the board office at 203-401-2515 or by email at jslubowski@rwater.com.

SAFETY MOMENT

OCTOBER – HEALTH LITERACY AWARENESS

Health literacy is the ability to understand health information and use it to make informed decisions. It consists of four components:

1. Reading and understanding health information;
2. Communication and decision-making skills;
3. Access to health services; and
4. Health knowledge and beliefs.

Steps to increase health literacy include:

1. Organizing information so the most important points come first
2. Breaking complex information into understandable chunks
3. Using simple language and defining technical or medical terms
4. Using the active voice

Tap Into
Safety



Regional Water Authority



Service – Teamwork – Accountability – Respect – Safety

Safety is a core company value at the Regional Water Authority .
It is our goal to reduce workplace injuries to zero.

 Regional Water Authority

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
 South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
 September 11, 2024

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Land Use Committee (“Committee”) of the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”), of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District (“RWA”), took place on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at the Lake Saltonstall Water Treatment Plant, 1 Saltonstall Parkway, Branford, Connecticut.

Committee Members Present: M. Levine, P. Betkoski, G. Malloy, J. Oslander and Jamie Mowat Young

Committee Members Absent: P. DeSantis, B. Eitzer, and M. Horbal

RPB: C. Havrda

Authority: S. Sack

Management: S. Lakshminarayanan, W. Henley, J. Hill, and J. Tracy

Chair Levine called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

The Committee held a moment of silence for the victims and responders of 9/11.

On motion made by Mr. Malloy and seconded by Mr. Oslander, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of its August 14, 2024 meeting.

Mr. Tracy, the RWA’s Forester II, and Mr. Henley, the RWA’s Aquatic Resource Scientist, provided a tour and update of the water chestnut harvest at Furnace Pond in Branford. They reported on the status of the water chestnut harvest since July 2024.

Committee members discussed current conditions, total harvest area, method, disposal, and monitoring,

Update on *The Land We Need for the Water We Use Program* – Mr. Lakshminarayanan, the RWA’s Vice President of Engineering & Environmental Services, reported:

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
August 31	87%	91%	74%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
August 2024	6.31	4.90	3.98
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 –	15.49	14.46	11.44

Land We Need for the Water We Use Program (Dispositions/Acquisitions)

- Hamden – Corresponded with property owner of 4+/- acres.

- Cheshire, Bis/Bowman property – Received award packet for the OSWLA grant. Closed on the property by the end of the month.
- North Branford, Beech St., and Poms La. properties (NB 4) – Notified by NBLCT that they were ready to execute the P&SA.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. – Discussed the resubdivision for the lot to go with the house with Juliano.
- Woodbridge, 1029 Johnson Rd. – Met with owners and potential buyer at the house. Discussed the deed restrictions.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 75% complete.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – The harvest was halted in early June, and the logger pulled his equipment off the property on June 13th. It is uncertain at this point whether the buyer will continue with the salvage operation even if a market is found - 15% complete.
- Guilford - Menunketuc High-Grade Rehabilitation Cut and Conifer Release (GU12/12A) – 20% complete.
 - Joined DEEP wildlife division staff at Lake Gaillard for a night of mist netting bat at the hibernaculum.
 - Worked to plan and implement the first field season of the Landscape Scale Restoration grant.
 - Gave a tour and demonstrated steam weeder unit to USFS LSR grant administrator.
 - Finalized details of a forest products sales agreement for witch hazel stems. The witch hazel will be sustainably harvested from Genesee and Nathan’s Pond tracts within the bounds of three timber sale harvests.
 - Completed and mailed USDA’s survey request regarding RWA’s Conservation Practices Adoption history and motivations.
 - Worked with volunteers from the Native Plant Trust to report on a recently re-located population of swamp cottonwood.

Recreation

- Held botany walk at Harry Field Rd., Madison with 30 participants.
- Issued latest newsletter.
- Ordered walleye for stocking Lake Saltonstall this fall.
- Two permit holders had their permits revoked for using live bait at Lake Saltonstall.
- Cleared trails at Woodbridge Greenway, Big Gulph, Sugarloaf, Genesee, Lake Chamberlain, Lake Saltonstall, and Lake Bethany.
- Responded to request for trail off of Dogburn Rd. in Orange and Johnson Rd. in Woodbridge.
- The Water Wagon attended five events in August.

	August		July	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Permit Holders	4,880	4,883	4,929	4,879

Special Activity Permits

- (nothing in August)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Hamden, 14 Russell St. (HA 6B) – Fence was installed and checked.
 - Hamden, Lake Whitney dam access (HA 4) – Signed license agreement with United Illuminating to clarify our access to the dam area.
 - Hamden, Hamden Hall athletic fields (HA 9A) – Exchanged appraisals with the school to set the annual fee for the remainder of the lease.
 - North Haven, Wharton Brook Industrial Park water main – Signed license agreement that extends until 2049 for water main that runs under train tracks.
 - West Haven, Allings Crossing Rd. (WH 6) – Executed license agreement with United Illuminating for access across our property to remove old electric poles along the railroad tracks.
 - West Haven, Shingle Hill Tanks (WH 7) – Completed the license agreement and approved the exhibits to be attached.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford, Bethany, Woodbridge, and Branford. Steamweeded roadside vegetation at Lake Gaillard. Flew drone mission at Furnace Pond to complete the post-harvest drone map from July.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	9 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	1.7 acres

- Deer hunt – Check station volunteers were chosen and contacted. Prospect and Ansonia areas were reflagged. Special permittees were notified about the hunt via US mail.
- New Haven, Sachem St. watermain – Contacted Yale staff about getting a former easement from them for the portion of the road that the city discontinued.
- Northford water main – Fielded call from Northford business owner about extending a water main up our Diversion Rd. to Reeds Gap Rd. Forwarded the request to others at RWA.
- Hamden, Clark’s Pond parking – Responded to town that they can put up “no parking” signs.
- Woodbridge, Rt. 69 ROW – Replied to fiber optic consultant about vegetation management along Rt. 69 under the utility poles that run parallel to the road.
- Water main easement encroachments – Discussed approach to documenting and dealing with encroachments over water main easements with GIS staff.
- North Branford, West Pond Tank (NB 10) – Answered questions from Engineering staff about our property and our ROW to the tank for a planned second tank at the site.
- Milford, Ford St. tanks (MI 12) – Answered questions from Distribution staff about our property for a planned booster chlorination station at the site.
- Pollinator garden – Real Estate staff worked on the pollinator garden at 90 Sargent Dr., New Haven. Also worked on new planting area at Furnace Pond.
- Drone missions – Conducted flight in Prospect to document construction at the Prospect Reservoir.

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
September 11, 2024

Committee members discussed the status of the grant for the bat study.

The committee assigned volunteers to attend the upcoming Regional Water Authority meetings on:

- October 24, 2024
- November 21, 2024
- December 19, 2024
- January 23, 2025

The next regular meeting is on Wednesday, October 9, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. at Lake Saltonstall. The committee will hold its annual pizza dinner. All members of the RPB and management are invited to attend.

At 5:25 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy and seconded by Ms. Young, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

Mark Levine, Chair

UNAPPROVED

**September 11, 2024
Land Use Committee Meeting**

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
September 30	80%	89%	68%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
September 2024	1.30	6.39	3.83
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 – 9/30/24)	16.79	20.85	15.28

Land We Need for the Water We Use Program (Dispositions/Acquisitions)

- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 20+/- acres.
- North Branford – Corresponded with property owner of 13+/- acres.
- Cheshire, Bis/Bowman property – Submitted draft survey to DEEP for the OSWLA grant. Sent letters to abutters about the acquisition. Received deeds back from the towns.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4) – Signed the P&SA with the NBLCT.
- Seymour, 56 Squantuck Rd. (SE 5) – Submitted disposition application to FMA. They had questions so the application will go back to them in October. Corresponded with town staff about the disposition process.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Discussed the resubdivision for the lot to go with the house with the surveyor

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 75% complete.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – The harvest was halted in early June, and the logger pulled his equipment off the property on June 13th. It is uncertain at this point whether the buyer will continue with the salvage operation even if a market is found - 15% complete.
- Guilford - Menunketuc High-Grade Rehabilitation Cut and Conifer Release (GU12/12A) – **40% complete.**
 - Completed QFR’s for the Preisner and Bis properties. Submitted 490 applications to assessors’ offices.
 - Trained Natural Resource Specialists in forestry inventory techniques related to PA490 applications, including the proper use of a 10-factor prism, dbh tape, and Biltmore stick.
 - Participated in two site walks for CFPA’s Master Woodlands Manager program and co-led a forest ecology field day at Nathan’s Pond slash for twenty-five participants on the morning of September 21st.
 - Supervised and managed Natural Resource Specialists in overseeding and mulching treated roadside areas and ditches following steamweeder treatments.
 - Worked with CAES to ground-truth a remote sensing alert from the US Forest Service regarding a decrease in leaf density on a portion of the Totoket Ridge.

Recreation

- Kids archery event was attended by 20 children.
- Plant walk at LWWTP was attended by 15 people.
- North Branford Women’s Walk was attended by about 160 people.

- Cleared trails of fallen trees at Lake Chamberlain and Lake Bethany.
- New sign and bait recycling collection bin were installed at Lake Chamberlain.
- DEEP Stocking and Liberation permits were filled out for the walleye coming in October to Lake Saltonstall.
- Informed Bethany Horsemen and recreation permit holders (through FB) that the causeway at the head of Chamberlain will be closed soon while Engineering does repairs.
- Contractor opened up 2 miles of trails at Genesee.
- The Water Wagon attended three events in September.

	September		August	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Permit Holders	4,846	4,827	4,880	4,883

Special Activity Permits

- Connecticut Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation-(Mr. Jack Swatt) flowering chestnut trees on RWA property to harvest nuts to plant in their Germplasm Conservation Orchards to preserve genetic diversity of the species (9/1/23-9/30/23) – Revised date until 10/31/24.
- Connecticut State Police K9 Unit (Mr. Ryan Cloukey and designees)-training K9 teams in the discipline of tracking, Lake Gaillard, (9/5/24-9/5/25)
- Univ.of New Haven Army ROTC Program Coordinator (Robert Clark) - Squad Tactical and Platoon Tactical Training - 1955 Litchfield Turnpike/West River Training Area, Woodbridge (9/12/2024-9/12/2025).
- CTDEEP (Brooks Pitman) – to address the decline of the fisher population in CT, Lake Gaillard area and properties east of the property, (9/16/24 – 9/16/25).
- Boys Scouts of America Troop 610 (Michael Collins) – hiking trip to Woods Road that runs behind the filter plant located outside of fence line that encompasses West River Water Treatment Plant, (10/5/24).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Hamden, Hamden Hall athletic fields (HA 9A) – Working on an amendment to the lease that would set the annual fee for the remainder of the term.
 - Hamden, 0 Easterly Dr (HA 39) – Found and removed tree stand.
 - Cheshire, South Main St. (CH 4) – Corresponded with Southwick Condos staff about the history of the license agreement including the fee.
 - Agricultural agreements – Contacted Tanev about mowing the fields he is responsible for.
 - West Haven, Shingle Hill Tanks (WH 7) – Spoke to Yale representative about getting the payment and COI before they start installing the antennas.
 - Prospect, Roaring Brook Rd. (PR 7) – EP staff found hoses on our property coming from the Crandall property. Sent registered letter telling them to cease. Area will be checked in October for compliance.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in Madison, Seymour, and North Branford. Treated stilt grass, mugwort and swallow-wort using steam at Lake Gaillard, approximately 0.6 acres (2000+ feet of road).

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	6 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	0.6 acres

- Deer hunt – The three pre-hunt safety meetings were completed. The final count of hunters is 134 at North Branford, 25 at Bethany, 20 at Prospect, and 8 at Seymour.
- Madison, North Madison Congregational Church land – Answered inquiry from member of the public about land sold to the church in 1998.
- Land Use Plan – Continued work on maps for next LUP update.
- North Branford, UI watermain easement – Murtha reviewed title report for UI property we wish to install a water main through.
- Drone flights - Flew drone in Prospect documenting construction at the Prospect Reservoir.

Attachments

- September 11, 2024 - Local Connecticut leaders trying to stop spread of an invasive aquatic plant – WTNH
- September 17, 2024 - Connecticut flooding report is 'a wake-up call' for the state – CT Insider
- September 23, 2024 - Water authority buys Cheshire land for preservation – Hartfordbusiness.com

Upcoming Agenda Items

November 2024 - ???

Local Connecticut leaders trying to stop spread of an invasive aquatic plant

by: Tina Detelj - WTNH - Sep 11, 2024

SALEM, Conn. (WTNH) — An invasive aquatic plant has state and local leaders joining forces to try to drown it out of existence.

\$5M in federal funds coming to help fight hydrilla in Connecticut River

They are hoping to stop the spread of the invasive weed Hydrilla before it causes real damage to Gardner Lake in Salem. The species has already taken over parts of the Connecticut River.

“Dealing with an issue like this knows no political boundaries,” Rep. Holly Cheeseman, (R-Conn) East Lyme, said.

“I am a nurse,” Rep. Martha Marx, (D-Conn) New London, said. “Prevention is the best medicine.”

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) said that the predatory plant displaces native plants, impacts fish and wildlife habitats and interferes with boating, paddling, fishing, and swimming.

“I’ve been aware of that that you can pick up stuff when you go one place to another so I always keep them clean,” Hamden resident Joanne Ekstrom said.

Hydrilla treatment temporarily closes swimming at Coventry Lake

‘Clean, drain, dry’ signs have been put up at Gardner Lake to warn boaters and swimmers about the rapidly growing plant. The state is urging people to wash their boats before entering into the lake and after leaving it.

“Once the bilge is dry, once the Livewell is dry, those plants can’t live,” Mason Trumble, Deputy Commissioner of DEEP, said. “But if they’re wet they can, and that’s when they can spread.”

“I always wash the boat after you pull it out and before just check around the boat to see if there’s anything that can be invasive,” boater Haroldo Kawakami said.

Those who live along the lake would like to have it drawn down four feet so they can try to kill the invasive plant and they would like to get a boat washing station so that any Hydrilla catching a ride on a boat doesn’t end up here.

“The variant from the Connecticut River is here,” Salem First Selectman Ed Chmielewski, (R-Conn) said.

“It’s not easy to eradicate so it can happen but often times it’s more a matter of controlling the growth,” Trumble said.

The larger it grows the harder it is to control.

The state does have an aquatic invasive species grant program that provides funding to communities so they can take action before it grows out of control.

Connecticut flooding report is 'a wake-up call' for the state

By Ken Dixon, CT Insider - Sep 17, 2024

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities on Tuesday released a study nearly two years in the making that recommends more regional cooperation in dealing with flooding from storm-swollen creeks and rivers, as well as tidal effects from Long Island Sound.

The \$100,000 report, called "Strategic Flooding Mitigation for Connecticut: Challenges and Solutions," which was released during an hour-long briefing for news reporters, warned that Federal Emergency Management Agency water maps are outdated by decades or more. The report contains about 30 recommendations and promotes statewide standards on climate resiliency, including its budgetary implications and the importance of access to federal support for what could become massive building projects.

The CCM will use the 158-page report as a basis to develop legislative proposals when the next General Assembly meets in January. "This is an important issue," said Randy Collins, associate director of public policy and advocacy for the CCM. "It's not an all-or-nothing report. There's a lot of pieces in there that provide best practices for municipalities to consider that don't need state legislation. We can start to make progress if different communities can look at the best way locally, regionally and statewide to address these."

The report noted that a state Senate bill on climate issues, which died at the end of the legislative session in May, had many pieces that would have helped Connecticut address the issues of flooding resiliency with enhanced local, regional and state cooperation.

"Flash flooding like we saw in August, as extreme as that was, I think the underlying take home is that can happen anywhere in Connecticut," said Erik Mas, vice president of the engineering firm Fuss and O'Neill, which led the study. "It really is a situation where you don't have to be along the coast. You don't have to be down by the river to be impacted in a serious way by this intense rainfall-driven flooding. Given the increasing frequency of these storm events that can hit any part of the state, it's a real wake-up call for the state of Connecticut."

Last week the state pegged initial damages from the Aug. 18th and 19th flooding at more than \$300 million, including the rebuilding of bridges destroyed by as much as 14 inches of rain in the Naugatuck Valley center of Oxford. The CCM said Oxford's flood maps have not been updated since around 1979. Three deaths were linked to the flooding, including two women in Oxford and a Weston man whose body was recovered in Westport.

"Ultimately this challenge is going to be making the infrastructure more resilient," Mas said. "A lot of the things that I think will have a very large ticket, ultimately, in the end. But I think setting up municipalities and the state of Connecticut to better take advantage of that federal funding that is out there, I think can offset some of those costs."

During the nearly two-year study, assessment questions were sent to all 169 towns and cities and 84 responses were received, including 60 percent from towns with populations under 20,000 and 40 percent from larger communities. Slightly more than half of Naugatuck Valley communities responded to the survey, although the regional Council of Governments weighed in for the study.

Mas suggested that the state's regional councils of governments should take major rolls in developing resiliency strategies because many smaller towns lack the personnel and expertise to navigate complex grant applications and construct flood mitigation projects. More state funding will be needed as well, along with design standards for future flood control projects similar to those being undertaken in Massachusetts, Vermont and Rhode Island, he said.

"Our infrastructure is aging and it's not designed to carry the water flow, the storm water runoff that we're seeing," Mas said. "These storm events, the flooding events are increasing in frequency and intensity. I think residents understand that we have to address this issue. We can't just ignore it and just hope that the water runs down hill. It's going to go someplace. When we're talking about flooding basements or commercial areas, I think residents are going to understand that hey, I don't want the sewer backing into my neighborhood and your kid jumping in the puddle."

Stratford Mayor Laura Hoydick, a former state lawmaker who is president of the CCM board of directors, told reporters that with a variety of state, regional and national agencies involved, officials have to navigate a literal "maze" of rules and regulations to obtain funding and loans. She said that many local leaders are observing the city of New Britain's Storm Water Authority.

"It's very complicated," she said. "You have to identify the problems first, right, in order to form the solution. And that's what we're trying to do here. The opportunities, the resources that communities have to combat whatever the kind of flooding issues they have, whether it's coastal, riverine, storm water. Most of us are having storm water issues. We've got to figure out what options are available and what we can afford."

Water authority buys Cheshire land for preservation

The Regional Water Authority has acquired nearly 80 acres of open space in Cheshire for preservation.

The 78-acre wooded parcel off Mountain Road was purchased by the nonprofit water utility and environmental services corporation with a \$188,500 grant from the state's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant program.

The land will be protected against future development and expanding the land buffer protecting RWA water sources.

The RWA completed the purchase, recorded Sept. 10, from Blue Trails LLC. The grant covered 65% of the purchase price, which was \$290,000, water authority officials said.

The property is located within the RWA's Lake Whitney watershed and will become part of an approximately 900-acre block of protected forest straddling the Cheshire-Prospect border.

It abuts existing RWA property in Prospect, and it is bounded to the south and north by open-space parcels owned by the town of Cheshire.

Economic Development Director Andrew Martelli said this purchase completes Cheshire's eastern ridge open space corridor along Prospect Mountain, which the town has been aggressively trying to acquire for nearly 30 years.

This is one of several property acquisitions by the RWA since 2007 that helps protect its watershed, said RWA real estate manager John Triana.

The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority provides services to about 430,000 people in 15 cities and towns throughout Greater New Haven. It owns and manages approximately 28,000 acres of watershed property, some of which is open for hiking, bird-watching and other passive recreational activities.