

REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD

LAND USE COMMITTEE

JANUARY 8, 2025

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

Mark:

Hello, everybody. I'd like to call the meeting to order. This meeting is being recorded and we're going to have the safety moment first. In January, safety at home. Make sure your home is well insulated. Well, that's not happening in my house. Check battery powered equipment and stock extra batteries, that's for sure. Keep emergency heating equipment available. Stock an extra supply of food and water. Insulate your water pipe. Stay indoors during extreme cold. Move pets indoors. Wear loose, layered clothing and check heating supply. We're all enjoying that right now. Everybody got that in the safety moment?

Jamie:

Yes.

Mark:

Okay, the minutes of our meeting, the regular meeting, can I have a motion to accept our meeting minutes.

Jamie:

I'll make the motion.

Greg:

Second.

Mark:

Any discussion? All those in favor of accepting the minutes as read or written, please signify by saying aye.

Committee members:

Aye.

Mark:

Opposed? Minutes are accepted. Next, presentation to the Representative Policy Board Land Use Committee review and summary of the controlled archery hunt. Thank you very much. Can you begin please, Nicole?

Nicole:

Sure. Hi everyone. For those who don't know me or have not met me before, I'm Nicole Smith. I'm the Natural Resources Analyst, and I administer the deer hunt and I just interact with all the hunters. So, the first few slides are going to be a quick review.

So, the first couple slides are just going to be a quick review of why we have the deer hunt and our surveys from the hunters from which I gather all of the information for most of this presentation are still in the process of coming in. They aren't due until January 31st, so you guys are going to get sort of an abbreviated version of a larger presentation we tend to do after the surveys come in.

So, really quickly a review. The deer hunt here has been going on since 2009. It started at Lake Gaillard, which is our largest property with 3,233 acres. We've added three more properties over the years and Ansonia/Seymour was the next property to be hunted. That started in 2014. Bethany and Prospect, which are of similar size, both allowed hunting in 2015.

So, the reason we do this is that we are trying to reduce deer density because deer browsing is pretty detrimental to the forestry program. We all know the deer really love to eat the native species, especially the young trees that are really valuable for future forestry products, and them browsing also causes a lot of destruction to the environment. For instance, when the plants die, if they're over browsed, you have erosion issues. I mean, I don't think I need to do a whole presentation. We're all very familiar with the damage deer can do, especially if they're browsing in great numbers.

With that, I'm going to do a quick summary of the deer concept this year. So, this year we had 360 applications that I mailed out. Out of that we had 188 participants. Broken down by property, at Gaillard in North Branford, we had 135 hunters. In Bethany, we had the full 25. In Prospect, we had the full 20. And Ansonia/Seymour always gets the full eight. That seems to be a very popular spot. This year, we had 10 days of scouting that lasted from October 5th to October 14, and then we had 30 days of the hunt and the hunt this year started on October 28th and ended as it always does on November 30th.

This year, we had 40 deer harvested. There were 22 bucks and 18 does and as I stated before, the surveys are due on the 31st this year, which is a Friday. And after that, after I collect all that data, I'll aggregate it and then send it to the Department of Public Health on the Monday after that's done.

We have so far 36 surveys have been returned. That's about 20% of the surveys that I sent out. The surveys are used basically to gather hunter effort that we then submit to the Department of Public Health. So at North Branford we had 26 hunters and ... Sorry, this is [inaudible 00:08:43]. With a total number of hunting hours of 1018. In Bethany, we had four survey respondents so far with 136 hours. Prospect, we had seven returned surveys with 262.5 hours and Ansonia/Seymour, we only had one respondent so far, and this is as of December 30th with 13.5 hours, which gives us a total of 1,429 hours. As more people respond to the surveys, I expect this to bump up to something like, we usually average for the last three years, something like 5,000 hunting hours for people. They spend a lot of time out there.

Now, the real fun part in terms of how many deer did we actually take. This year we had a total of 40 deer. I'm sorry, next slide if you can get to that. Yes. So this year we had a total of 40 deer taken. We had 18 doe and 22 bucks. Once again, as in years past, the majority of deer have been harvested from Lake Gaillard. What's interesting is the percentage of does harvested this year was actually a little bit higher. So, we had about 45% of the deer that were taken to be does, which is what we'd expect with the deer incentive that is still in effect. Okay.

Jamie:

Can I ask a question?

Nicole:

Yes.

Jamie:

I noticed on one page it is that there were 53 volunteers that staffed the check stations.

Nicole:

Well, yes. There's 53 volunteer days and every day, a different person staffs the check station. So, at Gaillard and Bethany, we run two check stations. The check station located at the Bethany hunting property is set up to monitor the hunters and the intake, the deer that they take for Bethany, Prospect and Ansonia/Seymour. And Gaillard, because it's the biggest property, only gets like one check station and so we select from the hunters.

Jamie:

So, to serve as volunteers? I mean, who serves? 53 different people volunteer?

Nicole:

It's really popular. I can explain. So, we have two ways that people can bypass the lottery and automatically enter the hunt without having to take your chances. You can either harvest doe, which gets you in automatically or you can volunteer at the check station. So, people sign up to participate at the check station, which is great because we don't have to staff it and people really like it. Not only do they like to talk to their friends, they also like to [inaudible 00:11:27] out there in nature. I'm really never hurt for volunteers, for people. They always sign up because especially in the smaller properties like Bethany, I would also say Prospect and Ansonia, because so many hunters apply to hunt those areas as their first choice, if they have to go through the lottery, they may not end up at their first choice. So, volunteering guarantees them that spot there. So, it's really helpful to us.

Jamie:

Thank you. I didn't mean to interrupt.

Nicole:

No, you didn't. I think most people have heard all of this, so they're kind of quiet for this, but you can just throw out questions whenever.

Greg:

What do they do at the check station?

Nicole:

Well there's mostly they just sit there, but from 9:00 to 3:00, they are responsible for making sure that people, the hunters are actually bringing in the deer from Gaillard. We've had a few instances in the past, way before I started, that it was questionable of whether or not the hunter actually brought a deer in from an actual property. So, especially because of the doe incentive, the volunteers are basically there to make sure that the deer that they're bringing are harvested from the property ethically. So, when you harvest a doe specifically, the hunter has to actually notch the ear in front of the check station volunteer so that you know the deer was taken from the actual property that they're hunting at.

John:

And some background, the state used to require that you take any harvest of deer to a check station and there were many places like bait and tackle store might be a check station in your town. By the time that we start our hunt in 2009, you only had to bring it to a check station, I think it was on nine days, to a state certified check station. If you harvested it on any other days outside of that one or two week period, you didn't have to go to a check station. Now they've even gotten rid of that. So, all you have to do is notify the state on the website, right?

Nicole:

Yes.

John:

To check in your deer. You could do it all through the web. Well, we still wanted to know how many deer we are still taking, our hunters are still taking from our property. And as Nicole said, the most important thing is that not only is there an incentive for someone to run the check station, to sit at the check station, but there's the doe incentive. So, we want to have eyes on what was harvested to know that Greg Malloy took a doe at North Branford and it wasn't just something checked off on a box and sent to Hartford.

Nicole:

Right. And even with our check station requirements internally for the RWA, the hunters are still required to check their deer at the state. Checking the deer with our check station does not exempt them from checking in with the state. They have to do both. And again, the reason the hunt got started was because you're trying to control deer browse. When JT and everyone did the study for why you would have the hunt, one of the reasons you have the doe incentive is not just to get hunters excited to participate, but taking the does will eventually reduce the population of the deer, more so than the bucks. So, we want to encourage them to take does.

Jamie:

Is there only one check station, or is there one in every single one?

Nicole:

No, just two. So, Gaillard because it's over 3000 acres and it has over seven different parking areas, has its own check station. Plus, it's farther away from the other two. Bethany, as a hunting property, is sort of centrally located between Prospect, which is the farthest north and a little bit east, and then Ansonia/Seymour, which is south and west. So, Ansonia/Seymour is like 15 minutes away from Bethany and Prospect is like seven minutes away from Bethany. So, the check station at Bethany is centrally located and located that's convenient for all three. Plus, those properties are so much smaller that people can get to them much more convenient. So, that's the deer.

So, yeah. I can talk about this slide a little more. I know that when we had gotten together in 2022, it was interesting to see how few does had been harvested, but since last year, the year before, the number of does has increased again. So, it'll be interesting to see if it was a weather pattern or some other sort of factor that caused the low taking of does in 2021 and 2022, because 2023 and 2024 sort of gone back to the mean of roughly around the deer that they're harvesting.

So, in years past they've harvested, the ratio between does and bucks has been somewhere between high 40s to 50s, and that seems to be the case again. So, that's an interesting data point. Nothing to make any new plans with, but it's just fun to see it over time and how [inaudible 00:16:36] evolving. Okay, next slide please.

And this is just a graph form as to show basically what I just said in passing [inaudible 00:16:47] data. The ratio of does to bucks being taken, plus the actual totals. This year is pretty much within the number of deer that had been harvested over time, aside from the two years where we had a much lower doe harvest, it seems to be kind of running the same. I just thought that was interesting. Okay, next slide please.

So, my final thoughts, mostly from the surveys that I've seen, the hunters seem to be enjoying their experiences as they do. We have fewer complaints. The issue that keep cropping up is that the hunters would like to have extended hours of the hunt, so that they could hunt until sunset. They would enjoy Sunday hunting. There are reasons why these things aren't happening, which we could talk about if people are interested and they wanted to sort of extend the hunting season.

An interesting data point that's shown up is that the weather has been sort of steadily warming in the beginning of the hunt, like late October to early November, we're starting to see much warmer days. That seems to be consistent. However, there's also a lot of temperature fluctuation between the warmest point in the day and the coldest point in the morning when people are more likely to shoot and harvest the deer. Again, it's not enough to change the program drastically. It's just interesting now that I'm tracking these trends to see how the temperature may or may not be affecting how the hunters are taking the deer.

A few hunters definitely mentioned that it was much warmer at the end of October, at the beginning of November than they expected. We had a few days where it was above 75, which is highly unusual for our area. And then the hunters also mentioned this year they were seeing a lot more coyotes than normal all across, which was interesting. Coyotes and bobcats specifically, it's come up at least seven times and I expect that to continue as the surveys keep coming in.

What's also interesting is that hunters have also said they're seeing a lot more deer, but the deer aren't coming close enough for ethical shots because they could only take a really solid shot from the tree stand with a bow at about 60 feet and the deer are kind of staying out of that range. So it's again, anecdotal is not data, but given how the hunt started where the deer were not used to being hunted, and the hunters were able to take a lot of deer throughout the hunt, the deer seem to be a lot more cautious and they've adapted to being harvested, so they're a little bit wiler for the hunters, which I thought was interesting. That's also come up in the surveys.

That's it so far. If anybody wants any more information once the rest of the surveys come in, I'd be happy to provide an update for people.

Jamie:

Is the time something set by the state or is it something that's set by the [inaudible 00:20:09]?

Nicole:

No. Connecticut has a hunting season like ... Connecticut DEEP sets that, so they have pre-appointed times and then we just work within that.

Greg:

Is your permit to a specific spot or can you go to any of the four?

Jamie:

No, once you're chosen via lottery, you are committed to that spot. You can't, say, decide that you're hunting in Gaillard, but then one day want to go into Prospect. Again, it's a safety issue. We want to know where everyone is, or where they're supposed to be, so we don't have them move from hunting area to hunting area.

Greg:

And it's not a spot, it's an area. So, in Gaillard, you have 3,300 acres to find your spot. But you cannot go to Prospect. You cannot go to Seymour, correct?

Speaker 8:

And once you get your spot, you can't move it.

Nicole:

You can.

Greg:

You can.

Nicole:

Oh, you can.

Greg:

Yes.

Nicole:

Yes. You just don't move it ... In terms of hunter etiquette, you can technically move. But because the hunting hours are from 6:00 AM to 1:00, we recommend that people don't walk around while people are actively hunting. If they do want to find a spot that they feel would be better, they're allowed to move their stands between the hours of 1:00, and I usually give them to sunset to do their hike. And they just have to let me know that they're there and then let me know that they're leaving so I can let the police know if they're gone, so that we keep track of everybody.

Joe:

Do they say, is there a better time to [inaudible 00:21:41]?

Nicole:

It really depends. It's so funny that you bring that up because I have hunters who swear that the deer are moving around at night, and they want a night hunt. And then there are people who swear that the early morning is better to hunt. I had hunters complain that it was too hot to hunt, although there's definitely some correlation between temperature and that's a longer conversation and there's a lot of

variables that go into that. But I had hunters who were like, oh, I don't really want to hunt. It's like 70 degrees and there's issues with meat spoiling. But then that hot day that I talked about, someone took a buck, it was fine.

So, while there are trends, there's not enough data to say something is definitively correlated where you can make a [inaudible 00:22:29] okay, we should move the hunting hours here. I've had hunters who haven't harvested anything in four years, ever. Have no bucks, no does, saying, "Oh, this was the best experience I ever had." I had someone who took an eight point deer and was just like, "Oh, this hunting area is trash." What? So, there's enough data that it's interesting that you can see trends, but there's not enough to say, "Hey, we should change this," because I think it really does depend on the skill of the hunter.

I've had hunters in the same location, Tommy's path is a very popular hunting spot in Gaillard where I've had people say, "Oh, we saw no deer when we were hunting there for seven days," or however long they're spending out there. Then you have someone who harvested two does in the same exact spot. So yeah, there's really no way to tell. There's no definitive pattern. The deer are always moving, depending on food, predators, opportunity, whatever is going on.

Greg:

So, do you think we're actually thinning out the population?

Nicole:

I mean, probably. We're taking on average about 40 deer a year and a lot of those are does. So, at some point, even if it's not removing a ton of deer because deer are migratory, so other deer might be coming into the property from other locations like [inaudible 00:23:54] and state, we really don't know what the deer population is. You are at least making a dent in how much browsing the deer can do. Once spring comes again, Casey and Josh will probably go out and see if they can check on stuff with the plots to see if there's any sort of change in how the vegetation looks based on the browsing.

Joe:

Now did any hunters see any bear?

Nicole:

Yes, we had a bunch. In Bethany, we think there's the same bear that we've been seeing on the trail camera for the last three years and every time I get notice of a bear, I send out ... I mean, these guys are all experienced outdoor people. I'll still send out a little email saying, "Hey, the bear's been spotted." But most everybody knows what to do when they're out there.

Joe:

How about Gaillard? Any [inaudible 00:24:49]?

Nicole:

We were looking at something in Gaillard right before the hunt last fall, and I pretty much came upon an area where I thought a bear might be hanging out in the summer. The scratching on the bark, the big area of grass being disturbed and the very fresh poop and I was like, "Oh, I bet a bear is sleeping here." So yeah, I mean, even if I don't see bear, I've definitely seen bear signs, so they're around.

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Mark:

Thank you. Any more questions?

Greg:

Yes. I'm curious as to how a location is selected. It's easy to note Lake Gaillard, but in North Madison, we have Genesee, which is very large itself, and it has plenty of old roads in there and places for people to hunt. I'm a little surprised that that has been passed over, over the years.

Nicole:

Well, I mean, I can't speak to that specifically. There were definitely factors when the hunt got started. I think it's a little trickier when all the areas that are hunted now, they don't have active recreation on them. I think that's a huge factor. I mean you could do great hunting at Maltby, but that place is packed with people. It's right in the middle of a high density neighborhood too. We have so many different people in there. And keeping the hunt sort of restricted to areas where there's not a lot of active recreation and maybe not a lot of housing around the hunting, probably reduces the amount of conflict that you would have with people who could potentially object to the hunt. So, keeping a lot of uses separate during a hunting time probably reduces the amount of conflicts we have to deal with.

John:

And was your question pointing towards the locations that we've chosen or the locations that hunters choose within our property?

Greg:

No, your choice of what's ...

John:

Right. But part of the other complexity was that not all towns in our district are the same. Some towns are in a more liberal hunting zone than others. Madison being one of them, all the shoreline zones have much more liberal rules for deer hunting than those inland. So, Seymour/Ansonia and Prospect, Bethany in North Brantford all fall in the same zone where all the rules are the same. You come to West Haven for Maltby, it's just like Madison. It's got more liberal rules. You could shoot over bait. We don't want to be dealing with that. We don't want to be ... In the beginning especially, we didn't want to deal with having to go and talk about you can do this here but you can't do it there. You can do this here, you can't do it there. So, just to keep things simple, to keep things consistent, those were some of the reasons why we chose the locations we did.

Mark:

Anybody else have questions? I have a question. Your title is what again?

Nicole:

Natural Resources Analyst.

Mark:

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Okay. What else do you do besides the deer hunt?

Nicole:

Oh, what don't I do? Well, okay, so I'll explain it like everyone asks. I have sort of three big kind of categories. So, one, we know about the deer hunt. I also co-manage the flood warning system with John and I'm [inaudible 00:28:16].

Mark:

What did you say? The what system?

Nicole:

I co-manage the flood warning system.

Mark:

[inaudible 00:28:22].

Nicole:

So, we have a system of gauging stations that measure water level and precipitation around the lakes. I co-manage that with John. I kind of do most of the day-to-day admin stuff, where I meet with our contractors if we need anything repaired, if we need servicing scheduled. I do all of that. And there's also some water level monitoring I do as sort of my day-to-day task.

And then after that, since I'm a licensed arborist in Connecticut, I'm also the hazard tree inspector. So, when there's a potential conflict between a tree that's on our property and a neighbor is concerned about whether or not that tree is going to do significant damage, I go out and inspect those trees to decide whether or not the tree needs to be removed, pruned, mitigated in any way or left in place.

Mark:

Okay. Just wanted to know. I don't remember that title. I must've missed that somewhere along the lines, but it's a nice title.

Nicole:

Oh, thanks. I think it's been around since before ... It's not a new title. A bunch of people have had it.

Mark:

Maybe I just never heard it before. I'm sorry.

Nicole:

No, that's fine.

Mark:

Anyway, it was a very great presentation. Pardon?

John:

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If I could add one more thing. I think Nicole's underselling herself. She does a lot of volunteering across the organization as well from leading recreation walks to coordinating our Arbor Day donations to towns. She's really helping to coordinate the pollinator pathway garden that's just outside here at Sargent Drive. So, she does a lot more than even is ... What she described, the top three, that's on her job description, but then she does a lot more beyond that.

Mark:

That's good. That's great.

John:

She manages the invasive species of the [inaudible 00:30:05]. Josh does a lot of that. Josh does that.

Jamie:

She plants stuff [inaudible 00:30:11].

Nicole:

We like planting stuff around here.

John:

She's the [inaudible 00:30:16].

Mark:

That was a great report. I'm very happy about that. Thank you very much.

Nicole:

Oh, you're welcome. Again, this is just preliminary, so if anyone has any other questions, I'll have more data for you on February 2nd.

John:

Thanks.

Nicole:

Okay, guys. Have a good night. [inaudible 00:30:31].

Mark:

Thank you very much. Okay, John. Updates on land and RWA properties including invasive species update.

John:

Yes. Summary for the month of December, excuse me. At the end of December, we were at 75% for our surface water supplies compared to last year was 94%. While that you can see is the consequence of the dry fall that we had and the long-term average is 72%. So, we're just above it at this point. When we get to the end of January, we should be at 77%. December was a wetter than average month, 5.15 inches of

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rain compared to the historical average of 4.15. And for the fiscal year, we're just below where we are for the long-term average 25.69 compared to 27.19.

The land we need for the water we use program, Madison, we talked to a property owning 24 acres. In Guilford, talked to a property owning think acres. In Seymour, 56 Squantuck Road, we booked the town hall for the public hearing and Jen published the notice in the newspapers. North Branford, Beech Street and Poms Lane property, we started marking the new boundary lines. The neighbor asked about land available inside the curve on the parts that we did not sell to the land trust.

For the rental houses, 233 Skiff Street, the town indicated the application was not received in time for the December meeting, so we're going on the January agenda. That's a week from today. 1029 Johnson Road in Woodbridge, a prospective buyer of the property emailed to ask more questions, specifically about the septic system for the house.

No changes to the forestry updates from Casey and Josh, but bullets below. We repaired the gates at the Madison slash wall. We conducted field and administrative activities for the firewood, maple tapping and Christmas tree field. We submitted an update to the US Forest Service for the LSR grant. We inspected the Madison timber harvest at least weekly, and cleared Dudley Pond overflow for the beaver activity [inaudible 00:33:11] the culvert there.

For recreation in month of December, we had a bird walk at Prospect. That was mine. It had 10 participants, including Victor Venny, came all the way from Old Saybrook. Wow. He got the prize for greatest distance to the walk. And then he was surprised that it was a bird walk, so all sorts of surprises up there. It was a very good [inaudible 00:33:35].

Joe:

I've actually walked the entire Quinnipiac Trail. When you said that added to the end of it, I realized I have to go get it.

John:

Correct. That's right.

Joe:

I, again, have walked [inaudible 00:33:50] Quinnipiac Trail.

John:

No problem. Thank you for coming out that day.

Greg:

Is there any rare birds?

John:

No. It's just the regular stuff you'd see in a forest, in the woods or town. I think the coolest thing we had was a yellow-bellied sapsucker. That was about it.

Naomi:

Have you ever been stumped by any birds you've seen?

John:

Oh, all the time. Yeah, sure. When you see something you don't see, you have a good look at it. It sounds weird, but you don't know what it is. Yeah, I'm not too proud to say that I don't know. A lot of things, I just put a question mark on and move on.

Responded to a question about access road to the Big Gulf area from a neighbor. We cleared trails at Maltby Lakes, replaced the malfunctioning lock at Chamberlain. And one staff member of our recreation staff said he would not return for this season. Two others have medical issues, which also limits their availability, so we're going to be looking for a couple people for the 2025 season.

For the permit holders at the end of December, we have 4787, compared to 4838 at the end of November. This typically goes down during the wintertime and it'll pop up again once we get to fishing seasons. For special activities, Linda only issued the one permit being December. Nothing out of the ordinary there. Inspection of the bridge at Lake Whitney.

Encroachments and agreements. At Shingle Hill, we talked to ... Well, the Yale contractor started work for the antennas on the tank that the university is doing. Also, for the tank sites at Burwell [inaudible 00:35:23]. We met with town staff about creating a new agreement that will put under one umbrella, police, fire, EMS and DPW, and we would also go to re-institute the fees that helps with communications with the municipalities, because we don't always renew things when everything is just for free.

Clinton Road in Seymour, we corresponded with town staff and supplied them with copies of the agreement for the Seymour Wellfield and the Clinton Road Building. Those two things need to be renewed in January, so I have yet to hear from that, but it's the same issue there. At Barberrry Road, the tenant, the Paiges, we responded to them about renting the fields, about drainage at the site. He's also a tenant at the Great Hill Road field in North Branford and we're looking at some more invasive plant management there, and coordinating with our tenant. At Whalley Avenue, responded to an inquiry from the buyer about additional use of the property. We do rent out part of our property there for a parking lot for the adjacent ice cream stand.

Invasive plants, in the last month, Josh treated and documented invasive plants in North Branford. Contractor cleared about two acres of barberry at Lake Gaillard in coordination with a new maple sugar permit team there. So, the number of acres that were mapped was 10. The number of acres treated in the last month was 4.2.

The deer hunt, Nicole gave a great summary of what's occurred in 2024, so I don't need to go over that. The deadline for returning the surveys to her is the end of this month. At Beech Avenue in East Haven, the application was uploaded to DEEP by our vendor, our consultant and notices were sent out to the town into abutters of the project, of the application being submitted. At Sachem Street in New Haven, we contacted the Yale staff again in order to get the easement for a portion of the street that was discontinued. It is now owned completely by the university. We've set up a time to meet with them about that later this month. Excuse me.

At 60 Middletown Avenue in North Haven, we were contacted by the property owner about an easement that we have over their property. Water main needs to go through it, but it's now all private service, so we don't need the easement anymore and they would like to have the property unencumbered as they try to do other things. So, we're in agreement with that. They just have to do all the legal legwork for it and we will give up the easement there.

I corresponded to Farmland Trust staff about acres that we protect around Lake Chamberlain. The West Haven Maltby Lakes, the outflow there, we corresponded with a downstream neighbor at Winfred Street about high water levels. It was just a day that was raining a lot, and nothing that we were doing.

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At 205 Skiff Street, this is the old offices for the New Haven Water Company on Skiff Street that was then sold to ACES. ACES is looking to sell the property and we own part of it. We actually had to keep a portion that was on the class one land and sold them the class two land. What we did is we had to lease to ACES for the class one land and they're asking questions about that, how it would be handled if it's sold and the new owner would want to do something differently there. And we just scheduled a meeting for that later or earlier today.

Greg:

Where are they going, John?

John:

I don't know where they're going, but they're looking to sell both of the properties that actually are on either side of us on Skiff Street. So, I don't know the answer to that question.

Lake Whitney Dam Project, Nicole has been out conducting a tree inventory inside the park where we will assess what we need to be taken down or placed for the dam project. Flood alert and raw water will have new bathymetric surveys done for the West River Lakes. We reviewed and sent questions to the consultant and they replied, answered our questions. We expect to update the surface water sheet for the new year. We just had a meeting about that today.

New UI water main easement in North Branford. We corresponded with town staff to put an easement on their property, which is conditioned to owned by the utility and supplied a boilerplate easement to the town to review. In Oak Drive in Cheshire, we researched a question from our contract staff about where Oak Drive was, because we had an easement over it, but there is no current Oak Drive in Cheshire, so it turned out that Poplar Drive was renamed and we could convey that back to the person who was asking the question.

In the month of December, Josh did a few flights including two at Prospect to document pre- and post-mowing inside of the reservoir bottom there. And a drone flight at Ford Street Tank to look at the top of the tank for engineering. And for that, inspected the hatches on top of the tank to see if they needed closer inspection. And then he met with stakeholders from MDC to discuss a drone program and demonstrate what we do for forestry and our water distribution inspection work. With that, there's a couple of articles for you to read. If there's any questions from anyone, I'll be happy to them.

Mark:

John, this is Brian. What does the Farmland Trust want to do with Lake Chamberlain? Were they just trying to get information or they wanted to preserve more area further around it? What was the correspondence about?

John:

Yeah, they just wanted information about what else, what we protected in that area. I believe it was Peter Cooper's property that they're working with and they needed to know how many other adjacent acres are protected for open space in that vicinity. So, that's what the nature of that inquiry was.

Mark:

Okay, thanks.

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John:

Any other questions?

Jamie:

With the ice cream place, since the [inaudible 00:41:15].

John:

Right. If you're going north on Whalley, it's the one on the right, Bill's Carousel. And about half of their parking lot is actually our property and they pay us a fee to use it for parking. We had an inquiry from the tenant about using more of our property, but the rest of our property all has a fence around it. We have a pressure reducing valve there, PRV, and we have no real interest in allowing them to do anything more there. We've really used up all the space. We've given them use of all the space that we can. There's no more to do.

Jamie:

Ice cream [inaudible 00:41:57]?

John:

I've never been there, actually. It's a soft serve kind of ice cream. I don't know if anyone's been there.

Jamie:

It's always very busy there.

John:

I believe-

Jamie:

Very popular place.

John:

I believe Jeanine Wilson, from our contracts department, she goes there a lot and she speaks well of it.

Jamie:

It's very busy there.

Greg:

The field crew should inspect the easement. [inaudible 00:42:15].

Sunny:

[inaudible 00:42:20] a land use meeting. [inaudible 00:42:22].

John:

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I can see that in the summer. We can work on that.

Jamie:

We should check out how that parking, if we should change the angle of the parking.

John:

Volunteer for that.

Mark:

Hey, John. [inaudible 00:42:32].

John:

We'll let Mario know everyone else wanted [inaudible 00:42:36]. That's a good one.

Jamie:

Can we get free ice cream if [inaudible 00:42:40]?

Mark:

Don't you go by it every day?

John:

I go buy it every day. Yes.

Mark:

Yes. And I know it's [inaudible 00:42:45] what you're talking about. You know? I see what you mean that you can't go any further. Okay. Next thing. Other land items, you were taking care of that, right? [inaudible 00:42:59]. What about, you have their subject for February meeting on the bottom.

John:

I'm open to suggestions if you have one.

Jamie:

I'd like to [inaudible 00:43:14] invasive bugs. You know about the lantern bug, the invasive bugs?

John:

Okay.

Mark:

Invasive bugs-

Jamie:

I don't know if it's hopping. I mean it's sort of the wrong season probably.

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Mark:

Who would that be? Would that be our forester or Josh?

John:

Actually, I was going to first touch base with the Ag experiment station, because they have a lot of people working on those insect pests. [inaudible 00:43:40] see if somebody could [inaudible 00:43:43].

Mark:

You could [inaudible 00:43:45] beetle or Claire Rutledge about the insect borer. Those are two suggestions.

Brian:

That's a good idea. That's a good idea.

John:

Claire was going to be the first person that I asked.

Mark:

Okay. So, the members who attend our meeting on January 23rd is Peter Betkoski. Are you on Peter?

Peter:

I'm on, yes.

Mark:

Okay. So, you know you're going there January 23rd.

Peter:

Yes, I am.

Mark:

I'm sure Jennifer will contact you and give you all the information you need.

Peter:

Big day. January 23rd is a big day for us. We have to [inaudible 00:45:01].

Mark:

What'd you say?

Peter:

We have a public hearing in Seymour.

Mark:

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Yeah.

Peter:

Yes, the hearing.

Mark:

That hearing ... Our meeting is going to be held there too, Jennifer, right? Our meeting and the hearing all in the same place.

Jennifer:

Yes.

Mark:

Okay. And where is that again? You'll let us know again. Okay. The next regular meeting is February 12th, 2025. Does anybody have anything else they'd like to bring up tonight?

Okay, well anyways, thanks a lot, guys, and I'll see you on the 23rd if I don't see you before that.

John:

Thanks everyone.