

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, CT 06511
****Join the meeting now**
Meeting ID: 244 991 765 052 1
Passcode: FF7jf6ni
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Dial in by phone
+1 469-965-2517,,811034756# United States, Northlake
Phone conference ID: 811 034 756#

AGENDA

Regular Meeting of Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – October 22, 2025 meeting
3. West River Stream Monitoring Program: Julia Guimaraes, RWA Aquatic Resource Intern
4. Set Calendar Year 2026 Regular Meeting Dates
5. Updates on land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
6. Other land items
7. Reminder: volunteers for upcoming Authority meetings:
 - a. November 20, 2025 – J. Oslander
 - b. December 18, 2025 – G. Malloy
 - c. January 22, 2026 – P. Betkoski
8. Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
9. Adjourn

****Members of the public may attend the meeting in person or via remote access using instructions at the top of the agenda. To view meeting documents, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/3antbz44>. For questions, contact the board office at 203-401-2515 or by email to jslubowski@rwater.com**

SAFETY MOMENT

NOVEMBER – DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

On November 2nd most of us will turn our clocks back one hour for the end of Daylight Saving Time. During this time there is statistically an increase in safety.

With the end of daylight savings time comes an increase in darkness around the time of rush hour, when traffic is at its peak.

A couple things to keep in mind when switching back to standard time are:

- Fatigue
- Accidents
- Decreased visibility
- Pedestrians walking at dusk

Use Daylight Saving Time to:

- Check and replace batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- Prepare a winter emergency kit for your automobile
- Check your fire extinguishers



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

Tap Into
Safety



Regional Water Authority

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
October 22, 2025

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, October 22, 2025, at Lake Saltonstall, 100 Hosley Avenue, Branford, Connecticut. Chair Levine presided.

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

RPB: R. Harvey, T. Clifford, J. DiCarlo, C. Havrda, and C. Mancini

FMA: D. Borowy and S. Sack

Management: V. Benni, J. Hill, P. Singh, Capt. P. Ruggiero, Sgt. D. Putnam, and J. Triana

Staff: J. Slubowski

Chair Levine called the meeting to order at 4:47 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Malloy and seconded by Ms. Young, the Committee voted to approve the minutes of its September 10, 2025 regular meeting.

Captain Ruggiero, the RWA’s Police Captain, provided an update on improvements done at RWA owned facilities and recreation areas, which included:

- Installed new burglar and fire alarms
- Repaired chain link fence and gate in North Branford
- Replaced box fence in Woodbridge
- Updated access control at Cheshire facility
- Repaired gate at Lake Saltonstall

Future improvements included upgrading the current radio system to the State Police frequency.

He also reported on the 2020 Police Accountability Bill, which required RWA officers to complete three tiers of training/certifications. To date, RWA officers completed Tier 1 in 2023, Tier 2 in February 2025, and are currently on track to complete Tier 3 by the end of 2025.

Capt. Ruggiero also reported on incidents in 2023 and 2024:

	2023 3 OFFICERS NO SECOND SHIFT	2024 6 OFFICERS WITH SECOND SHIFT
ARRESTS/INFRACTIONS	40	173
WARNINGS	90	463
PATROL CHECKS	1169	4344
RECREATION CHECKS	279	1418

TOTAL CASE #S	1820	6744
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Committee members thanked Capt. Ruggiero for the update.

Update on *The Land We Need for the Water We Use Program* – Mr. Triana, the RWA’s Real Estate Manager, reported:

<u>Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)</u>				
	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
September	68%	80%	68%	None

<u>Rainfall (inches)</u>			
	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
September 30	1.66	1.30	3.81
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 –	6.40	16.79	15.20

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

- Cheshire, former Bis property (CH 5) – Corresponded with DEEP regarding grant.
- Hamden, Davis St., and Hartford Tpk. (HA 5A) – Resent DOT the forms for the condemnation.
- Hamden, Treadwell St. (HA 7) – Sent DOT forms for these condemnations.
- Prospect - Corresponded with property owner of 16+/- acres.
- Cheshire, Cheshire Rd. properties – Provided letter of support to Cheshire Land Trust for an OSWA application they are submitting for properties on the North Cheshire Wellfield Aquifer.
- Seymour, 56 Squantuck Rd. (SE 5) – Received the fully executed P&SA from the town.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Public hearing was held on September 25, 2025.

Forestry Update

- Received approval for grant funding through the New England Forest Foundation (NEFF). Stakeholders from NEFF visited three project sites from the proposed 500 acres that the RWA would like to advance timber markets on through timber stand improvement.
- Madison, Weber property (MA 6B) – QFR submitted with 490 application to the town assessor.
- Signed up for NRCS’s Technical Service Provider training and met with HR staff regarding eligibility for incentive payments.

Recreation

- Lake Gaillard Walk-a-thon had about 160 attendees.
- Oak tree walk at Lake Saltonstall had 6 attendees.
- Contractor cleared trails at Lake Bethany and Lake Chamberlain.
- Checked bog bridges at Lake Hammonasset.
- Made 25 bags of recycled bait for future fishing events.
- Peter Hlousek retired from the recreation staff.
- The Water Wagon attended three events in September.

	September		August	
	2025	2024	2025	2024
Permit Holders	4,892	4,846	4,916	4,880

Special Activity Permits

- University of New Haven (Dr. Albert C. Nyack) - studying qualitative and quantitative data at different locations along the West River watershed. Lesson entails sampling flow rate, water's width, DO, temperature at the Lake Bethany Dam culvert on the downstream side (9/15/2025 – 9/19/25 8 am – 3 pm, 80 students and instructors).
- CTDEEP (Alexander J. Amendola, Forester) - utilize the shoreline of both reservoirs as sample areas for mesic soil-affiliated species of shrubs and trees species (primarily Salix spp., Cephalanthus spp., Ulmus spp., and others and to observe the effects of changing water tables on these species of woody plants. This data will be compared to growth habits of the same species in more static ecosystems with less dynamic hydrological fluctuations. No physical samples will be removed; only measurements taken. Lake Gaillard-North Branford, Lake Hammonasset-Killingworth (9/22/2025-9/22/2026).
- New England Intercollegiate Geologic Conference (Ryan Deasy) - college students and faculty will visit several exposures of rock ledge as part of a field trip with the New England Intercollegiate Geologic Conference. The visit is observational only no sample collection or alteration of the rock exposures; Maltby Lakes (10/3/2025).
- Univ. of New Haven Army ROTC Program Coordinator (Robert Clark) - Squad Tactical and Platoon Tactical Training - 1955 Litchfield Turnpike/West River Training Area, Woodbridge (9/23/25 – 9/23/26).
- New Haven Bird Club (Glen Cummings, Gilles Carter)-to maintain and monitor bluebird nesting boxes, Christmas Tree Fields (North Street and Great Hill Road) North Branford, (3/21/26-8/31/26).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Madison, 702 Summer Hill Rd. (MA 9) – Abutter will move shed and shipping container after installing underground utilities.
 - North Branford, 1790 Middletown Ave. (NB 16) – Executed license agreement for lawn and footbridges.
 - Branford, Cherry Hill Rd. (BR 10A) – Executed license agreement for lawn.
 - Bethany, Downs Rd. turnaround (BE 17) – Town sent letter asking to invoke final 5-year term of this license agreement.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in Prospect, Bethany, and Branford. Met with CAES staff to discuss the pilot study to see if steam had a negative effect on swallowwort seed viability and germination.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	12.5 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	2.25 acres

- Woodbridge, Racebrook Rd. access (WO 10) – Abutter to respond to RWA's query on the purpose of the easement.
- Deer hunt – Flagged boundaries and researchers were notified about the dates of the hunt. Pre-hunt meetings were held.

- Madison, Race Hill Rd. erosion (MA 2A) – Notified Madison town engineer about erosion issue occurring on our property off of Race Hill Rd. coming from storm water discharge.
- Bethany, Green Haven/Rocky Corner – RWA's teams working with DPH on well radius and other ownership/operation agreements.
- Hamden, Connolly Parkway (HA 9A) – Fence damage caused by vehicle being investigated by RWA PD.
- Bethany, Carrington Rd. guide rail (BE 6A) – Town notified RWA of installing a guiderail which would affect some of our frontage.
- Hamden, WPCA work (HA 5) – Notified our tenant beekeeper of activity by WPCA in their easement adjacent to Lake Whitney later this winter.
- Drone flights – RWA's teams commenced a pilot study to explore use of drone sensors to determine earthen dam stability.

There were no other land items to report.

Chair Levine reviewed upcoming Authority meeting assignments:

- October 23, 2025 – J. Mowat Young
- November 20, 2025 – J. Oslander
- December 18, 2025 – G. Malloy
- January 22, 2026 – P. Betkoski

The next regular meeting is Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

At 5:14 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy and seconded by Mr. Eitzer, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

Mark Levine, Chair

2024 - 2025 WEST RIVER SYSTEM Raw Water Sampling Sites

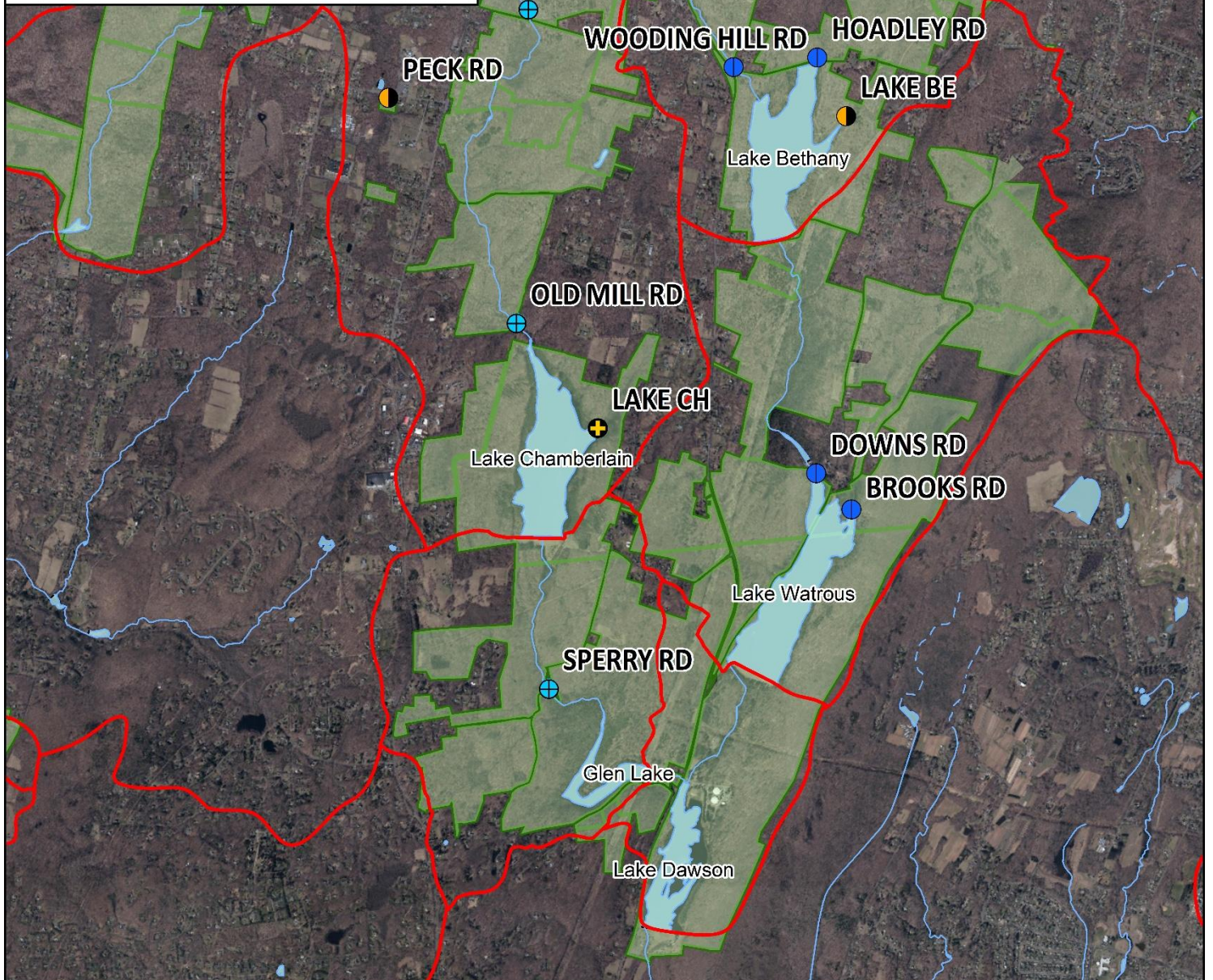
-  Sargent River - Insitu
-  Sargent River - Labs
-  West River - Insitu
-  West River - Labs

 Watersheds - 2mi

 Current Parcels



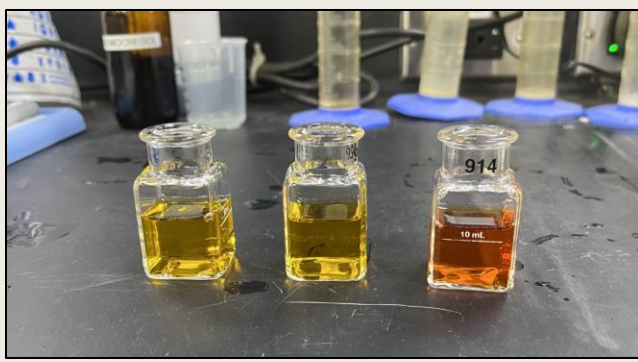
0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles



Site ID #	Site Name	Analysis Type
32421	Sanford Swamp 1	in-situ
32422	Sanford Swamp 2	in-situ
32414	Sanford BK @ Gaylord MTN Rd	in-situ + lab
32413	Sanford BK @ Wooding Hill Rd	in-situ + lab
32412	Lake Bethany @ Hoadley Rd	in-situ + lab
32410	Lake Bethany @ unnamed trib.	in-situ
32310	West River @ Downs Rd	in-situ + lab
32309	Watrous Stream @ Brooks Rd	in-situ + lab
32713	Sargent River @ Hilldale Rd	in-situ + lab
32721	Trib. to Sargent River @ Peck Rd	in-situ
32712	Sargent River @ Old Mill Rd	in-situ + lab
32703	Chamberlain E. Shore	in-situ
32612	Sargent River @ Sperry Rd	in-situ + lab

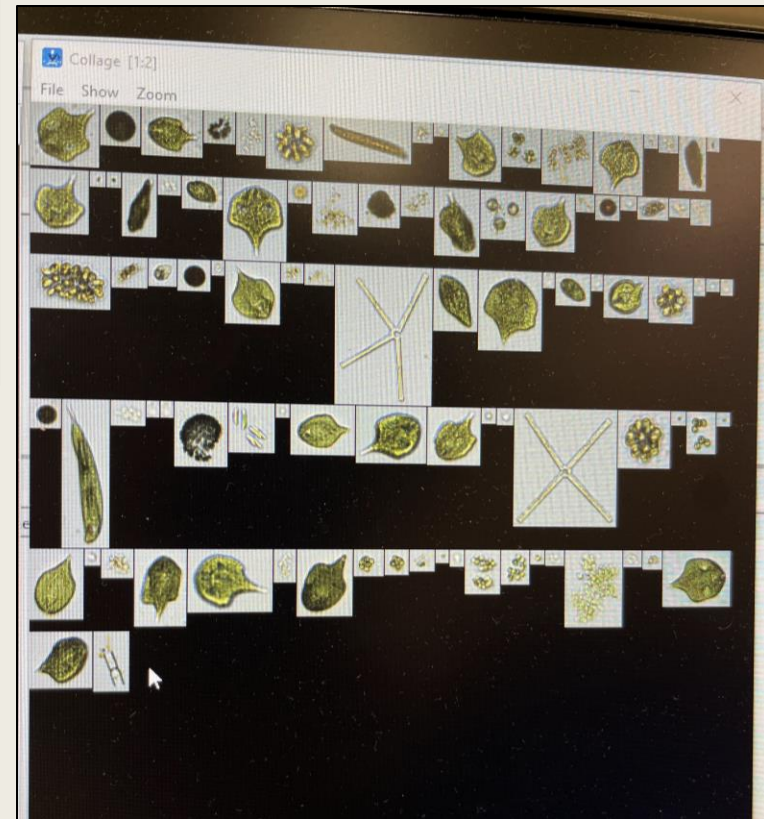
West River Watershed Stream Monitoring Program 2024 - 2025

 **Regional Water Authority**
Tapping the Possibilities™



My role at the RWA:

Aquatic Resource Intern



West River Watershed

Lake Bethany

Bethany

Lake Chamberlain

Lake Watrous

Hamden

West River
Water
Treatment Plant

Lake Glen

Woodbridge

Lake Dawson





Lake Bethany

Lake Watrous

Lake Chamberlain

Lake Glen

West River
Water
Treatment Plant

Lake Dawson

**West River
Watershed**

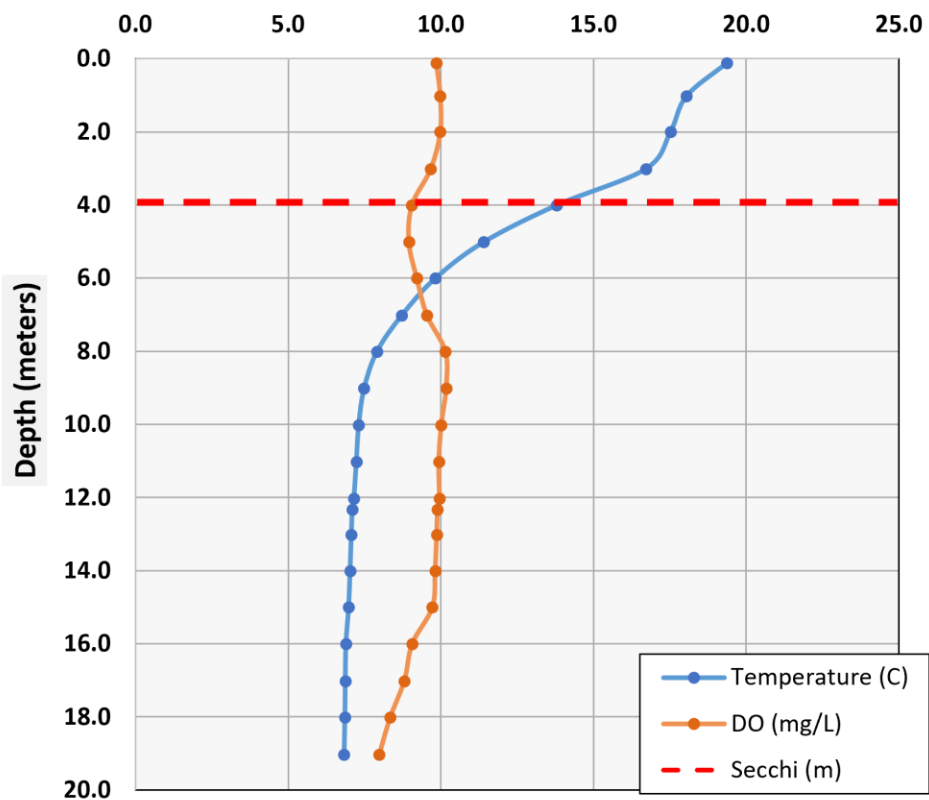


Reservoir Comparison



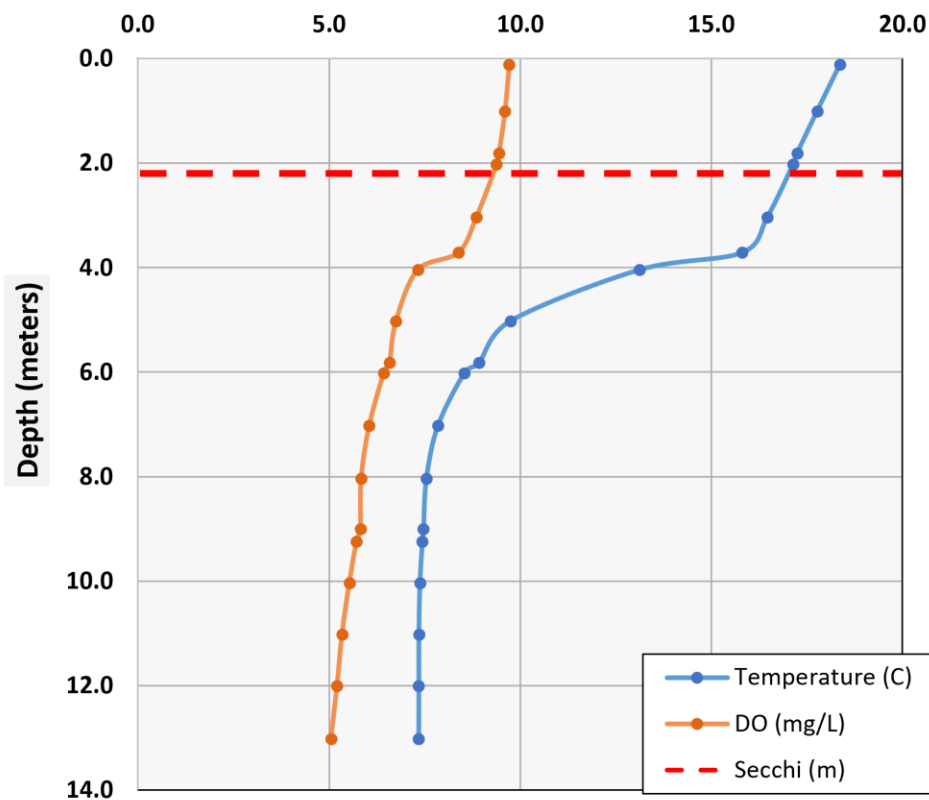
Lake Chamberlain - 05/21/2024

Temperature (°C) and Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)



Lake Bethany - 05/21/2024

Temperature (°C) and Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)





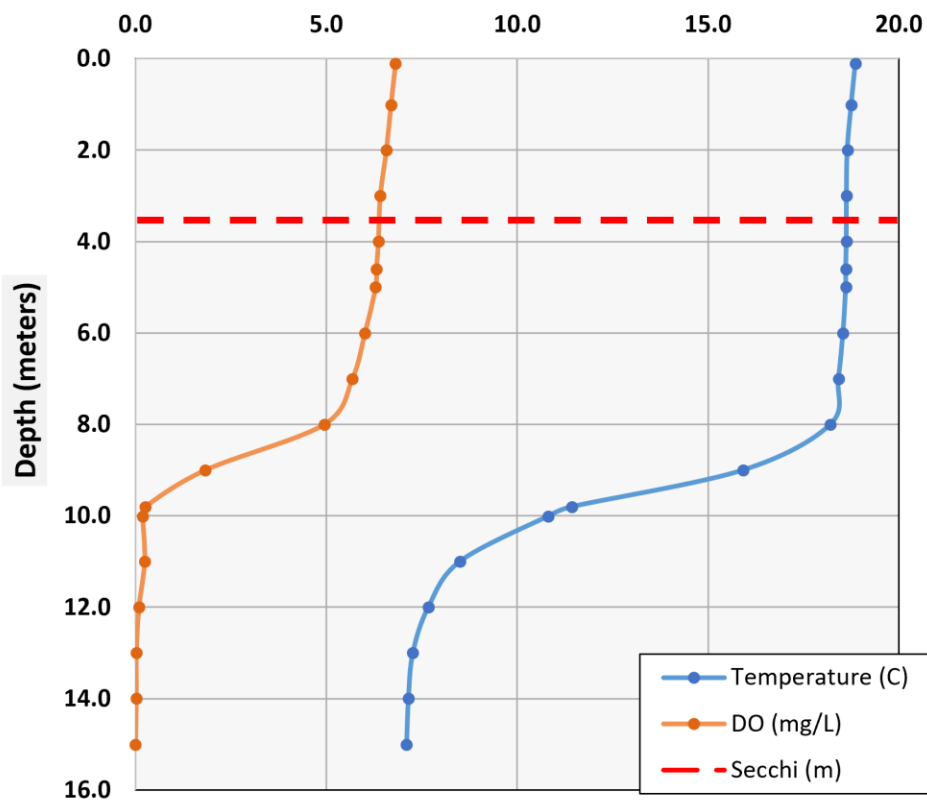
Reservoir Comparison



-2.5 m

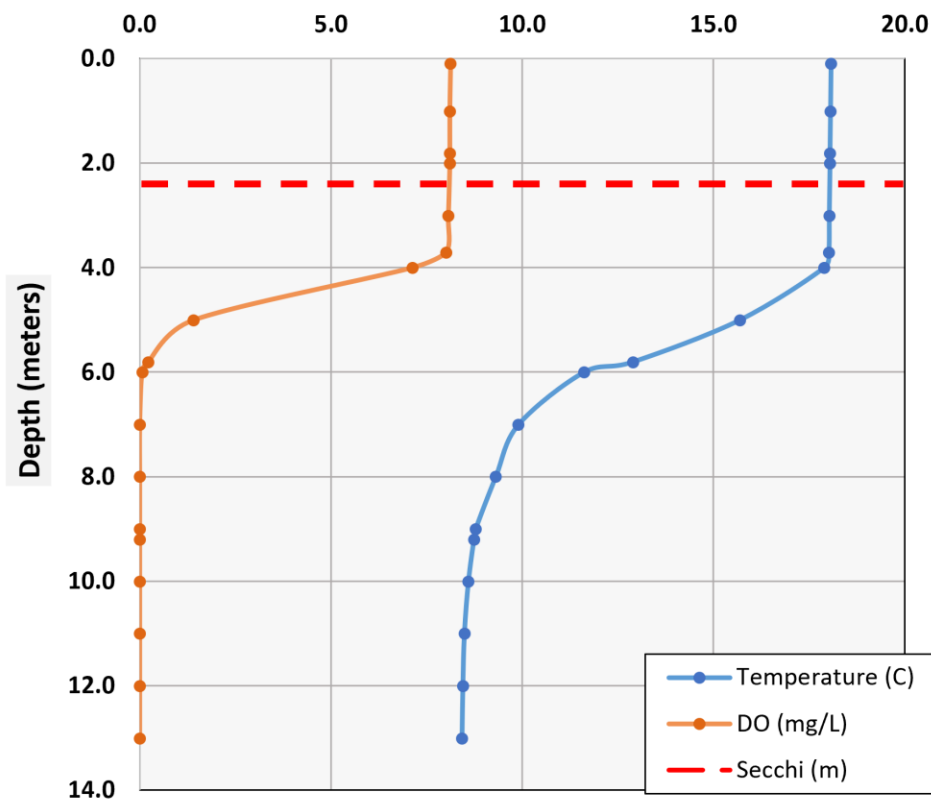
Lake Chamberlain - 10/09/2024

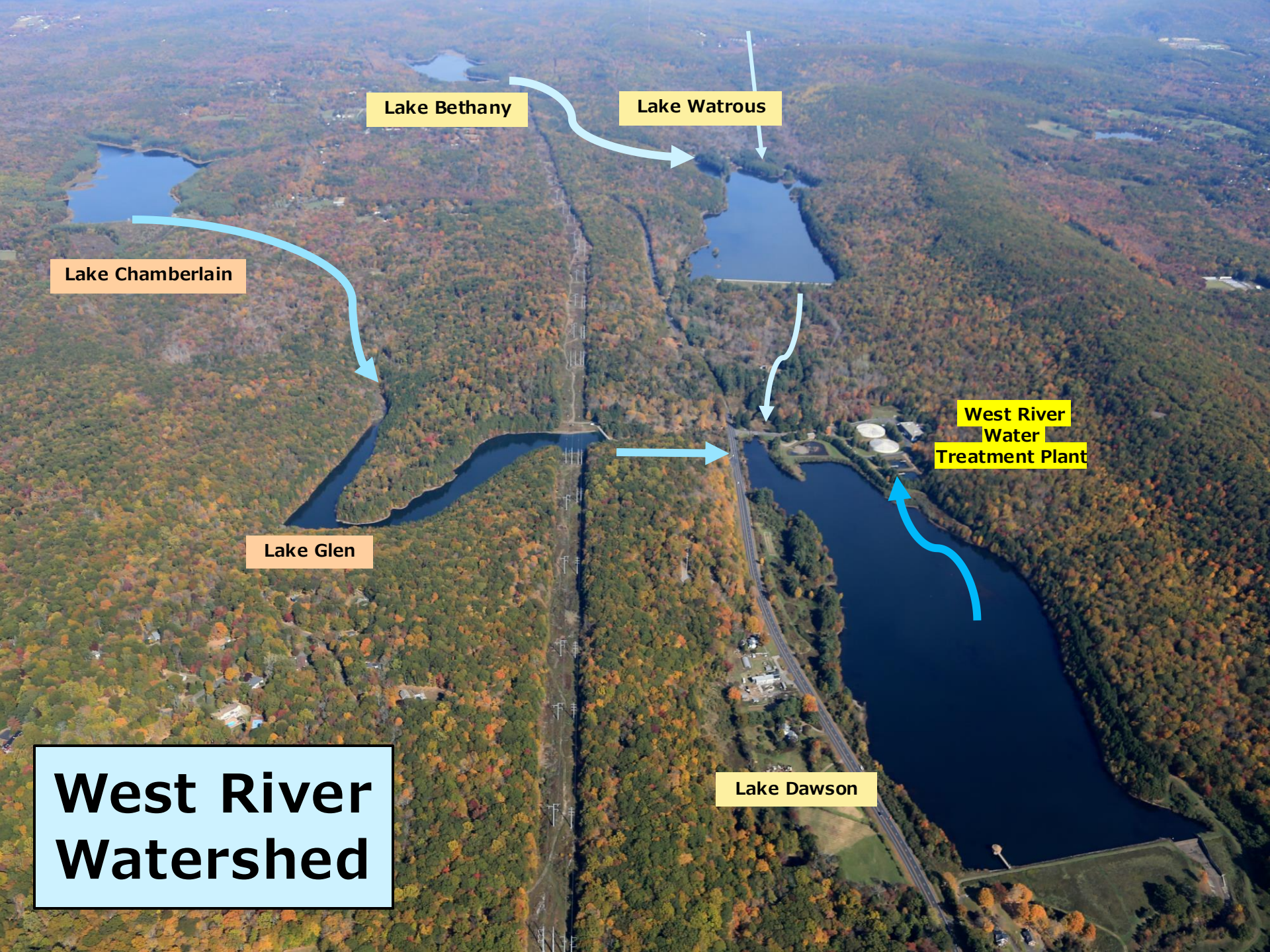
Temperature (°C) and Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)



Lake Bethany - 10/09/2024

Temperature (°C) and Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)





Lake Bethany

Lake Watrous

Lake Chamberlain

Lake Glen

West River
Water
Treatment Plant

Lake Dawson

**West River
Watershed**

West River Watershed

Lake Bethany

Bethany

Lake Chamberlain

Lake Watrous

Hamden

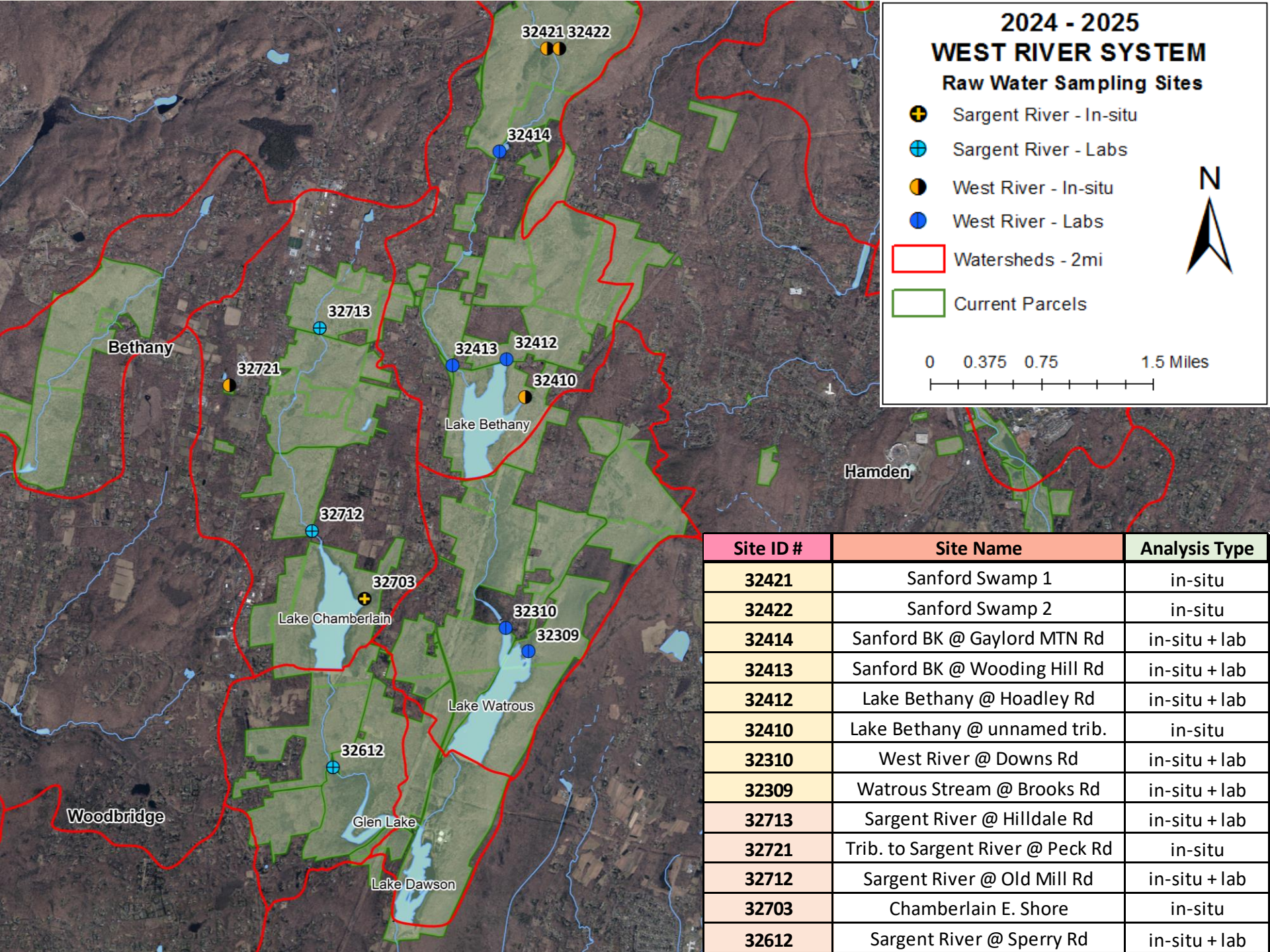
West River
Water
Treatment Plant

Lake Glen

Woodbridge

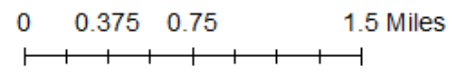
Lake Dawson



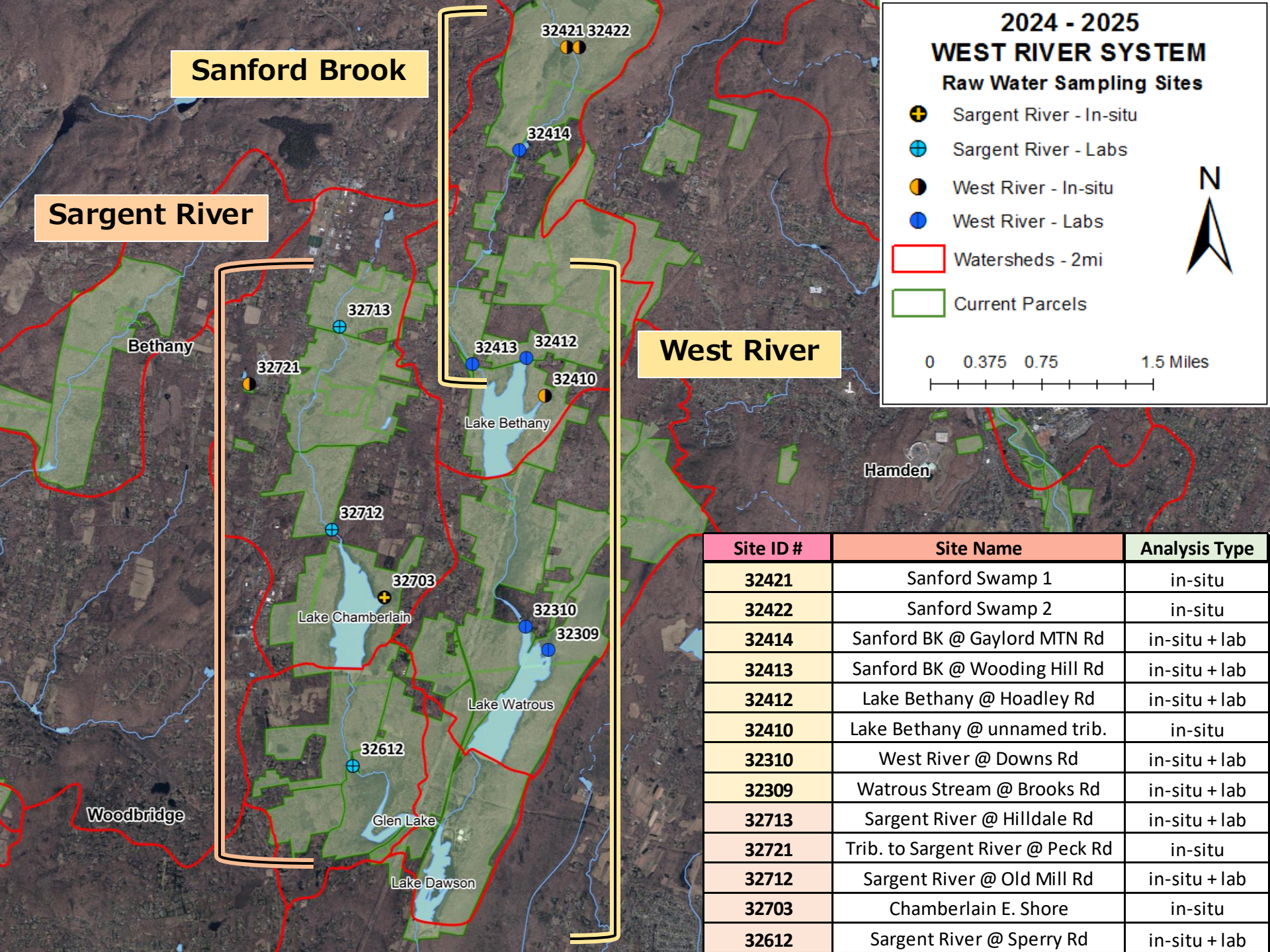


2024 - 2025
WEST RIVER SYSTEM
Raw Water Sampling Sites

-  Sargent River - In-situ
-  Sargent River - Labs
-  West River - In-situ
-  West River - Labs
-  Watersheds - 2mi
-  Current Parcels

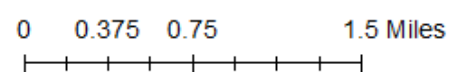


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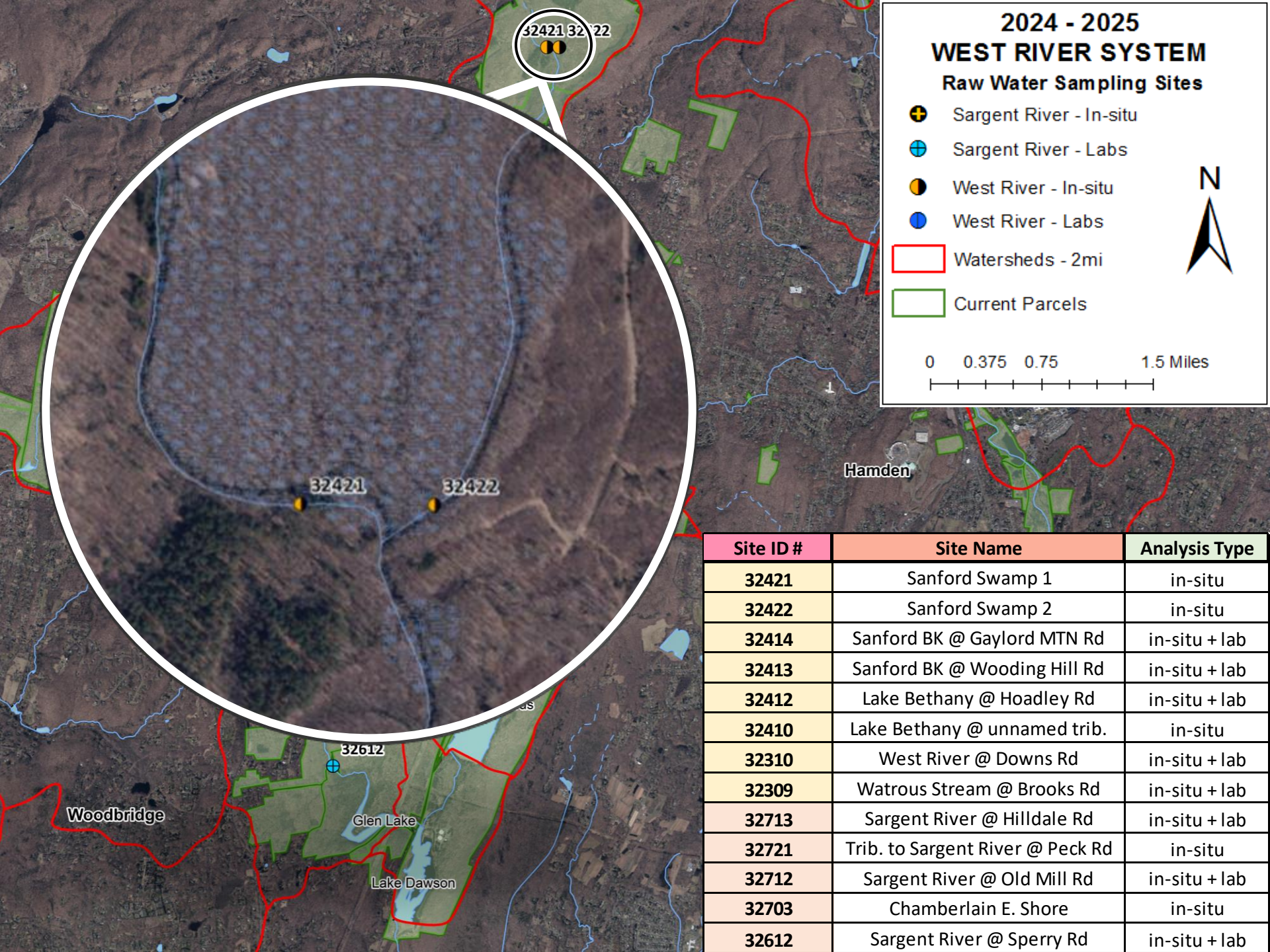


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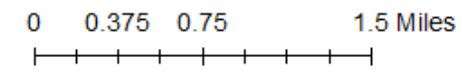


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2024 - 2025
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This is a black and white aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A prominent road or railway line runs vertically along the left side of the frame. The terrain is a patchwork of fields, some of which appear to be in different stages of cultivation or fallow. There are several small, dark, irregular patches scattered across the landscape, which could be ponds, depressions, or areas of dense vegetation. The overall texture is somewhat grainy, typical of older aerial photography.

1934

This is a black and white aerial photograph of the same landscape as the 1934 image, taken 36 years later. The road or railway line on the left remains visible. The most significant change is the appearance of several large, bright white patches in the central and lower-left portions of the image. These patches have irregular, somewhat organic shapes and appear to be areas of snow, ice, or perhaps large-scale land clearing or construction. The surrounding fields and vegetation patterns have also shifted, reflecting changes in land use over the intervening decades.

1970

Stream Sampling Procedure

Locate site and
prep
equipment/bottles

Fully submerge sonde
in stream

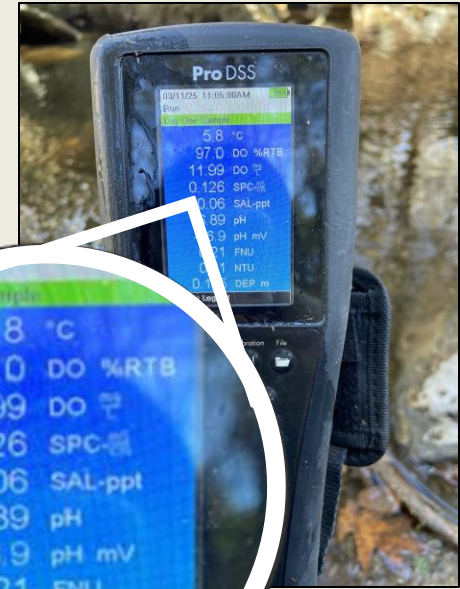
Take reading on
handheld and
record field data

Fill vials and bottles

Run benchtop tests
for organic material

Log samples into
LIMS program and
bring them to in-
house laboratory

Repeat sample
process 1x a month!



The Parameters: In-situ

Temperature (°C)

Dissolved Oxygen (mg/l)

pH

Turbidity (NTUs)

Benchtop:

UV254

the measurement of light (254nm)

that is readily absorbed by

dissolved organic material



The Parameters: Labs

Total Organic Carbon (mg/L)

Dissolved Organic Carbon (mg/L) is the fraction of total carbon that can pass through a 0.45 μm filter

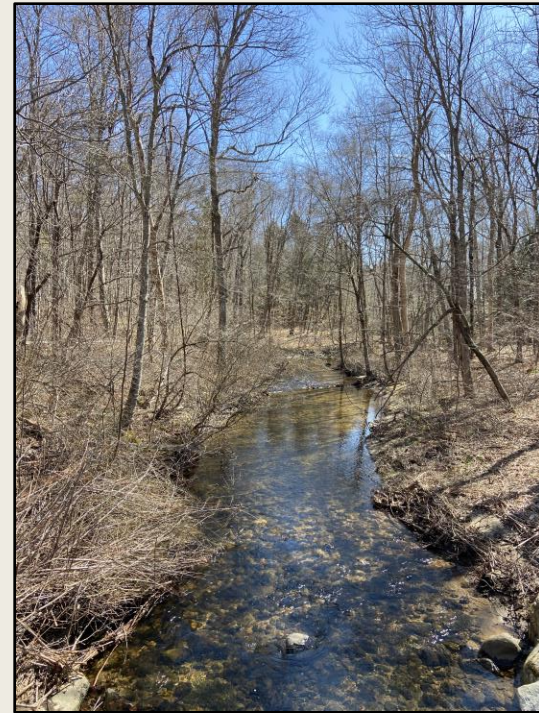
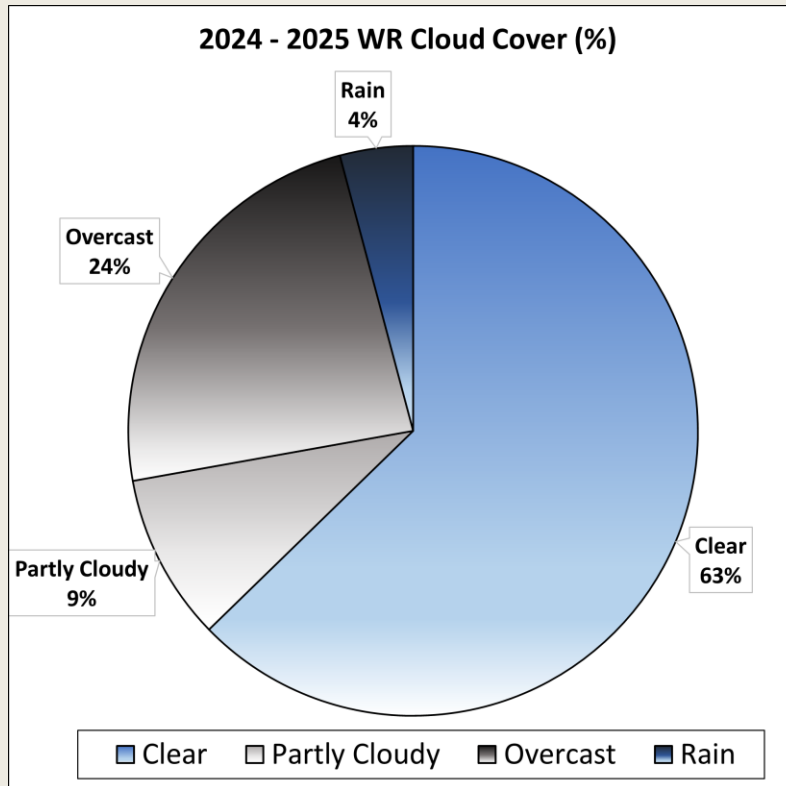
Total Coliform Bacteria & E. Coli
- Most Probable Number (MPN)
colony forming units (cfu) per
100mL (cfu/100mL)
Indicative of fecal contamination

Together, these variables help determine the taste, color, and odor of the raw water!

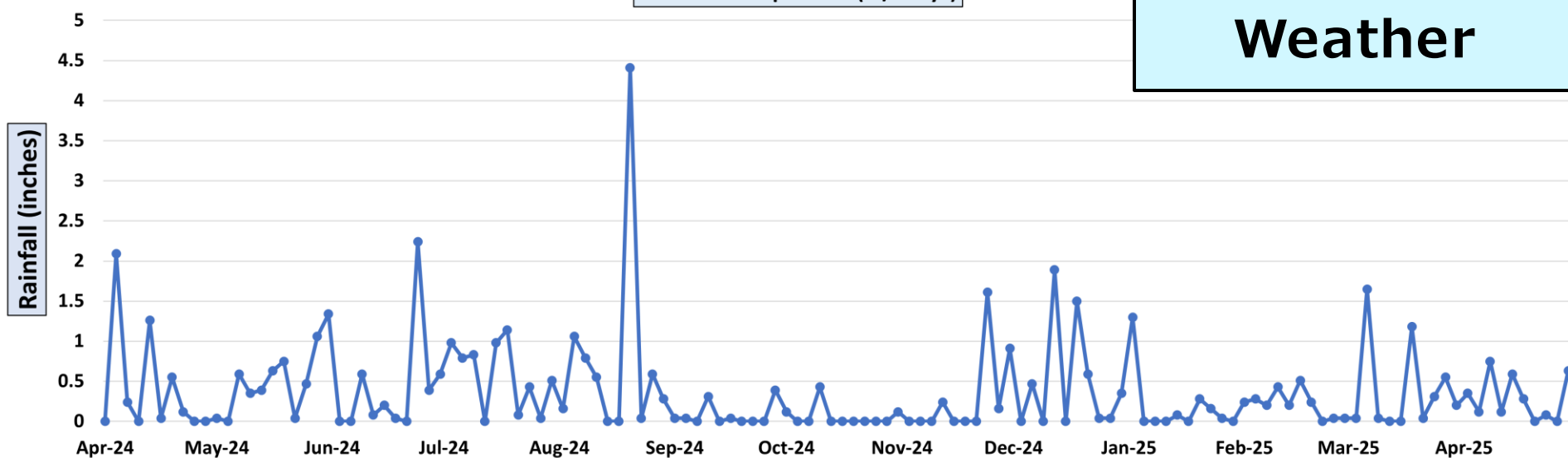


A photograph of a forest stream flowing over mossy rocks. The water is clear and turbulent, creating white foam as it cascades over the stones. The surrounding forest is lush with green ferns and trees, with sunlight filtering through the canopy. A semi-transparent black circle with a white outline is positioned on the left side of the image, containing the text.

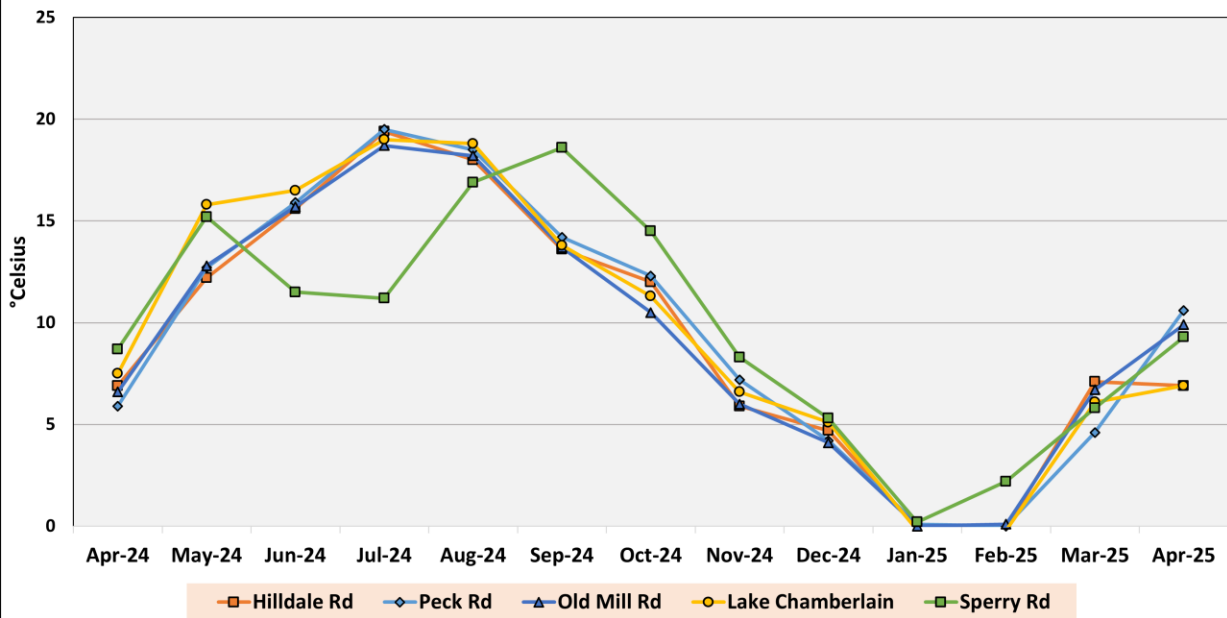
**April 2024
– 2025
Data &
Results**



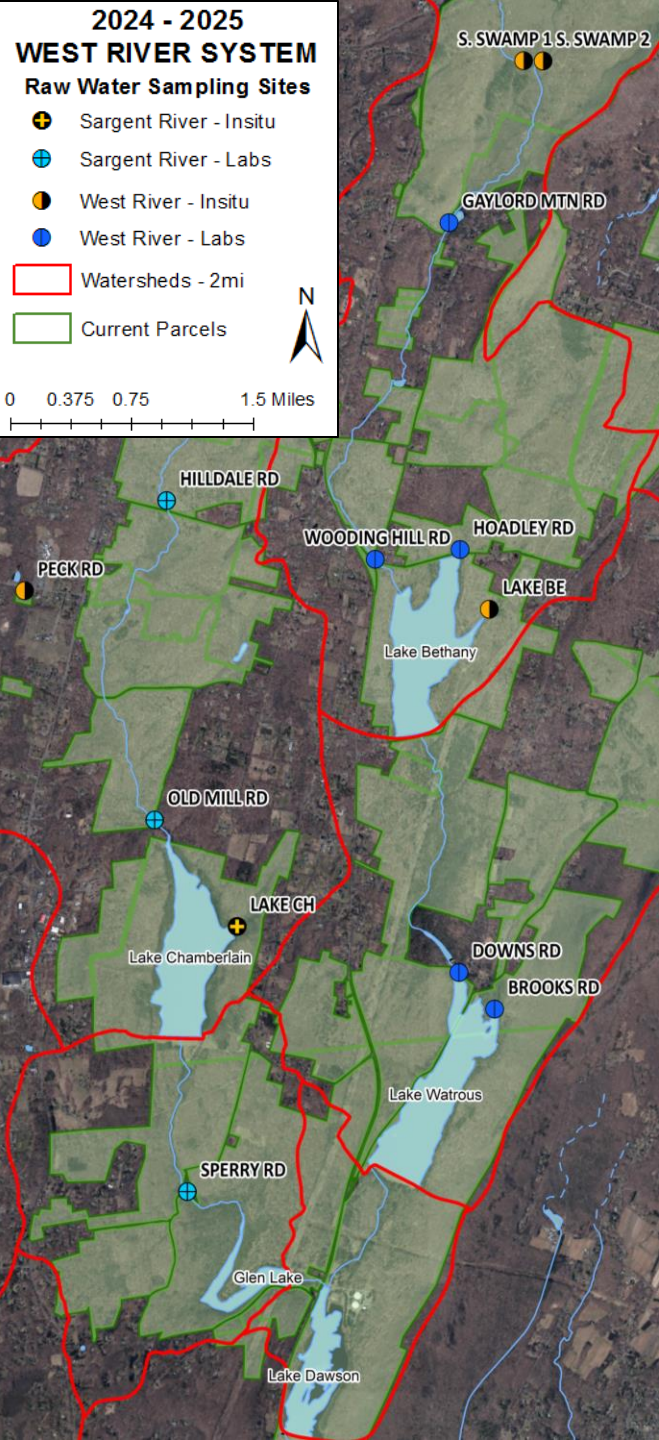
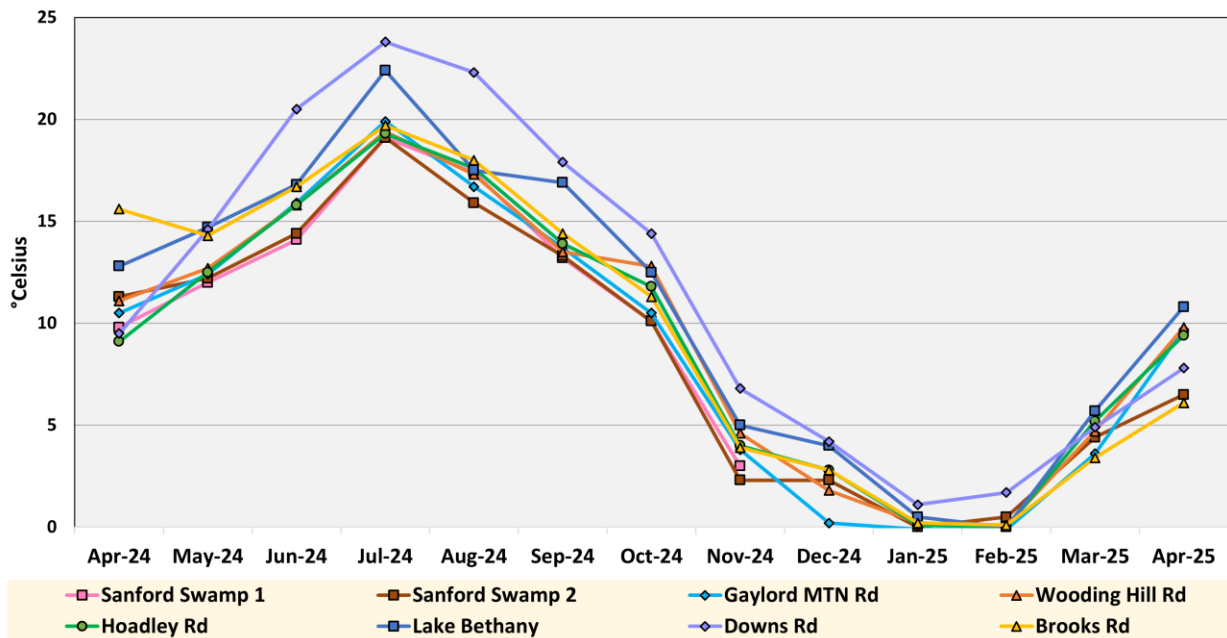
2024- 2025 Weather



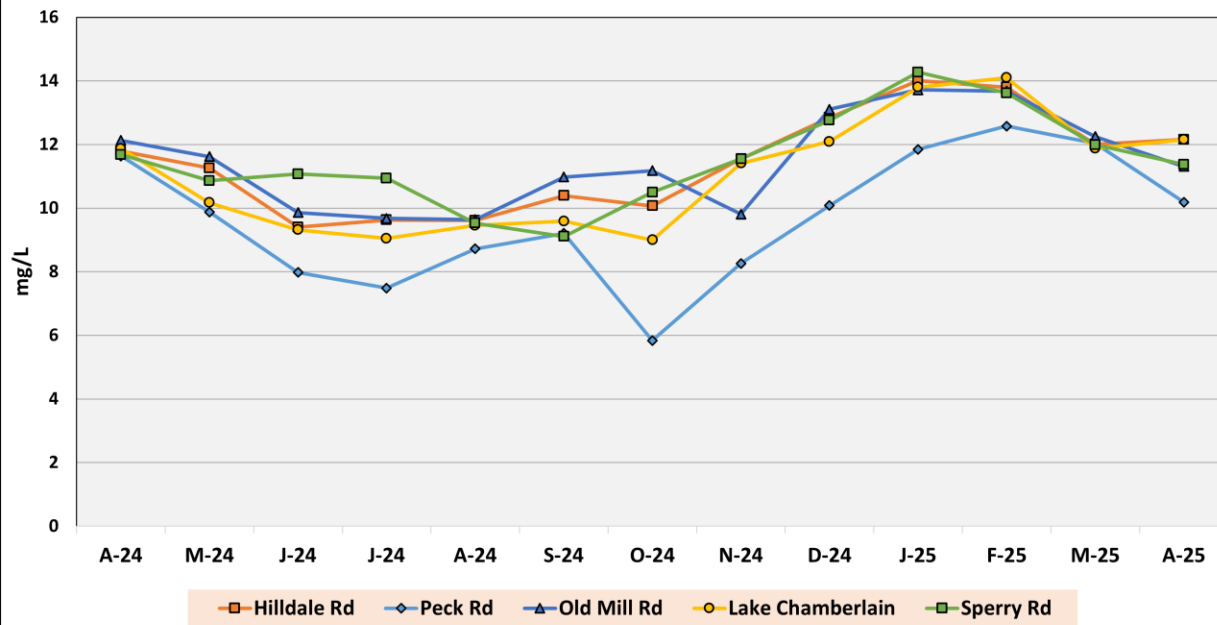
Sargent River Temperature 2024-2025



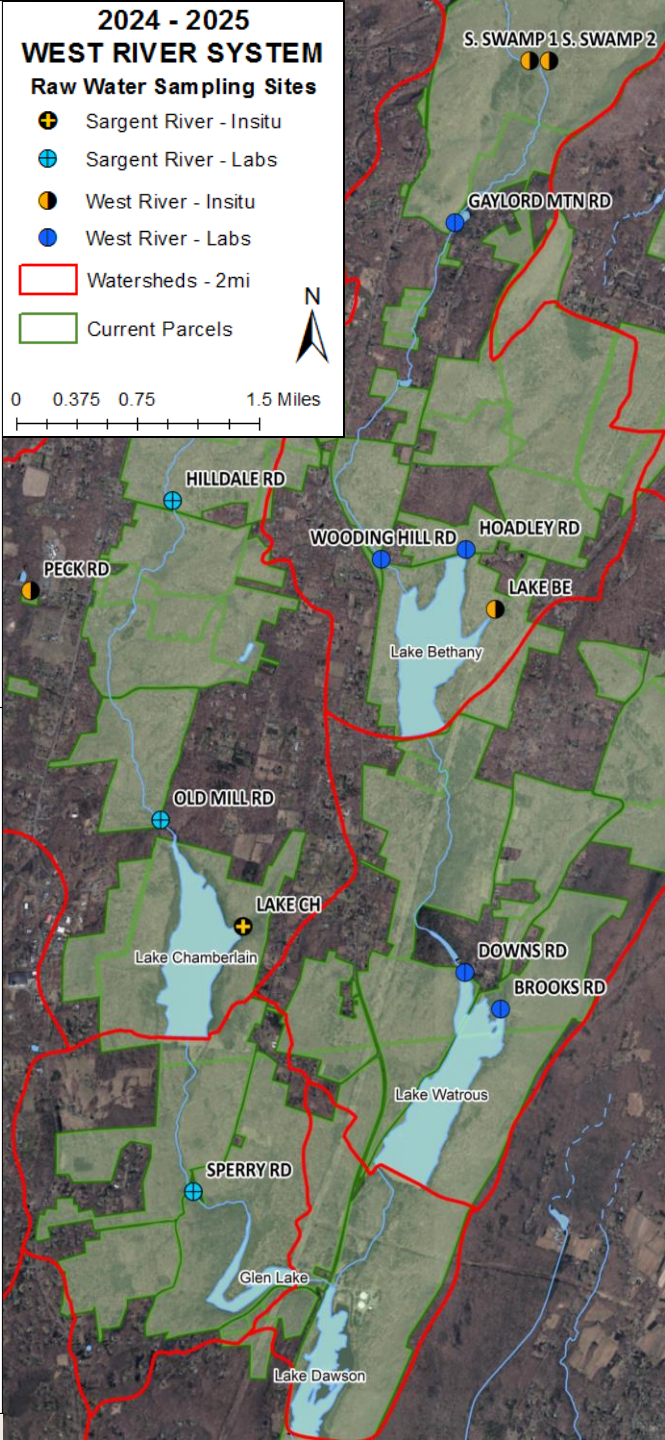
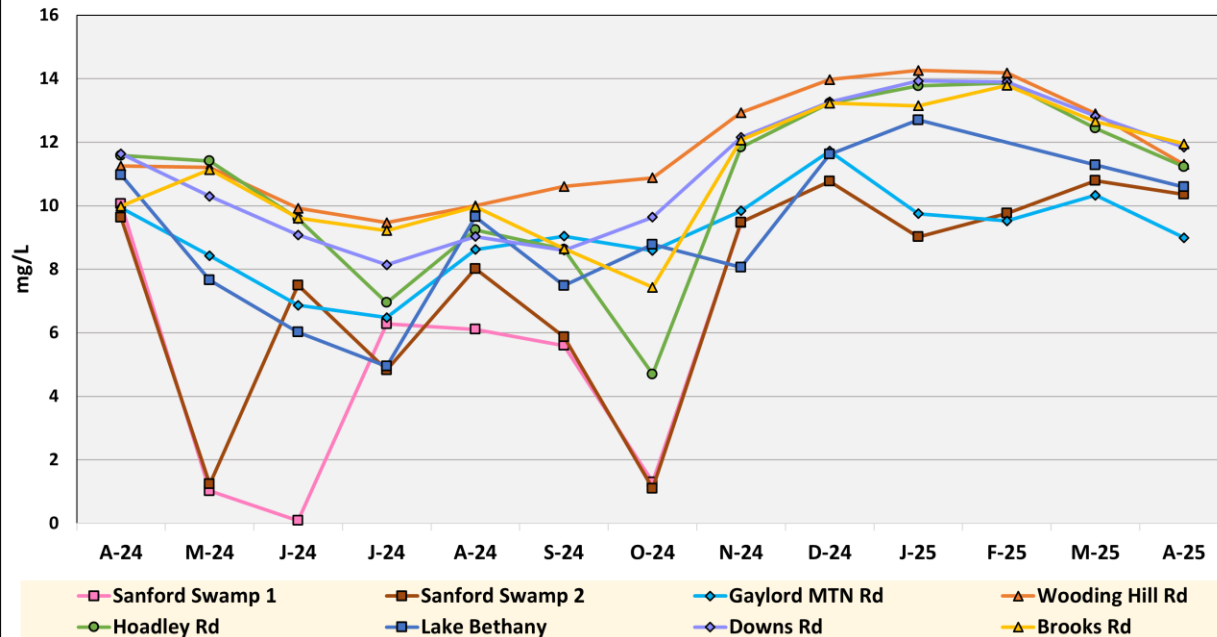
West River Temperature 2024-2025



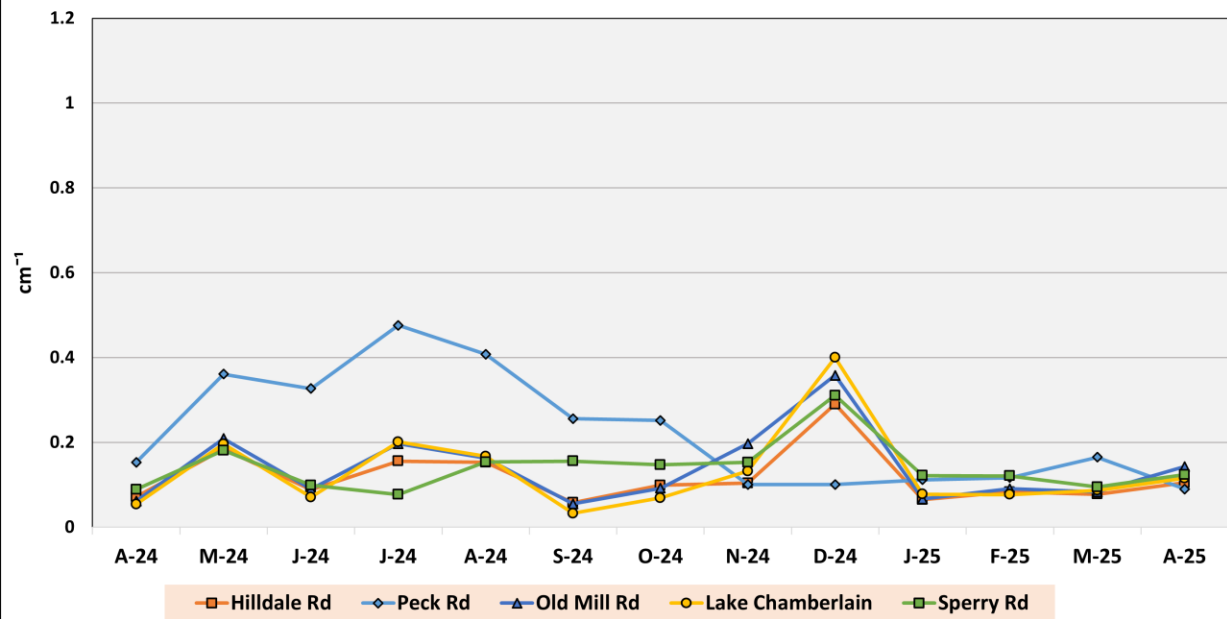
Sargent River Dissolved Oxygen 2024-2025



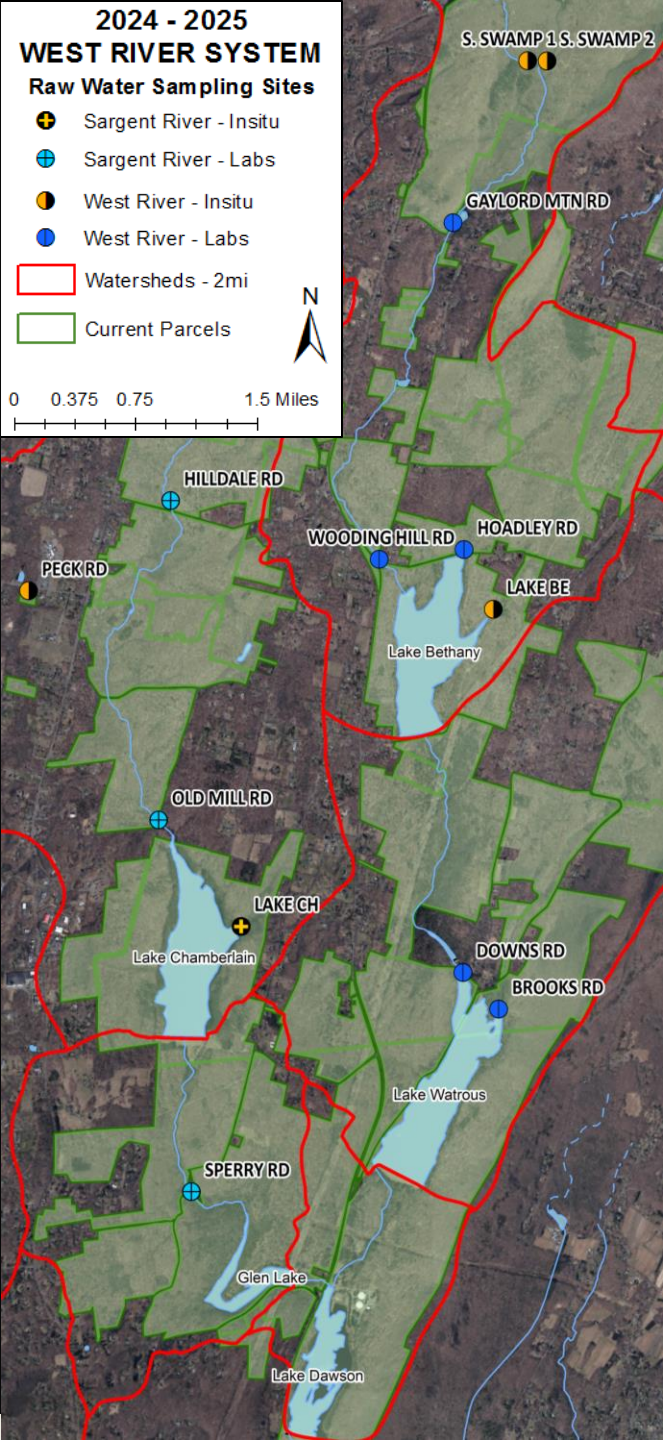
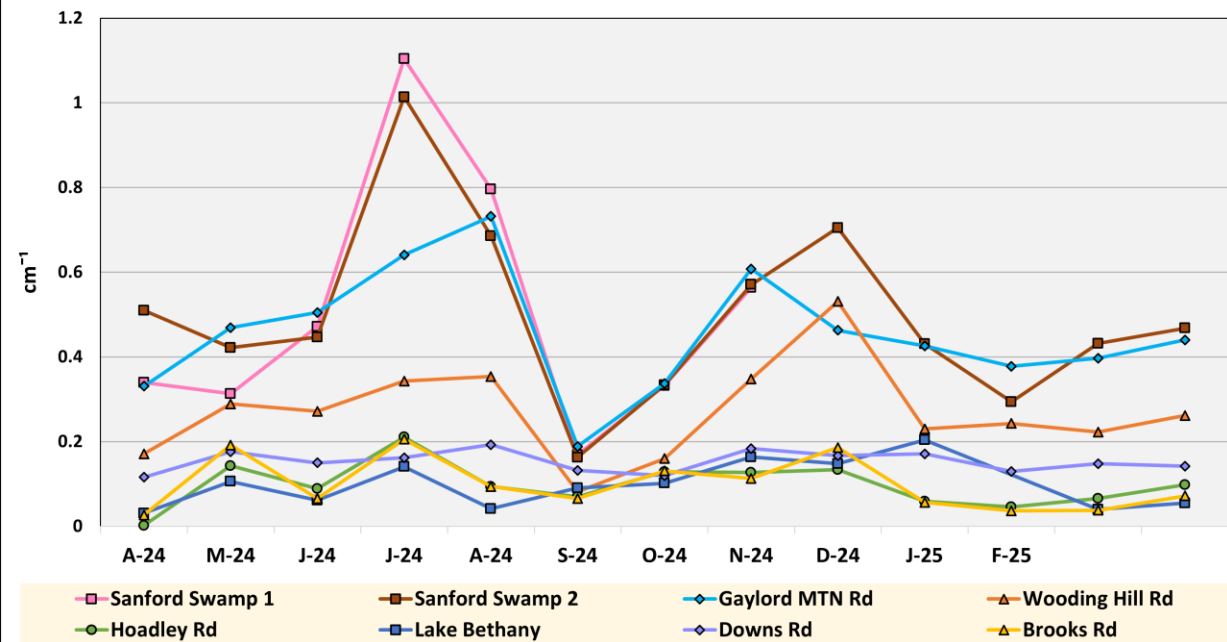
West River Dissolved Oxygen 2024-2025



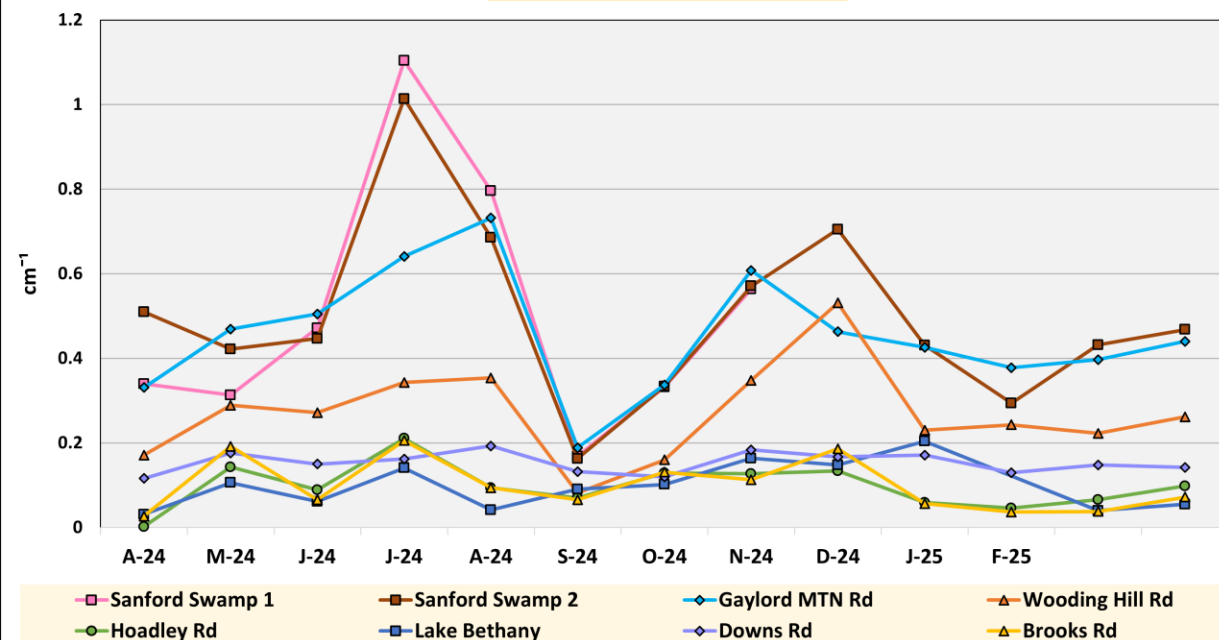
Sargent River UV254 2024-2025



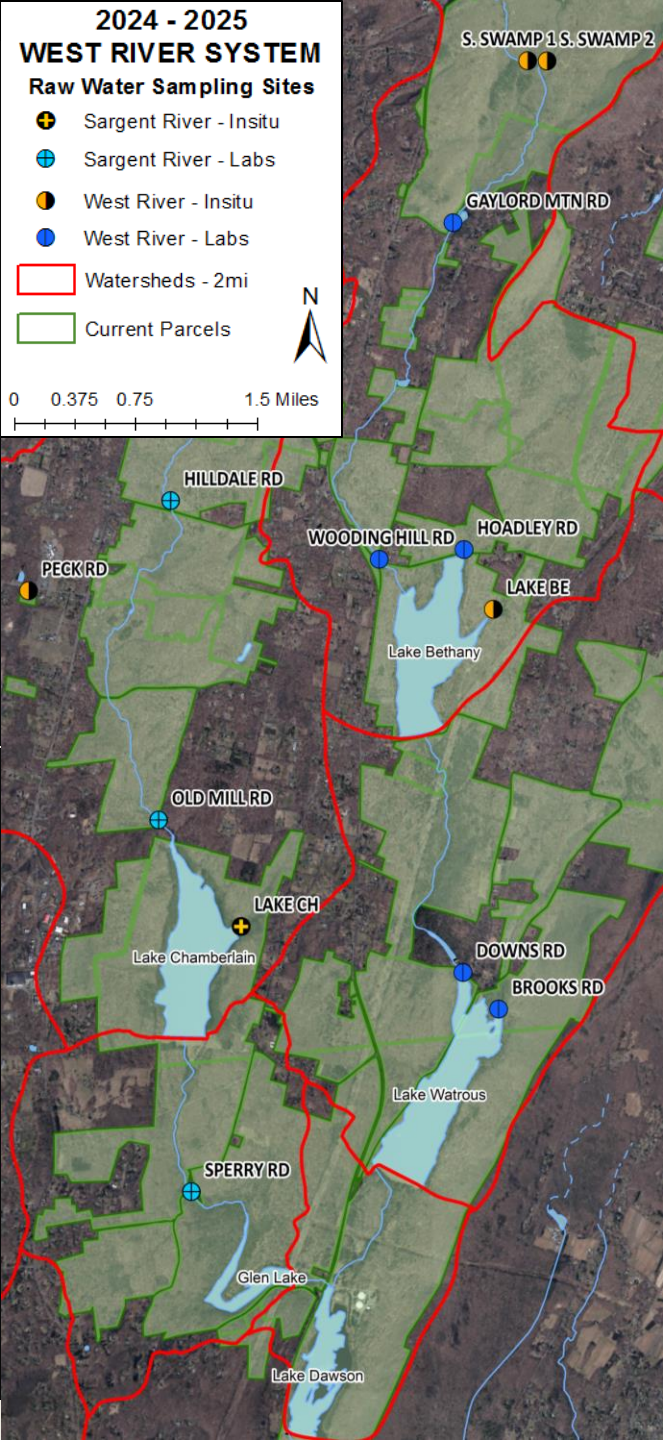
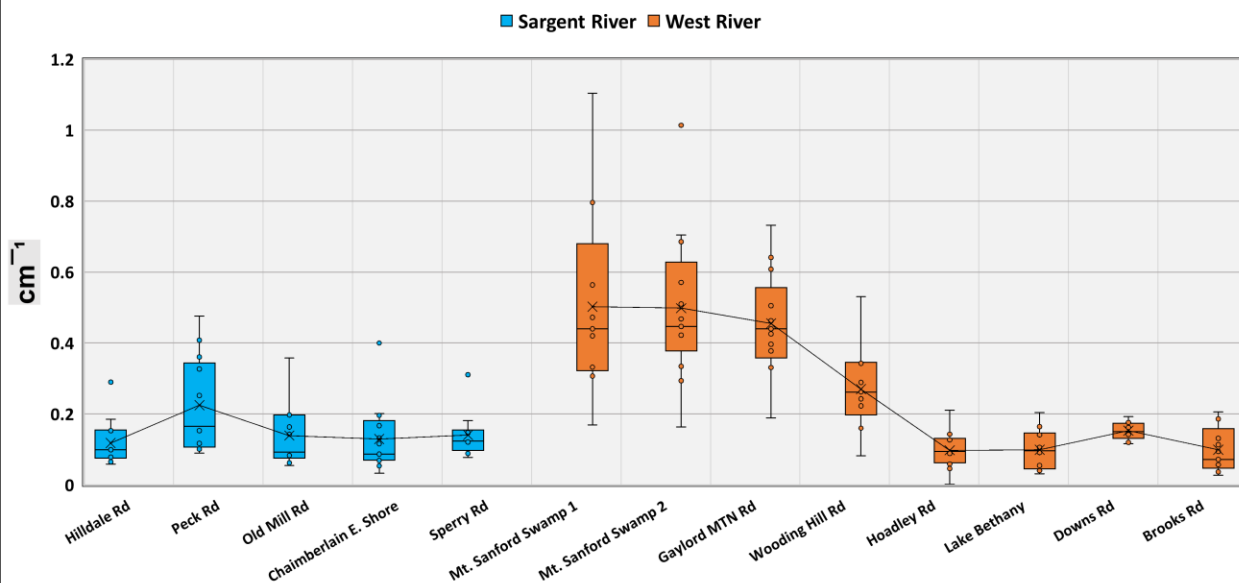
West River UV254 2024-2025



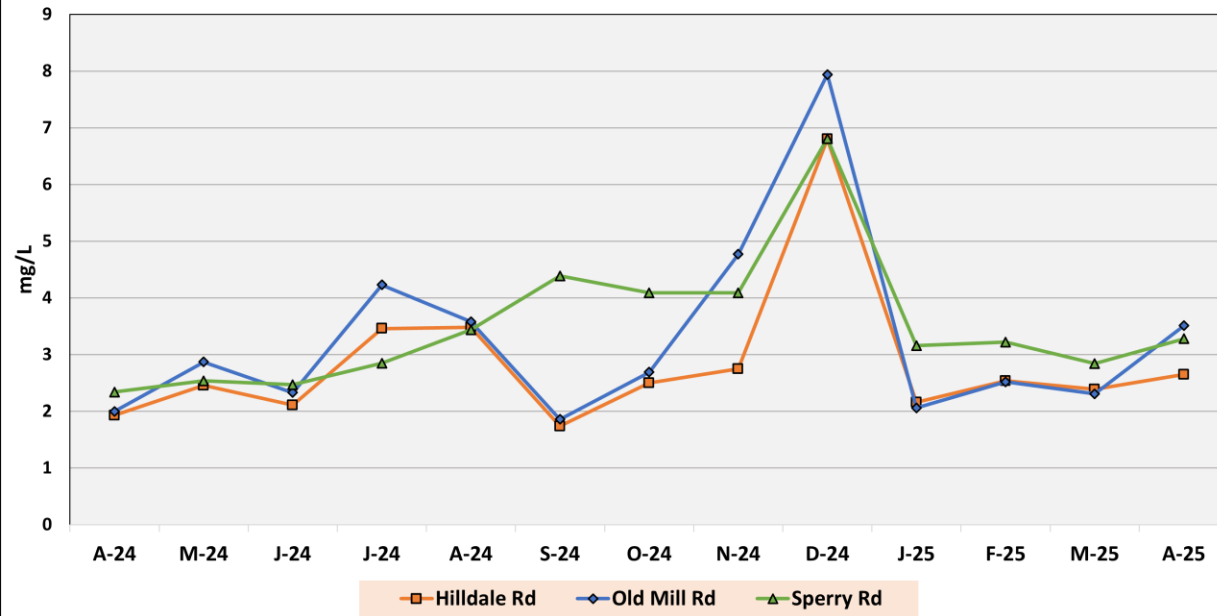
West River UV254 2024-2025



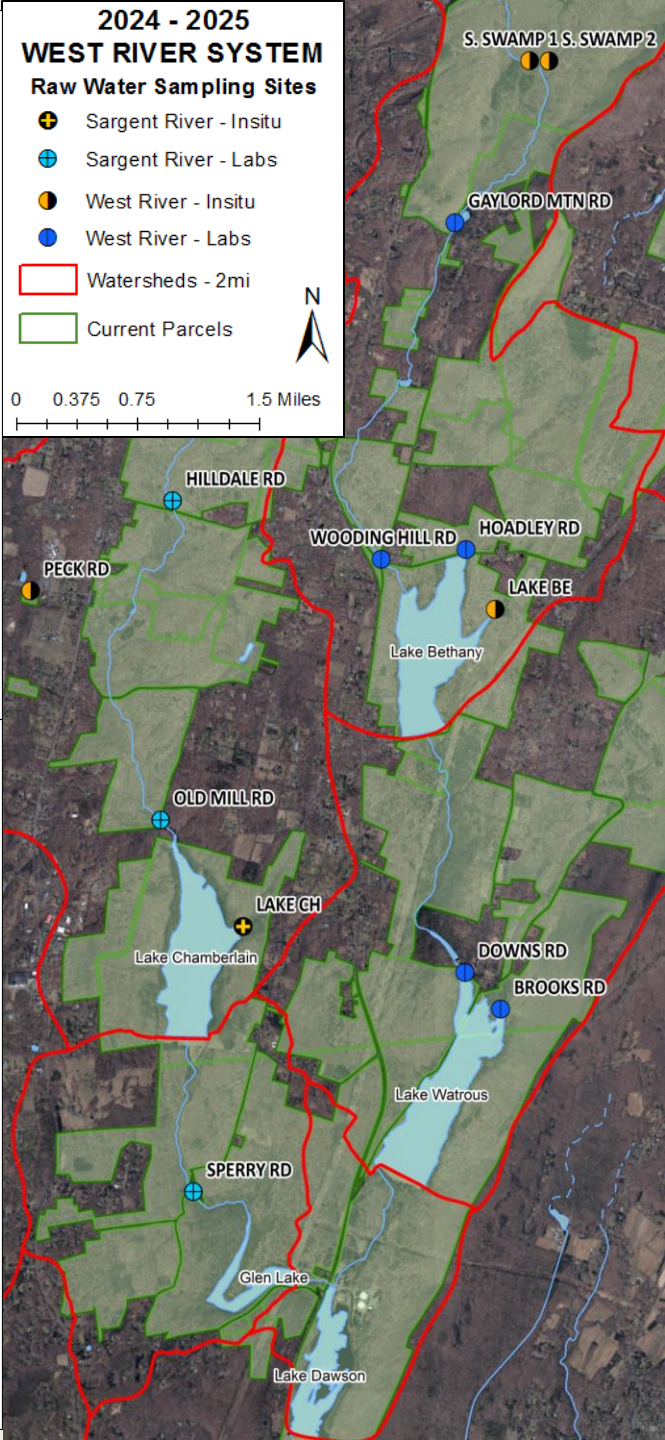
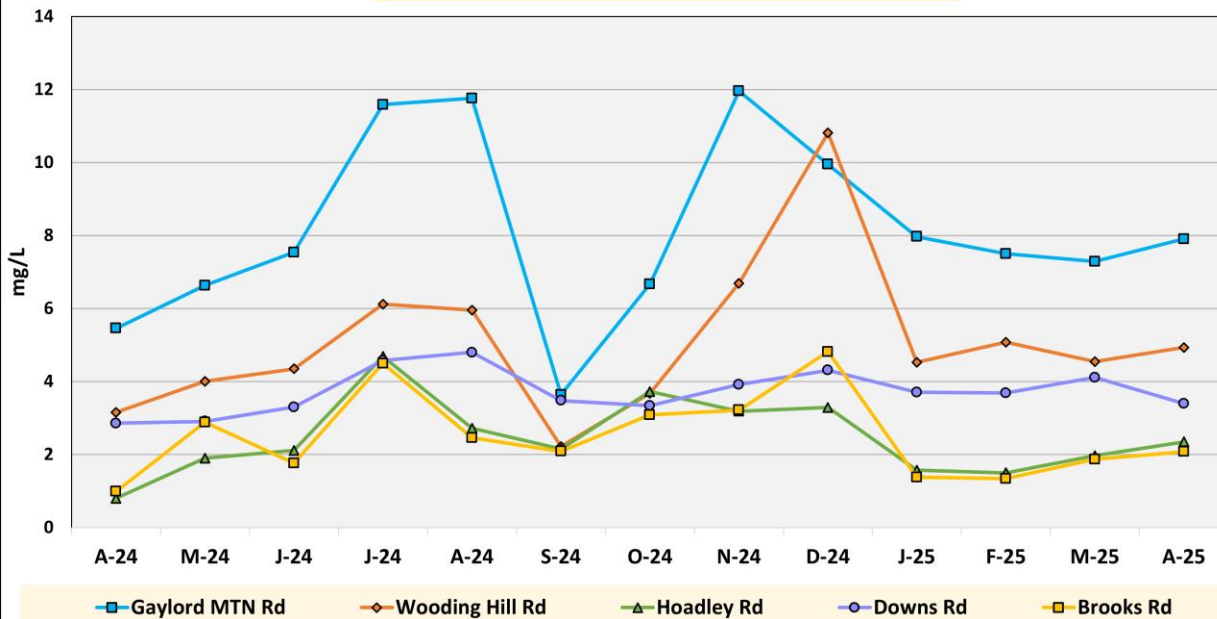
UV254

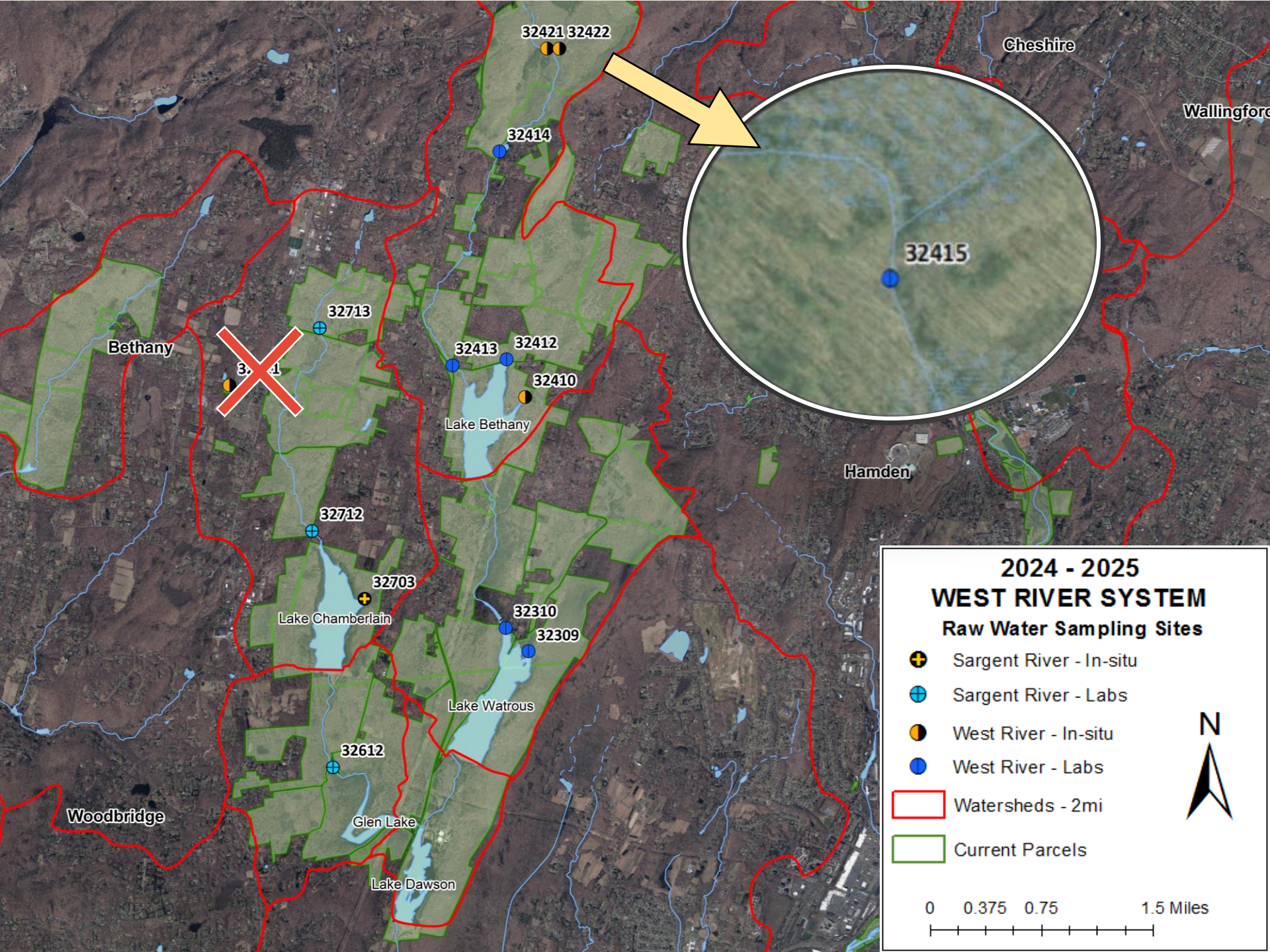


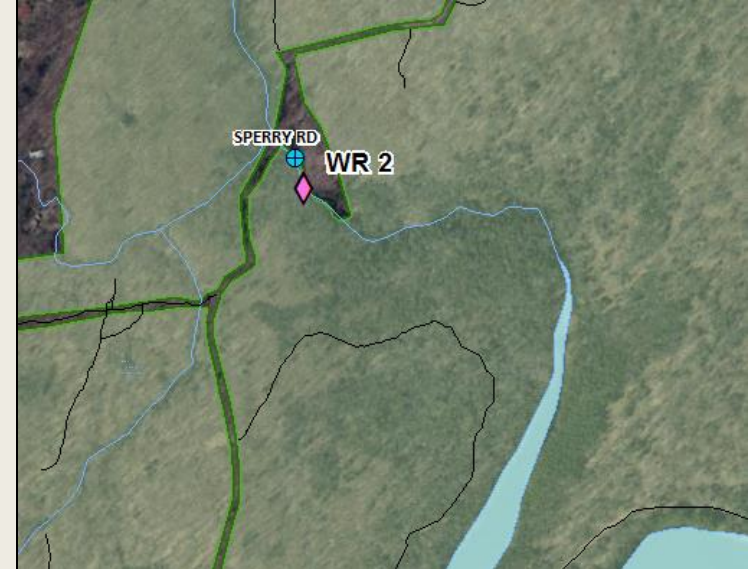
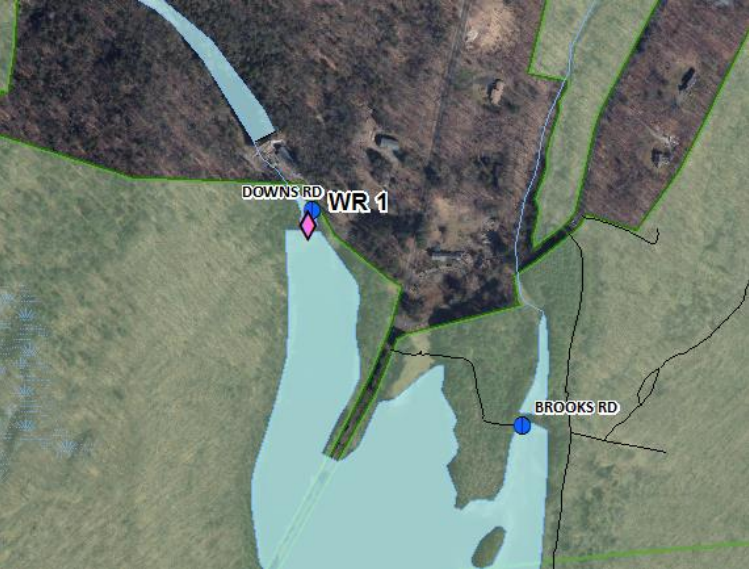
Sargent River Dissolved Organic Carbon 2024-2025



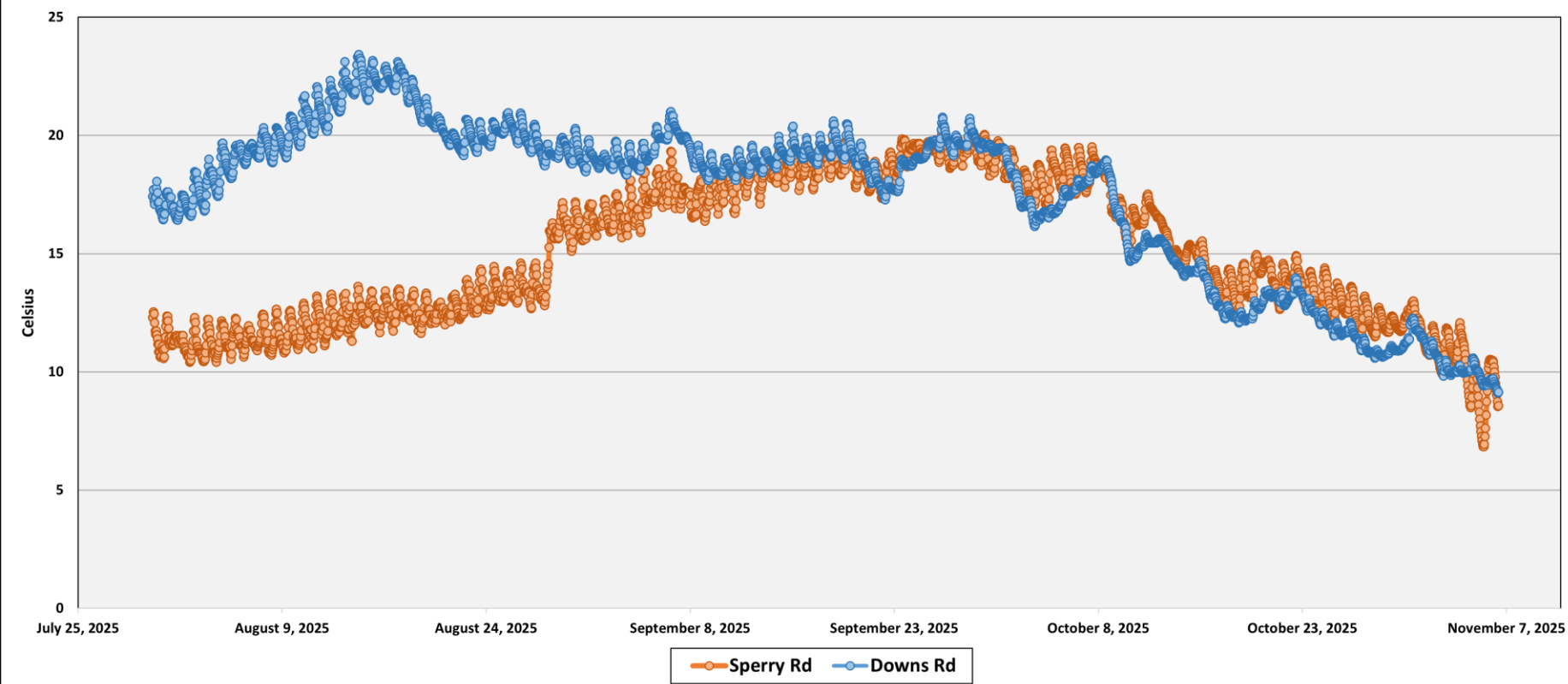
West River Dissolved Organic Carbon 2024-2025



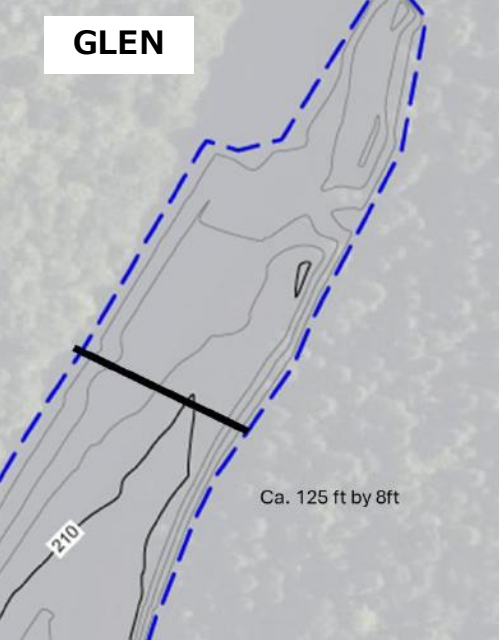




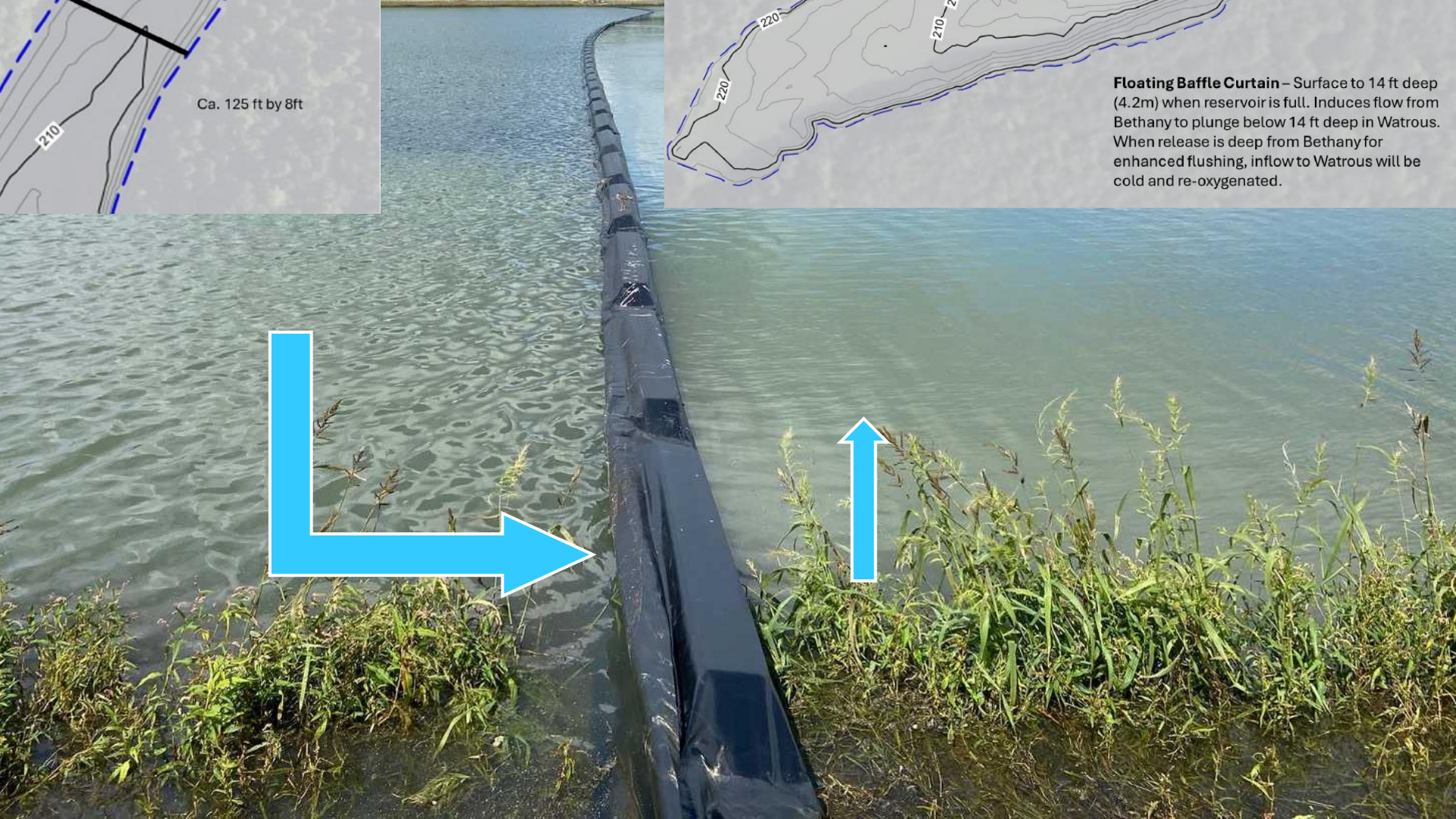
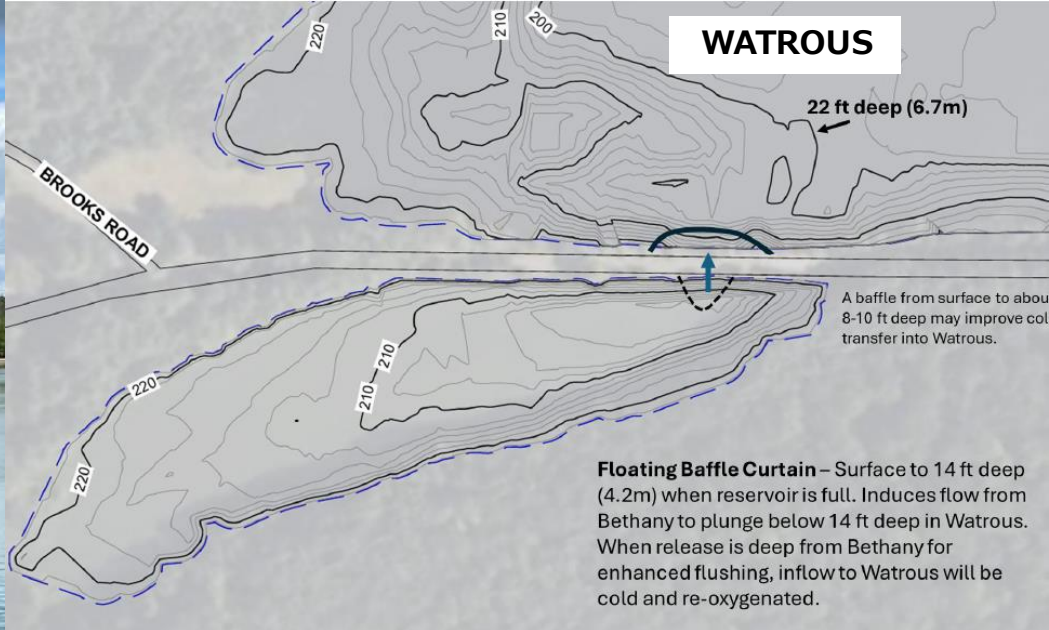
Temperature: West River HOBO Loggers



GLEN



WATROUS



In Conclusion...

Lakes Dawson, Watrous, and Bethany are problematic during the warm months:

low oxygen levels (anoxia), tannic water, and algae blooms

Dissolved organic loading (natural carbons and UV254), low oxygen, and bacteria problems originate in northern sites by Mt. Sanford Swamp, and compounds as water moves downstream to the WRWTP

Evidence from dataset shows Mt. Sanford Swamp is influencing downstream conditions, and further monitoring through more stream samples and temperature loggers will help track irregularities

Management of the reservoirs and downstream releases can be dictated with temperature tracking, and improvements of baffle systems is to be explored in the future



Raw data can be provided upon inquiry!

 Regional **Water** Authority
Tapping the Possibilities™

REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD

LAND USE COMMITTEE

2026 PROPOSED MEETING DATES

Land Use
January 4 @ 5:30 pm
February 11 @ 5:30 pm
March 11 @ 5:30 pm
April 8 @ 5:30 pm*
May 13 @ 4:30 pm
June 10 @ 5:30 pm
July 8 @ 5:30 pm
August 12 @ 5:30 pm
September 9 @ 4:30 pm
October 14 @ 4:30 pm
November 18 @ 5:30 pm**
December 9 @ 5:30 pm (Chanukah)

**moved for Passover*

***moved for Veterans Day*

November 12, 2025
Land Use Committee Meeting

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
October 31	65%	73%	66%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
October 31	5.23	0.79	3.85
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 –	11.63	17.58	19.05

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

- Cheshire, former Bis property (CH 5) – Reviewed grant agreement and easement documents from DEEP. Executed OSWA forms grant and submitted to DEEP. Executed conservation easement and mailed to DEEP. Still discussing the language needed for the certificate of title.
- Madison, Weber property (MA 6B) – Received closing documents from Murtha. In contact with a claimant who had recent permission to hunt the property from the previous owner.
- Seymour, 56 Squantuck Rd. (SE 5) – Property sold to the town.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – RPB approved the disposition application.
- Woodbridge, 1029 Johnson Rd. – See attached article.

Forestry Update

- RWA has received a proposal from Dr. Mark Bradford and first year PhD student, Maddie Annis, on a nutrient research project focused on slash wall harvests.
- Master Woodland Managers training was held at Nathan's Pond property.

Recreation

- Oak identification walk at Maltby Lake #3 with 32 participants was organized.
- Boat rentals ended. The docks were removed from the lake.
- Walleye were stocked at Lake Saltonstall in coordination with DEEP. About 1650, 5-8" fingerlings were released.
- Cleared brush from the shoreline of Lake Saltonstall for fishing access.
- Initiated work on preplacing bog bridges at Lake Hammonasset.
- Reported unauthorized horse trail markers on the North Sleeping Giant Wellfield property to police (HA 19). Contacted DEEP park ranger in charge of the adjacent property.
- The Water Wagon was brought to 3 events by the recreation staff which ends our season for this year.

	October		September	
	2025	2024	2025	2024
Permit Holders	4,857	4,889	4,892	4,846

Special Activity Permits

- Yale University School of the Environment (Annise Dobson)-research on earthworm impacts on soil and plants, working with RWA on measuring success of invasive species management, collecting invasive earthworms, collecting soil samples (2cm diameter, 10-15 cm depth), sampling leaves (3 leaves maximum per plant/tree) Lake Gaillard (41.339459, -72.787557), (9/30/2025-9/30/2026).
- New Haven Parks (Mr. Stephen T. Hladun, Deputy) – repair, rebuild damaged rock wall, Edgerton Park exterior rock wall abutting RWA property, (12/15/25 – 1/12/26).
- Yale University School of the Environment (Maddie Annis)-soil sampling in and around slash walls trying to uncover the interacting impacts of downed dead wood inputs into soil vs. live root inputs as trees regenerate with and without deer pressure. N. Madison, Lake Saltonstall, Prospect, and Seymour slash wall sites (11/1/2025 – 2/1/2026).
- TRC Environmental Corporation (Mr. Christopher Lindahl, Licensed Environmental Professional)-sampling of groundwater monitoring wells (MW-10, MW-21, MW-22) required in connection with an environmental monitoring program being conducted at a site located at 1817 Dixwell Avenue Hamden, West of Lake Whitney along dirt road from Mather Street in Hamden just east of Lake Whitney Glenn Condominiums (11/1/2025 – 11/1/2026).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Agricultural fields – Corresponded with potential tenant of the Prospect fields.
 - Madison, 702 Summer Hill Rd. (MA 9) – Abutter installed underground power line through driveway and would move the shed and container when that is complete.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in Hamden, Bethany, Orange, and North Branford. A new population of water chestnut was found in upper Lake Whitney. Reviewing continued removal of barberry and other invasives at Lake Gaillard.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	64.5 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	3.25 acres

- Deer hunt – Scouting period occurred in October. Hunt began on October 31st. One hunter's permit was revoked for not following various rules.
- Land Use Plan – In progress.
- Hamden, Waite St. pollinator pathway garden (HA 6A) – Garden preparation and planting was done.
- Drone flights - Conducted flights for pipe bridge inspection on Washington Ave. in New Haven, over the West River and to map new population of water chestnut in the upper Lake Whitney basin.

Attachments

- October 3, 2025 - Forecasters see more dry weather on the horizon in CT. And that's as 'fire weather' season begins – Hartford Courant
- October 6, 2025 - Invasive weed posing 'tremendous risk' to CT spreads to fragile waterways. It crushes native plants – Hartford Courant
- October 16, 2025 - Connecticut communities struggling with deteriorating infrastructure and water main breaks – CT Insider
- October 25, 2025 - A dilapidated CT historic house is now called a future 'dream home.' Why it's years in the making. – Hartford Courant
- October 28, 2025 - Most acorns you'll see in CT this fall are from red oaks. A forest researcher explains why – CT Public Radio
- October 29, 2025 - Police warn Connecticut drivers to watch out for deer in the road following recent crashes – NH Register

Upcoming Agenda Items
December 2025 -

Forecasters see more dry weather on the horizon in CT. And that's as 'fire weather' season begins

Stephen Underwood, Hartford Courant - October 3, 2025

As Connecticut starts off October with [mild temperatures](#) and lots of sunshine, the state is facing abnormally dry conditions with the potential to turn into a moderate drought as the start of the fall wildfire season begins, forecasters said.

Amid a mild stretch this past week, Connecticut has seen temperatures mostly in the upper 70s and low 80s, with mostly sunny and humid conditions, according to [AccuWeather](#) meteorologists. Forecasters now say mild temperatures are expected to continue this month with a forecast of mostly dry weather.

According to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), the entire state is listed as "abnormally dry" conditions. The southeast part of the state along the shoreline in New London County is listed as being in moderate drought.

"If you end the summer on a dry note and start losing leaves in the fall, that is fuel for fire," Accuweather senior meteorologist Paul Pastelok said.

"The thing that we should be thankful for is that there hasn't been a lot of wind. So any wildfires we might have had already didn't have a chance to really kick up. We did have a few days of rain last week that actually reduced our level from a drought to just abnormally dry conditions. That rain really helped us out."

Pastelok said that dry conditions will continue for most of the week until next Wednesday, with more warmer conditions setting in. Much of the Northeast is experiencing dry or drought conditions. Northern New England, including parts of Maine and New Hampshire, are currently listed as extreme drought conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

"Getting rain for a day and then drying out for five or six days afterwards is not good," Pastelok said. "That's going to be the patten through at least mid to late October. Because after the rain event next week, another big high pressure system builds right behind it. So it will most likely dry out again for several days afterwards."

So far this year, 29.62 inches of rainfall has been recorded in Connecticut, well below the 37.34 inch average for this time of year, according to [RainDrop.com](#). September saw just 2.59 inches of accumulated rainfall, and August saw just 1.60 inches.

"The state is averaging about 60 to 65 percent of average rainfall, which is below average," Pastelok said.

"Without the tropics or anything coming out of the Gulf of Mexico, it doesn't change our weather pattern. If it doesn't get wet in Tennessee and down to the Mississippi Valley, then it stays mostly dry in the Northeast as well, because that's often where our air is coming from," he said. "So since it's been dry down there with no tropical moisture coming up and affecting our pattern, I think that's why we've had a below average year for rainfall."

As dry conditions persist, the risk of devastating wildfires increases. The dry weather stretch comes as the state still reels from a [series of devastating wildfires](#) last year that led to the [death](#) of a Wethersfield firefighter. The [Hawthorne fire](#) in Berlin, which consumed more than 100 acres at its peak, was one of the largest in the state in decades. Through September, there have been six brush fires reported in the state, according to the [Wildland Fire Reporting System](#) through the state's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Connecticut has two forest fire seasons: spring fire season, normally mid-March to mid-May, and fall fire season, according to Accuweather.

More in U.S.

Fall wildfire season varies by region but is generally considered the period from mid-September or October until the first snowfall, characterized by dry, windy conditions that increase fire risk. In Connecticut, it runs from October to the first snowfall, with dry, windy conditions and fallen leaves act as fuel for fires.

Over the next few weeks, dry and potentially windy weather conditions, combined with fallen leaves and increased sunlight reaching and warming the forest floor, can elevate the likelihood of wildfires, according to state officials.

Water use

[Connecticut Water](#), which serves 60 towns in Connecticut has issued a notice to its customers that, "due to abnormally dry conditions and low rain forecast levels, Connecticut Water has issued conservation requests for customers in the following towns: Clinton, Madison, Guilford, Old Saybrook, Westbrook and Plymouth."

"Using water wisely will ensure available supply for public health and fire protection. This request is until further notice. We will continue to update customers on drought status," the company notice says.

The [Metropolitan District](#), a non-profit municipal corporation, reports in its most recent data that it reservoir levels as of August 31 are at 94.7% of capacity. The MDC notes that its surface water supply system of reservoirs includes: 30.3 billion gallon Barkhamsted Reservoir and 9.5 billion gallon Nepaug Reservoir.

“Because of the large size of its reservoirs relative to the amount of water typically used, the MDC is better able to meet water use demands during drought conditions,” according to the MDC.

The MDC supplies water to eight member towns, Bloomfield, East Hartford, Hartford, Newington, Rocky Hill, West Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor, but also to portions of Farmington, Glastonbury, East Granby and South Windsor, which the agency's non-member towns.

While the [South Central Regional Water Authority](#), which serves 15 towns in Greater New Haven, says “the level of water in reservoirs rises and falls throughout the year,” it list its reservoirs at 72% of capacity as of Sept. 15. The usual capacity at this time of year is 71 percent, according to the agency. Further, according to the RWA, it on average, supplies 42.3 million gallons of water a day to nearly 432,000 people.

Pastelok said that October and November tend to be more dry months due to persistent high-pressure systems that block moisture from the Gulf of Mexico and create dry, westerly wind flows, leading to less precipitation and increased drought conditions.

Connecticut experienced record wildfires last fall, with 605 fires burning more than 500 acres, destroying eight structures and disrupting communities across the state, a spokesperson with DEEP said. Last year, Gov. Ned Lamont declared a state of emergency, issued a statewide burn ban and activated the Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact, bringing in support from other states and the National Guard. During the last wildfire season, eight firefighters were injured.

As wildfires continue to be a major risk, Lamont and Connecticut Insurance Department commissioner Andrew Mais announced the launch of a [free online risk mapping tool](#) that allows Connecticut homeowners and businesses to assess their property's risk from flooding, wildfires and other perils to better understand their insurance needs.

Provided through a public-partnership between CID and First Street, a global provider of physical climate risk data and analytics, the mapping tool gives residents access to property-level data through interactive maps and risk-rating reports. By entering an address, homeowners and businesses can immediately see their property's exposure to a range of climate-related risks such as flooding, wildfire, hurricane winds, extreme heat and air quality.

State officials say the majority of wildfires in Connecticut are caused by improper burning of debris, arson, campfires and discarded wood ashes and equipment

Invasive weed posing ‘tremendous risk’ to CT spreads to fragile waterways. It crushes native plants.

Edmund H. Mahony, Hartford Courant – October 6, 2025

Another summer has produced mixed results in the [fight against hydrilla](#), the pernicious, aquatic weed choking the Connecticut River and threatening a half century of environmental progress that has made the river a \$1 billion-plus annual contributor to the state economy.

On the positive side, herbicide treatments at locations selected among the river’s powerful tidal flows have proven effective and even suggest that the applications may inhibit the [invasive weed’s astonishing, perennial reproduction](#).

“No one wants this to happen,” Keith Hannon, Connecticut River project manager for the Army Corps said. “So no one was really planning for it. We just have to respond. We are going to do what we can with what we have. That’s the message for everyone to understand. We are still working.”

What the Corp is doing is testing a variety of herbicides in different river flow and tidal conditions in order to report on what combination of herbicides works best in what conditions. The report is intended for future use by the state, towns, combinations of towns or associations as a guide to control the weed, which can kill recreational activity — and real estate values — by growing into football field-sized mats that take over the entire water column.

Compounding the Corps’ financial problems was an intense, if brief, internet campaign that looked like an uninformed attempt to derail the hydrilla program by circulating inaccurate information about diquat, one of the herbicides the Corps is testing. The [internet campaign](#) circled the globe: People in South America reposted accusations that the U.S. government is “poisoning” the Connecticut River.

In reality, diquat has been in use as an herbicide for more than 40 years, with the approval of federal and state regulators. The state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection routinely approves its use by lake associations across the state. It is what Wethersfield used to cure its hydrilla problem. Homeowners have been buying diquat brand name garden products for decades to kill weeds.

Owner Bob Petzold said Diquat made a remarkable difference with no adverse effects at Chester Boat Basin, where hydrilla was so thick it impeded the maneuverability of boats.

“It does a great job,” Petzold said. “In our basin there are a lot of turtles and fish and birds. There have been no negative effects at all. It’s actually a sought after area for people to fish, for bass and things like that. And we haven’t noticed any difference at all.”

The misinformation campaign caused the Army Corps to divert resources to a public relations campaign after, among other things, one of the corps’ hydrilla staff received a death threat.

While end-of-the-world posts about environmental poisoning [circulated across the internet](#), scientists from around the country were studying what Connecticut is doing to control it.

“New” hydrilla was the subject of the Aquatic Plant Management Society meeting in Providence, in July. Greg Bugbee, the scientist at the office of aquatic invasive species whose work laid the groundwork for the Army Corps program, described hydrilla’s movement from the river to lakes and ponds.

A colleague of Bugbee’s was a principle speaker, as were members of the Army Corps’ Connecticut River team. U.S. Richard Blumenthal, who is trying from his seat on the Senate Armed Services Committee to add to the Corps budget, delivered the opening remarks.

“Hydrilla poses a tremendous risk to Connecticut and all of New England by threatening wetland ecosystems, public drinking water supplies and our tourism industry,” Blumenthal said.

Hydrilla has long been a troublesome weed, but mostly for its infamous propensity to clog ponds and block rivers in the South. That changed in 2016, when amateur botanists found what they considered an odd weed that looked like hydrilla growing in Keeney Cove in Glastonbury.

It was hydrilla, but DNA testing revealed it to be a genetically unique strain not known elsewhere. In the years since, it spread explosively to cover more than 1,000 acres of river and tributaries from Essex to Springfield. Scientists believe what is now referred to in scientific literature as Connecticut River Hydrilla, originated somewhere in Eurasia and entered the U.S. as a decorative aquarium plant.

It is believed to have got into the river when someone emptied a fish tank.

Scientists who have studied Connecticut River hydrilla say it has the ability to adapt and in some cases control its environment in self-serving ways that cripples the native competition..

It blocks sunlight from penetrating beneath the water's surface, killing plants like eel grass that make the river an important spawning ground for fish like menhaden, the food source for striped bass, bluefish, mackerel, flounder, tuna, drums, and sharks.

Hydrilla can raise water temperature and reduce water flow, causing sedimentation and turning shallow tributaries and adjacent lowlands into acres of mosquito breeding ground.

And it has developed an ability to tap an alternate source of carbon, an element essential to photosynthesis and plant growth, when water chemistry fluctuates and decreases carbon dioxide in the water.

While native plants shut down, waiting for carbon dioxide levels to return, hydrilla keeps growing, expanding its advantage over the natives by utilizing another source of carbon, the bicarbonate produced by the slow, geologic weathering of rocks, according to Jeremiah Foley, a scientist with the state Office of Aquatic Invasive Species

Hydrilla can grow in fresh and brackish water in depths of 25 feet. With multiple branches that can grow three inches a day, a plant can double its biomass every two weeks. When plants reach the surface, they branch out, lie flat and shut off the light necessary for photosynthesis for everything in the water column below.

If a piece of a branch breaks off, it starts a new plant wherever it settles.

Mats of hydrilla lying on the surface at the height of summer make it difficult or even impossible to swim, paddle, run a boat or even sink a fish hook.

Invasive plant scientists have become familiar sights to homeowners and boaters along the lower river over the last three years, injecting dye into the river through tubes to plot currents, injecting herbicides once the flows are charted and returning to measure progress.

The results have been remarkable so far based on a half dozen or so test sites between Glastonbury and Chester.

Selden Cove, tucked between big granite bluffs in Hadlyme, is again a magnet for anglers, a clear pond over a sandy bottom from which a wide creek runs south through sunken meadows of wild rice and drowned oaks to join the river at the bottom of Selden Neck. Two years ago, the cove and creek were impenetrable.

Eradication results are less striking on fast-flowing, straight stretches, like the one between Portland and Middletown, where the river pours by unobstructed.

Still other spots present challenges, such as the Mattabesset River, a mile west of the point where it meets the Connecticut River in Middletown. Bugbee took his survey boat up the Mattabesset last week and found acres of hydrilla constricting the channel.

The plants were thick with turions, the resilient buds that will break off and float south in the coming weeks, forming new plants wherever they land.

Connecticut communities struggling with deteriorating infrastructure and water main breaks

By [Cassandra Day](#) - Oct 16, 2025

Some businesses on South Colony Road in Meriden recently spent an afternoon without water due to a [break that "literally blew out the pavement"](#) and flooded the roadway, said city spokesman Tony Terzi.

Communities throughout the state are grappling with water main breaks. A valve recently broke in Waterbury shooting water 40 feet into the air and cut off water for a large chunk of the city, and Portland experienced three major breaks downtown in four months.

Team Auto Center owner Firas Samander took a video that showed muddy water streaming from the split pipe into the street in Meriden, past vehicles and onto the sidewalk at 111 South Colony St.

"We lost water for half the day," he said. "We had no water source whatsoever."

"A lot of kids rely on having us open, so we rarely close," he said.

Crews were able to restore water that night and remove the mud and dirt from the parking lot. Afterward, the water was murky, however Beat the Street's water fountains filtered out the sediment, Pelletier said.

"Any time there's a major break, it happens," he said.

Why it's happening

Meriden, where the oldest pipes date back to 1892, annually repairs about 25 main breaks and 50 service lines, which are smaller pipes running from the water main into properties, said Robert Peter, Meriden's superintendent of operations, water and wastewater.

The state has some of the oldest water infrastructure in the country. Most of it is over 50 years old and beyond the useful life, according to a 2022 report from the [Connecticut Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers](#).

"Aging infrastructure is an issue facing many water systems across the entire country, not just in Connecticut," said state Department of Public Health spokesperson Brittany Schaefer.

Over half of U.S public water systems have identified rehabilitation and replacement of aging infrastructure as their most critical challenge, the [ASCE 2025 Report Card for America's Infrastructure](#) says.

"The issue impacts water systems of all sizes including municipally owned and privately owned water systems," Schaefer added. "Deteriorating infrastructure can lead to water delivery issues, such as pressure drops and limited flow rates, water quality issues, and rising maintenance and repair costs."

Municipalities throughout the state are dealing with expensive water main breaks, and beginning — or anticipating — projects to help remedy the situation.

As the colder weather and frigid temperatures approach, additional concerns arise.

Most breaches occur in the winter "when freezing soils shift, which can shear weaker pipes," Peter said.

A similar issue occurred on Huntingdon Avenue in Waterbury Sept. 23, when a break caused supply issues for a couple hours to a large section of the city and prompting a [boil water advisory until Oct. 2](#).

"We maybe lost 2,000 over the course of a couple hours, but most consumers live up in [higher elevations in the East End](#)," Water Department Superintendent Bradley Malay said

Hospitals and others sites with "critical" infrastructure were unaffected, he added. Pumper trucks are placed at these locations and can be hooked up if those buildings run out of water.

Some nearby residents [lost water again Sept. 29](#) as crews conducted repairs and the city briefly [shut down the water system Oct. 12](#) to repair the broken main, officials said.

"The impacted section of the main is part of Waterbury's core water infrastructure, much of which dates back 80 to 130 years," Waterbury said in a press release Monday. "The age and size of the water main made this repair particularly challenging, as crews had to manage system pressure while ensuring safe working conditions."

Costly repairs

Meriden's water division allocates more than \$500,000 to clean and line old mains, and those with more frequent leaks, Peter said.

"We depend on annual leak studies to find the areas to concentrate our efforts," he said.

Meriden uses a product that allows the city to create a new pipe within the broken pipe without having to dig, which Peter said is “beneficial cost-wise, improving pipe structure and flows.”

“Though replacement is an option, it is much more disruptive, and costs generally include repaving the roadway,” Peter said.

Waterbury has an emergency budget to pay for incidents such as these. Malay is also able to draw from the capital projects budget for main upkeep and maintenance.

A \$12 million project underway on Thomaston Avenue will reline the entire main after multiple breaks, each of which can cost about \$200,000, Malay said.

“If you have one every year or two, it makes sense to reline it,” he said.

Crews are taking that 42-inch main and “jamming a 38-inch pipe down the middle of it, which is brand new, much higher pressure, and better all the way around,” Malay said. “We’re trying to do what we can to mitigate disasters.”

Bridgeport will work with Aquarion to identify its outdated water lines and replace them, said Dave Reyes Jr. the city's acting director of emergency management.

Aquarion’s five-year average for water main breaks in Bridgeport is 10.7 per 100 miles. Approximately 1% were installed before 1900, said Aquarion spokesman Peter Fazekas.

“These cast iron mains are typically larger in diameter, with walls that are substantially thicker than today’s standards, making them very durable under ideal soil conditions,” he added.

Age is one factor when it comes to replacing them, Fazekas added, however, “break history and water quality play a more significant role in determining our priorities.”

Numerous funding opportunities are available to eligible public water systems to utilize for water main replacements and other aging infrastructure projects within their communities, including the [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund](#), Schaefer said.

Portland has a [\\$1 million state Small Town Economic Assistance Program](#) grant to support the main replacement on High Street and must provide 20% in matching funds.

A contractor has done some of the work, however the town was unable to meet its goal of getting it done before school started. It is expected to begin again late this month or early next, Portland Public Works Director Jason Morrocco said.

Portland First Selectman Michael Pelton said the Oct. 4 break made the project to replace lines on High and Main streets more urgent. Engineers told him the main is past its useful life.

“Both have been pretty much ruptured, not just cracked, and shattered, which is typical of something like this after so many years,” Pelton said..

It is one of the busiest roadways in town, with the high, middle and Valley View Elementary schools located there. With new businesses coming in, including the [Brainerd Place development](#) on Route 66, the project has become all the more important.

Some of the main lines, including High Street’s, have asbestos cement piping, very popular in the late 19th and early 20th century because it’s cheaper and had multiple uses, Pelton said.

“The replacement of these old water lines is vital to our whole downtown because, if one of those pipes goes down, it shuts water off for a significant part of the town,” Pelton said.

A dilapidated CT historic house is now called a future 'dream home.' Why it's years in the making.

By [Helen I. Bennett](#) Hartford Courant October 25, 2025

The little grey house sits along a sometimes busy road, now almost hidden from view by trees and covered in pine needles that have gone red with age.

The dilapidated but historic structure, which can be seen from the road, doesn't exactly sag, but it does seem sad among the mostly neat homes that dot the large lots so common in the little New Haven suburb of [Woodbridge](#).

Work on it was supposed to be done years ago and now the owners say there is a couple interested in it as their "dream home." It won't be easy, given the protective restrictions placed on the property since it was transferred to owners in 2017, records show.

It's a house that also is surrounded by the protected and wooded land of the [South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority](#). There are water authority signs that still hang on the house and its unattached garage despite the agency transferring the property to another owner eight years ago. There are also "no trespassing" signs on the site and there is a sign on the house for [J&A Construction](#), which bills one of its services as historic renovation.

Top Videos White House clarifies Trump's remark on withholding SNAP money during shutdown

It was the water authority that owned the house and garage until September 2017, when the agency quit-claimed the site, another way of saying it gave it away, town records show.

The quit-claim document, signed by the water authority's then-vice president of asset management, gave the property to Jacek Tarlowski of Avon and Aldona Tarlowski of Simsbury, records show. The document lists no exchange of any money. Recent [town tax records](#) show the appraised value of just the land at the site as \$161,700.

The tax records also show the water authority as having owned the property since 1910 but, according to the authority, the site, with the house and garage, "was among several properties with existing structures that the [RWA acquired](#) when it purchased the assets of the New Haven Water Company in 1980."

The property is "historically significant" according to a covenant recorded on land records and on [file with the town of Woodbridge](#). The covenant was between the two Tarlowskis and the water authority, the record shows. It terms the home as circa 1840 and, a "humble utilitarian house probably built in the second quarter of the 19th century."

It notes a "bake oven in the basement" and "evidence for an early corner fireplace."

The [covenant](#) required the new owners to restore the house to a habitable state and "make best efforts" to acquire a certificate of occupancy within 30 months of the date of the document. The date on the document is Sept. 25, 2017. It also notes that the authority must be informed of the work being done.

Aldona Tarlowski, of J&A Construction LLC, when contacted by email about the house, said in response to questions on its status, "the building at 1029 Johnson was already completely deteriorated when we obtained it."

A municipal document dated April 19, 2005 indicates that electrical power, natural gas and telephone service was discontinued to the home. A complaint filed with the town in 2014, prior to the property transfer, and on record in the building department, shows a then-town official had a concern about vegetation "growing on the roof." There is no longer growth on the roof that can be seen from the road.

But Tarlowski said, "Due to serious health & financial setbacks, we were unable to rehabilitate the property as initially planned. We therefore searched for an additional individual who would be interested in the property.

"We are currently working with a very excited and committed couple who want to make this their dream home," Tarlowski said. "They are not only excited about this property but also its long history." Tarlowski did not name the couple. Tarlowski said there are "many restrictions on the property as to how it can be developed," and it "took quite some time to find a new design that would satisfy the client and abide by all the restrictions on the property."

The covenant on the land record also reflects those restrictions, including on its size, and altering the way it looks, including its windows, any excavation on the site and more. The complex document requires the historic character of the house to be "retained and preserved" and that deteriorated historic features of the house be restored and not replaced, unless the deterioration is too severe. It requires, if possible, protection of archaeological features on the property.

"We have a new set of plans that has already been approved by the water authority and we are proceeding with the next steps to move this project forward," Aldona Tarlowski said.

Those plans were not yet on file with the town as of Tuesday, as a building permit issued in 2022 has expired, records show. There also was a tax lien on the house in records that day, showing \$3,887 due, [town documents show](#).

Aldona Tarlowski noted she understands there may be frustration "with the lack of visible development on this property," but said "though there has been little visible progress on this property, I assure you that we have been working very hard behind the scenes to restore this property."

Michael Marganski, blight enforcement officer for the town of Woodbridge, said there are currently no citations against the property or permits issued. "The owners are working through the process required for them to submit plans for consideration by the town for any variances or permits," he said. Another town official said the water authority "broke out the 'house lot' and sold it, as they did with two houses on larger tracts that they owned in town. The other two properties were purchased and remodeled."

Edward Crowder, a spokesman for the water authority, said the property at 1029 Johnson Road is "one of several properties with existing structures that passed into the RWA's hands when we acquired the assets of the former New Haven Water Company in 1980. Creation of the water authority was [done by an act of the legislature](#)."

The authority traces its history to [Eli Whitney II](#), son of inventor Eli Whitney, and says the younger Whitney, who lived in the area when the Woodbridge home was built, had a "vision to make life better for people by bringing water from Lake Whitney in Hamden to the people of New Haven and beyond."

Crowder said the the New Haven Water Company had acquired this and "several other structures as part of their acquisitions of land to provide the region's water supply."

"They passed into the RWA's hands when we bought the assets of the New Haven Water Company ... we kept them as rental units for many years, but ultimately decided to sell them and focus on our core business of providing water to our customers and protecting the watershed."

"For some time, we rented these properties out. In the early 2000s we made the decision to divest ourselves of these rental properties, identify salvageable structures and seek new owners willing to take on renovating and restoring them," he said.

Crowder said this "approach has led to successful restoration – and ultimately, occupation – of nearly all the structures identified through our real estate disposition process, which is governed by specific regulations to ensure the transaction is in the public interest and does not harm the water supply or the environment."

"In the case of 1029 Johnson Road, we entered an agreement to transfer the property to the new owners in exchange for a commitment to undertake rehabilitation of the historic structures," he said. "That has not taken place to date. However, we remain in contact with the owners and look forward to seeing this property properly restored and inhabited."

Crowder said the building was unoccupied at the time of "the sale" and required work to be made habitable. "It was last occupied about 10 years prior to the sale," he said. "In 2017, the RWA entered an agreement to transfer ownership of the Johnson Road property per our real estate disposition process."

"There are deed restrictions limiting uses that might impact the public water supply, but it is not under our control. We cannot speak to its current condition or its upkeep in the eight years since it was sold," he said. "It is no longer part of the RWA's land portfolio."

The water authority manages almost nearly 28,000 acres of watershed land in Greater New Haven, serving more than 430,00 people. It serves [15 towns](#), with more than 42 million gallons of water a day used.

About the delay in rehabilitation of the house, Crowder said the authority has a "robust property disposition process that involves board approval, an analysis of alternatives, a public hearing and adherence to policies regarding environmental impact and public interest."

"The structures that have been sold and successfully restored were saved from the landfill, demonstrating the RWA's commitment to sustainability and history," he said.

While, in this case, "we are aware that the property owners are delinquent in fulfilling their obligations to renovate the structures on the property and return them to a habitable state," the authority is in contact with the property owners and looks "forward to seeing these structures rehabilitated and once again occupied."

Asked why water authority signs would still be hanging at the site, Crowder said, "We would not enter the property to remove the signs after the sale. In general, we would expect property owners to remove existing RWA signage from their properties." The covenant on the land records actually gives the water authority the right to inspect the property.

"They may be old signs; we would not have taken down existing signs after selling the property. Again, we do have some signs marking the boundary where our property begins," he said.

"After the sale, we posted RWA signs to mark the newly created property boundary. However, we have not placed any signs on the house or on the property since it was sold."

Most acorns you'll see in CT this fall are from red oaks. A forest researcher explains why

Connecticut Public Radio | By [Jennifer Ahrens](#) - October 28, 2025

A fallen white oak tree in the New England forest. Once a common component of our forests, white oaks have diminished across the landscape in recent years due to repeated insect defoliation and drought.

Acorns aren't just food for wildlife, they are the seeds for the next generation of white oaks. For the past decade, researchers say there haven't been enough of them in Connecticut.

"Prolonged periods without adequate white oak acorn production are leading to fewer seedlings becoming established in our forested areas," [J.P. Barsky](#), research forester for Connecticut's Department of Environmental Science & Forestry.

This year's [annual acorn survey](#) shows the state's white oaks once again failed to produce any significant acorn numbers.

Barsky surveyed 275 white oak trees throughout the state. Only 39% had visible acorns and of those, Barsky said, the trees averaged less than 4 acorns per tree.

To put that in perspective, Barsky said there have been years where he has [counted hundreds of acorns](#) on a single red oak in 30 seconds.

Barsky said it's not known yet why this white oak acorn drought has lasted for the past ten years.

But he said mature white oaks have diminished across Connecticut's landscape in recent years due to repeated insect defoliation from the [invasive spongy moth](#) and drought.

Not just a Connecticut concern

The future of white oaks is a concern throughout the eastern and central United States.

The [White Oak Initiative](#), formed in 2017 by the American Forest Foundation and the University of Kentucky, said 75% of the nation's white oaks are mature and they are not being replaced at a pace that will support long-term sustainability.

"It's an uphill battle for the white oaks," Barsky said.

He partly blames the species' DNA.

"White oaks are generally not high producers of acorns," he said, unlike their cousin, the red oak.

When an acorn is produced and falls to the ground, it faces the added difficulty of trying to get its roots through layers of leaves that have accumulated over decades to reach soil. If it fails to do that, it dries up and dies.

When a white oak acorn is able to take root and produce a seedling, Barsky said they are slower to grow than their competitors, like red oak, maple and birch, so they can lose the battle for sun and nutrients and die.

So white oaks can benefit from human intervention.

"Some of the other work that we've been doing, in some of these younger stands, is to release [white oak saplings] from some competition, so that they do have a chance of forming the future canopy of the forest," Barsky said.

Another danger is hungry wildlife. White oak seedlings are very nutritious, so many get eaten.

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station says there was a sliver of good news for white oaks this fall in [Virginia where researchers](#) there reported a good crop of white oak acorns.

Police warn Connecticut drivers to watch out for deer in the road following recent crashes

By [Jesse Leavenworth](#), - Oct 29, 2025

MONTVILLE — With a humorous touch on a serious issue, Montville police warned motorists about [deer crossing roadways](#) after several recent crashes.

"It's that magical time of year when the deer forget how traffic works and try to play Frogger," police posted on Facebook. "The last week we have had three cars vs deer accidents and it's only Tuesday."

The post included a video from a dash camera of a deer that "decided to jaywalk right in front of our cruiser."

"They're fast, they're unpredictable, and apparently, they think they have the right of way," police said.

Fall means mating season and an increase in vehicle-deer crashes. The 387 such crashes in the state from October to December last year were equivalent to one crash every six hours, according to the Connecticut Crash Data Repository. Collisions were most common around sunset, but drivers also should be especially watchful at dawn.

The top towns in the state for deer crashes from October to December last year, according to a AAA news release, were Simsbury (18), Farmington (17), Groton/Wallingford (tied at 14 each), Middletown (13), Shelton/Stonington (tied at 11) and Berlin/Bethel/Coventry/East Windsor/Ridgefield (all with 8 crashes).

"Striking a deer can be extremely dangerous, with the animal possibly going through the windshield, seriously injuring or killing the driver and passengers," AAA Northeast spokesperson Lauren Fabrizi said.

Instinct drives white-tailed deer to seek mates and the fervor of reproducing often leads to erratic behavior, making the animals more likely to run into traffic, especially at dusk, AAA said.

AAA advises motorists:

- Scan road shoulders. Deer may dash out from wooded areas.
- Obey the speed limit. Lower speeds allow more time to react.
- Sound the horn with one long blast if you notice animals early enough. The sound may frighten them away.
- Apply brakes if a collision is unavoidable, but release the pedal just before impact so the front of the car rises, reducing the chance of the animal going through the windshield.
- Contact your insurance company to report any damage to your car, which generally falls under comprehensive coverage.

Montville police also warned that a deer crossing the road often means another or more will follow.

"So please, drive smart, stay alert, and let's keep the venison off your grill, unless it's your grill to cook, if you're into that," police said in the Facebook post.