

# Corporate Social Responsiveness

FISCAL YEAR 2024



175 YEARS OF SERVICE



 Regional **Water** Authority  
Tapping the Possibilities™

# Table of Contents

<b>A Message from Our Interim President and CEO</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Our Communities</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Our Business</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Our Company</b>	<b>2</b>	Community Impact	7	Economic and Financial Stability	16
175 Years of Service	2	Giving Back to Our Communities	7	Keeping Costs Low for Our Customers	16
Our Higher Purpose	2	Supporting Local Scholars	7	Responsible Fiscal Management	16
Our Mission	3	Enriching Environmental Education	7	Encouraging Sustainable Investments	16
Our Vision	3	Water on the Go	8	Strategic Planning	17
Our STARS Values	3	Household Hazardous Waste Disposal	8	Expanding Our Commercial Footprint	18
Raising the Bar for Service	3	Economic Impact	9	Investing in Infrastructure	18
<b>Our Customers</b>	<b>4</b>	Buying Locally	9	Infrastructure Milestones	19
Customer Care	4	Advancing an Inclusive Economy	9	Information and Data Security	19
Service First!	4	Support for Our Towns and Cities	9	<b>Our Environment</b>	<b>20</b>
Putting Technology to Work for Customers	4	Emergency Responder Grant Program	9	Conservation	20
Our Next-Generation Customer Experience	4	Promoting Economic Growth	10	Reducing Water Loss	20
A Helping Hand to Customers in Need	4	Providing Policy Leadership	10	Water Wise Ways	20
Keeping Consumers Informed	5	Quality on Tap	10	Recycling Rainwater	20
<b>Water Quality</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Our Governance</b>	<b>11</b>	Repurposing Water Treatment Residuals	20
The RWA Lab	5	Advocates for Our Customers	11	Protecting Our Water Supply	20
Extensive Testing	5	Focusing on What Matters	11	Land Management	21
Continuing Our Legacy of Quality	5	Authority Board Committees	11	Groundwater Management	21
Identifying Lead Service Lines	6	Representative Policy Board Committees	12	Protecting Native Habitats	21
Preventing Cross-Contamination	6	Evaluating Impacts on Customers	13	Steaming Out Invasives	22
		Risk Management	13	The Claire C. Bennett Recreation Program	22
		Supply Chain	13	Reducing Our Carbon Footprint	22
		<b>Our Employees</b>	<b>14</b>	Renewable Energy Sources	22
		Employer of Choice	14	<b>Fiscal Year 2024 At a Glance</b>	<b>23</b>
		Our Greatest Asset: Our Employees	14	Our Service Area	24
		Cultivating the Water Workforce	14		
		Journey to Zero Preventable Injuries	15		
		A High Standard of Ethics	15		



# A Message

## from Our Interim President and CEO

As we reflect on what we achieved in Fiscal Year 2024, we must acknowledge the tremendous sense of loss that all of us at the Regional Water Authority (RWA) are sharing after the sudden passing of **Larry Bingaman** last November.

Much of what you will read in these pages is a direct reflection of the vision, leadership and spirit of service Larry brought to the RWA since he became president and CEO in 2009.

Throughout his tenure at the RWA, Larry was driven by an unshakable belief that our organization should be a force for good in the community, propelled by the tenets of Conscious Capitalism under the polestar of our higher purpose: To make life better for people by delivering water for life.

According to Larry's worldview, the RWA's social responsiveness obligations must be an integrated piece of the company's overall business strategy. To that end, we seek to generate sustainable value for all stakeholders: customers, employees, bond holders, business partners and the community at large.

This report documents the progress we've made toward these goals in the most recent leg of a responsible journey that began in 1849. In 2024, we observed 175 years since our predecessor company was established by Eli Whitney II, whose founding principles of quality, service and value still guide us.

We honor Larry's legacy at the RWA by continuing to move forward with our higher purpose in mind, and by reaffirming our commitment to our customers, employees and community each and every day.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Lakshminarayanan'.

Sincerely,

**Sunder (Sunny) Lakshminarayanan**

Interim President and Chief Executive Officer

# Our Company



**The RWA is a not-for-profit, public corporation that has provided an essential, life-sustaining product — drinking water — to customers in the Greater New Haven area for more than 175 years.**

On average, we deliver more than 42 million gallons of water a day to a population of nearly 432,000 consumers in 15 South Central Connecticut municipalities.

The RWA acts as a responsible steward of the environment by protecting nearly 28,000 acres of watershed land it owns and by promoting sustainable practices. The consumers and other stakeholders we serve count on us to deliver the high-quality, reliable water that their lives depend on, any time they turn on the faucet.

## 175 YEARS OF SERVICE

In 2024, the RWA marked 175 years of delivering high-quality drinking water to consumers in New Haven and surrounding communities.

Our founder, Eli Whitney II, conceived the region's waterworks and established the New Haven Water Company in 1849 to provide a reliable supply of clean water for public and private purposes. In 1859, Whitney began construction of a dam that backed up the Mill River for more than two miles, forming Lake Whitney, the first of the 10 active reservoirs currently in our system.

In 1977, the Connecticut General Assembly passed legislation establishing the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority as a nonprofit public corporation. It purchased the assets of the New Haven Water Company in 1980, setting the stage for the RWA's emergence as a 21st-century water utility and environmental services company.

Across those 175 years, the RWA has sought to stay true to Whitney's original vision of delivering high-quality water to improve the lives of people and businesses in the New Haven area.

## OUR HIGHER PURPOSE

**We make life better for people by delivering water for life.**

We believe that, like good people, good companies have a higher purpose. Ours was first articulated by our immediate past President and CEO **Larry Bingaman**, and it is central to who we are as a company. It is what inspires us to work consciously, innovate for the greater good and continuously improve for all stakeholders.

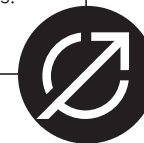
## BY THE NUMBERS\*

**42,311,000**  
GALLONS OF WATER  
DELIVERED A DAY

**431,920**  
CONSUMERS

**15**  
MUNICIPALITIES IN  
SERVICE DISTRICT

\* All data as of May 31, 2024,  
unless otherwise noted





## OUR MISSION

**We provide customers with high-quality water and services at a reasonable cost while promoting the preservation of watershed lands and aquifers.**

Our mission is a straightforward statement of why we exist. It is what gets us up in the morning, sustains us when times are tough and helps us find our bearings when we get pulled off course.

## OUR VISION

**We are an innovative water utility that sustains life, strengthens our communities and protects natural resources for future generations.**

Our vision represents our aspirations for the future: the company we are working diligently to become.

**We are an innovative water utility.** We always strive to do better, push the envelope and tap our creative resources to create value for all stakeholders.

**We sustain life.** We recognize the essential value of our product and the importance of delivering it reliably. In a world where lack of access to clean water claims an estimated 1.4 million lives each year, our customers count on us to provide reliable, high-quality water every time they turn on the tap.

**We strengthen our communities.** Water is a vital resource that citizens depend on for health, fire protection, economic growth and quality of life. Our high-quality water and well-maintained water system are key elements of prosperous, healthy communities and contribute to our region's bounty.

**We protect natural resources.** We are responsible stewards of our water sources, supplies and assets. We have a responsibility to preserve and protect them for future generations.

## OUR STARS VALUES

**Our values — Service, Teamwork, Accountability, Respect and Safety — are encapsulated in the STARS acronym. These are the principles that guide our everyday conduct and drive how we do business.**

**SERVICE:** We provide prompt, courteous service to our customers, our co-workers and all of our stakeholders. We continually strive to make the customer experience better for all.

**TEAMWORK:** We build on each other's strengths. Through efficiency and innovation, we work together, operating as a team, in the spirit of mutual trust and openness, to achieve success.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** We are responsible for our actions. We are honest and ethical. Integrity is at the heart of everything we do.

**RESPECT:** We show respect to everyone with whom we come into contact as we do our jobs. We promote diversity and embrace individuality.

**SAFETY:** We are a safe workforce. Safety is owned by every employee. We all benefit when safety is part of our daily lives.

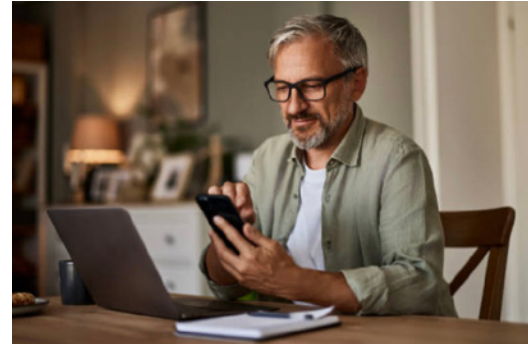
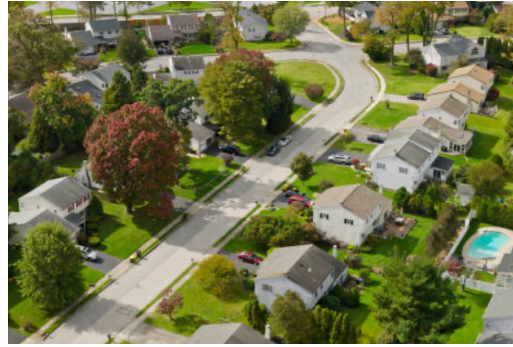
## RAISING THE BAR FOR SERVICE

Service is central to the RWA's identity and reputation. In 2024, we launched Delivering Service Excellence (DSX), an organization-wide strategic initiative to establish new service standards and elevate the quality of service we provide to our customers, our colleagues and our other stakeholders.

The program, developed with input from employees and focus groups, began with full-day training sessions attended by every employee, with expanded training provided to managers and leaders. Moving forward, this initiative continues with the delivery of refresher modules and function-specific training. The principles and service standards developed as part of the DSX initiative have been incorporated into core training for new employees and are reinforced on an ongoing basis.



# Our Customers



## CUSTOMER CARE

Our customer care specialists strive to respond quickly and effectively to customers' needs. While our representatives maintain the front line, the RWA offers an expanding array of self-service options where customers can find information, make payments, and even start or stop service. Our interactive phone system and online portal make it fast and simple.

## SERVICE FIRST!

We take pride in the high levels of satisfaction reported by our customers. A recent survey found 88.1 percent of our customers were satisfied with the service they received for billing and payment. We continue to work diligently to improve on these results.

## PUTTING TECHNOLOGY TO WORK FOR CUSTOMERS

We continually look at ways we can harness technology to improve our systems and processes so we can provide seamless and exceptional service to our customers. Our free customer account portal provides online tools that allow customers to make payments, review transactions and explore how and when they use water.

Customers can use our Autopay feature to set up hassle-free automatic payments from their financial accounts so they never have to worry about a missed RWA bill. And our e-Bill option makes payment easy for customers

who opt out of paper billing, reducing paper waste and postage for both the RWA and its customers. At the end of Fiscal Year 2024, about 42 percent of customers were signed up for e-Bill — avoiding the need to send nearly 2 million pieces of paper out by mail!

## OUR NEXT-GENERATION CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

We've made big steps toward launching our new, state-of-the-art customer service platform, which will debut in April 2025. The system, built on cloud-based software and specifically configured for RWA, is designed to make interacting with the RWA easier, faster and more convenient.

When our new customer platform goes live, customers will have more ways than ever to manage their accounts, make payments, monitor water usage and save money. They will receive a redesigned, easier-to-read bill, new self-service features and an expanded menu of payment options. The new system and platform will also provide RWA people with powerful tools so they can assist customers better and process transactions more efficiently.

## A HELPING HAND TO CUSTOMERS IN NEED

At about a penny a gallon, the RWA's reliable, high-quality water is a value for customers. For most, the water bill is their least costly monthly utility expense. However, some families need additional assistance to make ends meet.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**81,321**

CUSTOMER CARE INQUIRIES  
FIELDIED

**67**

SECONDS AVERAGE  
RESOLUTION TIME

**88.1%**


CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

**\$230,000**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
PROVIDED THROUGH LIHWAP  
PARTICIPATION

Our social media feeds help consumers stay up to date on the latest RWA news and information, while providing us with insights and feedback about what's on customers' minds.

 facebook.com/scctrwa | **3,185 followers**

 x.com/sc\_ct\_rwa | **1,562 followers**

 instagram.com/scctrwa | **2,268 followers**

 linkedin.com/company/regional-water-authority  
**2,325 followers**

In 2017, the RWA launched its Residential Water Assistance Program to help households in need pay their water bills, providing grants of up to \$175 for qualifying residential customers. RWA customers living at or below 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines are eligible for the Residential Water Assistance programs; income guidelines depend on household size.

We launched this affordability program in 2017, and by

## WATER QUALITY

Our customers count on us to deliver high-quality water. The RWA's proactive protection of water sources, meticulous processing of raw water, and rigorous testing help to ensure that our water continues to meet or be better than federal, state and industry standards.

## THE RWA LAB

Fully certified in 150 fields of testing by the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program, our state-of-the-art laboratory diligently tests our water to ensure it is of the highest quality. Our team of chemists, biologists and technicians performs expert testing of the RWA's drinking water, and we also offer commercial water testing services to members of the public, as well as private water utilities.

Our water experts test for contaminants regulated under state and federal law, including lead and bacteria, as well as emerging concerns such as PFAS (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances).

## EXTENSIVE TESTING

Our team of laboratory experts analyzed more than 28,500 water samples in Fiscal Year 2024 and conducted more than 102,000 tests, including those professionally collected at the RWA's own water sources as well as samples sent to us for commercial testing.

Water testing results can vary due to the weather, temperature, season and other external conditions. We collect samples from locations throughout our own distribution system at regular intervals throughout the year, so that we can meet regulatory requirements, provide meaningful results and assure our customers that the water we provide is of the highest quality.

## CONTINUING OUR LEGACY OF QUALITY

We are proud to say that the water we delivered to our nearly 432,000 consumers in Fiscal Year 2024 continued to meet or exceed all health and safety guidelines. Our test results detected

the end of Fiscal Year 2024 we have provided approximately \$185,000 in financial aid. Another source of help for our customers is the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). Through our participation, we helped customers receive more than \$230,000 in 2024 alone.

## KEEPING CONSUMERS INFORMED

The RWA uses a variety of channels to keep consumers up to date and help them understand the value of the services we provide. These include the rwater.com website, our quarterly Waterlines consumer newsletter, media outreach, bill inserts, email campaigns and digital channels. We even launched a radio show, "Liquid Lunch," on WNHH 103.5 in New Haven.







no contaminants at levels in excess of applicable federal or state standards for drinking water.

The RWA is required to test for specific contaminants and reports its findings each year in our Consumers' Annual Report on Water Quality.

As regulatory standards evolve in response to new scientific findings and public policy objectives, we will continue to monitor our water quality and work proactively to ensure we remain in compliance.

### IDENTIFYING LEAD SERVICE LINES

In the RWA's territory, we maintain the water distribution system up to the curb valve. But the final segment of the service line — the part that extends from the curb valve to the home or business — is owned and maintained by the property owner.

This presented a challenge when, as part of a broader effort to eliminate lead from water systems nationwide, the EPA introduced new rules requiring every public water utility to compile an inventory of the materials used for service lines connected to their distribution system. Although our own distribution system is essentially lead-free, the service lines connected to it were installed over many decades and are made from a variety of materials, ranging from modern plastics to copper, galvanized steel and lead.

In Fiscal Year 2024, in compliance with the federal rule, the RWA executed on a plan to identify the materials used for every service line in its system. This effort included direct outreach to property owners, as well as a targeted sampling program assisted by artificial intelligence to compile the inventory. Customers were also provided with simple, step-by-step instructions to inspect and report their own service lines.

An interactive map showing results of this inventory is available in the Water Quality section of our [rwater.com](http://rwater.com) website.

### PREVENTING CROSS-CONTAMINATION OF DRINKING WATER

Cross-contamination can occur when water that's not suitable for drinking, such as water used for cooling and irrigation systems, reverses flow. This "backflow" can enter the public water system, making the water unsuitable or unsafe to drink. To prevent this, a device known as a backflow prevention assembly is installed where the non-potable water system connects with the public water supply.

The RWA, working in partnership with businesses, healthcare facilities and homeowners, has an ongoing initiative to ensure these devices are working properly. In Fiscal Year 2024, our cross-connection control specialists oversaw testing of 10,526 backflow prevention assemblies to ensure they are protecting the public water supply.

### BY THE NUMBERS

**150**  
LAB-CERTIFIED FIELDS OF TESTING

**28,566**  
WATER SAMPLES ANALYZED

**102,483**  
TESTS PERFORMED

**10,526**  
BACKFLOW PREVENTION ASSEMBLIES TESTED

**0**  
FEDERAL WATER QUALITY EXCEEDANCES

**0**  
STATE WATER QUALITY EXCEEDANCES



# Our Communities

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

Our communities have grown in the 175 years since our founding — and so have we. We believe community engagement strengthens our region and is critical to our role as a modern water utility and 21st-century environmental services company.

## GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITIES

Throughout the year, the RWA and its employees donate money, services and time to local charitable and community organizations.

Each fall, the RWA holds an employee fundraising campaign for the United Way of Greater New Haven. In Fiscal Year 2024, employees raised more than \$26,000 and volunteered in the United Way's annual Day of Caring. They also organized an annual fall clean-up event along RWA watershed land, which last fiscal year netted enough roadside garbage to fill three large pickup trucks!

## SUPPORTING LOCAL SCHOLARS

The RWA supports educational efforts through the Claire C. Bennitt Watershed Fund. Established in 1999, the fund is a driving force behind the RWA's mission to protect water quality by acquiring watershed land and promoting environmental education.

The education programs and scholarships supported by the fund provide future leaders with the tools they need to preserve and protect open space and drinking water supply resources. It also provides assistance to students from the RWA's service district, awarding more than \$863,000 in scholarships since it was founded. In Fiscal Year 2024, the fund provided \$61,850 in scholarships to 10 students who are working toward degrees in environmentally focused fields.

## ENRICHING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Our commitment to making lives better extends to our belief that we have a responsibility to educate people about the value of water as one of our most precious natural resources. That's why, since 1990, the RWA has offered hands-on environmental education programs to show young people how their actions affect the ecosystem.

The RWA's Whitney Water Center provides free, hands-on water science programs to schools within the RWA service district. In Fiscal Year 2024, more than 10,100 students from 48 schools and organizations participated in classroom programs, field trips, water science loan boxes or field experiences.

In addition to classroom activities, our education team has also developed a 25-part video series highlighting at-home water science activities for parents and teachers as a distance learning resource. These videos, which are

## BY THE NUMBERS

**\$26,009**

CONTRIBUTED TO THE UNITED WAY OF GREATER NEW HAVEN

**\$61,850**

IN CLAIRE C. BENNITT WATERSHED FUND SCHOLARSHIPS

**10,123**

LOCAL STUDENTS ENGAGED IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS





available online and shared on our social media channels, have been used by schools, libraries and other local organizations.

Our education programs also build partnerships between schools and the business community. In 2016, we adopted Common Ground High School in New Haven, the nation’s longest-running environmental charter school. The RWA has worked with Common Ground students and staff since 2012 through our annual environmental careers summer camp and by providing support for other initiatives. In Fiscal Year 2024, with our support, Common Ground received a generous \$197,000 grant through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund. We will teach programs in spring 2025 to help Common Ground implement the curriculum outlined in the grant.

### WATER ON THE GO

Since 2015, our RWater to Go water wagon has been a regular presence at events across our region, helping educational and community organizations save money while keeping attendees hydrated. The mobile water fountain and bottle-filling station operates from April through October, making stops at events ranging from school functions to local festivals and road races.

Equipped with eight water fountains and eight bottle-filling stations, it carries 375 gallons of water – the equivalent of 2,800 plastic 0.5-liter bottles. It’s accessible to children as well as people with disabilities. In Fiscal Year 2024, RWater to Go rolled out to 31 events.

### HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

For more than 30 years, the RWA has operated HazWaste Central, Connecticut’s first permanent collection facility for household hazardous waste. In that time, the program has helped residents of member communities safely dispose of waste from the more than 200,000 households in the region served by the program. The program, cosponsored by the RWA and the South Central Regional Council of Governments, helps divert that waste from being improperly disposed of in a landfill.

During its May through October season, HazWaste Central provides residents of participating communities a weekly opportunity to deliver household hazardous waste to the collection center, which is open on Saturdays at the RWA’s headquarters on Sargent Drive in New Haven. Attendees can register online.

In its 2024 season, the program attracted approximately 164 registrations for each event and prevented more than 65,500 gallons

### BY THE NUMBERS\*

**65,500**  
GALLONS OF LIQUID HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTED

**63,300**  
POUNDS OF SOLID HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTED

**164**  
AVERAGE HAZWASTE CENTRAL ATTENDEES BY REGISTRATION

\*2024 program year



of liquid hazardous waste and more than 63,000 pounds of solid hazardous waste from entering the regular waste stream.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

The RWA is committed to the health and economic strength of Connecticut and our region. We support local businesses wherever possible, and we promote an inclusive and sustainable economy that benefits all people.

### BUYING LOCALLY

In Fiscal Year 2024, our spending on Connecticut businesses and municipalities exceeded \$48.8 million. We view this as a direct investment in the communities and people we serve. Buying locally has also been shown to generate a significantly smaller carbon footprint than relying on out-of-state vendors and suppliers.

### ADVANCING AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

The Greater New Haven region is home to a diverse population. The RWA believes in promoting inclusive economic growth in our community, and we do our part by supporting businesses that represent the diversity of the people we serve.

In Fiscal Year 2024, approximately \$2.4 million of our spending was with businesses owned by people of color, women, members of the LGBT community or disabled veterans. Supporting these businesses

helps drive economic prosperity to members of our community who have not historically benefited from economic growth.

### SUPPORT FOR OUR TOWNS AND CITIES

As a not-for-profit corporation, the RWA pays no taxes to local, state or federal governments. However, we believe that being a member of this region means making investments in its future. For this reason, we made nearly \$8.8 million in payments to the communities we serve through payments in lieu of property taxes (PILOT) during Fiscal Year 2024. These payments support schools, healthcare, local infrastructure and other vital services. Our commitment to this region starts at the tap, but flows well beyond.

### EMERGENCY RESPONDER GRANT PROGRAM

In 2024, the RWA announced a new initiative to support local fire departments and emergency service organizations. The RWA's Emergency Responder Grant Program distributed more than \$15,000 in grants to organizations that provide volunteer and professional emergency services within the company's territory. The funds are helping the organizations pay for protective gear, thermal imaging equipment, emergency response vehicles, training and other costs to support fire and emergency services protection.

BY THE NUMBERS

**\$48.8**

MILLION INVESTED IN CONNECTICUT  
BUSINESSES AND MUNICIPALITIES

**\$2.4**

MILLION INVESTED IN DIVERSE SUPPLIERS

**\$8.8**

MILLION IN PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILOT)







### PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

The RWA is active in local chambers of commerce and other industry organizations. Since Fiscal Year 2020, the RWA has funded a business development position with the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce to assist in job retention and economic growth. This unique initiative proactively connects with existing small and medium-sized businesses so we can better understand their needs and respond with resources. The goals of the program are to help businesses grow and thrive, remain in the region and encourage workforce development.

Since its formation in 2020, the Chamber's business retention and growth program specialist visited 392 area companies; provided 785 resources for information, education and advocacy; and discovered more than 1,605 new potential jobs.

### PROVIDING POLICY LEADERSHIP

RWA employees are involved in various statewide public policy workgroups and initiatives. They collaborate on issues involving the environment, water resources and the future of the state's drinking water supply. RWA employees participate in the state's PFAS Task Force, the Governor's Council on Climate Change, and the Water Planning Council Advisory Group, as well as the Connecticut section of the American Water Works Association and the Connecticut Water Works Association, to name a few.

### QUALITY ON TAP

Our water is not just a vital resource for human life. It's also a key ingredient in some of the world-class foods and beverages that have put the New Haven region on the culinary map. The RWA has partnered with local businesses, including East Rock Brewing Company, Modern Apizza, Chabaso Bakery and Foxon Park Beverages, to showcase just what makes their products — and our water — so special. You can find their stories, including video testimonials, at [rwater.com/water-quality/quality-on-tap](http://rwater.com/water-quality/quality-on-tap).



# Our Governance

## ADVOCATES FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

The residents of each municipality within the RWA's region — those we provide water to and residents of communities where we own land — have a voice in our company in the form of two boards that govern our work.

The 21 members of our Representative Policy Board (RPB) represent each community in our service district, as well as one member appointed by the governor. They are all residents of the municipalities they represent and bring to our organization a wide range of backgrounds and expertise. RPB members cast votes on critical decisions, with their votes weighted based on a formula that considers the number of customers and amount of land owned by the RWA in each municipality. Members of this board represent the interests of their communities. They vote on critical issues such as rate increases, land sales and any capital project with a cost in excess of \$3.5 million. The members of this board also ratify the appointment of the RWA's chief executive officer and appoint the five members of our Regional Water Authority Board.

Authority Board members are residents of the RWA's service region, but do not represent individual municipalities. Instead, they are involved with high-level strategy and oversight, such as setting the RWA's organizational priorities and overseeing the strategic direction of the company by reviewing and approving our strategic plan and tracking metrics to ensure it is successful.

Members of the Authority Board also oversee the financial strength of the RWA, which includes reviewing financials, approving operating and capital budgets, and holding annual, in-depth examinations of the organization's 10-year financial model. They provide input on the strategies that ensure the long-term financial health of the RWA. The success of these strategies has helped the RWA keep its commitment of providing high-quality, reliable and affordable water and services.

## FOCUSING ON WHAT MATTERS

To perform their oversight role, members of the RWA's two governing boards form specialized committees. These committees include:

### AUTHORITY BOARD COMMITTEES

**Audit-Risk Committee** – This committee assists the Authority Board in fulfilling its fiduciary and statutory oversight. The Audit-Risk Committee reviews the financial reporting process, the system of internal controls, the audit process, the process for monitoring compliance with laws, regulations and the Code of Conduct, as well as the RWA's risk management guidelines, policies and practices.

**Compensation Committee** – This committee has responsibilities for oversight relating to Leadership Team compensation. This includes reviewing the compensation strategy and ensuring officer compensation is aligned with market data, internal equity considerations, compensation practices

## BY THE NUMBERS

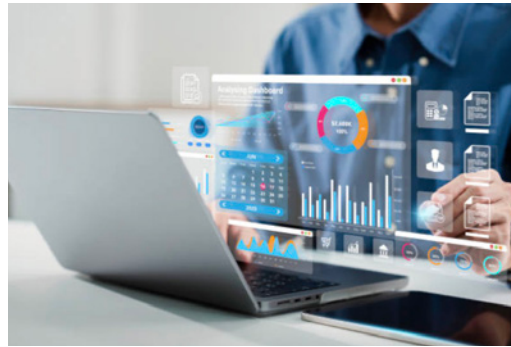
21

REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD MEMBERS REPRESENTING EACH COMMUNITY PLUS ONE GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTEE

5

AUTHORITY BOARD MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE RPB





and their contributions to financial and operating performance, and that the compensation strategy supports the organization's strategic plan goals and objectives.

**Pension & Benefit Committee** – The purpose of this committee is fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities for oversight relating to the RWA's pension and other post-employment plans. Responsibilities include the funding and investment policies for the plans, monitoring asset allocation and investment performance, and monitoring actuarial assumptions used to estimate the projected liabilities of the plans.

**Environmental, Health and Safety Committee** – This committee provides guidance and input to promote the RWA's leadership role in environmental sustainability and to help protect the health and safety of employees and the public. Members also assess and manage the company's emergency preparedness, business continuity and water supply.

**Commercial Business Committee** – This committee, in collaboration with the CEO and members of the Leadership Team, develops and recommends the overall strategy for development of the company's market-based business activities. It monitors progress, identifies and mitigates strategy risks, reviews results as a basis for setting new strategy and recommends actions consistent with the RWA's Enabling Legislation, Rules of Practice and

strategic plan. Market-based business opportunities are sources of revenue other than water rates. The objective of pursuing these revenue enhancement opportunities is to invest back in the core utility business and to mitigate water rate increases for customers.

**Strategic Planning Committee** – This committee, in collaboration with senior management, develops and recommends the overall strategic direction for the organization, monitors progress, reviews the basis for setting new strategies and recommends actions consistent with the strategic plan.

#### REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD COMMITTEES

**Consumer Affairs Committee** – Members of this committee assist the RPB in fulfilling its fiduciary and statutory oversight responsibility. This committee consults with the RPB and the Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) on matters concerning the interests of our customers. Examples of activities performed include reviewing the policies and procedures for considering consumer complaints and conducting public hearings to entertain objections by the consumer to OCA decisions.

**Finance Committee** – Members of this committee assist the RPB in fulfilling its fiduciary and oversight responsibilities concerning financial and budgetary matters, as well as the establishment of rates. The committee carries out its responsibilities relative to these matters, including the review of rate

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**Specialized committees help members of the RPB and Authority Board perform their oversight role.**

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applications, capital projects in excess of \$3.5 million, proposed commercial ventures in excess of \$1.5 million upfront and proposals to issue bonds, Bond Anticipation Notes and other financial instruments, and recommends the external auditor. Members also participate in policy discussions.

**Land Use Committee** – The Land Use Committee fulfills its oversight responsibilities relating to land use and management. This includes acquisition and disposition, recreation, cutting of timber, other land uses, land use plan amendments and related policy discussions.

### EVALUATING IMPACTS ON CUSTOMERS

As part of its governance, the RWA funds an independent advocate for consumers. The legal counsel who represents our OCA provides oversight to the RWA on customer issues. Complaints from customers can be sent to the OCA for evaluation and the implementation of remedies. The OCA also reviews RWA rate applications and other financial decisions, drafting opinions for consideration by the RPB before any vote. The OCA is entirely independent from the RWA, allowing for complete objectivity when providing guidance on how the RWA can best serve our customers. During Fiscal Year 2024, the OCA received one customer complaint.

### RISK MANAGEMENT

At the RWA, we are always looking ahead and considering a wide range of risk factors that could impact our business, from water quality issues to cybersecurity. The RWA's culture of safety includes planning for potential sources of risk. The RWA has a central control room and its own police department to respond to hazardous material spills on our watersheds and aquifers at any time of day. We maintain good working relationships with state and local emergency responders, and engage with them in regular tabletop simulations to enhance our mutual emergency preparedness.

Dam inspections and reports are completed on a routine basis at an interval that meets or exceeds state regulations. Emergency action plans have been prepared for high-hazard dams and are shared with local and state emergency planning officials. The RWA retains the services of a third-party consultant to assist in the completion of hydrologic and hydrology studies, structural and stability analyses, and modeling for use in identifying capital improvement needs at our dams.

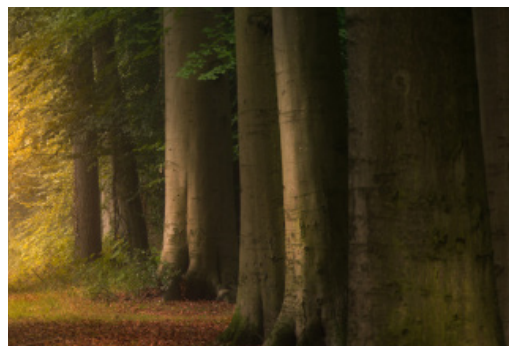
### SUPPLY CHAIN

We strive to ensure that our suppliers share our values of service, teamwork, accountability, respect and safety. We believe in supporting those companies that, like the RWA, strive to do good for the people and communities where they do business. The RWA seeks to ensure its suppliers comply with all environmental, health and safety laws, rules, regulations and organizational standards. We also hold these companies to the same high standards of safety to which we hold ourselves.

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**At the RWA, we are always looking ahead and considering a wide range of risk factors that could impact our business, from water quality issues to cybersecurity. The RWA's culture of safety includes planning for potential sources of risk.**

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# Our Employees



## EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Our employees are at the core of everything we do at the RWA, and we believe our efforts to attract, retain and develop them are an investment in our future.

## OUR GREATEST ASSET: OUR EMPLOYEES

The RWA offers a Total Rewards Package that is competitive and progressive within our industry and our community. It reflects our company's philosophy to provide every employee with competitive and valuable benefits, including base and premium pay, comprehensive health and welfare offerings, life insurance and retirement benefits.

In Fiscal Year 2024, we provided 5,010 hours of training and professional development opportunities for our employees, a significant increase over previous years. We also increased our investment in continuing education for our employees through our Tuition Reimbursement Program, issuing more than \$58,000 in reimbursements last fiscal year.

## CULTIVATING THE WATER WORKFORCE

With approximately one-third of the water-sector utility workforce eligible to retire in the next 10 years, attracting and retaining good workers is a critical challenge for utilities like the RWA.

The RWA reaches out to high school and college students to let them know about careers available at a water utility. This activity has included a weeklong program with Common Ground High School students and a daylong program with New Haven Junior Achievement students, as well as students from Gateway Community College and Southern Connecticut State University, who tour our headquarters and water treatment plants.

Championed by our immediate past President and CEO Larry Bingaman, a landmark Public Utility Management Degree program was created in 2019 to address the shortage of utility workers across the region. The RWA initiated and led the collaboration with Gateway, Southern and other utilities to develop the programs, offering students a pathway to employment in the utility industry.

Students can begin pursuing an Associate's Degree in Public Utility Management at Gateway, then transfer to Southern to complete their Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Utility Management. Both degrees offer courses designed to prepare students for work with a utility, with subjects such as

## BY THE NUMBERS

**285**

EMPLOYEES

**163**

BARGAINING UNIT  
EMPLOYEES

**122**

NON-UNION EMPLOYEES

**5,010**

HOURS OF TRAINING  
AND PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



environmental sustainability, financial accounting, asset and infrastructure management, and more. Graduates will be equipped to fill managerial and technical job openings at the RWA and other utilities. The RWA covers the full cost of tuition for employees who enroll in these programs. The programs are new but growing. SCSU had six students enrolled in the program for the 2024 spring semester.

The RWA offers internships to these students and attends job fairs and other events where we can meet with them and discuss career opportunities. The RWA has hired four graduates of these programs and hopes to employ more as the degree programs grow.

### JOURNEY TO ZERO PREVENTABLE INJURIES

Safety is the anchor of the RWA's core values. We are committed to ensuring that everyone returns home safely at the end of every day, and that our assets are operated in a safe and reliable manner. We base our commitment to safety on our care for employees, contractors, the communities in which we operate and the environment.

Employees underwent approximately 1,100 hours of safety training in Fiscal Year 2024. We reported no OSHA violations and redoubled our efforts to avoid preventable injuries. We recorded four such injuries during the fiscal year, three of which resulted in restricted duty and two of which resulted in lost time.

### A HIGH STANDARD OF ETHICS

Our strict Code of Ethics seeks to ensure that our business is conducted ethically, honestly and always in the interests of our customers. We ask every employee to review this code each year. In Fiscal Year 2024, 100 percent of RWA employees reviewed the code and documented their adherence to it.

BY THE NUMBERS

**1,100**  
HOURS OF SAFETY TRAINING

**4**  
PREVENTABLE INJURIES

**0**  
OSHA VIOLATIONS





# Our Business



## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

As a not-for-profit utility providing a life-sustaining product to nearly 432,000 people, it is a priority of the RWA to provide water that is affordable for all. Sound financial practices and prudent management of our business allow us to fund necessary capital improvements while mitigating rate impacts on our customers.

## KEEPING COSTS LOW FOR CUSTOMERS

Every year, we charge employees with identifying opportunities to save money and create efficiencies. Finding savings and efficiencies has a direct benefit for RWA customers. Combined with our successful efforts at reducing debt service since 2009, the RWA has mitigated rate increases by approximately 25 percent.

Besides our sound financial policies and operational effectiveness, the bond rating upgrades also reflect our ongoing commitment to fund our capital program in a way that is responsible to customers. The RWA primarily uses bonds to finance capital improvements. Beginning in 2011, we took steps to generate these capital funds internally. With the continuous decline in water consumption at a rate of approximately 1 percent per year, we have identified savings, as well as operational and capital efficiencies, and refinanced debt to help further mitigate rate increases.

## RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The RWA's fiscal policies and governance are focused on the long-term economic viability of our company, our resources and the region. Through responsible rate-setting practices, advanced financial management initiatives and effective strategies to increase our reserves, the RWA has established a strong financial foundation on which to build our sustainable future as a modern utility and 21st-century environmental services company.

The RWA's rates are based on cost-of-service studies generally performed every three to five years. These periodic studies ensure that our rate structure reflects the true cost of water and remains affordable. Cost-of-service analysis allows for matching rates to be charged to each class of water customer based on the costs to service that specific class.

The RWA monitors industry trends regarding rate structures and policies. By staying apprised of current trends and strategies, we are able to better plan for any future changes to our water supply or the communities we serve. We continue to adopt rate structures and financial policies that promote the sustainability of our organization while keeping water affordable for our customers.

The RWA utilizes a 10-year financial model that provides a long-term perspective on expenses, financing requirements and revenue needs. This

## BY THE NUMBERS

1¢

APPROXIMATE COST OF  
1 GALLON OF RWA WATER

25%

MITIGATION OF RATE  
INCREASES SINCE 2009

model allows us to project rate increases, both the percentage and dollar amount, for each planned rate increase over the 10-year planning horizon. We update the model annually and present the results of the base case and multiple sensitivity scenarios to both our governing boards. We solicit input from the boards regarding the scenarios analyzed, creating transparency in regard to any projected rate increases. Steps are regularly taken to enhance the RWA's financial model. For example, with reducing debt leverage as a focus, the model now incorporates projected debt leverage over the planning horizon. The model is also used throughout the year to assess various impacts on the RWA's overall financial position.

### ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS

In 2019, the RWA issued its first "green bonds" series. These bonds refinanced an environmentally sustainable tunnel and pipeline restoration project that was completed in 2018. Green bonds provide investors with the opportunity to invest in bonds that are targeted to support environmentally beneficial projects, including sustainable water management and drinking water infrastructure upgrades. Investors seek out green bonds as a way to identify opportunities to put their dollars toward environmentally friendly projects and combat climate change. We are a strong supporter of efforts by the business community to do good in the world by pursuing environmentally and socially beneficial projects.

Participating in the growing "green investment" movement is another way the RWA is helping to build awareness of the ability of the business community to do good and support the environment.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

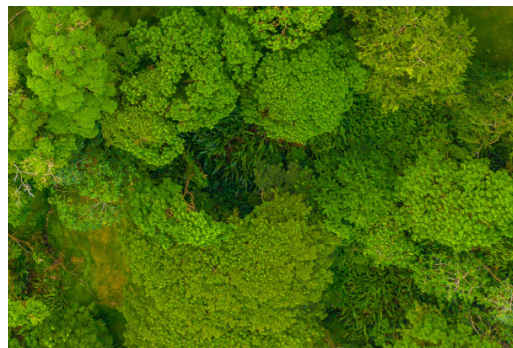
Our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan sets clear goals that incorporate cost savings and operational efficiency, encourage building a safer and more diverse workplace, measure and improve customer satisfaction, establish goals of effective management of our assets, promote sustainable management of our watershed lands and achieve financial targets while providing high-quality water to our customers.

The strategic plan, developed through a robust planning process that included input from RWA leadership, governing boards and more than 110 employees, focuses on several aspects of the RWA's operations, including increasing revenues from commercial business initiatives, with the objective of investing back into the core utility and mitigating water rate increases for customers. Enhanced revenue sources, such as services offered through the RWA's water laboratory, PipeSafe, Homeowner Safety Valve and WellSafe protection programs, affiliated water service companies, fleet repair, rental property and others help to reduce reliance on water revenues, mitigating rate increases for our customers.

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The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, which will sunset at the end of Fiscal Year 2025, is based on the Balanced Scorecard and serves as a living document and guide for action. It sets the stage for implementation plans, which are central to the four perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard:

- Customers and Constituents
- Financial
- Internal Business Process
- Employee Learning and Growth

### EXPANDING OUR COMMERCIAL FOOTPRINT AND WATER PROTECTION PROGRAMS

Our commercial business ventures allow us to offer our innovative services and solutions to more customers and clients while helping to offset upward pressure on rates for our water utility customers. In Fiscal Year 2024, the RWA announced the acquisition of North Franklin, Connecticut-based Carboni Plumbing & Heating, adding to the RWA’s expanding commercial water services portfolio that also includes Roach Plumbing & Heating of Marlborough and Water Systems Specialties of Thomaston. These locally operated water service providers are part of a network of commercial services and offerings available to consumers within and outside the RWA’s utility footprint. In July 2024, we acquired the Homeowner Safety Valve pipeline protection program, which provides pipeline and indoor plumbing protection plans in approximately 80 communities across Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

### INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintaining our system and delivering high-quality water to our customers requires ongoing, diligent and prudent investment. The RWA’s capital investment budget for Fiscal Year 2024 was \$45.4 million, including approximately \$8.2 million on pipe projects such as replacement of old and undersize water mains.

Our Capital Pipe Replacement Program, with the “three breaks per 1,000 feet replacement” criteria, is a very strong metric that has resulted in the RWA’s water main break rate of 2.73 breaks per 100 miles of main for Fiscal Year 2024 — significantly lower than the American Water Works Association’s national average of about 20 breaks per 100 miles of main.

The Capital Pipe Replacement Program is based on a Massachusetts Institute of Technology study performed for the RWA and has been reexamined by multiple parties to demonstrate its effectiveness in reducing and optimizing our main replacement program over the last 30 years, in order to balance capital investment with leakage and customer service standards.

Additionally, every year we listen for leaks on about a quarter of our water mains – more than 400 miles – by attaching two sensors to the pipes. The noise made by water leaking from a pipe is picked up by the sensors and transmitted to a device that can calculate the exact distance to a leak. This high-tech effort helps us detect small leaks, preventing them from becoming big breaks.

#### BY THE NUMBERS

**\$45.4**

MILLION FY24 CAPITAL INVESTMENT BUDGET

**\$8.2**

MILLION FY24 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR PIPE PROJECTS

**2.73**

WATER MAIN BREAKS PER 100 MILES



The RWA reduces costs by taking advantage of grants from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program and pursues other low/no-cost financing opportunities. Since we began participating in this program, the RWA has received \$6.3 million in DWSRF grants and continues to pursue other low- and no-cost financing opportunities.

### **FY24 INFRASTRUCTURE MILESTONES**

In Fiscal Year 2024, we commissioned our new million-gallon water tank in Derby, Connecticut, which will improve service reliability and fire protection for more than 13,000 customers in the lower Naugatuck Valley. We also completed major improvements to the West River Water Treatment Plant in Woodbridge, and continued our planning and community outreach campaign in advance the upcoming project to rehabilitate the 160-year-old Whitney Dam in Hamden. Construction on the dam is expected to begin in the summer of 2025.

### **INFORMATION AND DATA SECURITY**

The RWA makes the security of personal information and customer data a top priority. Our information security and public safety experts share information and strategies with utilities and law enforcement agencies throughout the country. Moreover, they implement internal strategies to protect customer data and work with all employees to promote smart cybersecurity practices.

To help protect customer information and keep our network secure, in Fiscal Year 2024, we conducted four phishing campaigns with employees through a trusted vendor. We have also implemented user phishing training as part of our onboarding for new employees. Results showed that RWA employees effectively protect the security of our network by recognizing and avoiding phishing attempts. We distribute a monthly newsletter to employees, which covers the latest industry news, best practices and special RWA cyber alerts. Moreover, we perform multiple ransomware tabletop exercises with our employees.

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# Our Environment



## CONSERVATION

Although the Greater New Haven region typically has abundant rainfall, we work to manage our water sources, our distribution system and our land to be resilient regardless of weather conditions or drought status.

## REDUCING WATER LOSS

Conservation is not solely the responsibility of the customer; it is important for the RWA to manage leaks and perform preventive maintenance as well. We were able to reduce our rolling net annualized unaccounted-for water from more than 14 percent in Fiscal Year 2022 to about 12 percent for the 2024 fiscal year by leveraging improvements in customer data and monitoring made possible by our advanced meter infrastructure (AMI). The water loss tool we use is a cutting-edge application that allows us to further target long-term water loss within our distribution system and coordinate field leak detection activities.

## WATER WISE WAYS

The RWA uses bill inserts, social media, its website, news media and other outreach opportunities to provide customers with tips and guidance on how to conserve water and more efficiently use this precious natural resource. In 2024, the RWA once again partnered with WTNH-News 8 and WCTX Channel 59 to air a series of television public service announcements sharing tips we call Water Wise Ways. These video segments can be found on the RWA's website, alongside many other points for reducing water use.

## RECYCLING RAINWATER

Approximately 40 percent of water used by a typical homeowner in the warm-weather months is used outdoors. To help customers conserve, the RWA procures rain barrels at a discount and provides them to customers with no markup. These 55-gallon barrels allow customers to capture and store water, and then use a hose attachment to perform outdoor chores such as watering the garden or washing the car. In Fiscal Year 2024, we sold 395 barrels for a cumulative total of 1,425 barrels since the program began.

## REPURPOSING WATER TREATMENT RESIDUALS

We're also pursuing novel strategies to reuse the materials produced as a byproduct of the water treatment process. Water treatment residuals produced by the RWA's treatment plants are sent to local contractors for beneficial reuse as a topsoil amendment. Since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2019, we've repurposed approximately 12,544 tons of water treatment residuals in this manner.

## PROTECTING OUR WATER SUPPLY

The RWA has long recognized the link between human activity on land and the water quality of streams, rivers and reservoirs. We have invested millions of dollars to protect thousands of acres of watershed land in the region so we can maintain a high level of water quality for our customers.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**27,806**  
ACRES OWNED

**10**  
ACTIVE RESERVOIRS

**3**  
AQUIFERS

**1,045**  
ACRES OF CONSERVATION  
EASEMENTS



## LAND MANAGEMENT

In 2016, we demonstrated our commitment to serve as stewards of RWA lands when we signed the Connecticut Source Water Collaborative Charter. The Collaborative is a multi-stakeholder group that seeks to develop and support strategies to preserve, protect and maximize the conservation of sources used for drinking water and the land that protects and recharges those sources. Through our work with the Source Water Collaborative, we will strengthen our water supply mission and enhance awareness that stewardship of water and land is a responsibility shared by all residents of the state of Connecticut.

Since 2019, we've partnered with local land trusts with the formation of a new regional conservation partnership in the Greater New Haven area we initiated called the South Central Regional Land Conservation Alliance. This regional partnership is an association of local land trust organizations that have come together to work collectively toward fostering open space in the Greater New Haven region. The RWA was a driving force in bringing these land trust organizations together so they can share expertise, information and resources.

The RWA manages its lands in accordance with a Land Use Plan that governs and enforces allowed uses on land holdings. It regularly seeks opportunities to acquire and protect new parcels of open space and watershed land, with the help of a matrix developed in-house to score the protection value of individual parcels. The protection of the water supply is the foremost standard for all land use decisions by our management and its governing boards.

Since 2007, we have spent more than \$13 million to protect 1,009 acres by acquisition or through legal agreements that guarantee the land is protected from development. This includes 280 acres protected by the RWA in the past 10 years.

## GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

Although mostly unseen, groundwater sources are an integral part of our water supply. Proper management of the watershed allows us to reduce pollution that could compromise the quality of the groundwater.

The RWA conducts inspections annually to identify potential sources of pollution within our public water supply watersheds and aquifers. We work closely with business owners, as well as local and state regulatory agencies, to ensure timely correction of any potential water quality threats.

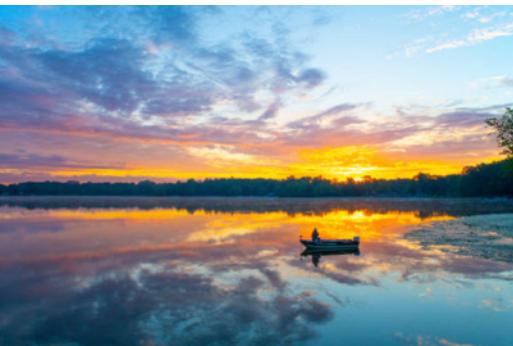
In Fiscal Year 2024, the RWA conducted 1,100 industrial, commercial and residential property inspections on parcels within our watersheds, which resulted in some 40 violations. Once the violations were identified, corrective action was taken to prevent additional issues.

## PROTECTING NATIVE HABITATS

The RWA maps, monitors and addresses invasive plants on watershed forestlands. This work includes research on control methods for species such as barberry, stiltgrass and knotweed, which interfere with forest regeneration, attract disease-causing ticks and impact water quality. We have worked with University of Connecticut researchers on remote sensing methods for







mapping invasive species, as well as the tree damage caused by insects and storm events.

Monitoring of invasive aquatic species is a high priority, including best management practices to prevent the introduction of zebra mussels and non-native aquatic plants into RWA reservoirs. The RWA is currently taking aggressive actions to contain water chestnut in one of its impoundments, including annual harvests since 2020.

### STEAMING OUT INVASIVES

In the spring of 2024, the RWA debuted a new, environmentally friendly tool in its battle against invasive plants. The new Weedtechnics mobile steamer device allows RWA personnel to “cook” invasive plant species without the use of herbicides or other chemicals. By safely and selectively targeting these harmful species, the RWA can help reduce erosion and prevent habitat loss for native plants and pollinators.

### THE CLAIRE C. BENNETT RECREATION PROGRAM

The RWA has nine recreation areas that touch 13 towns across Greater New Haven, offering great water views and four seasons of fun as part of our Claire C. Bennett Recreation Program. Permit holders can hike, jog, cross-country ski, bicycle and fish. The trails are well marked, easily accessible and open year-round. We provide easy-to-read trail maps and offer special family events such as nature walks and fishing derbies. In Fiscal Year 2024, we had nearly 5,000 permit holders.

### REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

The RWA is deeply committed to preserving the environment and continues looking for new ways to reduce our energy footprint. These ongoing energy reduction efforts helped the RWA accomplish an average decrease of 585,108 kilowatt hours (kWh), compared to our baseline year of Fiscal Year 2015, per EPA’s Portfolio Manager. In 2020, the RWA began purchasing green power through a third-party energy provider. This is 100% wind energy and, as a result of this purchase, the RWA has avoided the production of approximately 9,232 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in Fiscal Year 2024.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

In addition to projects that promote energy efficiency, the RWA has sought to use renewable energy sources more widely. The RWA has a 300-kilowatt hydro turbine installed behind the meter at its largest water treatment plant. In Fiscal Year 2024, the turbine offset this facility’s energy usage by 449 megawatt hours (MWh).

Another renewable energy source is the 1-megawatt (MW) solar array installed in 2015 at one of our wellfields. In Fiscal Year 2024, the solar array produced approximately 1,257 MW and provided 89 percent of the facility’s power. By utilizing solar power, we reduced our emissions by approximately 878 metric tons, equivalent to 2,245,798 miles driven by a passenger car or the energy use for 183 homes for one year. By cutting back on our emissions equivalent, the RWA is preventing this material from entering the atmosphere and contributing to climate change.

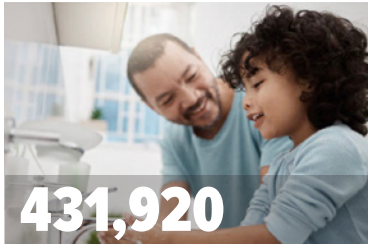
### BY THE NUMBERS

**9**  
RECREATION AREAS

**81**  
MILES OF RECREATION TRAILS

**4,889**  
RWA RECREATION PERMIT  
HOLDERS

# Fiscal Year 2024 at a Glance



Consumers Served



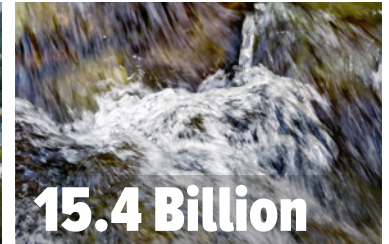
Employees



Metered Customers in District



South Central Connecticut Municipalities in Service Area



Gallons of Water Treated



Gallons Delivered Daily



in Assets



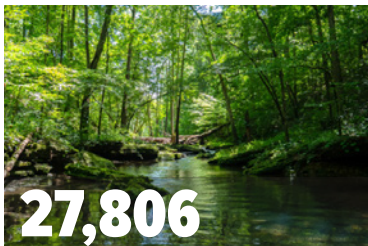
in Operating Revenues



Miles of Main



Hydrants Owned



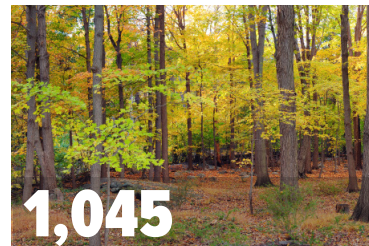
Acres of Land Owned



Miles of Recreation Trails



Miles of Fishing Areas



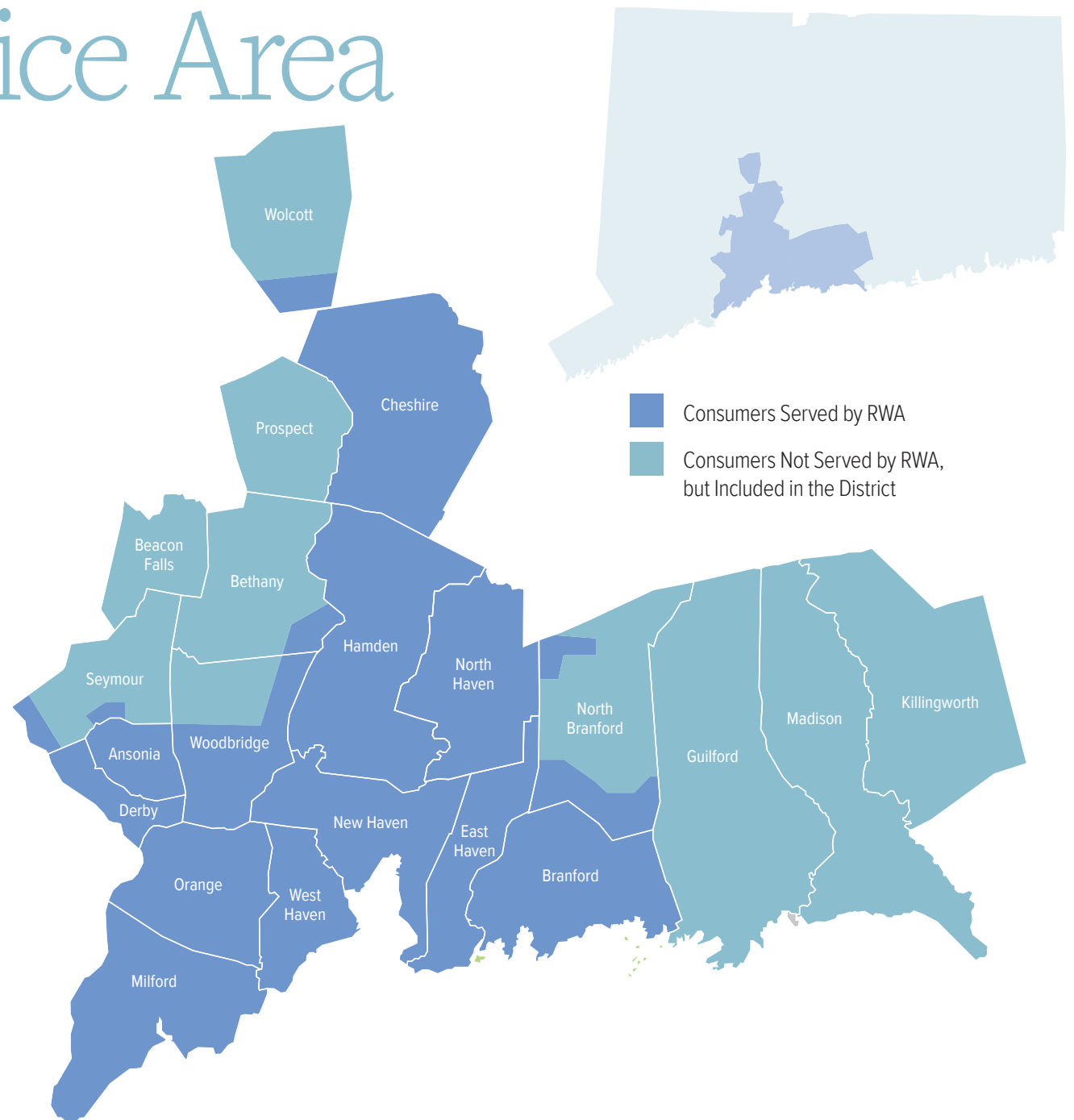
Acres of Conservation Easements



Area Students Educated About Water Science



# Our Service Area




 **Regional Water Authority**  
Tapping the Possibilities™

Visit: [www.rwater.com](http://www.rwater.com)

Write: [ask.info@rwater.com](mailto:ask.info@rwater.com)

Call: 203-562-4020

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[linkedin.com/company/regional-water-authority](https://linkedin.com/company/regional-water-authority) 