

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
Derby Tank, 73-75 Chatfield Street, Derby, Connecticut

AGENDA

Regular Meeting of Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – July 12, 2023 regular meeting
3. Derby Tank Update: Cody Savoy
4. Updates on land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
5. Other land items
6. Next meeting regular meeting: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.
7. Adjourn

SAFETY MOMENT

BICYCLE SAFETY

Americans are increasingly bicycling to commute, for exercise, or just for fun. By law, bicycles on the roadway are vehicles with the same rights and responsibilities as motorized vehicles. Bicycle safety initiatives focus on encouraging safer choices on the part of bicyclists to help reduce deaths and injuries on our roads.

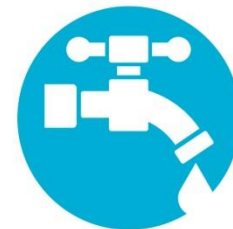
Bicycle accidents are highest during the summer months between June and September. To help prevent serious injury take the following steps:

1. Wear a helmet and bright colored clothing.
2. Be prepared before heading out - ride a bike that fits your size and one that works well.
3. Be focused and alert to the road and traffic around you.
4. Ride in the same direction as traffic and minimize sidewalk riding.
5. Ride in a safe environment at a park, bike bath or empty parking lot.

For more information visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/bicycle-safety>

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Tap Into
Safety



Regional Water Authority



**Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District**

Minutes of July 12, 2023 Meeting

The regular meeting of the Land Use Committee of the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”) of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District (“RWA”) took place on Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at the Northford Playground, 1827 Middletown Avenue, North Branford Connecticut. Chair Betkoski presided.

Committee Members Present: P. Betkoski, P. DeSantis, B. Eitzer, C. Havrda, M. Levine, and G. Malloy

Committee Members Absent: M. Horbal, J. Oslander and J. Mowat Young

RPB: R. Harvey, Jr.

Management: L. DiFrancesco, J. Hill, S. Lakshminarayanan, and J. Triana

Staff: J. Slubowski

Chair Betkoski called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Malloy, and seconded by Mr. DeSantis, the Committee approved the minutes of its June 14, 2023 regular meeting, with Mr. Eitzer abstaining.

Mr. Triana, the RWA’s Real Estate Manager, provided an update on the RWA’s Big Gulph Recreation area, which included:

- History and significance
- Recreation area trails and recent activities
- Watershed area

Chair Betkoski stated that at last month’s meeting the Authority voted to recommend two disposition applications to the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”). The RPB Chair referred the following applications to the Committee to review for completeness, mode and date of public hearing:

- a. 17.22 acres located west of Beech Street in North Branford that is part of Land Unit NB 4: S. Lakshminarayanan and J. Triana
- b. 19.462 acres located north of Poms Lane in North Branford that is part of Land Unit NB 4: S. Lakshminarayanan and J. Triana

After discussion, on motion made by Mr. Levine, seconded by Mr. Malloy, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend the following resolutions to the RPB:

WHEREAS, the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, on June 22, 2023, filed two Applications with the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”) for the dispositions of:

1. 17.22 acres located west of Beech Street in North Branford; and
2. 19.462 acres located north of Poms Lane in North Branford (the “Applications”); and

WHEREAS, the Land Use Committee of the Representative Policy Board reviewed the Applications and recommended that the Applications be accepted by the RPB as complete; and

WHEREAS, the Land Use Committee recommended that the public hearings be conducted by a Presiding Member; and

WHEREAS, the Land Use Committee proposed public hearing dates of September 28, 2023 at 7:00 pm., in accordance with Special Act 77-98, as amended, and the RPB Bylaws and Rules of Practice.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the RPB accepts the Land Use Committee's recommendation to consider the Authority's Applications and determined to hold public hearings, to be conducted by a Presiding Member, on September 28, 2023 at 7:00 p.m., in accordance with Special Act 77-98, as amended, and the RPB Bylaws and Rules of Practice; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chairperson is hereby directed to give notice of said hearing in accordance with Section 11 of the Rules of Practice, as amended.

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

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
June 30	92%	91%	88%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
June 2023	2.48	2.48	3.71
Fiscal YTD (6/1/23 – 6/30/23)	2.48	2.48	3.71

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

- Prospect, 200 Saddle Ct. – Surveyor set additional pins and the remainder of the property was marked.
- North Haven – Corresponded with property owner of 14+/- acres.
- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 50+/- acres.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4) – The FMA approved the disposition applications and they were transmitted to the RPB.
- Spring St. PS – Met with West Haven staff to discuss possible sites for a replacement pump station to Spring St. PS.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Asst. Town Attorney wrote that the condemnation was ready except for the compensation. He opined compensation should be zero. We replied that we disagreed with this and it should be some figure since they were taking part of the property fee-simple and an easement.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 95% complete.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – **The harvest was halted in early June, and the logger pulled his equipment off the property on June 13th. It is**

uncertain at this point whether the buyer will continue with the salvage operation even if a market is found - 10% complete.

- Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – 100% complete. Equipment removed, but some firewood logs still at the landing.
 - Mowed Christmas tree plantation at Lake Gaillard.
 - Hosted professionals from New Jersey, Vermont and Connecticut at our two slash wall harvests to discuss our experiences and outcomes related to them.
 - Conducted planning and start-up activities related to the anticipated receipt of the US Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration grant. Worked on and submitted various forms for LSR pre-award process including SF-424, SF-424A, and FS1500-35. Reviewed RWA's Grants Certifications Report and forms AD-1047 & AD-1049 for background.
 - Suspended one woodcutter for non-payment as a result of a check returned to AP due to insufficient funds.
 - Installed approximately 18 tree shelters around newly planted trees suffering deer browse damage at Maltby.
 - Investigated sugar maple die-off event on Saltonstall Ridge and contacted CAES experts for on-going follow-up toward identifying casual factor(s).

Recreation

- Trails Day hike at Big Gulph had 5 attendees.
- Tree identification walk at Saltonstall had 10 attendees.
- Bass tournament at Lake Saltonstall had 42 attendees.
- Cleared more trails at Sugarloaf.
- Attended meeting about the option to use PayTrac to collect credit card payments for boat rentals at Lake Saltonstall.
- Answered questions from Bethany Horsemen about what is allowed through their permit.
- Corresponded with UConn staff about their websites about trails.
- The Water Wagon attended four events in June.
- Picked up 20 donated used rod/reel setups from Bass Pro Shops to be used at out kid's summer camp fishing events.
- Hamden Hall Camp Hornet brought 57 kids to the Maltby Lakes for a morning of fishing and hiking.
-

	June		May	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
Permit Holders	4,980	5,218	4,972	5,676

Special Activity Permits

- Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (Dr. Goudarz Molaei, Chief Scientist and designees) - To conduct research on mosquito activity and eco-epidemiology of eastern equine encephalitis virus, 331 Old Toll Road, Madison-Cedar Swamp, Rt. 80 (6/1/2023-6/1/2024)
- Collins Engineers, Inc. (Robert F. Snelgrove, P.E.) – to perform an underwater inspection of the Amtrak bridge between Furnace Pond and Lake Saltonstall (6/22/23-6/23/23)
- Bimble's Bluff 50K (Russell Hammond) - Annual 50K foot race - Use of trails through Genesee Preserve north of Guilford (10/22/23)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Orange, 43 Pine Crest Dr. (OR 3) – Executed license agreement.
 - Hamden, New Haven Country Club (HA 5) – Continued to correspond with NHCC staff about an amended agreement for the parking area.
 - Hamden, 33 Rolling Ridge Rd. (HA 12) – Sent draft license agreement to the property owners.
 - North Branford, 261 Forest Rd. (NB 17) – Met with property owner and their tenant about the encroachments and showed them where the property line is.
 - West Haven, Shingle Hill tanks (WH 7) – Continued to correspond with the contractor for Yale re: using the tanks for a repeater. Corresponded with West Haven staff about amending the license agreement with the City.
 - Trespassing – Recorded instances of trespassing including dirt bikes and ATV's at Lake Gaillard, trees cut at Big Gulph, and mountain bikers and fishermen without permits at Maltby Lakes.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in East Haven, Branford, Bethany, and North Branford. Released bio-control for hemlock woolly adelgid at Lake Glen.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	51.5 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	4.5 acres

- Cheshire, Cheshire/ former Ricci property – Corresponded with Cheshire Land Trust staff about the town mowing the meadows.
- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – Juliano updated map again for Tighe and Bond for DEEP permit application. Corresponded with Tighe and Bond staff about the application.
- North Haven, Dodge Ave. easement – Responded to agent representing property owner about the status of the easement across their client's property.
- Prospect Reservoir – Gave tour of the area around the dam for Cheshire Historical Society members. Spoke to DEEP staff about latest plans for the dam. We expect to repair the dam and keep the supply in the water supply plan.
- Bethany, Rocky Corner development – Corresponded with other RWA staff about the need for an easement(s) to be conveyed to us around the wells before we accept the operation of the water system.
- Branford, Blackstone Ave water main – Corresponded with resident at Blackstone Ave. about our crew's access to and work on the water main. Discussed matter with Murtha staff.

There were no other land items to report.

Chair Betkoski reported that the position of Committee chair was open to interested candidates. Members were asked to contact him with interest in the position; he did not receive any responses. As there were no nominations for the position of Land Use Committee Chair for 2023-2024, on motion made by Mr. Malloy, seconded by Mr. Eitzer, and unanimously carried, the committee voted to reappoint Mr. Betkoski as Committee Chairman for 2023-2024.

The next meeting is on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. The Committee meeting will meet at the Derby Tank site.

At 6:15 p.m., the committee meeting adjourned.

Peter Betkoski, Chairman

August 9, 2023
Land Use Committee Meeting

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
July 31	95%	82%	81%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
July 2023	7.08	1.11	3.74
Fiscal YTD (6/1/23 – 7/31/23)	9.56	4.18	7.44

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

- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 50+/- acres.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4) – LUC determined that both applications were complete and forwarded them onto the full RPB. Town Hall was reserved as the location for the public hearings.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Asst. Town Attorney wrote asking us to provide a value for the property to be condemned. We provided \$5,000 as the amount we would accept.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 95% complete.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – The harvest was halted in early June, and the logger pulled his equipment off the property on June 13th. It is uncertain at this point whether the buyer will continue with the salvage operation even if a market is found - 15% complete.
- Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – 100% complete. Equipment removed, but some firewood logs still at the landing.
 - Placed five new woodcutters in woodlots.
 - Surveyed effects of beech leaf disease in areas of Northford.
 - Investigated and responded to complaints from firewood cutter who raised concerns regarding a potentially hazardous tree on his RWA woodlot.
 - Collected and submitted leaf samples to US Forest Service's New England Science Coordinator for a citizen-scientist, American chestnut identification and location project.
 - Supervised an American chestnut flower cross-pollination effort as part of bioregional effort to preserve the species local genetic diversity.
 - Drafted three PA-490 tax abatement applications.
 - Collected inventory data for the 200 Saddle Court PA-490 application.
 - Continued to investigate sugar maple die-off event on Saltonstall Ridge and contacted CAES experts for on-going follow-up toward identifying casual factor(s).

Recreation

- Botany walk at Rt. 42, Bethany had 5 attendees.
- Bass tournament at Lake Saltonstall had 34 participants. We switched to a catch-photo-release format for the tournament and it worked out well and made it easier for the recreation staff.
- Hamden Hall camp brought 50 kids to the Maltby Lakes for a morning of fishing and hiking.

- New Haven Police PAL's camp group also came twice to the Maltby Lakes to fish with about 30 kids each time.
- Issued work orders for trail mowing at various locations.
- Cleared downed tree at Old Mill Rd., Bethany.
- The Water Wagon attended four events in July.
- Discussed option to use PayTrac to collect credit card payments for boat rentals at Lake Saltonstall.

	July		June	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
Permit Holders	4,879	5,218	4,980	5,218

Special Activity Permits

- Branford Community Television (BCTV) (Ted Ebberts) Rest stop for annual fundraiser "Tour de Branford" - Sugarloaf Parking Lot (9/24/23)
- Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station-(Dr. Elisabeth Ward) conduct research on invasive plants and regenerating ash trees by monitoring plots in areas where ash been affected by Emerald Ash Borer. In ash stand along Farm River at the northern end of Lake Gaillard (7/6/2023-7/6/2024)
- Connecticut Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation-(Mr. Jack Swatt) flowering chestnut trees on RWA property to harvest nuts to plant in their Germplasm Conservation Orchards to preserve genetic diversity of the species (9/1/23-9/30/23)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Hamden, New Haven Country Club (HA 5) – Executed amended agreement for the parking area.
 - Hamden, 33 Rolling Ridge Rd. (HA 12) – Executed license agreement for lawn with adjacent property owners.
 - North Branford, 261 Forest Rd. (NB 17) – Called and left messages for property owner. By end of the month, their VM inbox was full.
 - West Haven, Shingle Hill tanks (WH 7) – Continued to correspond with the contractor for Yale re: using the tanks for a repeater. Sent them plans for the tank that we received from the original manufacturer. Received red-lined version of license agreement from Yale. Corresponded with West Haven staff about amending the license agreement with the City.
 - Trespassing – Recorded instances of trespassing including hikers without permits, dirt bikes, fishermen with alcohol and without permits, ATV's, and people on horses without permits
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford, Branford, East Haven, Prospect, an Hamden. Released bio-control for hemlock woolly adelgid at Lake Glen. Water chestnut harvesting concluded with extra days on the schedule. Conducted drone flights to document the extent of the infestation.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	79.5 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	10.4 acres

- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – Corresponded with Tighe and Bond staff regarding the DEEP permit application. Emailed update to one of the residents.
- Regional Conservation Partnership – Corresponded with other members of the RCP steering committee about future plans for the organization.

- Branford, Blackstone Ave. water main – Met with Murtha and RWA staff about the matter. Town staff confirmed it was a private passway. Sent letter to the resident of 1 Blackstone Ave. Authorized title report before our next move.
- Hamden, Waite St. and Mather St. vegetation (HA 6, HA 7, & HA 9) – Corresponded with Operations staff about mowing vegetation growing through the fence.
- Cheshire, Fernwood La. easement – Responded to property owner about our easements in this area.
- East Haven, Pine View Dr. (EH 3) – Replied to letter from owners of 39 Pine View Dr. regarding boundary markings and fence that was destroyed during the August 2020 tornado.
- Deer hunt - Proficiency testing was held on two Saturdays. Twelve hunters passed and one failed.

Attachments

- July 12, 2023 - Are water filtration systems an effective way to get rid of PFAS? Here's what a new study says – USA Today
- July 24, 2023 - Tick bites are sending more people in the Northeast to the emergency room this year – CT Public Radio
- July 19, 2023 - A land deal on the CT and MA border could be a major victory for conservationists – CT Public Radio
- July 24, 2023 - Eversource meets with Guilford residents over tree removal; some still want to protect healthy trees - New Haven Register
- August 2, 2023 - Dan Haar: Connecticut developers of \$1.5M house on contested Fairfield lot say they're victims of scam – New Haven Register
- August 4, 2023 - Connecticut saw a significant increase in deer hunting last year – New Haven Register

Upcoming Agenda Items

September 2023 –

Are water filtration systems an effective way to get rid of PFAS? Here's what a new study says

Kayla Jimenez - USA TODAY – July 12, 2023

Nearly half of the tap water in the United States is contaminated by PFAS chemicals, or per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, a recent report alarmed. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed an effort to restrict the group of chemicals, also dubbed "forever chemicals," in food and drinking water to improve public health which could help, but the agency hasn't yet finalized a rule.

In the meantime, Americans can keep themselves safe from the chemicals when grabbing a glass of water from the kitchen sink in part by using water filtration systems, one environmental group suggests.

Consumer-available water filtration systems that everyday people can use to rid PFAS from tap water are the center of a new study from the nonprofit activist group Environmental Working Group. Scientists from the group researched the effectiveness of several filtration systems available to consumers across the U.S., and determined that they can serve as a "band-aid" to the problem until a longer-term solution comes to form, said Sydney Evans, a senior science analyst at the Environmental Working Group who has led many types of PFAS testing nationwide.

"The end goal is people wouldn't have to buy a water filter... but that's just not the reality," Evans said.

What does the research show?

The group estimated there are "hundreds of brands and models of home water filters" that usually come six forms: "pitcher or large dispenser, faucet-mounted, faucet-integrated, on-counter, under-sink or whole-house."

Scientists tested 10 different water filtration systems for specific types of PFAS, notably the most common types: perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). The group tested for 25 different types of PFAS using one water sample for each filter, a summary of the research reads.

Most of the water filters the Environmental Working Group researched contain a medium typically made out of granular activated carbon to remove almost all of the PFAS, said Evans.

"To calculate the percentage PFAS reduction achieved by each filter, we contrasted the sum of the total PFAS found in the tap water sample with the PFAS detected in the filtered water," the summary reads.

Evans said she was surprised by how well some of the filters worked adequately removed PFA levels through reverse osmosis. And while there's no guarantee they rid of all chemicals, "some kind of reduction is better than nothing," she said.

The systems come with varying price tags. The group is advocating for legislation that restricts and regulates PFA levels from a federal and local level in part so consumers don't have to pay out of pocket to drink safe water.

How effective are water filters?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website cautions Americans that "no filter eliminates all contaminants" even though water filters can help rid of forever chemicals. The agency says water consumers should not "assume that if the filter removes one contaminant, it also removes others."

"Filtration of contaminants depends highly on the amount of contaminant, size of the contaminant particle, and the charge of the contaminant particle," its website reads.

"Depending on the household's water needs, pretreatment before filtration may include the addition of coagulants and powdered activated carbon, adjustments in pH or chlorine concentration levels, and other pretreatment processes in order to protect the filter's membrane surface," it continues.

What are the health risks of drinking water contaminated by PFAS?

Americans who drink water from the faucet contaminated by the chemicals are exposed to various health risks attributed to PFAS, including illnesses like cancer, low birth weight, and thyroid disease.

Location matters when it comes to risk level. A national study from the U.S. Geological Survey released last week shows that people living in urban areas are most at risk of having PFAS in their tap water while those living in some rural regions have a lower chance of consuming those chemicals.

According to a March 2022 survey of 2,246 American adults conducted by Aquasana showed that more than three-fourths of Americans are already filtering their water. Percentages of users grew between three percentage points between 2020 and 2022.

Those surveyed said they were most concerned about lead, chlorine, and chloramines and fearful of bacteria, cysts, and viruses. More than half agreed "they are more concerned about their health because of the pandemic, and 40% said they are "now more concerned about the quality of the unfiltered water in their homes because of COVID-19."

'There is still a lot of work to be done'

Experts are adamant regulation is the key to keeping people safe from long-term exposure to PFAS.

The Biden administration through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed a regulation in March that if finalized, "would regulate PFOA and PFOS as individual contaminants, and will regulate four other PFAS – PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and GenX Chemicals – as a mixture," a news release about the proposal reads.

"Communities across this country have suffered far too long from the ever-present threat of PFAS pollution," wrote Michael Regan, an administrator for the EPA, at the time the proposal was announced.

Justin Colacino, an associate professor of environmental health sciences at the University of Michigan, said if the new regulations proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency become reality, it would be "a major public health victory toward reducing exposure to these toxic and persistent chemicals."

He added: "There is still a lot of work to be done, though. With thousands of different PFAS chemicals on the market, we'll continue to need innovative new strategies to regulate how these chemicals are used in our products to protect the health of people and the environment."

Critics have argued it could cost the nation billions to make that a reality.

What are other ways to stay safe from PFAS?

Aside from the presence of chemicals in tap water, PFAS are commonly used in consumer products like nonstick cookware and linings of fast-food boxes. The Environmental Working Group recommends a few tips Americans can use to stay safe from PFAS in those items, including:

- "Skip optional stain-repellent treatment on new carpets and furniture"
- "Cut back on fast food and greasy carryout food" because it often comes from wrappers treated with PFAs
- "Be wary of all fabrics labeled stain- or water-repellent;"
- "Avoid PTFE-based nonstick pans and kitchen utensils;" and
- "Pop popcorn the old-fashioned way- on the stovetop."

Tick bites are sending more people in the Northeast to the emergency room this year

Connecticut Public Radio | By Kelsey Hubbard Rollinson - July 24, 2023

Connecticut's, tick-season, when ticks are most active, used to just be during the spring and summer. But with milder, shorter winters across the Northeast, ticks are now a year-round problem.

Earlier this month, Connecticut officials were forced to close Pleasure Beach in Bridgeport due to a tick infestation at the park. Four different species of disease-carrying ticks were found, according to the New Haven based Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. The state was advised to target and spray certain infested areas, cut back vegetation and post signs warning visitors not to walk in areas of dense vegetation.

The data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's online tick tracker shows that, in the Northeast, visits to the Emergency Department for tick bites are up more than 30% from last year. This means people enjoying the outdoors need to be vigilant, experts say.

"The best way to avoid getting sick is to just avoid getting bit by a tick in the first place," said Dr. Grace Marx, medical director with the CDC's Division of Vector-borne Diseases. "Being aware when ticks are active, and taking the right steps to prevent tick bites in the first place, is really the way to go."

The CDC's online, interactive tool allows users to track and visualize tick-borne disease data in the United States. A user can answer a series of questions covering topics such as tick attachment time and symptoms and then, based on the user's responses, the tool provides information about recommended actions and resources.

To reduce chances of being bitten by a tick, the CDC recommends using EPA-registered insect repellents such as DEET and checking body parts and clothing for ticks after being exposed to potentially tick infested areas, including the backyard.

"When you come inside, take a shower soon after you come indoors or within a couple of hours after coming indoors to reduce your risk of getting Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases," Marx said.

When a tick is found attached to the skin, she said removing it as soon as possible is key to preventing disease.

"You can just do this at home with a plain set of fine tipped tweezers," Marx said. "Different pathogens transmit at different times. For example, for Lyme Disease, which is the most common tick borne disease in the United States, it will take at least 24 hours for that bacteria to transmit. But there are other pathogens that can transmit in much shorter periods of time, including some on the skin for just minutes of attachment."

Another tool to protect against ticks, according to the CDC, is treating clothing with a tick-repellent chemical containing 0.5% permethrin, which typically stays active through several washings.

Of all the tick-borne diseases, Lyme disease is by far, the most common, representing upwards of 80% or more of all tick-borne diseases in the U.S., according to the CDC.

"There are other tick-borne diseases as well," said Dr. Marx, "and those include things like ehrlichiosis, anaplasmosis, tularemia, Powassan virus disease, so there really is a whole number of them."

"When you get bit by a tick, it's important to come in to your health care provider with information. And if you get sick after a tick bite, go in as soon as possible for evaluation," Marx said.

Symptoms of Lyme Disease and other tick-borne illnesses may develop within a few weeks after a tick bite. It's important to watch out for signs of a "bullseye rash" on the skin, as well as fever, nausea, headache and other symptoms that mimic influenza and arthritis, Marx said.

In Connecticut, residents can submit tick samples to The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station for testing to detect any diseases. Local health department contact information can also be found at the state Department of Public Health. Instructions on how to submit a tick and the necessary forms required to do so can be found through the state's Tick Submission Form.

"In areas where Lyme disease is common, including Connecticut, it's important to reach out early to your health care provider after a tick bite to see if a single dose of doxycycline to prevent Lyme disease could be appropriate," Marx said, "not necessarily waiting until you get sick."

A land deal on the CT and MA border could be a major victory for conservationists

Connecticut Public Radio | By Matt Dwyer & Patrick Skahill - July 19, 2023

Environmentalists have reached an agreement with a regional water commission to ensure that 5,500 acres of land in northwestern Connecticut and Massachusetts remains undeveloped.

The deal is a major victory for conservationists. It would keep the land open for the public and averts development on a critical piece of land that feeds into the Farmington River.

"The lands ... are extraordinarily beautiful and unlike landscapes that you see in most of Connecticut," said Catherine Rawson, executive director of the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC).

The future of the land was called into question after the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) announced it wanted to give up some of its rights to store water in the Colebrook Reservoir — citing costs to maintain aging infrastructure. That deal was recently approved by the state Department of Public Health, clearing the way for the area's conservation.

The Colebrook Reservoir is massive, holding billions of gallons of water. To keep it clean, strict rules govern nearby development. But environmentalists grew concerned those watershed protections could go away, potentially opening the door for development.

On Tuesday, the NCLC and Save the Sound said they reached a memorandum of understanding with the MDC to negotiate a conservation easement on the approximately 5,500 acres, which includes 4,300 acres in Connecticut and about 1,200 acres in Massachusetts.

The history of the Colebrook River Reservoir and its surrounding land stretches back decades.

The reservoir began operations in 1969. It was built mainly as a flood control dam following historic floods from back-to-back hurricanes in August of 1955 that left 77 Connecticut residents dead.

Under a contract between the MDC and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the MDC would have had 3.5 billion gallons of storage in Colebrook Reservoir, along with 10 billion gallons of stored emergency drinking water.

But since that contract was signed in 1969, the 10 billion gallons of emergency drinking water supply has never been used, according to the MDC.

The agency says there is no infrastructure for this water to be transported into MDC's drinking water supply system, which comes from the Barkhamsted and Nepaug Reservoirs. It also says payments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to maintain the Colebrook dam outweigh the benefits to ratepayers.

While local leaders agree, nearby residents have stressed the area's critical importance to local ecosystems and their desire to see it remain undeveloped.

"It is important to note that each of the four Colebrook Reservoir towns — Barkhamsted, Colebrook, New Hartford, and Hartland — have submitted letters of support of the MDC's abandonment application," Scott Jellison, MDC chief executive officer, said in a statement. "For decades, these towns and their residents have partnered with the MDC and its staff in ensuring that the land surrounding the Colebrook Reservoir is maintained as a protected watershed and available for passive recreation."

Under the deal, the land conservancy will pay the MDC \$1 million for the development rights to the land.

NCLC would purchase a conservation easement on 5,500 acres of MDC-owned land. MDC will be permitted to continue its existing uses of the property. New public access to the property will be allowed for hunting, fishing, hiking, and boating, subject to NCLC and state approval.

Residential, industrial, commercial and other forms of development would not be allowed.

If finalized, environmentalists said the deal would be the biggest area of land to be preserved in Connecticut since an agreement was reached to conserve Aquarion Water Company property two decades ago. According to Save the Sound, water companies are the second largest owners of open space in the state.

NCLC's Rawson said preserving the land is a key win for the state's residents, its animals and its ecology

"It's a really monumentally beautiful landscape, with steep forested slopes, cool clean rivers, and abundant habitat for both rare species and migratory species," Rawson said.

Eversource meets with Guilford residents over tree removal; some still want to protect healthy trees

Sarah Page Kyrzcz, Correspondent – NHR - July 24, 2023

GUILFORD — On Sunday, July 16, a large tree fell on Long Hill Road, during torrential rains, knocking out power for some 700 Eversource customers along Route 80, Great Hill Road and Long Hill Road, north of Route 80, and part of Branford.

Power outages are a common occurrence in this area of town, officials and residents agree.

Eversource started work in May to minimize this type of power disruption, yet work was halted after numerous complaints from neighbors who felt ill-informed.

Officials with the residential energy provider met with residents and town officials on Wednesday, July 19, to discuss their plan.

On Friday, July 21, the Board of Selectmen approved the issuance of the permit allowing Eversource to begin work on town trees.

The area affected by this work is Long Hill Road north of Route 80, Great Hill Road up to 700 Great Hill Road, Church Road and 470 to 560 County Road, according to Kevin McGee, Guilford tree warden.

"That circuit is one of the 10 worst in the entire state for Eversource," said Sean Redding, Eversource manager of vegetation management in Connecticut.

Some 74 town trees are included in and are located on "Long Hill Road north of Route 80 and on Great Hill Road up to 700 Great Hill Road," according to the permit issued by McGee.

There is one condition in the permit, which reads "...the trees being removed be reviewed by the tree warden with a sensitivity to the residents' concerns."

McGee and the Eversource arborist will work together to accomplish this goal, he said.

"It's a balancing act between the scenic road value and the public need for reliable energy there," said McGee.

"Nowadays you're looking at more people requiring electricity for different types of medical devices, more people working at home, so there's more demand for more reliability probably than it was 10 years ago, even pre-COVID," he said.

This project includes removal of trees on town property, in addition to private property.

"We are trimming branches that are encroaching towards, growing towards the line and over the lines," said Redding. "Removing tall growing trees within 10 feet of lines, tall growing, meaning taller than our wires."

"We are also looking at hazard trees, which are trees that are farther away from the line, are tall enough that if they failed at the base could hit the line and have some sort of disease, defect or structural problem."

Eversource is investing \$1.4 million in electric system upgrades in the northern part of Guilford, according to a press release.

The work includes installing 85 stronger, thicker utility poles and stringing nearly 1.5 miles of overhead electric lines, including "tree wire," which can better withstand extreme weather, the release said.

With input from Eversource's tree contractors and their Connecticut licensed arborists trees for removal were selected.

Some 90 percent of homeowners along this stretch of road consented to have trees pruned or removed from their property.

However, Great Hill Road resident Erin O'Hare is one of the 10 percent who did not consent to any work being done on her property when approached last February.

"They wanted to take leaders, two fat branches, on one tree and two fat branches on the other tree," said the resident who has spent, four decades working in environmental planning. "They never wanted to take the whole tree."

"I was still in shock," she said. "I didn't understand what was going on, so of course I said no."

"At that point we didn't even know about the poles, it was just under the radar," she said.

Long Hill Road resident Cynthia Damer understands the need to remove dead and dying trees, but is standing firm on leaving healthy trees on her property.

"I have a whole lot of trees going up Great Hill Road, the old sugar maples that are definitely on my property that I will not allow them to cut to the ground," she said. "That I will be looking for compromise."

"My last shade tree in my front yard is an old sugar maple," she said. "It literally is a foot and a half from the electric wires."

"The tree was growing there long before they put electricity in, so, that's inevitable," she said. "They need 10 feet, and my tree is right there. It's the last shade tree, but it's going to have to go. I have to accept that."

O'Hare said the work on trees and the installation of thicker, stronger poles and thicker wires "will forever alter the appearance and the character of this historic road."

Hoey said while Eversource is sensitive to this issue, they have a job to do.

"They have said, 'Yes, whenever possible we take into account the scenic aspects of a project,'" he said.

"But their primary responsibility is to ensure the delivery of electricity," he said. "They said that Wednesday. They said it 10 times during the course of the evening."

O'Hare was shocked to learn, during the meeting with Eversource, that the work will result in 30 to 40 percent less outages.

"I assumed it was 80 to 90 percent," she said. "I thought, 'Well, but at least we'll have good power. No, 30 to 40 percent fewer outages.'"

Jamie Ratliff, Eversource media relations – CT, addressed this concern.

"We are always working to improve reliability and resiliency for our customers, but we do not predict outages," she wrote in an email.

"When we do upgrades like this project accompanied with the type of tree work that we're planning, we have historically seen a 30 to 40 percent improvement in reliability," she wrote.

O'Hare lives in a 1827 Greek revival home.

"For us this is our homeland," O'Hare said. "Some people up here grew up on these roads, they were born on these roads. This is an old community up here."

"They are going to desecrate and forever alter the physical appearance of a scenic, rural road," said O'Hare. "This road, Great Hill Road, was the last road to be paved, in the '60s, in Guilford."

"This is a rural, agricultural road, lined by hayfields, sheep, horses," she said.

"We have a sawmill, we have a number of historic homes, winding stone walls, dark where the trees go over the road," she said. "It's rural, it's rustic, it's scenic. That's why we live we live here; we don't want to live downtown. We like it up here, rustic like this."

Dan Haar: Connecticut developers of \$1.5M house on contested Fairfield lot say they're victims of scam

Dan Haar - Aug. 2, 2023 – NH Register

As a partially finished house looms idle on Sky Top Terrace in Fairfield, the partners who bought the lot from an apparently fake seller and developed the property over the last eight months have issued a statement saying they are victims of the fraud with hundreds of thousands of dollars and their hard-earned reputations at stake.

A partnership owned by Gina Leto and Greg Bugaj is a defendant in a lawsuit in U.S. District Court by the rightful landowner, Daniel Kenigsberg, whose family has owned the half-acre lot for 70 years. Kenigsberg, a Long Island physician, returned to the street where he grew up on May 31 and found the property cleared with a \$1.5 million house built upon it.

That same day, they said in a written statement, "we learned to our shock and dismay that Kenigsberg, had not, in fact, sold the property to us. Rather, a third-party had impersonated Kenigsberg and – through the carelessness and neglect of the various real estate professionals involved in the transaction – managed to list, market, and sell the property without anyone ever catching on."

Leto and Bugaj said they have cooperated with local police and the FBI in a criminal investigation; that they offered Kenigsberg \$500,000 for the land they thought they had bought last October for \$350,000, which they said he rejected; and that they have initiated their own lawsuit against "the real estate professionals who facilitated the sale of the property in an attempt to hold them to account." Neither the lawsuit by Kenigsberg nor the statement by Leto and Bugaj name the real estate firms that listed and sold the parcel.

Kenigsberg filed a federal lawsuit on July 14 naming 51 Sky Top Partners, owned by Leto and Bugaj, and a lawyer who apparently executed the sale of the property for a scammer posing as Kenigsberg, as defendants. He's seeking as much as \$2 million in damages and wants the property restored to its original state.

I documented this whole unfortunate mess in a column last Friday. The statement from Leto and Bugaj, who have worked together on several properties with success in recent years, highlights that international wire fraud scams like this one -- the money was sent to a bank account in South Africa -- wreak deep havoc. And although they pit parties against one another, no one wins.

Scams involving fraudsters posing as sellers have become more common. One in which a house was actually built -- in this case, 4,000 square feet with four bedrooms and five bathrooms, on the market for \$1.475 million at least until recently -- may be unique. "We, as buyer, had no contact with the party impersonating Kenigsberg. We had no reason to believe he was an imposter. We would not have paid \$350,000 for the property -- nor would we have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars more in construction -- if we had," Leto and Bugaj said in their statement.

Work on the house stopped in early July after Kenigsberg and the partnership realized the land sale was a fraud. Leto and Bugaj said they agreed to vacate the property as Kenigsberg demanded except to make sure the site was secure and even then, with his permission.

Peter M. Nolin, the lawyer for Kenigsberg who filed the federal lawsuit, declined to comment on the \$500,000 offer the partners said they made and on further developments in the case.

In a filing this week in the lawsuit, 51 Sky Top Partners said it agrees that Kenigsberg is the rightful owner of the land and that they will shortly file a property record correcting the apparently fraudulent sale. But the partners, known as STP in the lawsuit, intend to seek a dismissal of several charges against them, for which Kenigsberg is asking for damages, according to their filing in the case. Simply put, they say they acted without malice. "Plaintiff has not alleged facts that would show STP acted intentionally or with reckless disregard for Plaintiff's rights," the filing said.

The other defendant in Kenigsberg's lawsuit, Anthony Monelli, a lawyer in Trumbull, has not commented and had not filed a response in the case as of late Wednesday.

Kenigsberg said he hopes to pass the land to his children or grandchildren as a vacant lot, one that connects his family to the place where his parents bought a house next door in 1953, along with the parcel at issue -- the house where he and his siblings grew up. Leto and Bugaj, in their statement, criticize Kenigsberg for holding out even as they agree he is a victim of the scam.

"But he is not a victim the same as we are. He will be made whole in the very near term through restoration of the property at our expense. We, on the other hand, will not recoup the hundreds of thousands of dollars we have, in good faith, invested in the property for years (if ever), and may never fully ameliorate the harm done to our reputations."

The hope is that their reputations don't suffer wrongly as a result of this swindle. The takeaway is that there are no winners here.

Connecticut saw a significant increase in deer hunting last year

Jesse Leavenworth, Staff Writer – NHR - Aug. 4, 2023

Hunters legally killed 10,433 deer in Connecticut last year, a 16.4 percent increase over 2021, and they spent about \$1 million more on hunting gear, according to a recently released report from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Of the total deer harvested, 4,889 were killed with bow and crossbow. Legalized statewide about 10 years ago, crossbow hunting has greatly increased in the state, according to the 2022 Connecticut Deer Program Summary.

Connecticut's whitetail deer population peaked at about 152,000 in the early 2000s and steadily declined to about 110,000, DEEP reported. Just over half of Connecticut deer hunters surveyed last year said the population was stable, 37 percent said it was declining and the remainder believed they were seeing more deer. Hunters' perceptions seemed to align with population estimates, which aligned with management objectives in several areas, according to DEEP.

Deer have been a particular nuisance in Fairfield County and along the shore, including collisions with vehicles and ecological damage, which is why the state has allowed unlimited harvesting in those areas as long as the proper permits are acquired.

Last year was particularly bad for hemorrhagic disease in the state's deer. Surveyed hunters reported about 200 dead deer suspected of infection with the virus, but the disease, spread by biting midges and fueled by drought and exposed mud flats, is not expected to be a significant factor this year due to the wet weather, DEEP wildlife biologist and deer specialist Andrew Labonte said Thursday.

Town by town, Lebanon took the lead last year for the most deer killed, including roadkill, at 277. Other towns with heavy harvests included Ashford with 189, Mansfield, 184, Newtown, 203 and Woodstock with a count of 190. Two deer were reported killed in Bridgeport and one in Hartford, all three by archers.

Other highlights from the report include:

- DEEP received reports of 270 deer killed on roadways but most crashes are not reported, and the total estimate for road-killed deer last year was 1,620. In previous years, about 21 percent of collisions were in Fairfield County, but the percentage declined steadily to about 13.3% last year, due in part to extension of the archery season and allowing hunters to use bait on private land.
- Of the reported roadkills, Farmington had the most at 20, while the count was 15 in Southbury, 13 in both Bethel and Newtown, 12 in Portland and 11 each in Glastonbury and Wallingford.
- Last year, 605 deer were killed by people with crop damage permits, available to farmers who can cite at least \$2,500 in potential losses due to deer browsing.
- The fall acorn crop determines herd health and movement of deer in the fall and winter. Of hunters surveyed last year, 46 percent ranked the crop as scarce. The decline is due in part to extensive oak tree damage by the spongy moth in recent years. The long-term implications are unknown, according to the report, but some recovery is evident based on recent surveys in Eastern Connecticut.
- Deer permit sales were down slightly last year, \$1,313,286 from \$1,366,485 the year before, but hunters in 2022 spent about \$7.1 million on hunting-related items, up from about \$6 million the year before.
- Deer hunters are allowed to hunt in some state and water company lands and on private land where the owners allow access. Asked about the main reason they hunt where they do, more archers said their hunting grounds were close to home while more firearms hunters cited access to private land.
- Deer hunters' success rates increased in all seasons over 2021, according to the report. Archers' success rate was 31.6 percent, while shotgun and rifle hunters' success rate was 30.4 percent.
- Of all antlered bucks harvested last year, eight-pointers were the most frequent.