

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
February 11, 2026

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Land Use Committee (“Committee”) of the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”), of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District (“RWA”), took place on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, 90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut, and via remote access. Chair Levine presided.

Committee Members Present: M. Levine(R), P. Betkoski(R), P. DeSantis(R), G. Malloy, and J. Mowat Young

Committee Members Absent: B. Eitzer and J. Olsander

RPB: R. Harvey, N. Campbell, C. Havrda(R), S. Iacuone(R), and C. Mancini(R)

Authority: T. Cort(R)

Management: V. Benni, W. Henley, J. Hill, J. Tracy, J. Triana, S. Vitko(R), and I. Brooks

Staff: J. Slubowski

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

On motion made by Ms. Young and seconded by Mr. Malloy, the Committee voted to approve the minutes of its January 14, 2026 regular meeting, with Mr. Malloy abstaining.

Mr. Henley, the RWA’s Aquatic Resource Scientist, and Mr. Tracy, the RWA’s Forester II – Drone Manager, provided an update on the RWA’s Water Chestnut management, which included an overview of the history, initial locations, and efforts to address the invasive species. They noted that the water chestnut, identified as an invasive species, spreads through seed reproduction and raises concerns for its potential impact on water sources. The RWA first discovered the species at Furnace Pond, located at Lake Saltonstall, which led to the implementation of a management plan in 2018. The plan led to annual harvesting efforts using mechanical methods beginning in 2020.

They also provided information on harvesting efforts from 2023 to 2025, analyzing pre- and post-harvesting results to assess the impact on water chestnut growth. Predictions and expectations for the 2026 season were also discussed. Other affected areas include the Lake Whitney upper basin, where the species' impact on nearby water bodies is being monitored using aerial imagery. In addition, the RWA is assisting the owners of Mill Pond in Branford, using drone imagery, to monitor the water chestnut growth in the area.

The Committee discussed management planning, mechanical harvesting, costs and funding, and a possible site visit to observe the harvesting process.

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
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January 31	65%	76%	77%	None
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<u>Rainfall (inches)</u>			
	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
January 31	2.12	0.72	3.56
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 – 1/31/26)	18.68	26.41	30.66

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

- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 20+/- acres.
- Cheshire, former Bis property (CH 5) - Received check for OSWA grant. Title company filed the CE's on land records in Cheshire and Prospect.
- Hamden condemnations (HA 5A and HA 7) – DOT staff sent updated surveys. Re-executed deed and sent to DOT.
- Killingworth, Abner Lane Rd. (KI 6) – Killingworth Land Trust indicated a lack of interest based on incorrect assumptions of how the deal would work. Briefed our proposal again for reconsideration.

Rental houses:

- Woodbridge, 1029 Johnson Rd. – Owner reported that they have yet to start the variance application for since they were still working on an A2 survey of the property.
- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. – Compiled material for the public bid.

Forestry Update

- Coordinated with timber harvester about clearing the area of the new North Branford tank.
- Completed marking timber for the Saltonstall slash wall harvest. Collaborated with herpetologist about allowing access/egress for box turtles.
- Inventoried two sugarbushes for the Bird Friendly Maple program and created habitat management plans.
- Worked with the New England Forestry Foundation and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to enroll forest stands with FSA to ensure eligibility and compliance with USDA environmental protection programs.

Recreation

- Held New Year's Day hike at Lake Bethany with 6 people.

	January		December	
	2026	2025	2025	2024
Permit Holders	4,833	4,775	4,813	4,787

Special Activity Permits

- Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station-(Ms. Susanna Kerio, Assistant Agricultural Scientist)-research for management of chestnut blight, Bethany (Hilldale Rd.); Madison (Genesee Recreational Area, Goat Lot Rd., Durham Rd.); Guilford (Goat Lot Rd., Durham Rd.); other possible locations on RWA lands with American chestnuts; (1/6/2026-12/31/2026).

- Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station –(Joseph Barsky) continuation of existing forest research studies, remeasurement of vegetation and sampling of ticks for vector-borne diseases. Seymour Slash Wall, Hosley Brook, Bethany RT. 42, Nathan’s Pond, Lake Chamberlain, Lake Gaillard; (1/1/2026-12/31/2026).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Agricultural agreements – Signed new license agreement to use the fields in Prospect. Sent consent form to Sperry Rd. field tenants to apply for a grant to install a fence around the field.
 - Madison, 702 Summer Hill Rd. (MA 9) – Abutter refused to agree with our survey. Preparing title report for an adversarial case.
 - East Haven, Barberry Rd. fields (EH 9, 10, 11, & 13) – Sent proposal for a smaller footprint.
 - West Haven, Shingle Hill tanks (WH 7) – Murtha sent email to West Haven about the expired agreement.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	3 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	3 acres

- Deer hunt – Post-hunt surveys due date is February 6.
- West Haven, 600 Derby Ave. – Reviewed proposal from YNHH and did not encroach upon open space area. Environmental Planning to track when the application goes before land use boards.
- Land Use Plan – Submitted draft letter and resolution to Authority to add to their February agenda.
- Armory St. PS – Responded to an information request regarding an art installation at the pump station in the 1890’s.

Mr. Triana reported that next month’s meeting will include a Whitney Water Center Update and April’s meeting will take place at an offsite location and will include the annual Deer Hunt update.

Committee members inquired about a site visit to see the Madison or Seymour slash wall.

The next regular meeting is Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

At 6:24 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy and seconded by Ms. Young, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

Mark Levine, Chair

(R) – Attended remotely.