

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
August 12, 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, August 12, 2026, at Lake Gaillard, 105 North Street, North Branford, Connecticut. Chair Levine presided.

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

Committee Members Absent: J. Engelhardt

RPB: R. Harvey, M. Doyle, C. Havrda, and C. Mancini

Management: J. Hill, V. Benni, J. Triana, J. Tracy, C. Cordes, Sgt. Putnam, and Sgt. Ferrara

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

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

On motion made by Mr. Malloy and seconded by Ms. Young, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2026 meeting.

Mr. Tracy, the RWA’s Forester II – Drone Manager, and Mr. Cordes, the RWA’s Forester II, provided an update and demonstration on the steam weeder, funded entirely by a USDA Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration grant, to control invasive plant species in the South Central Connecticut Regional Water district. The trailer-mounted unit uses pressurized saturated steam to kill invasive plants such as Japanese Stiltgrass and Black Swallow-wort without relying on herbicides or fire.

The project is part of a three-year, \$180,000 initiative focused on managing invasive plants, conducting bat habitat surveys, and improving wildlife around Lake Gaillard. The project aims to manage 100 acres for wildlife habitat, treat 450 acres for invasive species control, and adds 5–10 managed acres each year, all while minimizing chemical use and supporting forest and wildlife health.

Committee members discussed healthy plant impact, regrowth, safety protocols, and timeline.

Chair Levine stated that the next order of business was the review of the Land Use Committee Charter, which was last revised in 2018. Due to time constraints, Chair Levine asked for volunteers to form a working group to review and revise the charter for presentation and approval at the Committee's September meeting. Ms. Mowat Young volunteered to lead the working group.

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
July 31	87%	85%	81%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
July 31	10.27	2.25	3.80
Fiscal YTD (6/1/26 – 7/31/26)	13.07	3.32	7.47

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

- Durham – correspondence with property owner of 6+/- acres.
- Woodbridge, Baldwin easement – Reviewed first draft of the survey.
- Killingworth, Abner Lane Rd. parcels (KI 6) – DEEP indicated they are interested in acquiring the two parcels to add to Chatfield Hollow State Park. Notified the land trust and gun club. Authorized surveyor to start work.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. – Sold the property to Bayram.

Forestry Update

- Had multiple discussions on AMP-NEFF grant, supplying additional information to get us over the finish line with a contract. We anticipate a draft of the contract in early August.
- Met with new LSR grant handler.
- Worked with CFPA staff to schedule an education event at North Madison slash wall and cutting methods area in the fall focusing on forest ecology and stand development.
- Worked with an NRCS soil survey leader to collect samples at the cutting methods treatment area.
- Investigated a firewood stealing complaint from a woodcutter at Saltonstall.
- Sent a letter to all firewood cutters in Saltonstall alerting them to woodpiles created by a UI contractor.
- Conducted drill and fill experiment on burning bush and grapes in preparation for upcoming timber harvest.

Recreation

- CT Botanical Society walk was held at Lake Gaillard with 31 participants.
- Hosted two fishing events with kids from the New Haven PAL with 28 and 29 kids respectively.
- Held bass tournament at Lake Saltonstall with 37 participants.
- Cleared trails at Lake Hammonasset and Lake Chamberlain.
- Corresponded with the Mill River Watershed Association about the proposed trail by the Mill River in Hamden.
- After reviewing all the public comments about the Sugar Loaf area, emailed one of the respondents about serving as the coordinator of a volunteer group if the area was kept open.
- The Water Wagon attended five event.

July	June
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	2026	2025	2026	2025
Permit Holders	(not ready)	4,861	4,989	4,916

Special Activity Permits

- Bimble's Bluff 50K (Russell Hammond) - Annual 50K foot race - Use of trails through Genesee Preserve north of Guilford (10/18/2026).
- Yale University School of the Environment (Sara Kuebbing) - studying the impacts of invasive species (plants and pests/pathogens/diseases) on plant communities, forest soils and stand health. Big Gulph, Genesee, Lake Bethany, Lake Chamberlain, Lake Hammonasset, Lake Saltonstall, Maltby Lakes, Pine Hill Sugarloaf (7/20/2026 – 7/20/2027).
- Yale University School of Chemical and Environmental Engineering (Lea Winter) – group hike as part of my research groups retreat. Maltby Lakes (8/6/2026).
- Native Plant Trust (formerly New England Wild Flower Society) – (Erik Sechler, Ecological Program Coordinator) – survey and assess management needs for *Asclepias viridiflora* (green milkweed), a very rare plant species in New England. Saltonstall Ridge – Lake Recreation Area (7/29/2026-7/30/2026).
- Town of Hamden Land Use Department – (James Sipperly, Certified Soil Scientist, CT Wetland Scientist) - conduct a site visit on RWA property to delineate edge of water course to determine distance to proposed development for the Town of Hamden Land Use Department. Zero Willow Street, Hamden, formerly known as 4135 Whitney Avenue, Hamden (7/23/2026 – 8/6/2026).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Madison, 752 Summer Hill Rd. (MA 9) – Continued correspondence with abutter.
 - Madison, Dead Hill Rd. (MA 4 and MA 4A) – Sent letter to abutter about the brush pile since other neighbor denied it was his.
 - Orange, Pine Crest Rd. (OR 3) – Signed amendment to license agreement with abutter that lowered the fee since he removed the batting cage.
 - Guilford, Whispering Woods Rd (GU 9) – Investigated potential encroachment of clearing over the property line. A machine rolled over the line, but there were no trees cut on our property.
 - Bethany, 205 Valley Rd. (BE 6) – Discovered unauthorized trail coming from this property. Sent letter to property owner to cease use of the trail.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in East Haven, North Branford, West Haven, and Branford. Demonstrated steam weeder for the Mill River Watershed coalition and members from Save the Sound. Conducted drone flights at Furnace Pond and Page's Mill pond. Experimented on drill-and-fill techniques on Paulownia and Ailanthus at Maltby and Saltonstall.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	8.1 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	7.2 acres

- Hamden, Olin Powder Farm ponds – Corresponded with Save the Sound staff after they had a public meeting about the property and our participation was brought up.
- Deer hunt – Proficiency tests were held over two days.

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There were no other land items to report,

The next regular meeting is Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

At 6:27 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy and seconded by Mr. Eitzer, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

Mark Levine, Chair