

Representative Policy Board  
**Land Use Committee**  
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District  
90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut

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**AGENDA**

**Regular Meeting of Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.**

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – October 11, 2023 meeting
3. Lake Whitney Update: L. Marcik
4. Updates on land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
5. Other land items
6. Adopt Calendar Year 2024 meeting dates
7. Authority meeting assignments:
  - a. November 16, 2023 – TBD
  - b. December 21, 2023 – G. Malloy
  - c. January 25, 2024 - TBD
8. Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
9. Adjourn

# SAFETY MOMENT



## NOVEMBER – DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

On November 5th most of us will turn our clocks back one hour for the end of Daylight Saving Time. During this time there is statistically an increase in safety.

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

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

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

Use Daylight Saving Time to:

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



Service – Teamwork – Accountability – Respect – Safety

Safety is a core company value at the Regional Water Authority .  
It is our goal to reduce workplace injuries to zero.

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

Minutes of October 11, 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, October 11, 2023 at Lake Saltonstall, 100 Hosley Avenue, Branford, Connecticut. Chair Betkoski presided.

**Committee Members Present:** P. Betkoski, B. Eitzer, C. Havrda, M. Horbal, M. Levine, G. Malloy, J. Oslander and J. Mowat Young

**Committee Members Absent:** Peter DeSantis

**RPB:** R. Harvey, C. Havrda

**RWA:** M. Ricozzi

**Management:** S. Lakshminarayanan, J. Hill, J. Tracy, J. Triana, Capt. Ruggiero and Sgt. Putnam

Chair Betkoski called the meeting to order at 4:45 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Malloy, and seconded by Mr. Horbal, the Committee approved the minutes of its September 13, 2023 regular meeting.

Mr. Tracy, the RWA’s Invasive Species Management Technician, provided a drone demonstration, which is used for the control of invasive species on RWA owned properties. The demonstration included a discussion of:

- Drone components and sensors
- Requirements and certification
- Communication protocols
- Data collection and surveillance
- Areas of concern

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
September 30	89%	72%	68%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
September 2023	6.39	7.02	3.86
Fiscal YTD (6/1/23 – 9/30/23)	20.85	13.33	15.26

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

- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 50+/- acres.
- Bethany – Corresponded with property owner of 30+/- acres.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4) – Public hearings for both properties were held by the RPB.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Asst. Town Attorney did not reply to email asking for a status update of the condemnation.

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.
- **Guilford - Menunketuc High-Grade Rehabilitation Cut and Conifer Release (GU12/12A) - Timber marking and tally have been completed. A request for quote (RFQ) was distributed to potential buyers.**
  - Overseeded landings and skid trails in Killingworth, Madison and Seymour
  - Marked and tallied timber at planned Guilford timber harvest.
  - Supervised outside contractor for the removal of overgrown Christmas trees from Gaillard evergreen plantation.
  - Participated in a weekend program at North Madison slash wall for CFPA’s Master Woodlands Manager training.

Recreation

- Held walk at Lake Saltonstall about local oak species with 20 people.
- Held butterfly walk at Chamberlain with 18 people.
- Kids archery event was cancelled due to inclement weather.
- Met with Vermont Systems to talk about the website and including the current newsletter and updated events on the calendar.
- Cleared more trails at Chamberlain.
- Broken locks were replaced at the Maltby Lakes and Lake Chamberlain.
- Poor weather prevented boat rentals at Lake Saltonstall on three days.
- The Water Wagon attended three events in September.

	September		August	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
Permit Holders	4,827	5,026	4,883	5,102

Special Activity Permits

- Connecticut State Police K9 Unit (Mr. Ryan Cloukey and designees)-training K9 teams in the discipline of tracking, Lake Gaillard, (9/18/23-9/18/24)
- Univ.of New Haven Army ROTC Program Coordinator (Robert Clark) - Squad Tactical and Platoon Tactical Training - 1955 Litchfield Turnpike/West River Training Area, Woodbridge (9/18/23 – 9/18/24).
- Earth Tones, LLC, Adjunct Professor Naugatuck Valley Community College (Kyle Turoczi) – bring students to our properties for field work only. No collection of seed or plants, Morris Road, Bethany Rt. 69 and walk along the powerlines, (9/28/23 – 12/31/23).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
  - West Haven, Shingle Hill tanks (WH 7) – Waiting for Yale to waive a conflict with Murtha before proceeding.
  - Hamden, Downs Rd. field (HA 36) – Agreed to meet with our licensee and NRCS staff to talk about the field.
  - Agricultural fields – Corresponded with licensee about mowing the fields on the west side and the Branford fields off of Parish Farm Rd.
  - Trespassing – Recorded instances of trespassing including hikers without permits, dumping, and vandalism on a gate.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in Madison and North Branford. Attended two day invasive species expo in Saratoga Springs, NY.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	110 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	6 acres

- Hamden, water main easement at Hamden Plaza – Met with owner of Wood-n-Tap restaurant to discuss patio constructed over the water main. Said we would be in touch about what to do next. There was no immediate threat to the water main.
- Milford, 589 Bridgeport Ave. watermain easement – Met with Contracts staff and Murtha staff to go over amending the easement for the watermain in the former K-Mart plaza.
- Prospect Reservoir – Forwarded information to DEEP on behalf of Engineering about property ownership adjacent to the Prospect relating to their plans to dredge part of the reservoir.
- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – Corresponded with Tighe and Bond staff regarding the DEEP permit application. Met with him and made comments on the map he drafted.
- Branford, Blackstone Ave. watermain – The title report was received by Murtha staff. They are reviewing the report.
- Durham, Higganum Rd. beavers (DU 6) – Alerted that the beavers are active again plugging the culvert. Forwarded email to others who have talked to town staff before about this matter.
- Killingworth, Smith property easement (KI 16) – Contacted by realtor working for the Smith’s who intend to sell their property with our conservation easement. Answered questions she had about the rules of the easement.

- Deer hunt – Three pre-hunt meetings were held. The final count of hunters participating in the 2023 archery hunt is 164. By site: North Branford – 114; Bethany – 23; Prospect-19 and Ansonia/Seymour – 8. Parking signs have been put out.

There were no other land items to report.

Chair Betkoski reviewed committee member attendance at the upcoming Authority meeting on Thursday, October 26, 2023.

The next meeting is on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

At 6:00 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy, and seconded by Mr. Eitzer, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

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Peter Betkoski, Chairman

# Lake Whitney Dam and Spillway Improvements Project Land Use Committee Meeting Update



November 08, 2023

## Information on RWA's Dams

- ❖ RWA owns and maintains over 31 dams which ranges in height from 5 feet to over 100 feet
- ❖ 13 of the 31 Dams are classified as High Hazard
- ❖ Constructed between 1860 to 1957
- ❖ They were constructed of materials, such as, rubble stone masonry, concrete and earth
- ❖ Our oldest dam is the Lake Whitney Dam



## RWA's Own Brad Pitt of Dams



## How was the Dam Built



- ❖ Do we have Construction Drawings?
- ❖ Was there an Engineer of Record?

## The 2004 Leak



## Project Goals

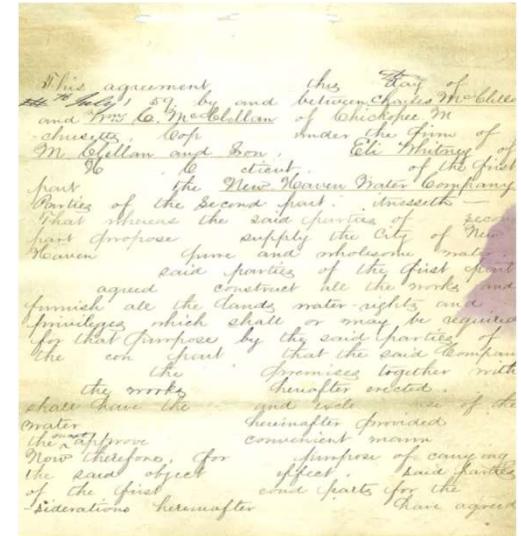
- ❖ Increase the structural stability of the dam
- ❖ Control seepage through the dam
- ❖ Increase the dam's hydraulic capacity to safely pass the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF)



Photo showing collected seepage through dam of 150 gallons per minute +/-

# Construction Challenges and Risks

- ❖ Managing water flow during construction
- ❖ Keeping the water treatment plant operational
- ❖ Protecting existing utilities
- ❖ Permitting with several agencies
- ❖ State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO)



## Project Execution Evolution

- ❖ Design team evaluated 20+ rehabilitation alternatives
- ❖ Construction risks, high project cost and long schedule identified
- ❖ Alternate Downstream Option considered and 45% design completed
- ❖ SHPO concerns
- ❖ Project delivery changed to Early Contractor Involvement (ECI)

# ECI Method Applied to Whitney Dam Project Delivery

- ❖ Integrated Delivery Solutions (IDS, Mark Alpert) prepared RFQ with RWA team
- ❖ Two phases defined – Phase I professional services to supplement design, Phase II for construction services
- ❖ Coordination with WIFIA and SRF funding
- ❖ Public RFQ process meets RWA, State and Federal contracting requirements

**EARLY CONTRACTOR  
INVOLVEMENT (ECI)**

***Request for Statement of  
Qualifications***

***Lake Whitney Dam and Spillway  
Improvements Project***



SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT  
REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY  
90 SARGENT DRIVE, NEW HAVEN, CT 06511  
203-401-2507  
Website: [www.rwater.com](http://www.rwater.com)

## Steps Moving Forward



- ❖ Advance preferred alternative to 100%, including permitting
- ❖ Conduct further design engagement with ECI contractors
- ❖ Solicit Phase II bids from ECI contractors
- ❖ Select one contractor based on value (price, work plan and construction methodology)
- ❖ Questions?

**November 8, 2023**  
**Land Use Committee Meeting**

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
October 31	87%	73%	66%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
October 2023	4.01	2.59	3.87
Fiscal YTD (6/1/23 – 10/31/23)	24.86	15.92	19.13

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

- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 50+/- acres.
- Bethany – Corresponded with property owner of 30+/- acres.
- Bethany – Corresponded with property owner of 60+/- acres.
- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 24+/- acres.
- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 7+/- acres.
- North Branford – Corresponded with property owner of 46+/- acres.
- Hamden – Corresponded with property owner of 10+/- acres.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4) – RPB voted to approve both applications. Sent letters to state and town about their rights of first refusal. Notice of the decisions were published in the newspapers.
- North Branford, Great Hill Rd. (NB 4) – Corresponded with abutter about land adjacent to his property. Indicated that we were no interested selling any of our parcel.
- Seymour, Squantuck Rd. (SE 5) – Received email asking about our use of the parcel and expressing some interest from the town in acquiring it from us. Instructed them to send us a formal letter if their interest was serious.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Asst. Town Attorney again did not respond to emails or VM's. Emailed Town Attorney and that was not responded to by month's end.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 75% 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.
- Guilford - Menunketuc High-Grade Rehabilitation Cut and Conifer Release (GU12/12A) - **Conducted a timber showing for GU 12/12A timber harvest. Evaluated bids and two bidders and awarded to highest bidder. Drafted a letter to homeowners abutting the timber sale and developed a mailing list for distribution.**
  - Cut grass and weeds between Christmas trees at Lake Gaillard.
  - Explored areas to move an existing maple taper looking to expand operations.
  - Investigated a trespassing incident at another rented field at the Crosby parcel

Recreation

- Bird walk at Prospect was cancelled due to inclement weather.
- Assisted with Women’s Club walk-a-thon at Lake Gaillard. Over 100 people participated.
- Boating program ended for the year. Boats moved to storage at Lake Gaillard and the dock were removed from Lake Saltonstall.
- Fish importation and liberation permits were filled out and filed with the CT DEEP so that we can get walleye stocked into Lake Saltonstall. The fish were delivered, but about 1/3 of the fingerlings arrived dead. The hatchery was contacted and adjusted the invoices.
- Met with Vermont Systems to talk about the website and including the current newsletter and updated events on the calendar.
- Cleared more trails at Bethany, Genesee, Hammonasset, and Pine Hill.
- Met with Bethany Horsemen representative about adding a water bar to a trail.
- Worked on plan to add more sections of dock with capital funds.
- The Water Wagon attended three events in October.

	October		September	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
Permit Holders	4,823	4,968	4,827	5,026

Special Activity Permits

- Connecticut State Police K9 Unit (Mr. Ryan Cloukey and designees)-training K9 teams in the discipline of tracking, Lake Gaillard, (9/18/23-9/18/24)
- Univ.of New Haven Army ROTC Program Coordinator (Robert Clark) - Squad Tactical and Platoon Tactical Training - 1955 Litchfield Turnpike/West River Training Area, Woodbridge (9/18/23 – 9/18/24).
- Earth Tones, LLC, Adjunct Professor Naugatuck Valley Community College (Kyle Turoczi) – bring students to our properties for field work only. No collection of seed or plants, Morris Road, Bethany Rt. 69 and walk along the powerlines, (9/28/23 – 12/31/23).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
  - West Haven, Shingle Hill tanks (WH 7) – Noted that Yale signed off on their conflict waiver with Murtha.
  - Hamden, Downs Rd. fields (HA 36) – Met with our licensee and NRCS staff at the field she uses. Corresponded to other tenant about mowing her field.
  - Hamden, High Rock tank (HA 22) – Sent courtesy email to Hamden Fire Chief that the license agreement for their equipment needed to be renewed.
  - Trespassing – Recorded instances of trespassing including hikers without permits, people with dogs, ATV’s, dirt bikes, dumping, and vandalism on a gate.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in Orange, North Branford, Madison, Hamden Met with New Haven Parks staff to discuss cutting Ailanthus on RWA property abutting Edgerton Park. Attended CIPWG general meeting and steering committee meeting, and confirmed new proposed additions to the invasive species list.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	70.5 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	2.4 acres

- Hamden, water main easement at Hamden Plaza – Spoke with Murtha about them drafting the letter that would go to the property owner at the Plaza with a cc: to Wood-n-Tap.
- Cheshire, proposed easement off of I-691 – Corresponded with DOT and DEEP staff about getting an easement for a water main between Peck Lane and Dickerman Rd.
- North Branford, former trolley line – Contacted UI real estate department to determine if they might grant an easement for a water main across their property which is the former trolley line.
- North Haven, Wharton Brook Industrial Park water main – Received notice from Amtrak that the license agreement for this water main expired in 2019. Filled out forms to renew the agreement.
- New Haven, 660 Howard Ave. – Discussed correspondence from the owner of the property claiming that he was owed money from us after we retired a pipe on the property in the mid-2000’s. This used to be a railroad line with a bridge. The above ground portion of the pipe was removed by us about 2008. Amanda and Jenine did much research on this matter and Amanda was going to respond to the property owner.
- Hamden, Cumley Rd. ROW – GIS staff noticed a garage situated over a water main in a ROW. Research showed that there was a build there from at least 1934 while the main was installed about 1922. Discussed with other RWA staff about the best way to move forward.
- Deer hunt – Put out signs at various locations. Hunt started on October 27 and will conclude on November 30. By the end of the month, 10 deer had been harvested.
- Green burials – Responded to an inquiry from a customer about the potential for green burials on our property. Replied that I didn’t think it was consistent with water supply protection.
- Bethany, proposed ordinance for burials on private property – Reviewed proposed ordinance from Bethany about allowing burials on private property. Environmental Planning issued a letter against the proposal, especially within a certain radius of our water bodies.
- East Haven, Rock Rd. SNET easement – Contacted Frontier about their abandoned equipment at Rock Rd. and possibility of releasing that easement.
- Hamden, Lake Whitney dam access – Contacted UI real estate department to resolve the issue of legal access to the parking lot and dam.
- Regional Conservation Partnership – Hosted a meeting of the RCP. The speaker talked about trap rock ridges and the first state geologist of CT.
- Branford, Hosley Ave. cleanup - Staff members participated in cleanup of trash along Hosley Ave.
- Drone flights – ISMT conducted two drone flights at the Derby tank for Engineering.

#### Attachments

- October 8, 2023 - Connecticut has a problem with water. Is the state under-preparing for storm runoff? – CT Mirror
- October 12, 2023 - Greater New Haven communities join forces to stop illegal ATV and dirt bike riders – New Haven Register
- October 16, 2023 - Regional Water Authority Employees, CEO Pick Up Trash In Branford – Patch website
- October 19, 2023 - Connecticut companies knowingly supplied contaminated water to residents, lawsuits claim – New haven Register
- October 30, 2023 - New Haven high school students thrive academically through urban farming – CT Public Radio

#### Upcoming Agenda Items

December 2023 –

## Connecticut has a problem with water. Is the state under-preparing for storm runoff?

By Jan Ellen Spiegel | CT Mirror - October 8, 2023

Raise your hand if you've heard this before: Connecticut has some really old infrastructure. And that includes drainage systems.

They are plagued with narrow pipes, small culverts, shallow and small waterway passages under bridges, and overburdened river outlets into Long Island Sound. Often they can no longer accommodate what climate change has created — large volumes and rates of water from intense storms that are occurring more frequently and water incursions from sea level rise, often at the same time.

While towns like Norfolk were reminded of this the hard way in July when it became apparent that the pipes put in after the 1955 floods could no longer handle the scale of floods in 2023, the problem has been on the state's radar for at least a decade. There have been steady, though slow, groundwork improvements, the result of some serious changes to state regulations and the data informing them.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has just released its latest installment: an update to its stormwater manual, which had been in the works for five years. It includes stricter regulations for how the state, municipalities and some large institutions handle stormwater by making sure more of it soaks into the ground instead of running into overburdened infrastructure.

The previous manual uses data as far back as the 1970s to calculate things such as stormwater runoff volume. The new one, which is operative beginning March 30, is updated to reflect more current patterns. More important, it will encourage users of the manual to consider how climate change affects stormwater, and it provides flexibility to compensate for the kinds of extremes climate change brings.

"The major update, which is more subtle, is that we're not trying to be static anymore," said Kathleen Knight, an environmental analyst who was a key author of the manual for DEEP. "We're trying to be more fluid and provide guidance documents that are living, provide direct references that are updated as we go. Both the science and technology of stormwater design and climate change are rapidly evolving."

Nisha Patel, who directs DEEP's Water Planning and Management Division, said another part of the overall objective is to give those who use it specific design guidance and how-to's for managing stormwater.

"How do you work within existing drainage systems? And what do you do to manage stormwater runoff? No. 1, in a way that's not going to cause pollution, so that's the environmental side. You don't want discharge of pollutants," she said. "But what can you also do to use small-scale, on-site solutions, so you are not always relying on a pipe to drain and take the water away?"

A key update to the manual involves something known as Atlas 14. It's a calculation by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of precipitation amounts and duration by location. This information is used in the stormwater manual and elsewhere to determine what to plan for when designing runoff infrastructure.

Just under a decade ago, the data for the Northeast in the Atlas was from the 1960s. Under pressure from the Northeast Regional Climate Center, which is headquartered at Cornell University, and its director Art DeGaetano, the Atlas was updated in 2015 to reflect 2012 data.

"So they're still 10 years out of date, basically," DeGaetano said. "There is another effort afoot by NOAA, probably within the next three years, to update those data once again to as recent as possible."

But the problem still remains that the data is historic. It does not predict precipitation in the future, which, given the acceleration of climate change-generated impacts such as rainfall rates, could mean the state is still under-preparing for storm runoff.

To that end, DeGaetano said his center has been working with New Jersey, Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay and Delaware River basins to develop adjustment factors to the NOAA Atlas 14 standard that takes climate change into account.

"I've heard talk about Connecticut maybe being interested," he said. "But nobody's coming to us, and we haven't gone out proactively and said, 'Hey, Connecticut, would you like us to do this for you?'"

The Atlas 14 data also don't account for shoreline-specific factors — mainly sea level rise, when more water comes towards the shoreline and storm surges push water way up Connecticut's rivers. Those inland pushes often come during storms as precipitation creates flooding and runoff trying to go downstream — essentially bi-directional and compound events.

"There's information on both, but they're kind of treated separately," DeGaetano said. He said it's hard to tease out impacts because drainage, geology and other factors are different from town to town, making modeling difficult, not to mention expensive.

## Permit changes

But the state has come up with some of its own adjustments, which it's instituting through a few of its existing permitting processes. One involves the "General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems," known as MS4. It is actually an EPA mandate for discharging stormwater. It presently affects about 120 cities and towns and about a dozen institutions. There's also a specific permit for the Department of Transportation.

Under Connecticut regulations that kicked in in 2020 (three years after they were approved), every year municipalities that fall within MS4 parameters must remove 1% of their impervious surfaces — the kind of surface that cannot absorb water, which mostly winds up in the storm sewer — paved driveways, parking lots, sidewalks. It's proving to be a difficult task for the bigger cities, because businesses and residents in those communities continue to add impervious surface by paving driveways and patios or extending parking lots even as their local authority is tasked with getting rid of it.

"Even if the climate wasn't changing, just by growing the impervious surface in the state, that would have created its own problems, as far as flooding was concerned," said Mike Dietz, who is with the University of Connecticut in several capacities specializing in stormwater management. "But now you pile climate change on top of that and the more intense storms, and it just amplifies the whole problem."

But there are some potential holes in the removal procedure, known as "disconnection." The state measures the baseline of impervious surface using aerial views, but it's only done every five or 10 years, so it can quickly become out of date and underestimate the amount of surface. Another problem is that the requirement to comply with the MS4 permitting procedure is based on census tract data — basically population density in certain areas — on the assumption the fewer people, the less impervious surface there will be, so less runoff.

What it doesn't take into account is how much flooding is likely, especially from the many inland river areas. So rural areas like Norfolk that don't have a lot of people, but do have some serious river systems that often flood, don't have to comply.

It's also the municipality's responsibility to report compliance annually. Given how new this is, the accuracy is still unclear.

But another stormwater runoff change coming in the new MS4 will also apply to DEEP's general construction permit, which covers new public projects — local, state or federal — that disturb more than an acre and private ones that disturb more than five acres. At the moment under both permits, projects have to retain the first inch of any rainstorm. They can store it, use it, whatever; it just can't go into a storm sewer. That one inch is about to go up to 1.3 inches, meaning even less water will be allowed into the sewer infrastructure.

Ironically, all these regulations were designed to help improve water quality, since storm runoff picks up whatever substances are in and on surfaces, impervious and otherwise. Solving water quantity problems just goes along for the ride.

For both the 1% impervious surface disconnect and the soon-to-be 1.3-inch retention requirement, green infrastructure is an increasingly popular solution. Rain gardens and retention ponds are recent alternatives to conventional stormwater runoff sewer systems, but they were originally conceived to deal with water quality, not quantity.

"There definitely is a benefit," albeit slight, said Dietz, who also heads up UConn's Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials, NEMO, program, which specifically helps municipalities comply with the MS4 disconnect and provides an online guide for them. "We're always careful to tell people it's not going to solve the big flood problems. It helps."

He and others point out that solving the problems would take a wide-scale coordinated system with many green infrastructure approaches. One rain garden isn't going to do it.

## DOT moving along, slowly

The Connecticut Department of Transportation, often under fire for not addressing any number of issues in a timely manner, has actually been a bright spot in retrofitting for more extreme weather. While not completing projects at breakneck speed, it can point to an array of them that feature widened culverts, minimized impervious surfaces, tidal wetland mitigation work, better fish passage, wildlife consideration, strengthened bridge abutments and more.

An executive order in 2021 required the DOT to develop a program to identify state-owned culverts in need of repair or replacement and a prioritized list to help get grant funding to do the work. DOT was already doing that, but it still faces a daunting task.

Almost all of the state's estimated 20,235 culverts were built prior to the 1970s, according to data provided by DOT. The average age of state culverts is 62 years, and the average age of drainage networks is 59 years.

More than half of the culverts are not even mapped. Among those that are, 6,400 are not inspected. Of the 2,687 that have been inspected, 62% are in good condition, just under a quarter are in fair condition and the remainder are in poor condition or are unable to be assessed.

There are 40 active projects and another couple of dozen somewhere in the design phase.

DOT has its own MS4 parameters for how much drainage to plan for. It also monitors recommendations from a number of national organizations for how to incorporate climate changes into transportation design and policy. But DOT is faced with the reality that there's a whole lot more impervious surface out there than when a lot of the bridges and culverts under them were put in place. And many of them are not much more than a metal pipe in the ground with only earth on top to hold it in place.

"So if the earth erodes away, that thing's just going to pop out of the ground and then go downstream, and we're going to lose the structure," said Scott Hill, DOT's chief engineer and engineering and construction bureau chief. "We're trying to make sure that whatever we're putting in is engineered so that it can survive the storm event."

More and more, that means replacing the whole structure and using deeper and more resilient foundations to account for greater water velocity underneath. It's not always that simple, since DOT doesn't always own the land around bridges and roads, potentially hamstringing resiliency options. Also, municipal drainage systems often tie into state ones, so changes have to account for that.

Hill said flooding on roadways is a huge concern for DOT and in many respects more difficult to deal with than bridges and their culverts. Solving it requires figuring out what roads will flood, how badly and when. Along the coast, they must calculate which roadways might be lost to sea level rise. And then what to do. If they elevate roads, will it impede wetlands or cause other problems?

"That is all still being worked on," Hill said. "At some point, what it's all going to coalesce into is a statewide discussion about what are the key critical roadways that we need to keep open in case of emergency and what are the impacts depthwise of water that eventually we're not going to have?" he said. "On the bridge side, we can show you the hardening and all that. But on the roadway side, it's pretty complicated conversations people don't want to have."

This is the first in a CT Mirror four-part series that will examine the impact of flooding on communities. In upcoming stories, the Mirror will look at ways shorelines as well as inland areas are coping with floodwaters and resources for communities that can't do it on their own.

## Greater New Haven communities join forces to stop illegal ATV and dirt bike riders

Mark Zaretsky – NH Register - Oct. 12, 2023

NEW HAVEN — Things are getting thornier for people who participate in illegal dirt bike and ATV rides in Greater New Haven.

A new eight-community joint task force is at work to combat the illegal use of ATVs and dirt bikes in organized "takeovers" and stunt shows that often rampage across town lines. Dozens of seized dirt bikes and ATVs served as the backdrop Thursday for what amounted to the task force's coming-out party.

The task force includes dedicated law enforcement personnel who participate in weekly meetings, share information and intelligence, develop best practices to respond, and coordinate joint operations to enforce related local and state laws. They also work to identify and apprehend those engaging in illegal activities, according to a document each of the participating communities signed.

"To the people that do this: You'll get a \$1,000 fine. You'll lose your bike, and you may get arrested," said New Haven Police Chief Karl Jacobson. "That's what's going to happen."

Jacobson was joined by Mayor Justin Elicker, Hamden Mayor Lauren Garrett, West Haven Mayor Nancy Rossi, North Haven First Selectman Michael Freda and police chiefs from Orange, Woodbridge and North Haven, among others.

Guilford, Wallingford and the Connecticut State Police also are part of the task force and members are negotiating with East Haven to possibly join, Jacobson said following the announcement at the New Haven Police Academy on Sherman Parkway.

"Obviously, ATVs and dirt bikes are a real challenge to the community — and it's not just the New Haven community. It's the region and the entire state," said Elicker.

He was joined by so many of New Haven's neighbors "to underscore that this is a united approach that will allow us to be much more effective in addressing a very difficult and complicated problem, but one that we can overcome," Elicker said.

The task force began work in May and was solidified in August, said Jacobson. Anyone with information about an illegal ride can contact the task force or leave an anonymous tip at 1-866-888-TIPS.

"This year in New Haven" so far, "we've seized 33 bikes," said Elicker. Of those, 18 were seized "since we started this work together."

In the process, "we also seized three guns," Elicker said.

"We want this behavior to stop. We want people not to come to our region" to engage in illegal rides "unless you want your ... bike or ATV seized," Elicker said.

Garrett said Hamden "has been participating for a couple of months now. We are sending several officers "whenever there is activity, "and we're very proud to be doing this work to keep our citizens safe.

"I know that this is a big problem, and it's going to take us all working together to have an impact," Garrett said.

Freda told members of the public, "We've got your backs here, because all of us here, myself included, we're fed up, disgusted and we're not going to take it anymore.

"If you're choosing to come to New Haven or the region to wreak havoc on our streets or take our streets over, now there's going to be consequences, and these consequences are going to be very severe."

Freda said he recently got caught in the middle of a so-called "takeover" on the Wilbur Cross Parkway "and people were so terrorized over this that it was really remarkable to see."

Orange Police Chief Robert Gagne said Orange "stands together with the city of New Haven" and its other neighbors. "The safety of each of our communities requires us to address lawlessness as a regional issue.

"This problem has been very frustrating for the public" and "the public demands action," Gagne said. "By working together, we can achieve a more effective response."

Rossi said that there have been a number of "takeovers" that have passed through West Haven, with some beginning in Milford and also passing through New Haven.

"The West Haven residents were frightened, and I understand why," she said. "I think it is important that we show a united front. We are not going to put up with this. There will be legal consequences ... Whatever it takes ... No one wants it here and we are going to work together until it stops."

Among those who attended were New Haven Chief Administrative Officer Regina Rush-Kittle, West Rock/West Hills Alder Honda Smith, D-30, and Evelise Ribeiro, chairwoman of the Police Commission, all of whom are members of the city's

ATV and dirt bike hearing committee, which holds hearings when people's dirt bikes and ATVs are seized and they want to get them back.

Formation of the task force follows steps that individual communities have taken, including an ordinance passed in New Haven in 2020 that allows police to seize dirt bikes and ATVs allegedly used in illegal activities and levy fines of up to \$1,000.

New Haven's ordinance, which the Board of Alders approved in December 2020, has been used as a model to tighten things up elsewhere — including Bridgeport — although New Haven used ordinances in New London and Springfield, Mass., as models for its law, Jacobson said.

Under the ordinance, first-time offenders riding one of the vehicles in the city illegally face a \$1,000 fine, up from the previous \$99. For a second offense, the fine increases to \$1,500. All offenses beyond that are \$2,000.

In addition, gas stations must post signs informing that they cannot sell gasoline to dirt bike and ATV riders — and for every illegal rider who fills up at a gas station, the owner could be subject to a \$100 fine. (It's OK for gas stations to sell fuel for ATVs or bikes that are on trailers, Jacobson has said.)

## **Regional Water Authority Employees, CEO Pick Up Trash In Branford**

Ellyn Santiago, Patch Staff - Oct 16, 2023

BRANFORD, CT — Armed with garbage bags and trash-grabbing tools, about 30 employees of the Regional Water Authority descended on Hosley Avenue in Branford Thursday to pick up roadside litter in the water company's Lake Saltonstall watershed.

There was no shortage of trash.

Over the course of approximately two hours, the employee volunteers, including RWA President and CEO Larry L. Bingaman, netted enough garbage to fill three large pick-up trucks, including an old couch, a discarded bed frame and mattress, and "too many 'nip' bottles to count."

Roadside garbage poses a potential threat to water quality, introducing contaminants that get picked up by rainwater and snowmelt as they drain into the reservoirs and aquifers that provide the water we drink. That increases the work that the RWA's water treatment plants must do to remove those contaminants. The RWA encourages consumers to properly dispose of waste and recyclables, and to remove roadside waste when they can safely do so.

## **Connecticut companies knowingly supplied contaminated water to residents, lawsuits claim**

Daniel Tepfer; NH Register - Oct. 19, 2023

BRIDGEPORT — Two class action lawsuits claim the state's two largest water suppliers, Aquarion and Connecticut Water Co., knowingly supplied water contaminated with chemicals used in the manufacturing of plastics to hundreds of thousands of state residents.

The lawsuits, filed in Hartford and Bridgeport Superior Courts on Wednesday, state that Connecticut Water and Aquarion have known for years that the water they supplied to consumers was contaminated with PFAS chemicals and that the chemicals were toxic, harmful to human health, and render the water unsafe and/or non-potable. The suits charge the two companies also knew, or reasonably should have known, about technologies available to remove the chemicals from water supplies.

Per- and polyfluoroalkylalkylated substances, commonly called PFAS, are artificial chemicals that have been used in manufacturing plastics, metal coatings, clothing, furniture, adhesives and other products.

"Instead of removing these harmful chemicals, Connecticut Water and Aquarion have chosen to pass on PFAS-contaminated water to their customers, putting the health of hundreds of thousands of people at risk and contaminating their bodies and their property," said Stamford lawyer Ian Sloss, who brought the lawsuits.

Aquarion spokesperson Peter Fazekas said the company "takes the quality of its water very seriously to ensure that it meets or exceeds all state and federal water quality standards."

Fazekas said there are no federal or Connecticut enforceable standards for the treatment of PFAS.

He added, "Aquarion is committed to continuing to work closely with policymakers, regulators, and other stakeholders to address PFAS."

Dan Meaney, Connecticut Water's director of corporate and external communications, issued a statement saying that "the water provided by Connecticut Water to its customers is in compliance with all current and state and federal regulations for drinking water, including PFAS."

The company began testing for PFAS in 2019, Meaney wrote.

"In those instances where it was detected, customers were notified of its presence. Test results are also included in the annual water quality reports available to customers," he wrote. "Connecticut Water is closely following the U.S. EPA's proposed standard for PFAS in drinking and will treat the water to the standard set by EPA to remain in compliance with drinking water standards."

The lawsuit seeks unspecified monetary and punitive damages, and orders that the two water companies install water treatment systems capable of filtering out PFAS chemicals and establish a diagnostic medical testing program for the class.

The lawsuits cite studies Aquarion and Connecticut Water have done of their water supplies that found levels of contamination dangerous to human health in water supplies serving, for Aquarion: Bridgeport, Danbury, Darien, Greenwich, New Fairfield and Ridgefield among other municipalities, and for Connecticut Water: Guilford, Madison, Old Saybrook, Farmington, Tolland and Vernon among others.

The lawsuit states that Connecticut Water has known about the danger of the chemicals in its water supply because in October 2021 Connecticut Water sued the 3M Company in U.S. District Court in South Carolina claiming the chemicals the company makes and are a danger to people have entered water sources in Connecticut.

Under a proposed settlement reached in July, 3M would pay up to \$12 billion to water suppliers. However, the settlement is opposed by attorney generals around the country including Connecticut Attorney General William Tong who claims the agreement does not hold 3M accountable.

## **New Haven high school students thrive academically through urban farming**

Connecticut Public Radio | By Lesley Cosme Torres - October 30, 2023

Atop one of the largest state parks in Connecticut sits Common Ground High School, a charter school with a mission to teach students about urban farming and environmental justice.

It's one example of how alternative schools have become a pathway for students who prefer a hands-on learning environment.

Common Ground's campus is sprawling. There are 225 students who attend class on 20 acres of land surrounded by West Rock Ridge State Park. Students take classes outside, learn how to tend to the land and grow food for local communities where access to fresh produce is scarce.

Teachers at Common Ground say their students seem to be more engaged in the classroom when compared to most students at traditional public high schools. They say this is due in part to the autonomy students are given over their education. Each high school senior must deliver a project based on a social or environmental justice issue facing New Haven. The seniors are allowed to choose the topic they research.

Isabella O'Connor, a senior at Common Ground, said the staff is very involved in her education and that she's learning about topics that would not ordinarily be taught at a traditional public high school. She said her teachers are passionate about the subject they're teaching and believes they actually want to be there. In class, students aren't just being lectured, they're experiencing their lessons, O'Connor said. "We're very hands on. We've had science classes where we go outside and do experiments within nature. We'll go into the wetlands and do experiments where we interact with the fish or the frogs out there," O'Connor said.

Candi Fulcher, a teacher at Common Ground, believes part of her job is to help her students develop their own voice. Fulcher said students are empowered to advocate for something they want out of their education rather than their parents. For example, a lot of assignments, activities, and performance tests were created or evaluated by students.

Samantha Townsend, an English teacher at Common Ground said the school encourages students to be active participants in their learning process.

"There's more cooperative learning here where they work in groups and have the opportunity to make a choice about what works best for them in their learning," Townsend said. "If a student would prefer to write an article versus writing an essay, then we allow them to tap into their unique passion, skill, or interest."

Not only students have a say, teachers also have the chance to build their own curriculum and lessons around the themes that interest them. "That's how we connect with the students," Fulcher said.

When students begin at Common Ground, they identify what their senior project will be and spend the next four years developing their unique idea. They'll choose a social justice issue they want to research and choose a local nonprofit to work with to accomplish their ideas.

In the past, students have spent their year producing a documentary film, strengthening support systems for English language learners, and helping launch New Haven's mobile farm market which helps neighborhoods in need of fresh produce.

Students at the high school also take advantage of all New Haven has to offer. They often take college classes at Southern Connecticut State University, Gateway Community College and Yale.

While it's different from traditional learning, students still have access to AP classes and classes that prepare them for college. They're required to have a post-secondary plan as a part of their senior project. They need to at least apply to one college or university as a part of this plan.

Common Ground also offers a curriculum that focuses on environmental challenges and why they tend to be concentrated in low-income neighborhoods that are oftentimes and communities of color.

Cherry Pacquette-Emmanuel, school director of Common Ground, said through their capstone, students are identifying what really matters to them and carrying the knowledge they learned at the school after they graduate.

"They're looking at the world in a very different way. They're thinking about climate change, they're thinking about the types of food we eat and the impact it has on our bodies and on their communities," Pacquette-Emmanuel said.

She said she wants students to take their experience at Common Ground and understand their future careers can be anything they want it to be. To not just have a career to have a career, but make sure their life's work is making a difference.

"The fact that the concept for Common Ground came about because there's some educators that wanted to do things differently and have created this really unique space," Pacquette-Emmanuel said. "I want the students to know they can do that in whatever fields they pursue, to push all pathways and not follow anybody else's path."

REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD

LAND USE COMMITTEE

2024 PROPOSED MEETING DATES

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