

**Representative Policy Board  
Land Use Committee  
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District**  
Place: Seymour Wellfield, 151 Roosevelt Drive, Seymour, Connecticut

**AGENDA**

**Regular Meeting of Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.**

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – August 10, 2022
3. Aquifer Protection: S. Vitko
4. Updates on other land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
5. Other land items
6. Volunteers to attend Regional Water Authority meetings on October 27, 2022, November 17, 2022, December 15, 2022 and January 26, 2023
7. Next meeting – Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.
8. Adjourn

# SAFETY MOMENT

## AUTUMN SAFETY



**CHECK  
SMOKE  
DETECTORS**

ONCE PER MONTH TO  
ENSURE THEY WORK



**KEEP ALL FALL  
DECORATIONS**

AWAY FROM LIT CANDLES  
& ALL OPEN FLAMES

**CLEAN AND  
INSPECT**

YOUR CHIMNEY ON A  
REGULAR BASIS



**DON'T  
OVERLOAD  
OUTLETS**

WITH TOO MANY  
PLUG-IN  
DECORATIONS



**Tap Into  
Safety**

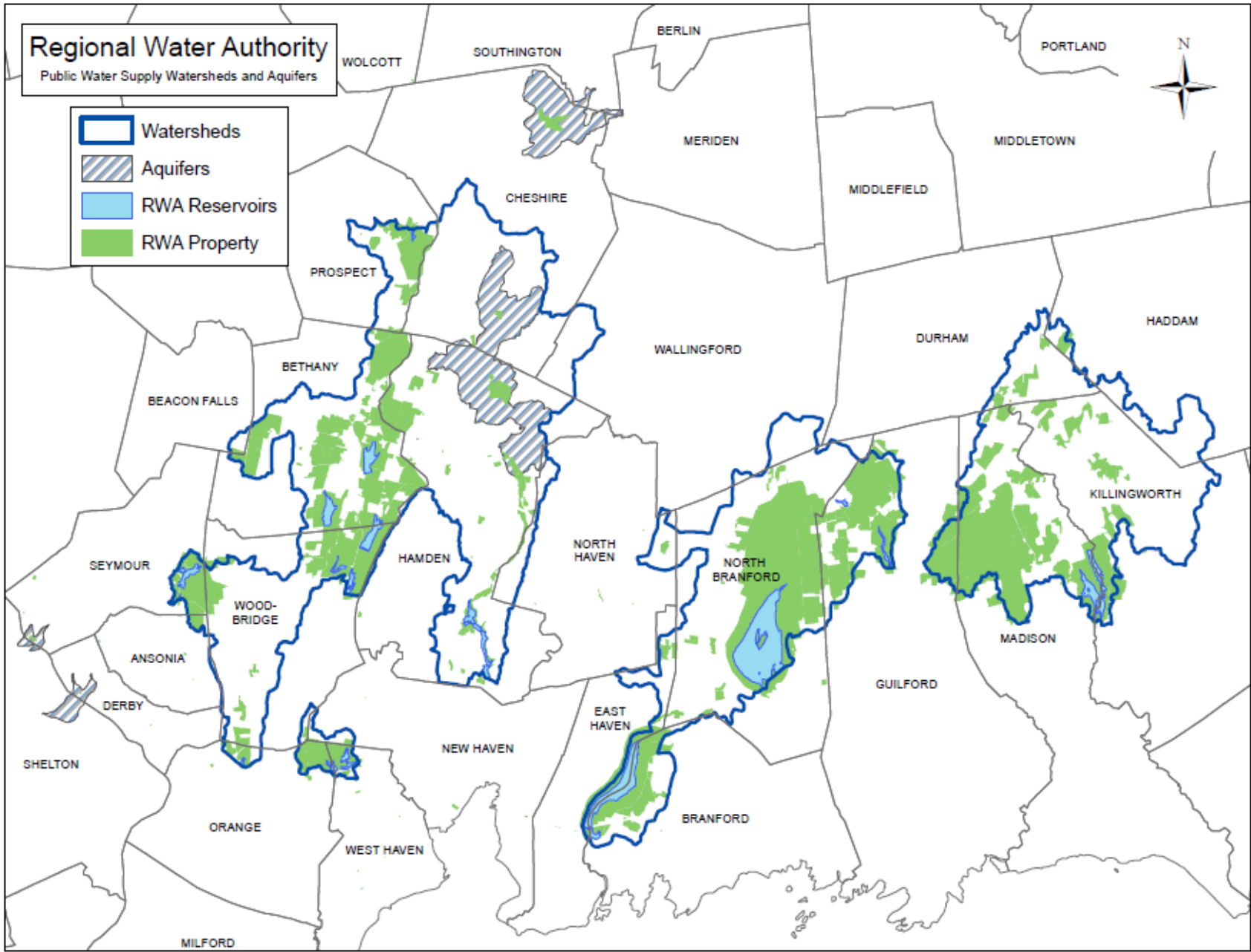


Regional Water Authority

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.

 Regional Water Authority



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

**Minutes of August 10, 2022 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Land Use Committee of the Representative Policy Board of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District (“RWA”) took place on Wednesday, August 10, 2022, at 194 Barberry Road, East Haven, Connecticut. Chair Betkoski presided.

**Committee Members:** P. Betkoski, P. DeSantis, B. Eitzer, R. Harvey, M. Horbal, M. Levine, G. Malloy, and J. Mowat Young

**Authority:** C. LaMarr

**Maple Tree Farm:** A. Page

**Management:** J. Hill, S. Lakshminarayanan, and J. Triana

**Staff:** J. Slubowski

Mr. Harvey called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Horbal, seconded by Mr. Eitzer, and unanimously carried, the Committee approved the minutes of its July 13, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Page, owner of Maple Tree Dairy Farm, provided an update on activities on RWA owned properties. He stated that the Maple Tree Farm is the last commercial dairy farm in New Haven County that produces milk and hay. The farm consists of 350 acres, of which 100 acres are currently used to grow corn and 250 acres are used to produce hay to provide feed for the cows. Mr. Page discussed hay harvesting methods, fertilization, and storage. He reported on recent issues that have had a negative effect on harvesting including the recent drought and damage to the fields caused by trespassers on ATV’s and dirt bikes.

At 4:48 p.m., Chair Betkoski entered the meeting.

Committee members discussed RWA assistance and harsh penalties to deter trespassers, increased security on RWA owned properties, and status of third party assessment and action plan of the RWA to increase security.

At 5:13 p.m., Mr. Levine entered the meeting.

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)

	<b>Current Year</b>	<b>Previous Year</b>	<b>Historical Average</b>	<b>Drought Status</b>
July 31, 2022	82%	97%	81%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	<b>Current Year</b>	<b>Previous Year</b>	<b>Historical Average</b>
July 2022	1.11	9.02	3.71
Fiscal YTD (6/1/22 – 6/30/22)	4.18	10.36	7.43

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

- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 50+/- acres.
- Cheshire, adjacent to Bis property – Continued to discuss process to perfect our claim with Murtha.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4) – Discussed MOA with Murtha. They were going to amend the document so that we could share with the NBLCA.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – April Capone reached out to the Asst. Town Attorney. Will move toward demolition if there is no progress after a month.
- Hamden, 95 Ives St. – Contacted property own to ask about progress. He said work will start in October.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 25% complete.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet. **Awaiting start of harvest in the summer.**
- Madison - Nathan’s Pond Slash Wall Harvest (MA 6) – 95% complete.
- Seymour - Silvermine Road Slash Wall Harvest (SE 9) – 100% complete.
- Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – Not started yet. **Winter start expected.**
  - Discovered rocks blocking our access to Poole Rd., Madison. Contacted town staff about removing them.
  - Monitored stump sprouting and regenerations at the slash wall harvests in Seymour and Madison.
  - Weekly inspected on-going leaf screen thinning harvest in KI 4.
  - Documented a tree cutting encroachment behind 22 Genesee Lane, Madison.

Recreation

- Botany walk at Hopp Brook in Bethany had 10 attendees.
- LED light was installed at the boat launch at Lake Saltonstall to help the rec staff see better in the early morning hours when getting boats ready.
- Discussed crossings of spillway channel with NBLCT for the trail coming from the Harrison Preserve.
- Brought two new Customer Service Reps to recreation areas as part of their orientation.
- One recreation staff member submitted his resignation effective in September. We will not be able to rent boats on Tuesday’s again and perhaps Friday’s too.
- Received email complaints about coyotes at various areas and a bear at the Maltby Lakes.

	July		June	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Permit Holders	5,218	5,873	5,334	5,991

Special Activity Permits

- Branford Community Television (BCTV) (Ted Ebberts) Rest stop for annual fundraiser “Tour de Branford” - Sugarloaf Parking Lot (10/2/2022)
- Yale University School of the Environment (James Loving Lichtenstein, Donnelley Postdoctoral Fellow) - collecting jumping spiders for behavioral experiment to be performed at a Yale facility. Spiders will be returned afterwards. Behavioral experiments will be aimed to explain results from previous project aimed at understanding the effects of invasive

plants on native plant and insect species and vice versa, Lake Gaillard Christmas Tree Field, (7/13/2022)

- Branford Inland Wetland Commission/Town Staff - To allow town staff and Inland Wetland Commission members inspect maintenance work on the Lake Saltonstall Storm Water Treatment System (7/11/22 – 9/1/22)
- UCONN and URI (Gail Reynolds, and designees) – Release biological agent, moth *Hypena opulenta* to help control the population of invasive plants black and pale swallowwort (*Vincetoxicum nigrum* and *V. rossicum*, Lake Gaillard, Lake Saltonstall (7/18/22-7/18/23)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
  - Agricultural agreements – Executed amendment to license agreement for farmer to hay fields at Parish Farm Rd. fields in Branford.
  - East Haven, 9 Pardee Place (EH 6) – Contacted East Haven Memorial Funeral Home and they executed the license agreement for the encroachment, but have yet to send it in.
  - North Branford, North St. Christmas trees (NB 4) – Cave’s have put their farm and house up for sale so that the agreement for Christmas trees at North St. would be available as well.
  - West Haven/Orange/Bethany, Eversource access to ROW’s – Submitted draft license agreements to Eversource for using gates and woods roads in West Haven, Orange, and Bethany to access their ROW’s. Eversource executed the agreements and updated the maps per our request.
  - Trespassing – Forwarded many instances of trespassing to LT members including boats in Lake Chamberlain, broken locks at Maltby Lakes (2x), dog walkers at Hammonasset, fishing at Lake Whitney, tampering with forestry equipment in Seymour, swimming and trash at Hammonasset, swimming in the Sargent River, dumping at Saltonstall, fishermen at Hammonasset, ATV and dirt bike at Gaillard along with trash placed in bags with racial slurs.
- Invasive plants – Documented and/or treated invasive populations in Seymour, Branford, East Haven, Bethany, and North Branford. Helped coordinate the water chestnut harvest at Furnace Pond. This was delayed since the water was too low to accommodate deployment and use of the large harvester. Performed drone flights over Furnace pond and Page’s Mill Pond to map invasive water chestnut.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	75.3 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	2.5 acres

- Deer hunt – Proficiency tests held at Lake Gaillard. Twenty-three hunters passed and have entered the hunt.
- Boundaries – Checked boundaries in Hamden.
- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – Murtha staff have been in regular contact with the last two private property owners who have not submitted the documents for easements over their properties.
- Cell phone towers – North Haven, Rabbit Rock Tank (NO 1) – Continued discussion with T-Mobile about sharing a generator at this site. East Haven, Saltonstall Ridge (EH 2) - Received notice from Sprint/T-Mobile that they were not going to renew the license for the site on Saltonstall ridge. Discussed what needs to be done with Murtha. Contacted EH

- assessor to determine how to delete the card for the cell site and asked him who I should speak to about the maintenance of the tower.
- North Branford, LGWTP campus (NB 1) – Submitted work request to mow western edge of property after request of abutter.
  - North Branford, Ric Ct. – Passed along inquiry asking about getting water service in this neighborhood.
  - Well abandonments – Continued filing these agreements on the land records with Contracts staff so they are part of title searches for property buyers.
  - Hamden, main break Paradise Ave. – Supplied additional information to other RWA staff regarding the properties lines in this area.
  - Drone flights - Performed drone flight with John Hudak at West River to document the DAF project for engineering.

Committee members discussed the use of RWA’s interconnections for surrounding towns to assist during the drought. Members requested that Mr. Triana provide notifications when assistance is provided.

Members discussed a recent fire that took place on an RWA owned property in Bethany.

Mr. Lakshminarayanan, the RWA’s Vice President of Engineering and Environmental Services, stated that the RWA is addressing concerns regarding the security on RWA owned properties and will relay the committee’s questions and concerns to leadership.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

At 5:50 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Eitzer, seconded by Mr. Levine, and unanimously carried, the committee meeting adjourned.

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Peter Betkoski, Chairman

**September 14, 2022**  
**Land Use Committee Meeting**

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	<b>Current Year</b>	<b>Previous Year</b>	<b>Historical Average</b>	<b>Drought Status</b>
August 31, 2022	74%	92%	74%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	<b>Current Year</b>	<b>Previous Year</b>	<b>Historical Average</b>
August 2022	2.13	3.15	3.95
Fiscal YTD (6/1/22 – 8/31/22)	6.31	13.51	11.38

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

- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 50+/- acres.
- Cheshire, adjacent to Bis property – Continued to discuss process to perfect our claim with Murtha.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4) – Shared draft MOU with NBLCT. Answered their questions. Awaiting word to move application forward.
- Branford, Brushy Plain Rd. (BR 7) – Corresponded with Branford Land Trust staff about this property.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – The Asst. Town Attorney called and we went over the need for condemnation again in order for the project to move forward. He said he understood and would get back to me.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – **30% complete.**
  - Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet. **Start pushed back to fall or winter.**
  - Madison - Nathan’s Pond Slash Wall Harvest (MA 6) – 95% complete.
  - Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – Not started yet. Winter start expected.
- One brush fire occurred on the peninsula at Lake Bethany. Covered about 1-2 acres.
  - Discussed possibility of applying for a Landscape Scale Restoration Grant.
  - Began experimenting with treating Beech Leaf Disease (BLD) to test the efficacy of an annual, single application of a basal bark drench treatment of Reliant® with a non-ionic surfactant, Pentra-Bark®. Applied mixture to beech trees in Chamberlain, Watrous, and Maltby Lakes.
  - Monitored slash wall harvests for hardwood stump sprouting and other regeneration and for encroachment by invasive plants. Pulled Ailanthus seedlings in Seymour slash wall. Evidence of deer browse was detected inside the North Madison slash wall toward the end of August.
  - Participated in a Zoom meeting with other Southern New England water companies to discuss forest stressors and data information needs surrounding climate change, invasive pests, and carbon sequestration.

Recreation

- Bat event at Lake Gaillard with Devaughn Fraser of DEEP had 16 attendees.
- Received reports of a bear at Maltby Lakes.
- Cut and removed trees along the Sanford Feeder Trail in Bethany.



- Report of horses on Lake Chamberlain dam was reported to Bethany Horsemen who addressed the issue with the riders and owner of the barn the horses came from.
- Sent letter to abutter in Guilford about accessing our property on horseback.
- Lost two staff at the end of the month. One went back to school and the other resigned. Therefore, we will not be able to rent boats on Tuesday's the rest of the year.
- Weed-whacked a section of recreational trail at Hammonasset west of the footbridge.

	August		July	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Permit Holders	5,102	5,926	5,218	5,873

Special Activity Permits

- Connecticut Butterfly Association (CBA) (Gina Nichol) conduct survey of nocturnal moths and other insects, Lake Saltonstall Fishing Dock Area, (8/18/22)
- CT Forest & Park Assoc. (CFPA) (Elizabeth Merow) conduct tour of property, Master Woodland Manager Program, forestry ecology, Rt. 79 Madison, (10/1/22)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
  - Agricultural agreements – Met potential tenant for the Christmas tree plantation at North St. Sent draft agreement for them to review.
  - East Haven, 9 Pardee Place (EH 6) – Received the signed agreement from Brennan.
  - West Haven/Orange/Bethany, Eversource access to ROW's – Executed the agreements for the Authority and alerted staff. Submitted to towns for filing on the land records.
  - Trespassing – Numerous instances of trespassing were observed including dog walkers, mountain bikers, hikers, dirt bikes, ATV's, and anglers.
- Invasive plants – Documented and/or treated invasive populations in Seymour, Hamden, and North Branford. The water chestnut harvest for 2022 was completed at Furnace Pond. Performed post-harvest drone flight of Furnace Pond. Cleared Japanese knotweed on Davis Street. Planted a rhizomous native sunflower, *Helianthus maximilliani*, to see if it could compete with knotweed once it established.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	40.5 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	8 acres

- Deer hunt – The Ansonia-Seymour and Prospect hunting area boundaries have been re-flagged.
- Easements – Checked on the status of easements at Schoolhouse Rd., North Haven, Englewood Dr., East Haven; NW Cheshire PS, Cheshire; Sugar St., Derby; and three old easements in Branford. Filed easement for pipe in new construction off of Coleman Rd., Cheshire.
- Cell phone towers – Cell phone towers –
  - North Haven, Rabbit Rock Tank (NO 1) – Signed agreement with T-Mobile to share a generator at this site.
  - East Haven, Saltonstall Ridge (EH 2) – Still waiting to hear back from Sprint/T-Mobile, Finance Dept., and EH assessor regarding various aspects of Sprint/T-Mobile's departure from the site.
  - Orange, Ogg Meadow Rd. (OR 2) - Signed consent letters with Crown Castle for various improvements.
- Drone flights - Performed drone flight at the Derby tank site for Engineering.

- Cheshire, Ricci/Moran property easement – Replied to Eversource about plan to trim trees along the street.
- Branford, Rt 1 guide rail (BR 17) – Commented on plans of the town to install a guide rail at the property south of Rt. 1 by the outflow of Furnace Pond.
- Guilford, Great Hill Rd., Abraham Baldwin memorial – Discussed allowing a pull-off for this memorial plaque that is within the town’s ROW for Great Hill Rd.

#### Attachments

- July 1, 2022 - Proposed Aquarion Water Rates Could Gradually Increase Costs by 27% - WVIT
- August 18, 2022 - Lamont Declares Stage 3 Drought In Part Of CT: Here's What It Means – Patch website
- August 16, 2022 - ‘Extreme’ risk of forest fires today in CT due to dry conditions, weather service says - NH Register
- August 31, 2022 - State leaders meet privately to discuss long-term solutions for Jackson water crisis – Mississippi Today
- August 15, 2022 - 40 days of clean water left in Las Vegas, city under stage 7 restrictions – KRQE
- September 8, 2022 - Scientists are using dragonfly larvae to monitor pollution in Acadia National Park – Maine Public
- September 8, 2022 - Ribbon Cutting Sept. 24 for Land Trust’s New Trail Bridge in North Branford – ZIP06 website

#### Upcoming Agenda Items

October 2022 – Saltonstall – Pizza?

## **Lamont Declares Stage 3 Drought In Part Of CT: Here's What It Means**

Rich Scinto, Patch Staff - Aug 18, 2022

CONNECTICUT — The eastern part of Connecticut has moved into an extreme drought, while the rest of the state continues to experience severe and moderate drought conditions.

Gov. Ned Lamont declared a stage 3 drought in New London and Windham counties at the suggestion of the state Interagency Drought Working Group.

"Connecticut continues to experience the impacts of climate change with this exceptionally dry summer, and while the entire state is experiencing drought conditions, we are seeing the most severe of those conditions right now in the areas of New London and Windham counties," Lamont said in a statement.

The group recommended that the six other counties remain in stage 2 drought for now.

Here are five things to know about Connecticut's drought:

### **What is Connecticut's current drought condition?**

Extreme drought conditions are now affecting the majority of Windham County and the eastern part of New London County, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. About 13 percent of the entire state is in extreme drought conditions as of Aug. 16, and 75 percent is in severe or extreme conditions.

"Despite a few small areas of moderate rain, most of the dry areas in the Northeast Region saw little or no precipitation," The U.S. Drought Monitor said in a statement. "This prompted drought intensification and expansion westward away from near-coastal southeastern New England."

Rainfall has been 2 to 5 inches below normal during the past 60 days.

Extreme drought conditions typically cause widespread crop loss and dry wells. Demand for drilling deeper wells increases. Wildlife disease outbreak also increases.

### **What is Connecticut doing about the drought?**

The state interagency group declared a statewide stage 2 drought in July and asked for residents and businesses to voluntarily conserve water. Connecticut's drought scale has five levels.

Stage 3 mandates state-owned facilities to reduce water use. Water suppliers would also have to prepare for mandatory conservation measures, but there are no state-mandated conservation measures imposed on residents.

Mandatory conservation would begin in a stage 4 drought, and would include bans on sprinkler system use.

The state recommends the following to reduce water use:

- Reduce, to the extent possible, the watering of lawns, recreational and athletic fields, gardens, or other landscaped areas (if watering is essential, late evening hours are best)
- Avoid burning in or near woodlands or brushlands
- Report dry fire/irrigation ponds or private wells to municipal drought liaisons or regional emergency management liaisons
- Postpone the planting of any new lawns or vegetation
- Minimize overall water use by fixing leaky plumbing and fixtures
- Take shorter showers
- Run dishwashers and clothes washing machines with full loads
- Shut off water while washing dishes, shaving, brushing teeth, and lathering up to wash hands, rather than running the water continuously
- Avoid washing vehicles or power-washing homes and other buildings
- Do not use water to clean sidewalks, driveways, and roads
- Do not use public water to fill residential swimming pools

### **How are drought levels determined?**

Connecticut's drought stage system is based on the U.S. Drought Monitor level, along with other metrics tied to precipitation, groundwater availability and reservoir capacity.

The interagency group meets periodically to assess drought conditions and make recommendations to Gov. Ned Lamont.

**What is the recent drought history in Connecticut?**

Connecticut has entered the stage two five times in the past two decades: 2002, 2007, 2010, 2016 and 2020.

Most recently, four counties entered stage 3 in 2020.

**What have water companies done to conserve water?**

The 2016-2017 extreme drought prompted Aquarion Water Company to institute twice-weekly limits on sprinkler irrigation for some towns served by the company. The twice-weekly rules have remained in effect.

The Regional Water Authority has also asked its customers to voluntarily conserve water.

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**'Extreme' risk of forest fires today in CT due to dry conditions, weather service says**

Peter Yankowski – NH Register - Aug. 16, 2022

The prolonged drought affecting Connecticut and much of New England is raising the danger of forest fires in some areas of the state, according to state officials and the National Weather Service.

The weather service warned in a bulletin early Tuesday for northern Connecticut counties that, "significant drought conditions will result in elevated fire weather concerns today." Relative humidity values are expected to drop to close 35 percent in inland areas Tuesday afternoon, while winds are expected to gust between 20 and 25 mph.

The advisory comes after state officials also warned of forest fires in some eastern regions of Connecticut on Monday. In southern Middlesex and southern New London counties, the risk of forest fire was "extreme," on Monday, the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection said. In Hartford, Tolland and northern Windham counties, the risk of forest fire was "very high," DEEP said.

An updated fire risk assessment for Tuesday is expected to be released later in the morning.

Those warnings follow weeks of drought and abnormally dry conditions across most of Connecticut. Windham and New London counties are in severe drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. Severe drought conditions are also being felt in a sliver of central and eastern Litchfield County.

Most of the rest of the state is under moderate drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, while most of lower Fairfield County and New Haven County are under "abnormally dry" conditions.

Unlike spring brush fires, which spread rapidly as light fuels catch on the ground, summer forest fires typically burn more slowly, but may burn deeper into the ground, according to DEEP.

That can cause more lasting damage.

"Fires that burn deeper into the ground burn organic matter in the soil (including tree roots), are more difficult to suppress, and cause extensive mortality to vegetation," the agency said.

## State leaders meet privately to discuss long-term solutions for Jackson water crisis

by Geoff Pender and Bobby Harrison August 31, 2022 – Mississippi Today

While local, state and federal officials scramble to restore the city of Jackson's failed water system in the short-term, Mississippi state lawmakers and legislative leaders are meeting privately this week to discuss long-term solutions for the capital city's collapsing system.

State officials knowledgeable of the deliberations agree that the immediate need is to restore an adequate flow to all parts of the city and end the need to boil water for drinking. But they also stress that much more is needed for a long-term fix for Jackson's water system.

That fix will require legislation — both at the state level and perhaps on the federal level.

Members of Jackson's legislative delegation met with Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba Wednesday afternoon and planned to meet with U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson Wednesday night to discuss possible long-term solutions.

Thompson, who represents a large swath of the capital city, has vowed support of a workable plan to fix the water system. U.S. Rep. Michael Guest, who also represents a small portion of Jackson, said, "I am working in Congress to help find solutions and to put Jackson back on a pathway to being the capital city we need and deserve, but it is going to take a combined effort from leaders at all levels."

Meanwhile, Lt. Gov. Delbert Hosemann, the only statewide Republican who owns a home inside the city of Jackson, has been meeting with Jackson lawmakers and other prominent state leaders since before the Jackson water system failed to brainstorm ideas for a permanent solution.

Various proposals have emerged in these talks over the past week, several people with direct knowledge of the deliberations told Mississippi Today. The ideas include:

Creating a "regional water authority" to run the system, which also serves Byram and parts of Hinds County.

Putting the city water system in a temporary conservatorship run by the state Public Service Commission, with the goal of passing the system back to city leaders after service has been restored.

Creating some new state entity or commission to take full, permanent control of the city's water system.

Privatizing Jackson's water system, leasing it to a private company that would manage it moving forward.

Hosemann said in an interview with Mississippi Today on Wednesday that he's been "saddened and sickened" by the water crisis and watching it make national news. He said a long-term fix for Jackson's water and sewerage will be an expensive, "monumental task." But he vowed: "We will have a plan, and we will put Jackson back on its water feet."

Hosemann said the task now at hand for a long-term solution is for state, federal, city of Jackson and Hinds County leaders to "first get a cogent plan."

But getting this large group of politicians to agree on one single plan hasn't been accomplished after many years of effort. Any of the options currently being discussed would require Jackson giving up at least some autonomy and control of its water operations.

As recently as 2021, city leaders including Lumumba have bristled at state attempts to ride herd over the city. These efforts include an attempted state takeover of Jackson's regional airport, the state requiring a special board to oversee infrastructure work funded by a special 1-cent city sales tax, and recently lawmakers requiring state oversight of federal pandemic stimulus money for water and sewerage projects — requirements that were not placed on other cities.

Lumumba has described such state attitudes toward the capital city as "paternalistic" and "racist." There has been an icy relationship between the majority Black, majority Democratic capital city and the white Republican state leadership that runs most of state government from Jackson.

But Hosemann said he doesn't foresee such issues hindering teamwork on solving the water crisis. He noted Lumumba this week said he welcomes state assistance dealing with the issue. Both Hosemann and Gov. Tate Reeves, who is leading the state's response to the short-term crisis, said they've met with the mayor and the city's legislative delegation in recent days.

This would appear to be progress, although it's notable that Lumumba and other city leaders have been absent at Reeves' and state leaders' recent press conferences on emergency water operations and vice versa.

Lumumba addressed this in a press conference on Wednesday afternoon.

"I've heard people say we're having dueling press conferences," Lumumba said. "That is not how I would characterize it." He said he and Reeves are both trying to address the public "early and often" and are "leaning forward." He said there is a "cooperative effort."

A prevailing question about a state-sanctioned, long-term fix of the water system is whether the governor will call a special session soon or wait for the regular session in 2023 to address the water crisis.

Reeves recently said his primary focus is solving the immediate problem and that at some point legislators “would be able to weigh in a potential ... long-term solution.” He said he had pledged to work with them on that solution.

Sen. John Horhn, a Democrat from Jackson, said waiting to the regular session “would give us time to come up with a strategy to determine what kind of system it will be (moving forward) and who will own it.”

Horhn said, “If state officials are going to provide a significant portion of the resources, we are going to want a say” in the operation of the system.

The mayor has estimated that solution would cost more than \$1 billion.

Rep. Earle Banks, a Democrat from Jackson, told Mississippi Today on Wednesday he and several other Jackson lawmakers support potential legislation that would place the city’s water system in a conservatorship “under the auspices of the three-member Public Service Commission.” The PSC could contract with outside companies to help run the system while the multiple problems were addressed. Then at some point down the road, the operation of the system would be returned to Jackson city government.

The PSC, which regulates most utilities in the state, currently has no authority over the Jackson water system. The PSC could petition a court for an order to take over a rural system facing similar issues.

Hosemann on Wednesday mentioned the regionalized water authority idea. He said the state “has a history with regional water authority” on the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina’s destruction of numerous water systems. He said Jackson’s system could be considered regional because it already serves the city of Byram and parts of Hinds County.

Some of those Coast systems at the time of Katrina had been in disrepair and struggling, and the creation of a six-county regional authority was required to qualify for federal money to not just replace them, but rebuild them bigger and better.

However, there was great infighting among cities and counties wanting to control their own water systems, and in the end, the Coast regional authority passed by lawmakers in 2006 was really regional in name only, and the legislation also created six separate county authorities, allowed any who wanted to opt out, and allowed cities to mostly run their own systems.

Hosemann said he wrote a letter last week to Jackson and Hinds County elected leaders urging them to put up all they can of the combined \$87 million they received in federal pandemic stimulus money. The Legislature this year passed a program to match any such spending on water and sewerage 1-to-1 with federal money the state received.

The city has planned to earmark \$25 million of its money, and Hinds County leaders have discussed pledging about \$8 million. Both have earmarked millions of their funds for other things. Hosemann said they should reconsider this, and put more of it up for the state infrastructure match, and use it to address Jackson’s water issues.

“I will be greatly disappointed if they don’t spend more of it on this,” Hosemann said. He said the state also still has \$345 million of its pandemic funds it hasn’t spent. He said he’s also hopeful that the federal government will help with funding for solving Jackson’s crisis.

Some members of Jackson’s legislative delegation are beginning to publicly acknowledge that the city handing over at least some control to the state is a necessity.

“To get the money the state controls, I expect state leaders to insist on changes to the Jackson water system,” state Sen. David Blount, a Democrat from Jackson, said in social media post. “I am open to any discussion, provided that it 1) must include significant money that is sufficient to fix the problem and 2) protects the citizens, especially low income citizens, with fair water rates. If we can convince the governor and state legislative leaders to spend what is needed to fix our water system, we must say YES. Inaction and complaints are not an option.”

“I especially want to point out that this problem is bigger than Jackson,” Blount continued.

Banks, the state representative, said there are three issues facing Jackson’s water and sewer infrastructure. They are:

The immediate problem of the water treatment plants failures caused by a number of factors, including recent flooding and the inability of the city to properly staff the plants.

The aging distribution system, which consists of 1,500 miles of pipes, some 100 years old, that often break, especially during extreme cold weather. Break in February 2021 during a winter storm resulted in a prolonged citywide water failure.

Wastewater issues that have resulted in the city dumping millions of tons of raw sewage into the Pearl River or its tributaries.

All of those issues have placed the city in the crosshairs of the federal Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, the recent lack of water pressure in many parts of the city has resulted in President Joe Biden issuing a federal disaster proclamation.

On Wednesday, Lumumba said he spoke with both President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, both of whom assured him there will be federal help.

“They both assured me that we will have the full arm of support from the federal government in any possible way we can help,” Lumumba said.

That federal aid will provide the state and city technical assistance through the Corps of Engineers to help ensure the water pumps are operational.

In addition Northern District Public Service Commissioner Brandon Presley of Nettleton announced Wednesday that the National Association of Water Companies, a group of the nation’s largest water utilities, “are willing to provide free technical assistance with boots on the ground.” Presley said he would be “connecting” the group with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

While local, state and federal leaders begin to draw battle lines over a permanent fix, the water system’s failure has spurred unprecedented state and federal level conversations about long-term solutions.

“We will not fail at this,” Hosemann said on Wednesday. “We’ve faced catastrophes like Hurricane Katrina as a neighborhood. Mississippi is a neighborhood, and 200,000 of our citizens are in trouble. We are going to get central Mississippi back on its feet.”

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#### **40 days of clean water left in Las Vegas, city under stage 7 restrictions**

by: Gabriel Chavez ; Aug 15, 2022 - KRQE

LAS VEGAS, N.M. (KRQE) – The city of Las Vegas is dangerously close to running out of water, and is now asking people to limit their water use. People in Las Vegas knew they were running out of water, but the situation is worse than they thought. “We only have less than 40 days of water. So it’s a bit worrisome,” said Tabatha Johnson, who lives right next to the Gallinas watershed treatment center.

Flooding in the Hermit’s Peak Calf Canyon burn scar areas has polluted the city of Las Vegas’ water. “We have 63 million gallons of treatable water. With the 63 million gallons of water, it is the equivalent of 40 days water to the community,” said Maria Gilvarry, who is with the city of Las Vegas Utilities Department.

Las Vegas and surrounding areas are now under a stage 7 water restriction level, which is almost the highest level. Residents are being asked to limit their water use. “That is 4 thousand gallons for your average household, specifically 44 gallons per person per day,” said Gilvarry.

Some families, like the Johnson’s, say that just won’t cut it. “I have nine people that live in my household, I have got myself, my husband, my five kids, and then I have got my aunt and my uncle. So, it is, you know, 44 gallons a day is really not doable for me. I have got to get my kids bathed, I have got animals drinking water, I’ve got you know, laundry to do dishes” said Johnson.

A temporary fix is drawing water from Storrie Lake and treating it for municipal use. The city is also waiting for the arrival of a temporary pre-treatment system that will treat the water in the Gallinas River.

“Our treatment plant cannot treat this kind of water. The amount of turbidity, the suspended solvents in this water is just not treatable by our system,” said Gilvarry.

A city council meeting was held Wednesday to discuss a more long-term plan, including an entirely new water treatment plant that they will need help from the state to implement. But for now, residents say something needs to be done before it’s too late. “They want to bring in a filtration system and we’re 40 days out, there’s no way they’re going to get that in and get us more water by the time we lose water,” said Johnson.

The temporary pre-treatment system was ordered this week and parts should start arriving by next week. The city hopes to get it up and running as soon as possible. For anyone in Las Vegas who needs clean water, the city will be distributing bottled water next Wednesday at the rec center.

## Scientists are using dragonfly larvae to monitor pollution in Acadia National Park

Maine Public - By Carol Bousquet - September 8, 2022

Mercury is a pollutant that comes largely from burning fossil fuels. Carbon and other organic compounds in the environment can convert mercury into methylmercury, a dangerous neurotoxin that builds up in fish, birds and people.

To gauge the amount of methylmercury in the environment, the National Park Service launched a research project more than a decade ago that measures the toxin in dragonfly larvae.

Some of that research is happening in Acadia National Park.

On a rare rainy morning in August, the research team from the Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park heads to Eagle Lake to do the annual collection of dragonfly larvae. Hannah Webber, Marine Ecology Program Director, explains that dragonflies are good biosentinels — or indicators — of methylmercury in the ecosystem.

"They're predators, they're always eating other things and so if something's going on in that water body it's probably going to be picked up by something like a dragonfly," Webber says.

Using poles with heavy canvas bags attached, Webber and field technician Jess Moskowitz stir up sediment at the bottom of the lake near lily pads and vegetation the dragonfly larvae feed on, vegetation that Webber says contains methylmercury.

Twenty of the small six-legged larvae are scooped from the sediment using spoons and placed in bags.

"Now that they're in their inner zipper bag they are sealed off from any contaminant that we could cause, so with touching them with our fingers or whatever, so these are now pristine and those inner zipper bags won't be opened again until they get to the lab,"

More than a dozen waterbodies are tested at Acadia each year. And what's concerning to scientists is why some have higher methylmercury levels than others. Hodgson Pond at the western end of the park, for example, has a higher methylmercury content than Seal Cove Pond, which is right next door. And it's not clear why.

"We've just started to look at some of the sites that we have a decade of data and tease out some of those patterns," says Dr. Sarah Nelson, now Director of Research at the Appalachian Mountain Club, who started the Dragonfly Mercury Project while at the University of Maine.

With funding from a broad consortium of federal agencies, including the National Park Service and U.S. Geological Survey, the project expanded testing to more than 120 national parks across the country. The work is only just starting to reveal some answers about how water chemistry and climate can cause mercury cycling to decline in some waterbodies and increase in others.

"We're not at a point where we have a tool box...but we better understand the processes to try water management tools we can use," says USGS scientist Dr. Collin Eagles-Smith, who co-leads the Dragonfly Mercury Project.

Eagles-Smith says the project is focused on trying to determine how different water management actions can stop mercury cycling.

"So there are examples of some systems in lakes where the methylmercury production engine, if you will, has been halted by adding nitrogen to lakes."

Mercury has been a target of policy for some time. The Environmental Protection Agency introduced the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards Rule in 2016 for most coal- and oil-fired power plants. The U.S. is also one of 137 countries that have signed the Minamata Convention, named for a Japanese bay polluted with mercury that wiped out numerous fishing villages. The convention, administered by the U.N., bans new mercury mines and phases out the use of mercury in numerous products.

In the meantime, monitoring and research at places such as Eagle Lake in Acadia National Park continue, as Hannah Webber and her colleague prepare dragonfly larvae samples for shipment to a USGS lab in Oregon.

"Each one of them gets a little tag with where it came from, the date, its length and we'll also get some information about the dragonfly family," Webber says. "There are several different dragonfly families that we have here at Acadia and throughout the country. And then they'll get frozen and it's in the frozen state that they'll get shipped off to the lab for mercury analysis."

Researchers say it will require decades of data collection and analysis to determine if federal policy or the efforts by the United Nations can really curb mercury pollution that is 100 years in the making.



## **Ribbon Cutting Sept. 24 for Land Trust's New Trail Bridge in North Branford**

09/08/2022 – ZIP06 website

Join the North Branford Land Conservation Trust (NBLCT) on Saturday, September 24 at 9:30am for a ribbon cutting of our new bridge and trail at Harrison Farm Preserve.

The bridge and trail built by NBLCT volunteers connects the Harrison Farm Preserve to a half-mile tract of Regional Water Authority (RWA) land. As part of our partnership with RWA, a portion of the yellow trail is now located on RWA "Class 3" (non-watershed) land, allowing a much longer hike into a portion of the RWA forest with larger, older trees.

An optional hike on the new yellow trail extension will follow the ribbon cutting. A half mile walk, from the trail kiosk, is required to reach the bridge.

Directions to Harrison Farm Preserve:

Near the end of North Street in North Branford, bear right, at the fork, go up the hill and follow the signs toward Harrison Farm Preserve. You may want to park on North Street.

For more NBLCT information visit [nblandtrust.org](http://nblandtrust.org)