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

AGENDA

Regular Meeting of Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – October 14, 2020 meeting
3. RWA Police Update: Sgt. P. Ruggiero
4. Updates on other land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
5. Other Land items
6. Set Calendar Year 2021 Meeting Dates
7. Member to attend November 19, 2020 RWA Meeting – J. Oslander
8. Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.
9. Adjourn

**In accordance with the Governor Lamont's, Executive Order No. 7B for the Protection of Public Health and Safety during COVID-19 Pandemic and Response, the public hearing will be held remotely under the requirements of Paragraph 1 of Executive Order No. 7B - Suspension of In-Person Open Meeting Requirements. Members of the public may attend the meeting via conference call, videoconference or other technology. For information on attending the meeting via remote access, and to view meeting documents, please visit https://www.rwater.com/about-us/our-boards/board-meetings-minutes?year=2020&category=1435&meettype=&page=. For questions, contact the board office at jslubowski@rwater.com or call 203-401-2515.

Topic: RPB Land Use Committee Meeting

Time: Nov 18, 2020 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting *(via conference call)*

Dial by your location

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Meeting ID: 830 1112 2962

Passcode: 266678

Find your local number: https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kjLY99c6l

SAFETY MOMENT

Tap Into Safety

Regional Water Authority

NOVEMBER – DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

On November 1st 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.

Regional Water Authority

UNAPPROVED DRAFT

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

Minutes of October 14, 2020 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, October 14, 2020 at Lake Saltonstall, 100 Hosley Avenue, Branford, Connecticut. Chair Betkoski presided.

Present: Committee Members:	P. Betkoski, P. DeSantis, B. Eitzer, R. Harvey, M. Horbal, G. Malloy, J. Oslander and J. Mowat Young
Authority:	S. Sack
Management:	T. Norris and J. Triana
RPB:	C. Havrda
RPB Staff:	J. Slubowski

Chair Betkoski called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Malloy, seconded by Mr. Eitzer, and unanimously carried the Committee approved the minutes of its September 9, 2020 meeting.

On motion made by Mr. Eitzer, seconded by Mr. Horbal, and unanimously carried, the application for the modification of the current procedure for future renewable economic resource projects was deemed complete and is recommended to the Representative Policy Board as a Non-substantial Land Use Plan Amendment and does not require a public hearing.

Mr. Triana, the RWA's Real Estate Manager, led a discussion about the history of Lake Saltonstall. He also provided an update of the RWA's recreation program. Currently, Lake Saltonstall is open for recreation activities such as fishing, hiking and mountain biking. Mr. Triana reported that there are currently 5,711 permittees registered in the program, which is approximately 2,000 more than last year. In September of 2020, 271 permits were sold, compared to 147 last September. He stated that the increase in permits was largely due to the COVID pandemic and the on-site point of sales offered to walk-ins.

Update on *The Land We Need for the Water We Use Program* – J. Triana reported:

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
September 30, 2020	68	81	68	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
September 2020	2.99	2.08	3.77
Fiscal YTD (6/1/20 – 9/30/20)	11.43	14.81	15.17

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

- Killingworth - Corresponded with property owner of 25+/- acres.

Hamden/Bethany, DePodesta and Hendrickson properties – Received the grant check for the Hendrickson property. Continued to correspond with DEEP about materials needed to complete the DePodesta grant.

Rental houses:

- Seymour, 59 Rimmon Rd. (SE 11) – Granted buyers an extension for the closing into mid-October
- Hamden, 95 Ives St. (HA 13) and 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Continued to discuss survey with Hamden town staff for lot split.
- Madison, 760 Summer Hill Rd. – Approved new shed and concrete pads for generator and propane tank.

Forestry Update

- Guilford – West of Sugar Loaf ash salvage (GU 4) – 40% complete
- North Branford - Beech Street Softwood (NB 4) – 85% complete
- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) - Contract not yet awarded.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet
- Bethany – East of Lake Bethany hardwood (BE 18) – 70% complete.
  - Coordinated with Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) to delineate and mark slash wall harvests and plots to monitor regeneration.
  - Coordinated with NRCS Soil Scientists to increase the scope of the CAES's experimental silviculture plots in Madison. This will not only allow us to study forest composition through different forest management prescriptions, but also allow us to asses and document any changes in soil health or composition underneath the canopy.
  - Worked with contractor for the purposes of salvaging the storm damaged material at Lake Bethany (in addition to clearing the road and trails).

Recreation

- Recreation permit holders – 5,711
- Boating continued at Lake Saltonstall with only one refusal to wear a mask due to religious objections.
- Held butterfly walk at Lake Gaillard with 11 participants.
- Started scavenger hunt activity that will conclude at the end of November.
- Continued cutting and removing trees from a tornado on August 27th. Needed outside contractor to clear the Lake Bethany trails.
- Received corrected DPH permit for the Genesee area activities.
- Lake Chamberlain golf cart access – Denied request from permit holder to allow access to family member to get to Lake Chamberlain dam by golf cart.

Special Activity Permits

- Chris Sullivan, PhD Student, UCONN- Will be taking tissue (using non-lethal biopsy punches) from the 15 bass to evaluate mercury contamination, Lake Saltonstall, (9/24/20)
- Southern Connecticut State University (Michael J. Maloney)-looking to set mesh minnow traps in several ponds in Madison, transport the wood frogs that swim into

the traps to the lab in New Haven for tests (strength, jump distance, etc.) then return the frogs to the ponds where they came from, Rt. 79 north of the traffic circle and Summer Hill Road, (09/23/2020-09/23/2021).

- State of CT Cross Connection Committee (Adam Pandolfi) – State of Connecticut Cross Connection Committee Meeting; Lake Gaillard; (09/30/20)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
  - Agricultural fields – Discussed a field with a potential farmer. Singed hay agreement with Hammarlund's.
  - Bethany, Downs Rd. cul-du-sac (BE 17) – Extended license agreement for Bethany to keep the cul-du-sac at the end of Downs Rd.
  - Bethany, 81 Litchfield Tpk. (BE 26) – Sent letter about yard debris.
  - Bethany, 250 Wooding Hill Rd. (BE 14) – Sent letter about yard debris.
  - Bethany, 254 Wooding Hill Rd. (BE 14) – Sent letter about yard debris.
  - Hamden, 62 Washington Rd. – (HA 12) - Sent letter about yard debris.
  - Hamden, 41 Maher Ave. (HA 12) – Sent letter about fence over the line.
  - Madison, 21 Hathaway La. (MA 6) – Sent letter about yard debris.
  - Madison, 49 Hathaway La. (MA 6) – Sent letter about deer feeder and targets.
  - Woodbridge, 43 Morris Rd. (WO 6) – Sent letter about yard debris.
  - North Branford, 229 Forest Rd. (NB 17) – Alerted to large encroachment by neighbor. Documenting the extent of the encroachment by month's end.

- Invasive plants – Treated invasives in East Haven and Seymour. Collected data at the herbicide plots in Prospect. Recorded videos for Outreach and Communications staff to use online.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	~2.3 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	~2.4 acres

- Deer hunt – Permits were mailed to hunters.
- Branford, Hilltop Rd. (BR 6) – Branford Land Trust staff said that trees were blocking access to the road so they were deferring the installation of the gate until the trees are removed.

Chair Betkoski acknowledged the RWA's recent award from the Metropolitan Water Agencies for its Sustainable Water Utility Management. Mr. Norris, RWA's Vice President of Asset Management, was part of a team who completed the award application.

There were no other land items to report.

The next regular meeting of the committee is Wednesday, November18, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

At 5:33 p.m., the meeting adjourned.

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Peter Betkoski, Chairman

November 18, 2020
Land Use Committee Meeting

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
October 31, 2020	64	79	66	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
October 2020	4.22	7.76	3.85
Fiscal YTD (6/1/20 – 10/31/20)	15.65	22.57	19.02

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

- Killingworth - Corresponded with property owner of 25+/- acres.

Hamden/Bethany, DePodesta and Hendrickson properties – Received the recorded easement for Hendrickson from Hamden. Issued revised title policy to DEEP. Continued to work on DePodesta survey and title issues for the OSWLA grant.

Rental houses:

- Seymour, 59 Rimmon Rd. (SE 11) – Granted buyers additional extension for the closing into November.
- Hamden, 95 Ives St. (HA 13) and 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Submitted revised plans for Skiff St. lot split to Hamden staff.
- Woodbridge, 1029 Johnson Rd. – Contacted owners about progress and forwarded contact information of others interested in the property.

Forestry Update

- Guilford – West of Sugar Loaf ash salvage (GU 4) – 40% complete
- North Branford - Beech Street Softwood (NB 4) – 85% complete
- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) - Contract not yet awarded.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet
- Bethany – East of Lake Bethany hardwood (BE 18) – 70% complete.

    - Marked timber harvests in two different areas; Seymour and Madison. Madison area is complete and out to bid.
    - Assisted the CAES (with help from our facilities dept.) in digging soil pits in Madison. These pits and the data collected from them will allow us to better understand changes in soil composition under a changing tree canopy.
    - Conducted drone flight and mapping of FR-EH tornado damage.
    - Ordered Christmas trees for the 2021 planting season.

Recreation

- Recreation permit holders – 5,758
- Boating ended. Dock removed.
- Maltby Lakes and Lake Chamberlain gates were vandalized and repaired.
- Newsletter published and mailed.

- Held invasive plant walk at Lake Chamberlain with 5 participants.
- Walleye stocking occurred at Lake Saltonstall.
- Quinnipiac Trail relocation in Prospect is complete.

Special Activity Permits

- Girl Scouts of Connecticut Troop 320 (Heather Angelico),Troop Leader - Brownie Troop is attempting to earn their Outdoor Art Creator Badge. Would like to hike Maltby Lake and inspire the kids to use lakes and local foliage as inspiration for their art projects, Maltby Lakes, West Haven, (10/25/20)
- Resources in Search and Rescue, Inc.-(Ms. Celeste Robitaille and designees)-Training of Seach and Rescue K9 teams to locate lost or missing individuals, Lake Watrous and Lake Dawson, (10/13/2020-10/3/2021).
- Chris Sullivan, PhD Student, UCONN- Will be taking tissue (using non-lethal biopsy punches) from the 15 bass to evaluate mercury contamination, Lake Saltonstall, (10/17/20)
- GM2 Associates, Inc.-(Mr. Peter Tetreault and designees)-perform field survey and site survey of hydraulic conditions upstream and downstream of the culvert carrying Treadwell Street over Lake Whitney, (10/19/20-10/30/20).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
    - Agricultural fields – Discussed a field with a potential farmer.
    - North Branford, 229 Forest Rd. (NB 17) – Sent letter about the encroachments.
    - Seymour, 6 Maiden Lane (SE 3) – Sent letter to son after death of licensee.

- Invasive plants – Treated invasives in East Haven, Woodbridge, and Bethany. Corresponded with CAES staff about spotted lantern fly monitoring at Lake Saltonstall. Collected herbicide plot data at Prospect.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	~8 acre
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	~35 acres

- Deer hunt – Scouting period began and ended. Hunt started on October 30. Eleven deer harvested and checked in on October 31st. Discussed plans with CAES about installing feeders and cameras after the hunt at Lake Gaillard.
- Cell phone antennas – Discussed swap of antennas at Rabbit Rock tank with vendor.
- Comcast lease, Burwell Tank site – Received proposal from Comcast about second amendment to lease. Sent counter proposal.

Attachments

- October 13, 2020 – RWA Receives National Waward Recognizing Sustainable, Innovative, Water Utility Management – RWA press release
- October 21, 2020 – DEEP Pioneers Innovative Method to Monitor Stream Connectivity – DEEP press release
- October 14, 2020 – Aquarion: Stop Water Lawn as CT Drought Continues
- October 29, 2020 – Opinion: Imagine a day without water – NH Register

Upcoming Agenda Items

December 2020 – Water chestnut follow-up

RWA RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD RECOGNIZING SUSTAINABLE, INNOVATIVE WATER UTILITY MANAGEMENT

RWA Press release – 10/13/20

The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) recognized the exceptional operation and performance of the Regional Water Authority (RWA) by presenting the company with its 2020 Sustainable Water Utility Management Award. The RWA was one of 13 public drinking water systems that received AMWA's top utility management awards on October 13 at the organization's 2020 Executive Management Conference.

AMWA management awards recognize the exceptional performance of public drinking water utilities where management vision and employee commitment come together to create sustainable utilities producing ample supplies of clean, reliable drinking water. The Sustainable Water Utility Management Award spotlights efforts of water utilities implementing long-term and innovative economic, environmental and social endeavors.

"The RWA was formed with a mission to provide high-quality water while preserving land and promoting sustainability," said Larry Bingaman, President and CEO of the RWA. "In pursuit of that mission, we have reduced our emissions, increased our use of green energy and worked alongside our partners and customers in Greater New Haven to promote a healthy environment. As a 21st-century environmental services company, we continually seek new and innovative ways to provide great service to our customers while also protecting the environment of our region and the precious natural resources with which we are trusted. Thank you to AMWA for honoring the RWA with this award."

"The RWA acts as stewards to more than 27,000 acres of land and the four reservoir systems we manage," said Ted Norris, Vice President of Asset Management for the RWA. "Sustainably managing these environmental assets is a core aspect of the work done by the RWA team. Healthy forests and watershed lands act as natural filters for our reservoirs. Reducing our carbon footprint by using green energy helps combat climate change, the effects of which can be seen in the drought currently impacting Connecticut. Sustainable management is critical to the RWA's ability to provide high-quality, affordable water to our customers for generations to come."

The RWA received AMWA's 2020 Sustainable Water Utility Management Award in recognition of the utility's focus on the long-term economic viability of its company, resources and region. Specifically, AMWA applauded the RWA's work to preserve and protect the watersheds and other undeveloped land. The RWA owns and manages approximately 27,000 acres of land, including 902 acres newly protected since 2007. The RWA protects these lands from development and manages them with sustainable, environmentally friendly methods of encouraging healthy forest growth and water quality, while removing invasive species.

AMWA also highlighted the RWA's use of renewable energy, such as solar power, to reduce the company's carbon footprint. The RWA has worked to reduce its emissions by adopting innovative metering technology that allows for remote readings, resulting in fewer vehicles on the road. These strategies are part of the RWA's responsible financial management plans, also recognized by AMWA, which help to keep the RWA's high-quality tap water affordable at less than a penny per gallon.

Finally, in its decision to honor the RWA with a 2020 Sustainable Utility Management Award, AMWA commended the company's work in the communities it serves. AMWA pointed to the RWA's recreation program, which offers fishing, hiking and other activities at nine properties, and the RWA's education program, which provides free, hands-on programs to students in local schools. The education program, which is celebrating 30 years of service, has provided enriching educational lessons to more than 352,000 students since its inception. This school year, the RWA's education program has already reached more than 300 students using a hybrid of in-person and virtual programming.

AMWA is an organization of the largest publicly owned drinking water suppliers in the United States. It awarded the 2020 Sustainable Water Utility Management Award to nine utilities. Three utilities won AMWA's 2020 Platinum Award for Utility Excellence and one utility won the 2020 Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance. The RWA is a previous recipient of AMWA's Platinum Award for Utility Excellence.

"In an unprecedented year for this nation, these systems are at the forefront of providing innovative solutions to the multiple challenges a global pandemic, extreme weather events, and infrastructure gaps are creating," said AMWA President Steve Schneider, General Manager of Saint Paul Regional Water Services. "By supplying their communities with clean, safe, and affordable drinking water, these water utilities are helping to safeguard the nation's health."

DEEP Pioneers Innovative Method To Monitor Stream Connectivity

Press release from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection - Oct. 21, 2020

For all living organisms on Earth, the presence of water means life, and the absence of it means death. That's especially true for organisms that spend their entire lives in water.

For many fish species, like the brook trout, a healthy stream provides the setting for the full range of its life activity-shelter, food, and reproduction. They require the whole stream to provide the right setting for each activity, from deep slower-moving pools, to shallow, fast-moving "riffles," and for there to be enough water in the stream to connect all of these habitats. When a stream becomes too dry, the habitats shrink and become disconnected. Fish might not be able to perform critical life functions and will die or fail to reproduce. The cause of the low water levels can be man-made interventions such as dams or water withdrawals, or natural phenomena such as the significant drought we are currently experiencing.

Stream connectivity during droughts is one of many concerns for staff in the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)'s Water Planning and Management Division. When a stream is completely dry, the impact is obvious, but in areas where there is some flow but not as much as should be there, the impacts become harder to quantify. One way the United States Geological Survey measures streamflow discharge is through operating gaging stations that cost approximately $20,000–$25,000 to install with an annual operation and maintenance cost of $15,000.

Because of the limited network of these gaging stations, DEEP staff came up with an interesting (and less expensive) workaround in 2017—from July to October, at a cost of roughly $500 per unit, they deployed digital "trail" cameras at seven "study" streams around the state, and set them to take a photo every hour. The photos were saved to a memory card, and collected by staff every 3-5 weeks.

The images were then evaluated and placed into one of six categories of connectivity established by staff, who were trained in order to standardize image interpretation. Categories 1-3 represent streams at different levels of disconnected flow, with Category One being completely dry. Categories 4-6 represent streams at different levels of connected flow, with Category Six representing healthy flows above "bankfull" discharge. From these images, staff were able to calculate an average daily stream connectivity category for each study stream. Using these categories, staff also developed 30 metrics to describe the magnitude, frequency, duration and timing components of stream connectivity.

Believing that the methodology they'd established was so innovative, thorough, and most importantly, proven, staff sought publication of their method in hopes that it might prove useful to others working in the field of stream management. After more than a year of effort that included an extensive, rigorous peer-review, the paper was published in August in the journal "Rivers Research and Applications."

Staff involved in the creation of the method call it a significant, and potentially game-changing tool to help inform approaches to stream management.

"It's a method that allows us to begin to identify the issues," Corinne Fitting, a Supervising Environmental Analyst with DEEP, and one of the paper's co-authors, said. "Once you've documented impact, the next steps are to figure out why and how we can deal with it, but the first step is saying 'there's a problem here,' and the trail cameras are allowing us to do that."

Philip Trowbridge, Assistant Director of DEEP's Water Planning and Management Division, said that having a process to objectively identify areas where there isn't enough water and streams are going dry will better inform planning documents such as the State Water Plan and decisions about managing water balances. Trowbridge said that of the three main stressors that contribute to stream impairment—nutrients, urban run-off, and flow—flow had been the most challenging for DEEP staff to gauge prior to establishing the new monitoring method.

"I'd say this was a gamechanger in our ability to investigate and follow up on localized issues for one of our major stressors," he said.

Christopher Bellucci, the primary author of the paper, noted that the method has enabled staff to add—backed up by objective reasoning—several miles of streams to the state's "Impaired Waters List," a list that is updated by DEEP and approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency every two years as required under the Clean Water Act.

"We've increased the miles that we attribute as flow-impaired substantially in part because of this method, and now we can feel fairly confident that yes, we have evidence, we have metrics that we've calculated," he said.

Bellucci, along with paper co-authors Melissa Czarnowski and Mary Becker, have shared the method with peers at science conferences over the last several months, and some states, including Vermont, have adopted aspects of the method for their own research. At DEEP, staff continue to employ the new methodology. Currently, staff have about 30 trail cameras deployed, capturing photos every hour of every day. Given the considerable time investment required to process this data (the cameras have captured some 60,000 photos this year alone), staff are continuing to innovate by experimenting with machine learning techniques, training computers to review photos and categorize them.

Staff are excited for the continued possibilities this method and this type of data capturing allow. From continued documenting of stream connectivity, to monitoring ice cover on lakes, to counting anglers at remote fishing areas.

Water is critically important, whether you're a brook trout trying to perform your basic life activities, or a human in need of water to drink, to shower with, cook with, do laundry with, wash your hands with during a pandemic, or to help put out a forest fire. Understanding this, DEEP encourages you to Imagine a Day Without Water, a national education campaign that highlights how water is essential, invaluable, and in need of investment. This year's day of action and awareness takes place on October 21, 2020, and will include events, resolutions, student contests, social media engagement, and more, across the country. Unfortunately, the ongoing drought makes imagining a day without water easy to do this year.

This press release was produced by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The views expressed here are the author's own.

Aquarion: Stop watering lawn as CT drought continues

Peter Yankowski - Oct. 14, 2020 – CT Post

The Aquarion Water Company has announced an irrigation ban as the state continues to see abnormally dry conditions throughout Fairfield County.

The ban affects irrigation variances issued by Aquarion in Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Stamford and Westport.

“Recent rainfall from Hurricane Delta remnants did little to replenish water supplies,” the utility company said in a news release. “Effective immediately, the ban includes automatic irrigation systems and hose end sprinklers.”

Irrigation systems have become less of a necessity as temperatures cool, the company noted.

“Hand-held watering, soaker hose, and drip irrigation continue to be permitted for new plantings,” the release said.

The move comes as Connecticut faces conditions ranging from abnormally dry in the state’s southwest to “extreme drought” in a swath of the east and northeast of the state.

Those extreme conditions are affecting most of Hartford, Tolland, Windham and New London counties, according to the National Drought Monitor.

The program is a partnership between the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

“Aquarion is requiring customers to turn off their irrigation systems and sprinklers for the season,” Donald J. Morrissey, Aquarion’s president, said in a prepared statement. “With drought conditions continuing to worsen across the state, this mandatory ban will help to ensure an adequate water supply for everyday needs and give reservoirs time to recover for the spring.”

The company is also Connecticut residents to take steps to cut back on their water use — including taking shorter showers, and running washing machines and dishwashers with full loads only.

Opinion: Imagine a day without water

By Larry L. Bingaman - October 29, 2020

How far can you get into your daily routine before turning on a faucet, taking a shower or otherwise using tap water? For most of us, water is a central part of our daily lives. This is particularly true in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, when regular hand-washing has become a vital part of our health and hygiene.

It is easy to take the availability of safe, reliable and high-quality tap water for granted. However, for millions of people around the world, this precious natural resource is not available when they need it.

Last week, the Regional Water Authority joined utilities across the country to Imagine a Day Without Water. This annual event is a time to pause and appreciate the way that water systems benefit our lives and communities, and for us to recommit to ensuring a sustainable water future for generations to come.

Our state and our nation are facing an enormous public health crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic. With regular hand-washing remaining one of the best ways to fight the virus, the need for reliable, high-quality water has never been greater. Throughout this emergency, the RWA and other utilities have kept safe, high-quality water flowing to homes, hospitals and essential businesses. This crisis has demonstrated the critical role that water systems play in our communities, protecting public health, providing fire protection, safeguarding the environment and making a prosperous economy possible. It is easy to imagine how much worse the pandemic would be without widespread access to tap water. Without it, Americans would be unable to stay safe and limit the spread of COVID-19.

We must not take water systems, or the resources that supply them, for granted. Much of Connecticut is experiencing a drought or abnormally dry conditions caused by the lack of precipitation throughout 2020. The RWA is fortunate to have plentiful water supplies. Despite that, we have asked that all our customers voluntarily reduce their water use by 10 percent.

It is no secret that our climate is changing. This has led to more severe weather events — like the recent Tropical Storm Isaias — that pummeled our state with heavy winds, but without the rains we rely on to keep reservoirs filled. The Environmental Protection Agency also reports that Connecticut's average temperature has increased by two to three degrees in the last century. A warming climate can cause more evaporation, further contributing to droughts like the one we are currently experiencing.

Fortunately, there are ways that all of us can help. By cutting back on irrigation and other nonessential water use, you can reduce your total water consumption by 10 percent. If all of us do this, we can help protect the supply of this precious natural resource, ensuring it is there when we need it. More guidance on using water wisely can be found on the RWA's website at rwater.com.

Environmental protection and sustainability are core aspects of the RWA's mission and identity. Earlier this month, we were proud to receive a 2020 Sustainable Water Utility Management Award from the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies. As a 21st-century environmental services company, we continually seek new and innovative ways to provide great service to our customers while also protecting the environment and the precious natural resources with which we are trusted.

I ask that you take a few minutes to imagine what your day would be like without water. Think about what it would mean not to have a reliable, safe and affordable source of water. For many people in the world, climate change has already made this imagined scenario a harsh reality. Climate change and access to water cannot be tomorrow's problem. Take a stand today, commit to using water wisely and living more sustainably so that an imagined day without water never comes to pass.

Representative Policy Board

Land Use Committee

Proposed Calendar of 2021 Regular Meeting Dates

(Meeting dates are the second Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated below)

January 13
February 10
March 10
April 14 @ 7:00 p.m.
May 12 @ 4:30 p.m.
June 9
July 14
August 11
September 8 @ 4:30 p.m.
October 13 @ 4:30 p.m.
November 10
December 8