

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

AGENDA

Regular Meeting of Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – December 8, 2021 meeting
3. Water Chestnut Harvest Summary: Josh Tracy and Will Henley
4. Updates on other land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
5. Other Land items
6. Member to attend January 27, 2022 Authority meeting – B. Eitzer
7. Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.
8. Adjourn

****Members of the public may attend the meeting via remote access. For information on attending the meeting and to view meeting documents, please visit <https://www.rwater.com/about-us/our-boards/board-meetings-minutes?year=2022&category=1435&meettype=1463&page=>. For questions, contact the board office at 203-401-2515.**

Topic: RPB Land Use Committee Meeting

Time: Jan 12, 2022 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting (*via conference call*)

Dial by your location

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+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 862 5996 6770

Passcode: 941736

For questions contact the board office at 203-401-2515 or by email at jslubowski@rwater.com

SAFETY MOMENT

IMPROVING INDOOR AIR QUALITY DURING THE WINTER MONTHS

The cold season is one of the worst times of the year for indoor air quality, either at home or work. People huddle inside tightly-sealed buildings and trade ventilation for heating. This traps pollutants and moisture in, which is a recipe for bad air.

WHAT MAKES IT WORSE?

- Inadequate ventilation
- Smoke from fireplaces
- Over-humidifying
- Prolonged presence indoors

WHAT TO DO?

- Periodically open a window for 10 to 15 minutes to keep indoor air clean.
- Change furnace and air filters as needed and clean air ducts often.
- Safely store toxic chemicals outdoors.

Service – Teamwork – Accountability – Respect – Safety

Tap Into
Safety



Regional Water Authority



Regional Water Authority

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

Minutes of December 8, 2021 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, December 8, 2021, via remote access. Chair Betkoski presided.

Present: Committee Members: P. Betkoski, P. DeSantis, B. Eitzer, R. Harvey, M. Horbal, M. Levine, J. Oslander, and J. Mowat Young
 Authority: C. LaMarr
 Management: T. Norris, S. Lakshminarayanan, J. Triana, N. Smith
 RPB Staff: J. Slubowski

Chair Betkoski called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Mr. Betkoski reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

Ms. Smith, the RWA’s Natural Resources Analyst, provided the 2021 Deer Hunt summary, which included:

- Deer density
- Hunting locations
- 2021 hunting season overview/permits
- Harvest totals
- Research, reporting, and safety

Members discussed area growth, deer population, and safety.

At 5:52 p.m., Ms. Smith withdrew from the meeting.

Update on *The Land We Need for the Water We Use Program* – J. Triana, the RWA’s Real Estate Manager, reported:

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

| | Current Year | Previous Year | Historical Average | Drought Status |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| November 30, 2021 | 85% | 67% | 66% | None |

Rainfall (inches)

| | Current Year | Previous Year | Historical Average |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| November 2021 | 1.65 | 5.20 | 3.96 |
| Fiscal YTD (6/1/21 – 11/30/21) | 29.58 | 20.85 | 22.99 |

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

- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 56+/- acres.
- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 19+/- acres.
- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 23+/- acres.
- North Haven – Corresponded with property owner of 14+/- acres.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4 and NB 4A) – Corresponded with NBLCT staff about the steps forward.

- Branford, Brushy Plain Rd. property (BR 7) – Saw correspondence between Larry and the First Selectman about these acres. Emailed the First Selectman’s office to discuss further.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 95 Ives St. (HA 13) – Bid published. Three pre-bid meetings held. Corresponded with WPCA and QVHD about the waste system at the property. Two addenda published for the bid.
- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Emailed town staff to determine the status of the condemnation.
- Woodbridge, 1029 Johnson Rd. – Continued correspondence with the Tarlowski’s about their plans for the house.
- Woodbridge, 2040 Litchfield Tpk. – Bayram’s placed three piles of material over the property line and pushed it down the bank. Ordered them to remove everything from our property. Told them that I would not accept any bid from them for 95 Ives St. if any material was left over the property line.

Forestry Update

- Guilford – West of Sugar Loaf ash salvage (GU 4) – 40% complete
- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 25% complete.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet. **Looking to grant extension.**
- Madison - Nathan’s Pond Slash Wall Harvest (MA 6) – **85% complete.**
- Seymour - Silvermine Road Slash Wall Harvest (SE 9) – Awarded contract. **Expected to start in December.**
- Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI-6) - Marking Complete, Job out to Bid.
 - Alex Amendola announced he will be leaving in December after taking a job with DEEP Forestry.
 - Marked timber for future sale at Lake Menunketuc.
 - Showed timber harvest 2021-02 to potential bidders and awarded the harvest to PermaTreat Corporation.
 - Attended/Co-Hosted Forestry Career Development Event at the CT Agricultural Experiment Station.
 - Ordered plants for re-forestation efforts for the spring.

Recreation

- Bird walk at Lake Hammonasset with the New Haven Bird Club has 7 people.
- Updated online forms to include the “Veterans” category.
- Gave tour of recreation facilities to the two new Customer Service Reps.
- Corresponded with DEEP staff about new fishing regulations.
- Water Wagon attended one event.
- Process started to hire new people for next year’s fishing season.

| | November | | October | |
|----------------|----------|-------|---------|-------|
| | 2021 | 2020 | 2021 | 2020 |
| Permit Holders | 5,578 | 5,879 | 5,366 | 5,758 |

Special Activity Permits

- (none in November)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Agricultural agreements – Met potential farmer at the southern field off of Downs Rd. The Page’s indicated that they will not be using the Parish Farm Rd. fields anymore, but would renew the agreements for the Barberrry Rd. fields that expire soon. Sent them drafts to review.
 - East Haven, 167 Saltonstall Parkway (Route 1) (EH 7) – Corresponded with Murtha staff about progress.
 - Cheshire, 264 Harrison Rd. (CH 2) – Sent letter to abutter about fence, lawn, and cut brush over the line. Previous owners had license agreement, but the property changed hands a couple years ago. Talked to abutter and will send them a draft license agreement.

- Invasive plants – Documented or treated invasive populations in Hamden, East Haven, Branford, and North Branford. Met with Gerda Magana from the CAES to discuss the invasive insect collection and her special permit. Watched Nancy Marek from UConn present her findings on distinguishing Japanese barberry and multiflora rose from images taken from an off-the-shelf drone.

| | |
|--|----------|
| Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac) | 11 acres |
| Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH) | 4 acres |

- Deer hunt – Hunt ended on Nov. 30th. Total deer harvested was 34. Breakdown of harvest is shown in the table below. NRA made regular trips to the field to meet check station volunteers and oversee the hunt areas. A hunter fell from his stand and was found hanging by his harness by another hunter. Trespassers were observed multiple times and the gates at Prospect and Beech St. were vandalized.

| 2021 Archery Deer Hunt Preliminary Numbers | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|------------|
| Property | Doe Harvested | Buck Harvested | Total Deer |
| North Branford/Gaillard | 6 | 20 | 26 |
| Bethany | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Prospect | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Ansonia/Seymour | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Totals | 9 | 25 | 34 |

- East Haven, Beach Ave. water main – Ted and Tom came up with an alternate route for the water main coming from Morgan Ave. and Stanton Rd. Got draft easement from Murtha. Told Juliano to proceed with the draft survey.
- Hamden, Olin property option – Forwarded the Chaplik’s 2005 emails to the HLCT attorney.
- Christmas tree donation – Donated oversized Christmas tree to New Haven Parks Dept. for use at Sea Wall Park.
- Responded to two abutters of Rockland Rd. (Guilford) and County Rd. (Madison) about problems with the locks on the gate we installed.

On motion made by Mr. Eitzer, seconded by Mr. Levine, and unanimously carried the Committee approved the minutes of its November 10, 2021 meeting.

Chair Betkoski reported on the volunteer to attend the Authority meeting on December 16, 2021.

The next regular meeting of the committee is Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Betkoski acknowledged Mr. Norris, the RWA's Vice President of Asset Management, and stated that it would be his last meeting. Committee members and management thanked Mr. Norris for his contribution to the Committee.

Mr. Bingaman, the RWA's President and Chief Executive Officer, stated that Mr. Norris and Mr. Triana have been working to create a land trust council, sponsored by the RWA. The Committee will be receiving a brief on the status of the partnership at a future meeting.

At 6:20 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Levine, seconded by Mr. Eitzer, and unanimously carried, the committee meeting adjourned.

Peter Betkoski, Chairman

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a clump of water chestnut (Trapa natans) roots and leaves. The roots are dark and fibrous, and the leaves are bright green with serrated edges. The background shows a body of water with some reflections.

Update on Water Chestnut (*Trapa natans*) Infestation and Harvest

Joshua Tracy
Invasive Species Management Technician

William Henley
Aquatic Resource Scientist

Trapa natans, Water Chestnut

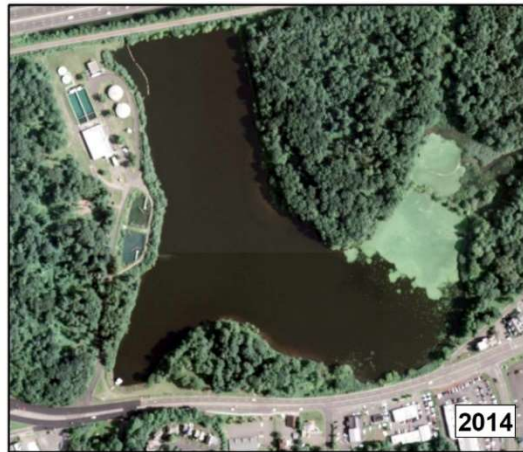
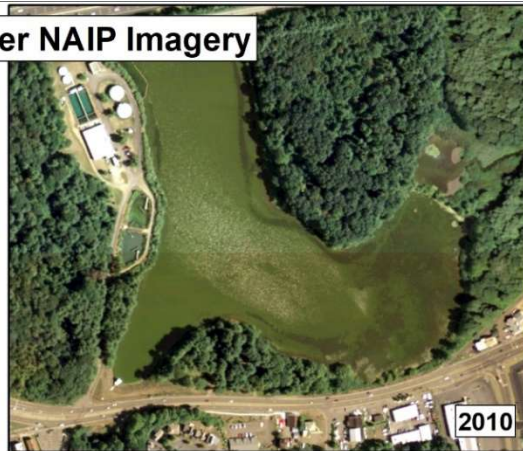


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Shaun Winterton, Aquarium and Pond Plants of the World, Edition 3, USDAAPHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org
licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/).



Historic Summer NAIP Imagery



Progression of the water chestnut infestation dating to 2008, using NAIP (National Agriculture Imagery Program).

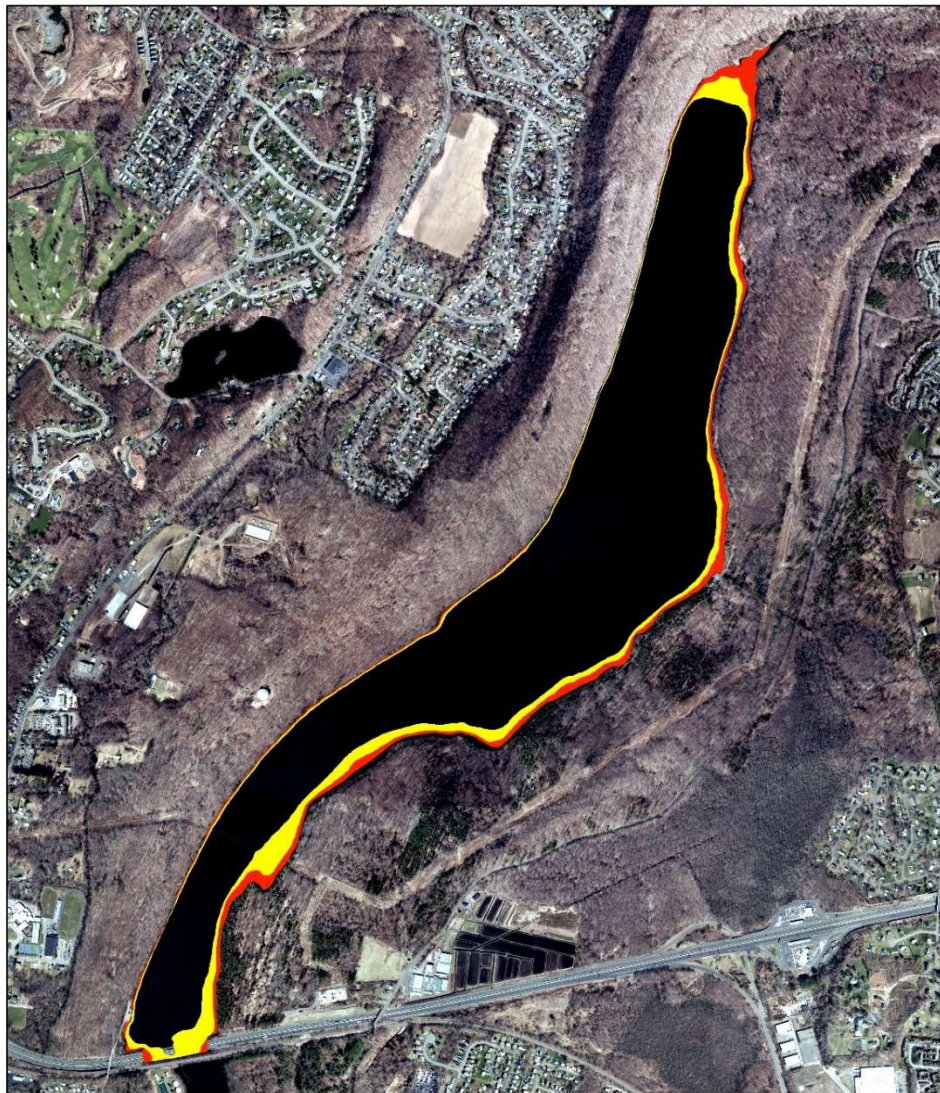


Furnace Pond Conditions



Preventing a disaster

Lake Saltonstall is located directly north of Furnace Pond and is connected under I-95. With the infestation left unchecked, this is where the projected outbreak could extend to.



Saltonstall *T. Natans* Risk Areas

23.4 acres high risk (depth <2.0 meters)
35.1 acres low risk (depth 2-4 meters)

Risk Level

High
Low



Meters

0 250 500 750

Regional Water Authority

CT Orthophotography (2016) with extracted bathymetric contours.
Map intended for planning purposes only, contains no authoritative data.



Regional Water Authority

Summer 2021 Harvest

- Harvest conducted 07/26/21 - 8/16/21
- Some delays due to (contractor) short staffing and supply chain issues.
 - Contractor completed 7 days of harvesting
 - Shorter harvest due to use of larger harvester
 - Some savings on project due to shorter harvesting period
- Harvested 4.37 acres



Equipment for Harvesting



Contractor:

SOLitude.

Capacity:

Holds ~1000 cubic feet of material.

Time between off-loadings:

~20-30 minutes.



Equipment for Harvesting



Equipment for Harvesting

A payloader was used to remove the water chestnut from the boat launch and move it to the de-watering area.



Harvest Spoils



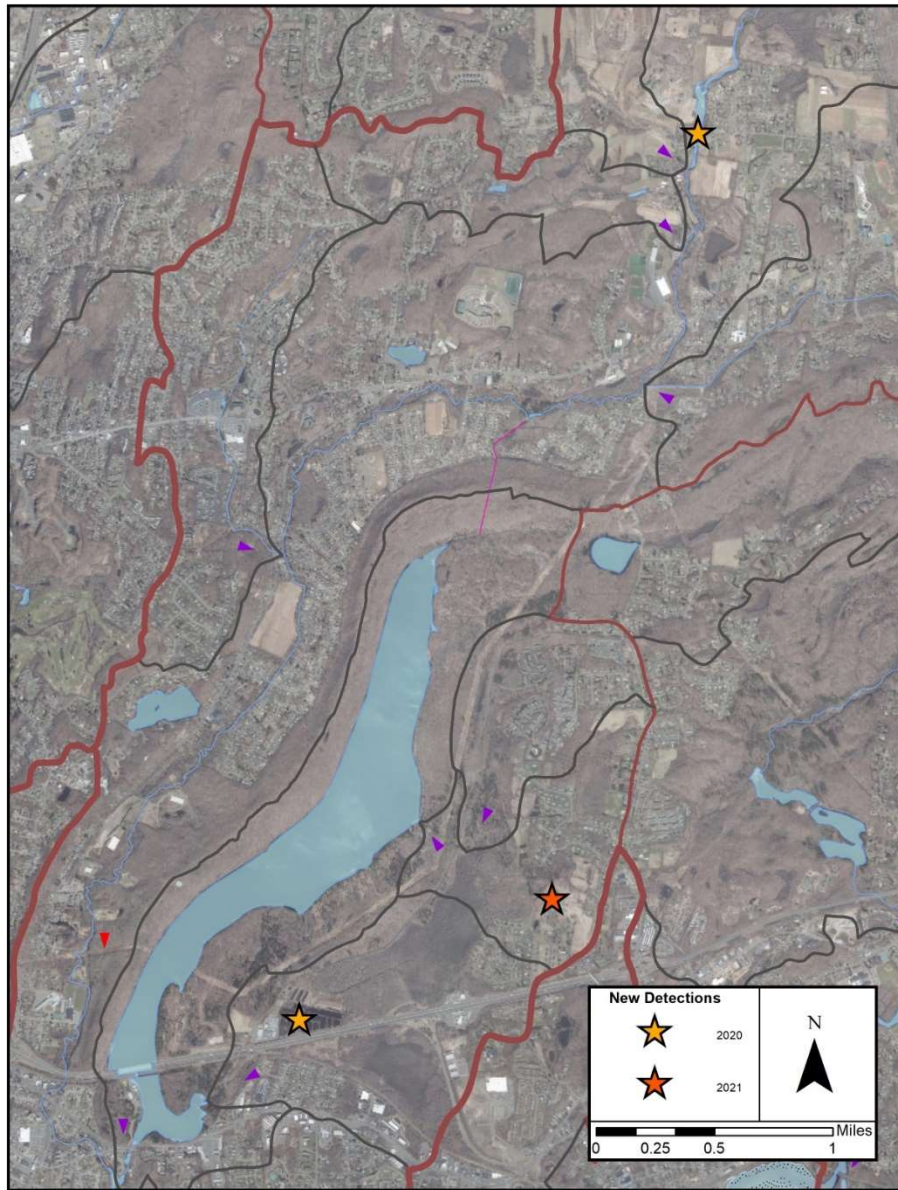
Water chestnut spoils in various states of decomposition, located a few hundred feet uphill from Furnace Pond.



2021 Spoils



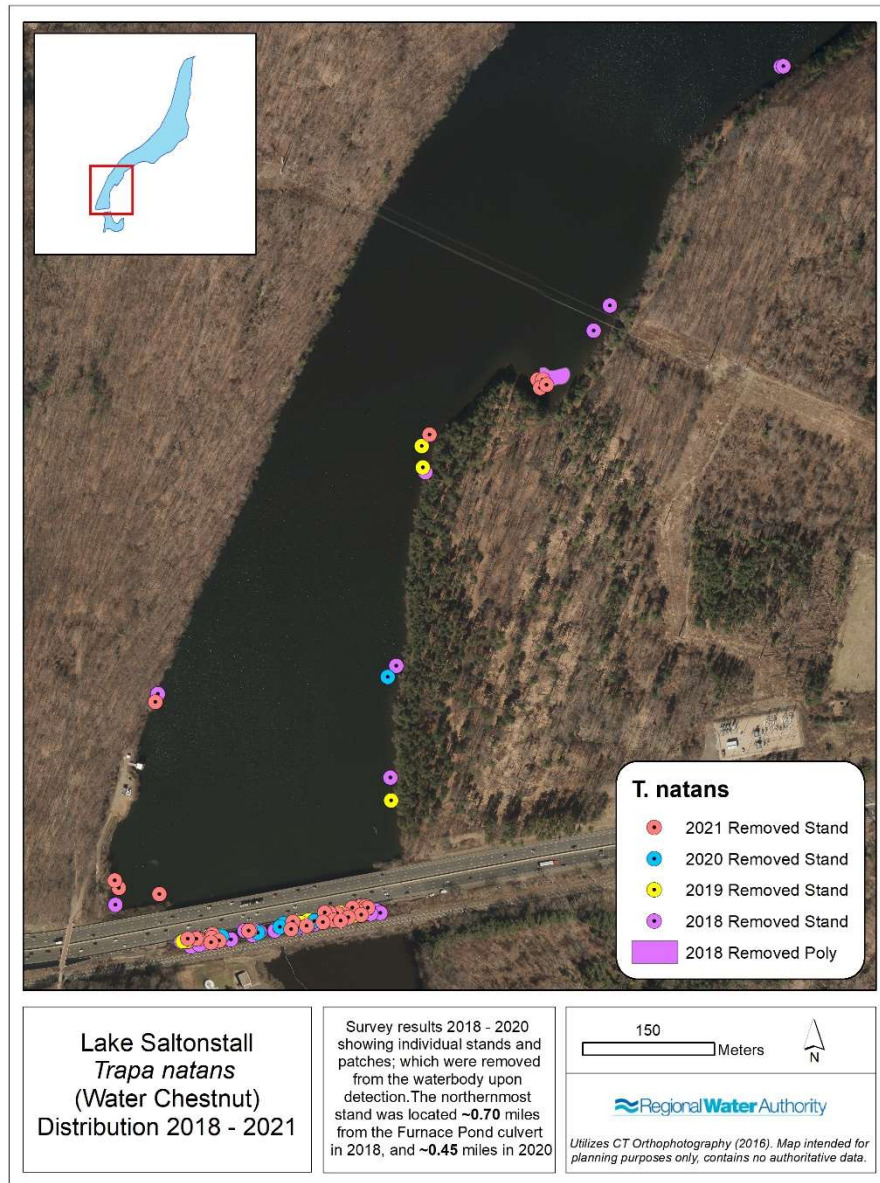
Summer 2020/2021 Monitoring



- New populations located upstream of Furnace Pond/Lake Saltonstall
 - One new detection in 2021 by Branford Land Trust after property procurement
 - Adds to two new detections in 2020



Summer 2021 Monitoring



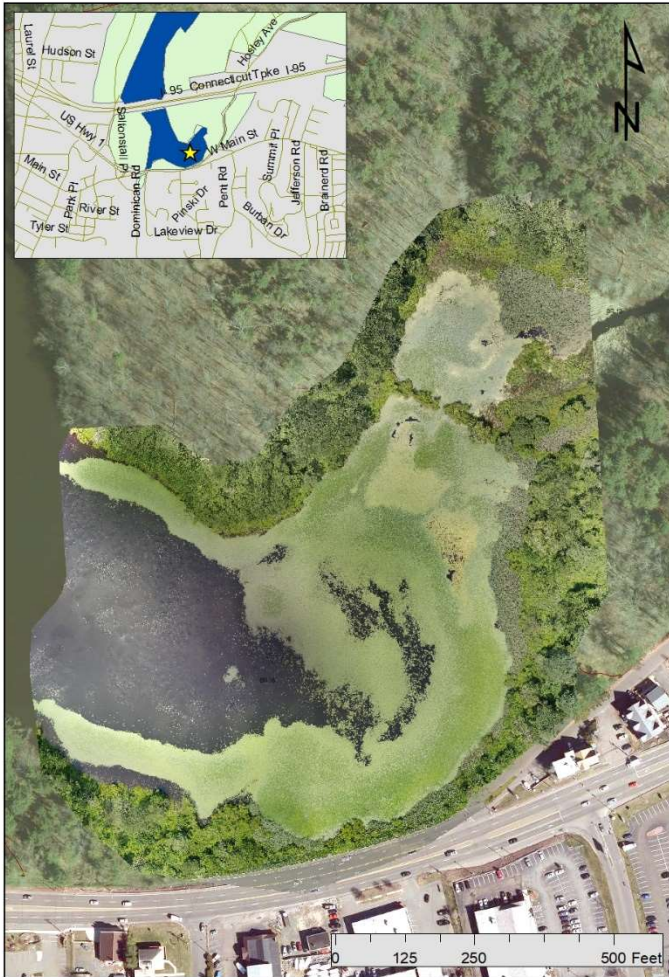
- Population in Saltonstall showing small rebound
 - Detection 3 years ago has prevented aggressive spread into Saltonstall
- No detections downstream of Furnace Pond
 - Surveys in 2018-19 found a handful of stands below Furnace Pond in the Farm River Tributary

Harvest Impact (Imagery Analysis)

- Collected pre & post harvest aerial imagery to assess *Trapa natans* extent and management effectiveness using Drones
- Utilize data for future planning



Water Chestnut- Pre Harvest- 07/16/2021



*Map produced of Furnace pond prior to the harvest beginning.
(programs utilized: Pix4Dcapture and Maps Made Easy)

Map made by:
Joshua Tracy
Inv.Spc.Mgt. Tech.
01/05/2022

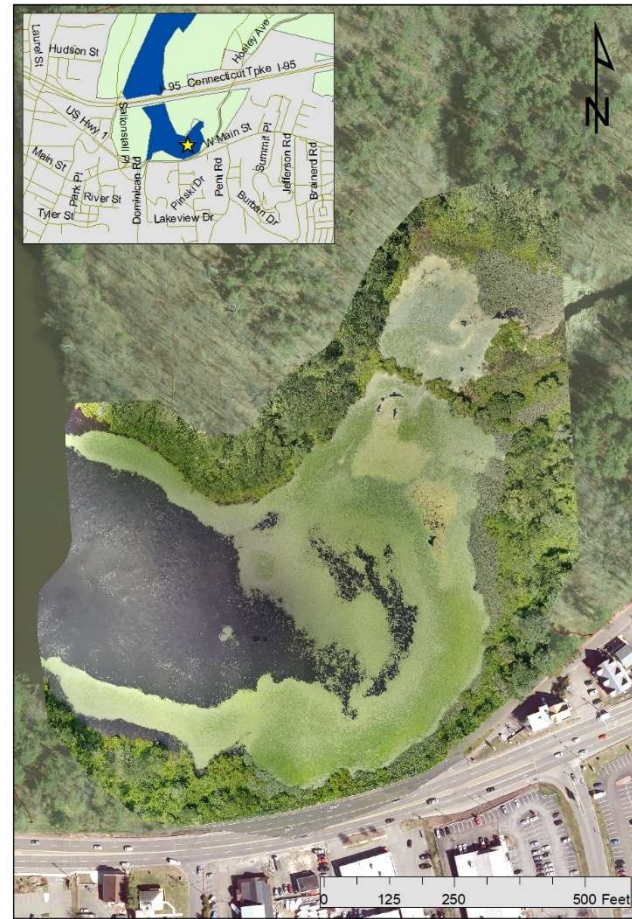


Water Chestnut- Pre Harvest- 07/06/2020



Map made by:
Joshua Tracy
Inv.Spc.Mgt.Tech.
01/05/2022

Water Chestnut- Pre Harvest- 07/16/2021



Map made by:
Joshua Tracy
Inv.Spc.Mgt.Tech.
01/05/2022



Water Chestnut- Post Harvest- 08/26/2021



*Map produced of Furnace pond after the harvest had ended. This flight utilized the programs Pix4Dcapture and Maps Made Easy.

Map made by:
Joshua Tracy
Inv.Spc.Mgt. Tech.
01/05/2022



Water Chestnut- Pre Harvest- 07/16/2021



Map made by:
Joshua Tracy
Inv.Spc.Mgt.Tech.
01/05/2022

Water Chestnut- Post Harvest- 08/26/2021



Map made by:
Joshua Tracy
Inv.Spc.Mgt.Tech.
01/05/2022

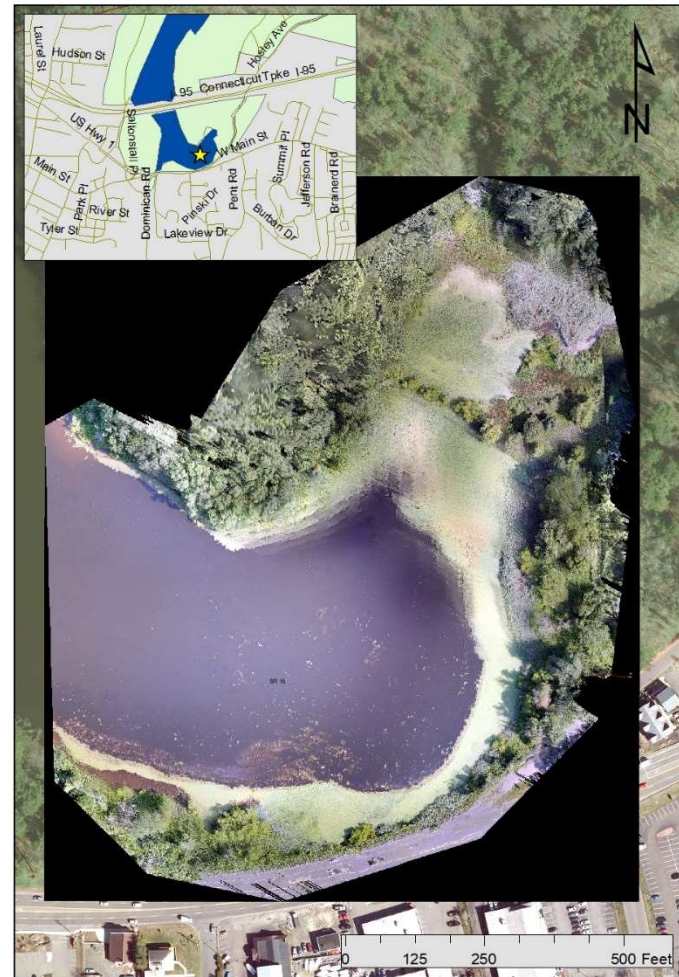


Water Chestnut- Post Harvest- 08/21/2020



Map made by:
Joshua Tracy
Inv.Spc.Mgt. Tech.
01/05/2022

Water Chestnut- Post Harvest- 08/26/2021



Map made by:
Joshua Tracy
Inv.Spc.Mgt. Tech.
01/05/2022

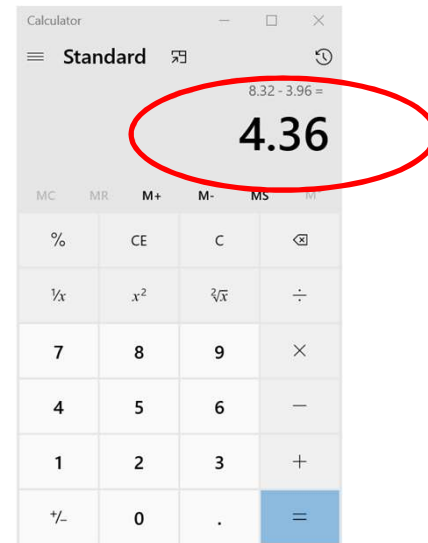


Water Chestnut- Post over Pre harvest area



| Pre Harvest | | | | |
|-------------|---------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| OBJECTID * | SHAPE * | SHAPE_Length | SHAPE_Area | Acreage |
| 1 | Polygon | 1480.408686 | 33704.741695 | 8.328623 |

| Post Harvest | | | | |
|--------------|---------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| OBJECTID * | SHAPE * | SHAPE_Length | SHAPE_Area | Acreage |
| 1 | Polygon | 1677.957403 | 16048.353159 | 3.96563 |



Map made by:
 Joshua Tracy
 Inv. Spc. Mgt. Tech.
 01/05/2022



Future Initiatives



- Budgeting for another two weeks (80hrs) of harvesting in Summer 2022
- Provide expertise to adjacent landowners with *Trapa natans* populations
- Conduct Pre & Post harvest flights.
- Continue monitoring known populations
 - Increase monitoring intensity at north end of Saltonstall and at Hosley Diversion



An aerial photograph showing a vast, dense mat of bright green aquatic plants, likely duckweed, covering a body of water. The plants are small and tightly packed, creating a textured, green surface. The text "Thank you." is written in a white, elegant cursive font across the center of the image.

Thank you.

**January 12, 2022
Land Use Committee Meeting**

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

| | Current Year | Previous Year | Historical Average | Drought Status |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| December 31, 2021 | 85% | 81% | 72% | None |

Rainfall (inches)

| | Current Year | Previous Year | Historical Average |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| December 2021 | 1.55 | 4.25 | 4.09 |
| Fiscal YTD (6/1/21 – 12/31/21) | 31.13 | 25.10 | 27.14 |

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

- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 19+/- acres.
- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 23+/- acres.
- North Haven – Corresponded with property owner of 14+/- acres.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4 and NB 4A) – Appeared at NBLCT meeting to discuss our disposition process. Contacted Bennett and Smilas to hire them to help us with the property splits.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 95 Ives St. (HA 13) – Bids opened with 3 respondents. Top bidder wanted to pull out. We then awarded the bid to the 2nd highest bid. Corresponded with bidder’s attorneys about the P&SA and closing.
- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Spoke to town staff about the condemnation. They indicated they would get to it by the end of the first quarter of 2022.
- Woodbridge, 1029 Johnson Rd. – Owners indicated they would compromise on some points we brought up. Asked them for updated plans when they were ready.
- Woodbridge, 2040 Litchfield Tpk. – Found material was still left over the property line and down the bank. Informed the owners that we would not accept any bid from them for 95 Ives St. By end of the month, they removed all the material and our crews installed jute mats.

Forestry Update

- Guilford – West of Sugar Loaf ash salvage (GU 4) – 40% complete
- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 25% complete.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet. Looking to grant extension.
- Madison - Nathan’s Pond Slash Wall Harvest (MA 6) – **90% complete.**
- Seymour - Silvermine Road Slash Wall Harvest (SE 9) – **Harvest started in December. 10% complete.**
- Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – **Bid awarded.**
 - Alex Amendola’s last day was Dec. 16th. Started interviewing candidates to fill the position.
 - Observed southern pine beetles at Lake Bethany. Consulted with CAES staff.
 - Updated forestry SOP’s in advance of Alex’s departure.
 - Marked firewood lots and issued one new permit.
 - Continued marking future timber sale at Lake Menunketuc.

Recreation

- Christmas tree cutting event had 63 trees harvested.
- Held invasive plants walk at Lake Saltonstall with 4 attendees.
- Continued process to hire new people for next year's fishing season.
- Reblazed trails at Lake Bethany.
- Redirected FB messenger notices about discolored water in West Haven to Operations staff.

| | December | | November | |
|----------------|----------|------|----------|-------|
| | 2021 | 2020 | 2021 | 2020 |
| Permit Holders | | | 5,578 | 5,879 |

Special Activity Permits

- New Haven Bird Club (Chris Loscalzo) - Annual Christmas Bird Count survey - Saltonstall, Whitney, Wepawaug, Maltby, Dawson, Glen, Chamberlain, Watrous – (12/18/2021).
- Christopher Loscalzo (at request of CTDEEP) - Annual Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey - Lakes Saltonstall and Gaillard – (1/8/2022).
- Branford Land Trust (Tom Cleveland) - Tracking class - Lake Saltonstall woods - 1/29/2022 (Rain Date: 1/30/2022) & 2/26/2022 (Rain Date: 2/27/2022).
- McLaren Engineering Group (Craig Plate) – Perform a routine and underwater inspection of the Davis Street Bridge over Lake Whitney; contracted by CTDOT to perform the inspection; (12/22/2021).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Agricultural agreements – Signed agreement for use of one of the fields (HA 36). Met beekeeper at Prospect to look at possible new site for hives (PR 6).
 - East Haven, 167 Saltonstall Parkway (Route 1) (EH 7) – Corresponded with Murtha staff about progress. Their attorney claimed they did not receive the documents we supplied weeks ago. Abutter has been parking more vehicles along our frontage with Rt. 1.
 - Cheshire, 264 Harrison Rd. (CH 2) – Sent abutter a draft license agreement.
 - Seymour, 8 Maiden La. (SE 3) – Sent draft license agreement to realtor involved in sale of this property.
 - New Haven, 1201 Whalley Ave. (NH 5) – Attempted to contact Spinaci's since the license agreement expired in December 2021.
 - Madison, 81 Suffolk Dr. (MA 12) – Corresponded with Nature Conservancy staff about this encroachment. Sent follow-up letter after what we sent in January.
 - North Branford, Big Gulph area (NB 4) – Alerted by North Branford staff about trespassing and fort constructed on our property. Police contacted youths and their families.
- Invasive plants – Documented or treated invasive populations in North Branford and Guilford. Discussed aquatic species grant that we applied for last year with the new Grant Writer for the RWA.

| | |
|--|------------|
| Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac) | 39 acres |
| Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH) | 2.66 acres |

- Deer hunt – Post-hunt surveys were mailed out and have been coming in.
- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – Corresponded with attorneys and surveyor preparing easement and map for use in the project.

- Hamden, New Haven Country Club (HA 5) – Asked by the NHCC to sign off on an assignment with them and Webster Bank since they have a license agreement with us for part of the parking lot. Referred to Murtha to review it before we sign anything.
- Hamden, Eli Whitney Museum – Discussed license agreement that affords access to the site with Murtha stuff. We will waive the conflict of interest that Murtha has with UI.

Attachments

- December 6, 2021 - RWA INVITED TO APPLY FOR EPA WIFIA LOAN TO IMPROVE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE – RWA Press Release
- December 9, 2021 - Water utilities urge regulators to scrap new PFAS limits – CT Insider
- December 16, 2021 - Lack of water in New Haven schools could last months: ‘We need water in schools’ – New Haven Register
- December 16, 2021 - Lamont aims to succeed on climate where the legislature failed – CT Mirror
- December 14, 2021 - Proposal to divert double the water from Fairfield area to southwestern CT approved – Fairfield Citizen Online
- January 4, 2022 - Spotted lanternfly continues to be concern for CT farmers - WFSB

Upcoming Agenda Items

February 2022 –

RWA press release - December 6, 2021

RWA INVITED TO APPLY FOR EPA WIFIA LOAN TO IMPROVE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The United States Environmental Protection Agency announced the 2021 projects eligible to apply for loans through the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act.

NEW HAVEN, CT – The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that the Regional Water Authority (RWA) will be included among the 43 new projects in 24 states invited to apply for approximately \$6.7 billion in Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loans. These low-interest loans are part of a federal program administered by EPA for eligible water and wastewater infrastructure projects. The funds can cover up to 49 percent of eligible costs for projects totaling \$20 million or more.

This year the EPA WIFIA program is approved to provide approximately \$5.5 billion in credit assistance and may finance approximately \$11 billion in water infrastructure investment to eligible entities. Allowable costs include development phase activities, including planning, preliminary engineering, design, environmental review, revenue forecasting, and other pre-construction activities. Construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, and replacement activities are also allowed under the rules of the program.

“The RWA is pleased to partner with WIFIA to help fund the rehabilitation of the iconic Lake Whitney Dam in Hamden,” said Larry Bingaman, RWA President and CEO. “We will renew the infrastructure in our community, safeguard this critical water supply reservoir for generations to come and through participating in WIFIA’s low-cost funding opportunities, we will also be able to mitigate future water rate increases for our customers.”

Lake Whitney Dam is a key part of the RWA’s water supply system and serves the following main purposes: impounds Mill River to form Lake Whitney which is the single source to the RWA’s Lake Whitney Water Treatment Plant; provides water quality improvements to Mill River which flows downstream of the dam, and provides drought mitigation by providing seasonally high volumes of source water.

“Lake Whitney is critical to providing Connecticut families with clean, reliable drinking water,” said U.S. Representative Rosa DeLauro. “When Congress and President Biden crafted and passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, rehabilitating the Lake Whitney Dam was exactly the type of project that inspired the historic investments in our nation’s water systems. I am proud that the EPA has invited South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority to access federal funds to rehabilitate the 160-year-old high-hazard dam and improve the spillway to meet current standards. I am committed to ensuring Connecticut has the tools it needs to safeguard our water supply and lower water costs for Connecticut’s families.”

An approximately \$40 million project is planned to upgrade the dam to more rigorous current stability guidelines established by the Army Corps of Engineers, and spillway capacities required by the State of Connecticut Dam Safety Regulations. The project will protect the water distribution system and the dam itself. Completed in 1862, the Lake Whitney Dam is not only a critical piece of water infrastructure, it is also a historic structure and the project must be conducted under the State of Connecticut’s historic preservation guidelines.

The RWA will take the next step in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process by formally applying for credit assistance. While this invitation does not guarantee funding, it is expected that the EPA will only invite projects to apply if it anticipates that those projects can obtain WIFIA credit assistance.

Water utilities urge regulators to scrap new PFAS limits

Dec. 9, 2021 – CT Insider

A group of Wisconsin water utilities are urging the state Department of Natural Resources to scrap plans to impose limits on PFAS chemicals in drinking water, saying the agency hasn't thought through the costs.

The Wisconsin State Journal reported Thursday that the Municipal Environmental Group's water division submitted comments to the DNR on Tuesday saying the state should wait for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to impose federal standards.

The DNR's policy board is expected to vote on February on rules that would establish a combined limit of 20 parts per trillion for PFAS chemicals in drinking water. The rules also would require testing municipal and some private water supplies. Systems that exceed the limit would have to install filters or drill new wells.

The DNR estimates the regulations would cost businesses and local governments about \$5.6 million in the first year and about \$3.9 million annually going forward.

The EPA isn't expected to implement federal PFAS standards before 2026. By then it would be too late for the state to spend about \$150 million in funding allocated through the new federal infrastructure law, said DNR Environmental Management Division Administrator Darsi Foss.

Lack of water in New Haven schools could last months: 'We need water in schools'

New Haven Register - Linda Conner Lambeck - Dec. 16, 2021

NEW HAVEN — It has been on the district's radar since a return to in-person schooling was mapped out in January.

Yet, a plan to replace water fountains in of the city's 40 schools with two water filling stations remains a work in progress, leaving some students, well, thirsty.

"We need water in schools," Anthony Fiore, a student member of the Board of Education, told the board this week.

With water fountains off-limits because of the pandemic, many students come to school with their own water bottles but, at some schools, there apparently is no place to refill them.

That came as news to Mayor Justin Elicker, a member of the school board who said he sends his daughter to elementary school daily with a water bottle and that she seems to have a way to refill it.

"What is the administration's policy regarding access to water?" Elicker asked.

Superintendent of Schools Iline Tracey said water bottle filling stations are on order, using federal COVID relief funds. Tracey said a city bidding process and supply chain issues have led to a delay in their arrival.

The board was told it will be February before the stations are in district hands, after which they can be installed.

That news left some board members frustrated.

"Hydrating our kids ... I don't understand why we are still having that problem," said board member Darnell Goldson. "We have to get that resolved as soon as possible. It is just not a good thing."

Board member Matt Wilcox, chairman of the board's Finance Committee, said while it was good that the stations will arrive, the fact that that won't be until February means a plan needs to be put in place to make the situation better in the meantime.

"I understand we have to abide by purchasing regulations," Wilcox said.

Tracey said those regulations prohibit the district from simply buying cases of water from local supermarkets.

Teachers and building administrators apparently have stepped in to buy bottled water in the absence of the filling stations, Wilcox said.

In October, samples of the water filling stations were installed at James Hillhouse High School, then put on order, according to Finance Committee meeting minutes.

The plan is to install two filling stations at each school, one near the nurse/administration area and the other near the cafeteria.

Connections at each school are said to be different.

Lamont aims to succeed on climate where the legislature failed

CT Mirror - Jan Ellen Spiegel - December 16, 2021

Facing an election year with an environmental track record far skimpier than he may have wanted, Gov. Ned Lamont Thursday unveiled a massive climate change-focused executive order that could make up for some legislative shortcomings. It could also help reverse the state's current trajectory that falls short of its 2030 greenhouse gas emission targets.

"One of the things you find about democracies is we're pretty good at responding to emergencies, but we're not as good when it comes to looking around the corner," said Lamont at a news conference outside the State Capitol. Commissioners from more than a half-dozen state departments stood nearby. "Frankly, I think we've been a little slow on climate change."

The order contains 23 multi-part items and is clearly a ramp-up of the state's climate change efforts. But it does not include a direct way to recoup the biggest environmental loss of the most recent legislative session – failure to authorize the Transportation and Climate Initiative. TCI was designed to tackle the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the state – motor vehicles.

Broadly, Lamont's order takes a whole-of-government approach to address meeting greenhouse gas reduction mandates with resiliency and energy-saving measures in place across many state government practices and multiple agencies. It contains building code changes to foster energy efficiency, land-based efforts for agriculture and offers solutions – such as forest maintenance –to help store carbon. It also outlines innovative actions in the areas of public health and climate change, environmental justice, and economic development.

Some items are detailed, others more vague.

Most of the items in the order are not new, however. They are largely drawn from a year-old report – Taking Action on Climate Change and Building a More Resilient Connecticut for All – prepared by working groups totaling nearly 300 people through the Governor's Council on Climate Change.

"A lot of the things in here should not be surprising," said Katie Dykes, commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. "It's really a direct line between this executive order and the phase one GC3 report that was issued in January with those 61 recommendations for near-term actions.

Dykes, who called the order a "landmark," said "This executive order cements much of our response to climate change. It lays out a whole of government approach to ensure that all of the agencies in this administration are rowing in the same direction, that we're coordinating effectively, so that we can deliver on our climate agenda."

That sprawling GC3 report had generated some criticism over the uncertainty of how to implement it. A few of its items came before the legislature this past year, but not all were approved.

A bill to consider whether to adopt stricter emissions for medium and heavy-duty vehicles did not pass, but is getting a second life in the order. Tightened efficiency standards for appliances, which has failed in the legislature on more than one occasion and is a direct money-saver for consumers, is also in it.

Another measure that allows communities to create stormwater authorities did pass. Lamont's order sets up several mechanisms to help municipalities do that as well as help them tee-up resiliency and climate change projects that might be eligible for federal funding from the bipartisan infrastructure law.

"It's going to be driving enormous amounts of investment and activity in infrastructure all across our state," Dykes said. "Many of the elements of this executive order ensure that our agencies are working together to deliver those investments, fast but also smart."

The governor said money from the state would come from bonding and that "there's not a lot of operating revenues that we're going to need this support this."

The order also goes beyond GC3 recommendations in some key areas.

Taking a page from the work that was done on TCI before the governor pulled the plug on it for the foreseeable future, the order establishes a Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council within DEEP. That had been in the works as part of the preliminary work in advance of the expected TCI approval.

The GC3 report had looked deeply at the issues around climate change and public health, offering some three-dozen recommendations. The order pinpoints several of those, but goes a step further, ordering the Department of Public Health to establish an Office of Climate and Public Health and directs that office to look at a litany of factors including the impacts of urban heat islands, air quality, drinking water, various diseases and mental health considerations that arise from climate change.

The order also establishes a Connecticut Clean Economy Council with the mandate to "advise on strategies and policies to strengthen our climate mitigation, clean energy, resilience, and sustainability programs, thereby lowering emissions and advancing the state of economic and environmental justice for our residents."

The many government-focused initiatives will set up state agencies and operations to lead by example with all manner of energy and resiliency retro-fits and acquisitions such as solar systems – many of them in state-owned buildings.

Buildings are a large source of greenhouse gas emissions. But motor vehicle pollution is still the largest. TCI would have put a price on those emissions which would have been passed on to consumers, though the money would have gone to programs to help those least able to afford the cost. Republicans and fossil fuel industries labeled it a gas tax and supporters never overcame that narrative, especially as gasoline prices rose recently due to pandemic factors.

The executive order does include a number of transportation initiatives including development of a statewide battery electric bus fleet by 2035, reduction of miles traveled by state employees and a plan to upgrade culverts to better accommodate stormwater as storms intensify and become more frequent.

“We know that the age of the automobile has accelerated climate change, and we need to do more to address that,” said Garrett Eucalitto, deputy commissioner of the state DOT. “The provisions in the executive order will help us achieve our goal of becoming at the DOT, the potentially greatest solution to fighting climate change instead of the greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions.”

Charles Rothenberger, energy and climate attorney at Save the Sound, called the electric bus fleet proposal “fantastic,” but said it should have been paired with a more robust effort to obtain zero emissions vehicles for the state fleet and more specifics on how some of the other proposals would work.

He and others took aim squarely at the legislature for failing to approve TCI and other climate-change proposals. “The administration moving forward to do what it can is great, but that doesn’t let the legislature off the hook,” he said. “They still have a responsibility here and a large responsibility to take action. We would certainly hope and urge that the upcoming session really center actions to address the climate crisis as part of that effort.”

Amy McLean, state director at Acadia Center, echoed that, noting as did others that the upcoming session is the shortest that is legally allowed. “The responsibility of not just the governor but now also the legislature to put meaningful climate legislation in place that is going to address specifically greenhouse gas emissions and transportation emissions is necessary,” she said. “We cannot go another year another legislative session without more meaningful legislation on climate.”

Proposal to divert double the water from Fairfield area to southwestern CT approved

Fairfield Citizen Online - Katrina Koerting - Dec. 14, 2021

A Fairfield resident enjoys a morning of fishing on the Mill River in Fairfield on Sunday, March 21, 2021.

Brian A. Pounds / Hearst Connecticut Media

Controversy surrounding a proposal to double the amount of water allowed to be diverted from the Fairfield area to southwestern Connecticut has been resolved.

Aquarion Water Co., which filed for the diversion, this week announced an agreement between the town of Fairfield, the Fairfield Conservation Commission and several other local groups that had challenged the proposal based on environmental and supply concerns. The agreement approves the diversion but adds monitoring safeguards.

Under the plan, Aquarion will be able to divert a maximum of 14.2 million gallons per day from its Greater Bridgeport System — almost double the prior limit of 7.26 million gallons per day — to Greenwich, Stamford, Darien and New Canaan. It is part of Aquarion's long-range plan to meet water needs in southwestern Fairfield County, especially as the threat of droughts increases.

"The challenge of limited water resources in southwest Fairfield County has been an important problem to solve," said Aquarion President Donald Morrissey. "We're pleased to have reached an agreement with the town of Fairfield and leading environmental organizations from the community that will help us ensure the reliable delivery of high quality water to Greenwich, Stamford, Darien and New Canaan not just in the near term, but for decades to come."

Environmentalists and officials in Fairfield recognized the need for more water to that area but challenged the proposal, saying that much water would negatively affect the residents and watershed in the Greater Bridgeport System, especially along the Mill River and Cricker Brook. They urged the state to reduce the amount of water allowed and shorten the 25-year permit duration, giving more chance for review to determine the impacts and need.

As part of the agreement, additional monitoring was added to the plan. Aquarion will pay the U.S. Geological Survey to maintain and monitor the flow gauge on the Mill River in Fairfield throughout the life of the permit. The USGS will share that data online, which is accessible to the public, and ensure there's enough water there to support aquatic life and fish habitats, Aquarion said. The gauge had been a popular request throughout the public hearings.

Aquarion spokesman Peter Fazekas said the amount of water the company moves depends on the demand and is always being adjusted. He said the additional gauge is one step to ensure there's enough water to the Greater Bridgeport System.

"We are always monitoring all our reservoir levels and balancing withdrawals," Fazekas said. "We will also be bringing our Housatonic wellfield back online."

The Greater Bridgeport System had been made up of 12 towns including Bridgeport, Wilton, Fairfield, Easton, Weston, Redding, Westport and Norwalk, but Greenwich, Stamford, Darien and New Canaan will now be their own water region — the Southwest Fairfield County Region.

While the diversion is approved, Fazekas said it will be at least another three years before the needed infrastructure improvements are done to move the maximum amount of water allowed.

Controversy around the project began about a year ago.

The state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection had already issued a Notice of Tentative Determination to Approve, limiting the annual daily average to 12.56 million gallons a day, sparking outcry in Fairfield. The notice prompted two petitions in January and fueled comment at the hearings in May.

The state ultimately approved the petition to divert in September, but was delayed when exceptions were filed later that month.

"The DEEP determined that the application was complete and, following its technical review, determined that the proposed diversion is necessary, will not significantly affect long-range water resources management, and will not impair proper management and use of the water resources of the state," Janice Deshais, the DEEP hearing officer, wrote at the time.

Oral arguments were then set for November and December, but the December date was canceled and the exceptions withdrawn because of this agreement.

"I'm pleased we were able to work with Aquarion to address important issues around reliable water infrastructure and toward developing those resources in a way that balances Fairfield's drinking water needs with protection of the environment," said Fairfield First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick.

Aquarion said the agreement is the result of a collaboration between the company, the town of Fairfield and its Conservation Commission, Fairfielders Protecting Land and Neighborhoods, the Lake Hills Association and the Mill River Wetland Committee.

“Under the agreement we’ve reached, stream flow standards will be adhered to, protecting the ecology of rivers and streams in our communities,” Kupchick said. “We fought for the best interest of the town of Fairfield and think the agreement with the addition of the gauge, will be a positive result for all parties.”

Alexis Harrison, co-president of Fairfielders Protecting Land and Neighborhoods, said the stream flow gauge had been in place at the Duck Farm Road bridge for decades until about 2016 when it was decommissioned for budgetary reasons. She said reinstalling it will allow those measurements to be taken again and help better understand any downstream effects.

She said the agreement will also mean Aquarion will continue to comply with the water release requirements of a separate agreement with Fairfield from 2007, until DEEP’s new Streamflow Standards and Regulations takes over. Fairfield will also get a summary water diversion report compiling annual water diversion data.

“Mill River is a considerable natural and recreational resource to Fairfield, and FairPLAN believes these agreements will help to ensure the future ecological health of the river for both wildlife and recreational use for all to enjoy now and in the future,” Harrison said.

Spotted lanternfly continues to be concern for CT farmers

Rob Polansky – WFSB - Jan 4, 2022

NEW HAVEN, CT (WFSB) - The spotted lanternfly continues to be a concern for farmers and scientists in Connecticut.

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station said it continued to detect the spotted lanternfly in Fairfield and New Haven counties over the last two years.

The municipalities where it was found included Greenwich, New Canaan, and Stamford, Norwalk, Milford, Orange, and Cheshire.

“As this insect continues to expand in Connecticut, it raises ongoing and future concerns for Connecticut’s agriculture, hence the renewal of the SLF quarantine as noted in the original order” said state entomologist Dr. Kirby Stafford.

Early detection is important, the CAES said. The public is urged to report potential sightings of this invasive pest when they become active again in 2022. Currently, the insect is overwintering in egg masses. If you suspect you have found a SLF, snap a picture of it, collect it if possible, and report it to ReportSLF@ct.gov.

The spotted lanternfly is a sap-feeding planthopper that was first discovered in the U.S. in 2014. It was found in Pennsylvania at the time.

This insect attacks many hosts and has the potential to severely impact Connecticut’s farm crops, particularly apples, grapes, and hops, along with several tree species. The secretion of excess sap called honeydew can also be a nuisance for residential infestations.

In the fall, adults about 1 inch long can often be found congregating on tree-of-heaven (Ailanthus), willows and other trees. They will lay egg masses on trees and almost any nearby surface like rocks, decks, houses, outdoor equipment, and furniture, etc.