

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

AGENDA

Regular Meeting of Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – January 12, 2022 meeting
3. Burying Beetles Research Update: Steve Trumbo
4. Updates on other land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
5. Other Land items
6. Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.
7. 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&meetype=1463&page=>. For questions, contact the board office at 203-401-2515.**

Topic: RPB Land Use Committee Meeting

Time: Feb 9, 2022 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Meeting (*via conference call*)

Dial by your location

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

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+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

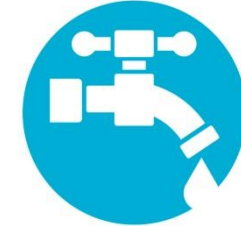
Meeting ID: 851 2245 7705

Passcode: 455933

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

SAFETY MOMENT

Tap Into
Safety



Regional Water Authority

FEBRUARY – AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Did you know that cardiovascular diseases claim more lives each year than all forms of cancer and chronic lower respiratory disease combined?

As of 2018, 30.3 million adults in the United States were diagnosed with cardiovascular disease.

Approximately every 40 seconds, someone will have a heart attack or stroke.

Heart disease, stroke and cardiovascular disease risk factors:

Smoking	<i>Tobacco was one of the top 3 leading risk factors</i>
Physical Inactivity	In 2016, 26.9% of adults did not engage in physical activity
Poor Nutrition	Small improvements in nutrition from 2003-2012
Overweight/Obesity	Between 1980 and 2018 increased from 28.8% to 36.9%
Cholesterol	2013-2016 adults had high levels of bad cholesterol – 30.3%
Diabetes	2013-2016 9.8% of adults were diagnosed with diabetes
High Blood Pressure	2013-2016, 46% of adults had hypertension



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 January 12, 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, January 12, 2022, via remote access. Chair Betkoski presided.

Present: Committee Members: P. Betkoski, P. DeSantis, B. Eitzer, R. Harvey, M. Horbal, M. Levine, G. Malloy, J. Oslander, and J. Mowat Young
Authority: K. Curseaden
Management: W. Henley, S. Lakshminarayanan, J. Tracy and J. Triana
RPB Staff: J. Slubowski

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

He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Eitzer, seconded by Mr. Harvey, the Committee approved the minutes of its December 8, 2021 meeting, with Mr. Malloy abstaining.

Mr. Henley, the RWA’s Aquatic Resource Scientist, and Mr. Tracy, the RWA’s Invasive Species Management Technician, provided an update on the Water Chestnut Harvest at Furnace Pond in Branford, which included:

- Progression of water chestnut and conditions
- Invasive species prevention
- Summer 2020/2021 harvest and monitoring
- Equipment used
- Decomposition
- Future initiatives

At 6:00 p.m., Messrs. Henley and Tracy 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
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.

There were no other land items to report.

Chair Betkoski reported on the volunteer to attend the Authority meeting on January 27, 2022.

The next regular meeting of the committee is Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

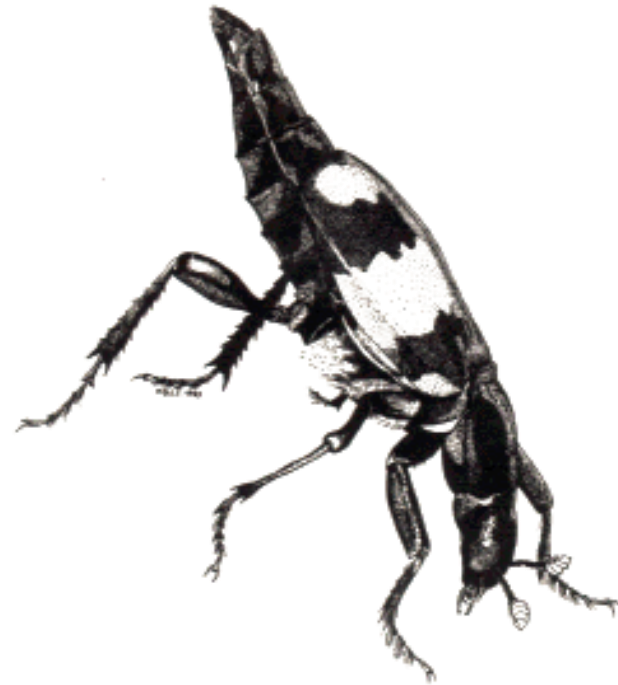
At 6:16 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy, seconded by Mr. Eitzer, and unanimously carried, the committee meeting adjourned.

Peter Betkoski, Chairman

Carrion ecology research on South Central Connecticut RWA property

**Stephen Trumbo, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary
Biology, UConn-Waterbury**

February 9, 2022



Research activities

- Background on study subjects and carrion ecology
- Trapping methods
- Behavioral research
- Studies of chemical ecology, recycling nutrients and forensic entomology
- Publications acknowledging the help of the RWA

Coleoptera: Silphidae

The Burying and Carrion Beetles

Burying Beetles



Nicrophorus americanus

The American Burying Beetle



Nicrophorus carolinus



Nicrophorus guttula



Nicrophorus marginatus



Nicrophorus obscurus



Nicrophorus orbicollis



Nicrophorus pustulatus



Nicrophorus tomentosus

Nicrophorines

→ Parental

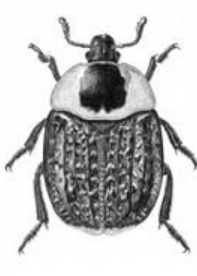
Carrion Beetles



Heterosilpha ramosa



Necrodes surinamensis



Necrophila americana



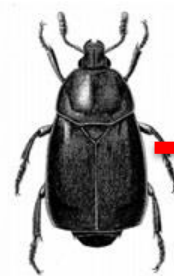
Oiceoptoma inaequale



Oiceoptoma novaboracense



Thanatophilus lapponicus



Thanatophilus truncatus

Silphines

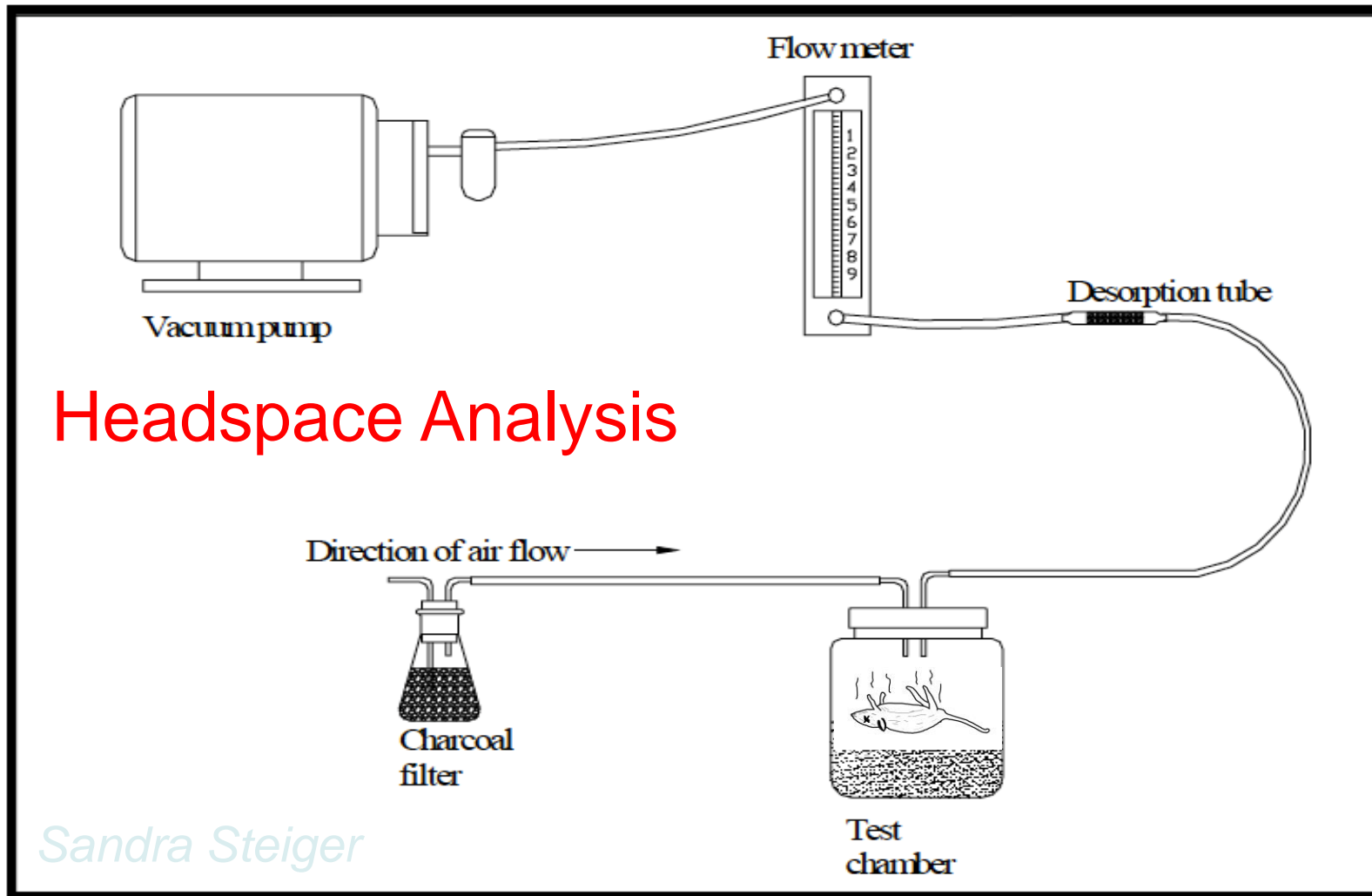
→ Non-parental

Experimental test of a volatile chemical





Trap used for studies
of forensic entomology
and carrion ecology



Lab analysis of odors from a carcass

Publications that involved the RWA

- Trumbo, S.T. 2006. Infanticide, sexual selection and task specialization in a biparental burying beetle. *Animal Behaviour* 72: 1159-1167.
- Trumbo, S.T. 2007. Can the “challenge hypothesis” be applied to insects? *Hormones and Behavior* 51: 281-285.
- Trumbo, S.T. & *Valletta, R.C. 2007. The costs of confronting infanticidal intruders in a burying beetle. *Ethology* 113: 386-393.
- Trumbo, S.T. 2007. Defending young biparentally: female risk-taking with and without a male in the burying beetle, *Nicrophorus pustulatus*. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* 61: 1717-1723.
- +Smith, G., Trumbo, S.T., +Sikes, D.S., Scott, M.P. & Smith, R.L. 2007. Host shift by the burying beetle, *Nicrophorus pustulatus*: a parasitoid of snake eggs. *Journal of Evolutionary Biology* 20: 2389-2399.
- Trumbo, S.T. 2009. Age-related reproductive performance in the parental burying beetle, *Nicrophorus orbicollis*. *Behavioral Ecology* 20: 951-956.
- Trumbo, S.T. 2012. Contest behavior and other reproductive efforts in aging breeders: a test of residual reproductive value and state-dependent models. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* 65: 1511-1518.
- Trumbo, S.T. & *Xhahani, E. 2015. Influences of parental care and food deprivation on regulation of body mass in a burying beetle. *Ethology* 121: 985-993

Publications that involved the RWA (cont.)

- Trumbo, S.T. & *Xhahani, E. 2015. Mass-size relationships, starvation and recovery in an engorging feeder. *Physiological Entomology* 40: 257-263.
- Trumbo, S.T., +Sikes, D.S. & Philbrick, P.K. 2016. Parental care and competition with microbes in carrion beetles: a study of ecological adaptation. *Animal Behaviour* 118: 47-54.
- Trumbo, S.T. 2016. Carcass age and reproductive costs for *Nicrophorus orbicollis* Say (Coleoptera: Silphidae). *Environmental Entomology* 45: 1178-1183.
- Trumbo, S.T. 2017. Feeding upon and preserving a carcass: the function of pre-hatch parental care in a burying beetle. *Animal Behaviour* 130: 241-249.
- Trumbo, S.T. and Steiger, S. 2020. Finding a fresh carcass: bacterially derived volatiles and burying beetle search success. *Chemoecology* 30: 287-296
- Trumbo, S.T. and *DiCapua, J.A. III. 2021. A synergism between dimethyl trisulfide and methyl thioacetate in attracting carrion-frequenting beetles demonstrated by use of a chemically-supplemented minimal trap. *Chemoecology* 31: 79-87.
- Trumbo, S.T., Philbrick, P.K.B., Stökl, J. and Steiger, S. 2021. Burying beetles adaptively manipulate information broadcast from a microbial community. *The American Naturalist* 197: 366-378.
- Trumbo, S.T. & Sikes, D.S. 2020. Resource concealment and the evolution of parental care in burying beetles. *Journal of Zoology* 315: 175-182.
- Trumbo, S.T. & Newton, A.F. 2022. Microbial volatiles and succession of beetles on small carrion. *Ecological Entomology* (submitted)

Acknowledgements

- Permissions to work in the field – South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, Flanders Nature Preserve, Roxbury Land Trust, Connecticut Department of Energy & Environment (Algonquin State Forest, Naugatuck State Forest), University of North Carolina, University of Michigan Biological Station, National Park Service
- Grants – National Science Foundation, National Geographic Society, American Museum of Natural History, UConn Research Foundation

**February 9, 2022
Land Use Committee Meeting**

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
January 31, 2022	87%	85%	77%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
January 2022	2.68	1.23	3.56
Fiscal YTD (6/1/21 – 1/31/22)	33.81	26.33	30.70

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.
- Branford – Corresponded with property owner of 12+/- acres.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4 and NB 4A) – Appeared at zoom meeting with Bennett and Smilas staff along with town staff to discuss how to split off the parcels. Authorized B&S to revise the maps and file on the land records.
- Branford, Brushy Plain Rd. (BR 7) – Met with First Selectman of Branford to discuss the possible sale of ~30 acres to the town for open space. He said he would discuss with the town council.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 95 Ives St. (HA 13) – Executed the P&SA. Received title report from the buyer. Executed the signature pages for the closing.
- Woodbridge, 1029 Johnson Rd. – Received revised plans from the Tarlowski's. Sent letter of approval for the amended plans.

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) – **95% complete.**
 - Seymour - Silvermine Road Slash Wall Harvest (SE 9) – **50% complete.**
 - Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – Bid awarded.
- Responded to email with questions and complaint from Seymour First Selectwoman about the harvest on Silvermine Rd.
 - Responded to questions with two abutters of the Silvermine Rd. timber harvest.
 - New Forester starting February 7th.

Recreation

- Submitted annual report to DPH in accordance with our DPH permits.
- Held New Year's Day hike at Lake Bethany with 15 people.
- Continued process to hire new people for next year's fishing season. Had multiple candidates not show up for their interviews.

- Acquired two aluminum boats for the 2022 fishing season at Lake Saltonstall.
- Prepared next newsletter for publication.

	January		December	
	2022	2021	2021	2020
Permit Holders	5,605	6,129	5,655	6,016

Special Activity Permits

- CT Agricultural Experiment Station (Dr. Jeff Ward, et al) - General forestry and wildlife research, tick/Lyme Disease studies - Lake Gaillard, North Madison, Prospect, Seymour, Branford, Bethany (1/06/2022 – 01/06/2023).
- New Haven Bird Club (Patrick T. Leahy) – Maintain and monitor bluebird nesting boxes on 7 sites – Downes Road, Bethany, adjacent to Lake Bethany property and field below Lake Dawson dam, Woodbridge, farm field on Sperry Road and Lake Chamberlain below the dam, Lake Watrous and other properties – (1/1/22– 12/31/22).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Agricultural agreements – Signed agreement with Kay for bee hives in Prospect (PR 6). Spoke to Baldelli about possible use of the Parish Farm Rd. fields for Christmas trees (BR 19). Received Christmas tree reports from Urbano, Miscio, and Jaynes.
 - East Haven, 167 Saltonstall Parkway (Route 1) (EH 7) – Corresponded with Murtha staff about progress. Sent letters to Lucido’s attorney. Reviewed draft of complaint. Marshall served the complaint to Lucido. Discussed the legal hold of materials with Murtha and RWA staff.
 - Cheshire, 264 Harrison Rd. (CH 2) – Executed license agreement for lawn and fence.
 - Seymour, 8 Maiden La. (SE 3) – Sent draft license agreement to new owner of the property.
 - New Haven, 1201 Whalley Ave. (NH 5) – Executed new license agreement with Spinaci for the parking lot next to the PRV.
 - Madison, 81 Suffolk Dr. (MA 12) – Kuck called to say that they would move the fence once the weather warms up.
- Invasive plants – Submitted grant application to DEEP for water chestnut harvesting project. Documented invasive populations in West Haven and Hamden

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	8.36 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	0 acres

- Deer hunt – Annual report submitted to DPH. From the post-hunt survey, we estimate total man-days spent scouting were 265 days. Man-days spent hunting were 927 days, while the total man-hours were 4,745 hours.
- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – Discussed draft easement and survey with Murtha and Juliano staff. Submitted draft of each to East Haven town staff to review.
- Hamden, New Haven Country Club (HA 5) – Discussed the request with Murtha. Decided that we would not sign the assignment since it was not in our best interest.
- Guilford, Rockland Rd gate (GU 15 and 18) – Notified by abutters that the pin of the gate was cut and the gate was open. Submitted work request to repair.
- Seymour, Haddad Rd. and Silvermine Rd. parcels (SE 9 and 10) – Spoke to town staff about possible sale of these parcels. Informed them it was not possible since the town wanted to develop them.

- New Haven, Yale Golf Course – Participated in zoom meeting with YGC staff and consultants to discuss planned work on the golf course.
- East Haven, 180 Borrmann Rd. (EH 2) – Checked on complaint from abutter regarding flooding in his backyard coming from the ridge. Water from seeps were not going to the intended storm sewer pipes.
- Farm River greenway trail – Attended zoom meeting about plans for greenway trail along Farm River in North Branford and East Haven.

Attachments

- December 16, 2021 - Biden-Harris Administration announces Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan - AWWA website
- January 17, 2022 - Work Begins On Third Phase Of Mill River Trail – New Haven Independent
- January 26, 2022 - REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY WARNS CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS TO AVOID THE ICE ON FROZEN RESERVOIRS – RWA press release
- January 31, 2022 - RWA Invited To Apply For \$20M For 2nd Lake Whitney Dam – New Haven Independent
- January 31, 2022 - Lake Whitney dam, built in 1862, closer to being brought into 21st century – New Haven Register

Upcoming Agenda Items

March 2022 –

Biden-Harris Administration announces Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan

December 16, 2021 - Connections Article, Publications – AWWA website

In a press event Thursday, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan announced that the January 2021 Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) are now final, and that EPA will promulgate further revisions prior to Oct. 16, 2024. *(Pictured left, Vice President Harris at the press event; pictured below, EPA Administrator Regan at the press event)*

The rulemaking plans are part of a broader Biden-Harris Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan, which the White House describes as “a historic effort of unprecedented ambition that will deploy catalytic resources from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law while leveraging every tool across federal, state, and local government to deliver clean drinking water, replace lead pipes, and remediate lead paint.”

AWWA CEO David LaFrance, who attended the event, issued a statement that read in part:

“Today’s announcement from U.S. EPA recognizes that the January 2021 Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) are an important step forward in lead risk reduction, and utilities are already hard at work implementing that rule in their communities. The required development of lead service line inventories will help communities understand the scope of the challenge and accelerate lead service line replacement. This is a tremendous and necessary undertaking, and many utilities are already advancing this goal and serve as excellent models for others. AWWA looks forward to helping communities find collaborative ways to overcome barriers to lead service line replacement.”

Key components of the announcement include:

The Jan. 15, 2021 LCRR Revisions are effective as of Dec. 16, 2021.

Water systems must comply with the LCRR deadlines unless a future rulemaking changes them. The first of those deadlines is Oct. 16, 2024.

EPA intends to propose and then promulgate further revisions – the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) -- prior to Oct. 16, 2024.

Because of the LCRI rulemaking, EPA anticipates proposing a delay in the compliance dates for submittal of Lead Service Line Replacement Plans and Tap Sampling Plans.

The announcement calls out the potential for recent federal infrastructure appropriations as well as legislative funding proposals currently in development as being important resources. EPA emphasizes:

Timely development of initial lead service line inventories. EPA does not expect to propose changes to the requirements for information to be submitted in the initial inventory

Avoiding partial lead service line replacement

Prioritization of lead service line replacement for the most vulnerable populations by focusing on schools, child-care facilities, homes where children are living, other locations where children are present, and households of those who historically have been disproportionately exposed to lead from water and other media.

While it’s not yet clear what the future revisions will include, the notice outlines specific areas of focus, including:

Re-evaluation of the action and trigger levels

Re-evaluation of the required tap sample compliance data set; perhaps including observed lead concentrations from both 1st and 5th liter samples in those calculations when samples are drawn from homes with lead service lines, as is current practice in Michigan

Provisions that would result in all lead service lines being replaced as quickly as is feasible

Provisions to prioritize the removal of lead service lines in historically disadvantaged communities

“Beyond EPA’s rulemaking, AWWA is pleased that the newly announced Biden-Harris Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan seeks to address lead exposure in a whole-of-government approach,” LaFrance said in the AWWA statement. “Increased collaboration among federal agencies can help reduce lead risks from all potential sources. *(Pictured left, AWWA CEO David LaFrance with EPA Office of Water Assistant Administrator Radhika Fox at the press event)*

“Tremendous progress has been made in lead risk reduction since the first Lead and Copper Rule was introduced in 1991, but more work remains. ... We look forward to working closely with the Administration, states, and partners to accelerate lead service line replacement in a collaborative and efficient manner.”

Work Begins On Third Phase Of Mill River Trail

Coral Ortiz - Jan 17, 2022 – New Haven Independent

A crew is pulling up asphalt from a dead end as part of the next phase of constructing the Mill River Trail.

The crew, from Schaumack Construction, has been doing the work at the closed-to-traffic roadway at the corner of Haven and Exchange Streets in Fair Haven.

The crew is working under the direction of Save the Sound, which has been overseeing the gradual development of the Mill River Trail, along with Biohabitats, a nonprofit dedicated to restoring ecosystems, conserving habitat, and regenerating natural systems

The Mill River Trail project began taking shape in 2018, with volunteer groups helping to do much of the clearing work and creating the trail in phases. [Click here](#) to read about completion of the first phase in 2019, and [here](#) to read about the completion of the second phase in 2020.

Clearing up this newest portion of the trail should take anywhere from three to four weeks, with the completion envisioned in early spring, said Save the Sound Watershed Coordinator Nicole Davis.

The plan for the new portion includes the installation of rain gardens through natural vegetation. The trail section will include a habitat for animals and a catch basin, which will prevent stormwater from entering the sewer system. The goal is to keep pollution out of New Haven rivers.

Grant funding for this portion of the trail comes from REI, Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Partners for Places, the Regional Water Agency, and the Dorr Foundation.

Once this part is finished, Save the Sound and other partners will be working with the city to design a future portion of the trail to Exchange and Saltonstall streets. The ultimate goal is for the Mill River Trail to connect from Criscuolo Park to East Rock Park.

The new portion runs by John Martinez Magnet School. Teachers there and at Cold Spring School have designed a curriculum using the new portion of the trail as “a learning space” to teach students about the ecosystem.

“We also have the Mill River Stewards, a program that has students maintain the space” once the project is completed, said Shauntasia Hicks of Save The Sound.

REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY WARNS CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS TO AVOID THE ICE ON FROZEN RESERVOIRS

Even with frigid temperatures, traffic of any kind over frozen reservoirs, is not safe or permissible.

RWA press release – Jan 26, 2022

NEW HAVEN, CT – As winter weather and frigid temperatures set in throughout south-central Connecticut, the Regional Water Authority (RWA) warns residents that it is never safe to walk, run, skate, sled, ski, or otherwise travel over ice-covered reservoirs. Posted warning signs on watershed land are meant to be strictly observed.

‘Frozen bodies of water can be deadly as the top layer of ice can easily give way trapping you under the freezing water. Your body can go into shock from the rapid temperature changes leaving you disoriented and unable to find a way out. Reservoirs in particular present additional dangers due to being far deeper than most lakes or ponds.’ RWA Recreation Program Specialist, Jeff Yale also reminded the public that ‘These tragedies can be avoided by simply staying off the ice.’

“In order to protect the safety of our customers and the quality of our water, the RWA does not allow activities of any kind on the ice at our reservoirs, which serve as the source of drinking water for some 430,000 consumers in Greater New Haven,” said RWA Police Captain Paul Ruggiero. “Frozen reservoirs can be far more dangerous than a frozen lake. Reservoirs are essentially flooded river valleys with fluctuating water levels, and when people stand close to the shore, they are standing above iced-over water that can be up to 30 feet deep.”

“We want our recreation permit holders to enjoy our watershed lands during Connecticut’s beautiful winter weather, but it’s important that people keep safety in mind,” said Ruggiero. “Any ice on reservoirs is unstable and dangerous. Falling through thin ice can very quickly become a tragedy, which is why we all must be diligent during this time of year.”

Follow these safety tips when near frozen bodies of water during the winter:

Obey all posted signs at RWA recreation areas and on watershed property.

Don’t test the thickness of the ice; it’s easy to slip from the bank and fall through.

Beware of ice covered with snow. Snow can insulate ice and keep it from freezing. It can also mask unsafe conditions like hidden cracks and other weak spots.

Parents should always closely watch and supervise their children and explain the dangers of playing on frozen reservoirs and lakes.

The winter months offer many unique opportunities for RWA Recreation Permit holders in nine areas in south-central Connecticut. All have different features to explore by walking, hiking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing while taking in the sights at these beautiful, pristine properties from which the region’s drinking water is sourced. Permit holders are welcome to enjoy four seasons of outdoor recreation as part of the Claire C. Bennitt Recreation Program by following all RWA posted signs along with standing rules and regulations.

RWA Invited To Apply For \$20M For 2nd Lake Whitney Dam

by Nora Grace-Flood | Jan 31, 2022 – New Haven Independent

U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro visited Hamden Monday morning to highlight a potential source of funding to help cover the estimated \$40 million cost of constructing a second dam for a longer-term fix.

DeLauro reported that the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority has been selected to compete for a \$20 million loan through The Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Program, a federal credit initiative administered by the Environmental Protection Agency that provides long-term, low-interest financial support to “regionally and nationally significant projects.”

“I’m so so proud that the EPA has invited RWA to accept the funds to rehabilitate the dam,” DeLauro said. She framed the potential loan as one piece of broader, “essential” federal investment in water infrastructure throughout Connecticut, including money allotted to boost business at New Haven’s ports and protect the city’s waterfront from sea level rise, flooding and storm surges.

“We are so excited to have these dollars flowing our way,” Hamden Mayor Lauren Garrett added. “Rosa is doing such a phenomenal job of bringing dollars home to our district, and we are happy to take them, and happy to take more.”

Investing in the Lake Whitney dam “is so important,” DeLauro argued, because “if you had a breach that occurred, any flooding downstream would be a disaster.”

Of RWA’s four water treatment plants, Lake Whitney is the second largest. It generates 80 million gallons of water each day, which provides around 120,000 customers throughout Southern Connecticut with clean H₂O.

It is also considered a “high hazard” dam by the state.

Because the dam was built more than a century and a half ago, it is filled with rubble, boulders, and stone, which are not cemented together.

To comply with modern dam codes, take into account changing weather conditions, and preserve the historical integrity of the original structure, RWA intends to build a solid concrete dam not in place of the current dam, but upstream of it. The project will be conducted under the State of Connecticut’s historic preservation guidelines.

First, RWA has to secure \$40 million in order to lead construction on that new dam. That project is crucial not only to delivering safe drinking water to customers but to supporting aquatic life throughout the Mill River and providing drought mitigation.

“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,” Capone wrote in a press release regarding WIFIA’s Lake Whitney spotlight. Capone said she is hopeful that the additional \$20 million required to follow through on construction will be provided through state grants.

In November, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal said that building a new dam in Lake Whitney is one of the highest priorities the state is looking to accomplish with federal infrastructure money.

With a total of \$445 million coming to Connecticut over five years for water infrastructure investments, DeLauro said, \$20 million to keep Lake Whitney clean and contained should be “viable through the infrastructure bill.”

RWA Vice President of Engineering Sunny Lakshminarayanan said that the design for the project has long been underway, and that construction should take roughly two to two and a half years. He said he hopes the new dam can be completed by 2026.

Lake Whitney dam, built in 1862, closer to being brought into 21st century

Ed Stannard - Jan. 31, 2022 – NHR

HAMDEN — The 160-year-old Lake Whitney dam likely will be restored to last many more years now that the Regional Water Authority has been invited to apply for up to \$20 million in infrastructure money.

U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-3, visited the Whitney Water Purification Facility Monday near the dam, and said the dam is among 43 projects in 24 states invited to apply for \$6.7 billion in money from the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act.

DeLauro said she expects the rest of the \$40 million to come from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed in November.

“Lake Whitney is critical to Connecticut’s families for clean, reliable, drinking water,” DeLauro said. The lake, the second-largest reservoir in the water authority’s system, is part of the Mill River.

“The dam is 160 years old, so if you had a breach that occurred, any flooding downstream would be a disaster,” she said.

The \$40 million project is sorely needed, according to April Capone, director of public affairs for the water authority. “This is a critical piece of infrastructure and it has to be maintained,” she said.

“The EPA tells you you are eligible to apply but they really don’t ask entities to apply unless you are a very good contender for the program,” Capone said.

“This dam project is very exciting, interesting. I absolutely love it,” said Mayor Lauren Garrett. “This very old dam is going to have stabilization put behind it with a new dam put in place.”

The project will meet stability guidelines set by the Army Corps of Engineers and improve its spillway capacity. Since the dam is a historic structure, the project must meet state historic-preservation guidelines.

In addition to extending the life of the dam, “By doing this work I think it helps the local communities for better water quality, transmission, as well as protecting the watersheds and aquatic life for generations to come,” said Sundar “Sunny” Lakshminarayanan, vice president of engineering and environmental services for the water authority.

He said the design is underway, construction is expected to start in 2023 and will take two to three years to complete.

Lakshminarayanan said there is a more recent concrete dam behind the original stone dam, and a new concrete dam will be built behind that. “It needs work, but it doesn’t necessarily mean it’s a dam that’s failing,” he said. “There are improvements that are required to bring the dam into compliance” with modern standards.

Capone said every \$1 million received from state and federal grants “equals 1 percent of a rate increase that doesn’t have to happen ... that we won’t have to put on our ratepayers. For a \$40 million project, that’s quite significant.”

While she expects the total to be received from the federal government, Capone said, “Our hope is we do not have to shift the cost onto our ratepayers.”

Lakshminarayanan said in the unlikely event that the EPA does not issue the \$20 million to the water authority, “we would still go ahead. Regional Water has actually gone and raised bonds in the past.” However, he said, “once they accept you then typically you are almost assured of funding.”