

Representative Policy Board  
**Land Use Committee**  
South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority  
*Meeting Location:* Bis Property, Roaring Brook Road, Cheshire, CT

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**AGENDA**

**Regular Meeting of Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.**

1. Safety Moment
2. Public Comment: Residents and customers may address the Land Use Committee regarding agenda items or other issues. Discussion is limited to the presentation of information for consideration and comment on agenda items.
  - a. 25 Saltonstall Place, E. Haven: J. Triana
3. Approval of Minutes – June 11, 2025 regular meeting
4. Bis Property Update: John Triana
5. Consider and act on Application for recommendation to the Representative Policy Board for Completeness, Mode, and Date of Public Hearing for the Application to dispose of 233 Skiff Street in Hamden, CT
6. Updates on land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
7. Other land items
8. Elect Committee Chair for 2025-2026
9. Next regular meeting - Wednesday, August 13, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
10. Adjourn

\*This is an in-person meeting. In the event of rain *ONLY*, the meeting will be held at 90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut and by teams. To view meeting documents, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/3antbz44>. For questions, contact the board office at 203-401-2515 or by email at [jslubowski@rwater.com](mailto:jslubowski@rwater.com).

# SAFETY MOMENT

## Dehydration

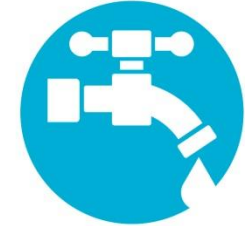
Dehydration occurs when the body uses or loses more fluid than it takes in. Then the body doesn't have enough water and other fluids to do its usual work. Not replacing lost fluids leads to dehydration.

The symptoms of dehydration in adults include:

- Extreme thirst
- Dark colored urine
- Tiredness
- Dizziness
- Confusion

If you or a loved one is feeling confused, less active, sleepy, or has a fever of 102 or higher seek medical attention.

**Tap**Into  
**Safety**



Regional Water Authority



Service – Teamwork – Accountability – Respect – Safety

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

 Regional Water Authority

Representative Policy Board  
**Land Use Committee**  
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District  
June 11, 2025

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Land Use Committee (“Committee”) of the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”), of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District (“RWA”), took place on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at 2061 Durham Road, Madison, Connecticut. Chair Levine presided.

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

Absent:

**RPB:** R. Harvey, C. Havrda, and T. Slocum

**Authority:** C. LaMarr

**Management:** S. Lakshminarayanan, V. Benni, C. Cordes, J. Hill, and J. Triana

**American Distilling, Inc.:** C. Hanson, Operations & Production Manager

**Guest:** B. Haines, Supplier

Chair Levine called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Malloy and seconded by Mr. Horbal, the Committee voted to approve the minutes of its May 14, 2025 regular meeting, as presented.

Messrs. Haines and Hanson provided an update on Witch Hazel Harvesting on RWA owned property in Madison, which included:

- Locations & Harvesting
- Harvesting techniques & chipping
- Distillation process
- Equipment used
- Cosmetic & pharmaceutical uses & benefits
- Certifications & compliance
- Marketing

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

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
May 31	98%	98%	93%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
May 2025	6.74	5.44	3.95
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 –	43.56	64.21	46.63

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

- Madison, Weber property – Inspected property prior to closing. Executed MOA with Yale. Final draft of the survey completed and reviewed. By the end of the month, we had everything in line except Yale's money so the closing would need to occur in June.
- North Branford – Corresponded with property owner of 97+/- acres.
- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 4+/- acres.
- Wallingford - Corresponded with property owner of 30+/- acres.
- Seymour, 56 Squantuck Rd. (SE 5) – Reviewed P&SA and sent to town's attorneys.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) - Filed re-subdivision survey on the land records.

Forestry Update

- Planted trees at Maltby Recreation Area in the vicinity of southern pine beetle salvage area, and adjusted some deer cages around seedlings and saplings planted in previous years.
- Worked with ISD staff regarding transferring firewood payment process onto WebTrac platform.
- Marked timber for Saltonstall slash wall harvest and submitted NDDDB request.

Recreation

- Forest management tour at Lake Saltonstall had 15 attendees.
- Kids fishing derby at Maltby Lakes had 21 attendees.
- New Haven Bird Club walk at Lake Chamberlain had 13 attendees.
- New Haven Bird Club walk at Lake Watrous had 10 attendees.
- Continued corresponding with trail coordinator in West Rock area about adding trails on our property.
- The vehicle barriers at the Lake Chamberlain causeway were moved by storm waters. Engineering had a contractor put them back in place.
- One of the new picnic tables was assembled and placed at Maltby Lakes.
- The Water Wagon was brought to four events by the recreation staff. Rain canceled the two other scheduled events.
- Two new applicants for the recreation staff were interviewed.

	May		April	
	2025	2024	2025	2024
Permit Holders	4,979	4,571	4,974	4,972

Special Activity Permits

- Resources in Search and Rescue, Inc.-(Ms. Celeste Robitaille and designees)- Training of Search and Rescue K9 teams to locate lost or missing individuals, Prospect Reservoir/Cornwall Street (5/15/25 & 5/16/25).
- Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments-(Ms. Christine O'Neill and designee)-NVCOG is creating open space inventory for the Naugatuck Valley region using photos. Photo is needed of Pine Hill Park Seymour to be included in the report. (5/15/2025 – 9/1/2025).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
  - Madison, 752 Summer Hill Rd. (MA 9) – Abutter has moved some, but not all, of the materials.
  - Madison, 702 Summer Hill Rd. (MA 9) – Spoke to abutter about his survey which differed from ours. Reviewed his deed and it matched our survey. Spoke to abutter again and advised him to get lawyer to review and then contact us.
  - Bethany, Bethany Horsemen trail agreement – Signed annual agreement for use of the trails around Lake Chamberlain for horseback riding.
  - Agricultural agreements – Corresponded with tenant of several fields on the west side of the system about his intentions.
  - Cheshire, 795 Mountain Rd. (CH 5) – Sent letter to abutter about trees that were girdled behind his house.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in Branford and North Branford. Portions of the Cherry Hill Rd. field were cleared of shrubby invasives. All Habitat treated the Great Hill Rd. field in North Branford with herbicide to control autumn olive.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	37 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	11.5 acres

- Killingworth, Kroupa Pond dam (KI 8) – Sent letter to DOT authorizing access to our property for survey and geotechnical work. Sent email to DOT on behalf of Engineering asking for results of their borings when complete.
- Land Use Plan – Sent out draft of West River, Maltby, and Prospect sections to staff for comments.
- New Haven, Sachem St. easement – Sent Yale a map to use for the easement.
- Bethany, 377 Carrington Rd. (BE 9) – Contacted by abutter about their plans to install a solar panel within the side setback. They are going to ZBA for a variance.
- Deer hunt – Lottery for hunters was run. We have 180 participants, 20 of those are first year participants. The breakdown by site: Gaillard – 127, Prospect - 20, Bethany - 25, Ansonia/Seymour – 8.
- North Branford, UI watermain easement – Separate surveys were completed for each property owner. Contacted town staff again. Murtha was contacting UI about acquiring their easement.
- Land Use Plan – Sent out draft of the Birmingham, North Cheshire Wellfield, and miscellaneous parcels sections for staff comments.
- Boundaries – Checked and marked boundaries in North Branford and Hamden.

There were no other land items to report.

Chair Levine reported that the next month's meeting would include the annual election of the Committee chair.

The next meeting is on Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in Cheshire at the former Bis property.

At 6:25 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy and seconded by Ms. Young, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

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Mark Levine, Chair

UNAPPROVED

**July 9, 2025**  
**Land Use Committee Meeting**

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
June 30	93%	94%	88%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
June 2025	1.07	3.94	3.68
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 – 6/30/25)	1.07	3.94	3.68

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

- Madison, Weber property – Sent letter of support to Yale for the Divinity’s School to use. Closed on the property.
- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 4+/- acres.
- Seymour, 56 Squantuck Rd. (SE 5) – Waiting for town to get back.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Submitted the disposition application to the FMA. FMA approved and forwarded it onto the RPB.
- Woodbridge, 2040 Litchfield Tpk. – Owner requested to build a garage for his tools and equipment, but they already used their impervious surface allotment. In inspecting the property, noticed that a large shipping container had already been installed. Required owner to remove it due to the impervious surface deed restriction. It was removed by the end of the month.

Forestry Update

- Adjusted deer protection around seedlings and saplings planted at the Maltby southern pine beetle salvage area, and watered recently planted trees during a heat wave.
- Inspected witch hazel harvest and the Menunketuc timber sale.
- Taped a radio program segment of Liquid Lunch discussing RWA’s forestry program.

Recreation

- Moth event at Lake Saltonstall had 21 attendees.
- Bass tournament had 30 participants.
- Hamden Hall’s summer camp brought 40 Kids to Maltby Lakes to fish and hike.
- The Water Wagon was brought to four events by the recreation staff.

	June		May	
	2025	2024	2025	2024
Permit Holders	4,916	4,989	4,979	4,571

### Special Activity Permits

- Connecticut Butterfly Association- (Gina Nichol) conduct survey of nocturnal moths and other insects, Lake Saltonstall Parking Lot Area, (6/28/25)
- New Haven Bird Club (Patrick Leahy) – Fall Migrant and Foliage Walk to observe fall birds and beautiful tree colors, Lake Dawson, (11/1/25).
- New Haven Bird Club (Patrick Leahy) – Fall Migrant and Foliage Walk to observe species that are nesting on Lake Chamberlain, (11/15/25).
- New Haven Bird Club (Patrick Leahy) – spring bird walk to observe species nesting on Lake Chamberlain, special emphasis on Bluebird/Tree swallow trail of bird houses, Lake Chamberlain, (5/20/26).
- New Haven Bird Club (Patrick Leahy) – spring bird walk to observe species nesting on Lake Watrous, special emphasis on Bluebird/Tree swallow trail of bird houses, Lake Watrous, (5/27/26).
- Bimble's Bluff 50K (Russell Hammond) - Annual 50K foot race - Use of trails through Genesee Preserve north of Guilford (10/19/2025).
- CT Forest & Park Assoc. (CFPA) (Julia Sonen) conduct tour of property, Master Woodland Manager Program, forestry ecology, Rt. 79 Madison-Nathan's Pond, (10/18/25)
- Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station –(Joseph Barsky) conduct research on impact of silvicultural treatment on stand dynamics, on sapling white oak tree release, effectiveness of slash wall on tree regeneration, impact on forested stands affected by emerald ash borer, collect ticks for research. Madison-Nathan's Pond, Bethany-Sanford Brook, Seymour-Haddad Road & Silversmith Road, North Branford-Lake Gaillard, Woodbridge-Lake Chamberlain, **Added Hosley Brook, Branford on 6/18/25** (1/1/2025-12/31/2025).
- Connecticut Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation-(Mr. Jack Swatt) flowering chestnut trees on RWA property to harvest nuts to plant in their Germplasm Conservation Orchards to preserve genetic diversity of the species; Seymour Slash Wall, RT 79 Durham, Genesee Tract, Menunkatuck, Bethany Tract 13 (6/30/2025 – 9/30/2025).

### Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
  - Madison, 752 Summer Hill Rd. (MA 9) – Abutter has moved some materials. Told him to contact us for inspection when everything is gone.
  - Madison, 702 Summer Hill Rd. (MA 9) – Abutter has gotten in contact with another surveyor to look at his old survey. Offered to put boulders along the back line. That is acceptable, but will be inspected prior to approval.
  - Agricultural agreements – Corresponded with tenant of several fields on the west side of the system about his intentions. Decided to only use the Branford fields. Placed the western fields on Farmlink.
  - North Branford, 1790 Middletown Ave. (NB 16) – Sent letter to abutter about bridges and mowing over the property line.
  - Branford, Cherry Hill Rd. (BR 10A) – Checked town records and the property (20 Autumn Ridge Rd.) was sold on June 3. Sent letter to the new owners saying they would need to enter into a license agreement to use the portion of the lawn on our property.
  - Orange, Baldwin Rd. (OR 4) – Reviewed license agreement for UI's guy wire-
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford and Branford. Conducted a drone flight at Page's Millpond and Furnace Pond to collect pre-harvest data on water chestnut populations. The water chestnut harvest started at the end of the month. Foresters were interviewed by WTNH about the steam weeder and invasives management.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	15 acres
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Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	0.5 acres
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- Woodbridge, Racebrook Rd. access (WO 10) – Contacted abutter to see if they would consider access easement since they are looking to lease their land for a solar array.
- Woodbridge POCD – Assisted town staff with questions they had as they update their POCD.
- North Branford, UI watermain easement – North Branford P&Z made the referral to the Town Council which meets to discuss the matter in July.

### **Attachments**

- June 11, 2025 - An invasive ant species with a potentially dangerous sting spotted in US. Is it in Connecticut? – NH Register
- June 2025 - The Top 30 Fishing Lakes in Connecticut Ranked – Fishmasters
- June 18, 2025 - Regional Water Authority weeds out invasive plants with steam in Connecticut – WTNH
- June 23, 2025 - Tick risks vary by region. Here's where diseases have spread and how to stay safe – NPR
- June 29, 2025 - From tragedy to tribute: Hamden's felled 'Door Tree' transformed into memorial benches – NH Register
- July 1, 2025 - RWA Acquires 24 Undeveloped Acres in Madison – RWA press release

### **Upcoming Agenda Items**

August 2025 - Bethany, Rt. 42 – Jeff Ward – CAES

## **An invasive ant species with a potentially dangerous sting spotted in US. Is it in Connecticut?**

By [Andrew DaRosa](#) - June 11, 2025 - NH Register

An invasive ant species is making headlines with [reports of the ants in 20 states](#).

The insect in question is the Asian needle ant (*Brachyponera chinensis*). The species is native to China, Japan and both Koreas, but was first observed in the U.S. in 1932, [according to the U.S. Forest Service](#).

"Small, shiny, dark brown to black" in appearance and measuring approximately .2 inches in length, the ants typically occupy undisturbed forest areas and lay eggs under logs, stones and leaf litter. They can also be found under mulch, pavers and landscape timbers, the U.S. Forest Service notes on its website.

The U.S. Forest Service notes that while these ants are "not terribly aggressive," their sting can lead to "life-threatening anaphylaxis." Symptoms of an Asian needle ant sting include skin reactions such as "mild to severe urticaria." In a [2002 study of the ants](#) cited by the U.S. Forest Service, it was reported that 2.1% of people stung by the ant exhibited "systemic allergic reactions."

[ABC News reports](#) that an Orkin Distinguished Professor of urban entomology in the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences has gotten "three calls from homeowners who have been stung by Asian needle ants and suffered anaphylaxis" in the past year.

Undated info from [antmaps.org](#), shows there have been reports of the *Brachyponera chinensis* in the nearby states of New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. [North Carolina State University](#) lists (also without corresponding dates) that the insects have been recorded in New York, North Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia — and Connecticut.

But Katherine Dugas from the [Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station](#) (CAES) told CT Insider via email that the [National Agricultural Pest Information System](#) does not have any record of these ants in Connecticut.

Dugas noted that a [2018 academic paper](#) — which is cited on antmaps.org in the entry for *Brachyponera chinensis* — shows that ant was spotted in Connecticut in 1980. However, Dugas also noted that in the book "[A Field Guide to the Ants of New England](#)" by Aaron Ellison, the Asian Needle Ant was reported as being collected over the state line in in Lewisboro, N.Y. in 1980.

In addition to their sting, Asian needle ants displace local ant species, in particular ants that disperse seeds. According to a 2012 study cited by the U.S. Forest Service, researchers have noticed decreased seed dispersal in areas invaded with Asian needle ants.

Though CAES has not received any of these ants or have had any reported stings, Dugas said that the office anticipates receiving calls from those concerned about the Asian needle ant in Connecticut.

"As we have no confirmation of these ants in Connecticut, if home or landowners suspect they have these ants, they should carefully collect some and send them to us for identification," Dugas said regarding sending these ants to CAES. "Ants should be collected in a small sturdy container such as a medicine bottle and placed into a freezer for 24 hours to kill them before sending them."

While Connecticut has not reported any Asian needle ants, the state does host a variety of [invasive animal species](#) including the emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle, [spotted lanternfly](#) and spongy moth.

## The Top 30 Fishing Lakes in Connecticut Ranked

Connecticut may be a small state, but it's packed with solid fishing spots—especially if you know where to look. I've spent plenty of time fishing these lakes myself, but I didn't want this list to be based on just one person's experience. So I reached out to other local anglers, asked around, and listened to what folks had to say. We also put a poll out on social media to get even more input. The feedback we got was honest, helpful, and sometimes even surprising.

Some of the lakes on this list are obvious picks for bass or trout. Others came up again and again because people just enjoy the experience there—whether that's easy access, great scenery, or solid year-round action. No matter what type of fishing you're into—bank, boat, kayak, or ice—there's something here for you.

This isn't a ranking from best to worst. It's a collection of 30 lakes that real Connecticut anglers actually like to fish. We kept it simple, straight from the folks who know the spots best. If you're looking to try a new lake this season or just want to see if your favorite made the list, you're in the right place.....

### #14. Lake Saltonstall

Lake Saltonstall sits quietly in eastern Branford, surrounded by thick woods and walking trails. It's a long, narrow lake, shaped almost like a river, which makes it great for casting along the shoreline. You'll find a mix of stocked and wild fish here, including trout, largemouth bass, walleye, and perch. The water stays cool thanks to the tree cover, which helps keep the fishing steady even on warmer days. A fishing permit is required since it's part of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority land. They keep it pretty clean and peaceful, which makes it a solid spot if you're looking for something less crowded. There are a few simple access points and a small launch area for canoes or kayaks. No loud motors, just quiet water and good fishing. Whether you're out for a few hours or staying the whole day, it's a nice place to get a line in the water.

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## Regional Water Authority weeds out invasive plants with steam in Connecticut

by: [Kent Pierce](#) – WTNH – 6/18/2025

CONNECTICUT (WTNH) — The Regional Water Authority has a new weapon in its fight against invasive plants around its reservoirs. They are some of the same weeds you might be battling around your home. The new weapon is water, just really hot water.

Steam, actually. It now has a steam weeder that heats water to 250 degrees, hot enough to burst the capillaries inside the plants.

"Typically, if you're going to be looking at invasive species, you're using chemicals, you're using herbicides," Regional Water Authority forester Joshua Tracy said.

[Kraft Heinz removing artificial dyes from its US products in 2027](#)

Those chemicals can then end up in the reservoir, however. The RWA got the weeder with a grant from the U.S. Forest Service. They may be the first agency using steam on invasive plants.

"What I like about it is it seems to be controlling the seed bed as well as the plants that we're killing," forester Casey Cordes said. "The heat seems to be going into the surface layer of the soil."

You may be wondering why the Water Authority cares so much about invasive plants. It turns out, many of these plants have roots that do not grasp the soil well. So, in places where those plants have taken over, the authority sees more erosion. The rain washes the soil downhill, and it ends up in the reservoirs.

The RWA foresters were out on this day looking around Menuckatuck Reservoir for Multiflora Rose, Mugwort, Stiltgrass, and Japanese Barberry, all plants the average homeowner might recognize very easily.

"They tend to grow rampant," Cordes said. "They tend to take over areas in your yard or the edge of your yard. So, that gets the attention of a lot of homeowners."

People have to do something about them because nature won't.

"So, those invasive species are not being controlled by any of our native fauna," Tracy said. "Deer are not going to eat them, insects are not going to eat them. So, they tend to run rampant in our forests."

Now, the Water Authority can fight them and the only thing running into the water of the reservoirs is...more water.

## Tick risks vary by region. Here's where diseases have spread and how to stay safe

NPR – 6/23/25

There are early signs that it could be a bad year for tick bites. In May, the rate of people seeking emergency care for tick bites was the [highest it's been](#) since 2019, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If you get a tick bite, you're not alone: They happen in [every U.S. state](#), and some [31 million people](#) get tick bites each year.

Not every tick bite yields disease, since not every tick carries pathogens or bites long enough to transmit them. Still, [most reported cases](#) of vector-borne disease (including mosquitoes) come from ticks, which can carry pathogens with terrible consequences.

Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne disease in the U.S., estimated to affect more than [470,000 people](#) each year.

"But ticks can actually expose people in the U.S. to [more than a dozen](#) different disease-causing agents," including toxins, allergens, bacteria, parasites and viruses, says Alison Hinckley, an epidemiologist at the CDC's Division of Vector-Borne Diseases. "The illnesses can range from mild to life-threatening," Hinckley adds.

Here are facts to know about these biting critters and tips to stay safe.

### Ticks are slow threats, so prompt action cuts your risk

With ticks — unlike mosquitoes with their one-and-done sting — there are generally multiple opportunities to reduce your risks. That's because most kinds of ticks need to crawl onto your body, latch into the skin and, in many cases, feed for a while — from several hours to several days — before they get you sick.

"The longer a tick is attached, the more likely it is to have spit an infectious dose of whatever germ it might be carrying into you," says [Thomas Mather](#), director of the University of Rhode Island's Center for Vector-Borne Disease and founder of its [TickEncounter Resource Center](#). Ticks, with their tiny crawling legs, don't go very far on their own, so they're often picked up outside or brought into living spaces on animals, whether they be pests or pets. So, if you're spending time outside, follow this guidance from CDC experts:

- Do careful and frequent tick checks on yourself and your family members and pets.
- If you find a tick on you, take it off as soon as you can.
- If you're hiking, it helps to [stay in the middle](#) of a well-maintained trail, since ticks tend to hang out in the shrubs and foliage around the edge.
- Treat outdoor clothing [with permethrin](#), a chemical similar to chrysanthemum extracts that stops ticks from biting. Additionally, treat your exposed skin with EPA-registered [insect repellents](#) containing DEET, picaridin, or other active ingredients that deter ticks. (Use the EPA's [search tool](#) to find one that works.)

### Risks differ in the North, South and West

The risks of getting a tick-borne disease like Lyme or relapsing fever vary by region, depending on what ticks are around, what they're carrying, and how likely they are to come in contact with humans.

To see which tick-borne diseases have been found in your area, you can check historic data (2019-2022) by county [on a CDC map](#), and in many cases, state and local health department websites, says [Thomas Hart](#), an infectious disease microbiologist at Johns Hopkins University who studies Lyme disease. Broadly, the CDC divides the country into three regions when it comes to ticks:

**North:** Tick bites are most common in the Northeast, mid-Atlantic and Upper Midwest, with nearly 20% of people getting them each year, and much of the region is considered to be at high risk for Lyme disease, according to [research from the CDC](#).

The bacteria that causes Lyme, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, is the [most common pathogen](#) carried by deer ticks in this region — up to 30% of ticks in the nymphal stage and up to 60% of adult ticks carry it, says Rebecca Eisen, a research biologist in the Division of Vector-borne Diseases at the CDC. Ticks in this area carry other pathogens, but far less commonly — 2% to 6% of ticks may be carrying bacteria that cause [anaplasmosis](#), [babesiosis](#) or [relapsing fever](#), she says.

**South:** In the Central and Southeastern parts of the U.S. (including Texas), around 13% of people report getting tick bites. There, [ehrlichiosis](#), [spotted fever rickettsioses](#) and the allergic condition [alpha-gal syndrome](#) are the top concerns.

The somewhat lower incidence of tick bites in Southern states may be related to [how the tick populations behave](#), Eisen says. In Northern states, they tend to crawl up to the surface of leaf litter and tall grasses, while in Southern states, they stay closer to the soil level, making them less likely to cling onto a human arm or leg. Eisen says these differences are

likely driven by genetics, based on how generations of ticks changed over time. "I think it's just a function of what survived," she says.

**West:** In Western states (including California), tick bites are considerably less common, but they do happen — around 6% of people report getting them, according to CDC research. Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and Rocky Mountain spotted fever are some of the diseases [people get there](#).

### What to do if you get bitten

If you do get bitten, you should remove the tick right away. Don't toss it immediately, advises Mather at URI, because identifying some key information about the tick can help determine your risks. That includes what kind of tick it is, whether it's in the nymph or adult stage and how long it's been feeding on you. To figure this out, you can [compare what you find](#) with diagrams provided by the URI's Tick Encounter website. If you get stuck, you can submit a [clear photo of your tick](#) from the top, and Mather and his team will try to help figure it out.

Or take your tick — wrapped in tape, or in a plastic bag — to the doctor if you're seeking medical care. Seeing what type of tick it is and how long it's fed on you can help medical providers determine if you're at risk of Lyme or other diseases, Hinckley says. But sending them in for testing [isn't all that helpful](#), according to the CDC, because the results often don't lead to actionable advice. If the tick is positive for a pathogen, it [doesn't necessarily mean](#) you've been infected. And if you do develop symptoms of a tick-borne disease, you're better off seeking medical treatment right away instead of waiting for the tick testing results.

### When to seek medical care

In places where Lyme disease is common, finding an engorged adult deer tick ([like the ones pictured here](#)) could mean you should seek care right away. "The only time you would get an antibiotic, after a tick bite and before any symptoms, would be to prevent Lyme disease," says Hinckley with the CDC. "And in that case, we recommend just a single dose."

In most other cases, you may be advised to monitor yourself for symptoms in the days and weeks after the bite. "In a lot of cases, if you're seeing something right away after a tick bite, it could just be a hypersensitivity reaction — a little redness — that doesn't require a visit to a health care provider," Hinckley says. "But if it's a few days later and you start to experience aches and pains, fever, and — for a lot of these different tick borne diseases — a rash can occur. For those symptoms, seeing a health care provider as soon as you can would be important."

Hinckley recommends telling the provider about your tick bite, your symptoms and where you were — the state, the county — when you picked up the tick. "It can help them decide what diseases you might be at risk for," she says. It's a lot to figure out on your own, so you can check the University of Rhode Island's [TickEncounter](#) and the CDC's [Tick Bite Bot](#) for help determining next steps.

### Ticks-borne diseases are spreading to new areas — stay informed

Ticks and the diseases they carry are on the rise, and on the move. In the past 20 years, scientists have [discovered at least](#) seven new tick-borne pathogens in the U.S., and reported cases of disease have more than doubled, according to a 2024 CDC report.

Changes in climate, particularly warming in the Northern Hemisphere, play a big role in expanding the areas where ticks can survive, says [Nicole Baumgarth](#), director of Johns Hopkins University's Lyme and Tickborne Diseases Research and Education Institute. So does reforestation, which brings more deer, birds and rodents. "When we live in these wooded areas, we are really getting into the way of millions of years of evolution between the ticks, the mammals and the bacterium," she says.

People and their medical providers are also more aware of ticks in their areas and the diseases they carry, which leads to more cases being confirmed, Baumgarth says. But there are risks coming to new areas that weren't seen before. Since the early 1990s, Lyme disease has gone from being "really unknown" to becoming established in [parts of southern Canada](#), says Baumgarth. And the mid-Atlantic recently saw its first fatal case of [Heartland Virus](#). "The fact that we are now seeing these virus infections in areas where we haven't seen them before is probably a tip of the iceberg," Baumgarth says, since it likely means there are more cases that aren't being diagnosed.

Researchers in the South and West are also tracking [soft-tick relapsing fever](#), a condition caused by the bites of soft-bodied ticks, which lack a hard shell and tend to be found in areas where bats and rodents live. While just [250 cases were reported](#) to the CDC from 2012-2021, the symptoms — high fevers, chills, nausea — can be often misdiagnosed as influenza, COVID-19, even malaria, says [Job Lopez](#), a tick researcher at Baylor College of Medicine.

## From tragedy to tribute: Hamden's felled 'Door Tree' transformed into memorial benches

By Austin Mirmina - NHR Staff Writer - June 29, 2025

HAMDEN — [Chopped down in an act of vandalism](#) in 2019, the town's 150-year-old "Door Tree" has since been transformed into two handsome benches that are now on public display.

One of the benches was recently installed on the third floor of the Hamden Government Center at 2750 Dixwell Ave., while the other resides in the [Jonathan Dickerman House](#) on Mount Carmel Avenue. Both pieces serve as tributes to the once-iconic white oak cherished by generations of local residents.

An oddity of nature, the Door Tree is believed to have formed when two tree trunks merged into one another, creating a doorway-like arch in a small valley off New Road, near the Mill River. Its unique shape captivated locals and later attracted wider attention through several features in Ripley's "Believe it or Not!" and in Rachel Hartley's "The History of Hamden Connecticut - 1786-1959." The tree never received any sort of official designation as a historic site. But to Hamdenites, it was their Charter Oak.

Despite the widespread affection, some had feared the tree would be targeted due to its remote location in the woods. Those fears came true in mid-July 2019, when a New Haven man [took a chain saw to the tree](#), slicing it into several pieces. The man, Curtis Pardee, later told police that he destroyed the landmark to [spite his brother](#), who was known as Mr. Door Tree because of his love for the white oak.

Pardee [avoided prison time](#) and was ordered to complete a [supervised diversionary program](#) that would see the charges dismissed in two years if he complied with the program's conditions. As of this week, no public records related to the case appeared on the state's judicial website.

The tree's destruction [sparked outrage](#) and drew worldwide media coverage, but local residents and officials were determined to preserve the tree's legacy.

The Regional Water Authority, which owned the property where the tree had stood – and whose [police officers investigated the crime](#) – donated the tree's remnants to the Hamden Historical Society.

"The terrible act of vandalism done to the Door Tree killed a living historical marker in Hamden," a RWA spokesperson said this week, adding that the agency was happy to work with the society to salvage the wood.

The HHS then commissioned City Bench, a Higganum-based furniture maker with a mill on Park Road in Hamden, to craft the slabs of wood into a bench. Last August, the society unveiled the finished piece, called the "Door Tree Bench," during a dedication ceremony at the Jonathan Dickerman House.

Using the same wood, City Bench fashioned a second bench and donated it to the town. The roughly six-foot-long piece displays the tree's rich fibers and curves, with small wooden strips reinforcing deep splits in the wood. It also retains the tree's natural shape, showing the exact point where the two trunks met to form the doorway.

A framed plaque hanging next to the artwork in the Government Center tells the story of the Door Tree and the memorial project, inviting guests to pause and reflect as they perch on a piece of Hamden's past.

**News from the RWA - July 1, 2025**

## **RWA Acquires 24 Undeveloped Acres in Madison**

*The parcel will expand the protected buffer zone around Lake Hammonasset*

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — The Regional Water Authority (RWA) today announced that it has acquired 24 undeveloped acres off Durham Road in Madison, expanding its protected land holdings within the Lake Hammonasset watershed.

The property is located south of County Road and east of Durham Road (Route 79). It abuts existing RWA property to the west and south, as well as property owned by the Hammonasset Fishing Association to the north and east.

Under RWA ownership, the parcel will be protected from development and will contribute to the protection of the Lake Hammonasset watershed from the impacts of human activities.

Lake Hammonasset, which straddles the Madison-Killingworth border to the southeast of the newly acquired land, is one of the 10 active reservoirs that supply water to the RWA's system.

The acquisition is part of the RWA's broader initiative, known as "The Land We Need for the Water We Use," to purchase watershed parcels that protect the quality of the water supplied to customers.

"Protecting the watershed lands that surround our water sources and drain into them is crucial to our mission to supply high-quality water to our customers," said RWA Real Estate Manager **John Triana**. "By acquiring this parcel, we can ensure that it remains in its natural, pristine state."

The RWA purchased the property from Robert Weber last month, after receiving a grant from the Yale Divinity School to help pay for the acquisition. The grant supports the school's effort to receive a Living Building Certificate from the International Living Future Institute.

"We are honored to participate with the RWA in purchasing this property to protect our water," said Yale Divinity School Dean **Greg Sterling**. "This is part of our larger effort to develop a sustainable future, an effort that we consider to be a sacred obligation."

The densely wooded parcel has no trails and will not be open to recreational activities.

The RWA owns and protects nearly 28,000 acres of watershed land in the region, including 3,326 acres within the Hammonasset watershed.

More information about the RWA's water sources and the high-quality water the company supplies is available in its 2024 Water Quality Report, available online at [rwater.com/water-quality/water-quality-reports/](https://rwater.com/water-quality/water-quality-reports/).