

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
February 12, 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, February 12, 2025, at the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, 90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut and via remote access.

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

RPB: R. Harvey, N. Campbell(R), C. Havrda(R)

CAES: C. Rutledge

Management: S. Lakshminarayanan, V. Benni, and J. Triana

Mr. Malloy called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Horbal and seconded by Mr. Eitzer, the Committee voted to approve the minutes of its January 8, 2025 meeting, as presented.

At 5:39 p.m., Mr. Levine entered the meeting.

Ms. Rutledge, of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, provided a presentation of invasive bugs in Connecticut. She reported on the Emerald Ash Borer, which is a highly destructive beetle that specifically targets ash trees, with a lifecycle that spans one year. This pest was first identified in the United States in 1990 and subsequently in Connecticut in 2012, starting in New Haven County and gradually spreading to northeastern Windsor and Litchfield County. Current control measures include the use of resistant plant varieties, natural predators such as woodpeckers, the release of parasitoids, and various diseases, alongside biocontrol strategies. Management efforts focus on monitoring multiple sites to assess tree health and the various stages of the beetle's lifecycle, whether in the larval or adult stages. A significant challenge ahead will be determining effective methods for the regrowth of ash trees.

Next, she provided an update on the Spotted Lantern Fly, which is an invasive species that first appeared in Pennsylvania in 2012 and has recently been reported in Connecticut in 2023. This insect, related to aphids and cicadas, is characterized by its large head outgrowth and vibrant appearance. Originally from northeastern Asia, it has notably affected the grape and wine industry in Korea. She stated that the fly spreads through transportation corridors and is currently found in southern Connecticut. Its adult lifespan is considerable, and can cause significant damage, primarily feeding on the Tree of Heaven but also targeting other plants such as multiflora rose, grapes, apples, and peaches. Infestations can be identified by a sooty mold found on leaves resulting from sap consumption, which also attracts bees, wasps, and ants. Control methods include the "hack and squirt" technique, which eliminates tree roots and traps made from shingle materials.

At 6:30 p.m., Ms. Rutledge withdrew from the meeting.

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

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
January 31	76%	98%	77%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
January 2025	0.72	5.95	3.57
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 –	26.41	43.82	30.76

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

- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 24+/- acres.
- Cheshire, Bis property – Corresponded with DEEP staff about the status of the OSWLA grant.
- Seymour, 56 Squantuck Rd. (SE 5) – Attended the public hearing at Seymour Town Hall and presented the disposition application. Updated town staff about the progress.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – ZBA approved all the variances that we submitted. P&Z resubdivision application goes before P&Z in February.
- Woodbridge, 2040 Litchfield Tpk. – Owner was given permission to replace the chimney in the kitchen but must look substantially like the original.

Forestry Update

- Located some of the West River plot growth plot centers near Lake Chamberlain.
- Met with the Guilford Town Engineer to talk about our improvements to Goat Lot Rd.
- Responded to a survey from the National Agricultural Statistics Service for USDA’s 2024 Census regarding Horticultural Specialties.
- Researched and responded to a survey from the National Agricultural Statistics Service on beekeeping and honey production.
- Investigated a stolen firewood complaint from a RWA woodcutter in Bethany.

Recreation

- New Year’s Day Walk had 26 participants.
- Winter tree walk had 29 participants.
- Submitted the annual Recreation Report to DPH as required for our permits.
- DPH issued a recreation activity permit for a hiking trail along the Mill River between Dixwell Ave. and South New Rd.
- Cleared trails at Lake Chamberlain.
- Contacted summer camps about summer events.

	January		December	
	2025	2024	2024	2023
Permit Holders	4,775	4,743	4,787	4,742

Special Activity Permits

- Yale University, School of the Environment (Mark S. Ashton) - Education/field trips for grad students, North end of Lake Gaillard along Crooked Brook Feb. 7; Off Route 79 in North Madison Feb. 28; Silvicultural stand delineation exercise; natural regeneration methods; (2/7/25 & 2/28/25).
- US Forest Service (Bryan M. Tirrell, Forester) – research 391 Totoket Road N. Branford, forest inventory study plot (5/1/2025 – 9/30/2025)
- Hamden Fire Department (Lieutenant Doug O’Rourke) – ice water rescue training, Lake Whitney Old Hartford Turnpike Entrance on 1/24/2025 and Clark’s Pond on 1/28/2025 (1/24/2025 and 1/28/2025)
- Yale University School of the Environment- (Dr. Craig R. Brodersen) - Field trips in field botany and forestry. - North Madison Cedar Swamp off of Rt. 80, (1/30/2025-6/30/2025)
- UConn, Dept of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (Dr. Mark Urban) – Research on pond amphibians - Totoket mountain in Northford; ridge north of Lake Gaillard; 60 ponds distributed to the west and east of Big Gulph Brook (3/1/2025- 3/1/2026)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Hamden, Downs Rd. field (HA 36) – Corresponded with tenant about allowing bee hives within her licensed area.
 - Woodbridge, Sperry Rd. (WO 5) – Contacted licensee about maintaining the field.
 - Seymour, Clinton Rd. (SE 7) – Town issued letter requesting renewal (5 years) of the agreement for radio equipment at the site.
 - Guilford, Saw Mill Hill Rd. (GU 12) – Contacted licensee about parking a car over the property line.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford and Guilford. Met with All Habitat staff to discuss options to treat autumn olive in the field.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	6.5 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	0 acres

- Deer hunt - 160 surveys were returned. The table below summarizes hunter effort.

Properties	Surveys Returned	Total Hunting Days	Total Hunting Hours
North Branford-Gaillard	108 out of 135	732.5	3942.0
Bethany	25 out of 25	63.0	387.7
Prospect	19 out of 20	185.0	807.0
Ansonia/Seymour	8 out of 8	33.0	208.5
Total	160	1,013.5	5,345.2

- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – DEEP staff noted several people contacted them to oppose the project.

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- North Haven, 60 Middletown Ave. easement – Reviewed drafts of termination of easement. Executed the document and sent to property owner for recording.
- Hamden, 205 Skiff St. – Met with ACES staff and potential buyer about the lease to the school at this property. Said we would look at their question about whether or not the lease is assignable.
- Madison, Durham Rd. cell tower generator (MA 2D) – DPH issued the change of use permit for the diesel generator.
- Milford, Beaver Brook system parcels – Responded to inquiry from attorney about the deed restrictions for some of the parcels sold to Subway.
- Watermain easement encroachments – Sent draft easement agreement to Murtha to review before contacting owners of properties where we have watermain easements.
- Flood ALERT/Raw water – Met to discuss the new storage figures for the West River lakes. Updated the spreadsheet thereafter.
- Lake Whitney Dam project, East Rock Park – NRA concluded the tree inventory inside East Rock Park.
- Land Use Plan – Sent out meeting invitation to several departments about the start of our latest update of the LUP.
- Bren Leard and Juliette Doyle completed their seasonal employment with us through the LSR grant funds.
- Boundaries – Checked and remarked boundaries in North Branford and Madison.

The next regular meeting is on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

At 6:40 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy and seconded by Mr. Oslander, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

Mark Levine, Chair

(R) = Attended remotely.