

STATE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE - ROLES

The State Vegetation Management Task Force.

Tropical storm Irene and the October Nor-easter severely tested Connecticut's emergency resources. In response, Governor Malloy appointed the Two Storm Panel to gather lessons from those events and the responses and to make recommendations concerning the state's approach to prevention, planning and mitigation of impacts associated with emergencies and natural disasters. In its [report](#), the Panel made 82 recommendations on a wide variety of topics.

Recommendation 23 was to "[e]stablish a State Vegetation Management Task Force to develop standards for road side tree care in Connecticut, vegetation management practices and schedules for utility rights of way, right tree/right place standards, standards for tree wardens, municipal tree inventories and pruning schedules." This recommendation forms the mission of the Task Force.

The recommendation further states that membership should include "State, municipal, utility and nonprofit organizations. The Commissioner of DEEP or his/her designee should be its Chairperson."

The purpose of the Task Force is to ensure necessary perspectives are represented by members who can commit the time and work effectively together, each bringing to the table the necessary knowledge and resources to inform discussion. The goal is to develop consensus recommendations to DEEP within the stated mission. It is anticipated that Task Force will meet approximately 9-10 times in order to complete its recommendations by August 31, 2012.

The Task Force members were drawn from a diverse set of perspectives and expertise who can bring their knowledge and experience to make realistic and implementable recommendations in the best interests of the state and its residents.

Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection – Sponsor and Convener

As the sponsor and convener, DEEP determines the goals and objectives of this process and how the outcomes will be used. The agency is also responsible for securing the endorsement of leadership and engaging participants; planning and organizing the process with the facilitator as appropriate, and allocating sufficient resources to see the process through to conclusion. DEEP will be represented on the Task Force in an *ex officio* capacity and will provide technical and other information to the Task Force to assist in its deliberations. DEEP is responsible for final decisions regarding the implementation of any recommendations or coordination with other agencies or organizations concerning implementation of any recommendations.

Commissioner Esty appointed Eric Hammerling as Task Force Chair and selected the members of the Task Force.

Facilitation

DEEP has engaged the Logue Group to assist in the design of the process and, as funding is available, serve as independent process managers and be accountable to DEEP and the Task Force for ensuring effective communication and implementation of the process. The facilitator will conduct meetings impartially according to jointly agreed-upon ground rules, and will not advocate on any substantive or procedural issue relating to the outcomes of the process.

The Public

Task Force meetings will be open to the public to observe; however, due to the time frames and the fact that these will be working meetings, there will be limited opportunity for open public observations and feedback during meetings. Meeting summaries will be made available through postings on the DEEP website pages for the Task Force. Interested stakeholders are encouraged to contact a member of the Task Force whom they believe will understand their comment or concern and address it with that member to request that it be considered in the dialogue of the Task Force.

At several points during the Task Force process, the general public will be provided with opportunities to make suggestions or provide feedback to the Task Force. In the late summer the Task Force is likely to make available *draft* recommendations for informational purposes, DEEP and/or the Task Force will hold an information session with a Question and Answer opportunity, and the public will have a brief 7 day opportunity to submit written feedback before the Task Force finalizes its recommendations and submits them to DEEP. Should any recommendation involve new regulations or statutory changes, there will be the usual and customary formal public process associated with that at some point in the future.