

Interagency Drought Workgroup

April 3, 2012 – 10:00 AM
Office of Policy & Management
Room 4A, 450 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Minutes

Attendees: Robert Baran, DPH; Nicole Belk, NWS; Ken Burke, RI WRB; Kathleen Crawley, RI WRB; Corinne Fitting, DEEP; Douglas Glowacki, DEMHS; Diane Ifkovic, DEEP; Gary Lamb, DEEP; David LeVasseur, OPM; Lori Mathieu, DPH; Karen Michaels, DEEP; Maria Szul, PURA; Bruce Wittchen, OPM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:05

2. Review of Data and Discussion of Existing Conditions and Forecasts

There was a discussion of CT's www.ct.gov/waterstatus website, which is back online with data links being updated. The group discussed the [drought indices](#) linked at that site. Only [precipitation](#) and [fire danger](#) currently meet the criteria for a drought advisory as specified in the [CT Drought Preparedness and Response Plan](#). With [stream flow](#) and [ground water](#) levels already being so low, however, it probably is only a matter of time before they also reach their drought advisory criteria. The same is probably true of the [Palmer Drought Index](#) and [Crop Moisture Index](#).

There was a discussion of reservoirs and Robert Baran said the state's [reservoir levels](#), overall, are above normal. Only a [few reservoirs systems are below normal](#) and those are only slightly below normal. Lori Mathieu described past experience with similar conditions and said the statewide average reservoir level is not likely to decline to the drought advisory level before mid-summer. She said DPH's [Drinking Water Section](#) will send a circular letter to water companies having water supply plans to remind them of their water supply reporting requirements.

3. Develop Course of Action and Assign Responsibilities

Dave LeVasseur asked Doug Glowacki to describe the outlook for precipitation and Doug said the 14-day forecast includes a total of only 1" of rain, with much of that expected next week. Doug and Nicole Belk discussed the broader patterns that are expected to influence the weather, as well as [temperature and precipitation outlooks](#) for the next few months. Doug noted that we are entering a summer weather pattern earlier than normal, which tends to limit the regional precipitation systems we expect this time of year. With drier conditions already being established, there will be also less moisture available to support localized precipitation events.

Kathleen Crawley, of the [Rhode Island Water Resources Board](#) staff, was asked to explain how RI's [drought management program](#) differs from CT's. She said RI's [Drought Management Steering Committee](#) includes broader representation, including legislators, water companies, agricultural and other interests. She added that RI gives a different weight to the various [drought indices](#), with precipitation, ground water, stream flow and

the Palmer Drought Index having more influence. Kathleen also explained that RI divides the state into [seven regions](#) so that drought determinations account for regional variations. She noted that drought advisories are issued statewide, not regionally, because everyone should be made aware of the conditions.

4. Website Update

Nicole Belk suggested establishing links from CT's website to the www.drought.gov website. She guided the group through the website to view [CT drought information](#) and explained what information is available there. Bruce Wittchen said he will add links to that information at CT's website.

5. Next Meeting

The group decided to meet in one month and details will be forthcoming.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM