



Source Water Protection Collaborative Meeting Minutes

October 24, 2014

12:00 – 4:00

DOT Headquarters, Newington, CT

In Attendance:

Eric Brown- CT Business & Industry Association
Kim Czaplă – CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection
Bruce Wittchen – CT Office of Policy & Management
Michael Dietz – Center for Land Use Education & Research
Kurt Sampara – Regional Water Authority
Kira Jacobs – US Environmental Protection Authority
Chris Feurt – University of New England
Julius Passay – Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies
Kate Brown – Trust For Public Land
Stephen Anderson – CT Department of Agriculture
Mark Ashton - Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies
Elizabeth Gara – CT Council of Small Towns/CT Water Works Association
Brian Roach – Aquarion Water Company of CT
Karl Honkonen – US Forest Service
Denise Savageau – Town of Greenwich Conservation Director
Janet Barclay – UCONN PhD Program
Marc Cohen – Atlantic States Rural Water Association
Matthew Pafford – CT Office of Policy and Management
Eric Lindquist - CT Office of Policy and Management
Steve Vitko – Regional Water Authority
Vivian Felten – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Eric McPhee – CT Department of Public Health
Patricia Bisacky - CT Department of Public Health
Kimberly Wholean – CT Department of Public Health

Chris Feurt, Facilitator: *Member Introductions/Briefing on Drinking Water Source Protection Projects*

- *Panel Discussion on Public Water Source Protection Challenges and Opportunities:*

Elizabeth Gara:

-Discussion focused on a recently attended CT Water Works Association and the need for water balance: stream flow/public health water needs *and* economic development.
-There is a concern that public water system utilities are hesitant to reach out to municipal officials who are inundated with information to protect spaces (the general public recognizes the 'open space' ideal). It is possible that municipalities are not aware of source water protection issues and agendas.

There is a need for more education such as citizens' advisory groups in addition to volunteers that have historically been relied upon.

- Connecticut has a multi-barrier approach to source water protection which includes water quality monitoring and an all hazards management plan. Due to multiple sources of water supplies, redundancies and back up sources are required.

Mark Ashton:

- Conflict between town rules and headwaters (trans boundary issues); need to look for a more cohesive way to improve obtaining open space which communities recognize.

- "Roads" = pollutant concerns with heavy metals, salt, petroleum, etc. Poor road management - obviously need more DOT involvement.

- Under realized: Stacked values/green infrastructure that cross towns: riparian and coastal systems, storm threats, planned open space.

Eric Brown:

-Main focus: More education regarding source water protection in the business community.

-Four key issues: Quality, Quantity (streamflow rules, impaired waters), Infrastructure, Challenging Permitting Issues – Section 316(b) of the Clean water Act; Connecticut is the only state that has Aquifer Protection Laws.

-Businesses: Explain potential impact to water sources due to climate change, environmental concerns, etc. that have so far made no impact on them.

Kate Brown:

-Key is buying land/facilitating land acquisitions by towns. Open space has much value for towns yet it is hard to get the community to understand that as economic development is their priority.

- May be important to put buying land before the voters with the directive of protecting all new business but trying to control impervious surfaces as well.

• **Questions/Comments/Responses to the Panelists:**

- Kira Jacobs: Cited the Minnesota Stormwater example regarding legislation and the implementation of tree planting (using natural infrastructure) to count towards MS4 and stormwater crediting system;

- Denise Savageau: Response to Elizabeth Gara and Eric Brown that is a need for more education in the business community and more discussion among the Collaborative should ensue; drought issues and the green industry (such as nurseries) being dependent on water supplies and while there is a lot of precipitation it is not necessarily reaching groundwater due to impervious surfaces and patterns of storm occurrences;

- Marc Cohen: Comment on the value of planting trees for source water protection;

- Mark Ashton: Concurs with Cohen. Correlation between raising property values and lowering crime rates; energy utilities are concerned with the cost of forestry management;

- Vivian Felton: Asked Eric Brown to quantify how businesses are so water dependent and how to prioritize a water crisis- public doesn't believe it because it rains...;
- Elizabeth Gara: Additional comment to Felton's: Water companies need to really reach out and educated the public that water conservation is something that needs to be embraced;
- Felton/Jacobs: Change in rainfall data has to be respected and drought committees need more attention;
- Karl Honkenen: It is important to be aware that New York receives a Congressional earmark to help with their protection efforts; their water supply protection includes watershed forestry (direct assistance to landowners);
- Brian Roach: Regarding towns; what message do we want to send to the states and constituents – there are money issues;
- Ashton/Kate Brown/Jacobs: Buying property costs vs filtration plants/ NY State spent much money to create reservoirs and land around them vs filtration plants;
- Kira Jacobs: Water efficiency vs reduced revenue for companies; industry is just flailing;
- Elizabeth Gara: Concern with MS4 permits; money being spent in excess elsewhere, such as some communities spending \$5-\$10 million/year on mandatory leaf pick-up.

- **Eric McPhee:**

Discussed State Water Plan/GIS/Parcel data for Class 1 and 2 for drinking water data compiled by 2014 summer interns which included: ranking system for parcels and their drinking water sources with the high quality source list to be shared with utilities and conservation groups; mapped all future potential sources to share with conservation groups and municipalities which were identified by utility water supply plans (no geographic science involved). Recent HAB initiatives by the Source Assessment & Protection Unit were also discussed which included a suggested CT Department of Public Health - CT AWWA Source Water Protection Committee seminar.

- **Chris Feurt:**

Moving Forward: Developing a Vision and a Mission:

The North Carolina Source Water Collaborative was presented. The question of what do we consider our collaborative members as being responsible for regarding contributions? A diverse group is needed; should there be point people from each group? Consider if 'your' group should be involved. Question put out to the collaborative as to meeting frequency: 1-2 times/year with a field trip?

- Eric Brown: CT Collaborative needs to start with a defined statement of purpose/mission/vision possibly using the NC Source Water Collaborative as a template. Suggested not losing sight of CGS Section 22a-1a, noted language: "Fulfill the responsibility of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations";

- Denise Savageau: Consider including CACIWC in Collaborative; It is important to focus on drinking water specifically because of the many groups working on broader water quality protection issues; enforcing erosion and sedimentation controls for large scale projects and potentially issuing cease and desist orders if non-conforming;

The members of the CT Collaborative were asked to review the packet materials (i.e. the North Carolina Source Water Collaborative document; the National Source Water Collaborative's "A Call to Action – A Recommitment to Assessing and Protecting Sources of Drinking Water" document; "Opinion" article in the New Haven Register by Larry Bingaman, President and CEO of the South Central Connecticut regional Water Authority; and the Salmon Falls Watershed Collaborative Action Plan). Outreach and education is on the forefront.

Goals and Objectives:

- Preventing pollution activity
- Emergency notification
- Identifying and making the CT Source Water Collaborative known
- Review of PA 14-163 to create our vision and mission directives
- Flip the two sentences on the S.O.P. on the NC Source Water Collaborative charter for the CT SWC charter
- Revise the S.O.P. to be sent out to all repeatedly until charter is reached by all members
- April meeting to sign the final draft of the CT SWC charter?
- Do we have a delegate from every organization?