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**Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)  
WORKING AND NATURAL LANDS WORKING GROUP  
RIVERS SUB-WORKING GROUP  
MEETING MINUTES**

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**Meeting Date:** June 25, 2020  
**Meeting Time:** 9:00 am – 12:00 pm  
**Meeting Location:** via ZOOM

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>Working Group Member</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Present</b>
Alicea Charamut	Executive Director	Rivers Alliance of Connecticut	Y
Lynn Werner	Executive Director	Housatonic Valley Association and Rivers Alliance BOD	Y
Eileen Fielding	Center Director	Sharon Audubon (National Audubon Society)	Y
Kirt Mayland	Attorney/President	Reservoir Road Holdings & Mayland Energy	Y
Bill Dornbos	Executive Director	Farmington River Watershed Association	Y
Andy Fisk (primary)	Executive Director	Connecticut River Conservancy	N
Kelsey Wentling (alternate)	River Steward - Connecticut		N
Jason Vokoun	Professor and Dept. Head	UConn Natural Resources and the Environment	N
Mike Dietz (primary)	Extension Educator	UConn/Institute of Water Resources	Y
Mike O'Neill (alternate)	Associate Dean	UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources	N
Laura Wildman	Director	Princeton Hydro - NE Office, Ecological Engineering	Y
Virginia de Lima	Retired	USGS (retired) & CT Water Planning Council	Y
Shelley Green	Director of Conservation	The Nature Conservancy	N
Erik Mas	Environmental Engineer	Fuss and O'Neill	N

<b>Associated Staff</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Present</b>
Rick Jacobson	Bureau Chief	CT DEEP, Bureau of Natural Resources	N
Peter Aarrestad	Director	CT DEEP, Bureau of Natural Resources - Fisheries Division	Y
Susan Peterson	Environmental Analyst 3	CT DEEP, Bureau of Water Planning and Land Reuse - Water Planning & Management Division	Y
Cary Lynch	Research Analyst	CT DEEP, Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy - Office of Climate Change Technology & Research	Y (ZOOM support)

<b>Members of Public</b>	<b>Affiliation/Organization</b>	
Kelsey Sudol	Northwest Conservation District & Lake Waramaug Task Force	Y
Elsa Loehmann	Mill River Watershed Association and Cheshire Land Trust	Y

## AGENDA & NOTES

### Welcome, Announcements, and Roll Call

*Alicea Charamut, Rivers Alliance*

Charamut asked Rivers Sub-Working Group (SWG) members to introduce themselves for new members of the public in attendance. Members of the public also introduced themselves.

Charamut asked if anyone attended the Forestry SWG meeting where they discussed their draft recommendations. Lynch attended and provided some feedback. Eric Hammerling (Chair) tasked his SWG members with providing a recommendation paragraph on their various pieces. He would probably share a draft, if requested. Forestry SWG is ahead of most other groups, at this point.

Charamut said that there is discussion about a potential timeline change for the GC3 process. She noted that there have been many challenges with COVID -19 and all committee members (other than DEEP staff) are volunteers. While the Rivers SWG agreed that it could continue to work and make progress, the length of meetings has been curtailed (because moved to remote platform) which has resulted in lost time.

July meetings are coming up ... Towards end of this meeting, it was decided that the July 9 meeting would be cancelled due to the July 4 holiday and vacation plans of various members. The July 15 meeting is 10:00 a.m. -12:00 pm. In lieu of skipping the July 9 meeting, Charamut would like to schedule another meeting towards the end of July. She would also like to schedule some additional meetings in August, including another evening meeting to make it easier for members of the public to attend.

Lynch noted that Rebecca French recently joined DEEP. She has taken over GC3 responsibilities from James Albis. French is Director of the Office of Climate Planning, filling a newly created position. She is also the Chair of the GC3 Financing WG.

Lynch has not heard of any schedule changes. As of now, she believes the plan is to have a draft outline by mid-July. Charamut asked if groups would be receiving more guidance on the draft outline. Lynch was not aware of any further guidance at this time. The outline previously provided appears to be the one they are following.

### Agenda Item(s)

*Facilitated by Alicea Charamut, Rivers Alliance*

- **Strategies, Actions and Outcomes** – [Discussion and Team reports](#)

(Note - Jumped right to Prioritization agenda item and did not return to this item.)

- **Prioritization**

Aarrestad indicated that when reviewing the 2011 Plan spreadsheet, he was not clear about some of the terminology used with regard to: near term, mid term and long term. He reached out internally and no one could really answer this question. However, Chris Martin (Forestry SWG) indicated that his group was using just two planning horizons.

Charamut said that this was a good segue to what she would like to propose. She suggests grouping Rivers SWG recommendations into two categories:

- Short Term Actions (1 – 5 Years)
- Long Term Actions (5 – 10 Years)

She asked if the committee feels there needs to be a Mid Term Action category. Lynch noted that there has been no guidance provided on this. Charamut noted that there has been talk of having some items brought forward for the next legislative session and said these items should be flagged in some fashion.

Werner said her (Ecosystem Services) team (Supporting Services) had started to think about how to group their recommendations. She recalled what Rick Jacobson had said at the first Rivers SWG meeting about identifying actions that can be implemented right away. She agrees with Charamut's proposed Short and Long Term categories. Dietz agreed and felt that introducing a Mid Term category would be confusing.

Charamut asked if we should consider adding an Immediate Actions category. Dietz said, no, because that adds another category. Werner felt that Immediate Actions fits into the Short Term category and that 1 -5 years is pretty inclusive. Charamut said that it would be good to have action items. Fielding suggested having a bulleted list under 1-5 years for things to do immediately.

Dietz indicated that his (Ecosystem Services) team (Provisioning Services) does not like using the concept of "low hanging fruit" because then, people tend to ignore the Long Term, complicated issues. As a result, these issues do not get addressed. Peterson agreed that Long Term issues are important and they take time to address which only happens by "chipping away at the rock". Werner suggested that Immediate Actions can include pieces of Long Term recommendations that need be addressed by "chipping away" over time.

de Lima expressed disappointment that the Long Island Sound Studies workshop on use of social media (on how to communicate effective environmental messages) had been cancelled. She said that we are not going to get anywhere until the public understands how their daily actions affect (climate change) issues. She would like to see the workshop run annually. Charamut agreed that it is necessary to find a way to make these issues resonate with the public. She does not feel our group can tackle this on its own, as the tone and format of the final report may be out of our control. However, it could be a recommendation at the top of our list. de Lima agreed that communication should be a top recommendation. She also agreed that professionals should be the ones to address it.

Charamut made further recommendations on how the Rivers SWG recommendations might be structured. The two alternatives she suggested were as follows:

Alternative 1:

- Top priorities (three must-dos)
- Legislative and policy priorities
- Education/outreach/technical assistance
- Economic, Environmental and Racial Equity
- Research Opportunities
- Priority Implementation in existing state plans

## Alternative 2:

- Top priorities (three must-dos)
- Break recommendations down by resource type (i.e. riparian zones, wetlands, etc)

Charamut noted that these proposed structures are merely recommendations and can change as the group sees necessary. She requested feedback and elaborated on the benefits of organizing recommendations according to the first alternative. Discussion raised the following questions and points:

- de Lima asked if Charamut was suggesting that resources be broken down according to the WNLWG resource sub-working groups? Charamut said, no, the breakdown reflects the 2011 Plan – Appendix.
- Aarrestad agreed with identifying top 3 -5 priorities. Otherwise, everything becomes a priority and that is problematic.
- Wildman said her team felt that the biggest actions should be those things that benefit the largest scale changes for all resource types. Breaking things down by resource types may “silo” things. Fielding added that breaking things down by resource types might invite people - who are not “resource types” - to not listen.
- Aarrestad amended his first statement and indicated that he agreed with the first alternative, perhaps with a few minor “tweaks”.
- Werner noted that we do not want to lose track of the fact that there may be small, meaningful things we can do that affect specific resources but which will also benefit other resources. Should consider pulling things out of State plans that mesh with one another.
- de Lima suggested color-coding for items, especially with regard to legislative policy. That might help policy makers to focus on areas of interest.
- Werner emphasized that some of identified priorities are not limited to one resource type. It is important to focus on “big picture” things. de Lima agreed, noting that if similar priorities come up among the different (Ecosystem Services) teams, this may be a way to identify priorities. She also agreed that the era of “low-hanging fruit” is past.
- Charamut suggested trying to score items. Scoring could reflect recommendations that affect multiple categories. Also, need to fill in knowledge gaps. Sorting and categorizing SWG recommendations is sort of like a “colored dots” exercise. Aarrestad added that it sounds like a “sticky dot” voting process. This may be an opportunity to hone in on top priorities. He suggested that there might be a virtual way to do this.
- Fielding wondered if this approach would get us to the most important things we need to address. She suggested a prioritization tool where you arrange recommendations in a circle and then compare each one against all others using arrows to determine if one item drives the other. May help to determine best approach to tackle identified issues.
- Werner asked whether each team has tried to prioritize recommendations individually

and capture Big Ideas. Her team created a Word document in which they tried to do this. Wildman explained their prioritization approach.

- Peterson suggested a mapping overlay idea where layer ideas like transparent maps to discover highest priority areas.

Following this discussion, Charamut said that the next step would be for each team to decide if recommendations are Short Term or Long Term. She wondered whether everyone should wait to classify recommendations as a group because there may be duplicates between teams. deLima suggested doing both because it would help set priorities, especially between teams.

Wildman shared her team's Word document and pointed out how they had started to break things down according to a Big Ideas approach, and listing recommendations under these. They could tighten up their document further, and organize it according to the six point structural approach that Charamut suggested. Werner emphasized that we really need a big, bold push tied to big money and a big bold plan. It needs to be a tight, streamlined, focused and fundable package. de Lima agreed and said that we need to communicate an urgency (not emergency) that will take an ongoing commitment to achieve. Werner said that it is frustrating to see other states around us taking big bold actions but we have not. She noted that it has taken people pushing for action over several years. de Lima asked how other states achieved this. Werner said that in NY, groups organized and agreed on a top priority that they could all get behind. In that case, they all agreed on significant funding for land and water protection. Wildman looked up information on NY effort and said it is "Mother Nature Bond Act to Fight Climate Change".

Charamut said that after identifying recommendations as Short Term or Long Term, we should also flag the ones that are "ripe" for next legislative session. She acknowledged that it would be a challenge to bring this all together. Some strategies/actions may sound different but actually are the same. She said it will be easier if can make the recommendations "sortable". She suggested that each item have its own spreadsheet line. It would be valuable to be able to score items. Some actions cannot happen until other actions take place first.

Wildman discussed some of the potential challenges and opportunities of trying to put this information into a spreadsheet sheet format. Both Wildman and Werner encouraged other teams to create a Word document similar to what their team did.

Charamut agreed that it might be difficult to create a spreadsheet but she was hoping they might be able to score items. Wildman said she likes the idea of scoring but it would be difficult to do in a spreadsheet. She suggested changing headings and eliminating redundancies. Afterwards, scoring could occur. Maybe would get higher priorities this way? Identifying drivers would be similar to scoring. Can categorize Short Term and Long Term towards the end of the process.

Charamut invited the public to provide feedback.

## 5 MINUTE BREAK

**Public comments**

Charamut asked if the public had any comments.

Loehmann – No comment but she appreciates the opportunity. She mentioned that she is a water resource engineer and works with both the Mill River Association and Cheshire Land Trust.

Sudol – Echoed Loehmann's comment. Said she had just started looking at the GC3 Google docs and becoming familiar with things. She indicated that she is staff to both the Northwest Conservation District and Lake Waramaug Task Force. She noted that the work of the Rivers SWG aligns with the work of her organizations.

Charamut said that if either of them have any comments on the spreadsheets to please let her know.

**Next Steps and Adjourn**

Charamut will send out a document with the structure recommendation and create a template with categories. If there are any recommendations to consolidate or add, or important categories that may have been overlooked, please jot it down and/or bring it up at the next meeting. As teams, everyone should pull information out of their spreadsheets and put recommendations into categories. Charamut will then condense the information.

Dietz asked for clarification that recommendations should be short bullets, not long explanations. Charamut said, yes, they should be bullets identifying broader strategies and actions. She noted that some strategies do not have actions. Also, if have actions, it may not be necessary to list strategy.

Charamut is also going to send out a Doodle Poll to schedule two more meetings in August.

This led to discussion about the next scheduled meeting date – July 9. Because of the July 4 holiday and vacation plans of several members, Charamut decided to cancel the July 9 meeting. Instead, the next meeting will be July 15. Charamut said that she would try to schedule another meeting towards the end of July since we are skipping the July 9 meeting.

Charamut asked the Ecosystem Services teams to send her their categorized information, preferably by July 10, or July 13 at the latest. After this, the Rivers SWG will work together to categorize recommendations as Short or Long Term.

The next meeting will be: July 15, 2020; 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Adjourn: 11:52 am