Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)
Public Health & Safety Extreme Events/Water-borne Illnesses

Breakout Session
MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: October 7, 2020
Meeting Time: 5:30-6:00 pm
Meeting Location: Zoom

ATTENDANCE

Attendee		Organization	Present
David Murphy		Milone and Macbroom	√
Joanna Wozniak-Brown		CIRCA	√
D'Arcy Jeffery		School Nurse Milford CT	√
Amy Velasquez		Regional Water Authority	√
Amanda Clark		DOPH	√
Anji Seth		UCONN	√
Cary Lynch		Nature Conservancy	√
Christine Kirchhoff		UCONN	√
Juan Ngo		Public health vector-borne disease group	√
Steven Wallett		DPH	√
Robert Scully		DPH	√
Diane Mas			√
John King		DPH	√
Anne Hulick		Clean Water Action	√
Kirby Stafford			√
Denise Savageau		CT Council for Soil and Water Conservation	√
Alec Shub		DEEP	√
Jocelyn Mullens		DPH	√
Max Cover			√

BREAKOUT SESSION NOTES

Moderated by David Murphy, Public Health and Safety working group

David Murphy highlighted some of the recommendations from the Extreme Events and Water-borne Illnesses sub-groups and then opened for questions and discussion.

Questions

- Amy Velasquez
  - I have a question regarding the energy audit program for wastewater utilities, also how the drinking water management plan will promote resilience.
- David Murphy
  - Responded that the drinking water management plan promotes resiliency through setting aside and protecting watershed lands
  - A major part of the GC3 initiative is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and one opportunity for that would be to examine the energy consumption at wastewater and drinking water treatment plants. As there are upgrades and improvements there should be a focus on improving efficiency.
- Denise Savageau
  - The Progress on Mitigation Strategies working group is also discussing this. They are looking at recommendations for how do we reduce energy consumption in these areas?
  - In regards to the drinking water management plan and source water protection
  - We don't have good policy in Connecticut in terms of non-point source pollution, however, we focus more on point source, which we have good policy on
  - In terms of land use and other activities there is a lack of policy while we need to be looking at both
  - It is much easier to prevent pollution than to clean it up after it happens
  - There is already a lot of funding going towards protecting the Long Island Sound, primarily from nutrient pollution. If we paired this funding with protecting public drinking water that supplies watersheds, we could take care of two issues at once by preventing harmful nutrients from watersheds from going into the Long Island Sound.
- David Murphy
  - Agreed and pointed out that this is big frustration with the 319 grant, which is only for impaired water, and often times the watershed waters are not impaired but we want to keep them that way
- Anji Seth
  - The recommendations have a lot to do with extreme rainfall. To what extent is there concern about drought related events?
- David Murphy
  - Highlighted the working group's recommendations on droughts:
  - Develop water conservation measures and communication guidelines to manage droughts
  - Update water supply planning guidelines, drought triggers, and drought response protocols at least once per decade
  - Develop GIS database and framework for updates to locate critical facilities and identify which public water systems they are served by, and which are served by their own public water systems

    - Develop emergency interconnections between public water systems to ensure that multiple sources are available for mutually beneficial sharing of water during emergencies
- Anji Seth
    - The role of Connecticut forests in absorbing carbon and water retention and reduced flooding and yet our forests are not protected. Existing forests that are 50-100 years old take up more carbon than young forests. The term proforestation refers to a reduction in forest management practices. This could be used by the public health group as a multi-solving approach to help mitigate things like droughts.
- Huan Ngo
    - Expressed confusion about the terms mitigation vs. adaptation. It seems like most of the recommendations deal with mitigation and not adaptation. In addition, the public health group does not discuss infrastructure when it comes to public health, for example, ways to monitor pathogens from flooding.
- David Murphy
    - Clarified the definitions of mitigation and adaptation. He expressed that he does think the recommendations cover adaptation and brought up the example of revisiting the drought triggers for reservoirs every 10 years. Assessing these triggers every so often allows us to adapt to a changing climate.
- Huan Ngo
- What are the public health implications for drought and flooding?
- David Murphy
    - In Connecticut, most of the population drinks from the public drinking water system. However, drinking water is not the only source of public health issues with regard to water supply, there is also sanitation and having water to flush toilets and wash etc.
- Steven Wallett
    - Safe drinking water is essential. By increasing resilience throughout public water systems and septic systems, you are increasing public health across Connecticut
- Diane Mas
    - A lot of the public health impacts that we see as a result of flooding occur after flooding events. There are current efforts through DEEP to reach out to companies that store harmful chemicals to discuss storage safety and to adapt to these issues by reducing exposure of the places that these chemicals are stored. In terms of pathogens, we increase the exposure of the population to pathogens in flood waters if we do not have a system set up to evacuate people from flood waters.
- Denise Savageau
    - Brought up the issue of drought as an extreme event and the impact on water quality. We often look at drought as impacting the quantity of water but is also reduces the quality of the water.

NOTE: *Identify if slides or presentations are available on GC3 web page: www.ct.gov/deep/gc3*

Chat Record

17:37:26 From Amy Velasquez : I have a question regarding the energy audit program for the water/waste water utilities also how the Drinking Water Management Plan will promote resiliency.

17:39:46 From Steven Wallett : https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Climate-Change/GC3/GC3-Working-group-reports
17:44:12 From Anne Hulick : Completely agree with Denise's excellent points
17:46:10 From denise savageau : To the point of source water protection, we need to have a One Water focus
17:46:22 From Steven Wallett : https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3-working-group-reports/GC3_Public_health_safety_draft_report_public_comment_092120.pdf
17:48:17 From Christine Kirchhoff : I just completed a review of drought impacts on urban infrastructure for AR6 and really struggled to find a lot of literature on drought and public health.
17:48:58 From denise savageau : There is a big overlap with the Natural and Working Lands recommendations that should be looked at.
17:52:45 From Amy Velasquez : I'm confused about the usefulness of the inventory of critical facilities and water supply systems. If a critical facility is serviced by a private water supply it's likely because a public water supply is not available.
17:57:11 From denise savageau : Does the report deal with salt water intrusion into wells and/or septic systems?
17:57:34 From David Murphy : yes, Denise
17:59:04 From David Murphy : The infrastructure and land use group produced several recommendations about flooding
18:00:12 From Christine Kirchhoff : Terrific breakout. Thanks for the great discussion and very capable moderation David!
18:01:52 From Kirby Stafford : I do need to leave for dinner as commitment at 7. Thunderstorms hitting here.
18:01:52 From Anji Seth : Thanks v much for an I shut up discussion!
18:02:24 From Anji Seth : wow I meant insightful!
18:02:28 From Joanna Wozniak-Brown : deep.climatechange@ct.gov
18:02:59 From Joanna Wozniak-Brown : Anji - you cut out?
18:05:32 From Max Cover : Thanks!