



**Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)**  
**Water Subcommittee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Mon, March 31, 2025; 3:00-4:30pm**

**Link to Meeting Recording:** <https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/3qsOkFlQ23thKLMpa-CDfwGX4kqXFRrr2fNqM9hFLlodctumCRI1JNXTsjHbDgfh.ELFNAtEQw6-2JOKn>

- I. Watershed Planning with Connecticut's Soil and Water Conservation Districts
  - a. Introduction and History by Denise Savageau
  - b. Southwest Conservation District with Chris Sullivan
  - c. North Central Conservation District with Joanna Shapiro
  - d. Eastern CT Conservation District with Dan Mullins

EPA Clean Water Act 319 management plans provide a list of action items; a plan helps connect your project to additional funding.

Public Drinking Water Supply was looked at to make sure that we are doing source water protection – that is some of the work that we did collectively. Those were public drinking water supply protections.

II. Questions and Discussion

**Lilian Ruiz** – ED of Council on Soil and Water Conservation – worked on these projects on the sidelines. What is the total cost of that project and how many partners did you have?

**Dan Mullins** – partnered with agricultural groups, NRCS, partnered with local farmer and conservation districts and volunteers. Little River Watershed probably spent \$7-8 million. This was after identifying it in the management plan and then identifying funding from there.

**Brenda Geer** – Vice Chair of Eastern Pequot and Alliance of Mystic River Watershed; LISSFF can be any community specifically for diverse communities. Offer to connect with tribal nations. Also found a guidebook on how to engage with indigenous communities; Sarah will send out to everyone here.

**Mary Pelletier** – update to the 2010 Watershed Plan; [2025 PLAN UPDATE | North Branch Park River](#). Districts help with bridging between state and federal agencies and local communities. That is important because districts help with critical policies. After 2010 Plan, these plans are for all stakeholders. At what point does DEEP realize that these groups have lessons learned and how does that lead to something else like a task force.

**Graham Stevens** – We appreciate communities that go through building a watershed planning process which is a pre-requisite for a lot of watershed plans. We meet internally to look at the plan and see where we can leverage resources or identify additional resources to support the plan.

**Mary Pelletier** – it always seems like it's up to the watershed organization to bring everyone together. Does DEEP have an ability to help us navigate make these plans successful?

**Graham Stevens**- MDC wants to use existing stormwater outfall to separate sewage and stormwater so there is less sewage in the Park River. We're always looking for opportunities to match partners to provide funding and technical assistance. Always looking for community's capacity to manage funding independent of state action – some communities are well staffed and others are not.

**Cierra Patrick** – we want to share lessons learned on various topics and understand what local, municipal, state roles are.

**Christine O'Neill** - NVCOG received a 319 grant, contemplating work of the plan and have another group help with engagement and steering committee who could transition to the longterm steering group. Mad River Watershed.

Conservation Districts are facilitators to bring partners together and also have technical capacity. We have districts who come in to provide support like technical expertise, like as a grantwriter or grant lead.

**Jane Brawerman** – Middletown and New Britain, ED of CT River Coastal Conservation District. We have several publications focused on water quality protection.

**Kelsey Sudol** – Northwest Corner of CT – educational lead and outreach coordinator

**Chris Sullivan** – people ask us to visit their homes to do home-based practices to implement projects like rain gardens. Urban Watershed Initiative Work – we're in conversation with CT DEEP to do a version 3.0 to continue the engagement they did in Fair Haven. Want to fund the water quality lab to process water quality samples. We're trying to move it forward, but no active funding. CT DEEP started a Norwalk Urban Waters Initiative – there is a solid buy in to support this work.

**Next:** Invite conversation with DEEP's Urban Forestry talk about urban heat islands and impact of trees in watersheds; riparian buffers and zones.