

STATE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
MEETING #3 – FACILITATOR’S SUMMARY
May 22, 2012, 10:00 AM – 12:45 PM
Connecticut Forest & Park Association, Middlefield, CT

Members Present: Kim Barbieri, Timothy Bockus, David Goodson, Jim Govoni, Eric Hammerling, Jane Harris, Mary Hogue, John Jasinski, Kevin Kelly, JoAnn Messina, John Mitchell, John Parry, Karl Reichle, Bruce Villwock, Jeffrey Ward. Alternate: Ken Bullard. **Members Absent:** Mark Goetz, Leslie Kane, Joe McGee, James Skiff.

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environment (DEEP) Participants/Ex Officio Members: Chris Donnelly.

Observers: none.

Facilitator: Bill Logue

Welcome, Introductions and Administrative Issues. The agenda and handouts were reviewed¹, as were several items circulated between meetings. Task Force Chair Eric Hammerling welcomed the members and noted that Senate Bill 23 passed. The bill references the Task Force. Vegetation management will be on the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) docket due to be completed in November 2012. The docket could open as early as June/July.

I. Risk Management/Risk Assessment Discussion. Tim Brady, an insurance risk management expert, was the invited guest to present an overview of risk management/risk assessment. He opened by noting his support for the work of the Task Force and that the industry has the most difficulty assessing risk for two types of events 1) high frequency/low severity and low frequency/high severity.

Mr. Brady first discussed **probability** which is broken down into A) Likely to occur immediately or within a short period of time; B) Probably will occur; C) May occur in time; and D) Unlikely to occur. He put this in context by noting that there have been no known category 5 hurricane in New England and distinguished between events being unique historically and unique in our lifetime. The last significant October storm, similar to the 2011 storm, was in 1836. When Irene reached Connecticut it was classified as a tropical storm. Connecticut benefits by cooler northern waters and land buffers of New Jersey, New York City and Long Island which reduce storm energy. He then discussed **severity** which are classified (by the military) as I) May cause death, loss of facility/asset, mission failure; II) May cause severe injury, illness, property damage, mission degradation; III) May cause minor injury, illness, property damage, mission

¹ Most documents from the meeting are generally available at:
<http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2697&q=503040>

degradation; and IV) Minimal threat, no impact to mission success. These two aspects are combined in a grid and assigned a **Risk Assessment Code** (RAC) of 1) Critical; 2) Serious; 3) Moderate; 4) Minor; or 5) Negligible. This relationship between probability and severity and how these elements relate to risk assessment are captured in the attached chart. Risk planning is an iterative process where the threat/hazard is examined, a RAC assessed, risk control/mitigation is undertaken, a revised RAC is assigned and then supervision occurs. Mr. Brady then reviewed various scales used in weather. These scales generally have been created using factual observations of damage or conditions and then assigning a value. The scales reviewed were the Saffir-Simpson hurricane scale, the Fujita tornado scale and the Beaufort wind scale.

When determining what level of protection is warranted, one needs to look at all components (e.g., power generation, distribution, etc.) that could suffer damage because the weakest element can bring the system down. There are other considerations included in using scales and assessing risk, for example; local topography – hurricanes are more likely to travel over the eastern portion of the state, seasonal conditions – in leaf or not, population densities, economic resources, etc.

Dave Goodson reviewed some of the considerations for utilities. He noted that the probability of a major storm in Connecticut in 2012 is close the 100%; the question is what type (hurricane, tropical storm, ice storm, wet snow, etc,) and where. When he examines risk he examines the probability of tree failure and the consequences of the failure. He likened the power grid to a tree with the electrical substation at the base, with the trunk as the backbone lines and the branches out into the communities. With protection fuses, a failure of a branch will have little impact on other branches but a failure on the backbone/trunk or at a substation will impact many. Critical community assets may include town centers, police/fire/EMS, hospitals and shelters. Protection of the backbone and critical assets are essential. About 25% of the 20,000 miles of utility lines are backbone lines. In general there are 186 trees/mile in CL&Ps territory.

A discussion ensued about the importance of municipalities coordinating with electrical crews to clear/de-energize power lines from roads to allow road clearing to occur so that emergency health and safety vehicles can pass. The Task Force also discussed what level of storm they should be considering in making recommendations. Utility poles are designed to last 40 years or more. Poles carry power and communications lines and loading tolerances from weight will vary with wind direction, speed, distance between poles and number of conductors. Anecdotally weight/gravity rarely appear to be a cause of pole failure.

Members made several suggestions for approach around which there appeared to be general consensus. One was to first look at “target value”, then RAC and then set standards. Another was to use GIS layers in risk mapping similar to what is done for invasive insects in assessing

probability and geographic location. The need for helping educate the public and setting expectations about how quickly restoration will occur was emphasized by several members.

Utilities are meeting with municipalities to identify critical infrastructure. In some locations micro grids and undergrounding of wires is being considered. (Several reports shared between meetings noted that underground increases reliability but also is more expensive to install and repair and shortens life expectancy of some equipment.)

There was a brief discussion of first and third party insurance coverage for damage by a tree falling from one property onto another and the implications for aligning incentives to properly maintain trees. The issues of case law, insurance policy language and legislation make this very complex. Several members noted that some carriers after inspection impose requirements to remove/trim trees on homeowners for policy renewal.

During the discussion members noted several things to be kept in mind when making recommendations including:

- Recommendations include some information about paths not chosen and why to provide better information for people reviewing the recommendations in the future;
- Trimming may create biomass disposal issues;
- Having a list of resources shared and consulted;
- Ways to avoid duplication of efforts through coordination of utility and municipal trimming; and
- Economic benefits from good management. John Jasinski committed to sharing a recent report regarding the storm studies and any upcoming report from PURA.

The request to have a communication company attend was renewed and a member offered to share a contact name at AT&T.

II. Work Groups. A draft of suggested work groups and their charges was shared prior to the meeting. The process of the work groups was discussed with overlapping membership, early work with opportunity for public comment working toward recommendations in the late summer. Each group will share and review ideas within the group and make suggested recommendation to the Task Force as a whole. The recommendations out of each group may have different audiences, e, g., public education is a more general audience.

Members signed up for the work groups as indicated on the attached Working Groups and Members. The Implementation Opportunities Work Group membership was deferred to later.

Probability

- A. Likely to occur immediately or within a short period of time
- B. Probably will occur
- C. May occur in time
- D. Unlikely to occur

Severity

- I. May cause death, loss of facility/asset, mission failure
- II. May cause severe injury, illness, property damage, mission degradation
- III. May cause minor injury, illness, property damage, mission degradation
- IV. Minimal threat, no impact to mission success

Risk Assessment Code (RAC)

- 1. Critical
- 2. Serious
- 3. Moderate
- 4. Minor
- 5. Negligible

	A	B	C	D
I	1	1	2	3
II	1	2	3	4
III	2	3	4	5
IV	3	4	5	5

Risk Planning

HAZARD/THREAT	ASSESSED RAC	RISK CONTROL & MITIGATION	REVISED RAC	SUPERVISION
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SVMTF WORKING GROUPS & MEMBERS

Public Education: What are the key messages that the public needs to hear about the roadside forest that will help support good policy and appropriate actions?

- What does the public need to know about trees to better understand the necessities of roadside forest management?
- What does the public need to know about the roles and responsibilities of private property owners, municipalities, utilities, and the state (DoT, DEEP Forestry, DEEP PURA, Ag Experiment Station, UConn) to understand the context for road side forest management, tree planting, etc.?
- Can we develop a product such as an informational brochure and/or Public Service Announcement on “Who is Responsible for your Community’s Trees?” or “What Landowners need to know about Trees and Power?”

Kim Barbieri, Ken Bullard, Jim Govoni, Jane Harris, Mary Hogue, JoAnn Messina, John Mitchell

Regulation, Legislation, and Funding: What regulatory context and resources are required to move beyond current obstacles and effectively manage existing and future roadside forests in Connecticut?

- Is a different regulatory structure needed?
- What local ordinances or statewide legislative proposals should be helpful?
- What funding/personnel are required, or how do you make a proposal for additional resources?

Tim Bockus, David Goodson, John Jasinski, JoAnn Messina, John Mitchell, Karl Reichle

Technical/Standards: What standards for pruning, integrated vegetation management, and risk assessment(s) are necessary to guide the management decisions made for existing and future roadside forests?

- What standards currently exist or are being used in Connecticut?
- What standards (from elsewhere) might be useful in Connecticut?
- How might these standards vary based upon location, road type, different risk assumptions about storm intensities/power outages, etc.?
- How will Right Tree/Right Place guidelines be best utilized?

Ken Bullard, David Goodson, Kevin Kelly, JoAnn Messina, John Parra, Jeff Ward

Implementation Opportunities: What is necessary to assist the implementation of Task Force recommendations and tools?

- How do we utilize our diverse expertise and contacts to move Task Force recommendations forward together?
- How can we help package or promote products/tools created or supported by the Task Force?