



Connecticut Integrated Water Planning Management Phase 2

August 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1. Water Quality Action Plans

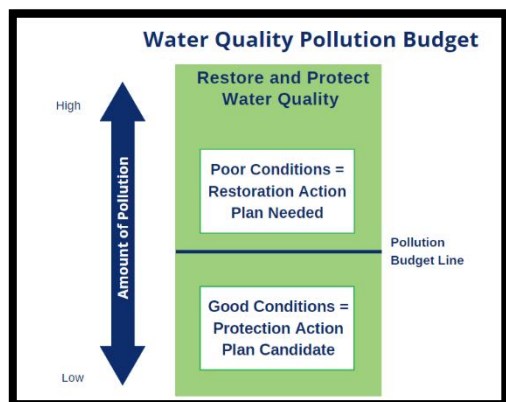


Figure 1.1: Water Pollution Budget

Section 303 (d) of the CWA requires states, tribes and territories to develop plans to restore and protect water quality. CT DEEP develops several types of Water Quality Action Plans (WQAPs). The primary planning tool of the 303(d) program is the development of Total Maximum Daily Load plans (TMDLs). TMDLs can be thought of as a water pollution budget. Any waterbody with poor water quality is over its daily budget for a pollutant. These waterbodies are considered to be impaired. TMDLs take into consideration the different types of pollution in a watershed and assign them an allocation. If there is too much pollution in the watershed, a reduction is needed

to get the waterbody back to meeting its water quality goals. Once the waterbody is meeting its water quality goals, the TMDL can serve as a protection plan to keep the waterbody from becoming impaired. In some cases, a TMDL is not needed, and states can develop an Advance or Alternative Restoration Plan (ARP). These plans go straight to implementation, for example through a permit, non-point source watershed plan or a Remedial Action Plan, which is developed to clean up a contaminated site through the CT DEEP Remediation Division. In other cases, The Water Quality Unit can work with the Permitting Unit to assign permit limits to facilities that take water quality into consideration. Protection Plans can also be developed to preserve the waterbody if it is at or below [Water Quality Standards](#) (WQS) (pollution budget). Whichever of these plans are developed, they serve as a bridge to connect regulatory requirements, data, and other information to implementation. Implementation is the process of putting the plan into effect.

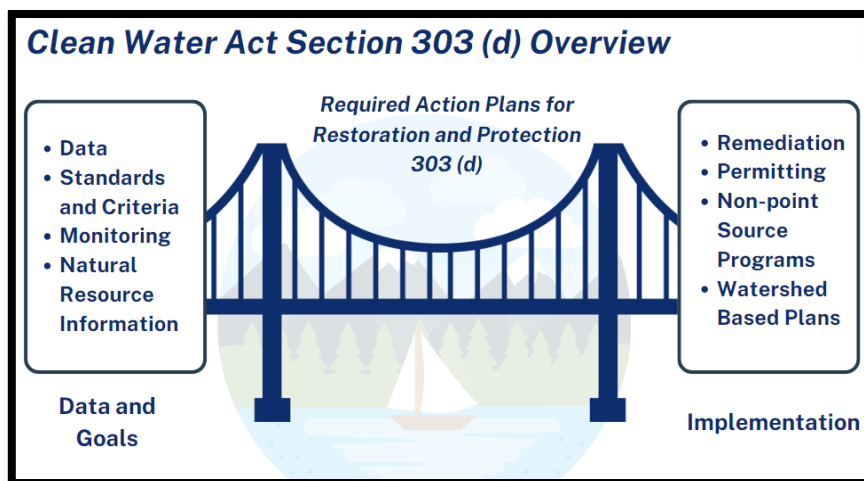


Figure 1.2: Water Quality Action Plans serve as a bridge.

1.2. Integrated Water Planning Management (IWPM)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the states have worked together to evaluate the previous practices that were used to develop WQAPs and have made changes to improve water quality planning methods. EPA called this updated approach to developing these plans the “Long-Term Vision for Assessment, Restoration and Protection under the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) Program” or the [303\(d\) Vision](#). In CT, this approach was called Integrated Water Resource Management, now called [Integrated Water Planning Management](#) (IWPM). IWPM is a planning process that establishes the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s (CT DEEP) water quality planning priority goals over the course of a 10-year period. In 2012, CT began utilizing this updated approach and used it as the basis to enhance our efforts in restoring and protecting CT’s surface waters through the year 2022. As a result of this process, CT has had more flexibility to work with partners and other stakeholders to develop the correct plan of action for restoration and/or protection more efficiently and effectively. Please refer to the IWPM 1 Webpage for more information regarding the initial phase of this approach in CT.

The Water Quality Unit within the Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse (WPLR) has been working to identify waters for development for WQAPs for the next 10 years (2022-2032) for the next phase, [IWPM 2](#). This process provides a collaborative framework among CT residents, communities, stakeholders, and other State Agencies to build partnerships and make decisions on how and where state resources are focused for WQAP development. The Department has identified Focus Topics and potential places to initiate the second phase of this effort, with input from the public and stakeholders. Please note that waters selected for plan development may be adjusted over time as new information and/or partnership opportunities occur.

2. Prioritization Goals IWPM 1 (2012-2022)

2.1. IWPM Focus Topics

Focus topics can be physical locations like a specific waterbody or watershed, a parameter, such as bacteria, or a social topic like Environmental Health for all communities, for example. The focus topics and locations for IWPM 1 were chosen through various methods and evaluations which included public input and partnerships. One method that was used was the [EPA’s Recovery Potential Tool](#) (RPS). Over 82 state specific indicators were created in house to represent the ecological, stressor and social water sources. Stressor indicators represented sources of potential pollution such as industrial discharges and sewage treatment plants impervious surfaces, and stormwater runoff. Ecological indicators included information that represented the health of fish and other aquatic life. Social values represented activities such as fishing, swimming, other recreation, and drinking water resources and Environmental Health for all communities. All reports and documents can be downloaded from the [CT IWPM 1 webpage](#). This tool provided a basis for an impartial and analytical approach to identifying waters that would benefit from plan development. CT DEEP worked closely with existing / potential partnerships,

active Environmental Groups, and other stakeholders to choose priority topics and focus watershed areas using this methodology.

This chapter will describe each of the focus areas under IWPM1. For more detailed information on how these watersheds / waterbodies were chosen for WQAP development under IWPM 1, please see the [Technical Support Document](#). For information on plan updates and water quality conditions in surface waters please refer to the [Integrated Water Quality Report](#).

After extensive outreach and public comment, the final planning focus topics of IWPM 1 included:

- Bacteria TMDL development
- Lake and Embayment Nutrient TMDL development
- Stormwater and Non-Point Source Management
- Environmental Health for All Communities
- Aquatic Fish and Wildlife Health
- Protection Plan development
- Advance Restoration Plan (ARP) development

Progress was made on all the Focus Topics identified under IWPM 1:

2.1.1. Bacteria TMDL Development Swimming and Shellfishing

Too much bacteria, caused by stormwater runoff during rainfall events can cause illnesses in humans and have an impact on swimming and shellfishing. WQAPs were developed for swimming and shellfishing under the Statewide Bacteria TMDL. CT developed an all-waters approach where all waterbodies are covered under the bacteria TMDL.

2.1.2. Nutrient TMDL Development for Lakes and Embayments

Excess nutrients from stormwater runoff from sources such as fertilizers and animal waste depletes waterbodies of oxygen, causing fish to die and can cause harmful algal blooms. Under IWPM1, the Water Quality Program established a procedure to set numeric nutrient criteria for each lake based on the narrative nutrient criteria for lakes in the WQS and is currently working on a similar procedure for embayments. A [Statewide Nutrient TMDL](#) was developed with the [Bantam Lake TMDL](#) as the 1st TMDL Appendix and included a [Watershed Based Plan Addendum](#), which is a 9-element implementation plan. This plan is the first of its kind in CT. The Water Quality Program also worked closely with the [CT DEEP Watershed Program](#) to develop an approach to create embayment TMDLs for nutrients supporting Long Island Sound commitments for the Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay.

2.1.3. Stormwater and Non-Point Source Management

CT DEEP developed a [Watershed Response Plan for Impervious Cover](#) to address the harmful impacts that stormwater can have on water quality. This included 16 appendices for watersheds where the impervious cover is over 12% or more and were chosen as examples of waterbodies that have been

negatively impacted by impervious cover. [The Stormwater and Water Quality Webpage](#) houses 169 Town Factsheets for CT municipalities that were developed to identify potential stormwater impacts to water quality for each individual town. The Water Quality Group worked with the CT DEEP Stormwater Permitting Group to include provisions in the permit to address the impacts from stormwater on water quality in surface waters in CT.

2.1.4. Environmental Health for All Communities

WQAPs to address bacteria in surface waters that were developed or drafted included an Environmental Health (Environmental Health section which focused on areas of social concern, key landmarks (such as schools and parks), Distressed Municipalities, Low Income Area Census Blocks and Tribal Sovereign Lands. CT used federal environmental health indicator information when selecting CT waters for plan development. Recommendations are also included in plans for consideration of preferential implementation in the aforementioned areas for environmental health improvement as part of the process to address the water quality issues in the plan.

2.1.5. Aquatic Fish and Wildlife Health

Healthy habitats for fish, aquatic life and wildlife are critical for a healthy ecosystem. Certain aquatic bugs are an important food source for fish like trout and bass. Without a healthy environment and bugs to eat, fish cannot thrive. And without fish, the wildlife will not have food to eat either. The Water Quality Program focused on fish and wildlife toxicity and is updating a TMDL for Bradley Airport streams including Rainbow and Seymour Hollow Brooks for ethylene and propylene glycol. Additionally, the Water Quality Program worked with CT DEEP's Remediation Program on industrial site cleanup projects that impacted surface water quality, including projects for ARP development for Stratford Army Engine Plant (Stratford), [Exide \(Fairfield\)](#), and the General Electric site in Bridgeport.

2.1.6. Protection Plan Development

The Water Quality Program worked on the first Water Quality Protection Plan in CT under IWPM 1, and it is still in development for IWPM2. The Natchaug Watershed Protection Plan highlights potential sources and stressors which impact water quality and details how this watershed can be preserved to protect one of the largest drinking water sources in the state. Aligning with the Department's goal to build partnerships, this plan supports implementation efforts of the [Eastern Connecticut Conservation District](#). Currently, this plan is under technical review within the Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse (WPLR) and will be available for public comment upon its completion.

2.1.7. Advance Restoration Plans

2.1.1.1. CT Statewide Phosphorus Advance Restoration Plan (ARP) for Freshwater Rivers

This ARP Plan is a compilation of several existing initiatives to address water quality impacts due to excess anthropogenic sources of phosphorus. This plan uses a "straight to implementation approach" which documents water quality based permitting efforts to address phosphorus discharges to nontidal

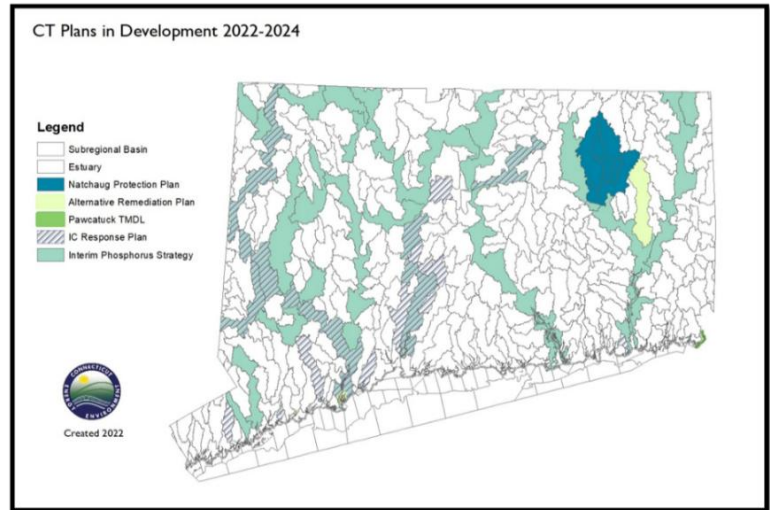
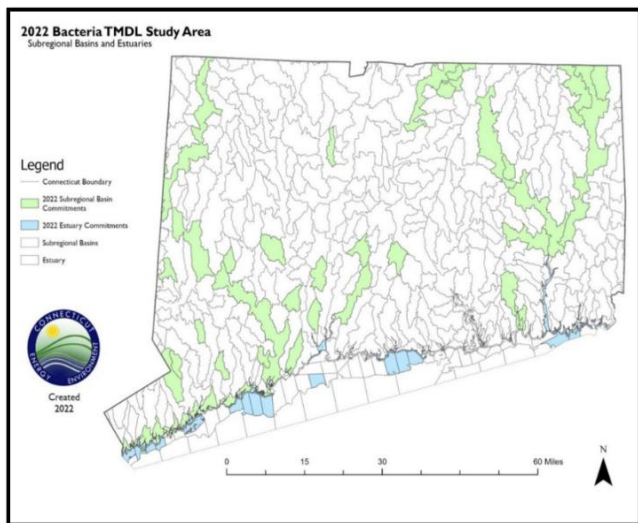
fresh waters through the NPDES permitting program, focusing on discharges from sewage treatment plants and stormwater. The intent of this approach is to provide a planning framework to support water quality restoration to be used in lieu of TMDL development. The existing initiatives that are brought together for this plan are 1) the CTDEEP Phosphorus Reduction Strategy for Inland Non-Tidal Waters, 2) NPDES permitting for sewage treatment plants and industries consistent with the Strategy, 3) the MS4 permit which contains additional requirements for stormwater control in the watersheds associated with the Phosphorus Strategy, and 4) Communication tools such as water quality factsheets developed for each town and web sites to provide additional information. This ARP will be used to communicate efforts to address nutrient pollution in fresh waters and focus on implementation activities in lieu of TMDL development at this time. TMDLs for waters impaired due to phosphorus will be required in the future if actions under this plan, or future updates to this plan, are insufficient to restore water quality.

2.1.1.2. Advance Restoration Plan for Sediment Contamination at Remediation Sites

ARPs are in progress using a “straight to implementation approach” which documents existing efforts to restore water quality through risk-based remediation for contaminated surface waters, groundwaters and sediments through Remediation Program activities. These watersheds were selected because they were the subject of project collaboration between the Water Quality Program and Remediation Programs for risk assessment and development of risk-based remedial strategies consistent with Connecticut Water Quality Standards. Current commitments include remediation actions for the Mill River (Exide), the lower Housatonic River (SAEP), and Stillman Pond (GE Bridgeport). Remediation has been completed for the Mill River and Stillman Pond sites and the waterbodies delisted.

2.1.1.3. Watershed Response Plan for Impervious Cover

This ARP is a compilation of several existing initiatives to address water quality impacts due to stormwater. This plan uses a “straight to implementation approach” based on 1) the Watershed Response Plan for Impervious Cover which includes a Core document to relate water quality to stormwater and has 15 watershed appendices to identify implementation approaches to addressing the effects of impervious cover on water quality, 2) implementation of water quality-based requirements for impervious cover implemented through the MS4 permit and 3) municipal fact sheets and other materials to provide additional information to link water quality and storm water quality. This ARP will be used to communicate efforts to address stormwater pollution and focus on implementation activities in lieu of TMDL development at this time. TMDLs for waters impaired due to stormwater from elevated amounts of impervious cover are required in the future if actions under this plan, or future updates to this plan, are insufficient to restore water quality.



Figures 2.1 and 2.2: WQAPs completed or in development under IWPM1.

3. Prioritization Goals IWPM 2 (2022-2032)

3.1 IWPM 2 Focus Topics

For the next round of IWPM2 from 2022-2032, CT DEEP has implemented the same process that was conducted for IWPM1 for IWPM2. The Water Quality unit requested feedback from the public and other partners on which topics they would like to focus on for the next 10-year planning period. Several virtual Public Meetings were held, in January of 2024. For more information on the comments that were received regarding IWPM2, please refer to the Response to Comments document (insert link).

3.2. Enhancing Existing Priorities

CT DEEP has built on and refined the Focus Topics that were outlined in IWPM 1 ([listed in chapter 2.1.](#)) While continuing to focus on nutrients in lakes and embayments, swimming and shellfishing, stormwater, aquatic life habitat for fish and wildlife, DEEP is committed to maintaining the meaningful partnerships that have been established under IWPM 1. For IWPM 2, the Department expects to continue to develop new partnerships with environmental groups, community stakeholders and other state agencies. CT DEEP will continue to highlight the importance of Environmental Health for all communities and the significance of increasing extreme weather conditions. The Department will

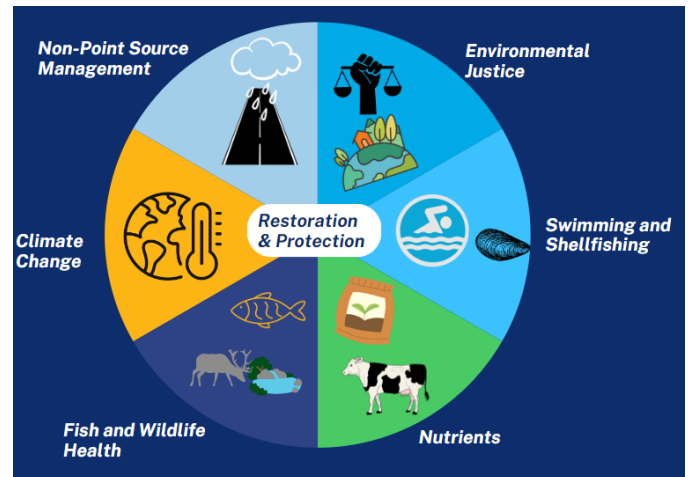


Figure 3.1: Diagram of focus for plans for restoration and protection for IWPM 2.

continue to develop WQAPs not only for restoration, but also to preserve and protect good water quality in its current condition through Protection Plans.

3.2.1. Enhancing Stormwater and Non-Point Source Management

Under IWPM 2, CT DEEP will continue to prioritize plans and actions to address the harmful impacts that stormwater and non-point sources can have on surface water in the state. The Department is expecting to update the 169 Town Factsheets to a digital, interactive mapping platform. CT DEEP will continue to coordinate with the Stormwater Permitting Unit to consider water quality goals when permits come up for issuance, reissuance, or renewal.

3.2.2. Enhancing Swimming and Shellfishing Bacteria TMDLs

The Department will continue to develop Bacteria TMDLs on a Statewide basis using an “all waters” approach. Using this approach, the Department will complete Bacteria TMDLs for Recreational Use and Shellfishing activities for all waters in the state over time.

3.2.3. Enhancing Nutrients in Lakes and Embayments

The Department anticipates the development of more Nutrient Lake TMDLs. Several CT lakes are already in progress including Roseland Lake, Lakes Zoar and Lillinonah, and West Thompson Lake. Embayment work will also continue as DEEP continues partnering with other programs to support Long Island Sound commitments and modeling efforts. The first Embayment TMDL for Nutrients will be focused on the Pawcatuck Estuary and Little Narragansett Bay under IWPM 1. Data collection and model development is underway for the Mystic River, and Norwalk, Saugatuck, and Southport Harbors under IWPM 2.

3.2.4. Enhancing Aquatic Life, Fish and Wildlife Health

The Department will continue to select waters with Aquatic Life Use Support impairments for plan development and to cross coordinate with other DEEP programs where water quality action plans can help to restore contaminated sites. The Department is also investigating water quality in watersheds that show evidence of impacts based on laboratory tests with fish and aquatic invertebrates, evaluating data to identify potential stressors to aquatic environments.

3.2.5. New Partnerships to Focus on Environmental Health for All Communities

CT DEEP will identify areas with environmental health concerns and consider ways to leverage resources and encourage environmental groups and programs to prioritize efforts in these areas for water quality assessments and plan development for all communities. On January 10, 2024, CT DEEP met with internal and external stakeholders to discuss IWPM 2 and to collaborate on how IWPM 2 could incorporate environmental health topics of concern. This meeting generated meaningful conversations and brought to light the hands-on outreach and communication that is critical for engagement within these communities. CT DEEP understands that it is necessary to participate within the local

communities to create meaningful connections for WQAP development. As part of this effort, waters associated with or near state and federal tribal areas are also being evaluated and efforts are being made to improve outreach and communication with tribal partners.

3.2.6. Improving Partnerships to Protect Drinking Water Resources

CT DEEP will partner with the Department of Public Health (CT DPH) to include protection of CT drinking water resources where surface waters selected for WQAP development are also designated for drinking water uses. CTDEEP will collaborate with CT DPH for these WQAPs to work together to identify and address risks to the CT public water supply waters within the areas covered by these plans.

4.303 (d) Planning Methodology

4.1. Prioritization

The following section describes the WQAP approach framework and methodology for IWPM prioritization for plan development. This process will be implemented every 10 years to reevaluate the water quality priority goals for CT. Extensive outreach and communication will be conducted both internally and externally. Waterbodies specified for plan development will be presented in the IWQR every 2 years. Plan development will depend upon the availability of data, partnership opportunities, and stakeholder input. This chapter discusses the EPA recommendations for 303 (d) program components for IWPM 2.

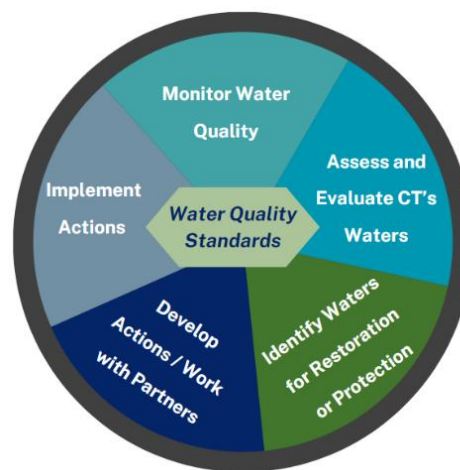


Figure 4.1 Process of WQAP Planning in CT.

4.1.1. Assessment and Evaluation of Surface Water Quality

CT DEEP routinely monitors and evaluates water across the state studying their physical, chemical, and biological condition to determine whether waterbodies are meeting Connecticut's water quality goals. Water quality goals are identified in the [Connecticut Water Quality Standards](#) and are developed to protect common uses for waters such as fishing, swimming, drinking and providing healthy waters for fish and wildlife. Chapter 1 of the Integrated Water Quality Report (IWQR) includes a section that describes the process and scientific methods that are used to assess water quality health in CT, called the Connecticut Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM). Chapter 1 of the IWQR also details the listing process, which is how CT reports the status of water quality health to EPA. These practices are used to facilitate Department staff identifying potential waters for plan development.

4.1.2. Data to Support Plan Development

Additional information is often needed to assist in plan development. CT DEEP works with partners to gather various types of information, data, and documentation to launch these efforts. One of the key

considerations when CT DEEP identifies waters for plan development is the ability to work with other entities and partners to ensure that the critical needs and resources for project development are met. These entities can include other State Agencies, Municipalities, and/or Environmental Groups.

4.1.3. Partnerships

As previously mentioned, protecting and restoring surface water in Connecticut is often dependent upon building successful partnerships and through communication. Through the Integrated Water Planning Management Process CT DEEP seeks to improve communication efforts and outreach to strengthen existing partnerships and to build new relationships with sister Agencies and Environmental Groups. IWPM also promotes internal collaboration among many CT DEEP programs including the Stormwater Permitting Unit, the Monitoring and Assessment Unit, the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) and the Watersheds Unit. The Water Quality Unit at CT DEEP works closely with the Watershed Management Coordinators and the 319 Program/LISS coordinators to collaborate on water quality planning development efforts and the implementation of TMDLs to restore and protect CT waterbodies. TMDLs are now developed to provide additional support for the development of Nonpoint Source (NPS) Watershed Plans by addressing as many of the required NPS plan elements within the TMDL as possible. Additionally, the Water Quality Unit provide input during the review of NPS plans. This collaboration among these programs helps to support implementation efforts by incorporating the knowledge of local nonpoint source entities and encouraging Best Management Practices (BMPs) and funding opportunities to support healthy surface waters and a healthy environment.

4.1.4. Engagement

CT DEEP uses multiple means to communicate with people, including:

- CT DEEP Web Sites - Information on [Integrated Water Planning Management](#) is provided and updated on the CT DEEP web site. The [CT DEEP TMDL webpage](#) houses all of CT's EPA approved TMDLs to date. [The Integrated Water Quality Report to Congress](#) is updated every 2 years and lists CT impaired waterbodies as well as the CT Assessment and Listing Methodologies. And the CT [Water Quality Standards and Classification \(ct.gov\)](#) webpage which explains the foundation of CT Water Quality Programs.
 - Other project specific webpages include:
 - [The Pawcatuck River Watershed Nutrient webpage](#)
 - [The Bantam Lake Watershed Nutrient webpage](#)
 - [The Stormwater and Water Quality Webpage](#) (which houses the 169 Town Factsheets)
 - [Stormwater Planning Tool for Impervious Cover \(ct.gov\)](#)
- Innovative Approaches – CT DEEP has utilized the multiple benefits of interactive mapping through the ArcGIS platform. Web mapping applications, story maps and app builders have changed the way the Department communicates with the CT public. [Integrated Water Planning Management 1](#), offered an interactive online mapping tool to help people review and explore

the areas that were recommended for plan development. Other examples of interactive maps are:

- The [Water Quality Plans and Assessment web mapping application](#) developed to track the status of the health of CT waterbodies and the plans that are associated with them.
 - [The Connecticut Water Quality Standards and Classifications \(arcgis.com\)](#) describes the structure and purpose of the CT Water Quality Standards and Classifications.
 - [Stormwater Pollution Management in Connecticut \(arcgis.com\)](#) describes various plans that are currently in place to manage stormwater in CT.
 - [Pawcatuck River Watershed \(arcgis.com\)](#) story map explains the impacts of nutrients and harmful algal blooms in the Pawcatuck River Watershed.
- Email Notification - CT DEEP offers a [Water Quality Planning Listserv](#) for people to sign up to receive email notification of activities related to water quality programs at CT DEEP. This email notification service will be used to send notices about Integrated Water Planning Management activities to those who sign up for this service.
 - Meetings and Presentations – Several remote meetings were scheduled as part of the Integrated Water Planning Management activities. There has been a significant increase in public meeting participation since meetings have been offered via ZOOM. For many, traveling to Hartford is not feasible, especially in poor weather. In January of 2024, CT DEEP held a special meeting with [a group of stakeholders](#). There were also two Public Meetings that were held on January 16, 2024, a morning, and an evening session. Additionally, staff participated in meetings at the request of several organizations or agencies. [IWPM 2 Public Meeting 1162024 \(canva.com\)](#) slides.
 - Public Comment - Opportunity for public comment was open from January 3, 2024, through February 16, 2024. Typically, public comment will be solicited when CT DEEP is identifying waters for which to develop plans for restoration or protection. Additionally, once a plan is drafted there will be an opportunity to comment on the plan before it is finalized.
 - Factsheets – The Department has developed 2 summary documents for those who are interested in the high-level points of [IWPM 2](#). And a [Factsheet update](#) of plans identified under IWPM1.
 - Infographics have been created to capture readers with bright colors and brief descriptions of topics (example below).

4.1.5. Success

After a plan has been developed and implementation actions begin, information and data will need to be collected to track actions and incremental progress to ensure that water quality restoration or protection is established over time and that the implementation methods are successful.

5. Summary

As part of Integrated Water Planning Management, CT DEEP has been working to improve coordination within and outside of our Agency. We have held meetings, inviting members from the different regulatory and environmental resource programs in CT DEEP to learn about and participate in Integrated Water Planning Management. As part of initial efforts to identify potential areas for plan development, we sought data and participation from these various programs to help in identifying an initial group of focus areas for plan development. This included with the CT DEEP Watershed Managers who work on nonpoint source pollution, members of regulatory programs such as site clean-up programs and permitting programs, staff involved in resource protection such as fisheries managers as well as staff from our state parks programs. We have begun the integration with other agencies in Connecticut and will continue to work to broaden the integration throughout Connecticut, seeking partners involved in resource protection and implementation activities.

CT DEEP requested feedback from the public on the waters which we have identified as candidates for developing plans for protection or restoration of water quality. This was done through a detailed process relying on environmental data and input from regulatory and conservation programs across the agency and areas of interest for environmental quality in Connecticut. Additional opportunities to provide feedback will be offered periodically, at a minimum through the IWQR process.

IWPM 2.0

Water Quality Action Plans for Restoration and Protection

Water Quality Unit Recommendations

Stormwater and Non-Point Source



- Continue focus on Stormwater
- Improve communication through an interactive dashboard and web mapping application
- Include an evaluation process to set WQ based TSS loads

Environmental Justice

- Use new CT EJ tool to help identify EJ areas for plan development
- Planning to incorporate outreach to Tribal Partners
- Work with DEEP EJ Office and other EJ partners



Swimming and Shellfishing



- Continue bacteria plan development (emphasis on EJ areas)
- Eventually complete bacteria TMDLs for all waters in the state



Nutrients

- Continue Lake and Embayment TMDL Development (see map for details)



Fish and Wildlife Health



- ALUS impairments for plan development
- Evaluate data to identify potential stressors

Climate Change

- Continue to add language in WQAP
- Communicate the impacts of a changing climate
- Continue to evaluate Climate Change scenarios for modeling efforts

