

## Integrated Water Planning Management (IWPM) V2: Water Quality Action Planning for Restoration and Protection of Connecticut Surface Waters

**Water Quality Action Plans (WQAP)** serve as a bridge to connect the Water Quality Standards (WQS), data, monitoring and other natural resource information to implementation through various DEEP programs including Permitting, Remediation, Non-Point Source Programs and Watershed Based Plans (Figure 1). Under the federal Clean Water Act, the 303(d) Program develops three types of Water Quality Action Plans. The primary planning tool of the 303(d) program is the development of Total Maximum Daily Load based plans (TMDLs) to restore and protect water quality.

TMDLs establish waste load and load allocations to restore water quality and can serve as a protection plan once standards are met. An Alternative Plan is a second type of restoration plan, where a direct to implementation approach can be used to address a water quality impairment through a Remedial Action Plan or a Permit. The last type of plan is a Protection Plan, which is developed to preserve water quality that is meeting Water Quality Standards in its current conditions.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the States began a process called 303(d) Vision which was a 10-year planning approach that shifted the focus from the rate at which WQAPs were developed and focused more on state specific water quality priorities and using the right tool to restore or protect surface waters. CT called this approach Integrated Water Resource Management, now called Integrated Water Planning Management (IWPM).

### **IWPM Phase 2**

CTDEEP is now in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of IWPM. The new 10-year planning period spans from October 2022 through September 2032. IWPM 2 will entail the same general process as IWPM 1. CTDEEP is recommending refining the topics that were outlined in IWPM 1 with a robust emphasis on Environmental Justice and Climate Change and recommending no new topics for IWMP 2. Those enhancements for IWPM 2 are outlined below (Figure 2).

### *Stormwater and Non-Point Source Management*

**For IWPM 2**, CTDEEP is proposing to continue to focus on Stormwater to better integrate 303(d) with stormwater permitting & NPS planning efforts. The 303 (d) program is also proposing to conduct an evaluation to

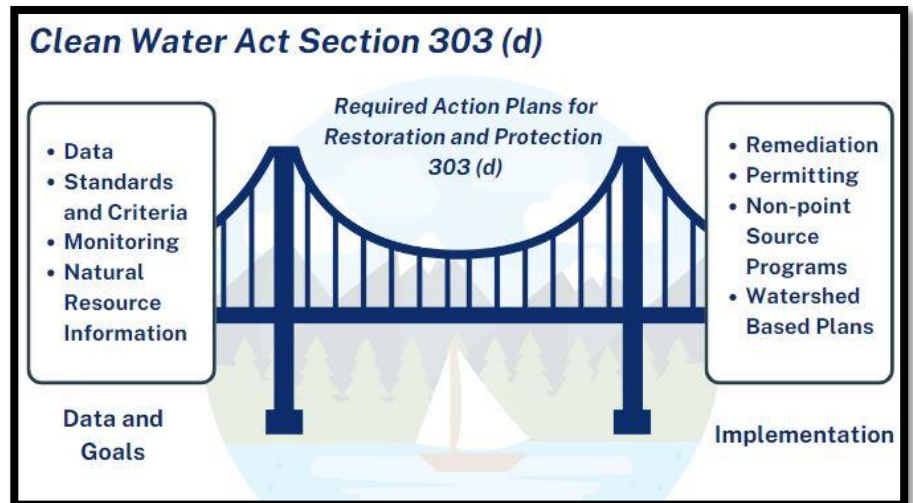


Figure 1. CT WQAP Bridge the Gap

determine if a process to set water quality-based targets for total suspended solids (TSS) to serve as a benchmark for stormwater quality could be developed. The Department is looking to refine communication efforts by updating the 169 town factsheets as an online dashboard and interactive map to serve as an easy-to-use reference tool for municipalities.

**Environmental Justice Communities**

For IWPM 2, CT will continue to evaluate EJ areas for WQAP development. However, we plan to switch to using the CT specific Environmental Justice Screening tool instead of the EPA screening tool for analysis. The Program will work closely with the Environmental Justice Division at CTDEEP and will plan to conduct outreach to our Tribal partners.

**Swimming and Shellfishing**

For IWPM 2, CT’s goal is to complete bacteria TMDLS for all waters for the entire state eventually over time. There will be a priority focus for those waters that are located in EJ communities and waters that are impaired.

**Nutrients in Lakes and Embayments**

For IWPM 2, more lakes and embayment work is planned. Work is already in progress for Action Plan development for Roseland Lake, Lakes Zoar and Lillinonah and West Thompson Lake. Embayment TMDLs for nutrients in the future will continue where there is ongoing work efforts already in place.

**Fish and Wildlife Health**

For IWPM 2, the Water Quality Program will continue the development of Water Quality Action Plans to ensure the health of aquatic fish, macroinvertebrates, and wildlife. The Program will evaluate data to identify potential stressors and select waters with Aquatic Life Use impairments for WQAP development.

**Public Review, How to Get Involved**

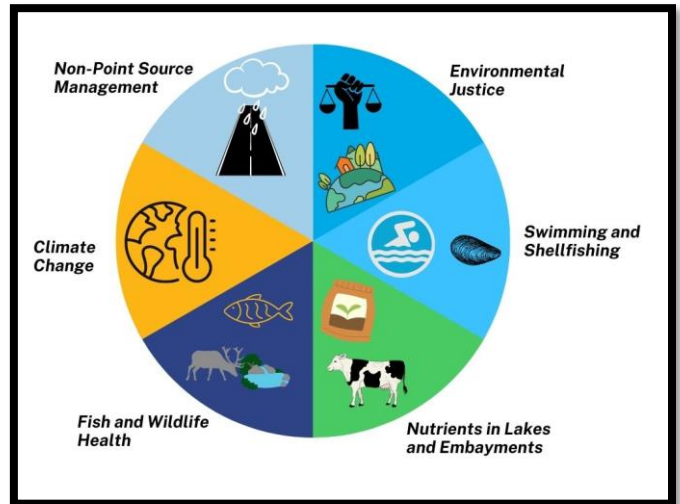


Figure 2. IWPM 2 Proposed Focus Topics

Comments are welcome on these water quality focus topics as well as waterbody locations, and other water resource information for consideration by CT DEEP. The Department is particularly interested in working with partners who have additional plans or data to help achieve water quality improvements. Public comments will be collected from **January 3, 2023, to February 16, 2024**. Two public meetings will be held (registration required) on **January 16, 2024, via Zoom from 9:00-10:30 a.m. and from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.** Here we will feature a presentation on the Integrated Water Planning Management 2

process and identification of potential water quality priority focus topics and potential waters for development of Water Quality Action Plans.

Interested people are invited to attend and participate in the session. Written comments may be submitted through email or regular mail by **February 16, 2024**. Email comments should be submitted to: [rebecca.jascot@ct.gov](mailto:rebecca.jascot@ct.gov).

**Learn More**

All reports and documents will be available for download on the [CT IWPM 2 webpage](#). There will also be interactive mapping tools available for IWPM2 waterbodies coming soon!

**List of Relevant Webpages**

[CT Integrated Water Planning and Management Phase 1](#)

[CT Integrated Water Planning and Management Phase 1 Updates Factsheet](#)

[CT Integrated Water Planning and Management Phase 2](#)

[CT Total Maximum Daily Load](#)

[CT Integrated Water Quality Report](#)

[Environmental Protection Agency 303 \(d\) Vision](#)

[CT Water Monitoring and Assessment Program](#)

[CT Water Quality Standards and Classifications](#)

**Resources**

1. CTDEEP TMDL webpage: [www.ct.gov/deep/tmdl](http://www.ct.gov/deep/tmdl)
2. CTDEEP *Integrated Water Resource Management* webpage, <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Water/Water-Quality/Integrated-Water-Resource-Management>
3. EPA TMDL Vision CWA Section 303 (d) webpage, <https://www.epa.gov/tmdl/new-vision-implementing-cwa-section-303d-impaired-waters-program-responsibilities>
4. Link to the *Connecticut Water Quality Standards*: [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/water/water\\_quality\\_standards/wqsfinaladopted22511pdf.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/water/water_quality_standards/wqsfinaladopted22511pdf.pdf)