

Good morning Rebecca,

My name is Tyler Johnson, I am the Environmental Technician overseeing the Willimantic Reservoir Watershed for Windham Water Works located in Mansfield CT. Thank you for reaching out to us requesting feedback. We have some ideas on ways DEEP may be able to help with protecting our watershed here in northeast CT.

The first thing that comes to mind is communication i.e.: prompt notification to the Windham Water Works whenever there is a spill, emergency, catastrophic event within our watershed that may impact our surface water quality. From what I understand the Release Notification Flow is

1. Release occurs and facility provides information to SERC and TERC (DEEP)
2. D.E.E.P. then notifies State Drinking Water Primary Agency (CTDPH)
3. CTDPH then notifies the affected Community Water System.

We here at Windham Water Works (WWW) have, to my knowledge, never been notified by the respective authorities about any emergency within our watershed area.

For example, there was a Fed-EX tractor trailer truck that went off of Route 84-W into Morey Pond on December 18, 2023, in Union CT. The only reason we found out of this incident was because a former employee texted our Superintendent notifying him that he saw on Facebook that there was a possible watershed emergency with a tractor trailer submerged in a body of water located in our watershed.

I took a ride up to the scene to confirm what we had heard was true. Luckily most everything was contained and did not end up affecting our water quality. I met Tom Welch there who was extremely helpful in explaining to me protocol and how things work in these types of situations. He gave me emergency contact numbers and emails and notified me after everything was completed and cleaned up with specific details. We would like to be notified of any event that may impact our surface water here in our Willimantic Reservoir Watershed. Some of the many events include Severe car accidents, fires, spills, chemical releases, explosions, etc. Since I am required to complete and submit an Annual Watershed Survey, this information would be very helpful.

Another topic that is important is our water quality monitoring. Soon, I will be conducting river sampling in specific locations in our watershed. I will be looking for excessive amounts of sodium, nitrogen, nitrates, coliforms, etc. We currently can sample and test PH, LDO, temperature, oxygen saturation and conductivity. I am not sure if this is something that DEEP would be able to help us with, establishing some baseline numbers for sampling. The locations that I will be sampling are mainly large capacity runoffs which feed into our streams and rivers from state roads such as RT-195, RT-198 and RT-44. At these locations I will be mainly concerned with the conductivity levels for these areas related to the salt contamination from application in the winter for ice and snow.

Other sampling areas will include areas downstream from large farms where there may be possible improper storage of manure leading to nutrient runoff and high nitrogen levels.

In relation to these monitoring programs which we will be implementing, is the proper and improper application of road treatments in the wintertime. I recently attended a Green SnowPro training which was put on by the UConn CLEAR program which was very insightful on how important it is to properly calibrate, inspect and correctly apply snow and ice road treatments in the winter. While we understand this is extremely important to ensure the safety of everyday winter travel, we also know how these salts and chemical brines negatively impact human health and well-being. So, we weren't sure if there was anything else that DEEP may be able to assist with regarding the mounds of salt we have seen at multiple intersections and roadways around the state. Possible ideas I have are more user application trainings like the ones that UConn CLEAR put on, as well as public outreach of the importance of proper application and how runoff affects human health.

One last topic I have is the health and water quality in Mansfield Hollow Lake. I have patrolled and observed the Lake multiple times within the last year and have noticed the extremely rapid growth of the two Milfoil Species and Water chestnut. I haven't heard of any future control or action being taken on these two extremely invasive aquatic species yet. I just know that if no action is taken soon, we will continue to lose the capacity of that reservoir at a rapid rate. This past summer I pulled out buckets upon buckets of water chestnuts from our terminal reservoir which is starting to be taken over by this species. We have currently contracted the engineering firm Tighe and Bond through a B.R.I.C. grant to conduct a study on our reservoir regarding the invasive aquatic plant life. We are expecting this to result in the need to dredge our terminal reservoir. With these aquatic species most likely coming from upstream (Mansfield Hollow Lake) we were hoping a similar study could be done with Mansfield Hollow which would result in the ever-spreading invasive plants. Please let me know if there is anything we can do to help start or expedite a program to address the invasive aquatic species issue in Mansfield Hollow.

We would love to know what you think of these feedback topics and if any of these would be feasible to implement. Thank you so much for all that DEEP does to help protect our environment and our surface water quality!