

Annual Report & Conference Brochure

**46th Annual Meeting &  
Environmental Conference  
Saturday, November 11, 2023**

*Bristol Event Center | Bristol, CT*



*Celebrating Connecticut's  
Conservation Commissions*

*Connecticut Association of Conservation  
& Inland Wetlands Commissions (CACIWC)*  
([www.caciwc.org](http://www.caciwc.org))

*46th Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference*  
*“Celebrating Connecticut’s Conservation Commissions”*



*Saturday, November 11, 2023*

*(Bristol Event Center)*

*Schedule for the Day*

Registration & Breakfast .....	8:00-8:45 a.m.
Welcome & Business Meeting.....	8:45-9:00 a.m.
<b>Keynote Speaker</b> .....	<b>9:00-10:00 a.m.</b>
Break 1.....	10:00-10:15 a.m.
<b>Session 1 Workshops</b> .....	<b>10:15-11:15 a.m.</b>
Break 2.....	11:15-11:30 a.m.
<b>Session 2 Workshops</b> .....	<b>11:30-12:30 p.m.</b>
Break 3.....	12:30-12:45 p.m.
Luncheon.....	12:45-1:45 p.m.
Break 4.....	1:45-2:00 p.m.
<b>Session 3 Workshops</b> .....	<b>2:00-3:15 p.m.</b>
Conference Ends.....	3:30 p.m.

*Business Meeting Agenda*

Welcome and Introduction to the Conference  
Approval of Minutes – October 29, 2022 Annual Meeting  
Reports: Treasurer’s Annual Report FY 2022-2023  
Budget FY 2023-2024  
President’s Report FY 2022-2023  
Old Business  
Election of Officers and Directors  
New Business

## Keynote Presentation:

We are pleased to welcome James O’Donnell, PhD, University of Connecticut Professor of Marine Sciences and Executive Director of the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) as our 2023 conference keynote speaker. Professor O’Donnell will outline risks and adaptation options in his keynote address, entitled “Climate Change in Connecticut (and what we’re doing about it).”

The climate of the earth is changing. Even if global greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced soon, the world will be warmer, the ocean deeper, storm winds stronger, and high rainfall events will be more intense. Since the patterns of development and the extensive infrastructure of Connecticut didn’t anticipate these conditions, much is at risk. Projecting likely future condition in Connecticut is central to establishing new design criteria for all infrastructure in 2050 and 2100. That information underpins the assessment of what is most at risk and the development of viable adaptation options. These are the science and engineering challenges CIRCA has undertaken. Assisting people and governments in choosing whether to act, what adaptation approaches to employ, what projects are most urgent, and how to pay for them, are challenges of public policy, law, and economics. Through extensive engagement, and with the assistance of local, state, and federal government staff, the Resilience Connecticut project has identified and analyzed more than one hundred projects that climate change has created or exacerbated in Connecticut, and that towns would like help in addressing. Professor O’Donnell will summarize the changes that we expect, and the process we have used to

create a “Pipeline” of Projects. Dr. O’Donnell will illustrate the key components of the approach by discussing some specific projects. He will conclude with a summary of important lessons about effective adaptation planning and highlight some outstanding issues that need attention.

### About Our Keynote Speaker:

#### James O’Donnell, PhD

Jim O’Donnell is a physical oceanographer. He studies the physical processes that determine the circulation and transport of materials in the coastal ocean. He earned a BSc. (Hons) in Applied Physics from Strathclyde University in Scotland, and a MS and PhD in Oceanography from the University of Delaware. After two years as a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics at Cambridge University, England, he joined the faculty of the University of Connecticut in 1987 and was appointed Professor in 1999. He was elected to the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering in 2009 and was appointed to be Executive Director of the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) in 2014.



James O’Donnell, PhD

## Report of the CACIWC Nominating Committee

November 7, 2023

The CACIWC Nominating Committee places in nomination the following slate of officers and directors for the 2023-2025 term of office for the CACIWC Board of Directors.

### Officers

**President:** Alan Siniscalchi  
**Vice President:** Peter Bassermann  
**Treasurer:** Charles Dimmick  
**Secretary:** Maureen FitzGerald

### Directors

<b>Fairfield County:</b>	Alicia Mozian	County Representative
	Aleksandra Moch	Alternate
<b>Hartford County:</b>	Ann Beaudin	County Representative
<b>Litchfield County:</b>	Jeremy Leifert	County Representative
	Abby Conroy	Alternate
<b>Middlesex County:</b>	Marianne Corona	County Representative
	Kathy King	Alternate
<b>New Haven County:</b>	Maria Kayne	County Representative
	J. David Rauch	Alternate
<b>New London County:</b>	Laura Magaraci	County Representative
	Gary Gregory	Alternate
<b>Tolland County:</b>	Rod Parlee	County Representative
<b>Windham County:</b>	Lindsay Beutler	County Representative

The following positions have not been filled at this time:

Hartford County: Alternate Representative  
 Tolland County: Alternate Representative  
 Windham County: Alternate Representative  
 Alternate-at-Large: Two (2) Representatives

Respectively submitted by the 2023 CACIWC Nominating Committee: Alicia Mozian, Fairfield County Representative, Maureen FitzGerald, Secretary, and Dr. Benjamin Oko, Former Director

<i>Workshops</i>	Session 1 (10:15-11:15)	Session 2 (11:30-12:30)	Session 3 (2:00-3:15)
Track A — Preserving our Forests, Wetlands & Their Inhabitants	Workshop A1 Niznick Room	Workshop A2 Niznick Room	Workshop A3 Niznick Room
Track B — IWWA Evaluation of Applications, Training & Wetlands Law	Workshop B1 Main Ballroom	Workshop B2 Main Ballroom	Workshop B3 Main Ballroom
Track C — Climate Impact, Increasing Resiliency and the Role of CT Conservation Commissions	Workshop C1 DoubleTree Cedar Room	Workshop C2 DoubleTree Cedar Room	Workshop C3 DoubleTree Cedar Room
Track D — Helping Our Commissions Evaluate and Respond to Evolving Issues	Workshop D1 DoubleTree Spruce Room	Workshop D2 DoubleTree Spruce Room	Workshop D3 DoubleTree Spruce Room

## ■ Session 1 (10:15-11:15 a.m.)

### A1. Morticulture: The Abundant Life in Old & Dead Trees (Niznick Room)

*Presenter:*

- *Margery C. B. Winters, Chair, Simsbury Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, President, Simsbury Land Trust & Assistant Director, Roaring Brook Nature Center*

Once considered a wasted resource and a hazard in forest landscapes, dead trees, and logs are now known to be valuable and essential parts of a healthy, mature forest ecosystem. In addition to providing essential habitat and food for many terrestrial and aquatic species, these senescing trees serve as a vital source of soil moisture, soil carbon, and nutrients for the entire forest. The importance and benefits of allowing our existing older and “middle-aged” forests to reach their full ecological potential and develop into a forest that has its full complement of environmental services, a process called proforestation, will also be discussed.

### B1. Advanced Topics\* in Wetlands Enforcement (Main Ballroom)

*Presenters:*

- *Janet Brooks, Attorney at Law, LLC*
- *Mark Branse, Halloran & Sage, LLP*
- *Moderator: Darcy Winther, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)*

Let’s discuss how some of you are using Notices of Violation incorrectly and how to issue an order when you don’t know the remediation that is required to correct the violation. We’ll use the template that I developed and distributed through The Habitat. Let’s have a wide-ranging approach to enforcement from incremental steps using your “soft” power to formal legally defined actions (orders + lawsuits). Are you jumping over steps and complicating your life? And what’s your civility quotient? (How civil are you to those who appear before you?)

\*No prerequisites required. You will all be ready for advanced enforcement issues after attending this workshop.

### C1. Sustainable CT: Supporting and Celebrating Sustainability Initiatives in Connecticut Communities

(DoubleTree Cedar Room)

*Presenter:*

- *Jessica LeClair, Senior Program Director, Sustainable CT*

Sustainable CT is a statewide municipal certification program that inspires and supports communities to become more vibrant, connected, healthy, and resilient. The workshop session will provide an overview of Sustainable CT, including the new Climate Leader Designation. The Climate Leader Designation celebrates municipalities that are reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions and preparing their communities for the impacts of climate change. The workshop will focus on the how Connecticut Commissions can use the Sustainable CT framework as a resource to accomplish their commission goals, and help commissioners understand how to access funding and support for sustainability projects through Sustainable CT’s Community Match Fund.

### Visit our Exhibitors!

*We are grateful for the support of the following organizations and companies exhibiting at our 2023 conference:*

- Beaver Institute, Inc.
- Connecticut Association of Conservation Districts
- Connecticut Botanical Society
- Connecticut Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation
- Connecticut Gardener Magazine
- Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation
- Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group
- Connecticut League of Conservation Voters
- Connecticut Sea Grant and the Long Island Sound Study
- Dark Sky International, Connecticut Chapter
- Earth Tones
- Estuary Magazine
- Farmington River Watershed Association
- Rivers Alliance of Connecticut
- Town of Bolton Conservation Commission

## D1. The Benefits of Preserving Greenways and Enhancing Outdoor Recreation

(DoubleTree Spruce Room)

Presenter:

- *Kimberly Bradley, CT Trails and Greenways Program Coordinator, State of Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)*

Trails and greenways positively impact individuals and improve communities by providing not only recreation and transportation opportunities, but also by influencing economic and community development. The DEEP Connecticut Trails and Greenways Program provides opportunities for collaboration, funding, and education in coordination with the Connecticut Greenways Council. DEEP staff will provide an overview of the program and an opportunity to learn how DEEP works with municipalities to enhance outdoor recreation across the State of Connecticut. The grant application process will also be reviewed. Bring your questions, concepts, and points of discussion as we hit the trails!

### ■ Session 2 (11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)

## A2. The Connecticut State Wildlife Action Plan: A Blueprint for Collaborative Conservation

(Niznick Room)

Presenter:

- *Brian Hess, Acting Director, Wildlife Division, State of Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)*

Connecticut has begun the process of revising its State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) ahead of the 2025 due date. SWAPs identify vulnerable species and habitats, threats affecting those species and habitats, and actions to address those threats. The plan has roles for organizations of all sizes and serves as a hub for collaborative conservation statewide. A major goal of the 2025 revision is to produce a plan that is more useful, relevant, and implementable by a wider range of conservation partners. Learn about our current SWAP, the revision process, how the document can help your work, and how to help make the 2025 SWAP the best yet.



Bulton Conservation Commission

## B2. “2023 Wetlands Law & Regulations Update with Question & Answer Session”

(Main Ballroom)

Presenters:

- *Mark Branse, Halloran & Sage, LLP*
- *Janet Brooks, Attorney at Law, LLC*
- *Moderator: Darcy Winther, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)*

These wetlands attorneys have been brought back again by popular demand to keep you current with the law. Bring your questions and your additional suggestions of possible improvements to the Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act (IWWA), now that we have celebrated the Act’s 50th Anniversary during 2022. There is much to discuss in response to your suggestions, concerns, and questions! Come ready to pose questions as you try to stump the attorneys!

## C2. Conservation Commissions and Climate Resilience (DoubleTree Cedar Room)

Presenters:

- *Louanne Cooley and Kayla Vargas from the CT Institute of Resilience and Climate Adaptation (UConn CIRCA)*
- *Michael Stankov, Environmental Planner/Inland Wetland Agent, Town of Mansfield*

Climate change has created challenges for managing public natural resources. Conservation commissions should consider the effect of climate change on natural resources and the solutions these resources provide, when undertaking their duties of protecting and preserving biological diversity and natural resources. Conservation Commissions can act to increase municipal climate resiliency to impacts like flooding, heat, and drought by protecting present and future natural resources and the ecosystem services they provide. We will discuss ways Conservation Commissions can act within their legal authority and in concert with other town, regional, and state boards, commissions, and agencies to promote climate resilience and nature-based solutions.

## D2. Solutions to the Food Waste Crisis in Connecticut (DoubleTree Spruce Room)

Presenters:

- *Sherill Baldwin, Sustainable Materials Management Environmental Analyst, State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)*
- *Pippa Bell Ader of Sustainable Westport*

Learn about food waste, including how municipalities and DEEP are responding with innovative pilots, programs, and other initiatives to reduce, reuse and recycle the organic portion of our municipal solid waste. Sherill Baldwin of DEEP will provide an overview of the challenges, programs the state is implementing with municipalities and food waste prevention and food recovery policy ideas. Pippa Bell Ader of Sustainable Westport, a non-profit, will discuss how Westport’s voluntary food scrap recycling program got started, progress made, challenges and ideas for the future.

## ■ Session 3 (2:00 p.m.-3:15 p.m.)

### A3. Conserving Amphibian and Reptile Diversity — A Collective Responsibility

(Niznick Room)

*Presenters:*

- *Hank Gruner, Herpetologist, and member of the Andover Conservation Commission*
- *Dennis Quinn, owner of Quinn Ecological, LLC*

Responding to rapidly changing climatic conditions is a significant challenge facing populations of many amphibians and reptiles. Low dispersal capabilities, coupled with an increasingly fragmented landscape, limit the capacity of populations to rearrange themselves in response to climatic changes that impact habitat suitability. Although some species and/or populations may demonstrate the ability to locally adapt to changing conditions, this remains far from certain. This session will provide an update on the status of Connecticut's "herps" and illustrate the critical role municipal commissions can play in fostering climate change resiliency for Connecticut's herpetofauna.

Hank Gruner and Dennis Quinn are contributing authors on the recent publication, *Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles in Connecticut*, published by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

### B3. Stormwater Management in CT: An Update on Efforts to Reduce Impacts and Enhance Resiliency (Main Ballroom)

*Presenter:*

- *Dave Dickson, Extension Educator & Director, UConn CLEAR; & Mary Looney, Municipal Stormwater Educator, UConn CLEAR*

The State of Connecticut has been working to shift how we manage stormwater in order to help reduce the water quality and quantity impacts of increased stormwater runoff. Educators for UConn's Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) will provide an update on the status of these efforts, including the MS4 and other regulatory permits; a new Stormwater Quality Manual; and the advent of stormwater utilities.

### C3. The CT Natural Diversity Database: What We Do and an Introduction to Our New Tools (DoubleTree Cedar Room)

*Presenter:*

- *Robin S. Blum, Supervising Wildlife Biologist, Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB), Wildlife Division, State of Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)*

The Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) is the repository for data related to Connecticut's Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species. We provide a variety of public services, including environmental reviews of projects that may impact Connecticut's listed species. These data are an essential component of any Natural Resource Inventory (NRI). This presentation will offer a description of the program and its services, along with providing a demonstration of our new online application portal.

### D3. GPS Mapping Using the Avenza Maps App (DoubleTree Spruce Room)

*Presenters:*

- *Emily Wilson, Geospatial Educator with UConn Extension and CLEAR, and the UConn CT Trails Program*
- *Adelheid Koepfer, UConn CT Trails Program (CT Trail Census and CT Trail Finder)*

The Avenza Maps smartphone app checks all the boxes when it comes to the mapping of trails, important habitat areas, and other areas surveys requiring GPS. It is free, allows for collection of lines and points at the same time using tracking, and easily adds smartphone photos as points on the map. And, directly from the app on an iOS or android phone, the data can be saved to a cloud drive (Google drive, OneDrive, etc.) or emailed to yourself or a GIS friend. The workshop will include a demo of the app and how it works for trail mapping, along with example uses of the collected data including viewing on google earth, editing in QGIS, and Emily's personal favorite, sending it over for inclusion in CT Trail Finder!



Pratology

# CACIWC 45th Annual Meeting Minutes

October 29, 2022

Scarlett's Fine Events at Best Western Plus, North Haven, CT

Alan Siniscalchi, President and Annual Meeting Chairman convened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance.

**Business Meeting:** The business meeting convened at 8:45 a.m.

**Approval of the 44th Annual Meeting minutes:** Motion and second from the floor to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2021 Annual Meeting. The motion carried.

**Treasurer's Annual Report & FY 2022-2023 Budget:** Motion and second from the floor to approve the annual report and FY 2022/2023 budget. The motion carried.

**President's Report FY 2021-2022:** Alan Siniscalchi reviewed the President's Report included in the Conference Brochure.

**Old Business:** No discussion.

**Proposed By-Laws Amendment:** Alan Siniscalchi reviewed the proposed amendment authorizing members of the CACIWC Board of Director's to conduct and or participate in meetings using virtual or other telecommunication methods.

10.3.7: A Board Member may participate in a meeting of the Board by, or conduct the meeting through use of, any means of communication by which all members participating in the meeting may simultaneously hear one another during the meeting. A board member participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

Motion and second to were made to approve the amendment. The motion carried.

**New Business:** No new business but Alan Siniscalchi requested attendees complete the survey at the end of the conference and provide suggestions for future workshops and articles for The Habitat. Alan thanked the conference sponsors, CACIWC contractors and committee members for their support.

**Adjournment:** The Business Meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Maureen FitzGerald, CACIWC Secretary

## President's Report for the 2023 Annual Meeting and Environmental Conference

While concerns for the possibility of new severe waves of COVID-19 have surfaced several times since 2022, 2023 proved to be a less challenging period for us than during the previous three years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, use of COVID booster shots and other factors have continued to reduce the risk of a reassurance. Unfortunately, other issues have contributed to our many national and global challenges, including the health and economic impacts resulting from military conflicts along with impacts from short-term severe weather patterns, and long-term climate changes. The growing mistrust of science and government agencies by individuals and elected politicians continues to impact efforts to increase pandemic preparedness and address climate change. Ongoing news of social and racial injustice still reminds us to bring renewed attention to the environmental justice issues as are being pursued by many Connecticut conservation commissions. More recently, several wars and numerous conflicts impact the global economy and detract numerous countries from addressing global climate change by increasing education, resiliency, source control, and other means.

Looking back to last autumn, the CACIWC Board of Directors extends their appreciation to the many members and guests who were able to attend our **45th Annual Meeting and Environmental Conference**, our first in-person conference since fall 2019, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference was hosted by Scarlett's Fine Events at Best Western Plus North Haven Hotel on Saturday, October 29, 2022.

After scheduling several virtual conferences during the COVID-19 pandemic, the CACIWC Board of Directors and its Annual Meeting Committee worked throughout the year to organize our 2022 conference. We endeavored to bring our conference attendees the wide variety of informative workshops, exhibitor displays, lunch and refreshments that our members missed during the last in-person conference three years ago. The theme of the conference, "*Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Connecticut's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act*," helped guide the focus of several of the conference presentations and workshops.



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## President's Report (continued)

### Keynote Speaker

We were pleased to welcome **Attorney Gregory A. Sharp** as our 2022 conference keynote speaker. Attorney Sharp followed to our conference theme in his keynote presentation entitled *"The 50th Anniversary of the IWWA: a Look Back and a Gaze Forward,"* which reviewed the history of the IWWA starting with its approval by the Connecticut General Assembly on May 1972 through its various amendments during the past decades. Attorney Sharp was uniquely qualified to discuss these issues, having represented local wetlands agencies as well as applicants and intervenors since the 1970s. He reviewed the impact of several court cases, discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the IWWA, and provided thoughts for possible future evolution of the act.

Attorney Gregory A. Sharp practiced environmental law for many years as a partner in the Environmental Practice Department of Murtha Cullina LLP, until his retirement in 2016. Entering the private practice of law in 1979, he represented local wetlands agencies, as well as applicants and intervenors, in inland wetland permit proceedings. Prior to his retirement, he published numerous articles in *The Habitat* on legal developments under the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act.

He is a past chairman of the Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and of the Connecticut Bar Association Section on Environmental Law. Mr. Sharp served for seven years in the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection prior to commencing the private practice of environmental law.

Mr. Sharp received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Dartmouth College, a Master of Forest Science Degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, and a Juris Doctor Degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law.

### Workshops & Displays

Breakout session workshops were organized into four newly revised tracks for our 2022 annual conference. These four tracks included our conference theme along with several conservation focus areas: *A. Preserving our Forests, Wetlands and Their Habitats, B. The 50th Anniversary of the Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act, C. Responding to our Evolving Environmental Issues, and D. Helping Commissions Assess and Respond.*

Three workshops of interest to Connecticut commissions were scheduled in **Track A, Preserving our Forests, Wetlands and Their Habitats.**

The first track A workshop, **"Invasive Aquatic Plants in Connecticut Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers,"** was presented by Gregory J. Bugbee, Associate Scientist, Department of Environmental Sciences, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES). Many of our members had asked for an update on invasive aquatic plants as they have become an increasing management problem for many local communities. In his workshop, Greg reviewed the results of recent surveys conducted in Connecticut lakes and rivers that document the persistence and distribution of various invasive plant species. He also

reviewed the importance of proper seasonal timing of control methods.

The second track A workshop, entitled **"Renewed Threats to Hemlocks: Responding to Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Resurgence with Collaborative Biological Control,"** was presented by Carole Cheah, PhD, Research Entomologist, Valley Laboratory. The workshop described how a string of recent warm winters region-wide was responsible for a recent and alarming surge in hemlock woolly adelgid, *Adelges tsugae* (HWA), in our hemlock forests. The workshop reviewed the benefits of biological control, which has expanded to other private and municipal hemlock stands through collaborative partnerships with towns, land trusts, water companies, nature preserves, residential communities, and homeowners.

The third track A workshop, **"Vernal Pool Monitoring and Education: Updates from CAWS,"** was presented by Edward Pawlak, MS, Certified Professional Wetland Scientist (PWS). In this presentation, updated data from the vernal pool monitoring program sponsored Connecticut Association of Wetland Scientists (CAWS) was reviewed along with information on a new CAWS vernal pool education program.

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## *President's Report (continued)*

Three workshops of interest to inland wetlands commissions were scheduled in the **B Track**, *The 50th Anniversary of the Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act*. The first closely followed the keynote address, and the theme of this conference theme.

This workshop, entitled “**Panel: Reflections on 50 years of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Law in Connecticut,**” included keynote speaker Attorney Gregory A. Sharp, Mark Branse, Halloran & Sage, LLP, Janet Brooks, Attorney at Law, LLC, Michael Klein, Senior Wetlands Scientist, Davison Environmental, LLC, Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs, Town of Greenwich, with Darcy Winther, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), as moderator.

The panel looked backwards on the first 50 years implementing the Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act (IWWA), offering what has worked, what hasn't, and suggestions of what might be improvements. The ensuing discussion brought out their perspectives on commission activities throughout the past five decades.

Our second track B workshop, “**2022 Wetlands Law & Regulations Update with Question & Answer Session,**” presented by Mark Branse, Halloran & Sage, LLP, Janet Brooks, Attorney at Law, LLC, and moderated by Darcy Winther, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), was brought back by popular demand. This workshop included its lengthy question-and-answer session.

The third B workshop, entitled “**Rivers & Watercourses: The Importance of Riparian Zones,**” was moderated by Denise Savageau, Chair of the CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation, and included three panelists: Alicea Charamut the Executive Director Rivers Alliance, Kelsey Sudol the Research Assistant of the Lake Waramaug Task Force & Natural Resource Specialist, Northwest Conservation District, along with Meghan Lally, Environmental Analyst, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). In their workshop, they outlined the importance of protecting riparian zones to maintaining the health and water quality of our rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, and other water bodies. They explained how these zones are essential for source water protection. The speakers described the functions and value of riparian zones in protecting water quality and discussed buffers and upland review areas and the role of local land use agencies in protection of these critical areas.

Three workshops of interest to conservation commissions were scheduled in **Track C**, *Responding to our Evolving Environmental Issues*.

The first track C workshop, “**The Bear Reality,**” was presented by Felicia A. E. Ortner, Connecticut Master Wildlife Conservationist. This requested workshop discussed the increasing population of black bears in Connecticut and the importance of educating land use commissions with insight to help promote the reduction of conflicts with our wild bear neighbors.

A second track C workshop, entitled “**Managing for Water Resources in a Changing Climate,**” was presented by Denise Savageau, Chair, CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation,

Alicea Charamut, Executive Director Rivers Alliance, and George S. Logan, Director of Community Relations, Aquarion Water Company. The workshop discussed how Connecticut is experiencing drought conditions on a more frequent basis, how precipitation is being monitored throughout the year, and the State Water Plan and the Drought Preparedness and Management Plan and what is being done to ensure that we have an abundant and safe drinking water supply while maintaining adequate stream flow.

The third, well-attended track C workshop was “**Talking Trash: Rethinking Municipal Waste Systems.**” In this panel workshop, Sherill Baldwin, Sustainable Materials Management Environmental Analyst, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, presented on Sustainable Materials Management 101 and Welcome to the Waste Reduction and the Reuse Economy, and Jennifer Heaton-Jones, Executive Director, Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority, discussed How Municipalities can Share Responsibility of Materials Management through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). Workshop organizer Kim O'Rourke, Recycling Coordinator, City of Middletown, presented on Municipalities in Action: Real Life Examples of Local Reuse, Refilling, and Waste Reduction Programs.

Three workshops of interest to conservation commissions were scheduled in **Track D**, *Helping Commissions Assess and Respond*.

The first track D workshop, entitled “**Pollinators in My Backyard,**” was provided by Victor DeMasi, lepidopterist, curatorial affiliate, Peabody Museum of Natural History. In his presentation, Victor took the audience on a sunny day walk through his pollinator meadow in Redding, Connecticut, reviewing some of the rare and common species he has seen there in 40 years of stewardship. The importance of these species was discussed along with a growing number of threats to their populations.

A second unique workshop in this track, “**Landscape Planning for Mental Health,**” was presented by Susan A. Masino, PhD, Vernon D. Roosa Professor of Applied Science, Trinity College. She described how mental illness is on the rise and has been declared an epidemic by the American Association of Pediatricians. While most of the focus and funding is on much-needed increased services, prevention is increasingly urgent and is a chance to achieve multiple goals. Professor Masino outlined research that reveals how children who spend time in nature, particularly forests, have improved cognition, emotional regulation, and life-long mindfulness. She also shared practical strategies for ensuring and integrating nature experiences, even in small “Urban Wilds,” to connect children to the land while also protecting clean water, mitigating climate change, and protecting biodiversity.

A third track D workshop, entitled “**Leveraging Systems Thinking and Geospatial Technologies for Advanced Sustainable Watershed Management,**” was presented by Alicia Tyson, MA., MS., PhD Candidate, Assistant Extension Educator, UConn CT Sea Grant, and Emily Wilson, MS, Geospatial Educator, UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR). Using an interesting interactive format, participants examined what is meant by spatial thinking and its role in responding to climate change impacts. Tools and

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## President's Report (continued)

other CLEAR resources available to CACIWC members and stakeholders for tangible application and enhancement of resilient communities and landscapes were also discussed.

With the return to an in-person conference format, we were once again able to host a variety of nonprofit and commercial **exhibitors** to provide their informative displays in an arrangement adjacent to our workshop rooms. The responses from our conference survey revealed an appreciation for the networking opportunity provided by these adjacent display and break areas.

During the business meeting preceding the keynote speaker, CACIWC President Alan Siniscalchi took the opportunity to acknowledge the **2022 list of honorees**. This group of individuals, representing a wide variety of professions, are in the process of retiring or have recently retired. They were recognized for a lifetime of achievements in a variety of disciplines who contributed to conservation and wetlands protection within Connecticut. These honorees were: **The Honorable Marshall K. Berger, Jr.**, Connecticut Superior Court Judge & Presiding Judge for the Land Use Docket from 2012 to 2020; **Michael Klein**, Senior Wetlands Scientist, Davison Environmental, LLC; **Alicia Mozian**, Conservation Director, Town of Westport & CACIWC Board Member; **Patricia Sesto**, Director of Environmental Affairs, Town of Greenwich; and **Attorney Gregory A. Sharp**, 2022 CACIWC Conference Keynote Speaker

Even with our continually updated registration systems, the task of organizing our **annual meeting and environmental conference** is a major challenge for our small volunteer board without the benefit of full-time staff. We are motivated to maintain this important event each year guided by the useful feedback we receive from all of you.

A new CACIWC initiative for 2023 was the development of **member commission activity surveys for all Connecticut Inland Wetlands Agencies and Conservation Commissions**. These targeted surveys are being analyzed to help us evaluate the activities and training needs of inland wetlands agencies along with the ability of today's conservation commissions to assess and protect important habitats in their towns while responding to climate change impacts and other evolving new challenges.

During 2023, we again reviewed our progress in implementing our **Strategic Plan**. One important strategic goal was the **modernization of our financial tracking and accounting system**. Our Treasurer Charles Dimmick and Vice President Peter Bassermann both continued their efforts to update our financial records using an electronic system that more efficiently prepares reports and evaluates our fiscal status.

Throughout 2023, the board has continued its efforts to address another key strategic plan goal of providing **information and outreach support** to commission members and staff through our website, **CACIWC.org**, and our quarterly publication, *The Habitat*. Additional municipal commission and environmental advocacy efforts were pursued throughout 2023 in conjunction with various partner organizations.

The board also continues to review progress toward achieving all the goals and objectives of our strategic plan in the context of our organizational mission. We thank those of you who reached out to us during 2023 and provided us with important information to help guide our efforts. We remain

committed to continuing efforts that will enable CACIWC to expand its role as a strong and effective statewide organization in support of you, our municipal conservation and wetlands commissioners and staff.

As we look ahead to 2024, we anticipate that the increasing threats of climate change will unfortunately continue to impact our state, and we pledge to maintain our vigilance in the protection of Connecticut's open spaces and important habitats. Those of us whom you entrust to lead CACIWC will maintain efforts to bring you relevant educational programs while informing you of the latest issues affecting your role as one of Connecticut's key conservation and habitat protection assets.

At today's **46th CACIWC Annual Meeting and Environmental Conference**, with its theme of "**Celebrating Connecticut's Conservation Commissions**," we have a full agenda covering many important and relevant topics. Several of our workshops address the impact of climate change, along with our keynote speaker presentation by **James O'Donnell, PhD**, University of Connecticut Professor of Marine Sciences and Executive Director of the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA). Professor O'Donnell will outline risks and adaptation options in his keynote address, entitled "**Climate Change in Connecticut (and what we are doing about it)**."

I know that I speak for the entire CACIWC Board of Directors in welcoming you to today's 2023 Annual Meeting and Environmental Conference for our second in-person conference since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a member of our dedicated CACIWC Board of Directors, I am equally appreciative of your continued efforts to protect habitats within your towns and wish you the very best for 2024!

— Alan J. Siniscalchi, President  
Saturday, November 11, 2023



Jeffrey H. Mills

# Connecticut Association of Conservation & Inland Wetland Commissions

## Treasurer's Report FY 2022-2023 & Budget: FY 2023-2024

	<b>Budget(\$)</b>	<b>Actual(\$)</b>	<b>Budget(\$)</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>FY '22-23</b>	<b>FY '22-23</b>	<b>FY '23-24</b>
Membership Dues, Towns	7,500.00	7,920.50	8,000.00
Dues, other	700.00	491.05	550.00
<i>Habitat</i> – Advertising, Sponsorship	4,000.00	4,442.15	4,000.00
Contributions	1,500.00	0	0
Interest/Reimbursements	4.00	30.21	30.00
Annual Meeting Income	17,000.00	16,231.63	17,000.00
CACIWC Publication Sales	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>30,704.00</b>	<b>29,115.63</b>	<b>29,580.00</b>
 <b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>Education &amp; Information</b>			
Newsletter – <i>Habitat</i>			
Layout, type, edit, graphics	2,500.00	2,750.00	2,750.00
<i>(Habitat</i> now only electronic, no print)			
Other – <i>Habitat</i> Advertising Manager	1,600.00	2,840.41	2,300.00
Website – administration, server fees	850.00	0	800.00
Wufoo		906.26	900.00
Listserve Management (now Mail Chimp)	200.00	53.54	100.00
Board Development	200.00	0	100.00
Other Organization Support	800.00	558.00	600.00
IWC & CC Educ & Information	100.00	0	0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>6,250.00</b>	<b>6,201.95</b>	<b>5,650.00</b>
 <b>Administration and Operations</b>			
Administrative Support – Memb DB Mgt	600.00	748.73	600.00
Administrative (other)	50.00	0	50.00
Bookkeeping Service	500.00	0	500.00
Office Rental (DeKoven House)	1,950.00	1,956.00	2,000.00
Office Equipment/Furniture	0	0	0
Postage/Supplies	50.00	0	0
Insurance	550.00	550.00	550.00
Fees/Taxes	0	0	0
Refunds	50.00	0	50.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,750.00</b>	<b>3,254.73</b>	<b>3,800.00</b>
 <b>Annual Meeting Expenses</b>	 20,000	 21,439.63	 21,000.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>30,000.00</b>	<b>31,802.57</b>	<b>32,450.00</b>
<b>GAIN/(loss)</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>(2,686.94)</b>	<b>(2,880)</b>

# 46th Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference Sponsors

## *Barred Owl* (\$250-\$499)

Connecticut Association of Conservation Districts  
Alan J. Siniscalchi, CACIWC



## *Screech Owl* (\$100-\$249)

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Connecticut Land Conservation Council  
Halloran Sage



Marla Butts, Former CACIWC  
Maureen FitzGerald, CACIWC  
Maria Kayne, CACIWC  
Alicia Mozian, CACIWC

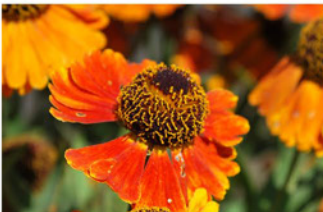


## *Saw-whet Owl* (\$10-\$99)

CT Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation  
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*CACIWC expresses its sincere gratitude to these sponsors! They helped make this event possible!*

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