3.6 Manage for Drought and Municipal Water Use

10 Points | 20 Points | 30 Points | 40 Points

Action Updates

This action was last updated in 2024. The previous version of this action is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow.

Objective

Plan for and implement projects to improve water efficiency in municipal buildings and public spaces (including Board of Education buildings) and enhance drought communication and coordination.

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn.

1. Reduce municipal water use by adopting the following best management practices as your municipality's standard operating procedure: **(10 points)**

    - Utilize WaterSense labeled toilets, urinals, bathroom faucets, showerheads, and pre-rinse sprayers in all new municipal construction; and
    - Replace toilets, urinals, bathroom faucets, showerheads, and pre-rinse spray valves in municipal buildings (Board of Education buildings included) with WaterSense labeled equivalents upon their scheduled or unscheduled replacement.

    Submit: Documentation that your municipality utilizes WaterSense labeled products (e.g., procurement contract, a list of installations, memo from relevant municipal department or staff) as part of its standard operating procedure.

2. Develop a drought communications plan to inform residents about voluntary and mandatory drought restrictions declared by your local water utility and/or the governor. Update your municipal website with links to information about water conservation, drought information and status, which may be found on your local water utility website, local health district website, and state water status website. **(10 points)**

    Submit: A copy of your Drought Communications Plan and hyperlinks and screenshots of the relevant webpage(s) on your municipal website with utility and state drought information. If your Drought Communications Plan was created more than three years ago, also include a brief description of how it is still relevant and used by your municipality.

3. Develop and pass a drought restriction ordinance that integrates your water utility drought plans (if applicable) with the state drought plan. It may be helpful to also engage with the Connecticut Interagency Drought Workgroup as you develop your ordinance. **(20 points)**

    Submit: A copy of the drought restriction ordinance formally adopted by your governing body and documentation that the ordinance has been adopted (such as meeting minutes, a copy of the municipal zoning regulations with relevant portions highlighted, a link to municipal ordinances, or similar verification).

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please

complete the “Partners” box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality’s role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the planning and zoning, public works, and purchasing departments could be helpful in implementing this action.

In addition, your inland wetlands commission, conservation commission, local water utility, local health district, council of governments, Connecticut Interagency Drought Workgroup could help implement this action.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Sustainable CT Community Match Fund
- State Funding Readiness Project

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- State of Connecticut Water Status
- CT Department of Public Health, "Water Conservation"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Water Conservation"
- CT Audubon, "Conserve Water"
- US Department of Energy, "Net Zero Water Building Strategies"

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- Connecticut Water
- Regional Water Authority
- Aquarion Water Company
- The Metropolitan District
- Connecticut Conservation Districts
- US Environmental Protection Agency, “WaterSense"
- American Water Works Association, Connecticut Section

Why This Matters

Water is a precious natural resource. Connecticut typically receives ample precipitation, however, occasional droughts can have widespread impacts on water availability, which is especially detrimental for produce growers and thus availability of locally-grown food. Overuse of surface and groundwater systems can also stress aquatic environments.

Benefits

Water conservation preserves and protects water resources, keeping more water in reservoirs, streams, and rivers, thus supporting human health and aquatic habitats. Conservation also keeps aquifers charged, so more water is available during times of drought than otherwise would be available.

By making water conservation the norm, rather than an emergency response, you empower your community to survive, and even thrive in a time of drought.

CT Success Stories

- Windham - Sep 2023 Certification
- Bethel - Oct 2024 Certification
- Glastonbury - Oct 2024 Certification
- Greenwich - Oct 2024 Certification
- Stamford - May 2025 Certification
- Vernon - May 2025 Certification
- Stamford - Oct 2025 Certification