

43rd Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference Saturday, December 5, 2020

# "Promoting Conservation & Preserving Habitats During the COVID-19 Pandemic"

**ANNUAL REPORT & CONFERENCE BROCHURE** 



# Cover photo of amphibian eggs by Bolton Conservation Commission

# Connecticut Association of Conservation & Inland Wetlands Commissions (CACIWC)

# 43rd Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference

# "Promoting Conservation & Preserving Habitats During the COVID-19 Pandemic"

Saturday, December 5, 2020 (A Virtual Conference)

# Schedule for the Day

Welcome & Business Meeting	8:45-9:00 a.m.
Keynote Speaker	9:00-10:10 a.m.
Break 1	10:10-10:15 a.m.
Session 1 Workshops	10:15-11:25 a.m.
Break 2	11:25-11:30 a.m.
Session 2 Workshops	11:30 a.m12:40 p.m
Break 3	12:40-12:45 p.m.
Session 3 Workshops	12:45-1:00 p.m.
Conference Ends	1:00 p.m.

# Business Meeting Agenda

Introduction to the Virtual Conference Approval of Minutes – November 23, 2019 Annual Meeting Reports:

Treasurer's Annual Report FY 2019-2020 Budget FY 2020-2021 President's Report FY 2019-2020

**Old Business** 

**New Business** 

#### Keynote Presentation:

or our 2020 Annual Meeting and Environmental Conference, CACIWC has again scheduled our keynote speaker presentation at 9:00 a.m. immediately following 8:45 a.m. Business Meeting and before the workshop sessions. This will permit the conference to end at 1:00 p.m.

We are pleased to welcome Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Director Dr. Jason White to serve as our 2020 conference keynote speaker. His presentation is titled "Putting Science to Work for Society: Helping to Protect Connecticut's Environment During the Pandemic."

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) was established in 1875 and is the oldest agricultural experiment station in the United States. The institute is a relatively small but separate agency of the State of Connecticut. While the primary mission of the CAES is research, educational and outreach programs are also an important function of the agency. These programs help promote the use of new research findings to solve emerging agricultural, public health and environmental problems in Connecticut.

The identification and preservation of local woodlands and other important habitats are major goals of many municipal commissions. Unfortunately, these tracts are becoming increasingly susceptible to a range of threats including poorly regulated development, climate change impacts and newly emerging destructive invasive insects including the Asian longhorned beetle, Emerald ash borer, and Spotted lanternfly.

During his keynote presentation Dr. White will review

the many environmental research programs being conducted by the CAES to protect local habitats, including tracking invasive insect pests along with efforts to identify and newly emerging plant diseases. Use of Integrated Pest Management to control insect and plant diseases with minimum use of pesticides will be discussed. He will describe CAES



efforts that contribute to public health including surveillance of diseases transmitted by ticks and mosquitoes, such as Lyme disease, human babesiosis, West Nile disease, and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. He will also discuss research into novel and sustainable approaches to increase agricultural productivity to minimize food insecurity.

Recent CAES efforts to study an alternative surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 virus activity, in conjunction with Yale University School of Public Health, will be described. Dr. White will also discuss how Connecticut conservation commissions can contribute to important environmental research even during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

## About Our Speaker:

#### Jason C. White, PhD

Dr. Jason White is the Director of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), the oldest Agricultural Experiment Station in the country. In addition to managing the agency budget of \$12.5 million and approximately 100 scientific staff, Dr. White oversees a research program of \$5.1 million in competitive funding/research. He also serves as the Managing Editor for the International Journal of Phytoremediation and sits on the editorial boards of Environmental Pollution and NanoImpact as well as the Editorial Advisory Boards of Environmental Science & Technology and Environmental Science & Technology Letters. Dr. White is the Immediate Past President of the International Phytotechnology Society. His primary research program focuses food safety and security, with specific interests on the impact of nanomaterials on agricultural plants and on the use of nanotechnology to sustainably increase food production and promote global food security. Dr. White received his Ph.D. in Environmental Toxicology from Cornell University in 1997 and has secondary appointments at the Harvard University TH Chan School of Public Health, the University of Texas-El Paso, the University of Massachusetts, and Post University. He has published approximately 240 scientific papers that have been cited 11,991 times, as well as authoring eight book chapters. Jason lives in Prospect Connecticut with his wife Michelle and six children.



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### Workshop Schedule

	Session 1 (10:15-11:25)	Session 2 (11:30-12:40)	Session 3 (12:45-1:00)
Track A For our Connecticut Conservation Commissions	Workshop A1: Updates from the CIPWG	Workshop A2: Understanding CT State Water Plan	Workshop A3: Ecotype Plants — Why the Local Seed Matters and What Conservation Measures Can Help
Track B For our Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commissions	Workshop B1: Wetlands Law — The Decade in Review	Workshop B2: 2020 Wetlands Law & Regulations Update with Q&A	

#### ■ Session 1 (10:15-11:25 a.m.)

# A1. Updates from the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG)

- Charlotte Pyle, PhD, Co-chair, Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG)
- Rose Hiskes, MS, Co-chair, CIPWG & diagnostician with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES)
- Emmett Varricchio, Co-chair, CIPWG
- Bryan Connolly, PhD, Assistant Professor of Biology, Eastern Connecticut State University and CIPWG member
- Joshua Tracy, Invasive Species Management Technician and CIPWG member

In 1997, the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) formed as an ad hoc consortium of individuals hailing from environmental organizations, educational institutions, municipal and state agencies, NGOs, the green industry, garden clubs and the general public. Our mission is to promote awareness of invasive plants and the use of native or non-invasive ornamental alternatives. The working group collaborates and shares information on the presence, distribution, ecological impacts, and management of invasive plants affecting Connecticut and the region. CIPWG offers

technical advice to the State Invasive Plants Council and posts Council's information on the CIPWG website. Although CIPWG's website is housed at UConn, CIPWG is not an arm of UConn.

These updates will involve short presentations by five CIPWG members: Why keep working on invasive plants? (Charlotte Pyle); Porcelainberry update (Rose Hiskes); New invaders on the horizon (Bryan Connolly); Drones for mapping invasive plant infestations (Joshua Tracy); CIPWG's invasive plant management calendar (Emmett Varricchio); and New projects for CIPWG's Native Alternatives Subcommittee (Pyle).

# B1. Wetlands Law — The Decade in Review

- Janet Brooks, Attorney at Law, LLC
- Darcy Winther, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)

As we end the second decade of the 21st century, we will compare what occurred in the second decade with what happened in the first decade. We will also look at changes in the statute, regulations and developments in the case law. Agency permit denials overturned by the courts due to lack of substantial evidence, thorny exemptions – all the greatest hits of the 21st century!

#### ■ Session 2 (11:30 a.m.-12:40 p.m.)

# A2. Understanding Connecticut's State Water Plan

- Denise Savageau, Environmental Professional
- Louis Rosado Burch, Connecticut Program Director, Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE)

In 2019 the Connecticut General Assembly adopted the State Water Plan that was prepared by the Water Planning Council. This workshop will provide an overview of the Plan and our state's water resources, challenges for maintaining water quantity and quality in a changing climate, how the Plan is intended to protect and manage these critical resources including during periods of drought, and steps being taken now to implement the Plan. Included will be a discussion of the role of municipalities, including Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions, in implementation of the Plan.

# B2. 2020 Wetlands Law & Regulations Update with Question & Answer Session

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

These wetlands attorneys has been brought back again by popular demand to keep you current with the law. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic there are not legal cases from this year to review. Are you enjoying conducting virtual meetings as much as we enjoy attending them? Let's discuss! Come ready to pose questions as you try to stump the attorneys!

■ Session 3 (12:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m.)

# A3. Ecotype Plants — Why the Local Seed Matters and What Conservation Measures Can Help

• Darryl Newman, Co-Owner Planters' Choice Nursery

Darryl Newman of Planters' Choice Nursery will discuss why the Ecotype Project was created by the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut (CT NOFA) and their partners and how that relates to the importance of addressing a critical shortage of habitat and food for pollinators, which is caused by the disconnecting of pollinator corridors through development. A particular focus will be made on how initiatives of different scales can help move this important endeavor forward.

Darryl co-owns Planters' Choice alongside his father Chuck, the nursery's founder. He is a University of Maryland graduate with a degree in Landscape Management. He worked as a Project Manager for prominent landscape design/build firms in the Washington DC area before returning to Planters' Choice in 2004. Darryl is a Past President of the Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association and the 2019 Award of Merit Winner. Being blessed with an incredibly gifted and supportive staff who allows him enough time, he has given presentations for the New York Botanical Garden, UConn, Naugatuck Valley Community College, University of Maryland, CTASLA, CT Northeast Organic Farming Association, the Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association, the Connecticut Groundskeepers Association, the Connecticut Tree Protective Association, the Connecticut Urban Forest Council, the Connecticut Tree Wardens Association, the Connecticut Environmental Council, the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group and the Ecological Landscape Alliance.

# CACIWC 42nd Annual Meeting Minutes

November 23, 2019 Red Lion Hotel, Cromwell, CT

A lan Siniscalchi, President and Annual Meeting Chairman, convened the meeting at 8:45 a.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

Business Meeting: The meeting convened at 8:50 a.m.

**Approval of the November 17, 2018 Annual Meeting minutes:** Motion and second from the floor to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2018 Annual Meeting. The motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report & FY 2019-2020 Budget:** Charles Dimmick, Treasurer, reviewed the annual report and FY 2019/2020 budget included in the conference brochure.

**President's Report:** Alan Siniscalchi reviewed the President's Report included in the Conference Brochure.

Old Business: No discussion.

Election of Officers and Directors: The slate of proposed CACIWC Executive Board officers and County Representatives for 2019-2021 was provided for vote. Motion and second from the floor to approve the slate as proposed. The motion carried. The slate of officers and directors is approved as follows:

#### Officers:

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

**Directors:** 

Fairfield County Alicia Mozian, County Representative

Aleksandra Moch, Alternate

Hartford County Ann Beaudin, County Representative

Litchfield County Steven Wadelton, County Representative

Jeremy Leifer, Alternate

Middlesex County Marianne Corona, County Representative Mew Haven County Maria Kayne, County Representative Laura Magaraci, County Representative

**Tolland County** Rod Parlee, County Representative

#### **CACIWC Board of Directors Vacancies:**

Hartford CountyAlternate RepresentativeMiddlesex CountyAlternate RepresentativeNew Haven CountyAlternate RepresentativeTolland CountyAlternate Representative

Windham County County Representative & Alternate

Alternate-at-Large Two (2) Representatives

New Business: No discussion.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Maureen FitzGerald, CACIWC Secretary

# President's Report for the 2020 Annual Meeting and Environmental Conference

The year 2020 will long be remembered by everyone who experienced and survived it. Certainly, the COVID-19 pandemic has overwhelmed and significantly altered our lives here in Connecticut and throughout the world. While the impacts of the pandemic on our economy and social networks are unprecedented during the last century, other issues added to the challenges of this year, including severe weather patterns, new threats to our sensitive habitats and species, along with growing evidence of the adverse impacts of climate change. Increased awareness of profoundly disturbing examples of social and racial injustice also challenged us to bring new attention to environmental justice issues as being pursued by many Connecticut conservation commissions.

As we enter the last month of this challenging year, it is difficult to imagine the that just 12 months ago we were enjoying another in-person conference within a packed ballroom, breakout session rooms and buffet lines! 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 42nd Annual Meeting and Environmental Conference, which helped CACIWC begin Connecticut's celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day with their presentations, which will focus on our 2019 conference theme, Preserving Connecticut Habitats for Earth Day 50 and Beyond. The conference was held on Saturday, November 23, 2019 at the Red Lion Hotel Cromwell. This expansive facility again provided an excellent setting for our conference with its twelve workshops and extensive display areas. The CACIWC Board of Directors and its Annual Meeting Committee worked throughout 2019 to bring attendees a wide variety of informative workshops and exhibitors, while coordinating with our venue to provide you with a new display and refreshment layout.

CACIWC welcomed Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Commissioner Katie Dykes who served as our 2019 conference keynote speaker. Unfortunately, Lt. Governor Bysiewicz had to cancel due to a last-minute conflict but she sent her Senior Advisor, Jimmy Tickey, to greet our members and welcome attendees during the introductory remarks.

Katie Dykes, who was nominated by Governor Ned Lamont and confirmed on February 20, 2019, had wide range of public service to prepare her for her role as Commissioner of the Connecticut DEEP. Katie had previously served as Chair of the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) from 2015-2018, and as Deputy Commissioner for Energy at Connecticut DEEP from 2012-2015. Katie also served as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, Inc. (RGGI) from 2014 to 2017. RGGI is a multistate effort focused on reducing carbon emissions from electric generating facilities. Katie joined CT DEEP in March 2012 after prior service as Deputy General Counsel for the White House Council on Environmental Quality and as a Legal Advisor to the General Counsel for the U.S. Department of Energy. She is a graduate of Yale College and the Yale Law School.

During her presentation, Commissioner Dykes reviewed the five decades of progress on improving environmental protection and conservation in Connecticut



since the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. Her presentation highlighted the milestones of improving air and water quality along with important work on identifying and preserving endangered and threatened plant and animal species along with important habitats.

Commissioner Dykes also discussed various aspects of environmental protection and conservation which still require progress and the challenges of working to improve progress in these areas during periods accelerating climate change along with decreasing federal regulatory and fiscal support. She emphasized the value of long-established partnerships with our members commissions and importance of continuing these joint efforts into the future.

We continue to receive positive feedback on her presentation and generous question and answer session, which helped energize conference attendees to continue their important local efforts while supporting statewide efforts to continue progress in improving environmental quality and conservation in Connecticut.

Four newly revised workshop tracks were organized for the 2019 annual conference to highlight our conference theme of "Preserving Connecticut Habitats for Earth Day 50 & Beyond" with topics on Preserving our Forests and Their Habitats, Preserving our Wetlands & Watercourses, Preserving our Waterbodies & Aquatic Systems, and Preserving and Sustaining our Habitats. Individual workshops focused on Connecticut programs designed to monitor invasive pests, complex applications and use of fees and standards for experts, new science on climate change and the role of natural land stewardship, 2019 wetland law and regulation, coexisting black bears in Connecticut, working with other agencies to protect water systems, water quality standards and natural resource planning, Connecticut stream crossing best management practices and facilitating fish passage and stream connectivity, Sustainable CT initiatives in Connecticut communities, charting the course of Connecticut's marshlands in a rising seas, and mapping overview including FEMA maps.

One workshop, entitled "Charting the Course of Connecticut's Marshlands in a Rising Sea," was provided by Emily Wilson of the UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR). This workshop supported our conference theme by provided information on the potential impacts of our changing climate on our critical coastal marshland habitats.

Another workshop, entitled "Coexisting with Wildlife: Black bears in Connecticut: When, Where, and How Many," attracted a large audience with this very popular topic, often suggested by our members. In this workshop, UConn Professor Tracy Rittenhouse reviewed the results of a study of the

continued next page

#### President's Report (continued)

increasing and expanding black bear population conducted in Connecticut which found that bear population density is explained by human housing density, not natural habitat features and generally predicted. Wildlife ecologist and President of the Connecticut Wildlife Rehabilitation Association Laura Simon discussed approaches for bear control emphasizing the value of educated co-existence.

Our conference venue supported layout of informative displays in an arrangement adjacent to our workshop rooms. The responses from our conference survey revealed a strong appreciation for the networking opportunity provided by these adjacent display and break areas. With continued mask use and social distancing, together with the expected widespread distribution of various COVID-19 vaccines, we hopefully will return to a post-pandemic in-person conference!

During 2019 conference, we elected the nominated **CACIWC Board of Directors** who began the first year of its two-year term during 2020. Our board, headed by fellow executive board members Vice President Peter Bassermann, Secretary Maureen FitzGerald, and Treasurer Charles Dimmick. Other 2019-21 Board of Directors also included returning members, Ann Beaudin, Marianne Corona, Maria Kayne, Jeremy Leifert, Laura Magaraci, Aleksandra Moch, Alicia Mozian, Rod Parlee, and Stephen Wadelton. During 2019, we reluctantly accepted the resignation of Meghan Lally and Marla Butts from our board. Fortunately, we were able to recruit two new members, Kristen Jabanoski and Abby Conroy, to join our board during 2020. Ms. Jabanoski is now serving as our Alternative New Haven County Representative and Ms. Conroy is serving as Alternate at Large Representative. At the conference, we noted that several board vacancies remain unfilled. We again thank all past board members and staff for their work on behalf of CACIWC and our membership.

The CACIWC Annual Meeting Committee and the entire Board of Directors extend our appreciation to all of you who are in virtual attendance here today. The committee has worked with our consultants to recruit informative speakers and exhibitors, refined our on-line registration and payment options and expanded publicity of our conference. We hope that these efforts will make this year's conference experience more valuable to you.

Even with these continuingly 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.

Throughout 2020, the board has continued its other efforts to provide **information and outreach support** to commission members and staff through our website CACIWC.org and our quarterly publication *The Habitat*, which until 2016 were published under the direction of Editor and former President Tom ODell and Associate Editor and former Executive Director Ann Letendre. Other municipal commission and environmental **advocacy efforts** were pursued in conjunction with various partner organizations.

During 2020, we continued the process of reviewing 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 worked throughout the year to continue to improve our final financial records using a more accessible electronic system that allows easily prepare reports and review the status of various fiscal categories. During 2021, we will provide you with additional updates on this important process.

The board also continues to review progress toward achieving the all the goals of our current strategic plan in the context of our organizational mission. We will be sharing progress on the development of these new goals and objectives during 2021 in upcoming issues of *The Habitat*.

We thank those of you who reached out to us during 2020 and provided us with important information to help guide our efforts. We remain committed to continue 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 2021, we anticipate that ongoing pandemic will 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 continue 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 43rd CACIWC Annual Meeting and Environmental Conference, CACIWC is proud to host an exciting opening session, as we welcome Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) Director Dr. Jason White to serve as our 2020 conference keynote speaker. In his keynote address, entitled Putting Science to Work for Society: Helping to Protect Connecticut's Environment During the Pandemic Dr. White will focus on our 2020 conference theme, Promoting Conservation & Preserving Habitats During the COVID-19 Pandemic. He will review the many environmental research programs being conducted by the CAES to protect local habitats, including tracking invasive insect pests along with efforts to identify and newly emerging plant diseases. We look forward to receiving your feedback on, what we expect to be most informative discussion.

I know that I speak for the entire CACIWC Board of Directors in welcoming you to today's 2020 Annual Meeting and Environmental Conference for our first *virtual* conference in the history of CACIWC. As an epidemiologist and member of our State's COVID-19 response team with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, I am indebted to all of you who continue to practice social distancing while indoors or outside on your local hiking trail. We hear and appreciate the efforts of many of you who also volunteered to help your community through the many challenges of the 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 during 2021.

— Alan J. Siniscalchi, President

# Connecticut Association of Conservation & Inland Wetland Commissions Treasurer's Report & Budget: FY 2019-2020

	Budget(\$) FY '19-20	Actual(\$) FY '19-20	Budget(\$) FY '20-21
INCOME			
Membership Dues	11,700.00	11,665.74	10,750.00
Habitat – Advertising Sponsorship	6,500.00	2,035.00	4,000.00
Contributions	4,000.00	900.00	2,000.00
Interest/Reimbursements	6.00	8.95	8.00
Annual Meeting Income	22,000.00	28,400.79	4,500.00
CACIWC Publication Sales	100.00	0.00	0.00
Grant Income	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL INCOME	44,306.00	43,010.48	21,258.00
EXPENSES			
Education & Information			
Newsletter – <i>Habitat</i>			
Layout, type, edit, graphics	2,900.00	708.75	2,500.00
Printing, collate, staple	4,000.00	1,292.03	3,000.00
Mailing – labels, service, postage	2,650.00	713.86	2,100.00
Habitat – Advertising Manager	2,900.00		1,600.00
Website – administration, server fees	850.00		850.00
Listserve Management	200.00	236.25	200.00
Board Development	200.00		200.00
Workshops	0.00	200.00	200.00
Other Organization Support	300.00	300.00	300.00
IWC & CC Educ & Information	400.00		400.00
Subtotal	14,350.00	3,250.89	11,050.00
Administration and Operations			
Administrative Support – Memb DB Mgt		278.25	600.00
Administrative (other)	50.00		50.00
Bookkeeping Service	400.00	530.25	500.00
Office Rental (DeKoven House)	1,932.00	1,932.00	1,932.00
Office Equipment/Furniture	0.00		50.00
Postage/Supplies	50.00	550.00	50.00
Insurance	550.00	550.00	550.00
Auditor/Accountant	12.00	12.66	15.00
Fees/Taxes Refunds	12.00	12.66	15.00
	50.00		
Legislative Action  Annual Meeting Expenses	24,000.00	29,736.15	5.500.00
Subtotal	27,644.00	<u>32,500.11</u>	9,297.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	41,944.00	35,751.20	20,347.00
GAIN/(loss)	2,312.00	7,259.28	911.00

# 43rd Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference Sponsors



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Connecticut Land Conservation Council
Maureen FitzGerald, CACIWC
Maria Kayne, CACIWC
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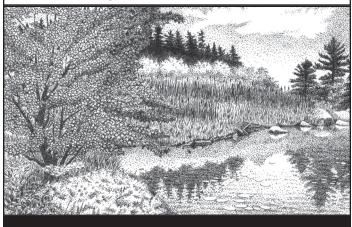
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