

Town of Montville Drought Communications Plan 2021

(To be reviewed no less than every 3 years)

Reviewed and revised by WPCA Superintendent on July 13, 2022

Montville property owners receive their water through water provided by the Groton Utilities (GU). The Town's communication policy regarding water and drought conditions is guided by best practices for users and guidelines provided by GU and the WPCA. The Montville Drought Communications Policy is designed to keep the community apprised of low water levels and drought conditions, and to educate property owners on water conservation best practices.

Drought Definition

A drought is a prolonged period of abnormally low precipitation, often combined with abnormally high evaporation that adversely affects the water resources of a given geographic area. It is not typically a distinct event that has a clearly defined beginning and end (such as a storm); nor does it affect all water resources or users equally. The WPCA Superintendent is the *Municipal Drought Coordinator* and provides information to the Town via the WPCA website.

Objectives

1. Maintain effective and timely communications with the Montville community as it pertains to water supply and drought conditions, including both voluntary and mandatory restrictions.
2. Ensure local residents and businesses are informed of low water volumes and drought conditions in the local drinking water bodies.
3. Promote and advocate water conservation activities among Montville property owners.
4. Leverage effective platforms to relay water supply levels, drought conditions, water conservation resources, and Town water conservation efforts to the public.

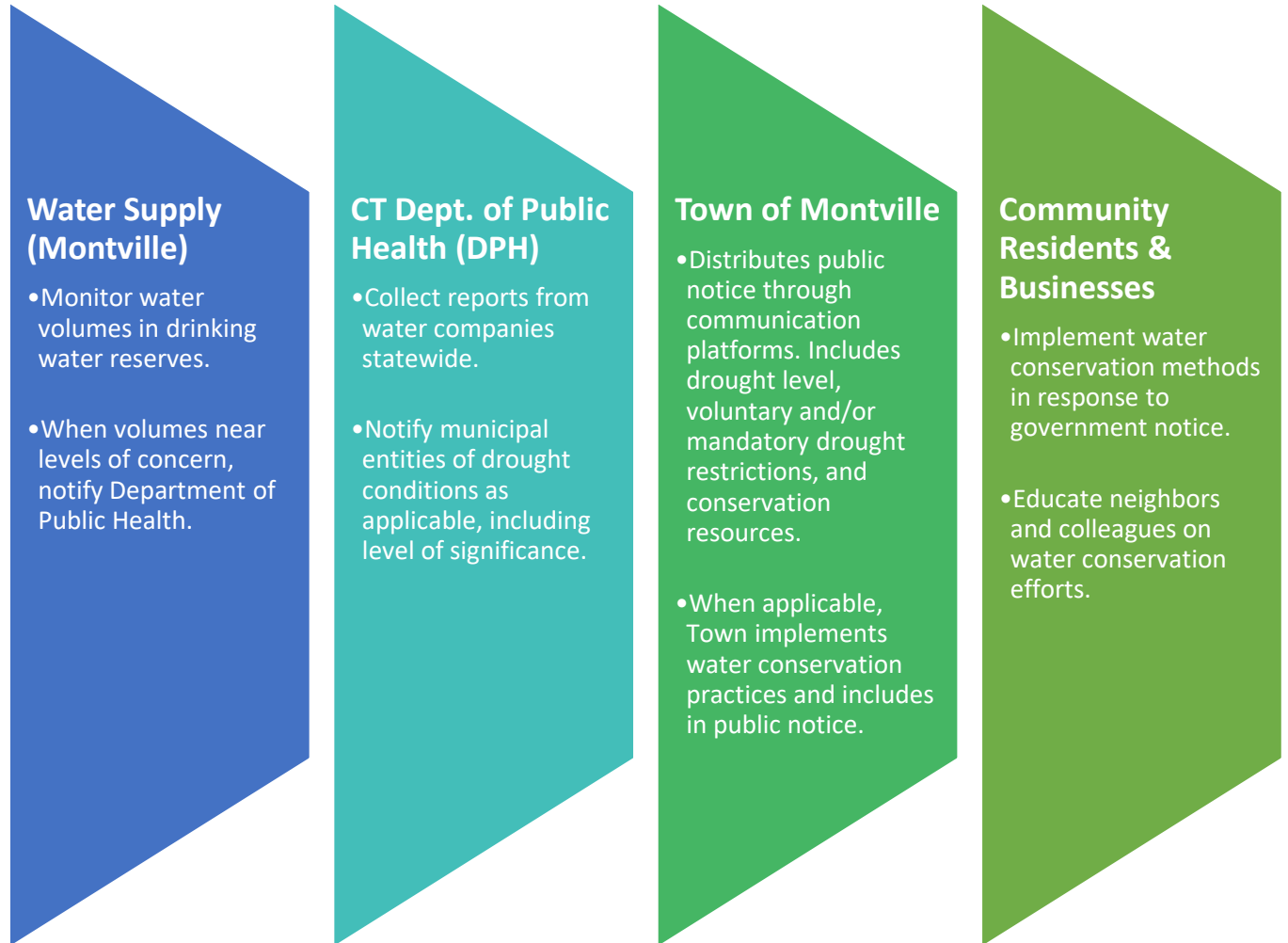
Audience

The primary audience is the Montville Town Offices, property owners, including local farmers and businesses. Local interest groups include, but are not limited to other water supplies within the town.

Communication Platforms

- WPCA website –dedicated website pages/resources
- Monthly newsletters and timely eNotifications (Subscription-based email notification system)
- Facebook – Town-managed pages and community group pages
- Local Media Outlets – Montville Citizen, Courant, CT River Valley Chamber of Commerce, The Scoop, Montville Newcomers and Neighbors– For use in emergency situations only
- Mailers and Public Reports (e.g. summer tax bill mailings, annual reports) – For use in emergency situations only
- Direct mailers (drought conditions only) – For use in emergency situations only
- Everbridge – Reverse 911 notification system– For use in emergency situations only

Process and Players



The WPCA Superintendent is the Municipal Drought Coordinator and provides information to the Town via the WPCA website. As such, communication is ongoing from the State about current drought conditions (if present). Drinking water sources in New London County are managed by several companies (including GU; the supplier of water to the Montville Water Supply) who evaluate and report on their respective water volume and conditions on an ongoing basis. When water volumes are low, the water companies relay the information to the CT Department of Public Health (DPH), who in turn, communicates water level status to the local governments. The Uncas Health District receives such updates from the CT DPH, and forwards to the Town of Montville. The WPCA disseminates the current water conditions, water conservation resources, and voluntary and/or mandatory drought restrictions through the Town website, eNotification (email) system, and Facebook. Notices are also distributed to the local media outlets including the New London Day, and others as needed. When drought conditions and/or mandatory drought restrictions exist, additional platforms may be used to ensure all residents are apprised of the water supply status. Updates are continuously relayed to the public through this process as they become available and a dedicated website page is established for a summary of how the situation has progressed or changed between the time the Town received its initial notice, and the date

of the most recent update. This process continues until the Town receives notice that water availability has returned to desired levels, and/or any mandatory or voluntary drought restrictions have been lifted. At that time, the WPCA distributes a final update, notifying the public of the resolved status. In addition to these situational updates, Montville maintains a number of water conservation resources on their website, which are updated by the Superintendent as needed.

Municipal Water Conservation Practices

The Montville WPCA web page has specific information regarding water conservation measures.

The Montville WS works with the Connecticut Interagency Drought Workgroup to issue Stage Alerts under the Connecticut Drought Preparedness and Response Plan for dry conditions in New London County.

Water audits (bought versus sold water) are conducted with results showing a tight system with little unaccounted for water.

Conservation of water can ensure that supplies of fresh water will be available for everyone, today and tomorrow. Water conservation involves changing habits. Since many of these habits have evolved over a lifetime, they can prove difficult to alter. People can become active in conserving water by starting simply, then gradually taking more advanced steps to reduce water consumption. The simplest habits involve turning off water whenever it is not being used. When water is needed for rinsing dishes, it can be held in a sink rather than allowing it to flow unused down the drain

An individual may simply use less water. For example, some people use a hose to “sweep” sidewalks, when a broom works well. People can shorten their shower times or reduce the amount of water they use when bathing.

Other conservation methods may initially require more effort and funds, but in the long run will save money and resources. For example, households can install low-flow showerheads with smaller holes that reduce water flow and increase pressure. A capped bottle weighted with stones takes up space in a toilet tank, reducing the amount of water available to flush down the drain.

1. Use a broom instead of a hose to sweep sidewalks and driveways.
2. When washing the car, use a hose with an on/ off nozzle or use buckets of rinse water.
3. Water lawns in the mornings or evenings when water will not evaporate as quickly. Make sure the water lands on vegetation and not on streets or sidewalks. If possible, save rainwater for watering lawns.
4. If you need to run water before it becomes hot, store the cool running water in a bottle for use in rinsing dishes, and washing vegetables and hands.
5. Turn off the water when it is not in use. Don't leave it running when brushing teeth. Turn off the water between soaps and rinses when washing hands.
6. Run the dishwasher or washing machine only with a full load.
7. Install a low-flow showerhead.
8. Turn off the water when it is not in use. Don't leave it running when brushing teeth. Turn off the water between soaps and rinses when washing hands.
9. Run the dishwasher or washing machine only with a full load.
10. Keep a bottle of cold drinking water in the refrigerator instead of running water until it becomes cool.

5. When washing dishes by hand, use a sink full of rinse water rather than letting the water run. 11. Limit shower time to 5 minutes or less.

6. Fix leaks! 12. Take showers instead of baths.

Public Drought Resources

- [CT Department of Public Health Drinking Water Division](#)
- [CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection \(DEEP\)](#)
- WPCA Website – <http://www.montvillewpc.com>

** The POCD was last updated in 2018 for a 10 year planning period*

Municipal Website Information – Hyperlinks and Screenshots

The Town has a dedicated page on its website titled “Water Conservation and Drought” where it lists drought resources and posts drought advisories and guidance as applicable. [Please click here to view the web page](#). A screenshot of the page is also provided below per SCT request (see first screenshot below).

The Town also has a web page dedicated to Utilities, which is available here: [Utility Services | Montville, CT \(Montvillect.gov\)](#). See second screenshot below.