

Mount Hope Bay Geographic Response Plan (GRP) Project Review Meeting

December 5, 2012 9:00 am
Fall River EOC, Fall River, Massachusetts

Attendees

Kira Adams – USCG, Sector SENE
Rachel Calabro – Save The Bay
John Duponte – Moran Environmental
Patrick Grady – Massachusetts Environmental Police
Mike LePage – Fall River Fire
Kenneth Lima – Fall River Fire
George Sampson – USCG, Sector SENE
Rich Packard – MassDEP
Mike Popovich – Nuka Research
Sanne Schneider – Nuka Research
Mike Whiteside - MassDEP

Introduction & Opening Comments

Rich Packard of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection introduced himself to the group and thanked them for attending the final meeting of the Mt. Hope Bay Geographic Response Plan Project. He emphasized that the group's input and efforts are what makes these documents successful and noted that there will be continual testing of the GRPs and training of first responders. This process will help to determine what changes (if any) are necessary. He then introduced Mike Popovich of Nuka Research and Planning Group.

Activities Since Last Meeting

Popovich thanked the work group for coming and advised them that the review of oil spill response tactics on the agenda would not be necessary, due to the fact that it was covered in prior meetings which all the members present had attended. He reviewed the timeline of the project, noting that it was almost six months to the day since the first meeting. The work group was formed in June and since then has prioritized sites during the site selection meeting, chosen 22 sites, and completed three days of site surveys.

Nuka Research developed the GRPs and then met with the Tactics sub-group to review, develop, and assign strategies for each site. The 22 original site were incorporated into larger areas and resulted in 12 draft GRPs, with only the deletion of a couple of sites which weren't practical or feasible to protect. The 12 draft GRPs will be reviewed further by the group, changes made, then presented to the Area Committee in January and subsequently published in the ACP. Popovich reiterated Packard's statement of continuing to test and adapt the GRPs as needed through the MassDEP GRP Testing Program. Popovich told the group that the project website will be updated with a single map showing all the GRP sites in Massachusetts and the final copies of the GRPs will available to download.

He invited the group to familiarize themselves with the layout of the GRPs: the map itself on page one, the location and description of each tactic, the response strategy, and implementation on page two, the response resources needed, the staging area and site access, the resources to be protected and any special considerations on page three, and pictures and contact information on page four. Popovich noted that the SSM (site selection matrix) was used to identify resources needing protection, which then helped the tactics sub-group determine which strategies to use in what location. The SSMs, developed by the ESI maps are the standard method used to identify sensitive resources throughout the state. He then introduced Chief Sampson of the United States Coast Guard, Sector Southeast New England.

Incorporation of the GRPs Into the Area Plan

Chief Sampson gave a brief history of the events and acts leading up to the establishment of Area Committees and the Area Contingency Plan(s). The Area Committee is made up of experienced environmental response representatives from federal, state, local and tribal government agencies and the Area Contingency Plan (ACP) is a strictly formatted document that provides the Area Committee and the entire response community with vital information and tools to aid in effectively responding to oil spills and hazardous material incidents. . GRPs are incorporated into ACPs and complete sets of Massachusetts GRPs for the South Shore, Cape and Islands, and Buzzards Bay are already incorporated into the Rhode Island and Southeastern New England ACP within the appendices. Sampson noted that the GRPs allow the stakeholders to communicate strategies more effectively. Having created GRPs prior to an event helps in decreasing time spent making decisions, offers access to pretested tactics, aids in equipment resource management during a response, and pre-identifies collection points. As an aside, he mentioned that the largest spill in southeastern New England was the Argo Merchant, which spilled eight million gallons in 1976, 25 miles southeast of Nantucket. In 1989 there was a spill of 290,000 gallons from the World Prodigy outside Newport Harbor that affected Mt. Hope Bay.

Chief Sampson encouraged the group to attend an Area Committee Meeting, which are held three times a year. The next will be on 3 January 2013 at the UMASS Dartmouth ATMC Campus in Fall River. Subsequent meetings will be in May and September of 2013. He noted that anyone can access the ACPs through the Homeport website, which also contains other pertinent USCG information. Packard said that the link on the Homeport website will send you to the project website, where the GRPs are available to download in PDF format.

Review and Comments on Draft GRPs

Chief Sampson relinquished the floor to Popovich, who asked the group to review the 12 GRPs together, offering up any corrections or suggestions. He began by saying that on the final copies the maps will be resized to fill the first page.

Site Review:

MHB-01 - Lower Cole River: Tactic DV-01 was tested in 2011 and it was effective despite the strong current, but the shore side recovery (SR) will be shifted from where it

is now to the Swansea Town Beach parking lot. Popovich stated that we can depict the current on the GRP. Kenneth Lima (Fall River Fire) noted that the GRP doesn't say which communities should offer mutual aid, and Popovich referenced the first page of the GRP that indicates how many response trailers are needed to deploy the tactics. Packard commented saying we can add "Consider mutual aid as needed" and also link to the mutual aid policy on the MassDEP website. Lt. LePage (Fall River Fire) asked whose decision it would be to request additional resources. Packard stated that typical mutual aid channels should be used in the case of a small event (one other community being affected), but that in the case of a larger event, the town would make the request through Unified Command.

MHB-02 - Upper Coles River: The boom color will be changed to blue for an ebb tide, on tactics DV-01b and DV-01d. SR areas will be noted but there are options for either side of the bridge/overpass. A new way to depict culverts will be explored because there are so many, so as not to overburden the map. As an aside, LePage asked if the trailers included release valves for the culvert blocks. Both John Duponte (Moran Environmental) and Packard answered in the negative. Kira Adams (USCG) asked if all the trailers are standard and Packard explained that a few communities have smaller trailers with 500 ft. of boom instead of 1000 ft. and Boston has 16 ft. trailers, for maneuverability in the city. Packard suggested putting a link on the GRPs to the MassDEP website which indicates the location and size of each trailer. Popovich will look into that. He also asked the group to review the SSM, which could be changed if additional resources are noted. Rachel Calabro (Save The Bay) offered their general contact number (401-372-3540) and will give Popovich the Bay Keeper's cell phone number to add to the contact list for the Coles River.

MHB-03 - Fox Hill Cove: Lima asked who should be contacted in case of contaminated birds/wildlife. Packard replied that as soon as Unified Command is set up there is a number for the public to call regarding oiled wildlife. Popovich asked who the communities could call prior to that and Packard suggested Massachusetts Audubon, MassDEP, or Fish & Wildlife, to which Popovich added MEMA. Adams suggested replacing the 866 contact number for the USCG with the local 508 number. Packard suggested adding Somerset Fire and Harbormaster to this map since one side of the river is Somerset and the other is Swansea.

MHB-04 - Lee River: Packard suggested using sorbent boom (noted as PR) on the little inlet to the east and labeling Rte. 6 at the top of the map. The group agreed to delete or update the photo of the Wilbur Ave. Bridge because it is out of date.

MHB-05 - Fall River Waterfront: Lima asked how the state pier was to be protected, which was brought up at the tactics meeting. LePage said he would check with the State Pier to determine if they have spill response equipment that they can use. Popovich said that he can add Passive Recovery (PR icon, sorbent boom) to the map, and note that this GRP has been tested already. He will also move the boat ramp symbol and emphasize the Quequechan River. Although it is only exposed briefly, it runs under the city and feeds out here. Popovich will add an EX array at the mouth.

MHB-06 - Breeds/Weavers Cove: Popovich will remove the pump station icon in the legend because Calabro said that it is a sewage pump station. He will also change the first leg of DV-01a so it is dashed. Calabro mentioned that the shoreline might change because the old power plant may be demolished and an aquaculture area established. Packard asked if there was access from the Shell Station and was told that although there is no parking area, boom could be pulled off the beach. He suggested noting it as a staging area. Popovich will change EX-02 to PR to protect the small area of salt marsh, and will switch the directions on page three and the picture caption on the top right. LePage suggested using 508.675.7411, which is the dispatch number for Fall River Fire, on all maps.

MHB-07 - Pierce Beach: Calabro noted the name of the brook is Labor-In -Vain Brook and that there are culverts. Popovich said he will add PR and also pointed out the mosquito ditches to the group. Calabro suggested adding shore and sea birds in the Resources To Be Protected section and asked who would decide if the beaches needed to be closed. Packard replied that was not in the MassDEP's purview. Popovich will also add a Staging Area to the parking lot above the beach and Somerset Boat Ramp icon (northern point on map). LePage asked a general question about how oil acts with ice. Both Packard and Popovich replied that oil can splash over and go under ice.

MHB-08 - Barnaby's Point: LePage asked how much sorbent boom is in each trailer, to which Packard and Duponte replied 80 ft, but that it is not marked on the outside packages how much is in each. Popovich will note the option of using PR on EX-02a instead of EX boom.

MHB-09 - Assonet River: Tactics DF-02a/b will be marked in blue for an ebb tide. Packard asked about potential staging areas and the group noted a staging area near Conspiracy Island, close to the SR icon on the map, which Popovich will add.

MHB-10 - Dighton Rock/Grassy Island: Packard suggested noting PR as an option to an EX tactic. Popovich will add PR to the little creek on the eastern side, below EX-01d.

MHB-11 - Dighton/Berkley Bridge: Popovich will have the GIS specialist change DF-01 so it doesn't appear as if it attaches to the bridge. Packard asked the group if they could identify a staging area, which they did and Popovich will add, below the Dighton/Berkley Bridge, on the eastern shore.

MHB-12 - Assonet Bay: Calabro gave the names of the cove and brook (Paine's Cove & Rattlesnake Brook), which Popovich will add to the map. She also suggested adding the Diamondback Terrapin to the list of Sensitive Resources for this area. The group suggested a possible staging area at Hathaway Park, where the town boat ramp is and where SR is already indicated. Popovich will add Staging Area icon to map.

Final Review and Adoption of GRPs

Packard and Popovich will present the Mt Hope Bay Geographic Response Plans to the Area Committee on January 3, 2013 for approval and adoption into the ACP.

Review Action Items

Popovich will make the recommended changes to the sites and create the final draft of the Geographic Response Plans. Boom lengths will be noted on all the GRPs.

Timeline

Initial meeting – 6/6/2012

Site Selection/Sensitivity Planning Meeting – 06/26/12

Site surveys – July

Tactics Review Meeting – 09/27/12

Draft GRP tactics – October

Open Comments close – December 19, 2012

Review/finalization of GRPs –December

Present GRPs to Area Committee for Adoption into ACP – January 3, 2013

Adjourn

Popovich and Packard thanked the group for coming and sharing their knowledge and expertise to help make this project a success. Packard will try to get the MassDEP website updated and get the link to the work group for informational purposes.