

MEETING SUMMARY



Geographic Response Strategy Development - Meduxnekeag River, ME

Final Work Group Meeting/ GRS Review

Wednesday, August 9, 2023: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Held via Zoom Video Conference

Project Overview

Nuka Research and Planning Group, LLC has been contracted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 1 to develop six (6) Geographic Response Strategies, or GRS, for the Meduxnekeag River in Maine. GRS are map-based plans tailored to protect specific and sensitive areas from oil spill impacts. Members of the workgroup represent state and federal agencies, local governments and tribal organizations, stakeholder groups, and spill response professionals. This project will be completed in August 2023.

Purpose

This meeting served as a final review of the draft GRS documents developed subsequent to the site surveys conducted on June 7th, 2023. Workgroup members reviewed the draft GRS and recommended changes and edits.

Participants

Jesse Clarke , Maine Department of Environmental Protection	Karen Way, Ila White , U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 1
Sharri Venno , Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians	Mike Popovich, Sam Butler, Haley Griffin, Olivia Norton , Nuka Research

Introduction and Opening Comments

Sam Butler (Nuka Research) opened the meeting by thanking the participants for attending and for their engagement up to this stage in the project. He briefly explained the project's milestones and objectives, then provided an overview of the process for reviewing and finalizing each GRS. On August 16th, at the conclusion of the post-review comment period, Nuka Research will deliver the final GRS documents and all associated GIS data to EPA Region 1. These GRS will then be integrated into the inland Area Contingency Plan (ACP) and available on the Federal Region 1 Regional Response Team (RRT1) website (https://nrt.org/site/doc_list.aspx?site_id=38).

Karen Way (EPA) also thanked the group for their participation and valuable input throughout the project.

Project/Tactic Review Process Overview

Sam noted that the final delivery of GRS/GIS materials will consist of 6 GRS sites along the Meduxnekeag River. Sam then explained that the GRS Site IDs include identifiers for the river (MX), state (ME), and a GRS-specific number identifier (01-06). Sam also noted that some GRS site maps include a purple GIS overlay, which is used to identify the boundaries of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indian Tribal land parcels.

MEETING SUMMARY



Sam completed his introduction to the group by providing a brief overview of GRS maps by page, with pg. 1 including the tactics map and recommended equipment needs, pg. 2 including tables showing additional information to successfully deploy each tactic, and pg. 3 including representative photographs of each GRS site and a contacts list. He then presented the final GRS drafts to the group for review. Comments and changes resulting from this review are listed below.

Meduxnekeag River Draft GRS Review Comments

- **MX-ME-01 - Houlton West:** Mike Popovich thanked Sharri Venno and her team for providing additional photographs and feedback to inform the development of MX-ME-01, since the project team was unable to visit this location during the site surveys. Mike also described the intention of the DV01b alt tactic as an alternative to the DV01b tactic, identifying that it is meant to be deployed in place of DV01b if on-scene conditions and factors warrant this adjustment. Mike then asked the group if they preferred the DV01b alt to remain depicted on the map (as is) or instead as an inset map overlaid on top of the original tactics map. Jesse Clarke commented that an inset map may not be needed for this GRS, and it is fine as is. Sharri mentioned that she wasn't sure who owned the vehicle access road depicted on the map (immediately west of and parallel to the rail line) but believes it is owned by the Town of Houlton. Mike also mentioned the gated property north of Smyrna St and along the east bank of Captain Ambrose Bear Stream and the site of the DV01a tactic; suggesting that information be included in the "Special Considerations" section of the GRS to identify access details or issues (i.e., requirements to contact the property owner to gain access). Sharri also questioned whether the boom placement on the upstream side of the bridge and railroad would be effective in diverting oil in the event of a spill occurring from the railroad or the overpass just north of each deployment location. Mike clarified that these strategies were placed here based on the feasibility of first responders accessing these areas. Mike also clarified that the tactics on this GRS are designed to divert and collect oil from spills occurring further upriver on the Meduxnekeag and upstream on Captain Ambrose Bear Stream. He stated that any spills occurring at the rail bridge that crosses the Meduxnekeag River at this location, or from other sources in or near downtown Houlton can be addressed using the other five GRS further downstream.
- **MX-ME-02 - Houlton Riverfront:** No comments.
- **MX-ME-03 - Houlton Wastewater Treatment Plant:** Jesse Clarke stated that Maine DEP has a good relationship with the Houlton Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and that access will rarely be an issue. He also stated that although the Treatment Plant isn't open 24 hours a day, someone is always available and within 10 minutes from this location to assist responders with gaining access to the facility if necessary.

MEETING SUMMARY



- **MX-ME-04 - Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians Tribal Land South:** Sharri Venno stated that the Maliseet Tribe owns additional land further north of the purple GIS layer highlighted on the GRS map, and that she can provide Nuka Research with the updated shapefile including all of the GIS parcels identifying land owned by the Tribe. Sharri then asked whether responders will be directed to access each GRS tactic via the farm road instead of Athletic Field Rd. Mike clarified that either road can be used as an access point. Jesse also noted that since the farm road isn't fully maintained, access to the DV02 tactic may be challenging. Jesse also mentioned that ME DEP may be able to obtain additional equipment to improve its internal capabilities to safely access both areas and enable the concurrent deployment of both tactics.
- **MX-ME-05 - Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians Tribal Land/Lowry Rd Bridge:** No comments.
- **MX-ME-06 - Littleton/Framingham Rd Bridge:** No comments. Mike noted that the picture used in the GRS tactics map will be replaced with an updated screenshot showing that the covered bridge is no longer there.

GRS Development Process & Project Timeline

At the conclusion of the GRS Review, Sam indicated that additional feedback is welcome until the post-review comment deadline of **August 16th, 2023**, when the EPA Region 1 and Nuka Research will finalize each document and post them on the RRT1 website for public access. These documents will also be incorporated into the Inland ACP. Sam also mentioned that Nuka Research will be presenting these GRS at an Area Committee Meeting (ACM) in the Fall.

Final Comments and Suggestions

Sharri Venno stated that she is still working to compile Houlton Maliseet Tribe Point(s) of Contact for inclusion in the GRS contacts page (pg. 3). Mike asked Sharri if there was a mechanism in place for notifying the tribe of a spill, or if it was more appropriate to call the Houlton Police Department. Sharri deferred to Jesse for this information. Jesse stated that in response to a spill, Maine DEP is usually dispatched by the Houlton Police Department and, from there, DEP will then disseminate an internal Situational Report (SITREP) to engage a DEP on-call supervisor who will then notify the list of contacts included on the GRS. He stated that he wasn't sure if the preferred number for the Tribe had changed. Sharri confirmed she would provide the phone number, although it likely hasn't changed since it was last sent to DEP.

Sharri mentioned that the Houlton Maliseets have a Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and that she would need to talk to these colleagues to determine what information can and cannot be shared for the purposes of the public-facing GRS. Sam stated that he will be on standby for Sharri to send him an email with any contact information and tribal response procedures.

Karen Way thanked Sharri, Jesse, and the rest of the group for providing their local expertise and participation throughout the project. She also thanked Nuka Research for their assistance in facilitating the project. Mike thanked the group for participating in this meeting and throughout this project.

Sharri thanked the group for their help with the project as well. She asked the group to verify that the railroad does, on occasion, carry crude oil or other petroleum products through Houlton and the nearby project areas. Jesse confirmed that oil and propane is occasionally transported via the railroad. Sharri stated that the Tribe recently hired staff to track/investigate goods transported nearby via the

MEETING SUMMARY



railroad. Jesse cautioned that these risks do change often, based on the type of product being transported and the time of year.

Action Items

Nuka Research will:

- Post meeting summary on project website and accept feedback on each GRS until August 16th, 2023.
- Post materials from this meeting on the project website.
- Make edits identified during this final workgroup meeting to the draft tactic maps and GRS.
Note: Immediately following this meeting and based on the missing Houlton Maliseet Tribal Land Parcels noted during the review of the MX-ME-04 GRS, Nuka Research updated their GIS files to include all Houlton Maliseet Tribal Land Parcels so that all GRS maps will accurately reflect the extent of Houlton Maliseet Tribal Land.
- Finalize all Meduxnekeag River (MX) GRS documents and all GIS data and deliver to the US EPA.

Project Website: <https://www.inlandgrpne.com/meduxnekeag-river-me>

FOR ADDITIONAL PROJECT INFORMATION CONTACT:

KAREN WAY, U.S. EPA REGION 1: Way.Karen@epa.gov

MIKE POPOVICH, NUKA RESEARCH: popovich@nukaresearch.com

SAM BUTLER, NUKA RESEARCH: sam@nukaresearch.com