



<p><b>Geographic Response Plans for Blackstone and Pawtuxet – Rhode Island Project</b></p> <p><b>Site Selection Meeting Summary</b></p>	<p><b>February 12, 2018 – 1:00 - 4:00 PM</b></p> <p><b>RI DEM Office</b>  <b>235 Promenade Street</b>  <b>Suite 300</b>  <b>Providence, Rhode Island 02908</b></p>
<p>The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 1 is developing 10 Geographic Response Plans or GRPs, for the Blackstone and Pawtuxet Rivers in Rhode Island. GRPs are map-based plans tailored to protect specific sensitive areas from oil spill impacts. They show first responders where sensitive areas are located and where to place oil spill protection resources to protect those areas. GRPs can save time during the critical first few hours of an oil spill response.</p>	
<p>A Blackstone and Pawtuxet GRP Work Group consisting of Federal, State, and local environmental emergency response partners will identify the candidate area(s) for development of these GRPs. Members of the Work Group will represent state and federal agencies, local governments and organizations, stakeholder groups, the oil industry, and spill response professionals.</p>	
<p>This was the second meeting of the Rhode Island GRP Work Group. The purpose of this meeting was to review the preliminary Site Selection Matrix, examine candidate sites, develop additional information about resources at risk, spill threat, and site accessibility at each site, and select ten (10) sites for GRP development along the Blackstone and Pawtuxet Rivers. The workgroup identified six (6) GRPs to be developed on the Blackstone River, and Four (4) to be developed on the Pawtuxet River.</p>	
<p><b>Participants</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US EPA</li> <li>• City of Woonsocket</li> <li>• Moran Environmental Recovery</li> <li>• Nuka Research</li> <li>• RI DEM</li> <li>• Providence Emergency Management Agency</li> <li>• Save the Bay</li> <li>• Pawtucket Central Falls Emergency Management Agency</li> </ul> <p>For a complete list of participants, contact Alyssa Hall at <a href="mailto:alyssa@nukaresearch.com">alyssa@nukaresearch.com</a> or Mike Popovich at <a href="mailto:Popovich@nukaresearch.com">Popovich@nukaresearch.com</a>.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda</b></p>	
<p><b>Introduction and Opening Comments:</b> Mike Popovich (Nuka Research) opened the meeting by thanking the participants for attending the site selection meeting and reiterating that this meeting is a crucial part of the process as the group will decide where the GRPs will be developed on the rivers. James Carew (EPA) noted the importance of including local knowledge into this part of the process in order to deliver meaningful products.</p>	
<p><b>Project/Site Selection Process Overview:</b> Mike Popovich then reviewed the drafted site selection matrix (SSM) for the Blackstone and Pawtuxet Rivers, and discussed the different variables that were relevant to the sites, including sensitive habitats, historical sites, conservation areas, and spill risk. He reviewed the process of using the SSM and that the workgroup can use it to provide context to support their local knowledge while making the decisions of where to develop GRPs.</p>	
<p><b>Review of Site Selection Delineation, Priorities &amp; Resources at Risk:</b> The floor was opened to a general group discussion to identify, prioritize and select sites for GRP development. The group focused on those river areas where there is both a risk of oil spills and where there is access to the rivers themselves. The sites were decided upon as follows:</p>	
<p><b>NOTE: All current GRP names are tentative and subject to change up to the conclusion of the final work group meeting</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Blackstone River Sites:</b></li> </ol>	



**BR-01 West Woonsocket and BR-02 East Woonsocket:**

Woonsocket was initially identified as a single GRP site with the expectation that multiple maps would be created to cover the entire area. Further discussion led to the decision to create two separate GRPs for the Woonsocket area. These GRP's will cut Woonsocket in half and cover the risks from a release in Massachusetts. One of the GRPs will focus on the area around Cold Spring Park, which is on the eastern side of the City. Cold Spring Park has an above ground storage tank with 280,000 gallons and is owned by Petro Oil. This western Woonsocket GRP will include strategies to deal with potential releases coming from sources in Massachusetts (upstream) as well as local threats. The second GRP will focus on eastern portion of the City. There is a factory that has a history of 6-oil spills in this area, so it would be good to have a plan in the case of that happening again. The exact number of maps per GRP will be determined later in the project.

**BR-03 Manville Dam:**

This GRP will focus on protecting river reaches downstream of Manville Dam southeast of Woonsocket. There are multiple state conservation areas and a national forest below Woonsocket, so this GRP would be important to protect that resource as well. It will also be important to include protection strategies for the wetland directly above Manville Dam from any oil release(s).

**BR-04 Upper Lonsdale Marsh and BR-05 Lower Lonsdale Marsh:**

Lonsdale Marsh is an expansive environmentally sensitive area and two GRPs will be developed for the entire area extending from the Pratt Dam to the Valley Falls Pond Dam. Access to the upper Marsh GRP area will be at the Central Falls Landing.

The lower marsh GRP will use Valley Falls boat ramp as an access point to reach the lower marsh. This GRP will work to protect Valley Falls Pond, which is ecologically sensitive. It is also important to note that the River splits in two different directions at the Broad street bridge, which should also be incorporated into this lower marsh GRP.

In general, the whole Lonsdale Marsh area has restoration plans for anadromous fish runs downstream, which should be noted in the GRPs.

**BR-06 Pawtucket:**

Work group members pointed out the multiple historic sites in the Pawtucket area and the need to protect the se sites from oil spill impact. This GRP will focus not only on protection of resources in the Pawtucket area but also as a "last line of defense" to keep oil from migrating into the Seekonk River and upper Narragansett Bay. The Valley Falls boat ramp is the last good access to the river until after Pawtucket.

**2. Pawtuxet River Sites:**

**PX-01 Warwick Mall:**

There is plenty of space for staging and storage in the parking lot that abuts the river. The banks are pretty steep, so direct access might be a challenge, but you could get a hose through it to a vacuum truck. There is a spot by the Showcase Cinemas that might be a better entrance, which will be looked at during the site surveys. The dam right below this point might be partially removed soon, but could take some time—it's something to note in the GRP.

**PX-02 Pontiac Boat Ramp:**

Pontiac Boat ramp at Knight Street has been used to stage and deploy resources during past spills and serves as a logical place to deploy resources to deal with oil spills occurring at or near the I-95/I-295 interchange and that may then impact the river.

**PX-03 Jefferson Blvd:**

This was the site of a previous hazardous materials spill that came off of the freeway and entered a retention pond, eventually flowing into the Pawtuxet River south of Natick on the main stem. Pontiac



Avenue Boat Ramp has good access to the river. In the past, they've used Ryder Truck's car-yard for a collection point.

**PX-04 Warwick Ave:**

There is a DEM warehouse in this area that could provide staging and access at Warwick Ave. The Safety-Kleen Systems building is just up river from Warwick Ave and has boat launches. There have been spills in this area in the past. The neighborhood that is just north of the river potentially has additional access points, since there are streets that go down to the river.

**GRP Development Process & Project Timeline**

Following the site selection discussion, Mike Popovich reviewed the remainder of the project timeline including the site survey process. He stressed the importance of continued local stakeholder participation and how critical local knowledge is to the entire process. He concluded by providing an overview of and timeline for the remaining project tasks, which will include a tactics sub-group meeting, immediately following the site surveys followed by GRP development and final review by the workgroup sometime in July or early August.

**Comments and Suggestions**

The Save-the-Bay Riverkeeper pointed out that the Blackstone River Watershed Coalition has a lot of local knowledge and have a certain level of first responder capability, so calling them for assistance during the site surveys would be a good idea. They also have boats and equipment at their headquarters.

It would also be important to contact the Blackstone Tourism Council, who may be able to provide their boat. POC is Bob Billington who is the Director of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council at Slater Mills.

**Next Steps:**

Nuka Research will:

- a. Post meeting summary on project website and accept feedback within a set comment period.
- b. Post documents and presentations used in this meeting on the project website.
- c. Schedule site surveys with key stakeholders for April/May timeframe.
- d. Invite workgroup members to Site Surveys as appropriate.
- e. Form Tactics sub-group to review proposed tactics from Site Surveys.

**Project Website:** [www.inlandgrpne.com](http://www.inlandgrpne.com)

Contact person for additional information: Mike Popovich: [popovich@nukaresearch.com](mailto:popovich@nukaresearch.com) 508-746-1047