



<p><b>Geographic Response Plan Development Project – Connecticut River in New Hampshire &amp; Vermont</b></p>		<p><b>February 4, 2021 – 10:00 - 12:00 PM</b> <b>Held via Zoom Video Conference</b></p>
<p><b>Initial Workgroup/Site Selection Meeting Summary</b></p>		
<p><b>Project Overview:</b> Nuka Research and Planning Group, LLC has been contracted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 1 to develop ten (10) Geographic Response Plans or GRPs, for the Connecticut River in New Hampshire and Vermont. 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 multi-agency, multijurisdictional workgroup consisting of Federal, State, and local environmental emergency response partners will identify the candidate area(s) for the development of these GRPs. Nuka Research will facilitate the Workgroup and the GRP development process. This project should be completed in December 2021, and we anticipate two (2) Workgroup meetings to be held over the life of this project.</p>		
<p><b>Workgroup Membership and Purview:</b> Members of the Workgroup will represent state and federal agencies, local governments and organizations, stakeholder groups, the oil industry, and spill response professionals. The Workgroup process is open to the public, and public participation is welcomed and encouraged.</p>		
<p><b>Purpose of Meeting:</b> This meeting served as an introduction to this project, a review of project goals, objectives, and timelines, and a review of the preliminary SSM. This meeting also examined candidate sites, developed additional information about resources at risk, spill threat, and site accessibility at each site, and selected seven (7) site areas for GRP development along the Connecticut River.</p>		
<p><b>Participants</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US EPA</li> <li>• New Hampshire DES</li> <li>• Vermont DEC</li> <li>• Vermont Historical Preservation</li> <li>• Vermont HMRT &amp; SERC</li> <li>• Vermont Agency of Transport</li> <li>• Great River Hydro, LLC</li> <li>• Lancaster Conservation Commission</li> <li>• Moran Environmental Recovery</li> <li>• Windsor FD</li> <li>• Nuka Research</li> </ul> <p>For a complete list of participants, contact Olivia Norton at <a href="mailto:olivia@nukaresearch.com">olivia@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 river.</p> <p><b>Project/Site Selection Process Overview:</b> Mike Popovich then provided a general project overview, project objectives, and timeline; an overview of GRP design and content; and finally, a review of the drafted site selection matrix (SSM) for the Connecticut River. He also discussed the different variables that were relevant to the sites, including sensitive habitats, historical sites, conservation areas, and spill</p>		



risk. He reviewed the process of using the SSM and how the workgroup can use it to provide context to support their local knowledge while making the decisions of where to develop GRPs.

Jason Domke, the spill response planning and preparedness manager with NH DES, gave an overview of NHDES Spill Response and Complaint Investigation Section (SRCIS), a section comprising of 10 members. Jason spoke of the responsibilities the SRCIS handles on a day-to-day basis, such as HAZMAT complaints and response, drug labs, residential and marine oil spills, etc. Jason presented slides to the group on their current spill response equipment and standard spill trucks.

Tim Cropley, the spill program manager with VT DEC, spoke to the group of their spill program, consisting of a notification advisory group of eight on call members. Tim mentioned this program's primary focus is above ground storage tanks. Chuck Schwer, a VT HMRT representative, mentioned their program capacity involving a HAZMAT team, full-scale response vehicles throughout the state, smaller vehicle to conduct small scale response, emergency propane response vehicle, and decon trailers.

Then, Karen Way, the project coordinator for EPA Region 1, gave a brief presentation on the history of contingency planning since the passage of OPA 90 and how these GRPs integrate into the larger Inland Area Contingency Plan. Following Karen's presentation, and based on a question form a participant, Mike touched on the difference in terminology when it comes to the use of GRP vs. GRS (Geographic Response Strategies), indicating that these two terms are synonymous and indicating that there is a national movement to refer to these smaller site specific documents as GRS to differentiate them from the larger and more comprehensive Area Contingency Plan of which they are a part.

**Review of Site Selection Delineation, Priorities & Resources at Risk:** Mike opened the site selection discussion indicating that as part of this project, Karen Way reached out to NHDES and VTDEC several months ago to obtain feedback regarding potential GRP locations with 19 preliminary sites/areas identified. These areas were used to develop an initial site selection matrix and will be the ones reviewed today.

Before opening up the floor for site selection discussion, Mike reminded the group that sites can be selected both due to the general sensitivities in and around each site, and, as is often the case, based solely on accessibility and suitability for staging and deploying equipment.

The following list includes those site areas selected by the group,

**Connecticut River Sites: *NOTE: All current GRP names are tentative and subject to change up to the conclusion of the final workgroup meeting***

- **Rhymes Facility:** New Hampshire Central Railroad and large conservation land located at this site.
- **Lancaster Rd.:** Lancaster Road site is above Munce's Campground, where the Portland pipeline is located. Below the bridge, there's a bit of an inlet. There are no previous strategies here. There is a rail line located at this site.
- **Littleton Dam Area:** We could potentially cover all three dams in one GRS, or we can separate them into their own GRSs. Kari Sparks mentions they just purchased a mobile unit trailer that can be useful. It was agreed that all dams will most likely become their own GRS, so combining the three closer ones into one will allow for more sites.
- **Bath/Ryegate/Woodsville/Wells- 15 Mile Falls:** This site has high human use with an outdoor park, critical infrastructure, a dam, and a rail line.
- **West Lebanon- White River Junction (WRJ):** Highly populated area with underground tanks, a dam, outdoor park, pipelines, and a rail line.
- **Charlestown/Springfield/Rockingham**
- **N. Walpole/Bellows Falls:** Tim Harty with Great River Hydro indicated that N. Walpole should be a priority site as there is a hydro facility and a number of oil companies in that area. Westmoreland, south of Walpole, has a drinking water intake utilized by a nursing facility. There



are petroglyphs at Bellows Falls and underwater petroglyphs at the west river. This site is of high significance to the Native American groups in the area.

- **Hinsdale/Brattleboro**

Note: For each GRP developed, a site name and numbering convention is used. As indicated above, site names can be determined by workgroup members as late as the final GRP review meeting at the end of the project. Since the inception of these inland river GRP development project series, GRPs have also been given a unique letter/number identifier consisting of a two-letter river designator and a two-digit sequential number for each GRP. EPA Region 1 and Nuka Research are currently developing a new numbering convention to account for GRP development on the same river system but in different states and, in the case of this project, development along a river that constitutes the border between two states. More information regarding GRP numbering will be provided later in this project as a new numbering convention is instituted.

**GRP Development Process & Project Timeline**

Following the site selection discussion, Mike Popovich quickly 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 and input is to the entire GRP development 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.

**Comments and Suggestions**

VT Historical Preservation personnel indicated their input should likely come later and after site development begins or nears completion. They can then provide input based on final mapping areas regarding the existence of sites, areas to avoid, etc. Identifying general areas (to avoid; where historical sites exist) on maps should be done.

Workgroup Members agreed to take a week or two to gather more information and then reconvene to select the remainder of the sites. **NOTE: While the above list only represents seven site areas, some of these areas are large enough to accommodate several GRPs so identification of additional areas is not necessarily required, but is welcome if members of the workgroup think other areas should be considered.**

**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. Solicit feedback from workgroup members on additional sites/areas to consider for GRP development.
- d. Determine site survey timeframe based on Workgroup feedback and schedule site surveys accordingly.
- e. Invite workgroup members to Site Surveys as appropriate.
- f. Form Tactics sub-group to review proposed tactics from Site Surveys.

**Project Website:** <https://www.inlandgrpne.com/connecticut-river-nh-vt>

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