



<b>Geographic Response Plan Development Project – Blackstone River in Massachusetts</b>		<b>November 4, 2019 – 1:00 - 4:00 PM</b>
<b>Site Selection Meeting Summary</b>		<b>MassDEP Central Region Office 8 New Bond St Worcester, MA 01606</b>
<p>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 Blackstone River in Massachusetts. 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 Work Group and the GRP development process. This project will be completed in August 2020 and we anticipate two (2) Work Group meetings to be held over the life of this project.</p> <p>This was the first meeting of the Blackstone River 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 River.</p>		
<b>Participants</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MassDEP</li> <li>• Uxbridge Fire Dept</li> <li>• Worcester Fire Dept</li> <li>• Moran Environmental Recovery</li> <li>• US EPA</li> <li>• Nuka Research</li> <li>• Worcester Emergency Management/LEPC</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>		
<b>Agenda</b>		
<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 Blackstone River. He also 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 how the workgroup can use it to provide context to support their local knowledge while making the decisions of where to develop GRPs.</p> <p>The Emergency Response and Risk Reduction Section Chief for MassDEP’s Central Region, Kevin Daoust, provided a summary of MassDEP’s response capacity, duties, and resources, an understanding of the importance of data management, and finally, an overview of the MassDEP emergency notification system and criteria.</p> <p>Then, Karen Way, the project coordinator and an EPA Region 1 On-Scene Coordinator, gave a brief presentation on contingency plans and area contingency plans (ACP). She highlighted the importance of</p>		



integrating GRPs into ACPs to present a starting point for local responders and allow for unified command-made response decisions.

**Review of Site Selection Delineation, Priorities & Resources at Risk:** Before opening the floor for discussion, Mike explained that there are already existing GRPs from Blackstone River (BR 01-06) therefore in continuation with these Blackstone River GRPs, the site numbers will start at BR-07 and end with BR-16. Mike took the initiative to identify ten (10) potential sites where he found it would be best to develop GRPs. Mike walked the group through his selected sites on Google Earth and opened the floor for discussion.

**NOTE: All current GRP names are tentative and subject to change up to the conclusion of the final work group meeting**

### **Blackstone River Sites:**

#### **BR-07: Worcester:**

The Walmart parking lot along the Worcester-Providence Turnpike was identified as a potential staging area and access site to develop booming tactics.

#### **BR-08: Mass Pike- Route 122 N Main St.:**

The wastewater treatment plant and rail yard were identified as viable staging areas to develop a GRP in Millbury. The group also pointed out that located in this area are the drinking water wells of Millbury.

#### **BR-09: Millbury Sewer Dept. & Tricentennial Park:**

Two locations were identified as potentially becoming one GRP due to its proximity. The working group drew attention to the dam and rare habitat near cold spring brook.

#### **BR-10: Grafton Good Depot St. and Sewage Plant:**

Grafton Good's on Depot St. was identified as a feasible staging site. The group pointed out that there are groundwater wells and a pump house in the area. It is not recommended to have oil spill collection points near these sites.

#### **BR-11: Riverdale Dam:**

The Riverdale Dam site that Mike presented as a potential site was agreed upon by the group. For deploying boom tactics, it was recommended to park on Riverdale St. and walk to the dam location to layout boom. The group is curious to know how accessible this area is because it is private property.

#### **BR-12: Plummer's Landing & Canoe Ramp:**

This site was agreed upon due to the amount of staging access it presents. Osterman's Propane is a potential location where trucks could park their equipment. The canoe ramp allows for easy access, however, the group pointed out that the canoe ramp can become easily flooded and the high waters may pose as difficult during a response.

#### **BR-13: Rice City Pond:**

Rice City Pond was discussed as a potential site with a parking lot that allows for decent river access. It was also determined that the dam is a good control point for responders. The group mentioned a several different variables to keep in mind for this location, one of them being river speed. One participant highlighted that North of the dam is a swampy pond and South of the dam there are a lot of trees and wooden debris in the river which both makes it difficult to navigate. Although it is possible to access this part of the river, it is deemed not possible to access it with any equipment. River Bend Farm Visitor Center was also mentioned as a potential staging area.

#### **BR-14: Uxbridge Public Works:**

The Uxbridge Public Works Facility was examined as a prospective GRP site with the staging area likely being located at the former Stanley Woolen Mill. The Stanley Woolen Mill can provide parking and



adequate access to the river. The group also acknowledged the public water supply in this area and wellhead near Newell Rd. It was mentioned that there are decent staging and access points South of the Uxbridge Public Works Facility off of route 122 on S Main St. The trailhead name is unknown but will be identified.

**BR-15: Uxbridge Wastewater Treatment Plant:**

Uxbridge WTP was identified as a staging area with a decent access point. It was mentioned that there are gates at this facility however, the fire department can gain access. The group also brought attention to another potential access point south of the Uxbridge WTP off of River Rd. near Unitrans Transportation and Norfolk Iron Works Inc.

**BR-16: Millville:**

Millville was discussed by the working group as a reasonable mapping area. One participant pointed out a fire department located at the four corners of Central, Lincoln, and Main Street. Mike stated that while selecting these GRP sites it is important take into consideration terrain. The property across the street from the fire station off of Central St could be a potential staging area.

**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 August 2020.

**Comments and Suggestions**

Work Group Members inquired as to whether there is a way to add river flow velocity and streamflow into GRPs and throughout the maps. It was mentioned that USGS allows for real-time data of streamflow. Massachusetts' daily streamflow can be found [here](#) and can be used as a beneficial source of data/information.

**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. Determine site survey timeframe (March – April 2020) based on Work Group feedback and schedule site surveys accordingly.
- d. Invite workgroup members to Site Surveys as appropriate.
- e. Form Tactics sub-group to review proposed tactics from Site Surveys.

**Project Website:** <https://www.inlandgrpne.com/blackstonema>

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