



**Geographic Response Strategy
Development Project – Connecticut River
in Massachusetts**

**December 9, 2021 – 10:00 - 12:00 PM
Held via Zoom Video Conference**

**Initial Workgroup/Site Selection Meeting
Summary**

Project Overview:

Nuka Research and Planning Group, LLC has been contracted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 1 to develop ten (10) Geographic Response Strategies or GRS, for the Connecticut River in Massachusetts. GRS 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. GRS can save time during the critical first few hours of an oil spill response.

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 GRS. Nuka Research will facilitate the Workgroup and the GRS development process. This project should be completed in August 2022, and we anticipate two (2) Workgroup meetings to be held over the life of this project.

Workgroup Membership and Purview:

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.

Purpose of Meeting:

This meeting served as an introduction to this project, a review of project goals, objectives, and timelines, and a review of the preliminary Site Selection Matrix (SSM). This meeting also examined candidate sites, developed additional information about resources at risk, spill threat, and site accessibility at each site, and selected ten (10) site areas for GRS development along the Connecticut River.

Participants

- US EPA, Karen Way & Allen Jarrell
- MassDEP, David Slowick
- Hadley Historical Commission, Courtney Meyers & Diana West
- Northampton Historical Commission, Sarah LaValley
- Hatfield Town Administrator, Marlene Michonski
- Connecticut River Conservancy, Anrea Donlon, Ryan O’Donnell, & Kath Urffer
- South Hadley Fire Department, Eric Stratton and Todd Calkins
- South Hadley Emergency Management, Sharon Hart
- Whately Conservation Commission, Scott Jackson
- Longmeadow Town Engineer, Tim Keane
- Holyoke Conservation Commission, Yoni Glogower
- South Hadley Water Department, Mark Aiken
- Hadley Conservation Commission, Shyla Davis
- Nuka Research



Agenda

Introduction and Opening Comments: 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 GRS will be developed on the river.

Project/Site Selection Process Overview: Mike then provided a general project overview, project objectives, and timeline; an overview of GRS design and content; and finally, a review of the drafted site 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 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 GRS.

David Slowick, with MADEP's western region office (WERO) Emergency Response Section Chief, gave an overview of the WERO's emergency response duties and capabilities. David spoke of the responsibilities and duties WERO handles on a day-to-day basis, such as direct clean-up, addressing responsible party issues, and support or participation in unified command, when necessary, etc. David presented slides to the group on the available resources, such as response equipment, emergency notification criteria, and online GIS data.

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 GRS integrate into the larger Inland Area Contingency Plan. Following Karen's presentation, Mike touched on the difference in terminology when it comes to the use of GRP vs. GRS, 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 Plans of which they are a part.

Mike then provided a quick overview of the new GRS template that EPA will integrate during the transition from GRP to GRS. There are now three pages with site-specific and tactic-specific details pertinent to a response.

Review of Site Selection Delineation, Priorities & Resources at Risk: Mike opened the site selection discussion indicating that as part of this project, Nuka used downloadable online sensitivity data to select preliminary areas to consider developing a GRS for. 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 GRS names are tentative and subject to change up to the conclusion of the final workgroup meeting.*

- **Northfield A – Pauchaug Boat Ramp**
- **Northfield B – Riverview Picnic Area** – Tim Harty mentioned that Riverview Picnic Area is of high priority.
- **Northfield C – Millers River**
- **Turners Falls A – Barton Cove**
- **Turners Falls B – Turners Falls Dam**
- **Turners Falls C – Rawson Island**
- **Turners Falls D – Deerfield River**
- **Sunderland**



- **Hatfield/N. Hadley**
- **Northampton/Hadley A – Riverfront Park**
- **Northampton/Hadley B – Elwell Island**
- **Northampton/Hadley C – Mitch’s Marina**
- **Easthampton – Oxbow Marina**
- **Holyoke/S. Hadley A – Brunelle’s Marina**
- **Holyoke/S. Hadley B – Holyoke Dam**
- **Chicopee – Chicopee River**
- **Springfield/W. Springfield A**
- **Springfield/W. Springfield B – Westfield River**
- **Agawam/Longmeadow**

Note: For each GRS 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 GRS review meeting at the end of the project. Since the inception of these inland river GRS development project series, GRS have also been given a unique letter/number identifier consisting of a two-letter river designator and a two-digit sequential number for each GRS. EPA Region 1 and Nuka Research are currently developing a new numbering convention to account for GRS development on the same river system but in different states. More information regarding GRS numbering will be provided later in this project as the site areas are finalized.

GRS 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 GRS 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 GRS development and final review by the workgroup.

Comments and Suggestions

In the Holyoke/S. Hadley area, Rebekah Cornell mentioned that it might be important to include where the mouth of Bachelor Brook exists. Mike added that he downloaded a data layer to show the streams throughout.

Rebekah was also curious if the area in between the Holyoke/S. Hadley A & B mapping areas can be extended to incorporate Bachelor Brook. Mike responded, saying we could extend to Bachelor Brook. We can include this specific gap in the mapping areas for Brunelle’s Marina and Dry Brook.

Rebekah asked if we consider the endangered species data overlay when selecting these sites. Mike showed the group all of the clipped layers we considered, including Endangered Species data available in Mass OLIVER.

Mike noted that each prospective mapping area can change depending on input from the workgroup. We have a few months between now and the site surveys, so feel free to provide any input between then.

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 GRS development.
- d. Determine site survey timeframe based on Workgroup feedback and schedule site surveys accordingly.
- e. Invite workgroup members to Site Surveys as appropriate.



Geographic Response Strategies for the Connecticut River in MA



f. Form Tactics sub-group to review proposed tactics from Site Surveys.

Project Website: <https://www.inlandgrpne.com/connecticut-river-ma>

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