



**Geographic Response Strategy** **August 10, 2022 – 11:00 - 12:30 PM**  
**Development Project – Connecticut River**  
**in Massachusetts** **Held via Zoom Video Conference**  
**GRS Review/Final Work Group Meeting**

**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. As a result, 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 will be completed in August 2022.

**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 a final review of the draft GRS documents developed subsequent to the site surveys conducted on April 14th and 15th, 2022. Workgroup members reviewed the draft GRS and recommended changes and edits.

**Participants**

- MassDEP
  - USDOJ – USFWS
  - South Hadley Conservation Commission
  - US EPA
  - Chicopee Water Pollution Control Dept.
  - Moran Environmental Recovery
  - Nuka Research
- For a complete list of participants, contact Olivia Norton at [Olivia@nukaresearch.com](mailto:Olivia@nukaresearch.com) or Mike Popovich at [Popovich@nukaresearch.com](mailto:Popovich@nukaresearch.com).

**Agenda**

**Introduction and Opening Comments:** Mike Popovich (Nuka Research) briefly explained the overall objectives of this project and the plan for reviewing and finalizing these GRS. Following the final review and a brief post-review comment period, the final GRS documents and all associated GIS data will be delivered to Karen Way with EPA Region 1. These GRS will then be integrated into the inland Area Contingency Plan (ACP) and available on the RRT1 website ([https://nrt.org/site/doc\\_list.aspx?site\\_id=38](https://nrt.org/site/doc_list.aspx?site_id=38)).

**Project/Tactic Review Process Overview:** Mike briefly discussed the new GRS excel template and how the final deliverable will consist of 10 GRS sites but will include 15 individual GRS because several sites have multiple mapping areas. Mike and Karen also mentioned the decision by EPA Region 1 to shift from the use of the term Geographic Response Plan, or GRP, to Geographic Response Strategy, or GRS, as part of a national effort to standardize terminology, and to differentiate these smaller scale strategic plans from larger Area Contingency Plans of which they are a part.

Mike explained how the new Site ID numbers were generated, as each GRS has the river, state, and state-specific number identifier. He then presented the final GRS drafts to the group for review. Comments and changes resulting from this review are listed below.



**Connecticut River Draft GRS Review Comments:**

**CR-MA-01A Northfield/Pauchaug Boat Ramp:** No comments.

**CR-MA-01B Northfield – Riverview Picnic Area:** Nuka to label “Tailrace Tunnel” at the appropriate location. Mike mentioned that the photos are often of the staging area to provide additional information to responders that are not familiar with the area. It is unknown by the group if the Tailrace Tunnel barrier boom at this location stays in place all year long.

**CR-MA-01C Northfield – Millers River:** Dave Slowick, MassDEP, asked if street addresses were included in these GRS as this specific location (Cabot Camp) was difficult to navigate to during the site surveys. Nuka to include the street address for Cabot Camp in the GRS.

**CR-MA-02 Turners Falls:** Nuka to label the existing orange line segment on the tactic map as “Dam Barrier”. Dave mentioned that there are plenty of other areas where tactics can be deployed here based on incident-specific requirements, but there is no reason to include them on the GRS.

**CR-MA-03 Sunderland:** Mike mentioned that during the site survey in April, it was evident that a recent construction project had been completed to update the pavement and boat ramp at this site. No other comments.

**CR-MA-04A Hadley-Hatfield – Hatfield Boat Launch:** No comments.

**CR-MA-04B Hadley-Hatfield – Mill River – Flood Plain Forrest:** Mike mentioned that this site was specifically identified by Scott Jackson with Whately Conservation Commission as a site worthy of GRS development due to the sensitivities present along the Mill River. The group mentioned that there would likely be outflow from the river here.

**CR-MA-05 Northampton – Hadley – Elwell Island:** Mike proposed changing the location of the DF02 tactic. Nuka to reverse the DF02 boom configuration to deflect oil along the southwestern side of the island rather than along the northeastern side. Dave mentioned that there was a tank spill where the outfall is located, and it was challenging to recover oil with a pump/skimmer, which resulted in manually recovering the oil. The area to the southeast is more of a recreational area.

**CR-MA-06 Easthampton – Oxbow Boat Ramp:** Dave mentioned that there have been spills along the Mill River that flows into the Oxbow at its western apex. No other comments.

**CR-MA-07A Holyoke S. Hadley – Dry Brook:** No comments.

**CR-MA-07B Holyoke S. Hadley – Brunelle’s Marina:** Nuka to update map label for “Stoney Brook.”

**CR-MA-07C Holyoke S. Hadley – Cove Island – Holyoke Dam:** No comments.

**CR-MA-08 Chicopee – Chicopee River:** No comments.

**CR-MA-09 Springfield – W. Springfield:** This site was not surveyed by the entire site survey group in April. Instead, Dave Slowick visited this site after the site surveys, and the group developed a GRS here with his assistance. No other comments.

**CR-MA-10 Agawam – Westfield River:** Mike mentioned that to boom off the river in this area would require significant amounts of boom, so instead, booming efforts were focused on the Westfield River to mitigate spills emanating from sources upstream and along the Westfield River.



**GRS Development Process & Project Timeline**

Following the GRS review, Mike indicated that additional feedback is welcome until August 16, 2022. After that, EPA and Nuka Research will finalize these documents, and EPA will post them on the RRT1 website for public access.

**Comments and Suggestions**

Dave was curious how to access and view these PDFs. Mike presented the Nuka hosted EPA website with links to the RRT1 website where the PDFs are located and explained that Nuka usually presents these formally to the RRT prior to integration into the ACP. Mike showed the group the RRT1 website where the GRS PDFs can be accessed and downloaded. Dave offered to help disseminate these GRS PDFs to local fire departments and other first responders.

Karen Way mentioned that the EPA eventually plans to have these on a publicly available online map viewer and that once all GRS updates are completed, the current RRT1 website will be updated with the newly formatted GRS and all (GRP to GRS) terminology will be updated as well.

Dave asked if there were plans for future testing of any of these strategies, as he is aware that there are fire departments who would like oil spill response training. Karen indicated that in the past, several GRS tactics were tested in Maine and New Hampshire as funding became available and added that outside of EPA-funded testing, testing by state agencies and local first responders is encouraged, with the caveat that the EPA be included in any independent testing so that this field testing and any potential changes to GRS can be documented.

Finally, Mike and Karen thanked the group for participating throughout this project.

**Next Steps:**

Nuka Research will:

- a. Post meeting summary on project website and accept feedback until August 16, 2022.
- b. Post documents and presentations used in this meeting on the project website.
- c. Make edits to the draft tactic maps and GRS identified at this final workgroup meeting.
- d. Prepare the draft Connecticut River GRS documents and all GIS data and deliver to the US EPA.

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

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