

MINUTES
Massachusetts Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act Advisory Committee
Tuesday, June 17, 2008
New England Wildlife Center, Weymouth, MA

Attendees:

Janine Commerford, MassDEP	Ryan Cox, Boston Line and Service
Rich Packard, MassDEP	Barry Cox, Boston Line and Service
David Janik, MA EOE	Brian Cox, Coast Line
Gordon Bullard, Mass Dept. Revenue	Fred Loomis, Boston Coastwise Pilots
Steve Dodge, Massachusetts Petroleum Council	David Clark, Boston Towing/Transportation
Kevin O'Brien, Mass Environmental Police	George Lee, Boston Harbor Docking Pilots
Kevin Partridge, Dept. of Fire Services	Adam Doughty, Canal Towing Assistance
Claudia Gelzer, USCG – Boston	Arthur Fournier, Canal Towing Assistance
Pamela Garcia, USCG – Boston	Charles Tyler, MWRA – Deer Island
Kirk Franklin, Frank Corp.	Megan Kirchgessner, NE Wildlife Center
Elise DeCola, Nuka Research	Bill Cass, NEWMOA
Mark Rasmussen, Coalition for Buzzards Bay	Rachel Colella, NEWMOA
Brian Fay, Clean Harbors Environmental	

Welcome and Introduction:

Janine Commerford, Assistant Commissioner, MassDEP, welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda planned for today's meeting.

Status of Current Implementation Activities:

Rich Packard, Program Manager, MassDEP started the discussion by highlighting some of the activities that have been completed thus far. These activities were part of the Interim Plan developed by MassDEP with assistance from NEWMOA, earlier last year. These and other activities are identified in the Draft Three Year Strategic Plan, which is a follow-up to the Interim Plan.

Equipment Procurement: Since implementation of the Oil Spill Act, MassDEP has provided 36 oil spill response trailers and equipment to 30 communities in the State. Procurement of 12 additional spill response trailers for North Shore communities will occur in 2008. MassDEP plans to continue to provide these trailers to coastal communities over the next few years.

Field Exercise: MassDEP and contractors held a field training exercise for local responders from Buzzards Bay and Cape Cod communities on April 24, 2008 in North Falmouth/Wild Harbor. There were approximately 60 participants, including fire fighters, coast guard, MassDEP staff, and other local responders and interested parties. During this training, participants tested two of the GRP strategies developed for the area.

Geographic Response Plans (GRPs): MassDEP and their contractor, Nuka Research & Planning, have completed a Geographic Response Plan (GRP) for Cape Cod and the Islands. They are also currently updating the GRP for the Buzzards Bay area. The GRPs are map-based documents that outline protection strategies as well as identifying priorities for protection in each particular area. The GRPs identify the necessary resources (e.g., equipment, personnel, staging areas) needed to perform the strategy. They also provide information about the environmental resources (e.g., habitats, biological communities) that the strategy is designed to protect, as well as any other special considerations for the area. MassDEP plans to continue with another round of GRPs this fall, focusing on the remainder of the coastline.

Risk Evaluation and Inventory: MassDEP and their contractor, Nuka Research & Planning are currently preparing a risk evaluation and equipment inventory for the coastal communities in the State. This project will develop a database of information on publically and privately held oil spill equipment including the spill trailers provided by MassDEP, located in Mass and regionally. The information together with vessel transit routes, marine terminal locations and past spill histories will be used to identify locations that are at increased risk of a future oil spill and will identify gaps where response resources exist. This information will be used to guide MassDEP's future efforts to prioritize distribute equipment, training and GRP development.

List of Coastal Communities: MassDEP and their contractor, Nuka Research & Planning are currently preparing a risk evaluation and equipment inventory for the coastal communities in the State. As part of this project a list of 71 coastal communities that will be included in MassOSA projects has been developed. The rationale for used to create the list was based on criteria that align with the requirements of the MassOSA.

Training and Response Webpage: MassDEP with the help of their contractor, Horsley Witten Group, has developed a training and response website. The website includes information about the oil spill response equipment, as well as training videos for how to use the equipment. The website includes a map of the locations of the MassDEP spill trailers (available in PDF format or through Google Earth), information on maintaining and restocking equipment and contact information for coastal communities and MassDEP. The website is located at: <http://www.horsleywitten.com/depoilspill/index.html>

Equipment Maintenance: MassDEP has recently procured a contract to inspect, maintain and restock the oil spill trailers provided to the communities. The trailers will also include copies of the GRP strategies specific to each community, photos of the training exercise, information about how to use the equipment, and all necessary contact information. MassDEP awarded a contract to Moran Environmental for these maintenance activities.

Status of the Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) for Buzzards Bay:

Ms. Commerford gave an update of the enhanced vessel movement reporting system (VMRS) planned for Buzzards Bay. After previously reviewing the existing VMRS, MassDEP determined that the existing system would indeed meet the requirements of the Oil Spill Act. However in accordance with the MassOSA DEP will continue to monitor its operation and evaluate the need for additional system enhancements. The US Coast Guard (USCG) has

requested that MassDEP consider funding equipment enhancements, which include the purchase and installation of radio, radar, and microwave equipment. MassDEP agrees that providing this equipment is a good idea because it will enhance safety. The parties have come to a conceptual agreement that MassDEP would fund \$1.5 million over the next three years for this equipment, which will be operated and maintained by the US Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE). The next step is for the USCG to submit a formal request to MassDEP.

Elise DeCola, Nuka Research, suggested that the enhanced VMRS that provided historical vessel movement data would be useful. Mark Rasmussen, Coalition for Buzzards Bay, agreed that vessel-tracking data should be archived for reference purposes.

Update on OSA Sub-Committees:

Bill Cass, Executive Director, NEWMOA provided a summary of the activities of the OSA Prevention and Training Subcommittees. Over the past few months, Mr. Packard and Mr. Cass have visited marine safety training centers in the area to assess their capability and the likely costs associated with providing bridge simulator training for Buzzards Bay. Two of the facilities do not currently have data for Buzzards Bay and would first have to do a survey of the area and enter the data into the system, which would increase the cost of the project. Massachusetts Maritime Academy already has this data in its simulator, but does not have equipment that is as new or sophisticated as the other facilities. The training will be targeted for tug and barge operators and will focus on vessel navigation, safety procedures, emergency preparedness, and seamanship. The next step is for MassDEP and NEWMOA to work with various stakeholders and waterway users to develop a training curriculum and RFP advertisement. MassDEP also needs to explore opportunities for encouraging the tug and barge operators to participate in the training.

Ms. Commerford suggested that the Training Subcommittee assess what types of training are already available and what is missing. Ms. DeCola agreed that a “needs assessment” of training should be done first. Claudia Gelzer, USCG, noted that there is a possibility for MassDEP to tie this training into what is already required by the USCG. One attendee that represented the Tug and barge industry indicated that if this training could be provided for free by MassDEP, there would be an incentive for his company to participate.

Discussion of Draft Three Year Plan:

Ms. Commerford reviewed that the Draft Three Year Plan prepared by MassDEP with assistance from NEWMOA. She recommended that the OSA Committee and other stakeholders review the plan and submit comments to Mr. Packard within the next couple of months. MassDEP will send committee members a reminder email, along with an electronic copy of the Plan (or a website where the Plan is located). MassDEP hopes to finalize the plan in time for the next OSA meeting planned this fall. Ms. Commerford highlighted certain tasks in the following sections of the Plan noted below:

I. Planning / Administration

- The major task to be completed under this Section is to finalize Three Year Plan. The document is currently in draft form and was presented to the Committee during the meeting. MassDEP will incorporate comments from the OSA Committee and finalize the Plan.
- This Section also includes information about the risk evaluation completed for the 71 coastal communities, and plans for developing the equipment inventory, which will be later posted on the website.
- Ms. Commerford noted that MassDEP is still trying to figure out how much money they are able to spend each year and still maintain enough money in the fund to provide an emergency reserve. MassDEP plans to develop specific policies and procedures to administer the monies in this trust fund and set a reserve amount (up to \$10 million – less annual operating budget).
- MassDEP is also looking into the possibility of providing a training stipend for municipalities so that local responders can continue to participate in field exercise trainings. This system has seemed to work well for the Dept. of Public Health under their Homeland Security training provided to local firefighters and other responders.

II. Prevention

- This Section includes information on the planned vessel tracking systems, such as the V.M.R.S. and P.O.R.T.S systems.
- It also includes information about an additional risk evaluation for chronic oil spills that includes strategies to prevent oil discharges where historically they have been common.

III. Response

- Ms. Commerford noted that MassDEP has already provided many communities with the oil spill equipment and response trailers and will continue to do so for the remaining communities over the next few years, prioritizing the order communities receive their trailers based on the risk evaluation and equipment inventory. MassDEP has scheduled the next wave of trailers to be provided to communities in the North Shore (e.g., Salisbury to Marblehead). After receiving the trailers, these communities will also be provided with the familiarization and deployment training.
- Ms. Commerford also noted that Massachusetts has historically worked closely with New Hampshire and Rhode Island when responding to an environmental disaster – through an informal agreement. Under this Plan, MassDEP will develop a formal mutual aid agreement with these and other neighboring states.
- Finally, this Section includes plans for providing field training to local responders, as was done in April 2008. The training event was very successful

but also a lot of work. Ms. Commerford expects that one to two trainings per year is a reasonable number of events. She noted that these trainings are an important part of the program because they are used to test GRP strategies developed for the area.

IV. Outreach

- Mr. Packard reported that he has conducted a number of speaking engagements with groups that have an interest in the program and has participated in many of these groups' meetings over the past year. MassDEP will continue to work closely with the USCG and other stakeholder groups.

Attachment A – Budget

- Ms. Commerford noted that there is a lot of work to be done over the next three years. She is hoping to hire a staff person to work with Mr. Packard on this project but is unsure if that would be possible given the hiring restrictions at MassDEP.
- Mr. Packard noted that the column titled “Projects in Process” does not represent a “per year” budget amount – the designated amounts are one-time cost estimates based on a “per project” basis and might overlap over two years. The column titled “Proposed Projects” constitutes MassDEP’s best estimate of the costs needed for each project task. Often, the budgets for these projects are spaced-out over the next three years.
- One of the Committee members noted that the budget amount spent on staff salaries seemed inflated (\$295,000 spent). Mr. Packard believes this amount includes the salaries for the work done by the various contractors under this project. He will double-check this amount.

Next Steps:

The next OSA Advisory Committee Meeting will be held in September/October 2008. At this next meeting, MassDEP plans to review the finalized Three Year Plan, based on feedback from the Committee.

Adjournment:

Ms. Commerford thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the formal part of the meeting. Many attendees stayed for an educational tour of the New England Wildlife Center, which is a LEED-certified building.