Northeastern University
Marine Science Center

Massachusetts Bays
NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

Boston Harbor Ecosystem Network Meeting
Thursday, May 3, 2018
1:00 – 4:00pm

Atlantic Wharf, 290 Congress Street, Boston

ATTENDING:
Ben Wetherill (ACASAK Aquatic Monitoring Technologies), Bill Kiley (Boston Water & Sewer Commission), Robert Hughes (boston360.video), Rachel Borgatti (Friends of Fort Point Channel), John Walkey (GreenRoots), Robert Boeri, Marc Carullo, Sean Duffey, and Adrienne Pappal (MA CZM), Karen Pelto (MA DEP), Prassede Vella (MassBays), Carolina Bastidas (MIT Sea Grant), Chris Goodwin, David Taylor, and David Wu (MWRA), Carole McCauley (Northeastern University), Peter Fifield (Quincy Climate Change Committee), Jill Rowe (RPS), Wally Peters (Scituate resident), Peter Burn (Suffolk University), Frank Singleton (Town of Weymouth), Kim Starbuck (Urban Harbors Institute), Matt Tessier (US Army Corps of Engineers), Phil Colarusso (US EPA), Andreae Downs (Wastewater Advisory Committee to the MWRA)

FACILITATORS:
Peter Burn, Chair, Boston Harbor Ecosystem Network Steering Committee
Carole McCauley, MassBays/Metro Boston Regional Coordinator, Northeastern University Marine Science Center

1:00pm **WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS**

Carole McCauley kicked off the meeting. Thanks were offered to Boston Properties for hosting the meeting and providing snacks, and to the Friends of Fort Point Channel for facilitating this. Members of the BHEN steering committee were introduced.

1:10pm **PRESENTATION: Boston Harbor Dredge Project**

Presented by Matt Tessier, Lead Civil Engineer, US Army Corps of Engineers

Matt presented an overview of the recently completed maintenance dredging in Boston Harbor, as well as the impending channel improvement project that will take parts of the navigation channel for ships heading into the Conley Terminal from 40-47' Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) deep in the inner harbor and from 40-51' MLLW within the entrance channel. The maintenance dredging project was completed in December 2017, while the improvement project will run through 2022.

Re: the maintenance dredging, sediments that were unsuitable for open ocean disposal at the Massachusetts Bay Disposal site were placed into the newly constructed Main Ship Channel CAD cell just downstream of the inner confluence of the Mystic and Chelsea Rivers, where it will be allowed to settle and then capped with clean fill from the channel improvement project. A CAD cell, or Confined Aquatic Disposal cell, is a constructed pit

that is dug deep into the harbor floor at depths ranging from 65 MLLW to greater than 100' MLLW. The main channel in the inner harbor is 40' deep, so the CAD cell is well below the depth of ships entering this part of the harbor. Construction of the CAD cell was the first phase of the maintenance dredging project which was followed by removal of sediments within the channel back to the authorized depth of 40'MLLW which is characterized as routine maintenance dredging. The material from this routine maintenance is placed within the newly constructed cade cell.

Re: the channel improvement dredging, the port of Boston is deepening the channel from 40-47' MLLW in the inner harbor and from 40-51' MLLW within the entrance channel to be able to accommodate larger vessels with deeper draft that are already beginning to call on the port of Bosotn largely due to the Panama Canal widening project, which was completed in 2016. The project will involve removal of a variety of sediments to deepen the main navigation channels, the reserved channel along Conley Terminal as well as the President Road anchorage for commercial/industrial vessels. Except for some of the sandy sediments that will be used to cap the active CAD cell (see above), the dredge material will be transported to the Massachusetts Bay Disposal site 20 miles offshore. to cap a former industrial waste dump site. Some of the larger rock material will be used to construct an offshore deepwater reef, which will benefit fish and other species.

1:40pm **PARTICIPANT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- MIT Sea Grant is holding an ocean acidification workshop on May 10
- Friends of Fort Point Channel pointed out that the Fort Point Room (Boston Properties/Atlantic Wharf, 290 Congress Street) is available for meetings, and the ground floor lobby has free WiFi and is open to the public from 7am-10pm. These offerings are part of the property's Chapter 91 agreement.
- The National Parks of Boston offers Stewardship Saturdays, and all are encouraged to participate.
- CZM is reviewing a project whereby Eversource will be deepening the depth of its electricity supply cable to Deer Island, which was instigated by the BH dredging project. In particular, it's considering potential impacts to eelgrass beds. People can follow the Environmental Monitor to stay aware of the status of projects, and to know when comment periods are open.

2:00pm **STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE**

- The draft BHEN governance document was presented and discussed, no objections to its adoption were made.
- Members of the BHEN steering committee talked about the value to them of participating and mentioned that new members would be recruited for 2019 later this year.
- Two BHEN field trips were announced:
    - May 10 to explore migratory fish in the Mystic River, led by the Mystic River Watershed Association
    - June 12 to explore environmental justice issues around Chelsea Creek
    - RSVPs are requested
- An updated was provided on the sold-out science communication workshop that's being held by BHEN from May 16-18
- Solicitation was made for any BHEN participants interested in helping to post on our Facebook page
- The next BHEN meeting is November 8, 2018 from 1-4pm, location TBD

2:25pm **BREAK**

2:40pm **PRESENTATION: Accessing the Sea Level Rise Affecting Salt Marshes Model (SLAMM)**

Presented by Marc Carullo, GIS/Environmental Analyst, MA Office of Coastal Zone Management

Marc provided an overview of the new digital interface of SLAMM. The presentation can be found here.

2:40pm **PRESENTATION: Assessing harm to ecosystems from oil spills: A new approach**

Presented by Karen Pelto, Natural Resources Damages Program Coordinator, MassDEP

Karen presented on MassDEP's new method for assessing ecosystem damage from oil/hazmat spills. The presentation can be found here.

4:00pm **MEETING ENDED**