



Maine and New Hampshire Area Committee

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Area Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: May 10, 2012

Time: 9:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Location: Sector Northern New England, South Portland, ME

1. Welcome and Introductions: Wyman Briggs opened the meeting after a 30 minute delay. The Air National Guard Function Room was double-booked requiring a last-minute relocation to Sector Northern New England. Thanks for everyone's willingness to quickly adapt and overcome. This provided a good opportunity to test our notification process – which went well. Roundtable introductions were conducted. 49 people attended the meeting.

2. New Hampshire DES Comments: Rick Berry noted that NH DES had no major spills to discuss and that they have mostly been dealing with the transition from the Piscataqua River Cooperative and converting PRC gear over to the state. They have been working on equipment maintenance issues and training contractors. NH DES also recently participated in a drill conducted by the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant.

3. Maine DEP Comments: Ginger McMullin (representing Barbara Parker) noted that ME DEP has been very occupied meeting the requirements for "zero based budgeting". Staff members are also participating in the "Hazmat IQ" class, and getting ready for the Damariscotta boom deployments to test several Geographic Response Strategies on May 22nd-23rd. They recently updated the state response equipment list and provided copies for everyone.

4. Federal On-Scene Coordinator Comments: CAPT Chris Roberge welcomed participants to the meeting and commented that it was a good time to take stock of successful spill prevention and response efforts over the past several years. Spill numbers are down, and there have been significant long-term improvements in the marine environment. He congratulated Portland Pipeline for winning the RADM Benkert Silver award. He also highlighted that Sector Northern New England and NOAA are assisting EPA develop the first Area Contingency Plan for Lake Champlain.

5. Portsmouth Area Workgroup: Rick Berry updated the committee on efforts to transition from the Piscataqua River Cooperative to a workgroup under the auspices of the ME/NH Area Committee. Of note, NH DES has entered a mutual aid agreement with Portsmouth Navy Ship Yard to share resources and preposition equipment. NH DES is working on prepositioning barges with boom in/near Great Bay for quicker deployment if needed.

6. F/V Seabreeze Recovery: Petty Officer Connell provided an update on the recovery of the lobster fishing vessel "Seabreeze" which sunk in midcoast Maine in December 2011. The vessel became a persistent pollution source, emitting sheen for several weeks and requiring containment boom. SEC NNE worked closely with Maine DEP to arrange for the cleanup and removal of the vessel. SEC NNE utilized Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund funds to raise and clean the vessel. Once raised and cleaned, Maine DEP utilized state authority to have the vessel removed from the water and disposed. Again, this was an excellent example of partnership. The case highlights a larger problem throughout the nation – abandoned vessels left to become navigation and/or pollution hazards. SEC NNE is using this and other cases to highlight best practices and guidance for a national effort to develop better derelict/abandoned vessels tactics via the "Abandoned Vessel Guidance Workgroup" under the NRT.

7. Empire Knight Update: SEC NNE and Maine DEP recently worked with the EPA New England Regional Lab to arrange for analysis of samples taken near the site of this WWII-era sunken cargo vessel. The primary concern is potential mercury contamination. Sample results were received on May 7th, 2011 and are currently under review by Maine DEP, NOAA, and Mr. Cornell Rosiu at D1.

8. Volunteer Reception Centers: Pam Zeutenhorst, Volunteer Sector Initiatives Program Officer for Maine Commission for Community Service and Domenic DiNatale, State Program Coordinator for Volunteer NH/New Hampshire Citizen Corps, provided an overview of how their organizations could support volunteer reception centers in Maine and New Hampshire. In addition to establishing an actual Volunteer Reception Center in approximately 48 hours, these organizations have the ability to help establish a Virtual Volunteer Reception Center which can be used to register and manage volunteers via an interactive website.

9. National Weather Service Storm Modeling : John Cannon of the NWS presented an overview of new storm surge modeling work underway which will allow for wave action to be considered in flooding models. There was a discussion of flooding/storm surge patterns and frequency in Northern New England, and estuary enhanced flooding with rain as an additional factor. Storm surges from winter storms were noted as the biggest threat in this area.

10. NOAA SSC Update: Steve Lehmann provided an update on the effort to produce guidance on subsea dispersant use, including eco-toxicity monitoring during long or deep applications. Steve will conduct SCAT training for Sector NNE reservists in June. He also plans to initiate a review of the current dispersant-use agreement published in the ME/NH ACP that was last fully reviewed and signed in 1998.

11. RRT1 Meeting: The meeting was held in March in Mystic, CT, and combined with a FEMA Region 1 "RISC" meeting. The theme involved efforts to align the National Response framework with NIMS/ICS. Of note, there was a presentation on Cuban Oil spill trajectory modeling, and Lisa Symons from NOAA gave a presentation on their ship wreck tracking efforts.

12. CANUSLANT 2013: Planning is on track for the next CANUSLANT exercise which is scheduled for the week of June 17th 2013 in Calais, Maine and St John, New Brunswick.

13. AC Seminar update: The next NE/NH Area Committee Oil Spill Seminar is scheduled for March 4-5, 2013 at the Holiday Inn By the Bay in Portland. The topic involves dealing with the Media and Elected Officials during a Spill Response.

14. Closing comments: Rick Berry thanked those who had stepped up to lead the Portsmouth Area Workgroup committees, and noted that NH DES has extended the lease on their Coastal Office on Pease for another 3+ years. The three Co-chairs highlighted that this had been another productive meeting and shared their appreciation for all the hard work contributed by members of the Area Committee to maintain our response capabilities along the ME/NH coastline.

15. Next Meetings:

0900-1200: September 26, 2012, NH DES, Portsmouth, NH

0900-1200: December 6, 2012: Air National Guard, South Portland