



# Maine and New Hampshire Area Committee

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## Area Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: April 6, 2021

Time: 9:00am to 11:30am

Location: Via Zoom For Government

### 1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Wyman Briggs, SNNE

Wyman welcomed all members to the meeting and began with limited introductions of new members.

- Willie Whitmore, [William.whitmore@noaa.gov](mailto:William.whitmore@noaa.gov), (978) 281-9182, introduced himself as Steve Lehmann's replacement as the Region 1 NOAA Scientific Support Coordinator (SSC ) serving New England out of his offices in Gloucester, MA.
- Mike McDonough from Resolve Marine Group introduced himself
- Chris Gillies - replacing Tom Hardison as president of Portland Pipeline
- Mike Pierno – USCG Preparedness Specialist from Sector Long Island Sound
- Drake Bell - Irving Oil in Searsport
- Dan Wilson – Tri-State Bird Rescue
- Dale Rowley – Waldo County Emergency Management Agency

### 2. **On-Scene Coordinator Comments**

- Jeff Squires (SOSC, ME DEP): Thanked the Committee for excellent work, welcomed Willie Whitmore aboard and thanked departing members. He highlighted current operations and noted that there has also been significant personnel turnover at ME DEP. He reminded the group of the vacancy left by Ginger McMullen, and that interviews are scheduled next week for her replacement. He also noted that a job announcement for a responder position was posted last week. ME DEP's Eastern Maine regional office has just put out a request for a new boom reel, bringing their total to two.
- Gardner Warr (SOSC, NH DES): Gardner wished CAPT LeFebvre well on his departure from SNNE and discussed scheduled interviews for Zach Taylor's replacement at NH DES. He announced a new tow boat arriving for NH DES's fleet of response vessels and mentioned eagerness for NH and ME state responders to have an on-water training event together as soon as it is safe to do so..
- CAPT Brian LeFebvre (FOOSC, USCG SNNE): Mentioned his relief, CAPT Amy Florentino will arrive in late June. He expressed his excitement for the full agenda for today's meeting and looked forward to hearing more about the full scale exercise scheduled for September. He welcomed Willie Whitmore aboard and mentioned multiple Coast Guard departures this summer,

including: MST3 Fanelli (Portland), LT Ramos (Belfast), LCDR Lajoie (Portland) and LCDR Loughran (Portland). He noted that he was pleased to announce that Brian Gilda will be rejoining the Coast Guard team (previously Sector Commander) on the Emergency Management and Force Readiness staff and that Dan Kinville will also be joining the Coast Guard team, on the EMFR Staff. He also announced the arrival of the new Prevention Department Head, CDR Megan Drewniak who will be relieving CDR Jason Boyer this summer.

### 3. **Shorebird Area Response Plans – Draft:** Don Katnik, ME IF&W

Don discussed shorebirds on the Maine coastline, and the potential population impact if a pollution event occurred in coastal habitats. Shorebirds have a critical period for feeding upon arrival along the Maine coast, primarily on large intertidal mud flats. He stressed the importance for responders to determine the impact of wildlife in 750 shorebird feeding areas along the Maine coast.

- As a result of lessons learned from previous exercises, he has developed a response plan for each shorebird feeding area modeled after the Geographic Response Strategies (GRS), but noted that many shorebird areas are not collocated with GRS areas.
- IF&W has created a database that includes 750 shorebird areas. Information includes:
  - location,
  - size of area,
  - protection status,
  - species of birds,
  - general site-specific comments,
  - parking/staging opportunities for the area,
  - photos of staging sites (street and aerial view),
  - tidal information,
  - access permission status,
  - means of transiting on/through area (ATV, Kayak, Vehicle, etc.)
- The Maine Wildlife Response Plan references shorebird plans, and is also available online. Don clarified that they may be able to post these new shorebird plans on the ME DEP website for responders but expressed concerns about posting personal identifying information on the public website.
- Willie Whitmore posed the question of adding the plans to ERMA (NOAA's Emergency Response Management Application), and asked for a POC from IF&W to have NOAA personnel add the information to the database. Don Katnik is the GIS POC.
- Jeff Squires asked about the format for the plan, Don clarified that each plan is a 7-8 page PDF.
- CAPT LeFebvre added that the plans would be an excellent topic for presentation at the International Oil Spill Conference, and discussed how beneficial these tools will be for field-responders. Wyman Briggs clarified that the IOSC is scheduled every three years and is scheduled to be held in May this year. Solicitations for papers/presenters for the next IOSC will most likely be next in @ 24 months.
- Don confirmed that in the meantime they will work to get the information into ERMA.

### 4. **USCG National Strike Force Capabilities: AST, IMAT and PIAT:** LT Ryan Cantu, USCG LT Cantu of the USCG Atlantic Strike Team provided an overview of National Strike Force (NSF) capabilities, how to request Strike Team support, and new equipment and capabilities of the Strike Teams.

- National Strike Force Coordination Center (NSFCC) has Tactical Control of three Strike Teams (Mobile, AL, Petaluma, CA, Fort Dix, NJ), capable of responding to up to two Type-1 incidents simultaneously.
- The National Strike Force has multiple specialized teams, consisting of:

- Incident Management Assist Team (IMAT) – force multiplier and subject matter expert for ICS. They offer coaching, training, support, Incident Management Team workshops
- Public Information Assist Team (PIAT) – They coach and assist public information officers in the field, for planned events or emergencies and provide Public Affairs training for any/all responders.
- Atlantic Strike Team (AST) – They are made up of multiple Coast Guard rates/specialties and assist Sectors with larger salvage or response activities. They have mobile command center trailers with ProRae Guardian, MSA, and Weather capabilities and are able to conduct RAD level II response, air monitoring, and CBRNE response (not an exhaustive list – see presentation for more).
- Discussed launching/requesting National Strike Force assets:
  - Noted that a Federal Project Number or CERCLA project number must be opened to allow for Strike Team deployment.
  - Listed technical capabilities and specialized software (see presentation for more information)
  - The AST has two robots, capable of carrying monitoring equipment on-site, and,
  - Two UAV's and multiple drone pilots cued for qualification
- Reviewed capabilities for the following:
  - Oil Response
  - Salvage and Lightering
  - Pumping/dewatering
  - CBRN (Chemical/Biological/Radiological/Nuclear) Response
  - Confined Space
  - RAD level II
  - Hazardous Materials Response Trailer – supports 12 person HAZMAT team, with PPE, sensing equipment, air monitoring, level A and B, and SCBA refilling.
  - Decontamination capabilities
- Discussed National Special Security Events, and noted that the Strike Teams are capable of deploying for pre-planned events as a standby for unknown hazardous material incidents.
- Discussed involvement opportunities for NSF assets:
  - Exercise support (e.g. the upcoming PREP FSE)
  - Training,
  - Presentations,
  - Force Multipliers
- Shared contact information for Strike Teams, and National Strike Force duty standers.
- Questioned posed from chat: How does the Strike Team get around the UAV Grounding Order? LT Cantu responded that it's a work in progress, but they ensure that the feed is not attached to any wireless phones and maintain the posture that the footage is only for responses/oil spills.

### **5. Case Study: Response to Sunken Fishing Vessel NO EXCUSE, Hampton Harbor, NH**

MST1 Ryan Hanson, Marine Safety Detachment Portsmouth emphasized the great partnership between the Coast Guard and New Hampshire during the response, and highlighted the extensive amount of community interest. He shared a presentation which included:

- Case specifics, incident potential at time of sinking, & notifications made.
- US Ecology hired on day one to deploy boom and plug vents
- Tow Boat US determined additional equipment was necessary for recovery due to weight estimate between 30-35 tons, the vessel owner did not have resources to continue paying for salvage/removal efforts
- A visible sheen had been reported in/on nearby clam harvesting flats, and resulted in fishing and traffic restrictions

- Coast Guard determined that they would maintain responsibility for removing fuel, and NH DES would take over for subsequent vessel removal
- A local volunteer drone operator volunteered to monitor, provided crucial aerial views
- After difficulty floating the vessel, fuel removal efforts were pushed back one day
- Mr. Chris Wood, NH Department of Environmental Services continued the presentation (representing the hand-off between USCG and NH DES responsibility):
  - A vac truck was situated on the seawall at Harborside Park, Riverside Pickering was hired for pumping/dewatering operations.
  - Noted that the response was officially transferred to DES after dewatering.
  - The vessel was able to float/maintain its own buoyancy with the incoming tide. The last few gallons of water was pumped out and the vessel was carefully towed to a trailer.
  - Mentioned that Drone Usage was implemented, showed an aerial photo, and noted that it was done approximately 2 miles away from a nearby powerplant. Confirmed that no FAA regulations were broken.
  - Emphasized the interest from local residents and concerned fishermen/clammers.
  - Once removed from the water, the vessel was stabilized on the trailer and the team coordinated transport to the Port Authority lot on the north side of the harbor.
  - The vessel is currently sitting on Port Authority property. The owner will be charged an “impound” fee, the vessel will be held as collateral by NH DES. [USCG funding will be recovered via the National Pollution Fund Center.]
- Specifically mentioned the exceptional job by US Ecology, Ken Anderson, Jocelyn Marine Services, NH Port Authority.
- Opened for Questions:
  - Gardiner Warr mentioned the superb relationship between NH DES and USCG, complimented the hard work done by both organizations to make sure things were in place for such a smooth evolution.
  - Jeff Squires asked the total cost for response/recovery: USCG \$45,000 / DES \$15-20,000 (estimates)
  - CAPT LeFebvre also complimented MST1 Ryan Hanson and Chris Wood on a great response, and emphasized the importance of the response to the local residents and fishermen.
  - Jeff Squires asked how the negotiation will usually proceed for cost-sharing between USCG and State. MST1 Ryan Hanson responded that the USCG is only able to provide funding for removal of hazardous materials but will always consider the safety of life and the environment (mentioned an example of needing to raise a vessel to successfully remove all pollutants, instead of stinging tanks). Chris Wood added that once the threat of pollution was gone, NH DES was able to take over.
  - CAPT LeFebvre mentioned multiple cases where vessels are raised, pollutants are removed, and the vessel is placed back down - due to constraints on fund-usage by the Coast Guard. Indicated that this was a well-executed case because all parties involved were satisfied.

## **6. Penobscot Bay Full Scale Spill Response Exercise – Plans Update:** Wyman Briggs, SNNE

Reviewed Full Scale Exercise Objective: exercise a near-worst case scenario in Penobscot Bay. He discussed the following details of the upcoming exercise:

- He explained that it has been a while since a large spill scenario was exercised in Penobscot Bay, and a new ICP location has since been identified at the U Maine Hutchinson Center that needs to be tested.
- He discussed logistical challenges of a more remote location; noted that aquaculture and lobstering are also large factors, mentioned that timing will be a challenge (due to potential

COVID-19 restrictions remaining in place), and the importance of training for many new responders within the committee.

- PREP Area exercises are held once every four years, presenting a great opportunity to use additional funding for extra training sessions, coaches, and resources.
- The Concept and Objectives meeting (scheduled for 07APR2021 at 0900 via Zoom) will develop a grounded tankship type of scenario for the Full-Scale Exercise.
- The FSE scheduled date is 22SEP2021, with Just in Time Training on 21SEP2021. The Just In Time training will include the following (not an exhaustive list):
  - The Public Information Assist Team (PIAT) will conduct risk communications training, and Joint Information Center training,
  - ICS specific training,
  - Waterway information and potentially impacted resources on Penobscot Bay.
- Full IMT will go through an operational planning cycle to develop an Incident Action Plan.
- Noted that while planning for the exercise will be completed this year, implementation of the exercise may need be postponed until 2022 due to COVID-19 restrictions in place.
- Opened for questions:
  - Jeff Squires asked if postponing will go to next year, or the next 4-year planning cycle. Wyman responded that the current plan is to push back 6-12 months – if necessary.
  - Michael McDonough asked to be involved in the planning process as well as the exercise. Wyman agreed to connect him with the Irving staff involved in the exercise/planning.
  - Willie Whitmore asked if we will be attending the virtual full-scale exercise held by Sector Long Island Sound. Wyman will be attending, and Sector Long Island Sound agreed to share lessons learned.
  - Willie Whitmore asked if a hybrid approach will be possible if the FSE is held in September, to increase participation and provide more opportunity for agencies with restricted travel. Wyman agreed to have the discussion at upcoming planning meetings.

#### **7. USCG D1 Updates:** Cornell Rosiu

The Region 1 Regional Response Tea 1 meeting is scheduled via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 05MAY from 1000-1500

#### **8. NOAA Updates:** Willie Whitmore, New Region 1 NOAA SSC

- Explained that he is currently prohibited from travelling with no update on when travel will be permitted.
- Announced that his group is starting to pick up virtual training, to include a recent virtual SCAT training session. Science of Oil Spills/Chemical Releases virtual training sessions are currently scheduled for September and October.
- Discussed that his position is slightly modified to include work with the Disaster Preparedness Program. This will now include work on hurricanes, nor'easters, and Incident Management Teams. *For more information on the NOAA Disaster Preparedness Program, visit:*  
<https://response.restoration.noaa.gov/disaster-preparedness-program>
- Announced that additional funding is now available for workshops (e.g.: shoreline engineering, coastal emergencies, aquaculture, or marine debris following major weather events). Solicited for requests for training and workshops throughout the committee.

#### **9. EPA and other Agency/Organization Updates:** No updates.

#### **10. Recent/Upcoming Events, Announcements, Exercises & Training:**

- RRT Region 1 Meeting: 1000-1500, May 5, 2021 via Microsoft Teams
- Just-In-Time Training, Penobscot Bay FSE, September 21, 2021

- Penobscot Bay, Full Scale Exercise, Hutchinson Center, Belfast, September 22, 2021
- ME/NH Area Committee Meeting, 0900-1130 Oct 21, 2021 via Zoom or at NH DES, Portsmouth, NH

**11. Last Call: We wish you all the best!**

- LT John Ramos: Marine Safety Detachment Belfast
  - Thanked Sector members, MEMA, DEP, and MSD Belfast
- LCDR Nick Lajoie: Chief, Incident Management Division
  - Eager to head to Headquarters, expressed the value of the relationships between USCG, States and other agencies.
- LCDR Lori Loughran, Chief, Emergency Management and Force Readiness
  - Agreed that the Maine/New Hampshire Area Committee is an amazing team to work on. Looking forward to going to CG Headquarters - Office of Emergency Management.
- CAPT Brian LeFebvre. Commanding Officer, SNNE, FOSC
  - Congratulated each of the departing CG members on very successful assignments and highlighted the great work he has seen among agencies. He mentioned that he will be retiring and staying in Maine and announced that Government Initiated Unannounced Exercises are back on track for industry. He reviewed the ALGOMA VERITY case, and discussed how the management was effective because of professional working relationships among agency partners and incorporating their unique perspectives. He complimented Wyman on the exceptional quality and content of ME/NH Area Committee meetings. He also noted the importance of congressional representation on the committee and thanked the entire group for years of excellent partnerships.

**12. Closing Comments/Adjourn:**

Jeff Squires offered closing comments: expressed that he is looking forward to planning for the upcoming full scale exercise and wished all the departing USCG members well.

**Meeting adjourned**

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