New Hampshire Dredge Management Task Force
Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2016

The meeting was held on Wednesday, May 11, 2016 from 1:30 PM to 2:55 PM at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, 222 International Drive, Suite 175, Pease Tradeport, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

Introductions and Announcements
Chairman Chris Williams asked members to introduce themselves. The list of attendees follows.

Attending members in alphabetical order:
Robert Boeri, Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program (MA CZM)
Olga Guza-Pabst, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Chris Holt, Portsmouth Pilots
Richard Holt, Jr., Moran Towing Corp.
Mike Johnson, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
William Kavanaugh, Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)
Richard Kristoff, ACOE
Eric Nestler, Normandeau Associates
Chris Scott, Senator Jean Shaheen
Tracy Shattuck, Pease Development Authority Division of Ports and Harbors (PDA-DPH)
Chris Williams, Chair, NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Coastal Program

Staff:
Mary Power, NHDES Coastal Program

Guests:
Deren Jacobs, Kittery Harbor Master
Mark McCabe, AECOM
Tom Murphy, UNITIL
Dan Robbins, Appledore Marine
Peter Whitman, Kittery Port Authority

Legislative update:

Chris Scott of Senator Shaheen’s office stated that since the last DMTF meeting staff from the Senator’s office have participated in meetings to identify priority New Hampshire projects for inclusion in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Two priority projects were identified: 1) construction authority for the Piscataqua River turning basin improvement project; and 2) extension of the Cape Arundel dredge material disposal site closure deadline. Both projects have been included in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee’s draft WRDA bill. The bill passed that committee on April 28, 2016 and is awaiting consideration by the full Senate. Mr. Scott stated that the proposed WRDA language will keep the Cape Arundel disposal site open until 2021, not 2024, as was originally requested. Chairman thanked Mr. Scott for the Senator’s efforts. Discussion followed.
**Project updates:**

**Piscataqua River Turning Basin Improvement Project**

Bill Kavanaugh, ACOE, provided an update from Project Manager, Jennifer Flanagan. The ACOE is currently working toward getting the preliminary investigations/studies in place. Contracts for the fin fish and subsurface investigations have been sent to the contractor for signature and should be awarded within the next few weeks. Chair stated that Mark Habel, ACOE, had said that additional rock borings were necessary to determine the nature of the rock and how to manage it. Mike Johnson, NMFS, stated that at the last DMTF meeting Dr. Fred Short, UNH, stated that aerial photos from 2015 depicted eelgrass beds near the footprint of the proposed turning basin. He also stated that Mark Habel indicated that the ACOE would be conducting another eelgrass survey of the area this summer. Mr. Johnson asked about the timing of the eelgrass survey and inquired if the ACOE anticipated hiring a contractor to conduct the survey. Mr. Kavanaugh was uncertain but stated that he’d look into it and report back.

Olga Guza-Pabst, EPA, asked if Massachusetts is still planning to use dredged material from the project for beach nourishment. Robert Boeri, Massachusetts CZM (MA CZM), stated that the Merrimack Beach Alliance is still planning to use at least half of the sand and that MA CZM continues to discuss the issue with the Towns of Newbury and Salisbury. Mr. Boeri stated that if the Towns agree to appropriate funds to obtain the material, additional studies to further characterize the material may be required.

Peter Whitman, Kittery Port Authority, stated that although the Town of Kittery is not going to use the sandy material from the project, they may still be interested in the rock. He then asked about the proposed quantity of rock. Chairman stated that the project would generate approximately 25,000 cubic yards of rock. Mr. Whitman stated that the rock would probably be used as a shoreline revetment but the exact use was still uncertain. Chairman stated that the Town of Kittery had previously expressed interest in using the rock for wave attenuation in Pepperell Cove. Mr. Whitman stated that the Town decided against using the rock for wave attenuation due to the presence of eelgrass and the fact that it was determined that wave attenuation would increase siltation.

Chairman Williams reminded members that the project will generate approximately 700,000 cubic yards of sandy material in addition to approximately 25,000 cubic yards of rock. The ACOE has received approval to dispose of the material at the proposed Isles of Shoals North disposal site. However, the Towns of Newbury, Newburyport and Salisbury, MA as well as Wells, ME have expressed interest in acquiring the sandy material for beach nourishment. The ACOE has indicated that it would give half of the sandy material to the Town of Wells and the other half to three towns in Massachusetts if agreements can be reached with the Towns. Chair also stated that while the Town of Kittery appears to be interested in using the rock from the project there have also been discussions about placing it near two of the breakwaters at the Isles of Shoals. Discussion followed.
## Sagamore Creek and Portsmouth Back Channels Maintenance Dredge

Bill Kavanaugh, ACOE, stated that he has been assigned the Sagamore Creek project in Mike Walsh’s absence. He continued by stating that ACOE and NHDES have been working on resolving some issues regarding the language of the draft Water Quality Certification (WQC). He stated that the ACOE is currently preparing the plans and specifications, however they are contingent upon any conditions that may be included in the final WQC. Mr. Kavanaugh asked the Chair to provide an update on the status of the WQC. Chair stated that the ACOE has expressed concern with language in the draft WQC related, in part, to proposed monitoring requirements for the dredging activities. NHDES is currently reviewing revised language provided by the ACOE. NHDES hopes to release the draft WQC for public comment in the near future. Following a 30-day public comment period, NHDES will address any public comments before issuing the WQC. Chair stated that the ACOE has also submitted a Coastal Zone Management Act federal consistency determination to the NHDES Coastal Program. Issuance of the federal consistency determination will follow issuance of the WQC. Chair also stated that PDA-DPH, as the project sponsor, has submitted an application to the NHDES Wetlands Bureau. Review of that application is ongoing.

Chair reminded members that the ACOE is proposing to dredge approximately 4,100 cubic yards of sandy material from a large shoal located near the confluence of the Back Channels. The material will be dredged by mechanical dredge and transported by scow to a nearshore placement site located approximately 900 feet offshore from Wallis Sands State Park.

## Hampton Harbor Jetty Repair

Bill Kavanaugh, ACOE, stated that earlier this week the ACOE awarded a contract to Mohawk Northeast for just under $2 million for work to repair the Hampton Harbor north jetty. Mohawk Northeast recently successfully completed jetty repair work in both Bridgeport and New Haven Connecticut. Mohawk has contacted Tracy Shattuck, PDA-DPH, regarding a proposal to bring stone into Pease and then truck them down to Hampton. Mohawk also mentioned the possibility of shipping the stone to the state pier and then barging it down to Hampton. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that the contractor will determine how they want to get the stone to the jetty. Chairman Williams asked how long the project would take to complete. Mr. Kavanaugh stated that it’s likely to last two to three months, depending upon the weather. Mr. Kavanaugh also stated that he hopes work can begin as close to the authorized construction start date of September 15th because the entrance to the harbor is dynamic and placing stones in that environment in the middle of winter is difficult and dangerous. Discussion followed.

Mr. Kavanaugh then stated that the ACOE has been informed of shoaling in the inner harbor. As a result, the ACOE will begin sediment sampling and testing this fiscal year. Discussion followed.
Other Business:

■ Rye Harbor Maintenance Dredging Sediment Sampling

Mr. Kavanaugh stated that biological sampling of the sediment was performed approximately two weeks ago. Analysis is currently underway and results are expected later this summer. Chairman Williams reminded members that the ACOE has already conducted grain size and chemical analysis of the sediment in Rye Harbor. The ACOE is proposing offshore disposal, perhaps at the Cape Arundel Disposal site, because the material is likely not of a suitable grain size to be placed on area beaches.

■ Northern Utilities Sediment Remediation, Squamscott River, Exeter

Chairman reminded members that at the January 14, 2015 DMTF meeting, AECOM presented a proposed sediment remediation project in the Squamscott River in Exeter. Chairman then introduced Mark McCabe of AECOM who provided details of the project that was completed last fall. The project involved removing less than 1,000 cubic yards of coal tar contaminated sediments from the river. The source of the contamination was likely a former manufactured gas plant in operation from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. Mr. McCabe provided details of the project, including site access, dredging activities, and transportation, de-watering and removal of the contaminated sediments. Discussion followed.

■ Summary: New Hampshire/Southern Maine Offshore Disposal Siting Interagency Meeting

Chairman Williams informed members of a meeting held last week at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to discuss the sighting options for a new offshore dredge material disposal facility to serve southern Maine and New Hampshire. Meeting participants included, in part, Maine DEP, Maine Coastal Program, Maine Dept. of Marine Resources (ME DMR), New Hampshire Coastal Program, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, EPA, NMFS, and ACOE. Chairman reminded members that the Cape Arundel Disposal Site (CADS) is scheduled to close in 2021. The closure of CADS will leave southern Maine and New Hampshire without an offshore disposal site for dredged material.

During the meeting three alternatives were discussed: 1) the former Isles of Shoals disposal site; 2) expansion of the Cape Arundel disposal site (CADS); and 3) the proposed Isles of Shoals North disposal site (IOSN). The former Isles of Shoals disposal site, which is located in NH and ME waters, was closed in the late 1970’s or early 1980’s. It is believed that the site was filled to capacity. The site is also heavily used by fishermen. As a result, the site was not considered suitable for the disposal of dredged material. There was also little interest in expanding CADS, which is currently located in ME state waters, into federal waters. The IOSN site, which is located entirely in federal waters, has been authorized for the one-time disposal of the material from the Piscataqua River Turning Basin Improvement project. According to information provided by ME DMR, the area around IOSN is used by fishermen, including fishermen from Massachusetts. The ACOE has agreed to provide additional information regarding the IOSN site to the fisheries agencies in ME, NH & MA who will conduct outreach to fishermen. Chair stated
that it is a priority for New Hampshire to identify a suitable offshore disposal site, given the upcoming closure of CADS.

- Schedule Next Meeting

The next DMTF meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2016 at 1:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM.