

# HTAC Dredging Subcommittee Meeting Summary

Tuesday, August 10, 2021 from 9-11 AM

Duluth Seaway Port Authority conference room

## PARTICIPANTS:

Dan Breneman (MN PCA)	Nick Patterson (JF Brennan) - <i>Chair</i>
Steve Brossart (USACE)	Jason Serck (City of Superior)
Natalie Chin (Wisconsin Sea Grant)	Cmdr Frances Smith (US Coast Guard)
Patty Fowler (MN DNR)	Ted Smith (Marine Tech)
Kris Liljeblad (City of Duluth)	Jeff Stollenwerk (DSPA)
Joe McGinnis (US Coast Guard)	Mike Wenholz (MIC) - <i>facilitator</i>
Sebastian Paczuski (USEPA)	Katie Williams (USEPA)

**PURPOSE:** To reconvene after not having met in approximately 21 months to discuss a variety of current issues.

## AGENDA:

1. **Introductions/ agenda review** – special introduction of LTJG Joseph McGinnis (Mike Wenholz)
2. **“Put & Take” Material at Erie Pier** – Can EP be used this way? (Dan Breneman)
3. **State Support for Land-Applied Beneficial Use of Dredged Material** (Dan Breneman)
4. **Implementing Erie Pier Management Plan** – initial ideas, status (Jeff Stollenwerk)
5. **Reissues Federal 404 Permits & Associated State 401 Certifications** (Jeff Stollenwerk)
6. **Anchorage Areas** – status
7. **Dredged Materials Decision Support Tool** – update (Sebastian Paczuski)
8. **How Environmental Windows Influence/Impact Dredging Projects** – general discussion, Should environmental windows be updated? (Mike Wenholz)
9. **Wrap-up**, Next steps and identify future work and topics of the Subcommittee

## SUMMARY:

### Special Introduction of LTJG Joseph McGinnis

- Commander Smith introduced LTJG Joe McGinnis. He is the new employee in the USCG Marine Safety Unit Duluth. He is replacing Abbie Lyons who was restationed, and he will be participating in HTAC meetings.

### “Put & Take” Material at Erie Pier

- Dan B framed the issue/question – can material be brought to Erie Pier for temporary stockpile?
  - Jeff S: Yes, but with some conditions

- Steve B: If under an O&M contract material must be tested for contaminants.
- Erie Pier can handle approximately 100-150,000 cubic yards of stockpiled material.
- Jason S asked if material can be placed for temporary stockpile at other public property (for example at a location on Conners Point)?
  - Steve B and Ted S: Potentially, yes. However, you need to get the location permitted first, which is not a quick process.

### **State Support for Land-Applied Beneficial Use of Dredged Material and Implementing Erie Pier Management Plan**

- Dan B is trying within MN PCA to get traction on this topic. Can the Dredging SC help promote getting money to assist in establishing beneficial use of material?
- Steve B suggested that with recent and current increased funding to USACE now might be an opportune time to tap into that funding to help subsidize beneficial use projects. One key would be to keep the focus tied to harbor maintenance and how that maintains and increases economic development.
- Jeff S gave an overview of implementing the Erie Pier Management Plan.
- Jeff S is having discussions with Northland Constructors who are potentially interested in some of the fine materials. The typical hauling cost barrier may not be an issue here as Northland Constructors has back haul to the range as they return with rock.
- Jeff S provided a 6/7/2021 letter to the USACE as a handout.
- Steve B said there is approximately 220,000 cubic yards of fine material that has been tested and is “clean”. Much more than that has not been tested and is below an elevation believed to be wet and from an era of contamination.

### **Reissues Federal 404 Permits & Associated State 401 Certifications**

- Jeff S: At the end of the Trump administration the USACE was required to update their permits, including 404 permits and 401 certifications. Jeff said the Duluth Seaway Port Authority (DSPA) is seeking to allow project specific BMPs to be determined to meet water quality standards.
- Jeff S provided a 12/11/2020 letter to the MN PCA as a handout.

### **Anchorage Areas**

- Joe M provided a short background on the port’s anchorage areas.
- Joe M: There are two “typical” anchorage areas (one in Duluth and one in Superior). Typical areas can be codified, but the Duluth and Superior areas currently have no regulations associated with them and serve as general areas for all users.
- Joe M: There is one “special” anchorage area. It is in the harbor adjacent to and along central Minnesota Point.
- Jeff S no supports keeping these anchorage areas. They are necessary if an emergency or unique situation arises and if removed it is likely they would never be available again. The DSPA supports conducting O&M dredging in these anchorage areas.
  - Steve B suggested USACE has funding to potentially conduct this O&M dredging.

### **Dredged Materials Decision Support Tool**

- Katie W gave a brief overview and status of the support tool.

- Katie W asked what projects can be fed into the model/support tool to test it out? She suggested mine reclamation as a good example to test.
  - Jeff S suggesting using projects or ideas that we think are not viable to see if the model output agrees. Or alternatively to verify projects or ideas we like.
- Mike W asked if we should have another workshop to run a few real-world examples all together? Specific examples can be chosen ahead of time and participants can come ready with the requested data.
  - The group like this idea and want to do it.
  - USEPA agreed to organize such a workshop and will reach out to Subcommittee members directly – not through Mike W.

#### **How Environmental Windows Influence/Impact Dredging Projects**

- Mike W explained this agenda item is to ask if now is the time to move forward to establish better environmental windows for the Duluth-Superior harbor? The group collectively said “yes”.
- Mike W explained he or the MIC will not be the “champion” of this effort (like Gene Clark was) but will help by facilitating meetings if that is helpful. The MIC is also likely open to establishing an Environmental Windows Subcommittee.
- Ted S suggested both MN Sea Grant and WI Sea Grant co-lead the effort. Natalie C will look into this. We know from the past that John Downing (MN Sea Grant) has wanted to support this effort and has searched for research funding to support establishing local environmental windows.
- Mike W suggested having a meeting of likely primary partners to set the direction for moving forward. All agreed.

#### **Wrap-Up**

- The Great Lakes Dredge Team meeting is October 4-5 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.