

HTAC Dredging Subcommittee

November 30, 2022 Meeting Summary; 9:00 am

Duluth Seaway Port Authority, Garfield Ave, Duluth

Attendance: Jeff Stollenwerk, DSPA; Steve Brossart, COE; Joe McGinnis and Ben Gates, USCG; Ellen Coffman, WDNR; Ted Smith, Marine Tech; Brett Ballavance, Stantec; Linda Cadotte, City of Superior; Natalie Chin, Wi Sea Grant; Dan Breneman, MPCA; Jason Serck, City of Superior; Kelsey Prihoda, Mn Sea Grant; Ricky Sarran, Ron Chicka, and Kris Liljebblad, MIC.

Agenda: Dredged Material Placement Sites – Jeff Stollenwerk, DSPA; and Environmental Windows, Kelsey Prihoda, Mn Sea Grant

Dredged Material Placement Sites: Jeff Stollenwerk summarized the ongoing task of finding placement sites for material dredged from the federal navigation channel, given that it is uncertain where dredge material will go next year or the year after. A draft goal is to identify candidate sites with this subcommittee for the next 5 years. The group agree with the goal with suggestions about some sites and engaging other participants. Jeff identified historic candidate sites including Incan Dock, Del Zotto, Pike Lake gravel pit, beach nourishment, Spirit Lake capping, Interstate Island, strip mining sites, Erie Pier, Interlake Duluth Tar site, and 21st Ave W. He indicated he would share various lists that have been developed over the years. Dan Breneman suggested that this group evaluate the sites, narrow it down and request support from state agencies. There was discussion about hiring a consultant to do this, but it was pointed out that we'd need a construction project in order to obtain funding. Jeff indicated he would assemble a list and draft measures to screen sites. The decision tool developed by the USEPA may be used for a more thorough assessment of the most viable proposed sites.

Environmental Windows: Kelsey Prihoda provided a presentation that outlined her position at Sea Grant and her goal for the project. As she pointed out, given that Sea Grant is a science-based organization, it is not political and should provide an appropriate organization to work on developing Environmental Windows. She revisited a workshop on this subject from 2018 and framed questions on how fish use the navigation channel, how in-water work impacts fish, and what habitat types are most important for juvenile fish. Ted Smith observed that there isn't current science available to assess the existing situation and decisions are often based on old information. Jeff said that we have a data resource from annual dredging operations as well as fish populations, and it would be helpful to compile the existing data. Ted and Steve agreed. It was suggested that DNR fisheries staff might be able to assist and Ted suggested prioritizing DNR's list while keeping communication going to maintain momentum on the project. Dan Breneman said we need a Duluth-Superior focused discussion that identifies funding opportunities to pursue if needed to move projects forward. Ted suggested that a UMD grad student could compile the fisheries data instead of doing a grant funding search. Kelsey said she would follow up with John Downing to explore resource availability options through Sea Grant.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.