

UPDATE FOR THE HART MILLER ISLAND
CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

May 2020

Action Items from the January 21, 2020 Meeting:

1. MDOT MPA will provide an update on the North Cell Habitat Design at the next meeting. *(Provided in this update)*
2. Mr. Brylske will provide an update on the HMI Friends Group meeting. *(Provided in this update)*
3. Mr. Blazer will work with Sea Grant to explore research funding opportunities for HMI. *(ongoing)*- Mr. Blazer contacted Maryland Sea Grant about funding opportunities for HMI. Currently, Maryland Sea Grant does not have an open request for proposal (RFP). Maryland Sea Grant's major funding effort will return in 2022. Mr. Blazer is currently on one of their advisory boards and will keep in touch with their efforts.

HMI Friends Group:

The HMI Friends Group meeting scheduled for March 19, 2020 was cancelled due to the current COVID-19 protocols on social distancing.

Mr. Paul Brylske will be contacting Mr. Rick Decker of the Friends of Maryland State Parks to arrange another meeting with the group in the near future. Options to have the meeting virtually versus postponing the meeting until COVID-19 restrictions are lessened will be explored.

North Cell Updates: Operations:

MES Operations is continuing maintenance on the dikes, trails, trenches, and roads.

MES Operations is continuing efforts to lime the perimeter trenches in the North Cell for discharge. In February, Spillways 007 and 009 were open for 10 days and discharged 36.80 million gallons (MG). In March, Spillways 007 and 009 were open for 13 days and discharged 44.73 MG. In April, Spillways 007 and 009 were open for 9 days and discharged 28.21 MG. Spillway 008 showed elevated levels of nickel and ammonia and was not opened. In May, Spillways 007 and 009 were opened for 8 days and discharged 26.29 MG.

The current North Cell water surface elevation is 37.95 feet. Water elevation increased by 0.18 foot since the last meeting. Currently, Spillways 007 and 009 are discharging daily for the month of June.

North Cell Updates: North Cell Design:

In coordination with DNR, MDOT MPA and MES, a preliminary design for the North Cell was chosen and includes upland, transitional and ponded habitat area to maximize potential wildlife habitat in the North Cell. Feasibility cost estimates for implementation of the design are being finalized by MES and Century Engineering. However, due to funding limitations resulting from COVID-19 impacts, the North Cell development may be delayed.

North Cell Updates: Design with Dredge:

Wye Research Environmental Center (WREC) and University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) reviewed and provided input on the monitoring plan. The revised engineer's estimate was sent to MPA for approval, however due to funding limitations resulting from COVID-19 impacts, the Design with Dredge project may be delayed.

HMI Discharge Permit:

The new permit draft was received on April 16, 2020. MDE, MES, and MDOT MPA met on May 11, 2020 to review and discuss any comments that needed clarification followed by final MDOT MPA and MES comments sent to MDE on May 15, 2020 to finalize all comments and changes to the draft permit. Updates to the permit include, the removal of Spillway 003 from the discharge permit, so no further monitoring will be required. The removal of selenium and, the reduction of copper and zinc sampling frequency from monthly to quarterly based on the success of water treatment with lime and consistently meeting permit limits. The daily 2 million gallons per day (MGD) flow requirement will be changed to an annual average flow of 2 MGD per spillway. MDE is finalizing these edits and once completed, the draft permit (Tentative Determination) will be posted for public review and comment, at which time the COC will be notified.

DNR Report:

Currently, HMI State Park and South Cell public access are open to the public, but in a limited capacity. Beach access, picnics, camping, and walking the South Cell are all allowed. The Ranger station is closed with no bathroom access, bike rentals, snow cones, or exchange of money.

DNR field activities were cancelled during the COVID-19 State of Emergency, as a result the Forest Service canceled a scheduled controlled burn of the North Cell. As the state opens back up MES will keep the COC up to date on any changes.

DNR staff performed maintenance tasks around the park and surrounding areas including:

- Checked all Personal Flotation Devices (PFD).
- Removed waterfowl site markers 15A, 16A, and 19.

- Posted 'Area Closed' signs on Pleasure Island campsites, Hawk Cove campsites, main beach campsites, beach, ranger station, bike shed, and rental/concessions shed. Signs were removed after Governor Hogan lifted restrictions on state park closures.
- Sent Ranger I in for service and delivered Ranger III to North Point.
- Scheduled servicing for fire extinguishers at HMI.

Staff distributed the South Cell trail map to other rangers for record keeping purposes and updated the HMI Park website with up to date information.

The Baltimore County Health Department was contacted to renew the food permit for concessions.

Staff worked on creating an informative billboard for camping at HMI.

DNR is working to coordinate and plan for upcoming tours and events to be held during the 2020 season including:

- DNR transportation to and from HMI for a birding tour for the Baltimore Bird Club around the South Cell.
- Fundraising event to benefit an autism charity to be held on HMI July 2020.
- A camping trip for Boy Scout Troop 564 was cancelled due to COVID-19. DNR will work with the troop to reschedule their camping trip.
- The HMI 5 Mile Run is tentatively scheduled for October 10, 2020. In the event the run is postponed, Mr. Will Murdoch of Charm City Run will contact DNR.

DNR will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation to evaluate if events and tours will need to be cancelled or postponed.

DNR staff will perform upcoming maintenance tasks including:

- Remove driftwood from the beach area.
- Trash sweep of the beach area/campsites on HMI and Hawk Cove.
- Deep clean restrooms, caulk edges, and replace siding.
- Clean observation tower and remove any wasp nests.
- Make any necessary repairs to bikes to prepare for future patron use.
- Remove all waterfowl blind sites and store them at North Point State Park.
- Inspect and clean all signage and interpretive signs.
- Dig out picnic tables and fire rings at all campsites.

Administrative Topics:

Mr. Brylske may want to schedule a virtual meeting for September 15th, if the on-site meeting is cancelled due to COVID-19.

Photos of HMI, May 2020



South Cell, looking south



South Cell, looking southwest



Spillway 007, looking east



Spillway 007, looking west



Spillway 009, looking northeast



Spillway 009, looking southwest



Deer in South Cell