

# Memorandum

TO: Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee

FROM: Rebecca Kreatschman – MES

DATE: November 6, 2018

SUBJECT: Next meeting – November 13, 2018

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The next meeting of the Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee (HMI COC) will be held on Tuesday, November 13, 2018 at 6:30 pm at 2200 Broening Highway. Please use the door on the side of the building and the conference room will be on the left. Parking is available adjacent to the building and also across the highway. The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) will provide dinner at 6:00 pm. The agenda for the next meeting will be provided the week prior to the meeting date. **Please call Ms. Margie Hamby at (410) 385-4419 if you cannot make this meeting.**

Attached for your review is a copy of the minutes from the September 18, 2018 meeting.

**HART-MILLER ISLAND  
CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING  
6:30 PM  
September 18, 2018**

**ATTENDEES:**

Francis Taylor	NPPCCC
Paul Brylske	Seventh District
Craig Doyle	Pleasure Boaters
Larry Lee	Essex-Middle River CC
Dave Patro	GDCC
Karen Wynn	Sixth District
Dave Bibo	MDOT MPA
Chris Correale	MDOT MPA
Jennifer Guthrie	MDOT MPA
Kristen Keene	MDOT MPA
Holly Miller	MDOT MPA
Bob Iman	DNR
Bruce Michael	DNR
Paul Shepherd	DNR
Rebecca Kreatschman	MES
Amanda Peñafiel	MES
Lincoln Tracy	MES
David Riter	Baltimore County EPS
John Bailey	North Point State Park Volunteers
Sam Weaver	BRRC
Delegate Ric Metzger	Sixth District

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- MES will present results from the final monitoring of the North Cell Test Strips after the growing season ends.
- MPA will update the COC members on the Sport Fisherman's HMI COC vacancy.

### **1. OPENING REMARKS**

#### **Paul Brylske-Chairman.**

- Mr. Brylske asked the HMI COC members for approval of the meeting minutes from the June 24, 2018 HMI COC meeting. All members approved.
- Mr. Bibo reviewed action items from the previous meeting. Ms. Peñafiel explained the Maryland Environmental Service (MES) submitted a permit renewal application to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) in April 2018. MDE posted a "Notice of Application Received" in the Baltimore Sun on May 18 and 25, 2018. When the permit draft is received, an additional public notice will be sent out. Ms. Miller added that this information will also be shared with the COC. Mr. Taylor asked if there was a timeframe for this process. Ms. Peñafiel answered that there is no specific timeframe, but MDE will issue the draft permit when it is complete. The current permit expires in April 2019. If a new permit is not issued before April 2019, HMI will operate under the current permit until the new permit is received. Mr. Bibo asked for an update on the Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) field trip. Ms. Keene announced the trip for the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) members will be held this year at Pearce Creek and is tentatively scheduled for October 11, 2018 during daytime hours. The trip will include a visit to the Town of Cecilton's water treatment center, a tour of the Pearce Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF), a tour of the C&D Canal museum, and discussion with some residents involved in the project.

### **2. FRIENDS GROUP DISCUSSION**

- Mr. Brylske reminded the group that members voted to partner with the North Point State Park volunteers at the last meeting. Mr. Brylske encouraged interested members to attend the October meeting of the North Point State Park volunteers, which is held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7 PM in the visitor center. Due to time conflicts, other dates and times for future meetings will be explored. Mr. Brylske asked Mr. Iman if any visitors to the park have signed up for the HMI Friends Group. Mr. Iman replied that no visitors have signed up, but staff is making an effort to outreach for the friends group.

### **3. DESIGN WITH DREDGE PRESENTATION**

#### **Kristen Keene-MDOT MPA**

- Ms. Keene presented on the HMI Design with Dredge Pilot Project.
- The MDOT MPA partnered with Mahan Rykiel Associates (MRA) to develop the pilot project, which falls under the Innovative Reuse Program.
- The project will be located in the Northwest corner of the North Cell. The location is adjacent to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) facilities and will be accessible to South Cell Access visitors. The area is located in higher elevation and has been consistently dry. The pilot project will be 23 acres in size, which is large enough to create viable habitat but small enough to manage.
- The pilot project has three primary goals: create diverse habitat that will improve ecological and environmental functions, minimize and optimize costs for construction and maintenance, and engage

and educate stakeholders to build support for the Innovative Reuse Program and demonstrate how dredged material can be used as a resource.

- The project will include three types of distinct landforms, described as mounds. The objectives of the mounds will be to accelerate soil ripening (i.e. transformation of marine sediments to terrestrial soil), minimize the presence of *Phragmites*, and stimulate habitat development. The first type of mound, referred to as a ‘basic mound’ will be a simple mound shape. The second type of mound, or ‘surface mound,’ will have smaller mounds established on the overall structure to increase surface area in an effort to accelerate soil ripening. The third type of mound, referred to as the ‘habitat mound,’ will be constructed with habitat readily available for species to utilize, including features like vernal pools and rocks. All mounds will be pentagon in shape, have a perimeter trench that could contain water, and be approximately 90 feet in diameter. Mound shape was decided based on the movement of the machinery to minimize time and construction costs. The pilot project design will include 21 mounds total, seven of each type (i.e. seven basic mounds, seven surface mounds, seven habitat mounds). For each grouping of seven, the design includes one control and six treatment mounds. All treatment mounds will receive a soil amendment, such as agricultural lime or compost, and some will also be planted with vegetation; treatments will be applied at 0, 1, and 2 years. The pilot project area will allow space for a pathway through the mounds for walking and machine traffic. Additionally, each 4-mound configuration will include a plaza (i.e. open space) that can be used for education, outreach, and management purposes.
- Mr. Metzger asked what kind of vegetation would be planted. Ms. Keene explained that lists of native vegetation species have been compiled using species that are already successful onsite and literature research. These species include a variety of upland and wetland species that are expected to thrive in the given soil type and can exist in dry to wet zones. Mr. Brylske asked if information from the North Cell Test Strips will be used to help with the Design with Dredge pilot project. Ms. Peñafiel and Ms. Miller explained that information from the Test Strips study has already been included in the Design with Dredge project.
- There are four phases to the pilot project: Concept Design, Design Development, Construction, and Adaptive Management and Monitoring. The project is currently finalizing phase 2, Design Development. The next phase will include construction of the 21 mounds and is anticipated to begin within the next 6-10 months. Phase 4, Adaptive Management and Monitoring, will begin immediately after construction and will be used to evaluate success. The monitoring strategy will evaluate three primary parameters including soil ripening, habitat, and structure. Soil ripening will be monitored for physical, chemical, and biological ripening. Physical ripening will include identifying signs of drying, such as cracks in the soil; chemical ripening will be determined by collecting and analyzing field samples to investigate chemical changes, such as pH; and biological ripening will include collecting and analyzing field samples to look for the presence of roots and microbial activity. Habitat will be monitored for vegetation diversity and abundance, including the presence of *Phragmites*, as well as the presence of animal species. Lastly, structure will be monitored by collecting topographic survey data to assess mound stability.
- Mr. Brylske asked what would be considered successful after the three years of monitoring. Ms. Keene explained that successful vegetative growth, animal species utilizing the area, and soil transformations occurring and remaining stable would all qualify as productive habitat development.
- Mr. Brylske asked what the plan for the project would be after the three years, if it is successful and if there was a plan to use it in the North Cell on a large scale. Ms. Keene answered that the project is a demonstrative project for the Innovative Reuse program, and duals as a method to establish low maintenance habitat in the North Cell. After the project is completed, discussions with DNR will be held to determine whether this model will be implemented across the remainder of the North Cell. Ms. Miller explained that throughout the project, there will also be discussions to update DNR on the progress. The COC members will also be updated throughout the project.

#### 4. NORTH CELL UPDATE

##### **Lincoln Tracy– MES**

- MES Operations is currently focusing efforts on liming the perimeter trenches for discharge.
- The pH at both Spillways 007 and 008 is about 7.45. In August, Spillway 007 was opened for 16 days and discharged 23.6 million gallons. Spillway 008 was opened for 14 days and discharged 22.3 million gallons. The pH at Spillway 009 is currently 4.5. MES Operations worked to extend and reinforce the trench at Spillway 009, in preparation for liming and discharge.
- The current North Cell elevation is 38.9 feet, and is the same elevation reported at the June COC meeting.
- In August, the lake fill pump was turned on in the South Cell to maintain water elevation. In September, Spillway 003 was opened to discharge excess water from rain events.
- An electrical failure occurred on HMI in August. Partial power was lost in the Operations building and the emergency generator was used for two weeks. DNR facilities also temporarily lost partial power. A ground fault was located by Spillway 003 and fixed. Maintenance upgrades to the power lines will be pursued.
- The Blue Heron was out for service for a few weeks in August.
- MES Operations has temporarily stopped construction of the North Cell deep pool. Mr. Brylske asked about the current depth of the North Cell deep pool. Mr. Tracy answered the elevation is 25 feet, making it 15 feet deep, which is the lowest depth of the design.
- Mr. Taylor asked about removing debris from the riprap on the exterior of HMI. Mr. Tracy answered that debris is not removed from the riprap unless necessary or in danger of causing damage. Mr. Michael added that debris has been a huge issue along the waterways in Maryland due to excessive rain. High flow events at the Conowingo Dam have contributed to debris issues as well, due to multiple opened gates on several occasions. August 2018 had the highest flow rate at the Conowingo Dam of any August on record. July 2018 had the largest flow since Tropical Storm Lee hit in September 2011. July 2018 had one of the highest flows on record for the month of July with 375,000 cubic feet per second. High flow events that occur in the summer also impact water quality, habitat, and living resources such as oysters, clams, and crabs. Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) is impacted due to low water clarity and lack of sunlight reaching the plants. The largest continuous bed of SAV in Maryland, the Susquehanna Flats, has withstood the high flow events and maintains clear water inside the beds.

#### 5. ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE

##### **Amanda Peñafiel-MES**

- In spring of 2017, 16 test strips were established in two different areas of the North Cell in limed and unlimed sediments and seeded with 16 different perennial and annual grass species. The purpose of this study was to observe which species would grow best under the current HMI soil conditions. Each strip is 300 feet long by 5 feet wide. The test strips were monitored monthly to assess for germination and growth. Adjacent to the test strips, 7 different species of woody vegetation were also planted and monitored monthly to assess for survivability. Species were chosen to withstand low pH and be salt tolerant.
- For 2018, it was decided that the test strips would be replanted and monitored for an additional growing season. Due to continuous flooding, the unlimed side was not replanted. In addition, soil sampling is conducted in the test strips twice a month to order provide more information on success of planted species.

- Warm season species were planted in July 2018. Warm season species included Big Bluestem, Indiangrass, Alkaligrass, Prairie cordgrass, Japanese Millet, Barnyard grass, Switchgrass, Coastal Panicgrass, Smooth Panicgrass, and Western Wheatgrass. Germination monitoring took place each week to look for signs of new growth. Preliminary results show that there are more species present this year than last year. In all three sections, Prairie Cordgrass and Foxtail Barley showed signs of growth. Alkaligrass, Barnyard grass and Coastal Panicgrass are seen within the 0-100 and 100-200 foot sections. Creeping Red Fescue, Oats, Rye, Japanese Millet, and Smooth Panicgrass were only noted within the 0-100 foot section.
- Final monitoring of planted grass species and woody vegetation will occur in October.
- Final results will be presented to the HMI COC.
- HMI has received two aerial sprays on June 26, 2018 and August 14, 2018 to help control the mosquito population. Traps are set in the North Cell adjacent to the test strips and in the South Cell by the holding pond. Most of the mosquitos caught by the traps are *Culex pipens* (Common House Mosquito). Another spray will be conducted if further staff complaints are received. Mr. Bibo asked about setting the traps and the protocol to determine the need for an aerial spray. Ms. Peñafiel explained that the traps are light traps baited with dry ice and set for 24 hours. Ms. Kreatschman collects the traps, counts and identifies the mosquitoes, and results are reported to the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to determine if an aerial spray is needed. Mr. Patro asked if the mosquitoes are tested for disease. Ms. Peñafiel explained they have not been tested this year, although they have in the past. MDA has recently inquired about testing the mosquitoes for disease.
- Invasive control will continue through October to control for *Phragmites*, mile-a-minute, pokeweed, Tree-of-heaven and Princess tree. Invasive control in the test strips will also continue to control the spread of *Phragmites*. MES is working with DNR Forest Service on a possible fall burn of *Phragmites* in the DNR marshes and North Cell. Originally the burn was scheduled to take place in the spring. However due to wet conditions, it was rescheduled to the fall.
- Exterior SAV monitoring for the fall will be completed later in September. SAV sampling is done twice a year in the spring and fall. The spring monitoring event took place in June.
- The HMI Exterior Monitoring Report was submitted to COC members for comments. It will be submitted to MDE as a final report. MDE is scheduled to present during the November COC meeting.

## 6. DNR UPDATES

### **Bob Iman – DNR**

- South Cell Access visitors used over 300 bikes between July and August.
- Visitation to the park has been down due to the rainy weather. Mr. Brylske asked about attendance numbers compared to last year. Mr. Iman responded that final attendance records will not be ready until the end of the season. Ms. Peñafiel explained that through August, 1,178 people had visited the South Cell.
- Ms. Peñafiel announced the end of the South Cell Public Access season is September 30. A Year 3 wrap-up progress meeting will be held at the end of the season. Mr. Iman added that a 2018 report will be compiled.
- DNR staff lead two field trips with children from the Conservation Job Corp (CJC) youth group out to HMI to allow them to experience nature in a way not common for inner city youth. Participants were 13-17 years old with most being 15 years old.
- DNR staff assisted the MDE/NASA ozone group with transportation to and from HMI during June 2018. Mr. Iman passed around two letters from MDE thanking DNR for their assistance. Mr.

Brylske asked if the ozone study will continue in the future. Ms. Miller explained that plans are being discussed but there is interest to continue the research on HMI.

- Paul Shepherd is the new HMI Park Ranger.
- DNR hosted the DNR Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and the Commission for Maryland Recreation and Tourism on July 25, 2018 for a tour of HMI before attending a conference at North Point State Park.
- DNR is participating in a program called Park Quest. HMI is included as a bonus quest since transportation to the HMI State Park is not provided to participants. The bonus quest is called Treasure Island. About 12 teams have completed the Treasure Island quest at HMI.
- Family Fun Days took place in August and September. Gunpowder State Park Naturalist lead programs for guests like fish seining and monarch butterfly and milkweed interpretation.
- DNR staff led programs on HMI once a month. Impromptu programs are also set up inside the facility for visitors. Programs included nature hikes, history tours, invasive species identification, water safety lessons, bike trips, lifecycle of the monarch butterfly and blue crab, and bird watching. In July, 300 visitors attended programs.
- DNR completed maintenance on the Hawk Cove campsites including posting new signs and replacing grills.
- DNR staff installed new mile markers and interpretive signs and stained existing signs.
- The 2018 Maryland Park Service Lifeguard Competition was held on August 7. Assateague State Park placed first, Cunningham Falls State Park placed second, and Gunpowder State Park placed third. Fox 45 News covered the competition.
- DNR staff assisted the Tidewater Ecosystem Assessment with transportation to Pleasure Island for a seed planting project.
- DNR staff assisted Baltimore County's Blind Licensing Day at Sparrows Point High School. Over 300 people attended.
- Ranger Shepherd attended Core training in Western, MD; Core training is for all new employees.
- DNR staff prepped the facility for Hurricane Florence.
- Mr. Brylske inquired about the paddleboards and kayaks. Mr. Iman explained that they are waiting for the Attorney General's office to create a rental agreement for visitors. The paddleboards and kayaks are onsite. Mr. Brylske asked Mr. Iman about DNR's involvement with the Baltimore Triathlon that is held at Gunpowder State Park. Mr. Iman explained that he is no longer involved with the race. The Baltimore Triathlon will be held September 28-29, 2018.
- Mr. Doyle asked about a deer hunting event at HMI. Mr. Iman clarified that the event is not at HMI. He explained that the 2-day deer hunting event will be held at North Point State Park and will be shotgun only. It will occur during the third week in January.
- A second HMI 5-Miler run is planned for fall of 2019.
- Mr. Taylor asked about contracts for transportation. Ms. Peñafiel explained that it was not a venture for MES or MPA, but DNR is exploring that option. Mr. Iman added that DNR is looking at options and working on logistics. Weaver's Marina has been approached. Finding a boat that can travel in such shallow waters has been a challenge. Discussions will continue in the winter. Mr. Weaver suggested a floating dock. Mr. Iman said that he would pass that suggestion on but believes a pier would be necessary. A pontoon boat was also an option to explore. Mr. Weaver added that Weaver's Marina owns a pontoon boat.
- Mr. Weaver added that his interns cleaned up 57 tires in one day off the perimeter of HMI.

## 7. FINAL REMARKS

### **Dave Bibo – MDOT MPA**

- Mr. Bibo thanked Delegate Ric Metzger for attending the meeting. Mr. Metzger stated that he was impressed with the work accomplished at HMI.

- Ms. Guthrie has been trying to fill vacant positions. She asked anyone who had a suggestion to please let her know. Ms. Wynn asked for the qualifications of the Sports Fisherman position. The only qualification is the person must represent the sports fishing or crabbing industry in Baltimore County. Ms. Wynn recommended Sam Weaver for the position. Mr. Weaver is the member of several fishing groups.
- The next HMI COC meeting will be November 13, 2018. The Exterior Monitoring Report will be presented by the Maryland Department of Environment, Maryland Geological Survey, and Chesapeake Biological Laboratory.
- The 2018 Annual Meeting of the DMMP will take place on November 2, 2018 at 9:30 am to 12:00 pm in the Sollers Point Multi-Purpose Center in Dundalk, MD.

Meeting adjourned-7:45pm