

Chair Smith called for changes to the previous month's Meeting Summary as presented.

Motion by Bob Libby/Martin Forbes to approve the March 4, 2009 Meeting Summary with no changes. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Superior Waterfront Initiative – Montreal Pier – Superior Research Institute

Dr. Richard Stewart reported that UWS has been seeking future space for additional research facilities. They have been working with the City of Superior and research stakeholders to identify a location that meets their needs. They wanted a waterfront location that did not compete with future maritime industry needs. Montreal Pier was identified as a suitable site because its narrow configuration is not suitable for most industrial uses and it provides the dock access necessary for research vessels. The research facility would be called the Superior Research Institute.

UWS is currently working with potential users and other stakeholders and has developed a conceptual design. The City of Superior is also interested in developing the landside area adjacent to Montreal Pier with green space and trail amenities. Dr. Stewart emphasized that this project is a town-gown effort and that this project is a collaborative effort between UWS and the City of Superior.

The goals of the project include expanding opportunities research, outreach and public education. They would like to develop a state of the art environmentally sustainable facility that would serve government agencies, academic research, and the private sector. The waterfront location would provide access for small and large research vessels and provide the public with high quality access to the waterfront. Currently the Great Ships Initiative, which is a ballast water research facility is located on Montreal Pier and would be an excellent compliment to the proposed research institute.

The current conceptual design depicts a four story building with a total of 76,000 sq. ft. with an option for an additional 30,000 sq. ft. The design includes a ground level parking garage and entry with the first level to include classrooms, meeting space, exhibit space and a central hall. The upper levels would include office space and labs. The inclusion of a large amount of lab space would accommodate current needs as well as providing space for visiting researchers.

The next steps in this process include engaging stakeholders, establishing funding opportunities, building design, developing the necessary infrastructure, and acquiring additional land. The timeline for this project will be about 4-6 years which is typical for a university project of this magnitude.

4. U.S. Steel Superfund Site Update

Susan Johnson from MPCA introduced herself as the project manager for the U.S. Steel Superfund Site and the St Louis River Interlake Duluth Tar Superfund site. Nationally, these two sites are listed as one Superfund Site but the State of Minnesota recognizes them as separate sites.

A brief history of the U.S. Steel site was presented outlining the steel and coke production at the site from 1915 to 1979 and the designation of the site as a Superfund Site in 1983. The contaminants on the site included PAHs (coal tar) and heavy metals in soil, sediment, surface water and shallow groundwater. The Record of Decision was developed in 1989 and a remediation strategy was created. Most of the land area contaminants were removed.

The MPCA is required to review each Superfund Site every five years. The purpose of the five year reviews are to determine if response actions are protective of human health and the environment. The latest review for the U.S. Steel site was completed in 2008 and found fairly widespread contamination which will require additional cleanup as well as additional sampling to determine the source and scope of the contamination.

The sediment and creek/pond units were initially “no action” remedies and are now in the investigative stage with additional data needed to conduct an ecological and human health risk assessment. Other operable units within the site were found to have contamination problems. It appears that the initial cleanup work may not have been as effective as first thought. A number of new tar seeps and oil sheens have been discovered. The former Atlas Cement site also has some contamination concerns. Water runoff in the area has extremely high PH values and is a concern for human health.

The next steps in the process is for MPCA staff to develop a schedule for additional work in each unit, develop investigation and response action plans, conduct sampling and data collection and implement response actions. MPCA will also work with prospective property buyers to evaluate parcels for contamination.

One of the concerns at the U.S. Steel site is trespassers. The area has become a haven for ATV riders given its remote location and challenging terrain. Duluth Police have increased enforcement and U.S. Steel has increased security. The ATVs are a problem because they can disturb the ground where contaminants are located and they were driving on the dry river bed a couple of years ago during low water. That area is known to have contaminated sediments and should not be disturbed.

5. International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species – Special Session on VHS

Dale Bergeron from Minnesota Sea Grant reported on the aquatic invasive species conference he attended in Montreal in April. The conference agenda included many researchers presenting the results of their research on a wide variety of issues related to aquatic invasive species. Dale Bergeron facilitated the session on VHSv or what is commonly referred to as the “fish virus”. This session included presentations on the history and current status of the VHS virus, detection methodologies, U.S. federal efforts to contain it, state responses, and fishery management responses in Ontario.

VHSv was first identified in European trout in 1938 and since four primary types of the disease have been identified. In 2003 it found its way into the Great Lakes. Since then there has been fish kills in all Great Lakes except Lake Superior. This has had serious

impacts on aquaculture and has negatively impacted the bait industry because of restriction on bait movements. The likely pathways of the virus were described: natural migration, sport fishing, recreational boating, and commercial ballast water. There was not enough evidence to pinpoint one particular source.

Conclusions on the current state of the virus are that it is a large multi-year, multi-host epidemic with a wide geographic range. It is assumed that the virus will diversify, possibly leading to new characteristics. Host fish populations should develop some immunity as the history of the virus worldwide suggests no significant wild fish population decline are likely.

U.S. Federal efforts to address VHSv include attempting to control movement of fish, developing monitoring strategies, developing standards for bait fish and aquaculture and conducting education and outreach. State level regulatory summaries were described for the Great lake states as well as communication to the public. Other control efforts were described including the Lake Carriers' Association's voluntary ballast water management plan and Ontario's plan creating VHSv management zones.

6. Duluth Slips 2 and 3 Land Use Planning & Development

Larry Killien and **Cheryl Erickson** reported on the current planning effort for Slips 2 & 3 lead by the Minnesota DNR. Slips 2 & 3 are located adjacent to Bayfront Park and the Lafarge Cement facility. The LaFarge facility is currently for sale and the Duluth Economic Development Authority (DEDA) currently owns a large amount of land adjacent to Lafarge and Slips 2 & 3. One of the first steps in this planning process is to establish a partnership between the DNR and DEDA to support the planning process. A Coastal Zone Program grant was secured to fund the planning project.

One of the primary tasks will be to gather all relevant site and technical data. Larry and Cheryl requested that meeting participants forward any technical, historic or past plans that have been done in the area. Of particular interest are any soil borings, engineering studies, dock wall information and sediment conditions in the area.

Another element of the planning process is public participation. The desire is to involve as many different viewpoints as possible and to have a transparent process that involves all organizations and groups as well as the general public. They are welcoming any feedback and input at this point.

Potential outcomes of the planning process include design concepts and ideas for economic development of the land side areas. One of the ideas for the slips is to provide transient docking for boaters. Currently very little exists in the Duluth-Superior harbor. Other ideas include locations for docking cruise ships, charter boats and commercial fishing boats. The DNR is not interested in developing a boat ramp on the site given the lack of area available to park vehicles and other boat ramps already exist not far away.

Currently, the Lafarge site is for sale and some interested parties have been communicating with City of Duluth officials. The DEDA land is targeted for economic

development and the hope is that any new use would fit with proposed public use of the slips. Larry and Cheryl closed by requesting HTAC members and stakeholders forward related information and to contact them with any ideas, concerns or questions.

7. Commercial Fishing's Future in Duluth-Superior

Ed Montgomery reported on the status of commercial fishing in Minnesota waters of Lake Superior. He stated this industry is dying and that the long-time family business Sivertson Fishery has recently gone out of business. Commercial fishing provides affordable and healthy food and is part of the rich heritage of this area. Commercial fishing is being pushed out of harbors across the country by gentrification and development of waterfront areas. This leaves no place for commercial fishing boats to dock. Ed stated that Mark Howard is one of the last commercial fishermen in the area. Mark's family has a history of commercial fishing in the area dating back to the 1850s.

Mark Howard described his family history in the area from settling near Knife River to building the first house on Park Point. His family has a long history of commercial fishing in the area and some of the geographic features of the St. Louis River estuary are named for his descendants including Howards Pocket in Superior.

Currently Minnesota allows a much smaller harvest than commercial fishermen in Canada and Wisconsin. Sport fishermen also take a large share. The Minnesota DNR has been very protective of fish populations and protects against overfishing. Minnesota commercial fishermen have also worked toward preserving stocks of fish. They have very strict standards which lead to a low by-catch of non targeted species.

A case was presented to preserve space for commercial fisherman in our working waterfronts. These types of operations promote a lively waterfront atmosphere with commercial fisherman selling their catch direct to customers at dockside. It can also attract tourists to watch the "catch of the day" being processed, packaged and sold. In the Duluth-Superior harbor, locations closer to the port entries would allow commercial fishing operations to be able to use less fuel and operate earlier in the season due to less ice than locations farther up river. There is much public benefit to having a thriving local commercial fishing industry. Increased tourism and a source of a healthy, local food source were cited.

8. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

John Haugland from the EPA Region 5 office in Chicago reported that the Obama administration has included \$475 million for Great Lakes restoration in his 2010 budget. This initiative will target the most significant problems in the Great Lakes region.

EPA is leading this effort which will draw upon work done during the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration from 2005. Other federal agencies will also be involved including Fish and Wildlife, Coast Guard, Natural Resource Conservation Service and NOAA. There will be five areas of focus with funding dedicated to them. The focus areas are:

- Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern - \$147 million
- Invasive Species - \$60 million
- Near Shore Health and Nonpoint source Pollution - \$97 million
- Habitat and Wildlife Protection and Restoration - \$105 million
- Accountability, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Partnerships - \$65 million

An RFP process will be conducted this summer. HTAC members were asked to also look at priorities beyond 2010. EPA will be meeting with many stakeholders throughout the summer providing information and getting input. Information is also available online at www.epa.gov/greatlakes/glri.

9. Subcommittee Reports

Dredging

Gene Clark updated the HTAC on topics from the May 14, 2009 Dredging Subcommittee Meeting. The Corps updated the subcommittee on dredging and Erie Pier activities that will take place in 2009. Erie Pier will have material staged for reuse to provide more area for the hydraulic washing operation. Sheet pile and a perimeter road will also be developed. All of these efforts are in support of developing a processing and reuse facility at Erie Pier. The Superior Entry will be hydraulically dredged with the material placed on the Minnesota Point beach. Other dredging will include about 60-70,000 cubic yards.

Army Corps personnel from the Detroit District were in attendance to discuss funding for the Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP). Limited funding will be available which will allow the Corps to analyze three or four projects from the list HTAC provided in December. Likely projects include 21st Avenue West, CN Dock, and Minnesota Power Hibbard Steam Plant. The DMMP project review process would start over the summer months.

Brigadier General John W. Peabody, U.S. Army Corps recently stated that the Corps will not be building any more Confined Disposal Facilities (CDF) on the Great Lakes. They will be looking at more reuse opportunities for dredged materials in the future. Brigadier General Peabody will be in the Duluth-Superior area at the beginning of September.

There was a lot of interest from the resource regulatory agencies about looking at habitat enhancement projects in the Interstate and Hearding Island areas. A sub group of the Dredging Subcommittee may be organized to look into details of either of these sites.

The Sea Grant network has continued to examine legal issues surrounding the movement of dredged materials across state lines. They currently have two legal interns assigned to research this issue.

Advocacy

Ted Smith gave an update from the Great Lakes Maritime Task Force (GLMTF). The budget for the Corps Great Lakes operations was pretty good last year but not as good this year. The Great Lakes received only 2% of the total Corps AARA funding. Some of the other ports and harbors across the country are being very creative in identifying how many jobs will be created with AARA funding.

Modeling

Gary Glass stated that he is still waiting on reports from staff.

10. Roundtable Discussion / Project Updates

Pat Carey reported that the Corps and EPA have \$3 million to spend on the AOC for site assessment to define what is contaminated and what is clean. He will report back in three months.

Ed Anderson reported that the Boathouse Restaurant on Barkers Island in Superior is for sale. It also includes dock space as well.

Ed Montgomery suggested a resolution of support for commercial fishing dock space in the lower harbor area. The following discussion included how a resolution could be circulated and who could provide language that addresses the issue. It was also stated that other maritime industries would benefit from the same type of support and that it is difficult to get decision makers to preserve waterfront areas for maritime uses.

Carol Wolosz handed out the Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute (GLMRI) summary report. GLMRI currently has nine active research projects and that new proposals were due on June 3.

Barbara Lambus reported that Duluth will be seeing cruise ship this summer with nine visits over the next two months.

11. Adjourn

No other items were brought forward for discussion and Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andy McDonald, Principal Planner