

SENSIBLE SOLUTIONS



**PUBLIC COMMUNICATION PLAN
VOLUNTARY RESPONSE ACTION PROGRAM
34 KIDDER POINT ROAD
SEARSPORT, MAINE**

Property Owner: GENERAL ALUM NEW ENGLAND CORP.
34 Kidder Point Road
Searsport, ME 04974

Prepared for: GAC CHEMICAL
34 Kidder Point Road
Searsport, ME 04974

Prepared by: CES, INC.
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**NOVEMBER 2014
JN: 10060.007**



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GAC CHEMICAL**

The intertidal area and the inland area of the GAC Chemical (“GAC”) property have been studied extensively over the last 30 years in coordination with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) as well as other State and Federal agencies. A past study completed by the Marine Environmental Monitoring Program states that “marine life in the area is reproducing and growing” and no remediation of the area was recommended (Marine Environmental Monitoring Program, dated April 28, 1998). Nonetheless, GAC continues to monitor the area and take all appropriate measures in consultation with appropriate regulatory officials to address any issues that might arise in the future. GAC’s voluntary entry into the established State of Maine Voluntary Response Action Program (VRAP) further demonstrates GAC’s willingness to perform additional testing in an effort to determine the current status of conditions in the intertidal area (CES, 2014). GAC is proud of its record of community stewardship and compliance. GAC is committed to ensuring that operations are conducted consistent with all environmental and other regulatory requirements. GAC believes in continuing to work proactively with regulatory authorities as demonstrated by this voluntary entry into the State of Maine VRAP.

After reviewing the MDEP *VRAP Public Communications Decision Matrix*, the applicable level of public communication is Tier I. As described in the Investigations Summary Report (CES, 2014), the parameter that is being addressed by the VRAP application is low pH conditions in the intertidal area. Tiers II and III are triggered when soil, groundwater, and/or surface water are impacting “offsite properties” above applicable “standards”. Groundwater, surface water, and soil do not have applicable water quality standards (i.e., State or Federal Surface Water Quality Criteria) or soil remediation standards (i.e., Remedial Action Guidelines) for pH. In addition, GAC’s property boundary extends to the low tide line since the distance from the low tide line to the high tide is less than 1,650 feet (Maine Principles, 1995). Therefore, the parameter (pH) does not exceed applicable standards on offsite properties.

However, given GAC’s environmental stewardship and relationship with the Town of Searsport, GAC proposes following the Tier II guidelines, even though neither Tier II nor Tier III criteria have been triggered. The specific communication measures proposed are as follows:

1. GAC will provide copies of the VRAP documents to the Town of Searsport at the same time they are filed with the MDEP’s Augusta office. VRAP documents to be submitted include: VRAP Application, Investigations Summary Report, Public Communications Plan, and Remediation and Shoreland Stabilization Plan (CES, 2014).
2. GAC will notify the Town Manager prior to commencing remediation activities at the site.
3. GAC will notify the Town Manager when remediation activities are complete.

4. GAC will submit copies of the VRAP documents to the local MDEP office in Bangor at the same time the material is filed with the MDEP's Augusta office.

Provisions to notify adjacent property owners are not applicable since the low pH is not impacting offsite properties as described above.

GAC has reviewed the key draft VRAP documents with management and officials at the Town of Searsport. After reviewing these documents management and officials at the Town have stated that the plans seem to accelerate mitigation of the area.

In addition to the public communication elements described above, CES on behalf of GAC has met and reviewed the key draft VRAP documents with Dr. Mark Green, Professor of Environmental Sciences specializing in Oceanography and Marine Biology at Saint Joseph's College of Maine (Standish, Maine). The Executive Director of Penobscot Bay Watch and Friends of Penobscot Bay, a local citizens group, sought-out Dr. Green earlier this year due to his qualifications and experience related to ocean acidification. Dr. Green has subsequently been repeatedly referenced by the citizens group based on his analysis of samples from the area.

After reviewing the draft Investigation Summary Report and draft Remediation and Shoreland Stabilization Plans (CES, 2014), Dr. Green provided an independent review as a member of the public-at-large who had previously been listed as a reliable expert entrusted by the local citizens group. According to Dr. Green the plan "appears [to be] based on good science and is an appropriate response to the problem at hand." Dr. Green went on to state "dredging in this region would be detrimental, could easily create a whole range of other issues, and will not do anything to rectify the problem." A copy of Dr. Green's statement regarding the investigation and remediation at the GAC property has been attached to this plan.

REFERENCES

Investigations Summary Report, CES, November 2014.

Letter, Marine Environmental Monitoring Program, April 28, 1998.

Maine Principles of Ownership Along Water Bodies, Hermansen and Richards, 1995.

Remediation and Shoreland Stabilization, CES, November 2014.

VRAP Application, CES, 2014.

VRAP Public Communications Decision Matrix, MDEP, <http://www.maine.gov/dep/spills/vrap/documents/vrappubliccom.pdf>, effective date of January 1, 2008.

-----Original Message-----

From: Mark Green [mailto:mgreen@sjcme.edu]

Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2014 3:53 PM

To: John Pond

Subject: RE: Folow up to yesterday's meeting

Hello John,

Yes, thank you too. I enjoyed our meeting and was very interested to learn the latest regarding your work and findings for GAC in Searsport. From my perspective, your remediation plan sounds fine. It appears based on good science and is an appropriate response to the problem at hand. I think removing the source material, applying the alkalinity buffer to treat the ground water, and stabilizing the slope of the problem area represents the perfect remediation approach. I don't think dredging the intertidal area where low pH pore waters were originally found is appropriate and, at least in my opinion, would add nothing to the remediation plan. In fact, dredging in this region would be detrimental, could easily create a whole range of other issues, and will not do anything to rectify the problem. It seems evident that the source of acid comes from the sulfur deposits which you have identified, mapped and will remove. In my opinion, once that's gone, the acidity problems of the inter-tidal will quickly correct themselves, particularly with the addition of alkaline buffer upslope of the mud flats.

Good luck with the project!

Sincerely,

Mark (Green)
