

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES FOR GREEN BOSTON HARBOR, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

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Here we present the first year findings of the Green Boston Harbor project. The primary goal of this project to integrate components of education, research and outreach in support of the No Discharge Area (NDA) in Boston Harbor. The recent designation of this NDA within Boston Harbor has made it exceedingly clear there is a need for more comprehensive assessment and analysis of the local environmental, social and economic conditions. This designation also provides an ideal opportunity to develop guidelines for the first “Green Harbor”.

One of the results of the project is a detailed assessment and GIS analysis of the Boston Harbor (BH) recreational and commercial boating and pump out (P/O) activities. Our assessment examines boating activities occurring in the BH area including numbers, types, locations of boats, as well as their use of the P/O facilities. Also included in the assessment is the adequacy and potential gaps in existing and planned P/O coverage and capacity in BH area; public awareness and knowledge about P/O importance and the role of these activities in the improvement of coastal water quality; and finally, the negative impact of waste discharges from boats not engaging in P/O activities.

Surveys and questionnaires were developed and subsequently used with boaters while they engaged in pump out boat activity. These allowed us to collect data on a variety of subjects including: boating activities, types of marine sanitation device (MSD) aboard vessels; methods boaters regularly employed to dispose of sewage; how well boaters were informed concerning availability of P/O facilities; how often they use these facilities as well as concerns related to their use; the best ways to promote P/O services; and how much boaters would be willing to pay for P/O services.

Based on these survey results and comprehensive environmental and socio-economic assessments the project resulted in recommendations for best management practices concerning three key areas: 1) improvements in the availability and use of P/O services; 2) monitoring, evaluation and enforcement of the NDA in BH; and 3) establishment of guidelines for a sustainable Green Boston Harbor.

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