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TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

To: Lisa Standley, VHB Date: September 28, 2010

From: Ryan Davis, Anchor QEA Project: 100710-01.01

Cc: Nathan Kelsall, Anchor QEA

Re: Potential eelgrass mitigation sites

INTRODUCTION

The Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) recently completed a Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (Draft EA/EIR) for the proposed Boston-Logan International Airport Runway Safety Area Improvements Project (VHB 2010). As described in the Draft EA/EIR, approximately 66,000 square feet (1.5 acres) of eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) may be directly or indirectly impacted by the construction of the runway safety area improvement project. In order to offset those impacts, Massport has proposed to undertake a site selection process to identify potential restoration sites in the greater Boston Harbor area (i.e., Boston Harbor and southern bays).

This technical memorandum describes the results of the initial site selection process conducted for Massport. The analysis is based on reevaluating potential eelgrass restoration areas previously identified by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MDMF; Estrella 2009) and Battelle (Battelle 2009a).

BACKGROUND

Two eelgrass site selection studies were recently completed to identify potential eelgrass mitigation sites to offset impacts associated with the construction of the HubLine natural gas pipeline in Massachusetts Bay in 2002 to 2003. One study was led by the MDMF (Estrella 2009), the other by Battelle (Battelle 2009a). Both site selection studies were based on modified versions of the Short et al. (2002) eelgrass site selection model, and focused on physical site characteristics such as light availability, wave energy, depth, and substrate to

identify eelgrass test transplant sites. Test transplanting was completed in 2004 for the MDMF project, with larger scale plantings in 2005 to 2007 at the successful test transplant locations (Estrella 2009). Test transplanting was completed in 2009 for the Battelle project, with full scale planting planned for the successful test transplant sites at a later time (Battelle 2009b).

APPROACH

Anchor QEA used the results from the Battelle 2009 study to re-evaluate the potential sites selected by MDMF and Battelle to account for actual light conditions in 2009. While there are numerous factors that can influence the suitability of an area to support eelgrass, light availability is the most critical factor. When there is insufficient light, eelgrass will not survive regardless of other site conditions; when there is sufficient light, other factors such as sediment composition/chemistry and exposure/disturbance become important (Davis et al. 1998; Koch 2001; Short et al. 2002). The two previous site selection models used many of the same parameters (see Methods section below) and identified several of the same areas as suitable for eelgrass, with some differences due primarily to predicated light availability. The Battelle study used light availability as one of the highest weighted factors in their model (other factors that differed between the models include exposure and desiccation).

Over the course of a few years, factors such as depth, exposure, and sediment composition are unlikely to change significantly. However, light availability can vary considerably within and between years due to changes in water quality and tides. In 2009, the period from early June through July 8 was the coolest, wettest, cloudiest period on record in Boston.¹ There were numerous severe storms that produced significant rainfall and associated runoff (Bluehill 2009). The clouds and wind associated with the storm systems would have increased turbidity and reduced light availability in the harbor area. In addition, sea level was documented to be abnormally high in the northeast during this same time period (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 2009). These factors likely contributed to decreased light availability and reduced transplant survival at sites that otherwise had suitable conditions.

¹ (http://www.boston.com/news/weather/articles/2009/06/23/so_far_june_sunlight_in_boston_is_lowest_in_past_century/).

METHODS

Both the MDMF and Battelle site selection analyses used a modified version of the Preliminary Transplant Suitability Index (PTSI) model (Short et al. 2002) to score areas of the bay for eelgrass restoration based on several parameters. Using the PTSI approach, an individual score is assigned to each parameter, and all of the scores are multiplied, with higher scores indicating higher site suitability. As a result of the multiplicative approach, if any one element receives a zero score, the final score is also zero and the site is considered to be unsuitable for eelgrass restoration.

MDMF Site Selection Model

The MDMF site selection model included:

- Depth Average depth at mean low water was estimated for discrete points from NOAA electronic navigation chart data and the shoreline shapefile from MassGIS.
 Depth for all of Boston Harbor was interpolated using the inverse distance weighting (IDW) method.
- Exposure Fetch in the northeast direction was used as a surrogate for exposure since that is the primary direction of winds in the area. Fetch was estimated using the shoreline cover from MassGIS.
- Historical eelgrass distribution Historical eelgrass distribution was determined from surveys conducted by the Mass DEP Wetlands Conservancy Program in 1951, 1971, and 1995.
- Current eelgrass distribution The most recent (2001) Mass DEP Wetlands
 Conservancy Program survey was used.
- Water Quality Water quality data from Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) were the primary data set. These were supplemented with measurements taken by Marine Fisheries eelgrass project staff. Median water quality criteria for April to October were interpolated using IDW.
- Bioturbation Density of bioturbating organisms (green crabs, skates, etc.) was estimated from figures in Davis et al. 1998.

Sediment type – Sediment composition data were obtained from the United States Geological Survey (USGS). These data were later found to be inaccurate in the near-shore zone and the parameter was removed from the model. Instead, extensive groundtruthing of sediment type at potential restoration sites was performed.

Table 1
MDMF Model PTSI Scoring for Site Selection

Parameter	PTSI Scoring
	0: < 0.5 m or > 4 m
Depth	1: 3 - 4 m
	2: 0.5 - 3 m
	0: gravel or > 70% silt/clay
Sediment	1: coarse sand to very coarse sand
	2: < 70% silt/clay to medium sand
	0: previously unvegetated
Historical SAV Distribution	1: previously vegetated in 1 survey
Distribution	2: previously vegetated in 2 or more surveys
1 1 1	0: NE fetch > 2724 m
Exposure	1: 1866 – 2724 m
	2: < 1866 m
Current SAV	0: currently vegetated
Distribution	2: unvegetated
Aye.	0: > 1 WQ value does not meet eelgrass requirements
Water Quality	1: all but one requirement is met
	2: all requirements are met
	0: > 1 crab/m ²
Bioturbation	1: 1 crab/m ²
	2: < 1 crab/m ²

Battelle Site Selection Model

The environmental factors in Battelle's site selection model included:

 Light Availability – The light attenuation coefficient was derived from Secchi depth readings from MWRA's Boston Harbor monitoring program and interpolated across the harbor using IDW at 30 m resolution. The attenuation coefficient was used in conjunction with depth to determine percent of photosynthetically active radiation (PAR) at depth according to Lambert-Beer's Law: $\% PAR = e^{(-Kd^*z)}$

Kd = attenuation coefficient

z = depth

For Boston Harbor,

Kd = 1.7/Secchi disk reading

- Desiccation Bathymetric data (depth at mean sea level, 30 m resolution) was
 obtained from the NOAA Coastal Service Center. Depth was used to estimate if an
 area would be dried out at low tide to the point of killing planted eelgrass.
- Temperature Temperature data were obtained from MWRA's Boston Harbor monitoring program for the period 2003 to 2006. Temperature was later determined to be non-essential to the model.
- Salinity Salinity data were obtained from MWRA's Boston Harbor monitoring program for the period 2003 to 2006. Salinity was later determined to be nonessential to the model.
- Wave energy Wind speed and direction data were obtained from the National Data Buoy Center and the National Climatic Data Center. These data were used in the Wave Energy Model (WEMo) from NOAA (NOAA CFHR 2007).
- Sediment Type Sediment type data were obtained from the USGS. These were
 determined to be inaccurate after comparison with more recent surveys. USGS
 multibeam data from 2006 were used instead, which classified areas more broadly.
 Unsuitable sediment types (anthropogenically modified, high-relief bedrock and
 boulder, and medium-relief and cobble) were used to mask out areas unsuitable for
 eelgrass restoration.

Table 2
Battelle Model PTSI Scoring for Site Selection

Parameter	PTSI Scoring
	0: 0 - 10%
	1: 10 - 20%
Light Availability	2: 20 - 35%
	3: 35 - 50
	4: < 50%
B	0: at or above -0.3 m MLW
Dessication	1: below -0.3 m MLW
Temperature	Eliminated as factor
Salinity	Eliminated as factor
W F	0: energies above 475 W/m
Wave Energy	1: energies below 475 W/m
Sediment Type	Areas with Anthropogenic Influence, High Relief or Medium Relief Cobble were eliminated as potential restoration sites

To select potential restoration sites, Anchor QEA used the desiccation, percent PAR at depth, and sediment type parameters from the Battelle model. Wave energy (and exposure) did not appear to greatly influence the Battelle model results and was not included in the analysis. We used both the normal and a conservative estimate for PAR at depth, the latter due to the above average rainfall, cloud cover, and tides observed during summer 2009. Specifically, percent PAR at depth was recalculated by increasing depth by 0.1 m to simulate the higher than normal tides, and reducing incoming PAR by 10% as a surrogate for the effect of increased cloud cover, rain, and wind driven turbidity. The revised model was used to re-evaluate restoration areas identified by the MDMF model that are not currently slated for restoration, and the 2009 Battelle test transplant sites that had poor survival results (Battelle 2009b). Sites with PAR greater than or equal to 20% under both the normal and reduced PAR scenarios were selected for additional evaluation.

RESULTS

Estimates of PAR at depth are shown on Figures 1 and 2 for the normal and reduced light conditions, respectively. The MDMF and Battelle sites are also shown on the figures for comparison. Many locations appear to have marginal light availability under normal

conditions (e.g., Slate Island, Hull Bay) and are even less suitable under the reduced light condition scenario. In some instances, slight adjustment to the planting site location may have improved light conditions (e.g., Hull Bay).

Additional factors that limit site suitability including desiccation, unsuitable bottom type (i.e., areas of boulder and bedrock), and anthropogenic stressors (i.e., anchoring areas, navigational channels, and cables) were used to further refine potential locations. Figures 3 and 4 show the predicted PAR at depth in relation to these additional factors for the normal and reduced light conditions, respectively.

As shown on Figures 3 and 4, incorporating these additional factors further limits the number and spatial extent of potentially suitable eelgrass restoration sites. While the majority of the mapped unsuitable bottom type is located in deeper water, there are numerous anchoring areas and navigational channels that further limit the spatial extent of suitable sites.

The results of the revised analysis were used to identify six primary and three backup sites for additional field evaluation (Table 3, Figures 5 and 6). Three of the six primary sites are close to test-transplant sites by Battelle and are relatively large areas that have high PAR at depth, even under the reduced light conditions. Focusing on areas where percent PAR at depth remains high under the reduced light conditions may allow the establishment of eelgrass populations where they can withstand the types of stresses experienced in 2009.

Table 3
Sites Selected for Additional Evaluation

Location	Designation	Notes
White Head Flats	Primary	Slightly inshore of Hull Bay site. Sediments reported to be fine grained.
World's End	Primary	Existing eelgrass bed at outer edge of site. Need to evaluate potential shellfishing conflict.
Grape Island	Backup	Evidence of historic eelgrass bed.
Hough's Neck	Primary	Battelle reported significant difference in transplant survival at shallow and deep edge of site
Hough's Neck West	Primary	Northeast of Battelle test planting site.
Squantum	Primary	New sites; no test-transplanting data available.
Old Harbor West	Primary	Southwest of Battelle site and in area with higher light availability.
Loyell Island East	Backup	Point bar to north may reduce exposure
Lovell Island North	Backup	High exposure

SUMMARY/NEXT STEPS

Site visits will be completed at the primary sites in mid-October 2010 to collect bathymetric and sediment data. Backup sites will be used, if needed, if any primary site appears unsuitable based on field observations. Sediment samples will be used to verify the results of the site selection model that the substrate is not predominately anoxic mud. Final test transplanting site(s) will be recommended based on the results of the bathymetric surveys and sediment analyses.

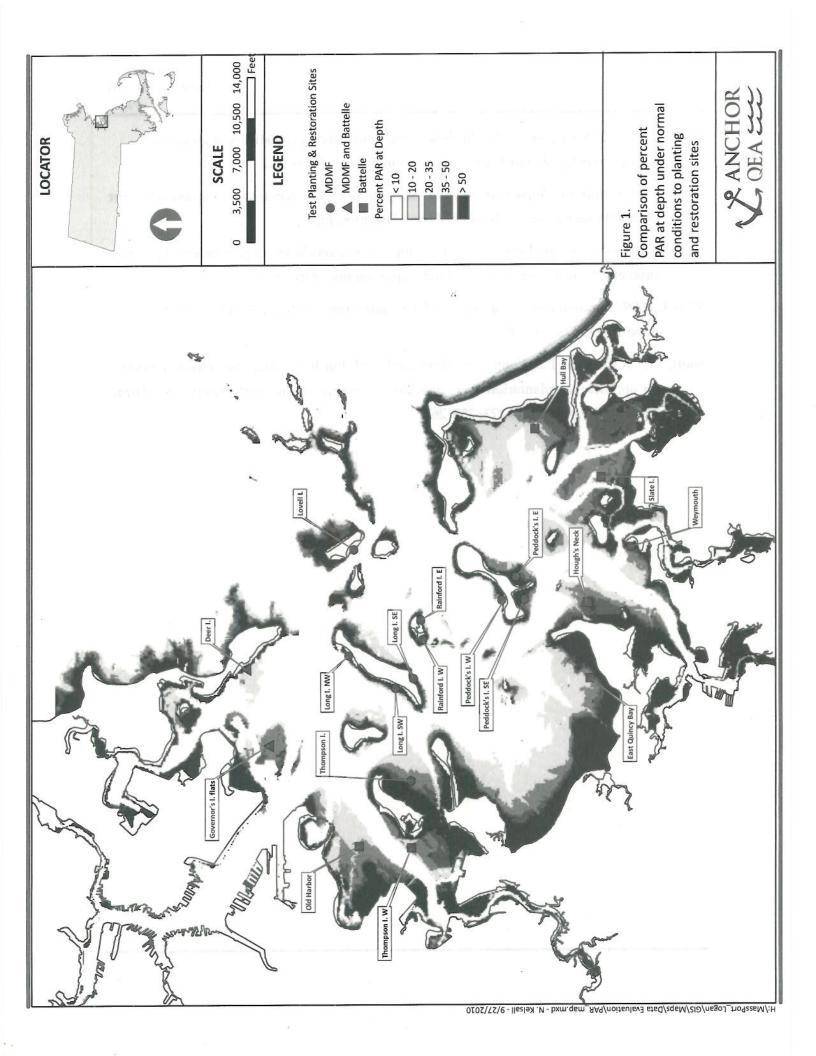
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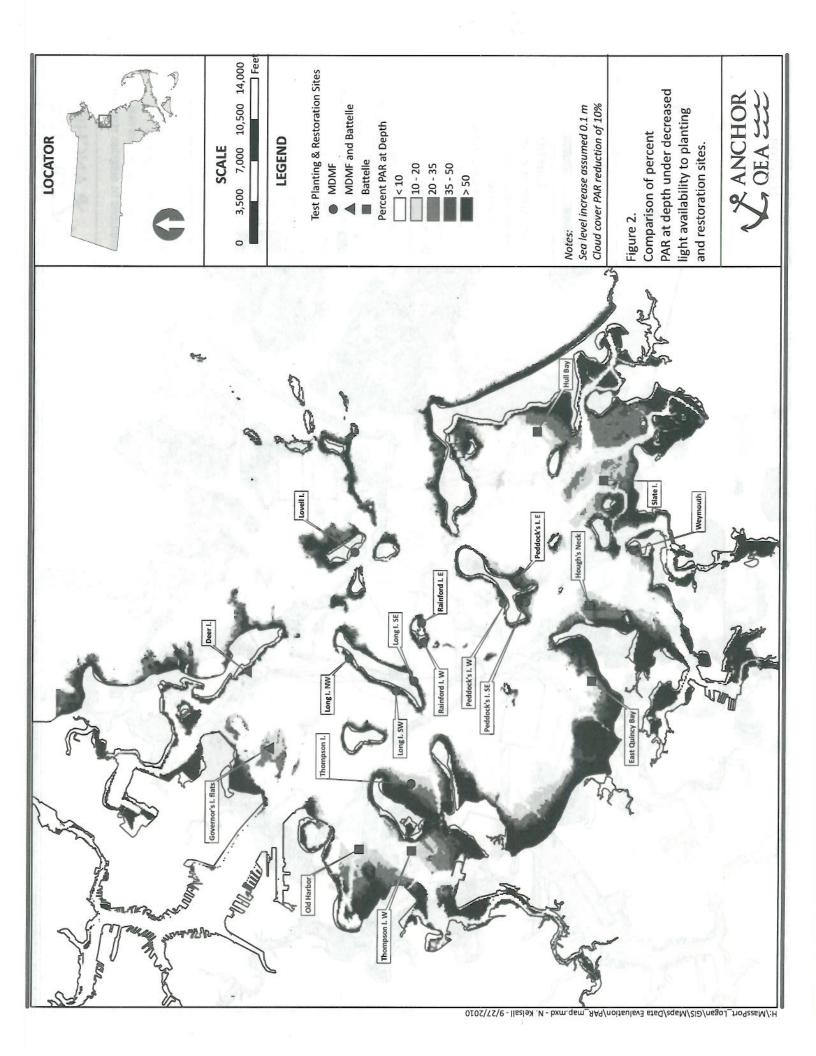
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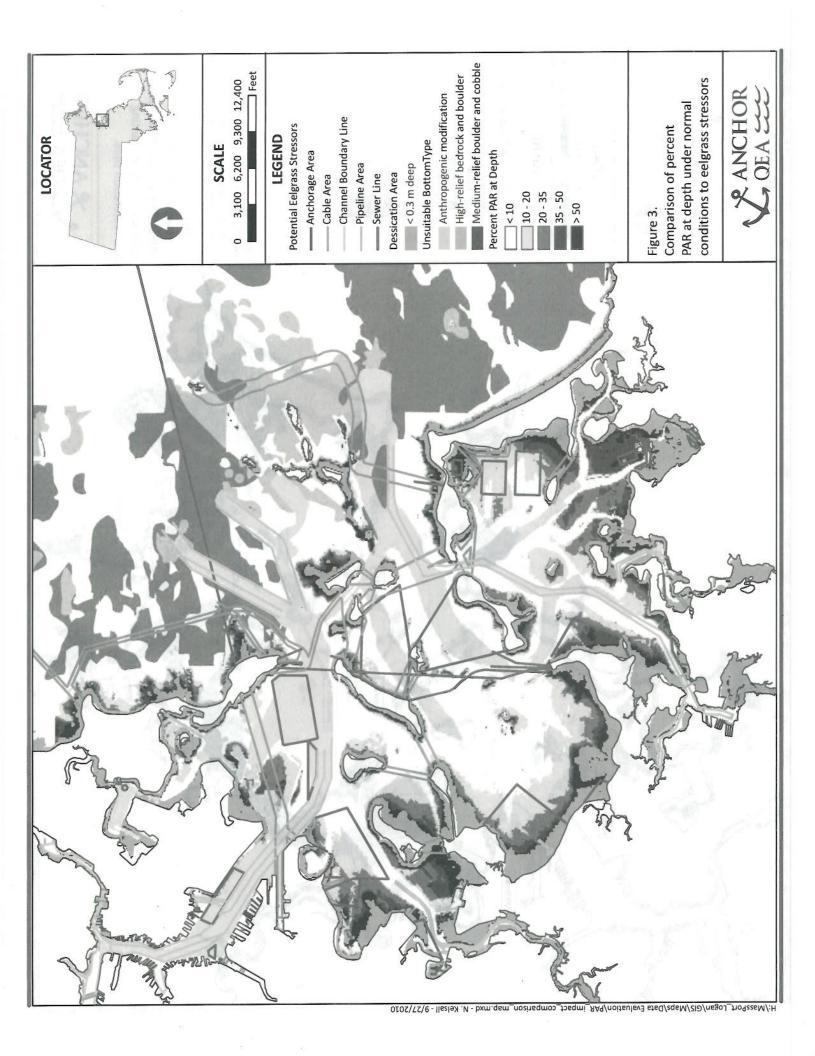
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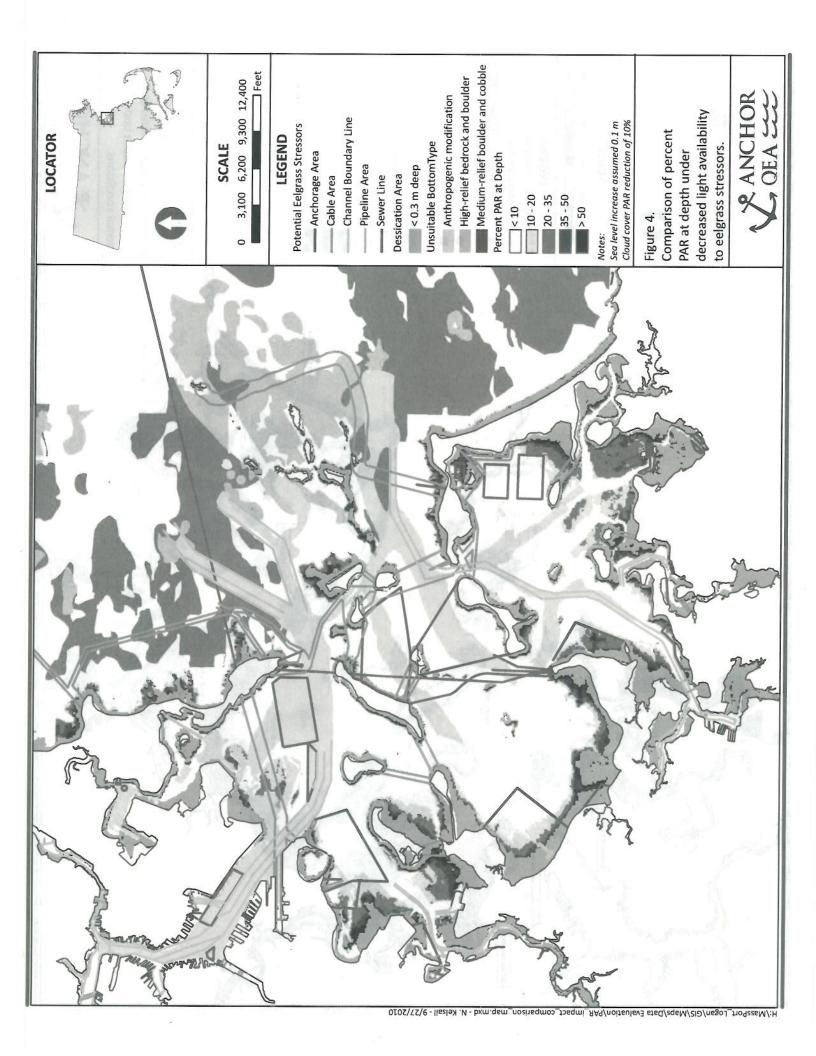
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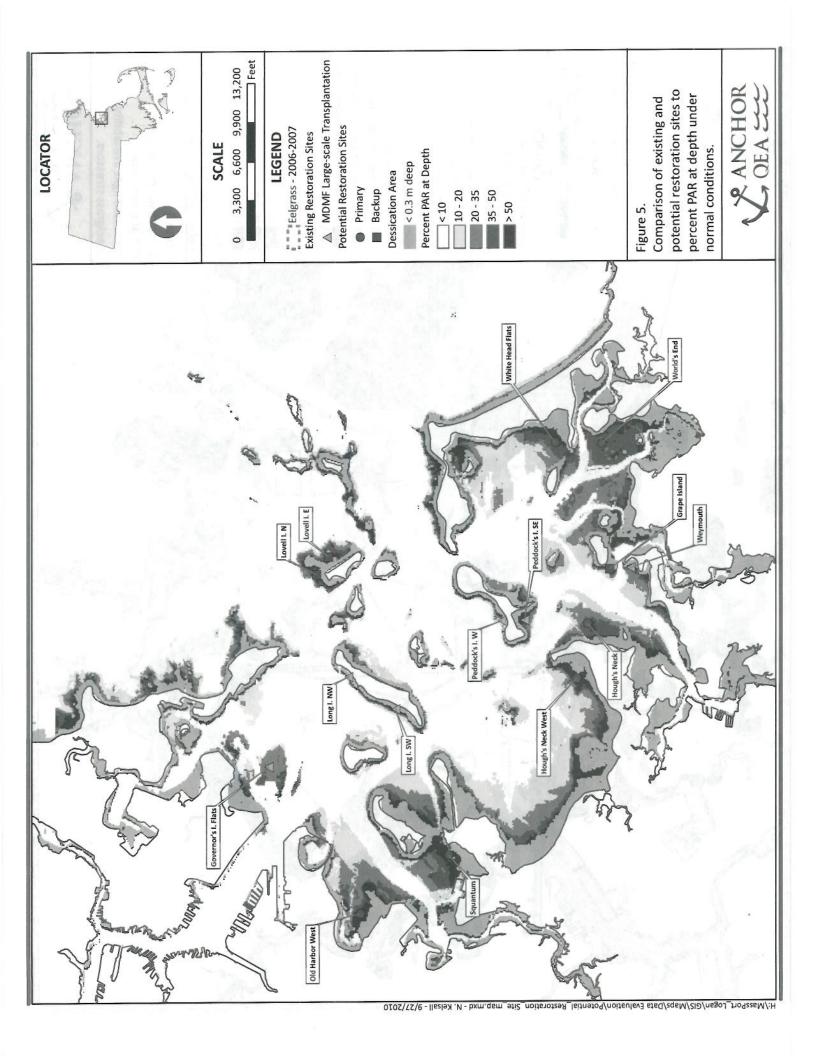
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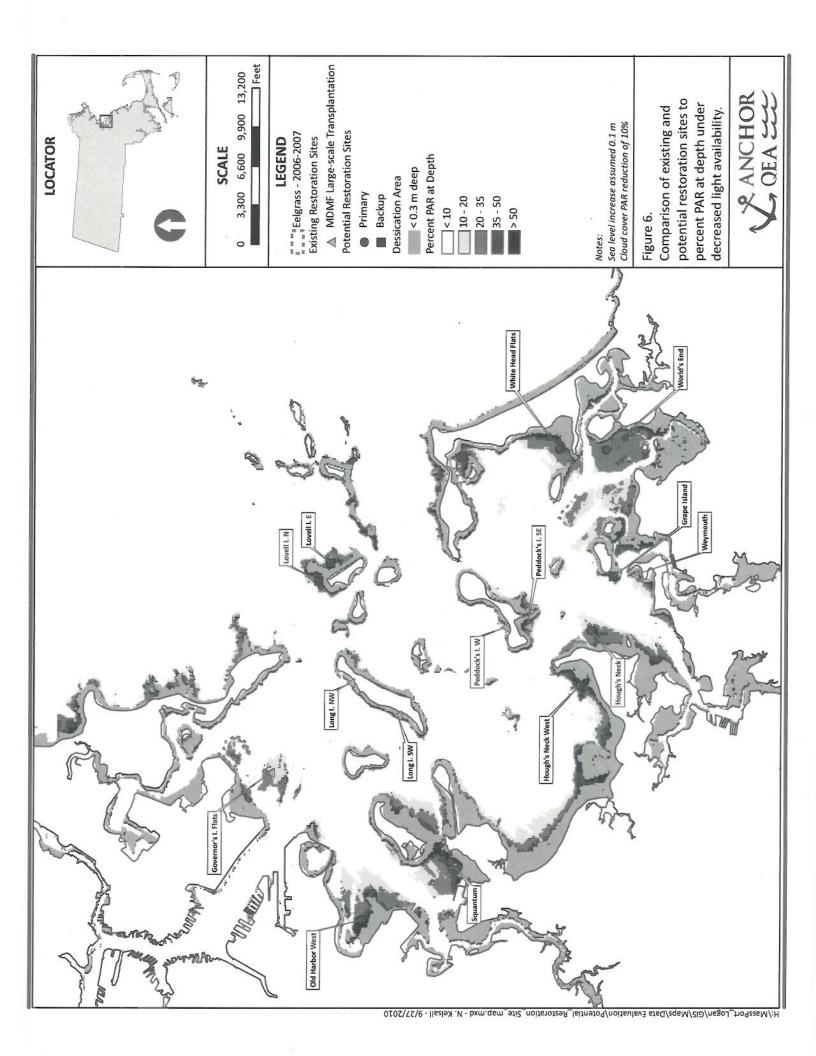












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Estimated Entrainment of Ichthyoplankton Under the Proposed Action
(11 Billion Gallons per Year)at the Northeast Gateway Deepwater Port based on Monthly Mean Density of Ichthyoplankton October 2005 through December 2009. Table 4.2-2.

Species		Jan	Feb	Mar	Anr	May	1	1		3	5		-	Lower Estimate	Annual	Upper Estimate
Alligator fish	Larvae	0	0	0	1,840	0	0	О	0	0	0	0	0	88	1,840	3,591
American eel	Larvae	С	0	0	0	0	0	0	c	0	0	0	o	0	0	0
American lobster	Larvae	0	0	0	0	161	53,316	16,184	11,063	1,125	0	0	0	21,082	81,879	142,872
American plaice	Eggs	264	15,032	147,884	4,202,108	2,003,086	263,589	83,933	2,252	0	0	0	0	4,218,547	6,718,148	9,267,460
	Larvae	0	0	225	5,145	24,071	35,667	14,585	18,438	1,385	0	0	0	30,362	99,516	186,073
American sand lance	Larvae	639,174	1,880,252	461,647	606,486	25,830	2,745	0	0	0	0	0	1,469,146	1,175,390	5,085,281	8,996,227
Atlantic cod	Eggs	3,163,917	162,451	28,660	5,244	5,816	0	0	170	0	2,310	112,997	5,299,733	4,970,135	8,781,299	12,594,105
	Larvae	22,367	4,616	4,017	5,880	2,091	12,216	50,475	25,020	0	0	6,395	37,865	32,856	170,942	313,240
Atlantic herring	Larvae	2,444	4,840	14,112	28,139	0	0	0	2,451	11,576	89,816	509,220	40,144	283,719	702,742	1,140,243
Atlantic mackerel	Eggs	0	0	0	0	8,307,046	6,948,153	151,626	0	0	0	0	c	7,791,112	15,406,825	23,022,537
	Larvae	0	0	0	0	21,033	1,982,187	578,506	135	0	o	0	0	858,129	2,581,861	4,305,730
Atlantic menhaden	Eggs	0	0	0	0	71,818	824,542	43,769	2,587	0	0	0	0	51,300	942,716	1,873,168
	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	45,011	423,625	19,965	1,376	0	0	0	97,230	489,977	885,597
Atlantic wolffish	Larvae	0	991	828	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	994	2,300
Black sea bass	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Butterfish	Eggs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	170	497	1,718	0	0	0	2,385	6,281
	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,213	5,996	1,559	263	0	374	2,216	9,405	19,202
Cod/Haddock	Eggs	0	426,527	450,070	466,535	0	31,743	0	0	0	172	0	0	366,760	1,375,047	2,508,936
Cod/Haddock/Witch flounder	Eggs	0	0	60,185	954,286	028,970	476,636	174,765	45,290	7,774	521	0	0	1,556,225	2,718,428	3,993,752
Cods	Eggs	0	0	. 0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Larvae	11,399	1,436	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	426	13,966	1,044	27,228	58,464
Cunner	Eggs	0	0	0	0	0	1,268,593	929,648	16,517	248	0	0	0	137,196	2,215,007	4,722,591
	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	11,268,017	19,636,833	2,093,668	25,749	0	0	0	12,750,327	33,024,267	53,298,206
Cusk	Eggs	0	0	0	0	0	18,244	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18,244	48,109
	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	3,751	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	3,751	7,482
Fourbeard rockling	Eggs	0	0	0	130,292	701,480	1,261,877	216,721	97,192	21,552	2,768	0	0	1,450,856	2,431,882	3,412,969
	Larvae	170	0	0	0	154,146	951,010	264,006	177,463	82,066	7,086	2,251	1,841	767,853	1,640,040	2,513,591
Fourbeard rockling/Hake	Eggs	0	0	513	94,879	3,186,369	3,166,888	2,781,569	755,058	1,090,166	7,635	0	0	6,589,399	11,083,077	15,577,291
Fourspot flounder	Eggs	0	0	0	0	0	283	15,422	21,387	0	0	0	0	0	37,092	102,524
	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	0	858	119,394	11,457	0	0	0	37,890	131,408	225,170
Goosefish	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	954	1,082	4,410	0	0	0	0	0	6,446	18,642
Grubby	Larvae	220	264	0	217	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	701	2,128
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Succion		Fam	Poh	Mar	Anr	Mav	Jun	Jul	Aue	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Transce Francis	Entrainment	
Gulf seasnail	Larvae	0	0	0	0	1,374	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,374	4,156
	Eggs	0	0	0	0	0	899	0	0	o	0	0	0	0	899	2,016
Haddock	Larvae	0	0	0	188	304	965	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,087	2,987
	Eggs	0	0	0	0	14,715	276,711	8,707,868	7,127,952	2,585,123	1,176	0	0	7,588,844	18,713,546	29,838,524
Hake species	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	9,662	7,866,543	3,768,403	843,960	27,079	4,896	1,348	2,135,255	12,521,891	22,910,003
Herring family	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	169	0	0	0	1,535	0	0	0	2,232	6,311
Longhorn sculpin	Larvae	243	3,774	30,603	10,431	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,558	45,051	83,802
Lumpfish	Larvae	0	0	0	0	304	703	0	257	0	0	0	0	0	1,264	3,527
Northern pipefish	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	0	21,849	0	0	0	0	0	0	21,849	65,975
	Eggs	112,186	159,206	2,914	1,741	0	0	0	0	0	301	277,00	936,664	768,568	1,312,783	1,857,431
Pollock	Larvae	283,734	245,825	16,149	0	681	1,406	0	0	0	0	3,513	228,757	264,269	779,572	1,296,817
Radiated shanny	Larvae	831	3,716	10,344	5,570	39,423	41,375	6,212	3,547	0	0	0	0	19,062	111,017	218,250
Red hake	Larvae	0	0	0	0	174	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	174	528
Redfish	Larvae	0	0	0	0	39,543	15,190	5,954	3,608	196	0	0	0	2,916	64,490	136,900
Rock gunnel	Larvae	3,480	2,237	3,666	5,121	482	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	432	14,986	31,484
	Eggs	0	0	0	0	3,632	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,632	9,061
Scup	Larvae	0	0	0	0	8,688	0	43,346	556,599	2,430	0	0	0	132,580	720,418	1,345,994
Scup/Weakfish	Eggs	0	0	0	0	81,484	0	0	0	253	0	0	0	0	81,737	247,205
Searobin sp.	Eggs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,731	0	0	0	0	2,731	8,247
Seasnail	Larvae	0	0	0	217	1,781	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,998	4,670
Shorthom sculpin	Larvae	0	421	700	7,597	0	c	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,096	8,717	16,071
	Eggs	0	0	0	0	0	156,505	1,608,785	2,004,674	1,654,207	6,727	0	0	2,042,723	5,430,898	8,819,074
Silver hake	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	42,190	5,148,119	1,736,075	293,876	9,308	0	0	506,788	7,229,568	13,976,894
Smallmouth flounder	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	664	0	0	0	0	664	2,004
Snake blenny	Larvae	0	12,010	36,207	33,726	346	0	5,007	0	0	0	0	0	16,625	87,296	172,901
Striped anchovy	Eggs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,634	0	0	0	0	3,634	8,147
Summer flounder	Larvae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,568	1,785	0	0	3,353	8,984
	Eggs	0	0	238	0	0	245,966	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	246,204	739,295
Tautog	Larvae	0	0	0	0	665	11,185	56,054	215,992	1,865	0	0	0	73,347	285,695	523,829
Threespine stickleback	Larvae	0	0	0	0	395	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	395	1,196
	Eggs	0	0	0	0	0	24,664	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24,664	72,706
Unidentifiable	Larvae	0	0	0	124	3,666	1,226	18,784	0	0	0	0	0	0	23,800	69,409
	Eggs	0	0	0	0	3,963	97,849	826,89	2,835	1,559	229	0	0	28,396	175,412	358,221
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