



Manchester-by-the-Sea Harbormaster **Harbormaster**

10 CENTRAL ST. MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01944-1399
OFFICE (978)526-7832 CELL (978)473-2520 FAX (978)526-2001

HARBORMASTER@MANCHESTER.MA.US



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THE WATERLINE

Greetings Boaters,

Oil Response Drill

On Wednesday October 3rd several local and federal agencies participated in a regional oil spill recovery exercise on the Annisquam River. Participating agencies included members of Gloucester, Manchester and Rockport Fire and Harbormaster Departments along with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Environmental Police and the United States Coast Guard. Following a brief classroom presentation at the

Rockport police station all participants rallied at the marina behind Nicole's Candies off Route 128 in Gloucester. Oil containment booms and anchors from the Manchester oil response trailer were successfully deployed and recovered on a flood tide. In the event of a real oil spill the booms would have protected fragile marsh land further up the river.



MOORINGS

MASSPORT has been in contact with the harbormaster department regarding the potential offer of free helix type, environmentally friendly moorings for installation in the eel grass beds of Manchester Bay. At this time MASSPORT is planning a survey of the eel grass beds to identify the total acreage in Manchester. A similar survey is being conducted in Beverly. It will be used to help MASSPORT determine whether Manchester is a suitable candidate for the replacement mooring program. This survey in no way obligates Manchester to do, or agree to anything.

MASSPORT is currently studying two different plans to protect eel grass habitat in Manchester from damage caused by traditional moorings and boat anchors.

1. Replace all existing traditional block and chain moorings in Area G and part of Area F with helix style moorings that have little or no impact on eel grass. Purchase and installation cost of these moorings would be paid for by MASSPORT. The benefit to mooring holders in these areas is clear since all new or replacement tackle in these areas must be of the low impact helix type.
2. Install a number of day use recreational moorings in the area near Long Beach and the Ram Islands. Many of you will have noticed the increased number of boats anchored on weekends in this area of the harbor. So many in fact that the harbormaster has been forced to curtail some water-skiing and tubing activity due to safety issues, an unfortunate situation. Well planned placement of these moorings would ensure broader recreational use of this wonderful boating area traditionally enjoyed by Manchester residents such as water-skiing.

MASSPORT is concerned that the moorings would be assigned permanently to boaters on the waitlist. Language designating the moorings for transient day use only as well as language protecting traditional use of the area could be inserted into any agreement signed by the town. It would seem appropriate to request a “sundown date” on any agreement should Manchester opt to discontinue the program.

So what does Manchester have to give up you ask? MASSPORT would like the area at Long Beach to be designated a “No Anchor Zone” in order to protect the eel grass. MASSPORT would fund the purchase and installation of advisory buoys. Discussion with MASSPORT is in the early stages although the survey suggests forward movement. MASSPORT has been on one site visit with members of the HAC, mooring service companies, boat yard owners and the Harbormaster to identify the actual eel grass beds.

Please contact me with any and all questions and I will update you as more information comes in.

Mooring Fees

The Manchester Harbor Advisory Committee will recommend to the Manchester Board of Selectman to raise the per foot fee for waterway use from \$6.50 to \$10.00 for recreational boats in order to support projected dredging expenses and other harbor related expenses. The Harbor Advisory Committee will also recommend to the Manchester Board of Selectman to change the annual transfer from the waterways fund to the dredge fund from \$20,000 to \$70,000. A public hearing will be announced following the formal recommendation for an increase in waterway fees to the Board of Selectmen by the Harbor Advisory Committee.

Dredging remains an important and expensive issue. Manchester moves closer to dredging areas B&C and at the same time concerns are being raised about shoaling and

silting in areas D&E. The current rate of saving (\$20,000 annually) will not meet the expected costs of maintenance dredging going forward. Dredging is the main reason for the recommended increase.

Please contact me with any and all questions.

Stop by, say hi and don't forget your lifejacket! You can follow harbor happenings on Facebook at Manchester Harbormaster Department, updated as often as is practical.