Memorandum

TO: Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee

FROM: Taylor Louis – MES

DATE: May 12, 2026

SUBJECT: Next meeting – July 14, 2026

The next meeting of the Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee (HMI COC) will be held ON SITE on Tuesday, July 14, 2026. The boat will pick up attendees at 5:00 pm at the Maryland Environmental Service's (MES) land base at 2024A Riverview Rd in Essex, MD. Please arrive a few minutes early, as the boat will leave promptly at 5:00 pm. The Maryland Port Administration (MPA) will provide dinner. A link for registration to this meeting will be released as the date approaches. This meeting will be first come, first served due to boat and tour bus capacity restrictions. There is no call-in option available for this meeting.

Attached for your review is the final summary of the April 14, 2026, HMI COC meeting.

FINAL

SUMMARY OF HART-MILLER ISLAND CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

April 14, 2026 – 6:00 PM
2200 Broening Highway

Attendees:

Arcadis Engineering: Bert Buell
Baltimore Bird Club and *Friends of HMI State Park*: Kathy Lambrow
Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability: David Riter
Baltimore County Seventh District: Paul Brylske (Chairman)*
Emergency Communication System: Craig Collins-Young
KLT Group: Brandi McCoy (HMI Facilitator)
Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Mark Spurrier
Maryland Environmental Service (MES): Megan O'Hara, Taylor Louis
Maryland Port Administration (MPA): Amanda Peñafiel, Danielle Fisher, David Bibo, Holly Miller, Nathan Thompson
North Point Peninsula Coordinating Community Council: Francis Taylor*
Sixth County Council District: Karen Wynn*
Sport Fishing and Crabbing: Sam Weaver*

**Appointed member of the HMI COC*

Action items:

1. ***MES will send Francis Taylor the HMI self-guided bird walking tour information.*** Complete—Distributed to Francis Taylor on April 17, 2026.
2. ***Mark Spurrier will provide the DNR project information request form link to Kathy Lambrow for raptor nesting boxes and Purple Martin housing, and to Craig Collins-Young for the Meshtastic communication system.***
3. ***DNR will provide the HMI COC with the number of emergency incidents that have occurred at HMI State Park.***
4. ***MPA will provide the HMI COC members with an HMI Transition Timeline Options ranking system to assist in the evaluation and feedback of the options.*** Ongoing— currently in development.
5. ***MPA will send the 2020 HMI South Cell Shoreline Stabilization Report to David Riter.***
6. ***MES will distribute the April 14, 2026, HMI COC presentation slides to the HMI COC.***

Ongoing action items from January 13, 2026, meeting:

1. ***MPA will provide Joe Corcoran with North Cell habitat development documents to share with a wetland engineer.*** Complete—MPA followed up with Joe Corcoran on January 28, 2026, but did not receive a response. In lieu, MPA followed up with Kathy Lambrow on May 6, 2026.
2. ***HMI COC members will review the HMI Transition Timeline Options document and***

provide feedback by ranking the options and providing a narrative that will shape future decisions. Ongoing—MPA, MES, and DNR are seeking feedback from the HMI COC on the currently proposed transition timeline options and any suggested alternative options. The HMI COC members will provide their ranking of the options and feedback in the coming months. To assist with seeking feedback, MPA will create a form and submit it to the HMI COC.

1.0 Welcome & Opening Remarks **Paul Brylske, Chair**

After the welcome and introductions, the group reviewed action items from the January 13, 2026, meeting. MPA will coordinate with Ms. Kathy Lambrow to determine which North Cell habitat development documents she would like to share with a wetland engineer. HMI COC members will provide MPA, MES, and DNR with their ranking and feedback of the transition timeline options.

The January 13, 2026 meeting summary was approved.

2.0 Friends Group Update **Paul Brylske, Chair**

The Friends of HMI were awarded a $25,000 grant from the Baltimore County Community Development Grant Program to purchase 24 interpretive signs to be displayed throughout the South Cell. Mr. Paul Brylske requested an unveiling ceremony once installation is completed. Mr. Mark Spurrier requested ample advance notice to ensure DNR staff are available for the ceremony.

3.0 Birding Updates **Kathy Lambrow, Baltimore Bird Club**

Ms. Lambrow expressed gratitude on behalf of the Baltimore Bird Club to MPA, DNR, and MES for access to HMI and the North Cell. Self-guided bird walking tours began at HMI on April 3, 2026, from 7 A.M. to 3 P.M. On April 3, 10 birders were present for leader training, and 87 bird species were identified. Mr. Fran Taylor requested a copy of the self-guided bird walking tour information. Ms. Lambrow requested approval from DNR to install nesting boxes at HMI for declining raptor populations through the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership and Maryland Farmland Raptor Project. Mr. Spurrier asked Ms. Lambrow to complete a project information form to be evaluated by DNR.

Ms. Lambrow, the Baltimore Bird Club, conservation organizations, and community advocates are investigating solutions to the nuisance midge problem in Baltimore County. In 2025, midge larval densities in Back and Middle Rivers were eight times higher than the nuisance threshold. Insecticide spraying is costly and the groups are exploring natural remedies to alleviate the midge population. The Purple Martin are insectivores that consume a variety of aerial insects, including midges, and the groups would like to encourage Purple Martin housing in strategic locations around Back and Middle Rivers, Bear Creek, and HMI. Promotion of Purple Martin housing will benefit the species conservation efforts, provide student research opportunities, reduce insecticide treatments, and improve the quality of life in the affected communities. Ms. Lambrow requested funds from DNR to construct and install Purple Martin housing at HMI. The estimated costs range from $800 to $1,100. Mr. Spurrier asked Ms. Lambrow to complete a project information form so DNR may evaluate the request. Mr. Taylor noted that funding for Purple Martin housing could potentially be supported at Todd's Inheritance [Museum and Interpretive Site] as it is also a location struggling with the nuisance midge problem. Ms. Karen Wynn added that this project would be a great task for the local Eagle Scouts. Mr. Brylske suggested

discussing this project at the next Friends Group meeting to seek additional supplementary funding. Mr. Sam Weaver confirmed that the midge population in the areas of Baltimore, Back River, and Weaver's Marine Services is a major issue and expressed his frustration.

4.0 Emergency Communication System Craig Collins-Young, Citizen - Meshtastic

Mr. Craig Collins-Young provided an overview of the Meshtastic communication system. Meshtastic is a form of communication that operates on long range radio, wherein each radio receives a message and rebroadcasts that message creating a mesh network by utilizing nearby antennas called nodes. The radios are text only, contain GPS tracking, and have variable radius depending on the type of nodes used, where the node is located, and how many nodes are in the area. Messages sent are received on other synced Meshtastic radios or via the Meshtastic app that can be downloaded onto a cell phone. This form of communication is beneficial if cell phone service is unavailable.

Mr. Collins-Young explained that while each radio costs approximately $200, he is willing to donate a radio to HMI if approval is granted to establish a node on the HMI State Park viewing tower, or another beneficial location at HMI to assist with communication during emergency situations and expand the Meshtastic network. Mr. Brylske added that this system can be beneficial to the Friends Group during HMI volunteer events if potential emergency situations arise when DNR rangers are not on site. Mr. Spurrier agreed that this system would be a reliable way to simultaneously notify DNR, MES, and MPA of an emergency so whomever is closest at the time can respond. Mr. Spurrier asked Mr. Collins-Young to complete a project information form for internal DNR review. Ms. Amanda Peñafiel asked if other emergency personnel are utilizing this system and Mr. Collins-Young replied that HMI would be an early adopter of the system. Mr. Brylske asked what the current protocol is in an emergency at HMI State Park, and Mr. Spurrier replied to call 911 to activate emergency services, note your location as HMI State Park, and Natural Resources Police Marine Division will most likely dispatch first and be in communication with DNR rangers who will also promptly respond. Ms. Lambrow asked how many emergencies have occurred at HMI State Park and Mr. Spurrier offered to provide Ms. Lambrow and the HMI COC with the incident numbers.

5.0 2025 HMI Monitoring Presentation Taylor Louis, MES

Taylor Louis presented on the 2025 HMI Environmental Monitoring Report (see attached report).

6.0 HMI North Cell Habitat Development Amanda Peñafiel, MPA

The Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) 2026 annual report lists recommendations for the upcoming year developed and presented by the DMMP Management Committee to the DMMP Executive Committee for approval. The 2026 annual recommendations are a road map for the year, aligning priorities and projects with the recommendations, including defining specific strategies and actions. As a result, the number of recommendations has been reduced, and the remaining recommendations are more concise and high-level. There are currently 12 recommendations within the broader categories of funding and policy, planning and operation, and outreach and education. Recommendation 8 is to develop a plan for HMI North Cell habitat development in collaboration with DNR and the HMI COC. To advance this recommendation, MPA established, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) goals. One of these goals has already been completed by onboarding Ms. Brandi McCoy, an independent and dedicated facilitator for the HMI COC, to ensure meaningful engagement and an open and transparent

dialogue.

- By September 30, 2026, MPA will select and document the path forward for the HMI North Cell, from one of the Transition Timeline Options, or alternative options proposed by the stakeholders. MPA will do this by facilitating at least three engagement sessions with relevant stakeholders, collecting input, and successfully advancing the proposed path forward through the DMMP framework for review and formal approval.

Mr. Taylor asked if citizens are considered relevant stakeholders, and in addition, Ms. Lambrow asked how these relevant stakeholders are determined. Ms. Holly Miller and Ms. Peñafiel replied that relevant stakeholder is a broad term for individuals and groups that create robust engagement such as citizens, community members, other committees within the DMMP, environmental interest groups, local businesses, elected officials, etc.

- By September 30, 2026, MPA will develop specific plans for addressing each element of the transition criteria agreed upon by MPA and DNR, including meeting with relevant stakeholders to further define requirements where needed.
- By December 31, 2026, the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between MPA, DNR, and MES will be updated to memorialize the path forward and clearly define roles and responsibilities. Funding constraints and opportunities will be evaluated in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, alternative funding sources, partners to ensure advancement of the HMI North Cell habitat development, and development of a funding strategy will also be identified.

In collaboration with DNR, MPA composed an HMI Transition Timeline Options document listing the pros and cons and estimated timelines for completion of three potential options for North Cell habitat development.

Transition Timeline Option 1 is the original 2019 Option D concept design plan that has been memorialized in the HMI IGA. Option 1 is a minimal maintenance option and would require the least maintenance for DNR in the future. This option has not been advanced due to lack of funding. Option 1 includes dredging of the North Cell pond to a minimum 2.8-foot depth to meet the agreed upon habitat goals and objectives and mitigate *Phragmites* growth. Dredged material would be relocated into the upland causing a potential impact on the existing habitat and bird population. For this option to proceed, alternative funding sources need to be identified, and as a result, the timeline for completion is unknown. If funding is secured and all transition criteria have been met, MPA and DNR estimate approximately 12 years for completion.

Transition Timeline Option 2 is the original 2019 Option D concept design plan with dredged material amendments. This option would deepen the North Cell pond to a minimum 2.8-foot depth by strategically placing inflowed dredged material into the uplands. Option 2 meets the agreed upon habitat goals and deters *Phragmites* and other invasive species growth but would impact existing habitat. As of December 31, 2009, HMI no longer accepts dredged material; this option would require a change in legislation and support from the HMI COC, community, and all stakeholders. Opening

HMI to dredged material placement would provide the Baltimore Harbor DMCFs with additional capacity. An engineering evaluation would be needed to determine the feasibility of Option 2 and facility improvements would need to be completed before accepting dredged material. If legislation is changed and transition criteria are met, MPA and DNR estimate approximately 20 years to complete Option 2. Mr. Brylske asked what type of dredged material would be used for this plan. Ms. Peñafiel replied that this could be maintenance harbor channel material, bay channel material or Baltimore County material. Ms. Miller reiterated that this material would be strategically placed to further the overall goals and design of Option D.

Transition Timeline Option 3 accepts the current North Cell habitat as it stands. This option preserves the existing habitat and is the least expensive transition option. A study by Century Engineering determined that rainfall alone would sustain the ponds; however, the North Cell pond would remain shallow and ongoing maintenance and funding sources would need to be identified for DNR to control potentially harmful algal blooms, *Phragmites*, and other invasive species. MPA will provide the group with a range of current cost estimates for *Phragmites* treatment and other invasive control completed at HMI. If transition criteria are met, MPA and DNR estimate approximately seven years to complete Option 3. Mr. Brylske expressed his belief that accepting the current North Cell habitat is the most attainable and preferable option.

Prior to transitioning the operation of HMI from MPA to DNR, DNR noted that some necessary conditions would need to be met for any of the North Cell habitat development options to occur: all permits and monitoring required by the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) need to be removed (the South Cell no longer has permit limitations or monitoring requirements after consistently meeting standards and the North Cell would need to be the same); any active or passive treatment systems need to be removed; flow controls need to be set to maintain pond levels; and an inspection of the berms would be required. Future discussion on the transition will include MPA response plans and post-transition DNR funding options. There is also gauging interest from local universities to use the Operations building as a research facility or location for a Mesonet weather station. The group discussed additional timeline options including potential state designations for the North Cell or the entire island, including wildlife management and natural resources areas, and what those designations could potentially entail regarding funding, management, development, goals expectations, public access, etc.

The HMI Infrastructure Working Group (HMI IWG) will meet again on April 27, 2026, to continue future transition discussions. Once an option has been chosen, MPA and DNR can determine a more accurate timeline for asset and infrastructure transition. MPA requested that the HMI COC members review and rank the HMI Transition Timeline Options, suggest additional options, and provide justifications for their ranking to continue advancement within the HMI IWG and toward the MPA SMART goals. Ms. Danielle Fisher offered to develop an online ranking system for the HMI COC members for ease of feedback; this was successfully used for the Masonville Cove Connector (MCC). The Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between MPA, MES, and DNR was extended for two additional years and will expire on December 31, 2027. The IGA language will be revised when North Cell habitat development plans are determined.

7.0 Legislation Interpretation — Holly Miller, MPA

MPA coordinated with the Office of the Attorney General to review legislation regarding the placement of dredged material at HMI to obtain clarification and legal opinions of the following questions:

- Is Baltimore County allowed to place dredged material at Hart-Miller Island if they obtain approvals by December 31, 2027?
    - Answer: No, Baltimore County cannot place dredged material at HMI because an enforceable community benefits agreement was not entered into on or before December 31, 2024.
- Can Baltimore County implement a beneficial use project using dredged material on the shoreline of Hart-Miller Island?
    - Answer: Maybe. Baltimore County would need to consult MDE because placement within 5-miles of HMI is prohibited; however, Baltimore County has an exception to that, and dredged material would need to be confined. There is conflicting language in the law that will need to be interpreted by MDE to determine if placement can happen in the vicinity of HMI.

Baltimore County is interested in dredging the area between Cuckold Point and Pleasure Island commonly referred to as "the Cut". The fiscal year 2027 Waterway Improvement Fund Grant was awarded to dredge approximately 34,000 cubic yards of sand from the Cut and use the material to complete a beneficial reuse project. Miami Beach in Middle River, Rocky Point in Essex, and HMI would be ideal areas for placement of the sand; HMI is the most ideal option since it is closest in proximity. Ms. Miller explained that using the dredged material for a shoreline restoration project would be a beneficial use of the material, but MDE must make that determination based on their interpretation of confinement. Mr. David Riter will need to know by summer 2026 if this material can be accepted onto the shoreline of HMI. Ms. Peñafiel added that an HMI Shoreline Stabilization assessment was completed in 2020 to determine areas of HMI that are experiencing erosion and asked if this project would include planting. Mr. Riter replied that this project can include marsh creation and a type of hybrid living shoreline. Ms. Miller requested that Mr. Riter reach out to MDE to determine the feasibility of the project and noted that MPA will review the 2020 HMI Shoreline Stabilization Report and share it with Mr. Riter for review.

8.0 Administration and Open Discussion — Dave Bibo, MPA

Mr. Brylske reminded the HMI COC members that attendance at 50 percent of meetings is a requirement of their service. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm. The next meeting of the HMI COC will be held on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. on Hart-Miller Island.