

September 2023

## **2023 SOIL COVER MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE SUMMARY REPORT**

**GSA PROPERTY DO1MA001902  
670 ARSENAL STREET  
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS**



***Prepared by:***

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## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A. Photographs

Attachment B. Soil Cover Inspection Checklist – 11 August 2023

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Soil Cover Monitoring and Maintenance Summary Report was prepared in compliance with the Final Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Plan dated 16 April 2014 for the Watertown Arsenal - General Services Administration (GSA) Property (D0MA0019 Project 02) located at 670 Arsenal Street, Watertown, Middlesex County, Massachusetts (the site). This report includes:

- Date of the inspections and name of personnel conducting the inspections;
- A brief summary of observations;
- Summary of maintenance activities;
- Representative photographs of the soil cover area and any deficiencies (with recommendations to correct any deficiencies); and
- A determination as to whether or not the land use controls are still being fully implemented.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The site is located at 670 Arsenal Street, in the eastern portion of the town of Watertown in Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Figure 1) (USACE, 2012). It was part of the former U.S. Army Watertown Arsenal, and was referred to as the "Northeast Area" and the Federal Property Resources Center. The site contains two parcels, the 11.91-acre GSA Property parcel, and the 1-acre, Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), now known as the MassDCR-owned, Property 20 parcel (Figure 2).

The site contains vacant land classified open space/conservancy by the City of Watertown with adjacent land considered industrial, mixed use, and residential (City of Watertown, 2022). The boundaries are heavily vegetated, and the interior contains an engineered, compensatory wetland and maintained soil cover (Figure 3). Structures related to former site operations were removed as part of the remedy, and there is no active use of the property. The nearest located water supply wells are over 1.4 miles north of the site in central Watertown, (MassMapper, 2023, USACE, 2012). The site is not within a current or a potential Drinking Water Source Area and is not within a surface water protection zone. Public access is restricted by a fence and locked gates constructed by Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MassDCR). Historically, portions of the site were classified as both State and Federal wetlands. MassDCR and the City of Watertown plan to utilize this area as greenspace for passive recreation public access.

The MassDCR owned nearly 12-acre site is bounded on the west by residential properties and parkland, on the south by Arsenal Street and further south by MassDCR-owned parkland, on the east by Greenough Boulevard (Blvd.) and parkland owned by MassDCR, and on the northwest by condominiums, apartments, and businesses. Upgradient properties contain light industrial and commercial uses, as well as two condominium complexes and a parking lot. The Arsenal Mall, the Watertown Mall, Arsenal Park, and MassDCR parkland occupy the land area to the south, southwest of the site. The area to the east and northeast of the site contains recreational pedestrian paths, open and wetland areas.

The property was filled to facilitate development during World War II and was subsequently used by the Army and by the GSA for storing and managing various materials and equipment. Prior to the Army's transfer of the property to GSA, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued the U.S. Army a license in 1961 for processing the depleted Uranium (DU) within an area at the site referred to as the former burn box area. The GSA also leased portions of the property to various parties, including automobile dealers and a television production company. One building was used as a police firing range and to store flammable materials (USACE, 2012).

### **3. FIVE YEAR REVIEW**

USACE completed the second Five-Year Review (FYR) on 25 July 2023 pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) Section 121, consistent with the National Contingency Plan (NCP)(40 CFR Section 300.430(f)(4)(ii)) and considering Department of Defense, Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policy. FYRs are required for this site by statute because the selected soil cover remedy for site results in contaminants remaining at concentrations exceeding unlimited use and unrestricted exposure to site media. This was the second five-year review for the site.

The FYR concluded the remedy is still protective of human health and the environment. The cap was found to be in similar condition to post construction condition with no major settlements, alterations, or major daylighting of the liner; therefore, eliminating the contaminated soil exposure pathway. The Former GSA Property's revised Grant of Environmental Restriction dated January 2021 is functioning as intended as it has been effective in preventing exposure through covenants and restrictions, annual maintenance, monitoring and reporting. (USACE, 2023). The Decision Document's soil and surface water Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirements (ARARs) have been met.

### **4. COMPENSATORY WETLAND**

As part of the remedy, a compensatory wetland was designed to replace the functions and values of the former wetland areas that were impacted in order to excavate and cover contaminated soils at the site. The compensatory wetland is approximately two acres in size and includes an interspersed of open water, emergent, wet meadow, and forested wetland cover types (USACE, 2018). USACE was responsible for inspections of the compensatory wetland and that corrective actions were complete for the initial five-year period. Beginning in 2019, in accordance with the O&M Plan, the property owner, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (MassDCR), assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the compensatory wetland (Charter, 2014a).

### **5. MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE**

USACE performed the Annual Soil Cap Inspection on 11 August 2023. Representative photographs USACE took during the site walk are included in Attachment A. The Soil Cover Inspection Checklist USACE completed is attached as Attachment B.

#### **5.1 Observations**

USACE met MassDCR and MassDCR's contractor, Tighe & Bond, at the site to complete the annual inspection activities. The perimeter fence, i.e., the second/interior gate, was padlocked and there was no evidence of trespasser activity. All parties were able to access the property with no issue, and upon completion of the soil cap inspections, the gates were locked.

Once inside the perimeter fencing, USACE confirmed the abandoned transformer and utility pole located on Arsenal Street, initially identified during the 2021 soil cap inspection, had been taken down and removed from the site by MassDCR.

A large tree was observed growing through the perimeter fence at the southern end of the drainage swale adjacent to Greenough Blvd. (see Photograph 16). Ongoing construction of a biotechnology facility on Coolidge Avenue was noted looking north from the site.



### 5.1.1 Integrity

During the inspection, the soil cap was observed to be intact (see Photographs 13, 14, and 15). USACE did not note issues with the integrity of the soil cap. No erosion, settlement, cracks, holes, or tire ruts in the soil cap were noted. Also observed in 2022, USACE identified one minor depression at the foot of the eastern slope; however, USACE believes it is too shallow to warrant action at this time (Photograph 9).

### 5.1.2 Vegetation

USACE observed the grass to be in healthy condition. Grass was observed to be sparse along the slope of the southern perimeter of the soil cap (see Photograph 8). This area was previously noted in the 2022 soil cap inspection report. The bare patch appears to be comparable in size to the 2022 observation.

### 5.1.3 Swale and Check Dams

Along the northwest portion of the drainage swale, USACE observed saplings, dead branches, and other vegetation overhanging the swale (see Photograph 3). Immediately adjacent to the riprap of the swale in this area, 2-4-inch-wide woody roots were observed (see Photographs 1 and 2).

Along the northeast portion of the swale, USACE observed that a tree had taken root (see Photograph 4) and cattails are growing in the swale (see Photograph 5).

USACE observed the access gate located along Greenough Blvd. is blocked by trees growing along the edge of the eastern drainage swale (see Photograph 7). Growing along the swale adjacent to Greenough Blvd., USACE also observed dense *phragmites* (see Photograph 6).

Similar to the 2022 inspection, the catch basin was observed to be surrounded by *phragmites* growth. USACE located the catch basin grate and found the surface water pooled in the swale to be actively draining (see Photographs 10 and 11). Although the majority of the swale was observed to be dry, standing water was observed behind check dams along Greenough Blvd.

USACE observed dense *phragmites* growth along the eastern and southern portions of the swale (Photographs 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 17, and 18).

## 5.2 Maintenance Performed

No maintenance was performed during this reporting period by USACE.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Future work at the site to be completed by USACE will include a site survey to confirm the soil cover perimeter and other site features related to maintenance of the remedy remain in place.

USACE recommends the following maintenance activities be conducted by DCR:

- Remove the growth of *phragmites*, cattails, and trees growing in or near the swales and treat with herbicide in accordance with the O&M plan. This includes removal of saplings from northeastern swale and eastern swale by gate to Greenough Blvd and the visible tree roots adjacent to northwestern swale.
- Remove encroaching *phragmites* to allow for inspection and repair of check dams and to maintain a functional catch basin
  - The drainage swale's check dams retain water for several days after precipitation events and should be cleaned. During regular mowing activities and swale maintenance completed by MassDCR, the check dams and receiving catch basin

should be inspected and serviced if needed, including camera inspection of the pipe under Greenough Blvd.

- Consider seeding bare patches with appropriate grass seed to prevent erosion.
- Mow remaining long grass identified in Photograph 12 of Attachment A.

## REFERENCES

- ABB Environmental Services Inc (ABB Environmental, Inc), 1993. Former Watertown Arsenal Preliminary Assessment, Watertown Massachusetts. U.S Army Corps of Engineers New England Division Waltham Massachusetts, 321 p.
- Charter Environmental, Inc. (Charter), 2014a. Operation & Maintenance Plan, Remediation Action, GSA Property D0MA001902, Watertown, Massachusetts, Revision No.: 01. 14 April 2014.
- Charter, 2014b. Remedial Action Closeout Report, Remedial Action, GSA Property D0MA001902, Watertown, Massachusetts, Revision No.: 00, Contract No. W912WJ-11-0009/0003. 30 September 2014.
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[http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map\\_ol/oliver.php](http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map_ol/oliver.php) accessed 2 Nov 2017.
- MassMapper, 2023. MassGIS Data: Public Water Supplies,  
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- USACE, 2018. Wetland and Soil Cover Inspection, 2018 Summary Report, GSA Property D0MA001902, 670 Arsenal Street, Watertown, Massachusetts. 20 December 2018.
- USACE, 2023. Second Five-Year Review Report for Watertown Arsenal - D01MA0019 Project 02 Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Prepared by: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, . 25 July 2023.
- USEPA, 1983. Environmental Transport and Transformation of Polychlorinated Biphenyls. United States Environmental Protection Agency. EPA 560/5-83-025.

## FIGURES



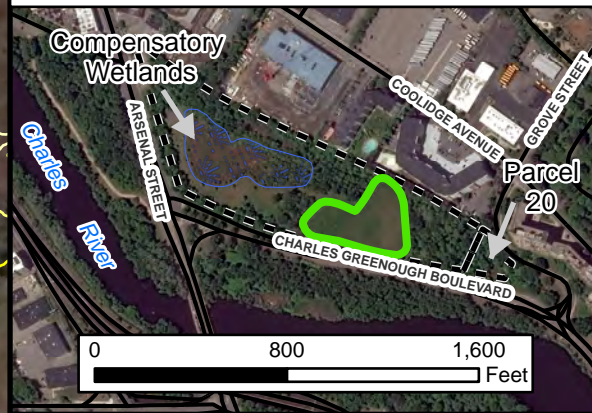
## Figure 1. Site Map

Watertown Arsenal - GSA Property  
670 Arsenal Street, Watertown, Massachusetts  
(Google Earth, 2018)

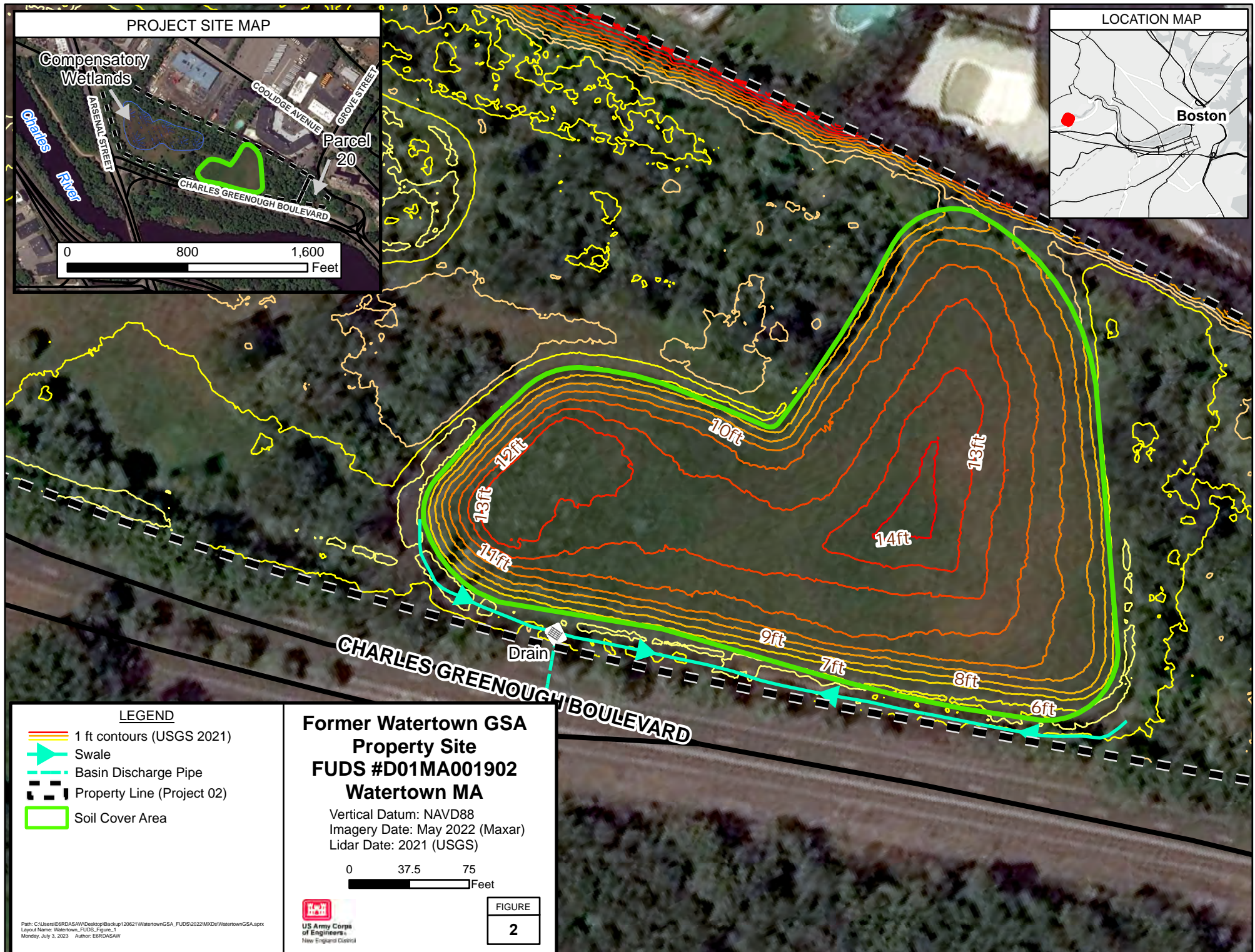
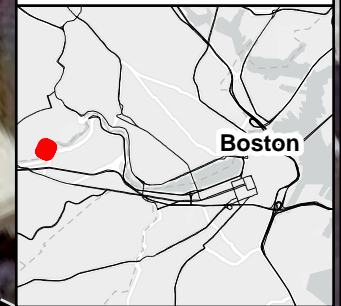




# PROJECT SITE MAP



# LOCATION MAP



## LEGEND

- 1 ft contours (USGS 2021)
- ▶ Swale
- Basin Discharge Pipe
- Property Line (Project 02)
- Soil Cover Area

## Former Watertown GSA Property Site FUDS #D01MA001902 Watertown MA

Vertical Datum: NAVD88  
Imagery Date: May 2022 (Maxar)  
Lidar Date: 2021 (USGS)

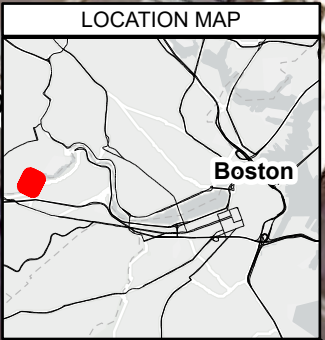
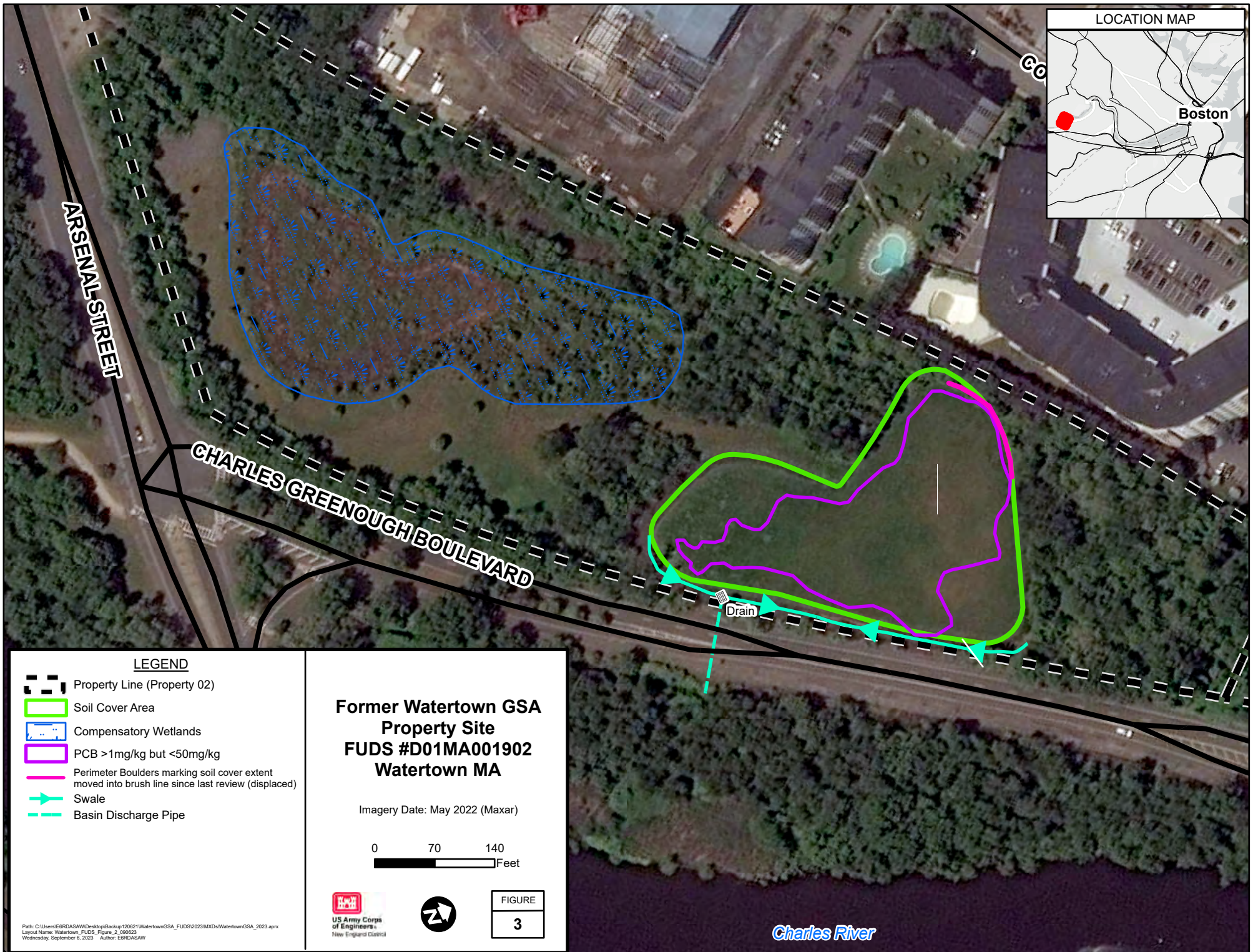
0 37.5 75 Feet



FIGURE

2





**LEGEND**

- Property Line (Property 02)
- Soil Cover Area
- Compensatory Wetlands
- PCB >1mg/kg but <50mg/kg
- Perimeter Boulders marking soil cover extent moved into brush line since last review (displaced)
- Swale
- Basin Discharge Pipe

**Former Watertown GSA  
Property Site  
FUDS #D01MA001902  
Watertown MA**

Imagery Date: May 2022 (Maxar)

0 70 140  
Feet



FIGURE

3

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**PHOTOGRAPHS**





**Photo 1:** Looking northwest along northwestern swale; note tree roots (2-4 inches in diameter) encroaching cover.



**Photo 2:** Closeup of tree roots (2-4 inches in diameter) encroaching cover shown in Photo 1.





**Photo 3:** Looking southwest along northern swale towards Greenough Blvd; note overhanging saplings, dead tree limbs in center of image, and vegetation growth throughout riprap. Dead grass (potentially tracks from mowing) noted on the right side of the photo but minor and no indication of resulting erosion/cap exposure noted.



**Photo 4:** Northern swale looking northeast; note woody vegetation growth in riprap.





**Photo 5:** Northern swale looking northeast; note vegetation (cattails, purple loosestrife, etc.) growth in riprap.



**Photo 6:** Looking southeast along eastern swale; note *phragmites* growth in riprap obscuring property fence along Greenough Blvd. and partly wet condition of swale.





**Photo 7:** Eastern swale looking southeast towards Greenough Blvd; note *phragmites* growth in riprap, tree growth along northeastern gate in center, and wet condition of swale.



**Photo 8:** Soil cap looking south towards Greenough Blvd.; note bare patches.





**Photo 9:** Eastern swale at soil cap toe looking down; note slight depression in grass cover consistent with prior inspections; boots are in depression; continue to monitor.



**Photo 10:** Eastern swale looking southeast towards Greenough Blvd; note dense *phragmites* growth; DCR Engineer and USACE Inspector (obscured) are assessing flow after clearing catch basin drain.





**Photo 11:** Eastern swale near Greenough Blvd. looking down at catch basin drain cover; note heavy vegetation and sediment buildup; drain functioned well once cleared.



**Photo 12:** Entrance path near southwestern swale looking north; note unmown section of grass; may have been rabbit nesting area but should be mowed.





**Photo 13:** Top of soil cap looking northeast; note good condition of grass cover and *phragmites* growth in center of photo and to the right in the eastern swale along Greenough Blvd.



**Photo 14:** Top of soil cap looking southeast; note good condition of grass cover and minor bare spot in center of image.





**Photo 15:** Top of soil cap looking northwest; note good condition of grass cover.



**Photo 16:** Southern swale looking south; note large tree growing through fence along Greenough Blvd and dry condition of swale in this section.





**Photo 17:** Eastern swale looking south towards Greenough Blvd.; note *phragmites* growth and apparent slumping of check dam that may differ from designed condition.



**Photo 18:** Eastern swale looking southeast towards Greenough Blvd; note heavy vegetation obscuring inspection of check dam; vegetation should be cleared to ensure check dams function as designed.

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**SOIL COVER INSPECTION CHECKLIST –**  
**11 August 2023**

# SOIL COVER INSPECTION CHECKLIST



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Task Order/Job Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Name: GSA Property D01MA001902

City: Watertown

State: Massachusetts

Inspection Team: Brent Smith - Geologist (USAEC); Erik Merry - Geologist/  
D.A. Fellow (USAEC); Muhammad Chowdhury - Engineer (MANCR);  
Samantha Velluti-Fry - PM (Tight & Bond)

Weather: mostly sunny, no wind

Temperature: 70-75 F

Site Map: Attach Map

Inspection Date: 11 August 2023

ITEM	REMARKS
<b>VEGETATIVE COVER</b>	
1. AVERAGE GRASS HEIGHT <u>0.2 ft</u> Estimated Height (inches): <u>1-3 in.</u>	• mowing performed before inspection • small overgrown area should be cleared • may be rabbit nesting area
2. SPARSE COVER AREAS? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Length: <u>5 ft</u> Width: <u>10 ft</u>	• fewer areas than 2022 inspection • seeding could be beneficial
3. GRASS CONDITION Healthy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	• much improved vs. 2022 inspection • benefited from recent rainfall
4. INVASIVE TREES/SHRUBS? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Areal Extent: <u>300x10 ft</u> Height: <u>6-8 ft</u>	• phragmite growth along Greenough Blvd should be cleared to better assess slumping in check dams • tree roots 2-4 in. diameter northwestern edge of cap
<b>GROUND SURFACE</b>	
1. SETTLEMENT (LOW SPOTS) Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Areal Extent: <u>2x2 ft</u> Depth: <u>0.5 ft</u>	• same minor depression observed in prior inspections • continue to monitor, but no action needed
2. CRACKS Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Length: _____ Width: _____ Depth: _____	• none observed
3. EROSION Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Areal Extent: _____ Depth: _____	• none observed
4. HOLES Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Areal Extent: _____ Depth: _____ Suspected Cause (e.g. rodent, other):	• none on soil cap; prior burrows were filled in but "relic den" area could use some additional soil/ and grass seed



# SOIL COVER INSPECTION CHECKLIST



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ITEM	REMARKS
<b>5. WET AREAS</b> Ponding: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Areal Extent:  Seeps: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Areal Extent: Estimated Flow Rate:  Soft Subgrade: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Areal Extent:	• none observed on the cap; recent rain elevated surface water in wetland  • none observed  • none observed
<b>6. EVIDENCE OF UNAUTHORIZED OFF ROAD VEHICLES</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Areal Extent: Depth:	• none observed
<b>STORM WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS</b>	
<b>1. EASTERN SWALE</b> Settlement: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Ponding: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map):	• no settlement observed • ponding observed in swale (red on map)
<b>2. SOUTHERN SWALE</b> Settlement: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Ponding: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map):	• no settlement observed • ponding observed in swale (red on map)
<b>3. WESTERN SWALE</b> Settlement: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Ponding: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map):	• no settlement or ponding observed • tree roots 2-4 in. diameter observed near swale and placed boulders; consider removing roots
<b>4. CATCH BASIN</b> Debris: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Appears to be Functioning: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Condition: Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	• debris had to be cleared by hand from top of grate; should be cleared when mowing happens prior to inspection • flowing well considering recent heavy rain

# SOIL COVER INSPECTION CHECKLIST



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ITEM	REMARKS
<b>5. STONE CHECK DAMS</b> Excess Sediment: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (greater than 12") Location (also indicate on map): Erosion: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map):	• vegetation debris and sediment observed but none >12 in. • some check dams not visible due to heavy vegetation • 2+ check dams observed to have slumped and become 'U' or saddle shaped (green on map) • all should be monitored
<b>ACCESS ROADS</b>	
<b>1. Damage:</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Erosion: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Vegetation: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map):	• none observed • none observed • heavy vegetation around entrance gate
<b>WALLS AND SLOPES</b>	
<b>1. NORTHERN SLOPE</b> Erosion: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Settlement: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map):	• no erosion or settlement observed
<b>2. EASTERN SLOPE</b> Erosion: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Settlement: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map):	• no significant erosion or settlement • see aforementioned minor depression in "Ground Surface" → i. Settlement (low spots)
<b>3. SOUTHERN SLOPE</b> Erosion: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Settlement: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map):	• no erosion or settlement observed
<b>GENERAL</b>	
<b>1. VANDALISM</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location (also indicate on map): Description of Damage:	• no new vandalism or graffiti • DCR opened gates and provided keys to USACE, so no need to cut chains for entry
<b>2. CHANGED SITE CONDITION</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	• no change observed
<b>3. LAND USE CONTROLS STILL FULLY IMPLEMENTED</b> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	• LUC fully implemented and USACE inspection access has improved by sharing keys

# SOIL COVER INSPECTION CHECKLIST



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<b>INTERVIEWS</b> (conduct interviews only if any of the following are present during inspection)	
1. INTERVIEW WORKERS ON SITE - <i>N/A, no workers present</i> Problems: Suggestions: Attach Report	
2. INTERVIEW SITE NEIGHBORS - <i>N/A, no site neighbors present</i> Problems: Suggestions: Attach Report	
3. INTERVIEW LOCAL OFFICIALS - <i>Muhammad Chowdhury (MADCR) and Samantha Velluti-Fry (Tight &amp; Bond) took part in inspection.</i> Problems: Suggestions: Attach Report	<i>No other local officials encountered.</i>
<b>REVIEW DOCUMENTS</b>	
1. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLAN Is there a plan in place? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Is it being followed? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Is it adequate? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>no comment needed</i>

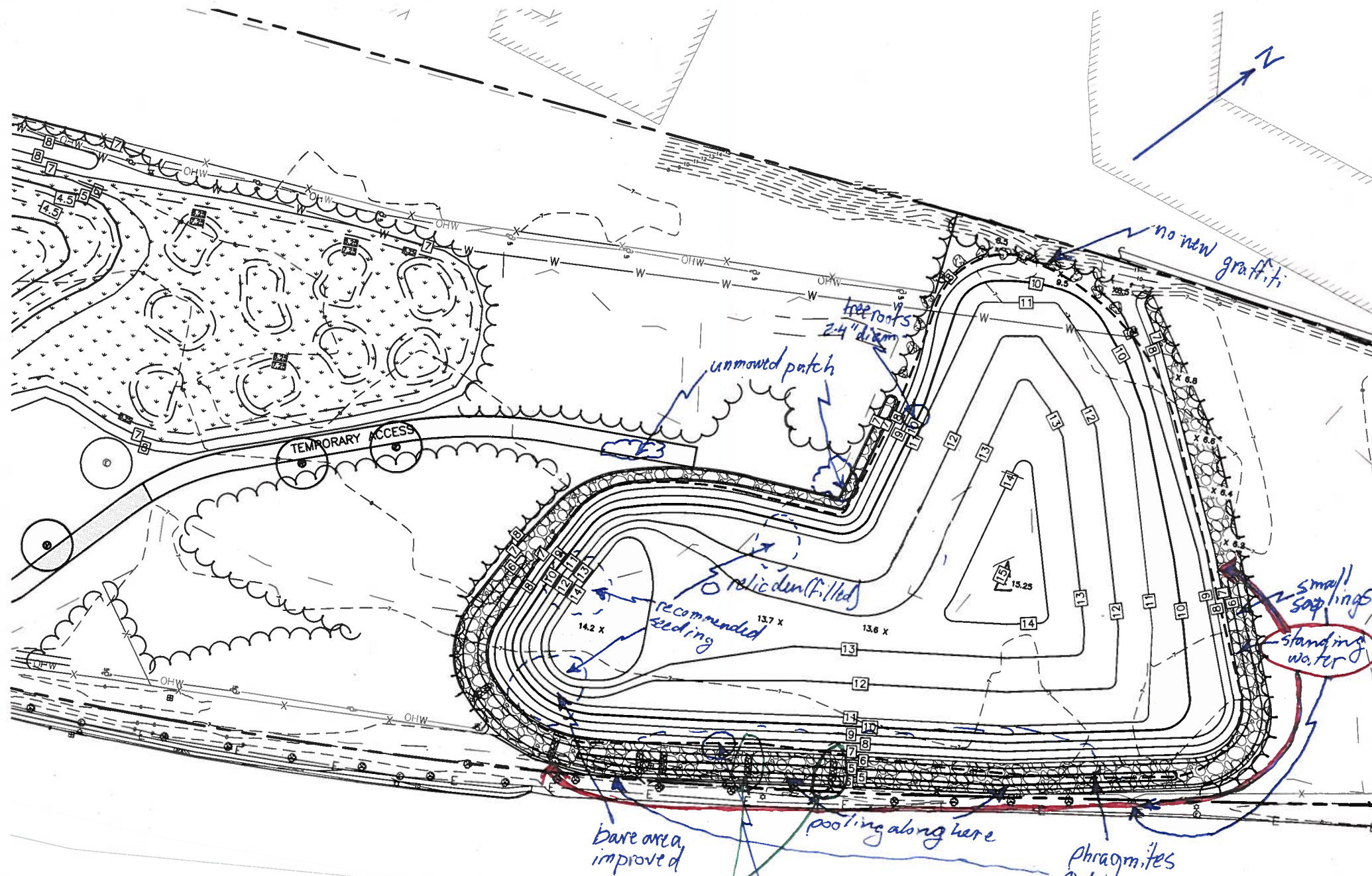
## Notes:

Observation: Encountered numerous rabbits and one rabbit carcass with evidence of coyote activity nearby.

Improvements: ① grass health much improved due to rainfall  
② better access due to key sharing  
③ removal of telephone pole and transformer near entrance eliminated potential source of hazardous materials

Recommendations: ① Remove encroaching phragmites to allow for inspection and repair of check dams and to maintain a functional catch basin.  
② Remove saplings from northeastern swale and eastern swale by gate to Greenough Blvd.  
③ Remove visible tree roots (2-4 in. diam) from cap adjacent to northwestern swale.  
④ Consider seeding bare patches with appropriate grass seed to prevent future erosion.





GREENOUGH B  
(PUBLIC)

Notes by  
Erin Merry & Brent Smith  
11 August 2023