

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 12, 2013

1. **City-State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group will meet again at the end of the month.
2. **MBTA** – The Technical Advisory Committee to the City-State Groundwater Working Group met again with the T and its consultants to review their updated plans for raising groundwater levels in the area of the South End near Back Bay Station and for presenting those plans to the Working Group meeting. There was substantial consensus on the analysis and on the solutions presented. The T still hopes to have a public meeting on the plans later this Spring.
3. **BWSC** – BWSC is taking additional steps to address low groundwater near the corner of Beacon and Dartmouth Streets, with focus now on the 72” combined sewer overflow pipe. They remain committed to finding and solving all of the causes of low groundwater levels in that corridor. BWSC has also begun preliminary work on the sewer repair project on Blagdon Street that will hopefully lead to higher groundwater levels near the Boston Public Library. They are also doing investigative work on the cause of low groundwater near the corner of Tremont and West Brookline Streets in the South End.
4. **MassDOT** – MassDOT has identified several additional leaks in the Turnpike drain line and hopes to make repairs this Spring.
5. **DCR** – Our data loggers showed an unexpected drop in some of the levels along Back Street. After receipt of that data, DCR discovered that one of the pumps that direct water from the Storrow Drive Tunnel to recharge galleys under Back Street was not functioning properly. They have replaced the pump, and groundwater levels have generally recovered.
6. **GCOD** – Compliance with GCOD continues to be excellent, thanks to the efforts of ISD, BWSC, the BRA, and the Board of Appeals. There have now been 182 recharge systems installed and inspected to meet GCOD standards. We continue to work with project proponents to help them develop the most cost effective ways to meet GCOD requirements.
7. **GCOD Process** - We have discovered a potential problem in the GCOD process that we are working with ISD to fix. One of the criteria that a project must demonstrate is that it won't have a negative impact on groundwater levels. In one case, there was a relatively minor change in project design after zoning approval that could have a significant impact on groundwater levels and changes the basis on which the zoning was approved. The change did not get picked up in any review process and was discovered in correspondence between BGwT and one of the project's consultants after we discovered that nearby groundwater levels had dropped unexpectedly. I have met with ISD, and we have agreed to ask the Board of Appeals to attach a proviso to approvals that include a “no harm” letter that construction must be done in accordance with the terms of that letter. That should trigger a more careful review of changes by ISD's plan examiners that will help to pick up any changes before construction. In addition, I hope to conduct a training session for plan examiners to make them more aware of what to look for and why certain changes are particularly important to groundwater levels.
8. **Green Alley** – We are close to completing the details on a Memorandum of Agreement among the Trust, the City, and Charles River Watershed Association for

the construction of a Green Alley project in the South End. This is a demonstration project, partially funded by the U S EPA through the Commonwealth's Department of Environmental Protection, aimed at documenting the impact of porous pavement on both increases in groundwater level and improvements in water quality. Our involvement is strictly with changes in water levels. Depending on how smoothly the project advances, it will be installed either this Fall or next Spring.

- 9. Recharge from Sidewalks** – We are participating in planning sessions led by the Public Works Department for an initiative to recharge stormwater from sidewalks city-wide. In addition to providing recharge to preserve wood piling foundations, this initiative will reduce pollution.
- 10. Website** – Traffic to our website remains solid, and I continue to get compliments on the information on the site.
- 11. Meetings** – Along with Brian Swett and Jake Glickel from the City, I met with MBTA senior management to discuss details of plans and funding for the effort to raise groundwater levels in the section of the South End near Back Bay Station. I attended a scoping session on the Fenway Point project. I met with ISD and project consultants about issues at the 4-6 Newbury St project. I testified at the Zoning Commission hearing on 1282 Boylston St. Christian and I met with consultants to the upcoming Landmark Center revision project to discuss best ways to meet GCOD requirements. I attended the groundbreaking for the Ink Block project.
- 12. Comment Letters** – I filed comments on the Fenway Point project. As always, they are posted on our website, www.bostongroundwater.org.
- 13. Vacation** – I will be on vacation the week of April 15.