

THOMAS CRANE PUBLIC LIBRARY
45 WASHINGTON ST.
QUINCY, MA 01906

VOLUME II

TECHNICAL EVALUATIONS

Final Environmental Impact Statement

SITING of WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES for BOSTON HARBOR

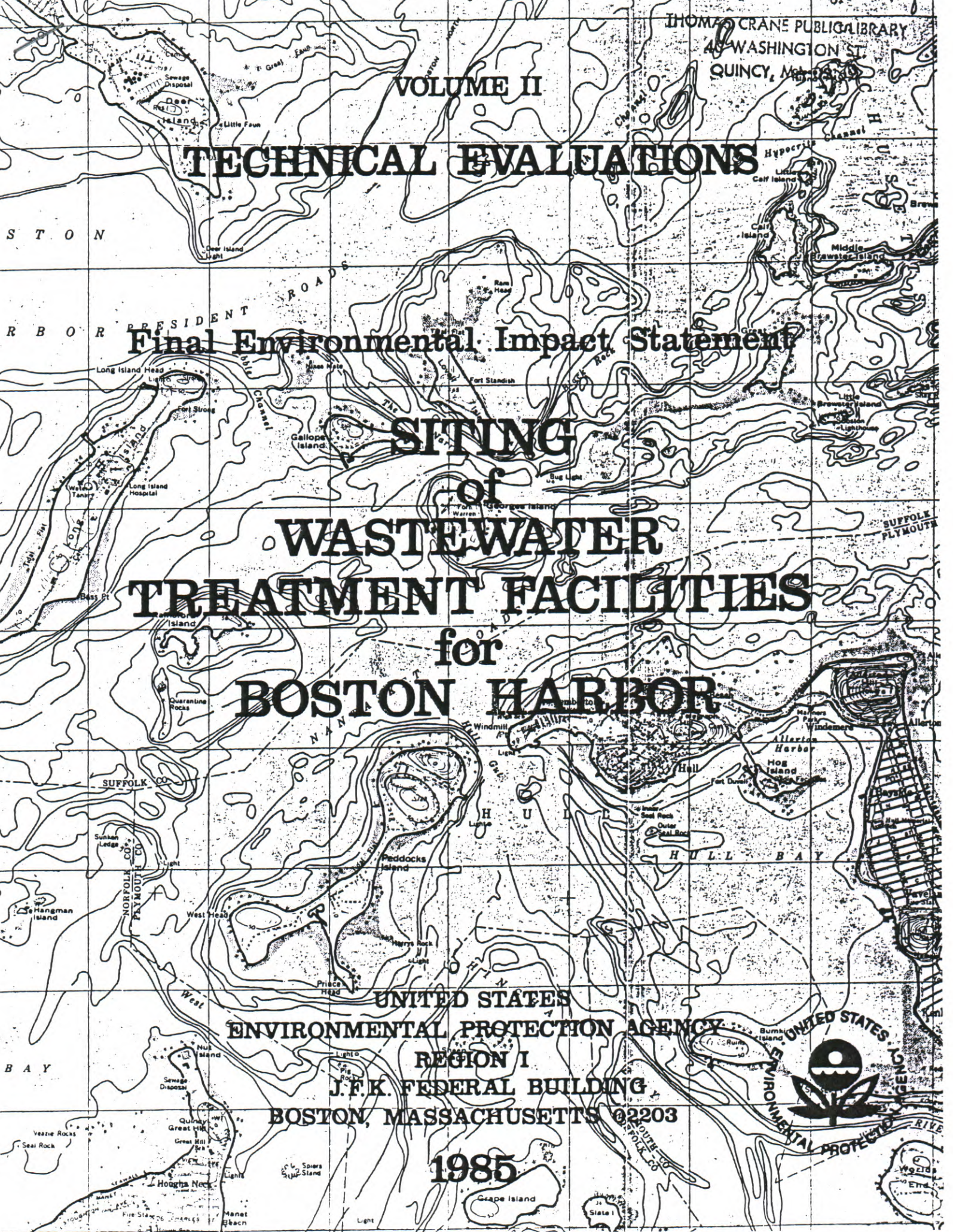
UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION I

J.F.K. FEDERAL BUILDING

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02203

1985



Historical Background

Deer Island was heavily forested with a large mobile deer population when the land was granted to Boston in 1634. Two years later, the island's forests were opened for wood cutting to residents of Boston. Within ten years, enough trees had been removed for the town council to restrict the cutting of wood to island residents in 1647 (Sweetser 1881: 194; Snow 1971: 199). By 1655, "only enough for a farm remained" (Drake 1856: 342). Besides providing wood for Boston, Deer Island served as a pound for stray goats and swine. John Ruggle built a pen to provide shelter for the strays in 1641 (Shurtleff 1871: 466).

From the mid 1640's, and for the next two hundred years, the Boston town fathers rented Deer Island lands to a series of individuals. Proceeds from these leases went to support Boston schools. During much of this period of the islands' history, Deer Island appears to have been used primarily as farmland, focussing on pasturage and grazing lands for cattle, sheep, and other livestock (Sweetser 1882: 1984; Snow 1971: 199-200).

* During King Philip's War, Deer Island served first as a concentration camp for Christian or Praying Town Indians. * The English settlers feared that these natives might take up arms along side Philip's hostiles, so they rounded them up from their towns and removed them to Deer Island. Some five hundred men, women and children were left on the island without adequate shelter, * provisions, or boats during the winter of 1675. Many of them died. * At the close of the hostilities the survivors were allowed to leave the island, only * to be replaced by native prisoners of war who were then interned there. These captives were kept on the island until they could be sent away or sold into servitude (Sweetser 1881: 195).

A native claim was made to Deer Island in 1685 by Wampatuck, also known as Charles Josias. Citizens of Boston paid nineteen pounds to buy the island from Wampatuck (Snow 1971: 200-201).

As early as 1677 Deer Island was suggested as a quarantine station for the crews and passengers of ships infected with small pox (Snow 1971: 201). No more action was made on the idea until 1717 when the Boston town council voted to lease a small parcel on the island for the erection of a "Hospital or Rest House for the reception and entertainment of sick persons coming from beyond the Sea." This time the concept was carried out, but the pest house appears to have been built on Spectacle Island instead (Snow 1971: 202).

Deer Island was the site of two Revolutionary War incidents. In 1775 Major Greaon lead his Continental soldiers on a foray to the island where they took some 800 sheep and horses, and a barge to transport them off the island, from under the noses of the British (Sweetser 1881: 196). The following year two Continental privateers, the Franklin and the Lady Washington, were sneaking out of Boston harbor through Shirley Gut with the Lady Washington became grounded. The ships were attacked by the British, but were able to escape when the British retreated and the grounded vessel floated free with the tide (Sweetser 1881: 124). During the war, minor fortifications were constructed on Signal Hill overlooking the harbor and Shirley Gut.

II-10 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL

A. Background

The comments on the SDEIS on historical and archeological issues which required further investigations center on the following question:

Did the SDEIS overstate the historical and archeological value of Long Island and underestimate the historic and archeological resources of Deer Island?

In order to respond to this issue, it was important to review previous studies and investigations of historic and archeological resources for both islands. The scope of the SDEIS investigation was designed to build upon previous studies to ensure that the areas proposed for construction of wastewater treatment facilities had been adequately evaluated.

In June and June 1984, EPA's consultant Public Archeology Laboratory, Inc., conducted an intensive level archeological survey on sections of Deer and Long Islands. Two project areas ranging from 60 acres on Deer Island to between 20 and 115 acres on Long Island were stratified into zones of expected archeological sensitivity on the basis of a literature search and walkover survey.

Survey efforts on Long Island were coordinated with the University of Massachusetts, Boston field school in archeology. The University of Massachusetts field school had surveyed the Southern end of Long Island in summer of 1984. The combined efforts of the Phase I survey conducted by PAL, Inc., and the UMass Boston field school concluded that Long Island is considered to be a significant complex of prehistoric and historic period cultural resource much of which may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

On Deer Island, it was determined that the area covering the central drumlin had not been previously investigated. Earlier surveys of Deer Island were conducted by the Institute of Conservation Archeology and covered a small area on the southern tip of Deer Island and the site of the existing treatment plant. Other areas of the island exclusive of the prison site were judged to have been previously disturbed from construction activity and therefore did not warrant further investigations.

The conclusions of the Deer Island survey were that no potential significant prehistoric or historic period cultural resources were identified on Deer Island. However, the consultants did recommend further examination of the pump station/screening plant to determine its present condition and structural integrity. Since the pump house is associated with the earlier operation of sewerage handling and disposal. For the Boston Metropolitan area, it could meet the criteria for eligibility to the National Register of Historic places.

Recommendations

In summary, the results of background research and a walkover inspection indicate that the Deer Island project area (+200 acres) consists mostly of modified land surfaces that have been the site of numerous construction and demolition episodes (ca. 1850 -- present). Some areas on the northern end of the prison complex remained open, but have been altered by many sources of previous disturbance such as grading/landscaping, filling, and installation of utility lines and easements. Cultural resources may have survived in the area as small remnants, however, due to the extent of previous disturbances, it is not likely that they would have retained sufficient integrity to meet normal standards of significance.

The small cemetery plot on the northwest edge of the project area and the open hillside surrounding it are considered to be archaeologically sensitive. From current plans of the proposed treatment plant, it is clear that the cemetery area will be impacted by this development. The exact horizontal limits of the cemetery area are unknown at present and additional archaeological investigations will probably be necessary to verify the actual extent of this sensitive cultural resource.