Technical Visits

Jumping whale. Courtesy Boston Harbor Cruises

About Technical Visits

Please register early! Technical visits will be cancelled if they do not reach the minimum number of paid participants by 31 March.

Minimum and maximum numbers of participants are noted. If the visit for which you have registered does not meet the minimum number by 31 March 2005, IAIA HQ will notify you and provide refund information or offer to transfer you to another visit. After 31 March, registrations may be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until the visits reach the maximum number.

Participants must be pre-registered and pre-paid to participate. If you must cancel, the fee will be refunded, less an administration fee of 25% of the technical visit cost and contingent upon written notice of cancellation received in HQ by 31 March. After that time, no refunds will be issued.

Technical visits will depart from the Hyatt. Check in at the IAIA registration desk a minimum of 15 minutes prior to the start time of the technical visit.

*** Family members of registered delegates are welcome to register for technical visits.**

*** Casual clothing and walking shoes are recommended.**

A: Environmental Justice Site Tour

Many professionals never experience firsthand the compound environment, public health, and social problems that some residents face every single day. This technical visit will give participants a glimpse into the reality and severity of the problems facing two Boston-area low income and minority communities. Via a bus tour of Chelsea and East Boston, participants will learn hands-on about environmental justice issues of concern to the local community, make a personal connection with environmental justice problems, learn how residents are dealing with these issues and what progress is being made in addressing them, and hear what support the community might benefit from in the future.

The tour will be led by representatives from local community-based organizations and illustrate some of the communities' most pressing environmental concerns, which demonstrate cumulative risks, including lack of open and green space, limited waterfront access, numerous state-designated hazardous waste sites, heavy concentration of industries in a designated port area, and traffic and air pollution. A portion of the fee will be contributed to the Chelsea Creek Action Group to fund environmental educational programs in the community.

Organized by US EPA and Chelsea Creek Action Group.

Friday, 3 June • 1:00 to 3:30pm • 25-45 people • $25

B: Central Artery/Big Dig

The $14 billion Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project, scheduled for completion in 2005, is the most expensive and complex urban infrastructure project ever built in the United States. The project was subject to concurrent federal impact review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and state impact review under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). As conditions of the NEPA/MEPA review, two far-reaching sets of environmental mitigation measures were agreed upon:

- The state transportation agencies made a legally enforceable commitment to fund and construct over $1 billion in regional transit improvements, to offset potential air pollution and traffic impacts of the new highway. This commitment has effectively guided transportation planning and investment throughout the greater Boston region over the past fifteen years.
- The project is creating several hundred acres of parks in Boston and neighboring communities. The most prominent of the redevelopment sites is 27 acres in the heart of downtown Boston, made available for new uses by demolition of the elevated highway. Debate over the use of this land—planned for a combination of open space, private development, and civic building—has focused on how to repair the scars of previous highway construction, and who should control that process.

This technical visit will include a guided tour sponsored by the Central Artery Tunnel's Big Dig project, a visit to some of the newly created selected greenspace sites and a discussion of potential uses and alternative social and environmental impacts. Participants will be on their own for lunch with a choice of restaurants in Boston's North End or Quincy Market and opportunity for shopping before returning to the hotel.

Friday, 3 June • 1:30pm to 6:30pm • 20-40 people • $25

C: Charles River Watershed

One of the United States' first watershed associations, Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) was founded in 1965 in response to public concern about the declining condition of the Charles River which flows between Boston and Cambridge. Since its earliest days of advocacy, CRWA has figured prominently in major clean-up and watershed protection efforts, working with government officials and citizen groups in 35 Massachusetts watershed towns. Initiatives over the last three decades have dramatically improved the quality of water in the watershed and approaches to water resource management.

The tour will begin with a slide show and question/answer session at the Hyatt Regency Cambridge Hotel. Staff from CRWA will present environmental and water resource management issues on the Charles River, including water quality, water flow, storm water management, combined sewer overflows, and social impact analysis. Participants will then board a boat for a tour of the Charles River, where CRWA staff will point out issues presented at the slideshow. In addition, a park ranger will provide historical commentary about the river during the trip. The boat will also travel through the locks for a brief excursion in Boston Harbor before returning to the dock.

The fee includes a three-hour boat tour with dinner.

Friday, 3 June • 4:30pm to 9:30pm • 40-55 people • $80

D: Boston Harbor Tour

The port of Boston is characterized by a highly developed, mixed-use waterfront where residential, commercial and industrial uses share a relatively small-scale harbor. Boston Harbor has been the subject of intensive efforts to improve environmental quality. This technical visit will illustrate the challenges and solutions that recent major engineering projects have faced in this diverse area. Participants will view and discuss recent major infrastructure improvements in Boston Harbor, including the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Deer Island treatment plant (see http://www.mwra.com/03sewer/html/sewditp.htm), and the Boston Harbor Navigation Improvement Project. Both of these projects have been recognized nationally as state-of-the-art technical solutions to complex social/environmental/industrial problems.

Participants will take a bus to the MWRA Deer Island facility, located in Boston's outer harbor. At the visitor's center there, MWRA staff will present history of the projects and provide a tour of the facility. Weather permitting, this will include a tour of the recreational and coastal defense aspects of the facility on the seaward perimeter of the island. Lunch will be provided at the visitor's center.

After lunch, personnel from the Corps of Engineers will discuss the planning, design and construction of the confined aquatic disposal cells constructed under Boston Harbor to contain over a million cubic yards of contaminated dredged sediments. Participants will then take a guided boat tour of Boston Harbor to view the Massachusetts Port Authority's recent industrial developments and to hear how they have addressed the challenges of developing major port facilities while addressing significant social and environmental concerns.

Organized by Coastal Zone Management and Massachusetts Water Resources Authority.

The fee includes box lunch.

Saturday, 4 June • 9:30am to 3:30pm • 30-45 people • $60

E: South Shore Coastal Hazards Field Trip

The South Shore of Massachusetts (Hull-Scituate) is an exposed shoreline that has seen considerable development and repetitive storm damage over the years. By bus, participants will visit several oceanfront sites along the South Shore that illustrate the vulnerability of this shoreline to damage as well as historic and contemporary approaches to protecting development from storm damage.

Hull is located on a peninsula with the Atlantic Ocean on one side and Boston Harbor on the other. Fort Revere is located in Hull and protected Boston Harbor during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. From Hull the tour will pass Cohasset, known for its beautiful coastline, often referred to as the Gold Coast, and its famous Minot Light Lighthouse located outside its harbor; the tour will continue on to Scituate and Duxbury, a center of shipbuilding until the mid-nineteenth century when ships became too large for the shallow bay.

The current approach to shore protection and hazard mitigation along the Massachusetts coastline is very segmented and often focuses on repair of existing coastal engineering structures. In order to provide a better basis for decisions regarding the appropriate approach, Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management (CZM) is developing detailed information regarding technologies and methods of shoreline management and making recommendations regarding their applicability to sections of the shoreline with similar wave exposure and sediment characteristics.

CZM will provide a guided bus tour of one or more major coastal defense structures currently under design and/or reconstruction and illustrate and discuss dominant coastal processes that affect sediment dynamics along shoreline segments; Federal Emergency Management Agency repetitive loss data; and the history of shoreline response to storm and normal conditions relative to engineering structures, repetitive damage patterns, flood zone classification, density of development in proximity to hazard areas, etc.

Organized by Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management.

The fee includes box lunch.

Saturday, 4 June • 12:00pm to 6:00pm • 25-45 people • $60