

**New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)
Meeting Summary –3 March 2026**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
Prepared by	Hadley Menk, Cadmus Group	3/5/2026
Reviewed by	Julia Gulka, Biodiversity Research Institute	3/18/2026
Reviewed by	Kate Williams, Biodiversity Research Institute	3/27/2026
Reviewed by	Kate McClellan Press, NYSERDA	4/1/2026

Disclaimer: While all efforts were made to accurately represent E-TWG discussions, the views expressed in this summary may not represent the views of all E-TWG members.

Background

As part of New York State's efforts to responsibly develop offshore wind (OSW) energy, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) convened the Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG) in 2018 to provide input to the state.¹ On March 3, 2026, the E-TWG held a virtual meeting via Zoom. All participants who attended are listed in [Appendix A](#).

This summary is intended to capture the key points of discussion and action items identified during the meeting and is loosely organized according to the structure of the meeting agenda ([Appendix B](#)). Opinions are not attributed to specific E-TWG members unless there is a clear reason to do so. For topics where there were differences of opinion among E-TWG members, this summary identifies areas of agreement as well as the different perspectives offered during meeting discussions.

Action Items

- E-TWG members are encouraged to respond to NYSEDA's [Offshore Wind Predevelopment Support Program Request for Information \(OSWRFI26-1\)](#), which is open to submissions until March 24, 2026.
- E-TWG members are asked to provide feedback on components of the Rapid Communications Specialist Committee effort (draft directory of resources, potential communicators spreadsheet) by March 20, 2026.
- E-TWG members are encouraged to register for the 2026 State of the Science conference taking place June 8–11, 2026, at Stony Brook University on Long Island. Members can register [here](#).

Welcome and Introductions

Bennett Brooks (Consensus Building Institute, or CBI) provided a brief introduction and invited new meeting participants to introduce themselves. The focus of the meeting was to discuss the Rapid Communications Specialist Committee effort.

NYSERDA Updates

Kate McClellan Press (NYSERDA) provided an update on the [Offshore Wind Predevelopment Support Program Request for Information \(OSWRFI26-1\)](#), which is open to submissions until March 24, 2026. The Request for Information (RFI) aims to obtain feedback from stakeholders to help New York State consider the value, benefits, and risks of funding OSW predevelopment activities. Feedback from the RFI will be used to inform the timing, structure, and design of predevelopment Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to ensure they achieve the best outcomes for New York State. E-TWG members are encouraged to provide their input ahead of the March 24, 2026, deadline. Information on how to respond can be found [here](#).

Additionally, NYSERDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to fund aerial surveys performed by the New England Aquarium through 2026, and closed an [RFP](#) focused on determining a multi-year record of Atlantic sturgeon presence in the greater New York City area. E-TWG members with questions about NYSERDA's research updates can reach out to Kate McClellan Press (kate.mcclellanpress@nyserda.ny.gov).

Finally, the fifth [State of the Science conference](#) will take place at Stony Brook University from June 8–11, 2026. The Scientific Advisory Committee received a large number of high-quality abstracts for this year's conference, and abstract and symposium acceptances have been sent out. Registration for State of the Science is free for E-TWG members and their alternates, and for members of active E-TWG Specialist Committees. E-TWG members are encouraged to [register to attend](#), either virtually or in person, and to book accommodations if attending in person. Questions about State of the Science can be directed to Kate Williams (kate.williams@briwildlife.org).

Questions

- **Would NYSERDA be open to an extension of the predevelopment RFI deadline?**
 - Kate McClellan Press (NYSERDA) responded that Janna Herndon (NYSERDA) (janna.herndon@nyserda.ny.gov) and Greg Lampman (NYSERDA) (Gregory.lampman@nyserda.ny.gov) are the designated contacts for the RFI and can answer questions related to it.

Overview of the Rapid Communications Specialist Committee

Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute or BRI) and Julia Gulka (BRI) provided an update on the recent work of the Rapid Communications Specialist Committee (SC). This SC was formed in summer 2025 following prioritization efforts by the E-TWG in late 2024 to early 2025, where E-TWG members identified a need for clear and timely information about OSW and environmental issues, given increased attention on the OSW industry. The goal of the SC is to provide science-based information, resources, and communications strategies to stakeholders to be able to anticipate communication needs and respond quickly as issues arise in the public sphere.

The SC has developed a list of 14 plausible scenarios that could arise related to OSW and environmental issues, which could benefit from pre-developed response resources and communications strategies. These include scenarios related to known or perceived bird and marine mammal mortality, impacts to fish, oceanographic and hydrological effects, permitting-related topics, and project-specific incidents. There may be additional topics the SC could pursue in the future.

The SC is currently meeting monthly to refine communication strategies, develop a database of existing public-facing resources, and define strategies for engaging interested individuals/groups in this effort. In particular, the SC is focused on refining the role of the points of contact (POC), who will serve as the connection between the SC and the broader network. The SC has identified three potential POC types: a general POC (by topic area), a media/elected official POC (who would specialize in outreach to those groups), and a developer POC (who might respond in the case of project-specific scenarios).

An SC member has agreed to take on the media/elected official POC role, given their existing work in that area and shared with the E-TWG an overview of what their organization has been doing, which includes working with consultants to address OSW-related information in media, building relationships with reporters, and working with elected officials and their staff members to provide resources and information about OSW. This represents a natural fit to serve as a POC connecting topical scientific experts with media and elected officials.

Julia Gulka (BRI) shared an example scenario to demonstrate how the process would work, including sharing four components:

- Existing public-facing resources
- Talking points summarizing key information
- Types of proactive and reactive communication activities
- Potential individuals/organizations with topical expertise

The SC is also discussing implementation plans and engagement of topical experts, and requested feedback from E-TWG members on the following draft products and activities:

- Compiling public-facing resources into a public resource directory
- Developing and finalizing talking points for scenarios
- Organizing communications activities into a toolkit resource
- Engaging potential topical experts
- Identifying POCs

Discussion

Bennett Brooks (CBI) invited members of the SC to share their experiences and takeaways from the committee's work so far.

- An SC member shared that the E-TWG created a space where people from various perspectives can communicate in a trusted, respectful way. The E-TWG helps people understand the different strengths and areas of expertise of various organizations and individuals. This SC is particularly valuable for planning coordinated and proactive responses, dispelling misinformation, and getting accurate information out. This process sets the group up for success and helps avoid errors or missed opportunities to respond.
- Another member agreed, sharing that the collaborative process has been meaningful. The SC has put together a detailed framework and has thought through each step of the potential response. This is important because when an event occurs, the response needs to move quickly. Next steps for the SC are focused on outreach to help build a network of topical experts to provide science-based information when needs arise. The SC is looking for suggestions on who could best serve in this role and encourages E-TWG members to provide feedback.

Credible Science Communicators

Julia Gulka (BRI) provided an overview of the potential roles that topical experts could play in this effort. These are individuals who could help communicate science-based information to the public and include a range of types of organizations and groups. Examples include staff from environmental and conservation organizations, academia, state and federal agencies, regional entities, and community and fisheries groups. There is a spectrum of roles that individuals may be willing and able to take on, including awareness and informal engagement, internal engagement within their organization or network, public engagement, media engagement, or outreach to elected officials.

The SC has compiled a list of potential science communicators and is currently brainstorming how to perform initial engagement with them. The SC plans for the initial engagement to take place via an email, ideally from someone already in their network. Information about the role would be provided in an email, informational webinars, and/or one-on-one meetings. The SC has also proposed circulating an online survey after initial engagement to gauge interest in involvement and which roles individuals would be comfortable taking on.

Key areas of feedback requested from the E-TWG included:

- Have the correct experts been identified?
- If the expert is in an E-TWG member's network and willingness to contact
- What type of engagement would be most effective (webinar, one-on-one meetings, etc.)?
- If you don't know an individual on the list, do you know someone who might?

Discussion

- **What is the vision for what the science communicators would be doing? Responding to media inquiries?**
 - Julia Gulka (BRI) responded that the SC is not assuming everyone is comfortable talking to the media, so individuals could take on a variety of roles including internal communications within their organization, awareness or informal communications, or talking to the media. Not everyone would be fulfilling all those roles. Bennett Brooks (CBI) pointed out that identifying who would need to be informed in a particular scenario is also useful, even if those individuals aren't performing external outreach.
 - A member pointed out that at federal agencies, the best contact is typically a formal press office rather than individuals.

Operationalizing Scenarios

Julia Gulka (BRI) walked through how an example scenario would be operationalized once the experts and POCs have been identified. Julia provided three examples of how the scenario might unfold. Key components included (1) coordination among POCs, (2) assessment of resources and talking points, and (3) outreach and two-way information sharing.

The SC is looking for feedback on the implementation process. The following questions were posed for breakout group discussion:

- Are there any potential sticking points and how can the SC address them?
- How does the SC ensure the connection between topical experts and developers?
- Are there any additional considerations to account for?

Breakout Groups

E-TWG members were split into breakout groups for a 15-minute discussion on the scenario implementation process. The bullets below summarize topics and themes that emerged during the breakout group discussions and should not be interpreted to represent the opinions of the full E-TWG.

Preparing for Speed

- Groups opposing OSW are often quick to put out a narrative after an event occurs, so being prepared to respond rapidly with science-based information is important.
- Groups on the ground responding to an event may not have time or ability to put together talking points, so having them available and ready ahead of time will remove barriers to rapid response.
- It's important to ensure the entire network is aware of who the POCs are and what their role is, in case someone else in the network notices a scenario unfolding first.

Building Trust

- Having buy-in from key groups in advance of informational needs will help the process run smoothly. This requires developing relationships ahead of time, ensuring expectations are clear, and acknowledging limitations to participation in the response network.

Acknowledging Barriers to Participation

- Willingness vs. ability to participate will vary for different individuals.
- Several key groups, such as developers, state, and federal staff, may face barriers to being part of a network of public-facing science communicators, such as needing internal approval to speak publicly. If comments or feedback are needed from organizational leadership, a pre-approval process for talking points can help streamline the process.
- It's important to identify people who are in a position to immediately make public facing comments when the circumstances arise.

It may be useful to add a column to the list to identify potential restrictions around communication.

Tailoring to Various Audiences

- The level of trust in scientific information often varies depending on who is communicating the information.

- There are opportunities for engagement with additional communicators who may resonate with specific groups, but they may be willing to engage with the process in a way that's different from other groups, so it's important to provide flexibility.
- A member suggested adding a column to the list for individuals to add which platforms they have access to (i.e., social media accounts) that could be used to reach their intended audience.

Outreach to Additional Experts

- A member suggested reaching out to staff at veterinary schools as it will be beneficial to include experts on avian mortality for certain scenarios.
- Ensuring the list of science communicators is up to date will be an ongoing process, and it's important that the list is updated to account for organizational changes or staff turnover.
- Developers have maritime communications networks already which the SC may be able to tap into or contribute to, assuming there is buy-in from developers for this communications network.

Identifying Opportunities for Proactive Outreach

- Choosing a topic to engage in proactive outreach may be worthwhile. A member suggested birds may be a good topic for proactive outreach, particularly given recent mortality from avian flu and ice-over conditions during the winter. A webinar series or similar may be a good place to start.

Resource Directory

Julia Gulka (BRI) provided an overview of the resource directory created by the SC. The resource directory is a list of key public resources the SC has identified on relevant topics, including fact sheets, FAQs, webinars, websites, and news articles. For each resource, three inclusion criteria were considered:

- Evidence base—Does the resource contain cited data, references, and/or expert input?
- Transparency—Does the resource provide clear authorship information, a publication date, and other publication information?
- Production quality—Does the resource include a high-quality design and layout? Are hyperlinks working and up to date?

Some resources did not meet the inclusion criteria but were being reviewed by the committee to determine if they might still be reliable resources (e.g., federal agency websites). The SC is currently looking for additional public-facing resources on several topics and asked the E-TWG for input.

Following E-TWG review, the resource directory will be made publicly available on the [E-TWG website](#). The directory can be filtered for resource objectivity, technical assessment, visual support, keywords, resource type, and scenario.

The SC is looking for feedback from the E-TWG over the next few weeks on:

- Whether the resources listed are comprehensive,

- Whether the inclusion criteria and filters are useful, and
- If public-facing resources are not available for a topic, should the SC include more technical resources instead?

Wrap Up

Bennett Brooks (CBI) and Kate McClellan-Press (NYSERDA) closed the meeting by thanking all attendees for participating. Both also provided reminders on the following:

- E-TWG members are encouraged to provide feedback by March 20, 2026 on (1) the potential science communicators list, particularly noting any connections members have to individuals on the list, and (2) the resource directory spreadsheet.
- Support staff are planning an in-person E-TWG meeting for Fall 2026. The date is still to be determined, but the meeting is tentatively planned for late September or early October.
- The 2026 State of the Science will be held June 8–11, 2026, at Stony Brook University. A key focus will be lessons learned from U.S. OSW development. E-TWG members are encouraged to [register](#) for the conference.
- E-TWG members with questions, comments, or feedback for support staff are encouraged to reach out to Kate Williams (kate.williams@briwildlife.org) or Julia Gulka (julia.gulka@briwildlife.org).

Appendix A: List of Participants

Point of Contact	Organization	Stakeholder Type	Role
Kate McClellan Press	NYSERDA	State Govt.	Convener/chair
Jen Banks	TotalEnergies Carolina Long Bay	Developer	Advisor
Isabella Betancourt	NYS Dept. of State	State Govt.	New York State
Morgan Brunbauer	NYSERDA	State Govt.	New York State
Colleen Brust	NJ Marine Resources	State Govt.	Observer
Kira Dacanay	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	Federal Govt.	Observer
Hollie Emery	MA Coastal Zone Management	State Govt.	Observer
Catherine Fede	NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation	State Govt.	New York State
Elise Frazier	VA Coastal Zone Management	State Govt.	Observer
Heather Genievich	NJ Dept. Of Environmental Protection	State Govt.	Observer
Terra Haight	NYS Dept. Of State	State Govt.	Observer
Atma Khalsa	Avangrid Renewables	Developer	Advisor
Scott Lawson	Dominion Virginia Power	Developer	Advisor
Kristi Lieske	DE Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Control	State Govt.	Observer
Carl Lobue	The Nature Conservancy	eNGO	Advisor
Becca Loomis	Natural Resources Defense Council	eNGO	Advisor
Amanda Mayhew	RWE	Developer	Advisor
Erin McClean	Turn Forward	eNGO	Advisor
Darrell Oakley	Equinor	Developer	Advisor
Kimberly Peters	Ørsted	Developer	Advisor
Patrick Roberts	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Federal Govt.	Observer
Albie Solana	Attentive Energy	Developer	Advisor
Shayna Steingard	National Wildlife Federation	eNGO	Advisor
Sarah Trabue	Wildlife Conservation Society	eNGO	Advisor
Nora DeDontney	Vineyard Offshore	Developer	Advisor
Sharon Whitesell	Ørsted	Developer	Advisor
Bailey Wild	NJ Board of Public Utilities	State Govt.	Observer

Support Staff

Bennett Brooks (Consensus Building Institute)

Julia Gulka (Biodiversity Research Institute)

Hadley Menk (The Cadmus Group)

Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute)

Katrina Zarrella Smith (Biodiversity Research Institute)

NYSERDA Staff

Jeremy Magliaro (NYSERDA)

Appendix B: Meeting Agenda

New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)

Virtual Meeting Agenda – 3 March 2026

11:30 am – 1:00 pm EST

Meeting Objectives

Discuss the Rapid Communications Specialist Committee effort

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
11:30 -11:38 am	Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction• Agenda• General Updates
11:38-11:53 am	Overview of Rapid Communications Specialist Committee Effort
11:53 am -12:08 pm	Science Communicators <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview• Feedback
12:08-12:53 pm	Operationalizing Scenarios <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example Implementation• Breakout Groups• Group Discussion
12:53-12:58 pm	Resource Directory <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goals• Feedback
12:58-1:00 pm	Wrap up and Next Steps