

Advancing Environmentally Responsible Development of Offshore Wind Energy for  
New York State:  
Outreach & Communications Plan for the Environmental  
Technical Working Group (E-TWG)



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## Summary

In 2018, New York convened the Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG) to advise the State about the environmentally responsible development of offshore wind energy resources (NYSERDA 2018). The E-TWG brings together a wide range of groups interested in offshore wind development activities in New York State and elsewhere along the Eastern Seaboard from Maine to North Carolina. The E-TWG advances priorities through a range of mechanisms, including: working to directly produce products, such as letters, reports, and other documents; forming specialist committees (SCs) of experts in the field to produce products on particular topics; and facilitating engagement through the State of the Science Conferences. These activities, among others, serve to support State efforts to advance the environmentally responsible development of offshore wind. Outreach to offshore wind energy and environmental communities, and the general public, has been identified by the E-TWG as a critical component of the group's activities.

The following document outlines an outreach and communications plan to support broader offshore wind community engagement in E-TWG activities. The primary audience for topical communications is informed groups in the offshore wind and environmental field. Other audiences include the general public and other New York State Technical Working Groups (TWGs). Communications are expected to focus on the State of the Science Conferences, as well as other E-TWG activities (including meetings, products produced by the E-TWG and SCs, and public comment opportunities). Avenues of communication include, but are not limited to, the E-TWG website, an email list-serv, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) public webinars, and presentations at conferences and meetings.

## Background

New York convened the E-TWG to advise the State about the environmentally responsible development of offshore wind energy resources (NYSERDA 2018). In addition to the E-TWG, which is made up of a offshore wind developers, environmental non-governmental organizations, state and federal agencies, and regional groups, the State's proposed approach for offshore wind community engagement on environmental issues also incorporates Specialist Committees (SCs), which bring together science-based subject matter experts under the direction of the E-TWG, and public "State of the Science" Conferences (Figure 1). Input from a wide range of knowledgeable groups helps inform the State's efforts to advance offshore wind in environmentally responsible ways. Facilitating outreach to the broader offshore wind community and general public also serves to inform these groups about State efforts and has been identified by the E-TWG as a critical component of group activities.

## Objectives

Communications between active participants in the E-TWG process (e.g., NYSEDA, E-TWG member organizations, SC member organizations) and the broader offshore wind community are intended to 1) inform interested parties about the work that is being done by the E-TWG and the State of New York in regards to developing offshore wind in an environmentally responsible way, 2) inform interested parties about the state of knowledge on offshore wind and environmental science more generally, and 3) facilitate regional coordination among entities working in this field.

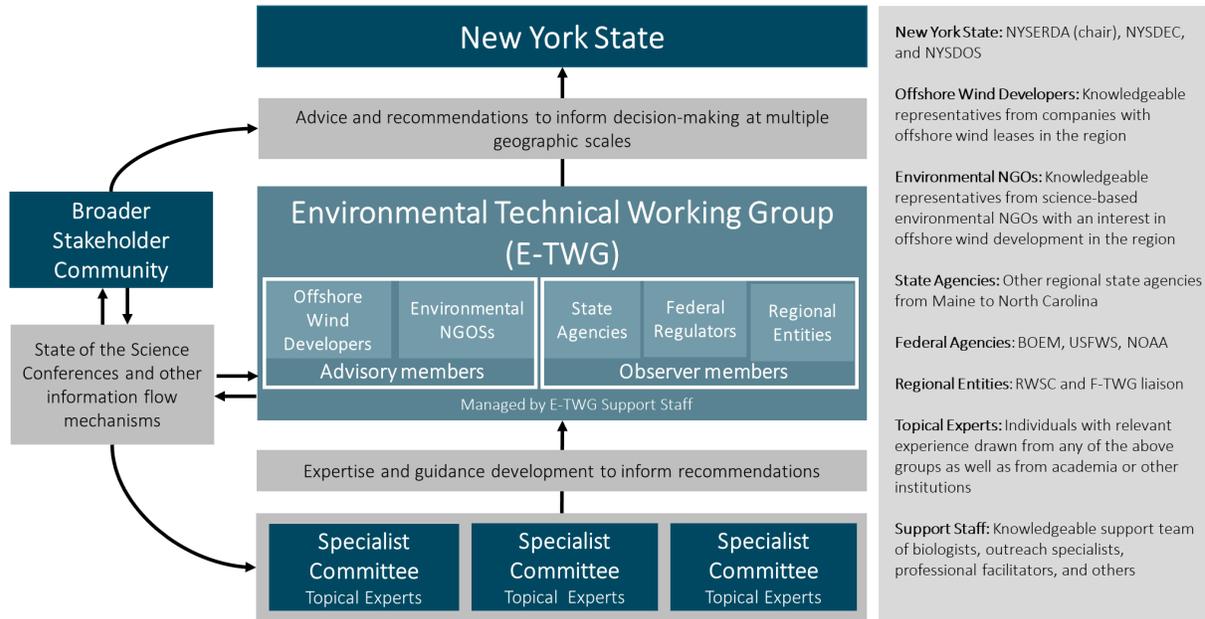


Figure 1. Groups involved with the E-TWG effort and the structure of engagement. Specialist committees, made up of topical experts and others, develop guidance documents or other products that are reviewed by the E-TWG. The E-TWG, with representation from developers, environmental NGOs, state and federal agencies, and regional entities, provides recommendations to the State of New York. Specialist committee products, along with E-TWG input on those products, inform collective decision making by the State. State of the Science Conferences and other information flow mechanisms communicate E-TWG and committee efforts to the broader offshore wind community, and allow opportunities for input on these processes and products.

## Audiences

We recognize three sets of groups that are important to communicate with as this effort continues, with different communication and outreach goals and strategies required for each group:

- Informed groups.** Offshore wind energy developers, eNGOs, environmental consulting firms, state and federal agencies, academics, and other subject matter experts should, as much as possible, be incorporated into the E-TWG and SC processes and have opportunities to make their voices heard and to engage through State of the Science Conferences. Regional science funding bodies, such as the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) and Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind (RWSC), also fall into this category of informed groups. There is a need for reciprocal communications with these groups to inform them of ongoing activities and also to solicit their input to inform strategic priorities and develop end products. Such two-way communications also ensures that E-TWG efforts do not duplicate ongoing efforts by other states, federal agencies, regional funding bodies, or other actors in this field to address offshore wind and wildlife issues. **Informed groups, including New York State agencies, agency staff from other regional states, staff from BOEM and other federal agencies, offshore wind energy developers, eNGOs, ROSA, RWSC, and other emerging regional science bodies, research scientists, and others, are the primary audience for E-TWG communications and outreach activities.**

- The general public. Interested parties who do not have technical expertise, including coastal communities, that may be interested in or impacted by offshore wind energy development, should also be kept informed of ongoing E-TWG activities and products. Informing the public of the E-TWG's efforts, as well as other ongoing science in the field, demonstrates the State's commitment to environmental responsibility and helps engender support for offshore wind energy development by the State and in the region.
- Other Technical Working Groups. The New York Offshore Wind Master Plan (NYSERDA 2018) included the formation of several [Technical Working Groups](#), including the E-TWG. Other currently operational TWGs related to offshore wind energy development are focused on (1) jobs and supply chains, (2) maritime issues, (3) recreational and commercial fishing, and (4) environmental justice). The E-TWG should maintain communications with these other Working Groups and associated personnel to ensure that areas of topical overlap (such as fish habitat, which is of interest to both the environmental and fisheries groups) are addressed appropriately and without duplication of effort. There can also be efficiencies in sharing process information between groups. The seating of the Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) chair as an E-TWG member facilitates cross-TWG coordination, as does co-hosting of the State of the Science Conferences.

## Communication Topics

The outreach and communications strategy for the E-TWG is focused on three major topic areas: E-TWG activities, meeting summaries, and other products; SC efforts (e.g., reports, guidance documents, webinars, and other products); and State of the Science Conferences. The methods of communication for each of these topics are discussed in the "Channels of Communication" section, below.

### **E-TWG activities, meeting summaries, and other products**

Transparency in E-TWG processes allows audiences to understand and remain informed about E-TWG activities, build trust in the process, and avoid duplication of efforts between the E-TWG and other groups operating on offshore wind and wildlife issues. Public summaries of meeting discussions are a main avenue for communication of E-TWG activities. Additional products may also be produced by the E-TWG, including letters, editorials, and reports.

#### *Communication Opportunities/Needs*

1. Following each E-TWG meeting, agendas, summaries, and presentations provide an avenue to ensure audiences are aware of meeting substance. Other E-TWG products provide additional information on activities and focus of the group.
2. For activities that may require a long process, it may be important to provide updates prior to the creation of a product. This type of communication could serve multiple purposes, including ensuring that other interested parties are aware of the activities in order to identify opportunities for collaboration or to ensure that efforts are not being duplicated elsewhere.
3. The E-TWG or NYSERDA may choose at certain junctures to request community input on a particular decision or product.

### **SC efforts**

Typically focused SCs bring together science-based subject matter experts to develop products and recommendations that inform or advance the environmentally responsible development of offshore

wind. SCs may include E-TWG members as well as other topical experts from a range of backgrounds, as appropriate for each committee's charge. Products developed by the SCs could include final reports, guidelines, other technical products, and communications materials, depending upon the charge of each SC.

#### *Communication Opportunities/Needs*

1. During SC processes, topics of SC efforts should be communicated to the broader offshore wind community, to identify interested groups or individuals with relevant expertise to serve on the committee and help identify related efforts with which each SC should coordinate. This includes communications with relevant RWSC subcommittees and sector caucuses.
2. Public dissemination of SC work plans and final products provides a means to make the broader offshore wind community aware of the work that is being done by experts in fields related to environmental issues and offshore wind energy development. SC products may be technical, so there may also be opportunities for the development of public outreach documents like handouts and fact sheets to summarize the work of the SC and make it more accessible to a larger audience.
3. The E-TWG or NYSERDA may choose at certain junctures to request input on a particular decision or product from the broader offshore wind community. This may take the form of public workshops/webinars or requests for feedback on draft products.
4. Each SC, depending on its charge, may identify additional opportunities and needs for communication with particular audiences.

#### **State of the Science**

The main goals of the State of the Science are to promote *regional coordination* of research studies, guidelines development, and other efforts along the eastern seaboard (Maine to North Carolina); to provide a forum for *expert information exchange and discussion*, which can promote collaboration and inform E-TWG and SC activities; and to contribute to *public engagement and education* about ongoing efforts to understand, minimize, and mitigate environmental effects and impacts from offshore wind energy development.

The first biennial State of the Science Conference was held in 2018. The State of the Science bring together key interested parties for environmental and wildlife research and offshore wind energy development along the U.S. Atlantic coast and beyond. Since 2024, the Conference was broadened to include fisheries topics. Scientific programs are planned by a Scientific Advisory Committee, which is an SC with representatives from a wide range of environmental and fisheries sectors (e.g., environmental non-profits, offshore wind developers and scientific consultants, fisheries researchers and managers, academics, government agencies), as well as technical support staff. Each conference has a focused theme that is explored through presentations (e.g., symposia sessions, oral presentations, moderated panel discussions, poster sessions, lightning talks), as well as side meetings and technical workshops. Conferences are open to the public with prior registration, with options for both in-person and virtual meeting attendance. As recommended by the E-TWG, the State of the Science can be structured in a variety of ways to achieve the objectives identified for each conference (for example: <https://www.nyetwg.com/past-workshops/2020-workshop/workgroups>).

### *Communication Opportunities/Needs*

1. Pre-conference advertising and dissemination of information. Leading up to the conference, promotion is key to ensuring substantial participation in scientific sessions and public participation opportunities such as poster sessions.
2. Conference sessions and discussions. The conference provides a venue to share information about E-TWG and SC activities.
3. Post-conference reporting. A conference report, proceedings, or presentation recordings are publicly disseminated following the event.

### **Related NYSERDA efforts**

There are additional NYSERDA efforts that are related to the E-TWG but do not fall within the categories listed above, for which the E-TWG may act in an advisory role. This could include additional workshops, engagement efforts, research projects, or other activities.

### *Communication Opportunities/Needs*

1. Outreach to interested parties for participation where relevant.
2. Public dissemination of final products, as a means to make the broader offshore wind community aware of the work that is being done by experts in the field in relation to wildlife and offshore wind energy development. Products may be technical, so there may also be opportunities for the development of public outreach documents such as handouts to summarize the work of these efforts and make outputs more accessible to a larger audience.
3. Other (those involved with these efforts may identify additional opportunities and needs for communication with particular audiences).

## Channels of Communication

Multiple channels of communication provide opportunities to share information on the above topics with different audiences, including an email list serv, project website, and NYSERDA webinars, among others (below). Additionally, E-TWG and SC activities and final products are used by NYSERDA for ongoing community outreach and media efforts (e.g., press releases, email blasts, website updates, social media posts, public meetings, etc.).

### **Public events**

NYSERDA conducts outreach to local communities and political representatives that are interested in and/or may be impacted by offshore wind energy development. These public meetings include discussion of the TWGs and E-TWG activities. The State of the Science Conferences, and other public events as appropriate, also provide opportunities for direct engagement with interested parties and the general public to share information about E-TWG activities and other important topics. In addition, there may be targeted outreach opportunities for particular SC products and efforts that warrant outreach either in person or via public webinar.

### **Invitation-only meetings**

In addition to events that are open to the public, the E-TWG and NYSERDA may host invite-only technical workshops, meetings, and webinars focused on specific topics, such as the 2019 and 2020 workshops focused on developing a framework for a regional science entity. These meetings could be

held as part of, or in conjunction with, State of the Science Conferences, or they could be held independently. These meetings focus on communication specifically with informed groups, potentially including members of other TWGs. New York State works with E-TWG and SC members and other groups to identify and recruit potential attendees.

### **Reports and proceedings**

The E-TWG and SCs develop reports and other products, which are made publicly available on the E-TWG website and shared via email list serves (below). Support staff also develop summaries from E-TWG meetings and workshop reports or proceedings, which likewise are shared publicly.

### **Email list serves**

We maintain two email lists for interested parties: one specifically for State of the Science Conferences, and one for other E-TWG and SC activities. The target audiences include E-TWG and SC members, other informed groups and those engaged with other TWGs, and members of the general public. List serv updates are a convenient way for E-TWG and SC members to keep their organizations, as well as other interested parties, up to date on their activities. By sharing meeting summaries and other updates, E-TWG members and interested parties can further disseminate products within and outside their respective organizations.

Lists were initially populated by NYSERDA staff, support staff, and E-TWG members with potentially interested contacts. Additional names are added via a sign-up form on the E-TWG website and attendance at State of the Science Conferences and other meetings. We also maintain a list of relevant email lists, newsletters, and websites, such as the Tethys Blast, National Wind Coordinating Collaborative, NYSERDA offshore wind email list, regional planning body list serves, and subject-specific groups (e.g., the Atlantic Marine Bird Cooperative), to reach out to in order to extend the reach of these email updates beyond our own contacts where applicable (particularly for dissemination of SC products).

We send periodic email updates about recent and upcoming meetings, draft and final products, and other opportunities to get involved in offshore wind and environmental issues. All emails include a link for readers to unsubscribe from future emails if desired. Emails go out to the State of the Science Conference list serv as needed to advertise upcoming meetings and disseminate resulting conference reports, recordings, and other information. The more general list serv briefly mentions Conference activities, but is primarily used to:

- Disseminate E-TWG and SC reports and other products
- Announce requests for public input on E-TWG-related efforts, as relevant
- Announce other project activities, as needed
- Share the E-TWG Annual Bulletin (see below)

### **Annual Bulletin**

Every fall, we release an Annual Bulletin that provides updates on E-TWG activities as well as on the offshore wind industry more generally (within the target geographic area of ME to NC). The bulletin summarizes various E-TWG and offshore wind-related activities over the previous year, including sections on State of the Science, active SC efforts, New York State and regional offshore wind updates, and fisheries updates. The annual bulletin is published on the E-TWG website and shared via the email list-serv.

## Project webpage

The E-TWG website ([www.nyetwg.com](http://www.nyetwg.com)) hosts information about the E-TWG, SCs, and State of the Science meeting along with other useful resources. It is regularly updated by support staff to provide up-to-date information on project activities. The website currently includes the following:

- A home page that briefly describes NYSERDA's goals and planned approach for the E-TWG and includes news and updates (including information about upcoming meetings, product releases, related events).
- An "About Us" section that includes both a "Who We Are" page and an "About This Effort" page that provides background information on the Offshore Wind Master Plan and the framework for E-TWG and SC operations, lists organizations involved with the E-TWG and their respective roles, and provides access to the full E-TWG Charter.
- An "Activities" section that includes a main landing page with a regularly updated summary of E-TWG activities, and pages including an "E-TWG Meeting Archive" (agendas, meeting summaries, and presentations), an "E-TWG Products" page for other group products like the annual bulletin, an "Environmental Mitigation Plans" page that provides information and documents relating to E-TWG consultations on environmental mitigation plans for projects selected under New York offshore wind procurements, and a "Bird & Bat Research Framework" page detailing a NYSERDA effort to develop a scientific framework to guide long-term study of potential impacts to birds and bats from offshore wind energy development. Additional pages are added under the "E-TWG Activities" section as needed.
- A "Specialist Committees" section that includes a landing page with information on current and past E-TWG SCs. There are additional pages that host more details about each previous and active SC, timelines and descriptions of their activities, processes, and membership. They also provide direct access to SC products like guidance, recommendations, and best practices documents with complementary summaries, handouts, etc., as well as communications materials on wildlife and offshore wind. This section is updated and restructured as new SCs are formed and upon conclusion of SC activities.
- A "Conferences" section that includes a landing page for State of the Science with general information about the history, goals, and structure. There is also a "Past Conferences" page for archived information from previous conferences (agendas, proceedings, scientific programs, etc.), and a current conference page that is updated to provide information on the next upcoming conference, with links to additional pages for content on logistics, scientific program, travel and accommodations, registration, and abstract submission.
- A "Resources" section with pages providing information about and access to additional TWG, NYSERDA, and selected external resources related to offshore wind and the environment, including but not limited to an educational webinar library that E-TWG support staff maintain, a database of mitigation practices (MPD Tool), an F-TWG map of real-time vessel activity in the New York Bight, planning, strategy, and solicitation documents, research studies and reports, etc. Pages are added as needed and updated regularly by support staff.
- A "More" section with a page for E-TWG Announcements, which is dynamically linked to display recent news/announcements on the website home page, and a "Contact" page where website visitors may submit written messages via an online form and/or sign up for E-TWG and State of the Science mailing lists.

## **NYSERDA webinars**

Following release of the Offshore Wind Master Plan (NYSERDA 2018), NYSERDA periodically hosts public webinars about the status of offshore wind energy development efforts. The activities of the E-TWG and SCs, as well as other Technical Working Groups, are summarized during these webinars. Presentations include details about how to obtain additional information.

Based on input from the E-TWG, NYSERDA launched an offshore wind webinar series called “[Learning from the Experts](#)”. It is an educational series aimed at connecting the public with independent experts in key topics in offshore wind, including wind farm technologies, development practices, regulatory processes, and research initiatives.

## **Communications documents**

Some final products from the E-TWG or SCs may be long and technical, making them less accessible to members of the general public and other interested parties. Other priority topics may be best addressed directly to the general public. Through SCs or as directed by the E-TWG and/or NYSERDA, support staff and/or the NYSERDA Communications team may develop communications materials and summary documents (e.g., fact sheets, handouts, color reports, brochures, frequently asked questions, or press packets) with content appropriate for a general audience, which provide useful context for non-experts. These communications products are shared on the E-TWG website and via emails to the list serv. They may also be used in other NYSERDA Communications efforts via in-person meetings, social media posts, or earned media coverage of State and E-TWG activities.

## **Presentations at relevant professional/scientific meetings and conferences**

NYSERDA personnel and E-TWG support staff represent the E-TWG at domestic and international meetings and conferences to share information about E-TWG and New York State activities, coordinate with and keep abreast of related efforts, and identify possible collaborations. This includes presentations at relevant wind-related conferences, as well as taxon-specific meetings and conferences as designated by NYSERDA. With prior coordination with NYSERDA, E-TWG members may also represent the group at meetings.

## **Cross-TWG coordination and other regional coordination activities**

NYSERDA has identified a staff person to serve a coordination role between the TWGs. Coordination includes liaising between the support staff for different TWGs to communicate process decisions and goals. This coordination is a particular focus for the E-TWG and the F-TWG and is largely facilitated by the participation of the F-TWG chair in the E-TWG. Updates about the activities of the F-TWG are thus regularly included in E-TWG meetings. This communication helps avoid duplication of effort for areas of topical overlap between groups and encourages efficiency by sharing information about effective governance processes for the TWGs.

In addition to coordinating with other TWGs, the E-TWG actively coordinates with other regional research bodies such as the RWSC and ROSA that may be focused on similar issues. Coordination with the RWSC is primarily facilitated via participation of an RWSC representative in the E-TWG and NYSERDA participation as an original Steering Committee member and continued representation on the RWSC State Caucus. Additional coordination calls can also be made with representatives of these entities, the E-TWG chair, and E-TWG lead/support staff as needed. In addition to these efforts, overlap in

membership between the fisheries and environmental TWGs and other regional efforts informally facilitates coordination and collaboration.

### **Calls for input**

There are potential opportunities to request broader offshore wind community input on draft products and other E-TWG and SC efforts. The State of the Science Conference itself provides an opportunity for informal public comment, due to public participation in the event. The E-TWG or NYSERDA may also choose at certain junctures to request input on a particular decision or product. This could be achieved via an online form, email comment, or online survey. Allowing for input from a broader offshore wind community allows for greater buy-in and can improve the quality of end products or other outcomes.

## E-TWG Communications Strategy Summary

Overall, these different strategies are combined for the three main groups of interest and three main communications topics into an overall communications strategy for the E-TWG (Table 1).

Table 1. External communication channels to be used to reach the three main groups of interest for the main topics of interest.

<b>Communications Strategy</b>			
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Informed Groups</b>	<b>General Public</b>	<b>Other TWGs</b>
<b><i>E-TWG Activities</i></b>			
Documents including agendas, meeting summaries, annual bulletins, products	Website, email list serv, presentations at meetings/conferences, coordination with regional funding bodies or other relevant entities	Communications documents, website, email list serv	Website, email list serv, TWG liaison
Updates on activities	Email list serv, presented at conference/meeting presentations, NYSERDA webinars, presentations at meetings/conferences, communicated via informed group representatives	Email list serv, public events, NYSERDA webinars	Email list serv, communicated via TWG liaison
Requests for input	Calls for input, invite-only meetings, email list serv		
<b><i>Specialist Committee Activities</i></b>			
SC Updates	Email list serv, presentations at meetings/conferences, communicated via community representatives		Email list serv, TWG liaison
Technical Outputs/Final products	Reports, website, email list serv, presentations at meetings/conferences	Communications documents, email list serv, website, public events, NYSERDA webinars	Communications documents, email list serv, website
Summary/Communications products	Publicly accessible summaries and fact sheets	Publicly accessible summaries and fact sheets	Publicly accessible summaries and fact sheets
Requests for community input	Calls for input, invite-only meetings, email list serv	Anonymous surveys accessible via website	
<b><i>State of the Science Conferences</i></b>			
Event Promotion	Website, email list-serv, presentations at meetings/conferences	Website, email list-serv, NYSERDA webinars	Website, email list-serv
Conference sessions	Public event with in-person and virtual attendance	Public event with in-person and virtual attendance	Public event with in-person and virtual attendance
Post-conference reporting and recordings	Reports or recordings shared on website/YouTube, email list serv	Reports or recordings shared on website/YouTube, email list serv	Reports or recordings shared on website/YouTube, email list serv
<b><i>Other Related Efforts</i></b>			
Topic updates	Email list serv, presentations at meetings/conferences, communicated via community representatives		Email list serv, TWG liaison
Technical Outputs/Final products	Reports, website, email list serv, presentations at meetings/conferences	Communications documents, email list serv, website, public events, NYSERDA webinars	Communications documents, email list serv, website

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