

**New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)
Meeting Summary – 29 June 2021**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
Prepared by	Julia Gulka, Biodiversity Research Institute	7/22/2021
Reviewed by	Kate Williams, Biodiversity Research Institute	8/3/2021
Reviewed by	Bennett Brooks, CBI	8/9/2021
Reviewed by	Farrah Andersen, Cadmus	8/11/2021
Reviewed by	Kate McClellan Press	8/27/2021
Revised by	Julia Gulka, Biodiversity Research Institute	8/30/2021

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 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 state¹. The twelfth E-TWG meeting was held via video conference on 29 June, 2021. Twenty-one representatives from 18 member organizations participated (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 should fill out the survey on virtual vs. in-person meetings by July 1. Support staff will disseminate the results to the E-TWG via email.
- NYSERDA is scheduling the next Environmental Mitigation Plan meeting for August 17. It will be held in place of the August E-TWG meeting.
- Kate McClellan Press will provide additional information on questions posed regarding the Power Grid Study, and encourages E-TWG members to reach out to her via email with additional questions or suggestions for outreach on this topic.
- NYSERDA and support staff will continue coordinating with the Regional Wildlife Science Entity on regional research and monitoring and will share an updated workplan with the E-TWG.
- NYSERDA and support staff will continue discussions and coordination with federal agencies on the topic of site-specific monitoring and will update the E-TWG as the effort evolves.
- Support staff will develop a synthesis of State of the Science Workgroup efforts for inclusion in the 2020 workshop proceedings.

Bennett Brooks (Consensus Building Institute) provided a brief introduction. New representatives to the E-TWG include John Perry (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife) and Cynthia Pyc (Vineyard Wind). Emily Shumchenia, the new director of the Regional Wildlife Science Entity (RWSE), was introduced to the E-TWG, and she and Kate McClellan Press provided a brief update on the RWSE. The Northeast Regional Ocean Council, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean, and Coastal States Stewardship Foundation were selected as the RWSE, and are working closely with NYSERDA to ensure integration with E-TWG efforts to make both organizations stronger and reduce duplication of effort.

New York Power Grid and Transmission Planning

Kate McClellan Press (NYSERDA) provided an overview of New York's approach to cable coordination, which includes discussions with other New York State agencies, neighboring state agencies and stakeholders from the geographic region of interest (e.g., New York City, Long Island, Hudson River). A

¹ For meeting agendas, summaries, and presentations, see: <http://nyetwg.com/e-twg-meeting-archive>

major step in this process is the New York Power Grid Study², which has three main components: 1) utility study, 2) offshore wind study, and 3) zero emissions study. Of greatest interest to the E-TWG is the offshore wind study, which looks at options for New York to achieve the state's 9000 MW goal and bring that power into New York effectively. Notable findings in the report include:

- 1) Ability to support 9000 MW without major onshore bulk transmission upgrades;
- 2) Recommended radial connection with a meshed offshore network for transmission connection;
- 3) Need to interconnect 6000 MW into New York City and 3000 MW to Long Island
- 4) Recommended coordinated effort (possibly via policy) for a cable route into NYC that minimizes disruption and risk to stakeholders and lowers costs.

A number of offshore wind projects are planning connections to the grid, and if each project builds its own tie-in, viable landing sites and cable routes would quickly become constrained. Thus, a coordinated, well-planned transmission approach can help make better use of limited landing sites. The Coastal Cable Corridor Study was recently initiated (to be available in summer 2021) to analyze environmental, societal, and physical conditions relevant to siting of cable routes into New York City and Long Island to inform state policy options. This report will present options, constraints, opportunities, and challenges, including avoidance/mitigation measures, but will not make recommendations on specific routes. This effort builds from the 2017 Cable Landfall Permitting Study³.

In addition, NYSERDA is beginning a planning effort for offshore wind cable coordination to systematically consider different factors, constraints, concerns, and relative risk. It will include state waters, New York Harbor, and portions of the Hudson and East Rivers and focus on biological resources, marine commercial and recreational uses, vessel traffic, physical resources, existing infrastructure, cultural resources, socioeconomic impacts, visual and aesthetic resources, cumulative impacts, and alternatives analysis. This will not replace offshore wind developer responsibilities under Article VII, but could support coordinated offshore wind development and transmission into the power grid. It is anticipated that a draft scope will be available for public comment in July 2021 with an anticipated complete draft in early 2022.

E-TWG members were interested in the degree to which the study considers contamination sites. Kate Press indicated that contaminated sites are included in the process of identifying potential risks, and this was also an aspect of the earlier cable landfall permitting study. An E-TWG member asked whether these planning processes will be completed in time to feed into the next round of offshore wind procurements; Kate is to follow up on this question. Multiple E-TWG members expressed a need to consider other ongoing public processes in scheduling a public comment period for the draft scope, and they noted that a longer public comment period would be beneficial. There was also a suggestion for NYSERDA to engage during planning processes with estuary programs such as the New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program and South Shore Estuary Reserve.

Regional Research and Guidance

NYSERDA and support staff have continued to develop the E-TWG workplan to produce guidance for regional-scale research and monitoring efforts, including coordination with the RWSE to ensure the

² New York Department of Public Service [Matter Master Case 2000905/20-E-0197](#)

³ [Cable Landfall Permitting Study](#)

proposed approach will meet the needs of both groups. Based on these discussions, the effort will have two components: 1) the development of guidance on terminology and study design considerations, and 2) the compilation of regional research priorities identified by other efforts and identification of criteria for further prioritization. The former will involve a small group with quantitative study design and subject matter expertise, while the latter will involve a larger stakeholder effort. As such, there will be multiple options for E-TWG involvement. Support staff will share the updated workplan with E-TWG members and solicit volunteers.

E-TWG members were interested in the degree to which NYSERDA and the E-TWG are fulfilling an RWSE role prior to the entity being fully stood up. Emily Shumchenia indicated the benefit of a joint effort on this topic is to help serve as a bridge for the RWSE as the entity is being built (e.g., sector caucuses, committees) over the coming months. E-TWG members also clarified that the geographic scope of this guidance would be similar to that of the E-TWG, e.g., Gulf of Maine to North Carolina, with a focus on research at scales broader than individual project sites.

Guidance for Pre- and Post-construction Monitoring

NYSERDA and support staff are continuing discussions with federal agencies on potential development of guidance for pre- and post-construction monitoring at offshore wind projects. We have moved away from the previous idea of submitting a letter to federal agencies on the topic, and are working to identify mechanisms to support proposed federal efforts.

NYSERDA Environmental Research Program Plan

In 2015, NYSERDA released an Environmental Research Program Plan focused on marine wind and wildlife.⁴ The plan was developed via a stakeholder engagement and expert elicitation process with state and federal agencies. NYSERDA and support staff will be updating the plan, drawing from the 2020 State of the Science workgroup reports and the compiled list of research priorities to be developed for regional research and monitoring guidance (above), among other sources. The plan will identify which of the priorities from 2015 have been addressed and apply criteria to identify new research priorities.

Great Lakes Feasibility Study

Sherryll Huber (NYSERDA) provided a brief update on an ongoing NYSERDA-funded desktop feasibility study for offshore wind in the Great Lakes (Lakes Ontario and Erie) led by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Brattle Group, and Advisian. She emphasized the separation of this effort from marine offshore wind planning in New York due to the nuances of permitting and resource characterization. There have been two public webinars to date on the study, with two more scheduled for August and October.⁵ Given E-TWG interest, Sherryll indicated that she would add E-TWG members to the listserv to receive updates, and that members could contact her with any additional questions (Sherryll.Huber@nyserdera.ny.gov). Support staff will include this topic in future E-TWG updates.

⁴ [NYSERDA Environmental Research Program Plan: Area 4](#)

⁵ [NYSERDA Great Lakes Feasibility Study](#)

2020 State of the Science Workshop

Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute) provided a brief review of the 2020 State of the Science effort. Plenary sessions for the workshop were held last November with a focus on cumulative impacts. Seven workgroups, including more than 200 people, met over the winter to identify short-term research priorities to improve our understanding of cumulative impacts as the offshore wind industry develops. Reports from each group are available in draft form on the E-TWG website⁶ and will be finalized in mid-July. The technical leads from each workgroup presented key outcomes at a webinar in May, where there was strong participation and discussion; the webinar recording is also available⁷. Several workgroups are discussing publishing reports in the scientific literature to expand visibility of the results, and support staff will be developing a synthesis of workgroup efforts for inclusion in the workshop proceedings. Workgroup outcomes will be useful in multiple contexts, including future E-TWG efforts.

Support staff requested input from the E-TWG on 1) whether this was a helpful first step for thinking about cumulative effects, and 2) potential next steps. The following themes emerged during discussions:

- **Benefit of virtual effort.** There were multiple benefits to the workshop and workgroups being virtual, including the level of expert involvement and the timeline of the effort, which led to higher-quality outcomes.
- **Need to consider additional stressors.** Workgroup efforts focused on understanding cumulative impacts from offshore wind development, but other stressors, including climate change, also need to be addressed to understand cumulative effects to individuals and populations.
- **Cross-taxon opportunities for collaboration.** Workgroups were largely taxon-specific, but there is a need to look across taxa to determine key needs and make best use of limited resources.
- **Build out taxon-specific tools and frameworks.** Cumulative impact frameworks should be developed now; with the current state of knowledge, they will need to be based on assumptions and may have substantial uncertainty, but they can help identify key parameters and shape priorities.
- **Examine potential biases.** It would be beneficial to critically examine the outcomes of the workgroups to ensure that any biases or gaps in expertise are understood and to ensure that research questions are focused on understanding cumulative impacts.
- **Identify next steps, timescale, and utility.** Identification of action items and next steps could provide a path forward for research. It is worth examining what efforts are ongoing, the timescales for different research, and how outcomes would be used, particularly in relation to federal processes.

Support staff will develop a cross-group synthesis for the workshop proceedings and compile a list of research priorities to inform regional research and monitoring guidance. Support staff may solicit E-TWG input in the development of the synthesis.

2022 Workshop

Kate Williams noted that the next State of the Science Workshop, likely in summer 2022, will be more similar to the 2018 workshop in that it will serve as a general update on the state of the knowledge on

⁶ [State of the Science Workgroup reports](#)

⁷ [State of the Science Culmination Webinar](#)

wildlife and offshore wind development. Unlike in previous years, the plan is to issue an open call for abstracts and symposia. A hybrid approach is likely, with both an in-person event and some kind of virtual participation option. Support staff will be forming a planning committee shortly, and E-TWG members should email Ed Jenkins (Edward.jenkins@briwildlife.org) if interested in participating.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

- Support staff sent a survey to the E-TWG to gain input on future meeting logistics. E-TWG meetings will remain virtual through the end of 2021, and we will utilize survey responses to inform the plan moving forward. *E-TWG members indicated interest in seeing survey results.*

The August E-TWG meeting will be replaced by an Environmental Mitigation Plan meeting for Sunrise Wind. E-TWG members should hold the scheduled time slot as a possible meeting time.

Appendix A: List of Participants

Point of Contact	Organization	Stakeholder Type	Role
<i>Kate McClellan Press</i>	<i>NYSERDA</i>	<i>State Government</i>	<i>Convener/chair</i>
Lisa Bonacci-Sullivan	NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation	State Government	Observer
Catherine Bowes	National Wildlife Federation	eNGO	Advisor
Koen Broker	Shell New Energies	Developer	Advisor
Colleen Brust	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection	State Government	Observer
Michael Evans	Ørsted	Developer	Advisor
Shilo Felton	National Audubon Society	eNGO	Advisor
Michelle Fogary	Equinor		
Elizabeth Gowell	Ørsted	Developer	Advisor
Kevin Hassell	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection	State Government	Observer
Scott Johnston	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Federal Government	Observer
Shannon Kearney	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection	State Government	Observer
Francine Kershaw	Natural Resources Defense Council	eNGO	Advisor
Kristi Lieske	DE Dept. Natural Resources & Environ. Control	State Government	Observer
Jillian Liner	Audubon New York	eNGO	Advisor
Carl LoBue	The Nature Conservancy	eNGO	Advisor
Anita Murray	Wildlife Conservation Society	eNGO	Advisor
John Perry	Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife	State Government	Advisor
Cynthia Pyc	Vineyard Wind	Developer	Advisor
Brandi Sangunett	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management	Federal Government	Observer
Kimberly Sullivan	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management	Federal Government	Observer

Support Staff

Farrah Andersen (Cadmus Group)
 Morgan Brunbauer (NYSERDA)
 Bennett Brooks (Consensus Building Institute)
 Julia Gulka (Biodiversity Research Institute)
 Sherryll Huber (NYSERDA)
 Edward Jenkins (Biodiversity Research Institute)
 Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute)
 Megan Zimba (NYSERDA)

Other Attendees

Emily Shumchenia (Northeast Regional Ocean Council/RWSE)

Appendix B: Meeting Agenda

New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)

1-4 pm EDT, 29th June 2021

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
1:00-1:15 pm	Welcome and Icebreaker <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Wildlife Science Entity update
1:15-2:15 pm	Grid Study Presentation and Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main study findings• Proposed process for obtaining stakeholder input• Feedback and discussion
2:15-2:35 pm	Networking Break
2:35-3:50 pm	Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State of the Science Workshop<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Update○ Debrief (via small breakout groups)○ Group discussion○ Next steps• Guidance for regional research and monitoring• Guidance for pre- and post-construction monitoring
3:50-4:00 pm	Wrap Up & Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey• Next steps for E-TWG activities• Upcoming meetings