

**New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)  
Meeting Summary – 18 August 2020**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
Prepared by	Julia Gulka, Biodiversity Research Institute	8/20/2020
Reviewed by	Kate Williams, Biodiversity Research Institute	8/27/2020
Reviewed by	Bennett Brooks, Consensus Building Institute	9/2/2020
Reviewed by	Kate McClellan Press, NYSERDA	9/2/2020
Revised by	Julia Gulka, Biodiversity Research Institute	9/8/2020

*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 state on environmental topics<sup>1</sup>. The ninth meeting of the E-TWG was held via video conference on 18 August, 2020. Twenty E-TWG members participated in this meeting (Appendix A).

This meeting summary is intended to capture the key points of discussion and input from the E-TWG, as well as action items identified during the meeting. This summary is loosely organized according to the structure of the meeting agenda (Appendix B). Specific comments are organized by topical relevance, not necessarily the part of the agenda in which the comments were made. 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

The following action items to advance E-TWG objectives were identified during the meeting:

- The **E-TWG priorities survey will be re-opened for additional responses through September 1**. Those who have already responded can feel free to edit their responses.
- We will **schedule a short priorities-focused E-TWG meeting for late September/early October**. Prior to the meeting, support staff will develop outlines of workplans for the highest-ranking priority topics and discuss with NYSERDA.
- If you have **additional feedback on E-TWG activities and process**, please email Kate McClellan Press or any of the BRI/C&C support staff.

## Welcome

Bennett Brooks (Consensus Building Institute) and Farrah Andersen (Cadmus Group) reviewed the aims for the meeting, including identifying E-TWG priorities for the next 1-2 years and discussing group membership and time commitment.

## E-TWG Membership

Since the last discussion on this topic, multiple developers and state representatives have been added to the group and there has been a move to virtual meetings. Given these changes, support staff solicited discussion around the following topics:

- 1) Possible additions with specific expertise
- 2) Balance between NGO and developer representation
- 3) Balancing and/or managing participation of multiple representatives from the same organization(s)

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<sup>1</sup> For meeting agendas, summaries, and presentations, see: <http://nyetwg.com/>

## Discussion

- **Additional expertise** – members recommended adding expertise as needed. Particular recommendations included another bird-focused NGO and possible addition of bat expertise. One member also made the point that expertise should be added to specialist committees in some instances rather than the main E-TWG.
- **Balance of membership** - members generally expressed that balance of sectors matters less than breadth of expertise.
- **Multiple representatives per organization** – E-TWG members indicated that for discussions it was generally fine, and even beneficial, to have multiple voices from the same organization. However, in instances where there is ranking or informal voting (i.e. surveys etc.), then it may be helpful to explicitly specify an expectation of one response per organization.

## E-TWG Time Commitment

The E-TWG was polled regarding time commitments for E-TWG-related activities. Responses included:

- **E-TWG communications and time commitment.** Most E-TWG members read group communications sometimes or always, and felt that the current E-TWG time commitment is sometimes too much. In particular, it was noted that
  - Fast turnarounds for documents or products can feel overwhelming
  - A 3-hour call feels like a large time commitment
  - Predictability of timelines and time commitments well in advance, when possible, would help E-TWG members manage their time.
- **Specialist Committee time commitment.** All those involved in the BMP specialist committees indicated that it was either sometimes or always too much of a commitment, and while the intentions were good, there were hard deadlines that made the process difficult. It was noted that there may also be opportunities to streamline efforts with other states, which could help folks involved in multiple state groups to manage their time. About half of the members involved with other specialist committees, such as the State of the Science Workshop planning committee, indicated that it was sometimes too much of a time commitment.
- **Future time commitment.** When asked how many hours per month members were prepared to dedicate to E-TWG related activities, 67% indicated 2-5 hours, 25% indicated 5-10 hours, and 8% indicated more than 10 hours. The importance was noted of being clear up front about what the time commitment for a particular task might be (if known).

## E-TWG Priorities Discussion

The E-TWG continued discussions from the July 2020 E-TWG meeting about where to focus the group's efforts for the next 1-2 years. Kate McClellan Press (NYSERDA) began this discussion by explaining how E-TWG recommendations would be used by NYSERDA to help inform decisions about where to direct resources. While the E-TWG is not a decision-making body, NYSERDA takes the advice of the E-TWG seriously. Priorities identified by the E-TWG may require time/resources from E-TWG members, NYSERDA, contractors, or other organizations in order to be achieved. As such, there are different levels of time and effort from the E-TWG and NYSERDA that could go into different priorities.

## *Survey Results*

In early August, support staff sent the E-TWG an online survey of the topics brainstormed during the July meeting in order to assess which topics were most commonly felt to be priorities. Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute) reviewed these results. There were 9 initial responses to the survey (5 NGO, 3 government, 1 industry), which tended to identify the same topics that received the most attention and discussion during the July meeting. Between these two sources of E-TWG input, potential top priorities centered on the following:

- 1) Design a regional monitoring program
- 2) Develop standards for technology deployment offshore
- 3) Develop guidance for site-specific monitoring plans
- 4) Improve regional coordination with other states and regional groups
- 5) Organize State of the Science Workshops
- 6) Develop guidance for standardizing site-specific data
- 7) Develop best management practices for wildlife mitigation and monitoring

Kate Williams noted that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has expressed interest in contributing funding for a data standardization pilot project through the Regional Wildlife Science Entity (RWSE)<sup>2</sup>. As such, this topic was shelved by the E-TWG for the time being. More information about this effort will be shared with the E-TWG when it is available.

## *Full Group Discussion*

E-TWG members were asked to respond to the survey results. Comments centered on the following:

- **Low survey response.** Multiple members expressed concern about the lack of response to the survey, particularly from industry. It was decided that the survey would be re-opened following the meeting to allow for additional responses.
- **Regional perspective.** State representatives indicated that this list reflects broader priorities than just for New York. However, depending on the topic, consistent implementation across states may be a challenge.
- **Consideration of timeline and goals.** Members indicated the importance of thinking through the goals of potential priorities, as they may be able to be tackled on different timeframes.
- **Best management practices.** BMP specialist committees ended with “Version 1.0” of products earlier this year, with the intention of continuing discussions. If BMPs do not remain a priority for the E-TWG, there should be some consideration of what the next steps are for that process.

Following full group discussion, the group was split into breakout groups to continue discussions on four of the above potential priority topics: regional coordination, advancing technology for monitoring and mitigation, developing guidance for site-specific monitoring plans, and designing a regional monitoring program. These topics were chosen for further discussion as the other topics listed above are either existing E-TWG priorities or being pursued by other efforts.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nyetwg.com/regional-wildlife-science-entity>

### *Breakout Group Brainstorming Discussions*

E-TWG members had preliminary discussions on four potential priority topics. Breakout groups were asked to consider possible objectives, process, end products, and E-TWG role.

#### **Possible ideas for regional coordination**

- *Objectives* – Improve sharing of information across state groups and leverage regional expertise, with a focus on state-agnostic information.
- *Process* – There may be multiple approaches for ensuring information exchange and discussion, including options such as a working group for states and improving information-sharing regarding the activities of the E-TWG and similar state-led groups.

#### **Possible ideas for advancing technology for monitoring and mitigation**

- *Objectives* – Build trust in and advance technology to the stage of being considered a best management practice.
- *End Products* – End products could take many forms including overview documents, white papers, desktop studies, a technology matrix, and/or pilot projects partnered with developers.
- *Process* – This could include improving our understanding of where advancements have occurred and what the next steps are for mitigation and monitoring.
- *E-TWG Role* – NYSERDA could be a leader in advancing technology by ensuring the necessary continuity of process.

#### **Possible ideas for developing guidance for site-specific monitoring plans**

- *Objectives* – Help to determine what monitoring is needed depending on the site and existing baseline data, and how much monitoring is adequate.
- *End Products* – These could include a monitoring guidance document for pre- and post-construction monitoring or a monitoring matrix that outlines different existing monitoring efforts and methodologies.
- *Process* – This could include a series of webinars or workshops to review monitoring frameworks with the broader stakeholder community, followed by an effort by a team of experts to flesh out monitoring recommendations, with particular focus on study design and monitoring approaches.
- *E-TWG Role* – This effort could utilize E-TWG subcommittees and outside experts. It may involve support staff (i.e. NYSERDA, BRI) to compile existing information. There may also be an opportunity to team up with other ongoing efforts.

#### **Possible ideas for designing a regional monitoring program**

- *Objectives* – Identify and clarify New York State priorities for regional monitoring and how these priorities could be supported using the dedicated funding from the Phase 2 procurement.
- *Process* – This relates to the State of the Science workshops, and we should strive to ensure that the outputs from the workshops contribute to the development of a regional monitoring plan.
- *E-TWG Role* – This could involve subcontractors, as well as a steering committee. The committee could be made up of E-TWG members or involve the Regional Wildlife Science Entity (RWSE) and Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA).

### *Next Steps*

Support staff will reopen the online survey to gather further E-TWG member input on potential priorities. Following the completion of the online survey, support staff will:

- Share results with E-TWG members
- Develop short outlines of workplans for priority topics and get input from NYSERDA on these topics
- Plan a short (90 min) priorities-focused E-TWG meeting for September/October, after which we aim to have a clear path forward

## 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>
Anthony Bevacqua	NJ Board of Public Utilities	State Government	Observer
Jenny Briot	Avangrid	Developer	Advisor
Louis Brzuzy	Shell New Energies	Developer	Advisor
Koen Broker	Shell New Energies	Developer	Advisor
Jennifer Daniels	Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind	Developer	Advisor
Lisa Engler	MA Dept. of State	State Government	Observer
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 and Environmental Protection	State Government	Observer
Francine Kershaw	Natural Resources Defense Council	eNGO	Advisor
Jillian Liner	Audubon New York	eNGO	Advisor
Carl LoBue	The Nature Conservancy	eNGO	Advisor
Joe Martens	NY Offshore Wind Alliance	Nonpartisan NGO	Advisor
Catherine McCall	MD Dept. of Natural Resources	State Government	Observer
Laura Mensch	DE Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Control	State Government	Observer
Laura Morales	Equinor Wind US	Developer	Advisor
Matt Robertson	Vineyard Wind	Developer	Advisor
Howard Rosenbaum	Wildlife Conservation Society	eNGO	Advisor

### Support Staff present

Morgan Brunbauer (NYSERDA)  
 Bennet Brooks (Consensus Building Institute)  
 Farrah Andersen (Cadmus Group)  
 Kate Williams (Biodiversity Research Institute)  
 Julia Gulka (Biodiversity Research Institute)  
 Edward Jenkins (Biodiversity Research Institute)

## Appendix B: Meeting Agenda

### New York Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG)

1:00-4:00 pm EDT, 18 August 2020

#### Meeting objectives:

- Discuss survey results and identify suggested E-TWG priorities for next 1-2 years
- Discuss possible approaches for addressing top priorities
- Discuss E-TWG membership and time commitment

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
1:00-1:20	<b>Welcome and Overview</b>
1:20-1:30	<b>E-TWG Membership Discussion</b>
1:30-1:45	<b>E-TWG Time Commitment Discussion</b>
1:45-1:55	<i>Networking Break</i>
2:00-2:40	<b>E-TWG Priorities Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and discuss survey results</li></ul>
2:40-2:45	<i>Break</i>
2:45-3:10	<b>E-TWG Priorities Discussion, cont.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Breakout groups</li></ul>
3:10-3:15	<i>Break</i>
3:15-3:55	<b>E-TWG Priorities Discussion, cont.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group discussion</li></ul>
3:55-4:00	<b>Wrap Up &amp; Next Steps</b>