

Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) Meeting Summary

Friday, July 17, 2020 from 10am to 12:15pm
Virtual Meeting

Background

This meeting summary describes key discussion points and action items from the Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) virtual meeting, which was held on Friday, July 17 through a virtual meeting platform.

Goals for the meeting included:

- Update F-TWG on various ongoing and upcoming activities.
- Solicit input from F-TWG on key issues and ideas including: 1) Coast Guard Navigation Studies; 2) The Cable Burial Document.

There were 58 F-TWG members and other stakeholders in attendance through the Teams meeting/conference line. Four staff from Tetra Tech, the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), and The Cadmus Group, were also present to provide technical, facilitation, and logistics support.

This summary is organized to align with the structure of the meeting agenda ([Appendix A](#)). Opinions are generally not attributed to specific F-TWG members. F-TWG members are referred to interchangeably in the summary as stakeholders and F-TWG members. This summary identifies areas of agreement as well as the different perspectives offered during meeting presentations and discussions.

Action Items

The following key next steps resulted from the meeting:

- Any F-TWG members with comments about the [Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study](#) (USCG-2019-0279) and the [Northern NY Bight Port Access Route Study](#) (USCG-2020-0278) should submit comments to the docket. F-TWG members should look out for a Federal Register Notice in the next 4-6 weeks for the Seacoast of New Jersey PARS to submit public comment.
- Any fishermen interested in joining the ROSA Advisory Council should apply as soon as possible.
- Brian Dresser will share the most up to date version of the draft TOC for the “*Submarine Cable Burial Depth Assessment*” with the F-TWG.
- Topics to include in the Submarine Cable Burial document should be sent to Morgan Brunbauer, Morgan.Brunbauer@nyserda.ny.gov, or Brian Dresser, brian.dresser@tetrattech.com.
- F-TWG members should send Morgan Brunbauer, Morgan.Brunbauer@nyserda.ny.gov, the names and contact information for any individuals or organizations they think should be added to the working group. Morgan Brunbauer will share the most recent list of members.
- F-TWG members should share additional topics they would like to discuss with the F-TWG or any concerns about proposed topic with Morgan Brunbauer, Morgan.Brunbauer@nyserda.ny.gov.

- F-TWG members should let Morgan Brunbauer, Morgan.Brunbauer@nyserda.ny.gov, if there are any significant dates in the fall that NYSERDA should be aware of as they begin to schedule fall meetings.

Opening Remarks

The meeting opened with a review of meeting ground rules, F-TWG goals, and the F-TWG's mission. Morgan Brunbauer of NYSERDA and Pat Field of CBI welcomed the group and underscored that the F-TWG is a forum for discussion between the commercial fishing community and offshore wind developers to provide advice and input to New York State (NYS).

Program, Research, and Science Updates

Program, research, and science updates were shared for the New York 2020 Offshore Wind Solicitation, NYSERDA-funded fisheries research projects, the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA), and MA-RI fisheries research projects.

New York 2020 OSW Solicitation update

Morgan Brunbauer at NYSERDA gave an update about the New York State Offshore Wind Procurement.

- The Solicitation is still in the **process of being finalized** but Morgan shared that NYSERDA is eager to release it. Authorization was received in April; however, **the offshore wind procurement is being integrated with a procurement for ports** which has been affected by COVID-19 since developers cannot go to ports and engage about projects which has resulted in delays.
- NYS is moving forward with the solicitation and it **could be in the next few weeks or months**. Once the solicitation is released, NYSERDA will be conducting outreach to hold more formal discussions with F-TWG members.

Status of various NYSERDA-funded fisheries research projects

Fishermen's Knowledge Data Trust: Annie Hawkins from the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA) shared an update on the Fishermen's Knowledge Data Trust project. In November 2019, the Trust received funding from NYSERDA to build data infrastructure that enables the fishing industry to take knowledge and information collected and create data products to assist in planning, regulatory or management processes. There are two "pilot" studies: the Atlantic Herring and Mackerel fishery and the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog fishery.

Annie briefly described how the products are created: the fishermen add raw data, the Trust cleans the data and executes a request, analysts develop the product, and the product goes through peer review. Annie emphasized that fishermen have full control over the data and determine what is shared. The project kicked off in December and is on a one-year timeline. Since kickoff they have made progress in building the core infrastructure including developing the governance structure, data sharing platform, and integrating and aggregating data. The Trust is currently implementing the pilots and working on scoping the products. The surfclam fishery recently identified their needs and completed their statement of work. For these pilot studies, the Trust requested VMS data, catch records, landing, and dealer data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The data is now being put into a standard format for the analysts to create the product. This project will provide a proof of

concept so that other fisheries can use this data infrastructure to create data products are cost-efficient, protected, and effective.

Fishing Access within Turbine Arrays: Rebecca Green of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) provided an update on Collaborative Development of Strategies and Tools to Address Commercial Fishing Access in U.S. Offshore Wind Farms. The project kicked off in early April and is led by NREL in partnership with RODA, Global Marine Group, and a Project Advisory Committee. The Project Advisory Committee includes representatives from the surfclam industry, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), offshore wind developers, and other stakeholders. The goal of the project is to collaboratively develop technical strategies and tools, including new datasets and models to minimize disruption of commercial fishing within offshore wind arrays while also ensuring economical energy generation and safe operation for the offshore wind industry. The project plans to address the concern that turbines, cables, and other structures make it difficult to effectively fish or navigate in the vicinity of an offshore wind project, direct and indirect access restrictions due to physical obstructions, risk, and safety. Studying resource distribution effect and economic impacts to fishing are currently outside the project scope. The project is on a two-year timeline which will involve four phases:

1. Information gathering, literature review, and fishery participant survey;
2. Offshore wind scenario development and analysis;
3. Validation of approach using a pilot project in the NY Bight; and
4. Sharing and disseminating information.

The project looks to develop a set of technical approaches to maximize fishing safety and access with arrays and provide an initial case study that demonstrates the effectiveness of these technical approaches. The initial scope of the project will focus on scallop, quahog, and surfclam fisheries but after the pilot, these technical approaches may be applied to other fisheries. The first case study project is yet to be determined but will be discussed and decided upon with input from the Project Advisory Committee.

[Responsible Offshore Science Alliance](#)

Lyndie Hice-Dunton, Executive Director of ROSA, gave an update on their ongoing work. She reviewed the objectives and structure of the organization and discussed what they are doing to build out the organization. The Board of Directors is made up of 10 people, five offshore wind representatives and 5 commercial fishing representatives. The Research Advisory Board will provide scientific review and technical expertise. The State of the Science workshop will help identify potential Research Advisory Board members and research needs and priorities. The approach and criteria for selecting the Research Advisory Board will be determined through consult with the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council will be the primary group that helps set goals and determine the focus of the organization. ROSA will also develop sub-committees that will focus on specific issues. ROSA is currently working on building the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council will be made up of about 40 people including, offshore wind developers who hold federal leases, commercial and recreational fishermen, state agencies from North Carolina to Maine, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), BOEM, the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC), the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASFCM). The letters to schedule appointments were sent out recently. ROSA asked that F-TWG members who received a letter and have not responded yet,

please respond. Applications for fishermen to join the Advisory Council were due July 15th but they will continue to accept applications for a brief period after and anyone interested should submit them as soon as possible. ROSA is also working on the Interim Fisheries Monitoring Working Group (IFMWG). The IFMWG aims to have a draft Interim Guidance by fall 2020. Additionally, they are working on developing their website and will consider adding a resources section that inventories current and ongoing research on offshore wind development and fisheries.

MA-RI Fisheries Research Projects

Julia Livermore of Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) shared information on the Southern New England Regional Science Pilot. This initiative is a collaborative effort between BOEM, the state of Massachusetts, and the state of Rhode Island and includes five projects. Each project is on its own timeline but will generally follow a two- to two-and-a-half-year timeline once they start but some of these projects have been slow to start due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The five projects cover three topic areas: fishery resources, seafloor habitat, and technical. The five projects include:

- **Passive Acoustic Telemetry as a Tool to Monitor the Baseline Presence and Persistence of Highly Migratory Fish Species in Popular Recreational Fishing Grounds within Southern New England Wind Energy Areas** – This project will use passive acoustic telemetry to monitor the presence and persistence of bluefin tuna, blue shark, and shortfin mako. The study plans to deploy 15 receivers and conduct tagging trips to tag up to 20 fish of each species.
- **Larval Lobster and Fish Neuston Net Survey for Regional Fisheries Monitoring in Southern New England Offshore Wind Development** – This project is estimating the abundance and distribution of larval lobster and fish using neuston net surveys. The study seeks to understand seasonality and when these crustaceans appear in wind energy areas.
- **Developing Standard Approaches to Synthesizing, Visualizing, and Disseminating High-Resolution Acoustic and Imagery Data to Advance Benthic Habitat Mapping in the Wind Energy Areas of the Northeast** – This project seeks to advance understanding of what habitats exist in wind energy areas by developing best practices for integrating acoustic data, high resolution imagery and publicly available data and making data available through the Northeast Ocean Data Portal.
- **A Comparative Analysis of Europe and Japan’s Approaches to the Regulation of Offshore Wind Farms** – This project seeks to draw lessons learned from Japan and Europe to understand how offshore wind development and commercial fishing can coexist.
- **Fishing Status of Vessels Using the Automatic Identification System (AIS): A Big Data and Machine Learning Approach** – The goal of this study is to improve estimates of where/when fishing vessels are actually fishing, and to generate improved maps of fishing effort and landing values at sea. The study is taking a nuanced approach to determine activity of vessels. Data will be attributable to port, state, or region.

Update on Navigation Studies

Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study (PARS)

The United States Coast Guard (Coast Guard) shared background information on Port Access Route Studies (PARS) and updates on three of these studies: the Atlantic Coast, Northern New York Bight, and Seacoast of New Jersey. The Coast Guard is required by the Ports and Waterways Safety Act to conduct PARS before establishing new or adjusting existing Traffic Separation Schemes (TSSs) or fairways. They look to reconcile needs for safe access routes with other reasonable waterway uses so people can get from “Point A” to “Point B” in the best way possible. Once a PARS is complete, it can be used to justify use of other tools to ensure traffic is moving properly.

Atlantic Coast PARS

The Atlantic Coast PARS, spurred in part, because of efforts to advance offshore renewable energy initiatives; such as wind energy projects, was conducted between 2011 and 2017. The report recommended developing navigation safety corridors in shipping safety fairways which will be established by the Federal Rulemaking Process. The Coast Guard is currently soliciting comments about the establishment, naming, location, and other aspects of these fairways. **Those interested in submitting a comment should do so by August 18, 2020. The Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking can be found at [Docket # USCG – 2019 – 0279](#).**

Northern New York Bight PARS

The [Notice of Study for the Northern NY Bight PARS](#) was published on June 29, 2020. The study is going to evaluate the adequacy of existing routing measures and determine if additional routing measures are necessary in the study area. **The comment period is open until August 28, 2020.** In addition to submitting comments directly to the docket, the **Coast Guard is hosting two virtual public meetings:**

- **Thursday, July 30, 9 am EST**
- **Tuesday, August 11, 6 pm EST**

The information for these meetings will be posted by July 23rd to <https://www.navcen.uscg.gov/>. The Coast Guard encouraged F-TWG members to submit comments that address impacts to navigation within the study area and factors such as planned offshore development, current port capabilities and improvements, increased vessel traffic, weather effects, potential conflicts of uncharted or informal anchorage areas, navigational difficulties, and general concerns. As part of this study, the Coast Guard is analyzing as much data as is available to them to supplement AIS data, including VMS data from NOAA and NMFS, other components such as weather, and information submitted through public comment. The Coast Guard noted that if the F-TWG feels it is important for the New York Bight Transit Report to be submitted to the public record, it would be helpful if members could submit that to the docket.

Seacoast of New Jersey PARS

The Seacoast of New Jersey PARS is focused on access routes to the Ports of New Jersey, rather than routes to and from the Port of New York. The Coast Guard published a Notice of Study for the Seacoast of New Jersey PARS on May 5th and the comment period closed on July 6, 2020. However, they are intending to re-open comment on this study. The USCG is currently scheduling public meetings and

anticipate a Federal Register Notice for these meetings within four-six weeks. They will likely give 30-45 days' notice for these meetings and the comment period will reopen in conjunction with these announcements. Comments on behalf of the New York Commercial Fishing Industry should be submitted when the comment period reopens in conjunction with the public meetings. This group will be notified directly when the Federal Register Notice is posted.

Cabling Project Update

Background on need and intent for cabling technical review

Tetra Tech provided an update on the Cable Burial Document outline and progress made to date. They shared an updated Table of Contents after receiving and incorporating feedback from the June F-TWG meeting. The Table of Contents, Introduction, and US Wind Market Summary sections have been drafted while the Submarine Cables within Offshore Wind Projects, Risks to Cables and Mitigation Measures, Risks from Cables and Mitigation measures, and Conclusion are in progress.

Tetra Tech gave an overview of types of cables and how the cables are buried. The cable types likely to be encountered are export and array cables. The main differences between these types of cables are voltage and size. There are several methods for burying cables which were briefly discussed, including:

- Simultaneous lay and burial
 - Towed plough
 - Tracked trencher
 - Towed jetting sled
- Post lay burial
 - Jetting ROV
 - Tracked trencher
 - Free-flying jetting ROV
- Other protection methods
 - Pre-cut trench
 - Dredging
 - Rock dumping
 - Controlled flow excavators
 - Concrete mattresses
 - Grout/rock bags
 - Frond mattresses

The burial and protection methods chosen are highly dependent on soil type, cable route, and the type of cable.

Mechanisms for providing feedback: F-TWG members will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the full draft of the document when it is completed.

The following feedback and **key points to consider** including in the document were provided by F-TWG members:

- Will the report include nature inclusive designs and the US market for nature inclusive designs? The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture launched a [catalog for nature inclusive designs](#) in March that inspired this question.
- Discussion of site-specific technology for cable protection to facilitate minimization of loss of fishing grounds.
- Background on existing submarine cables in the New York Bight.
- U.S. suppliers will increase with project certainty thus the report might discuss economic prospects.

If you have a topic or area you would like to see included that is not in the most recent TOC, please send it to Morgan Brunbauer, Morgan.Brunbauer@nyserda.ny.gov, or Brian Dresser, brian.dresser@tetratech.com.

Other Items and Issues

Potential New Topics

NYSERDA is always open to understanding what core F-TWG members want to focus on and who should be included in the group. If there are other industry representatives that should be added, let Morgan Brunbauer, Morgan.Brunbauer@nyserda.ny.gov know. F-TWG members suggested adding representatives from Virginia and North Carolina fishing industry or state as they often fish in the New York Bight.

NYSERDA would like to embark on helping provide background information on mitigation compensation and develop a current state-of-play document, to be fact based and informative. NYSERDA made clear that NY is not attempting to establish their own compensation framework, but rather, provide useful information and shared knowledge for the region. If any F-TWG members have feedback on bringing this topic to the group for discussion, please reach out to Morgan Brunbauer, Morgan.Brunbauer@nyserda.ny.gov. If there are any additional topics that F-TWG members would like to discuss in coming months, please share those ideas with Morgan as well.

Announcements from NYSERDA

- A [lease area map](#) is on the F-TWG website. Tetra Tech may reach out to developers to ensure the fishery liaison officer is up to date.

Adjournment

The facilitator noted that the next virtual FTWG meeting will be scheduled for some time in the fall.

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

F-TWG Summer 2020 Virtual Meetings

July 17, 2020

Virtual Meeting

F-TWG Goals for Meetings

- Update the Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) on various ongoing and upcoming activities.
- Solicit input from F-TWG on key issues and ideas.
- Adhere to our ground rules for an effective meeting (stay on track, let others speak, be respectful, focus on the substance not the people).

9:45 **Open Lines for On-Line Joining**

10:00 **Welcome, Listing of Participants, Orientation to the On-Line Platform**

10:15 **Program, Research, and Science Update**

- New York 2020 OSW Solicitation update – *New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)*
- Status of various NYSERDA-funded fisheries research projects – *Update from the Principal Investigators*
 - *Fishermen’s Knowledge Data Trust*
 - *Fishing Access within Turbine Arrays*
- Update on status and activities of the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) – *ROSA Executive Director*
- Review of MA-RI Fisheries Research Projects – *Julia Livermore, RI DEM*
- Other

11:00 **Update of Navigation Studies - USCG**

- In process or upcoming port access studies
- Brief discussion

11:30 **Cabling Project Update – Tetra Tech**

- Progress update and timeline – *Tetra Tech*

11:50 **Other Items, Issues, and Other NYSERDA Workstreams**

- Potential new topics from Meeting #1
- Members bring forward other issues for discussion as needed
- Ideas from NYSERDA – *NYSERDA*
- Discussion and feedback

12:15 **Next Steps and Adjourn**

- Next meeting dates?