

Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) Meeting Summary

Monday, April 10, 2023, from 3:00 to 4:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Background

This meeting summary describes key discussion points and action items from the Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) virtual meeting held on Monday, April 10, 2023, through a virtual meeting platform.

Goals for the meeting included:

- Provide an overview of Master Plan 2.0: Deep Water Site Assessment Studies to the F-TWG, and provide a forum for stakeholders to engage, explore, and coordinate views and comments on the process.
- Adhere to our ground rules for an effective meeting (stay on track, let others speak, be respectful, focus on the substance not the people).

There were 56 F-TWG members and other stakeholders in attendance through the Zoom meeting/conference line. Staff from NYSERDA, HDR, 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. Attendees are referred to interchangeably in the summary as stakeholders and F-TWG members. This summary provides an overview of the presented information about Master Plan 2.0 and related studies as well as feedback and suggestions regarding the shared information and process.

Action Items

The following key next steps resulted from the meeting:

- HDR will continue to move their study forward over the next 6-8 weeks. After initial assessment they will consult with the F-TWG and E-TWG on other elements that need to be considered. The F-TWG can expect the HDR report drafts to come out in late-June or July. If F-TWG members have other information, feedback, or questions, they are encouraged to reach out to Dave Davis, David.Davis@hdrinc.com and Morgan Brunbauer morgan.brunbauer@nyserda.ny.gov.
- Tetra Tech will continue with their Master Plan 2.0 Fisheries Engagement Approach (April – September 2023) and will hold facilitated monthly listening sessions styled as informal office hours. These office hours will specifically target input from the commercial and recreational fishing industries. Please share contact information with Brian Dresser, brian.dresser@tetrattech.com, for anyone that should be consulted (that represents fisheries within the AoA and that are not part of the F-TWG). Tetra Tech will coordinate this feedback back to HDR and will include a summary of this engagement as part of the Fish and Fisheries Study.

- Tetra Tech will continue with the Deepwater Wind: Technical Concepts Study Memorandum.
- F-TWG members should share additional topics they would like to discuss with the F-TWG or any concerns about proposed topics with Morgan Brunbauer, Morgan.Brunbauer@nyserdera.ny.gov.

Rules of the Road, Purpose, and Intent

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 (OSW) developers to provide advice and input to New York State (NYS). The April 10th meeting focused on updates related to Master Plan 2.0 including an overview, studies, and opportunities for F-TWG engagement.

Overview of Initial Master Plan 2.0 Process

Morgan Brunbauer (NYSERDA) provided an overview of Master Plan 2.0: Deep Water. The purpose of Master Plan 2.0 is to set an organizing principal for OSW that continues to advance past the 60-meter contour. The initial Master Planning process identified three zones past the 60-meter contour that will be assessed for OSW viability and associated potential risks of development: Zone 1 is the 60-meter contour to the shelf break, Zone 2 is the shelf break, Zone 3 is the area beyond the shelf break.

There will be five component site assessment studies in these zones that will continue the conversations initiated under Master Plan 1.0 to centralize relevant data, identify gaps in knowledge, and assess next steps.

- These five site assessments will engage with a project advisory committee of technical experts in fisheries and wildlife prior to finalization and presentation to F-TWG members.
- Studies will come out between April and August, and the F-TWG will have the opportunity to provide comments and edits accordingly. HDR will revise the documents to address comments and ensure that the studies are clear. HDR will present these studies to the E-TWG and F-TWG groups in September, detailing how the report was revised to address the feedback from TWG members.
- The final reports will be made public in October, and there will be final recommendations to BOEM identifying areas that need further evaluation and stakeholder engagement, and potential workstreams that could help move the conversation about OSW development forward in a cost effective and environmentally responsible manner.

HDR Overview of Master Plan 2.0

HDR provided a brief overview of their team and the work that they will do on Master Plan 2.0. The objectives of the process are to conduct desktop assessments to review and synthesize data sources within the area of analysis (AoA). There will be five separate reports that focus on:

1. Marine mammals and sea turtles
2. Birds and bats
3. Fish and fisheries
4. Benthic habitats
5. Environmental Sensitivity Analysis

HDR's team will engage with experts through the Project Advisory Committees, and the E-TWG and F-TWGs, to identify existing data and ongoing research within and adjacent to the AoA, identify stressors from OSW development with a focus on deep water technology, identify research needs and opportunities to address data gaps, and provide recommendations to mitigate risks of OSW.

The Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Study is led by Dr. Kristen Ampela (HDR), who provided an overview of the task. The goal of this task is to characterize marine mammal and sea turtle population density, distribution, and use-patterns in the AoA, as well as identify potential risks to marine mammals and sea turtles by OSW development and build on previous studies to summarize relevant mitigation and monitoring processes. This study will also serve to identify gaps and uncertainties in the research, and to identify research method recommendations to address these shortfalls.

The Birds and Bats Study is led by Dr. Wing Goodale (BRI). The study will use methods deployed in previous studies in the Gulf of Maine to develop a spatial risk assessment that focuses on:

- Foraging analysis: The study will identify relevant sea bird colonies in the region, using tracking data and available literature to identify foraging distances from the colonies.
- Marine bird exposure and vulnerability assessment: The study will make use of data from the bird distribution and abundance models developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to assess risk.
- Assessment of tracking data: The assessment will aggregate as much tracking data as possible about non-marine birds and marine birds to understand migration patterns through the different zones.

The overall goal of the study will be to identify potential risks to birds and bats from all phases of OSW development, identify research gaps and uncertainties, provide method recommendations to address these gaps, and summarize the relevant mitigation and monitoring practices.

The Fish and Fisheries Study is led by Dave Davis (HDR). This study will identify and summarize the existing data on key fish, shellfish, species of concern, and sensitive habitats. HDR has conducted a preliminary data review and is building a framework for the study; compiling data; identifying key commercial, recreational, essential fish habitat (EFH), threatened endangered and sensitive (TES), and NOAA trust species; and identifying key habitat areas.

The Benthic Habitat Study is led by Kate Estler (HDR) who provided an overview of the task. This study will analyze the benthic characteristics of the AoA. This includes the geophysical and biological characteristics of the zones, as well as the presence of unique habitats and threatened, endangered, and vulnerable species. This information will be used to identify risks to the benthic environment from all phases of OSW development, identify research gaps and specific recommendations to address risks, and summarize relevant mitigation and monitoring practices.

The Environmental Sensitivity Analysis is led by Jaak Van den Sype (HDR) who provided a summary of the task. This assessment will utilize the data generated by the other four assessments to provide an overall risk analysis. HDR has reviewed Master Plan 1.0 as well as New Jersey and Maine OSW studies, comparing methodologies and data sources that will inform this task. This task will develop a model to incorporate all the risks identified in the other assessments from potential stressors, and the level of risk of these stressors on particular receptors during each phase of OSW development. The result will

provide geographic descriptions of high and low areas of potential conflict for OSW development and associated stressors.

Summary of Questions & Discussion

F-TWG members expressed concerns over possible overlap and duplication of effort between the Master Plan 2.0 assessments and previous studies, especially the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance's (RODA's) Synthesis of the Science report. Stakeholders also expressed concern that the scope and ambition of Master Plan 2.0 seems to be misaligned with the relatively short timeframe presented.

- NYSERDA responded that this process is intended to build on previous studies, compiling and centralizing available data, and identifying research gaps. The results of the Synthesis of the Science report will be part of this and will be included and put into context. The assessments will also be as geographically specific, which was not considered in other workstreams, as possible and will assess the viability for OSW development in specific areas of the zones in question.

Stakeholders asked questions about the relative weight of commercial fishing interests in the process of ruling out areas for deep water OSW development, as well as the possibility of accelerating the process by ruling out certain areas, such as the Hudson Valley, at the beginning of the process.

- HDR responded that the relative weight of different interests will be determined as the assessments progress. Regarding ruling out areas at the beginning of the process, HDR responded that these areas will still be part of the larger assessments, to build as complete a picture as possible of the zones under consideration and ensure the areas of highest risk are identified early in the process.

F-TWG members brought forward several studies, through verbal comments and the meeting chat function, that HDR should consult as part of these assessments. These included scallop surveys from organizations other than the Northeast Science Center, as well as deep sea coral mapping projects from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

- F-TWG members are encouraged to send these and other references to HDR to be incorporated into the assessments.

Master Plan 2.0 Fisheries Engagement Approach & Deepwater Wind: Technology Considerations Study

Tetra Tech provided an overview of the Fisheries Engagement Approach and the Deep Water Wind Technical Concepts Memorandum that will supplement the assessments of Master Plan 2.0. The goal of the Fisheries Engagement Approach is to compile topics of interest or priorities that are new since the development of Master Plan 1.0, focusing on what new fisheries may need to be included in the process now that the AoA is further offshore. The assessment will evaluate whether topics of concern identified in the first round of this process are still relevant, and what information is missing to ensure that a full picture of topical areas are captured and considered as offshore develops beyond the 60-meter contour.

The engagement approach timeline will run from April – September and will include facilitated monthly listening sessions styled as informal “office hours,” and will identify representation from fisheries within the AoA that are not part of the F-TWG but should be consulted for input. This process will inform the

recommendations to BOEM and will be an appendix to the fish and fisheries assessment of the OSW Master Plan 2.0.

The **Deep Water Wind: Technology Considerations Study** will supplement the other assessments. The goal of this study is to provide a synthesis of the available technology and environmental considerations related to OWS in waters that exceed 60m in depth. It will be used as a reference and informative document by NYSERDA and other state agencies and will serve as an information source for stakeholders. It will be an in-depth review of the available literature and will seek to evaluate technical specifications regarding turbine types, anchoring mechanisms, mooring designs, export and inter-array cables, and offshore substations. It will focus primarily on floating wind, but will also investigate next-gen fixed wind technology. This study will centralize comments from the fishing industry and will consult stakeholders to determine if any priorities are being missed.

Summary of Closing Questions & Discussion

F-TWG members expressed significant concerns that fishing interests will not be weighted appropriately in the assessments, and that the concerns of the fishing industry regarding OSW have not been given the appropriate level of consideration in this process.

- Stakeholders are encouraged to reach out to HDR if they have additional resources, concerns, or questions regarding the assessment process and studies. Stakeholder engagement is a crucial part of the assessment, and input from fishing interests are essential to building a complete picture of the risks and potential for OSW.

Stakeholders asked questions about price per mega-watt (MW) considerations, and how pricing decisions could impact the viability of OSW projects.

- There will be a follow-up assessment to the deep water technology study that will start later this year and will have a cost analysis focus. This study will look at changes in MW costs related to different technologies, geographic placement of OSW projects, and other factors.

Next Steps

- HDR will continue to move their assessment process forward in the next 6-8 weeks.
- HDR will consult with the TWG as appropriate throughout the process to see if there is anything else that needs to be considered.
- The report drafts will be coming out in late-June into July.
- If TWG members have other information, feedback, or questions, they are encouraged to reach out to HDR and NYSERDA.
- Tetra Tech will continue with their Master Plan 2.0 Fisheries Engagement Approach and will hold facilitated monthly listening sessions and informal office hours for F-TWG members and other stakeholders.
- Tetra Tech will continue with the Deepwater Wind: Technical Concepts Study Memorandum with a draft scheduled for June.

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

F-TWG April 2023 Virtual Meeting

April 10, 2023

3:00 to 4:00 PM (EDT)

You may join the meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89297931394?pwd=MWs3am9lWDRMYzNlVE00L0x6R0QyZz09>

F-TWG Goals for Meetings

- Update the Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) on the plan for advancing initial workstreams for Master Plan 2.0.

2:55 Open Lines for On-Line Joining

3:00 Welcome, Listing of Participants, Orientation to the Zoom Webinar Format

- TWG Purpose, Meeting Agenda, Review Rules of the Road

3:05 Overview of Initial Master Plan 2.0 Process

- Presentation by NYSERDA

3:10 HDR Site Assessment Studies for Master Plan 2.0

- Presentation by HDR
- Discussion

3:35 Master Plan 2.0 Fisheries Engagement Approach

- Presentation by Tetra Tech
- Discussion

3:40 Deepwater Wind: Technology Considerations Study

- Presentation by Tetra Tech
- Discussion

3:50 Next Step: Questions and Discussion

4:00 Adjourn