

**MEETING SUMMARY  
FEBRUARY 11, 2009  
OCEAN ENERGY TASK FORCE  
SUBCOMMITTEE #1  
ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN IMPACTS**

**I. Introductions and Subcommittee Scope**

1. Introductions

- Task Force Members and Interested Public present: Erin Pelletier, Matt Nixon, Beth Nagusky, Kathleen Leyden, Tim Divoll, Chris Desorbo, Emily Walsh, Dennis Heinemann, Mark Dittrick, Mary McCann, Marcia Bowen, Vivian Newman, Jeff Thaler, Shelly Talloch, Ernie Hilton, Des Fitzgerald, Richard Podolsky, Shelly Taluck, Wing Goodale, Linda Mercer, George Lapointe, Sean Mahoney

2. Subcommittee Work and Specific Deliverables to the Ocean Energy Task Force

- General discussion of process and goals for SC 1 by S Mahoney:
  - No distinction between task force members and the interested public – input from both is important.
  - Overarching goals of subcommittee: 1) identify existing information sources as well as existing information gaps; and 2) develop and propose process to engage stakeholders and to perform public outreach.
  - Timing – there are short term and long term time horizons – if anything needs to be presented for legislative review/consideration/action, must be presented by mid-March; otherwise, recommendations of this subcommittee will track the work of the OETF as a whole
- Subcommittee Expertise: Presence and Absence of Necessary Advisors
  - Gaps: task force members and interested parties at the meeting lacked experience/knowledge on potential impacts on/from recreational fisheries and offshore transportation – need to fill these gaps.
  - Suggestions also made to add bats to the avian category, reptiles to the marine mammals category, and to consider the use of acoustics and hydraulic modeling to assess impacts of offshore energy projects
- Data oriented goals:
  - Inventory available sources of data
  - Identify critical data gaps
  - Develop opportunities/constraints maps

- Comment: Identification of *all* the data gaps will be next to impossible (in the time allotted); people will have to make informed decisions on whether to move ahead based on the risks of what we do/don't know.
- Test Site Specifics
  - The Cape Wind FEIS contains a number of constraints and criteria and could be used as both a template and as a model for issues that are relevant to Maine.
  - The purpose of the test site – we've heard from two companies that want to test equipment; sort of mimics the preliminary permit process, but we're looking at a non-exclusive test site where any developer could come in and test equipment that needs testing. There could be more than one turbine.
    - Comment: The period of time corresponding to the site is more limited – “I want to try something for 3 years” – much different than a “permanent” project
    - Comment: It is worth keeping in mind that a full scale demo might be a 5mw turbine which generates significant energy (can power a thousand homes). Transmission costs are cheap compared to the rest. It challenges the idea of the temporary nature of the project. Also, a lot of environmental expertise in the room – could quickly identify available resources.

## II. Criteria Considerations

- Avian –Three Important Considerations:
  - 1. Knowing where the colonies/nesting islands are – by recognizing these areas and being sensitive to avoiding them, this takes care of the much concern surrounding avian issues. Flight paths and feeding most intense around these islands. This information is very well known.
  - 2. Knowing where the feeding areas are – a lot of airtime and flightlines from the colonies to the feeding areas. We know a fair bit about where these are, but some work is required (a possibility may be studies involving cruises to figure out where birds feed).
  - 3. Knowing where the migratory flight lines are – we have some sense of this, but really don't know a lot.
  - The Subcommittee's task is not to establish buffers around environmentally sensitive areas.
  - It's worth keeping in mind the future perspective with habitat shift due to climate change. This speaks to the need for adaptive management and ongoing monitoring
  - Bats – Bats need to be considered, though not necessarily lumped together with avian species. It has been shown that they do traverse large bodies of water and that copulation takes place on the tallest structures in their breeding grounds (potential turbine). Additionally, pressure changes in the air surrounding turbines is a health issue for bats.
  - ASSIGNMENT: come up with a list of sources of information/existing data on bird/turbine interaction – Heinneman, Goodale and Podolsky.

- Marine Mammals and Reptiles
  - Good sources for data and information currently exist, e.g., New England Aquarium, historic siting/stranding information (whales), College of the Atlantic, the University of New England, and The National Marine Fisheries Service.
  - Temporally, there are windows of species activity to avoid, e.g., construction of a test turbine is a temporary issue that should occur outside of species migration times.
  - Information gaps – Limited survey work in the past as to migration routes for species such as right whale will need to be addressed, as will new impacts, e.g., any impacts from underwater transmission cables.
  - ASSIGNMENT: Identify data sources and distribute – Mercer, Dietrich.
  
- Coastal Fisheries
  - Inshore fisheries. Suggestion to divide into nearshore and offshore fisheries, where there is considerable information already existing for both. .
  - Issues likely to arise involve impacts on fish and fauna habitat, commercial and recreational fishing, size of potential projects, impacts on aquaculture, aesthetic issues, etc.
  - ASSIGNMENT: Identify existing data sources and distribute - Lapointe, Pelletier and Nixon.
  
- Recreational Uses – sailing, sea kayaking – **not fishing**
  - There are no human use inventories of our offshore areas. Something that comes close is the Quebec Labrador Foundation, study on Muscungus Bay.
  - Kathleen: would look at the sites we've identified in order to limit the scope of the task
  - Maine Island Trails, Maine Captains Charter Association, and The Windjammer Association
  - ASSIGNMENT: Identify existing data sources - Leyden and Mahoney
  
- Habitat and Ocean Bottom Impact
  - Classification should be: water column/wave and tidal category vs. top of the water.
  - Maine Geological Survey maps include studies done on Monhegan; but, there is a huge void in terms of offshore mapping
  - WWF/CLF did work several years ago; TNC doing work currently
  - Regarding the issue of deep water corals – has a sense that this is not well mapped. This is a significant habitat issue that should go on the constraints map.
  - ASSIGNMENT: UMO (Heather Deese) using GIS project to take lead on compiling various information sources, w/ assistance from Mercer, Nixon and Mahoney
  
- Viewshed
  - SPO has republished inventories done for the old critical areas program, Kittery to Casco Bay, but this was done in the era of slides and typewritten manuals. A gap exists in Hancock and Washington counties. SPO has contracted to have these counties use the new scenic inventory handbook to inventory these areas.
  - It will be problematic regarding how we deal with ocean views. i.e. Monhegan – an especially scenic area, but we don't have an inventory for it.

- For the Wind Power TF some work was done on viewshed impact, so the SC might be able to draw on this
- The big issue in land-based wind projects was and for many continues to be impact on viewshed. When the Task Force gets to the point of identifying that certain areas are more amenable to wind power development, imperative to work with the people who are going to see it.
- ASSIGNMENT: Leyden and Nixon to compile existing data sources.
  - Transportation –
  - Potential sources may be university GIS layers, and items to add may be ferry routes, coastal airports, shipping lanes
  - Don't lose sight of the larger picture – The Federal Government has huge plans – America's Marine Highway – will result in major increase in volume of shipping
  - ASSIGNMENT: Lapointe to gather information from State and federal agencies

### III. Adjournment

- Question: Should acoustics be added as another category?  
Answer: Yes, we should bring in some expertise on this. The category should be added to viewshed along with shadow flicker issues.
- Next subcommittee meeting:
  - Small groups will present their findings: here's the data we have, here are the gaps we've identified
  - NEXT MEETING: two weeks from today, the 25<sup>th</sup>, 9:00-12:00 in Augusta (prior to the meeting in Augusta on the 27<sup>th</sup>.)
- Post-meeting comments:
  - It's important to keep in mind that the charge of the task force is to uphold the state's goal to move forward with renewable development in an environmentally responsible manner. The bottom line is: do we know enough about certain sites such that we can identify them as test sites? We are trying to get to "YES".