

MEETING SUMMARY
MARCH 17, 2009
OCEAN ENERGY TASK FORCE
SUBCOMMITTEE #1
ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN IMPACTS

I. Attendees

- Task Force Members Present: Sean Mahoney, Leslie Harroun, Beth Nagusky, Kathleen Leyden, and George Lapointe
- State Staff: Matt Nixon, Linda Mercer
- Interested Public Present: Ernie Hilton, Mary McCann, Nate Vail, Des FitzGerald, Sean Casto, Jeff Thaler, Dennis Heinemann, David Yates, Marcia Bowen, Vivian Newman, Mark Dittrick, Gayle Zydlewski, George Kendrick, Richard Rozene, Tim Divoll, Chris Desorbo, Wing Goodale, Norman Famous, Jake Ward, and Susan Elston, By Phone: Heather Deese, and Tom Shyka

II. Last Meeting's Summary and Meeting Goals

- The Summary from last the meeting on February 25th, 2009 was accepted.
- Mr. Mahoney clarified that today's meeting objectives are to identify data gaps and needs in the provided bibliography, review the draft of proposed legislation regarding the siting of offshore wind turbine test facilities, and rate criteria within the bibliography accordingly.
- Mr. Mahoney believes that, going forward, the subcommittee's tasks are to: 1) help to identify test or demonstration sites where the wind resource is conducive and human and environmental conflicts are minimized. These potential site recommendations must be made by May. The ensuing public outreach and education process must be able to proceed by June.

III. Proposed Legislation Discussion

- Mr. Mahoney reiterated his desire to strictly identify needs and gaps and not to involve the subcommittee in "word-smithing" as of yet.
- Mr. Mahoney is aware of several existing comments made by Task Force members including himself and George Hart and is also aware of suggestions that have been made to SPO staff as well pertaining to the legislation.
- As an example, in Section 2E (Fish and Wildlife Monitoring Plan), the language needs to be broadened beyond "seabird" to include migrating passerines, bats, and other types of whales in addition to Right Whales.
- Additional comments are as follows:
 - Section 2, Subsection 2, Part C, Paragraph 1: The word "two" should be removed from the paragraph.

- Monitoring should be done in partnership with stakeholders. There needs to be a role for Maine citizens with experience in these areas such as the Biodiversity Research Institute. Monitoring reports should be completed every six months as there is a lack of information on some species involved (bats).
- Monitoring reports completed twice a year would capture spring and fall migrations.
- The monitoring program design is very important. It needs to ensure that any impacts observed are a result of the project and hence statistically valid results. The BACI (Before, After, Control, Impact) method should be utilized. A substantial baseline is needed for all seasons. The monitoring program should be subject to peer review and the state should create a technical advisory committee to vet the program design and review the collected data.
- The monitoring plan needs to account for breeding, wintering, and migration.
- Some states are developing technical advisory committees linked to project permits. These committees are usually comprised of third party, disinterested groups or individuals with a science background that review each permit. Establishment of a standing group that all parties could accept would facilitate this process.
- Relying solely on adaptive management is something that the subcommittee must be wary of. Adaptive management is not something that can be substituted for baseline data.
- Cornell should be approached about research for Right Whales.

IV. Presentation of UMaine GIS Project, Susan Elston (University of Maine), Matthew Nixon, (State Planning Office)

- A short siting exercise ensued showing the conflicts and criteria that currently exist in the UMaine/SPO database in the focused region of Penobscot Bay as related to development of a deepwater wind test site in state waters. This exercise was for demonstration purposes only. Neither the subcommittee nor the Task Force as a whole has endorsed any specific area. Penobscot Bay was used to illustrate the high number of use conflicts and review that would take place after a site has been selected.

V. Discussion of Criteria, Data Gaps, and Priorities

- The addition of the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) to the bibliography was suggested as a potential source.
- A comment was made about including the year each data layer was created to ensure its relevancy and accuracy.
- Data portrayal in a spreadsheet format would be useful for the subcommittee.
- A question was raised regarding the availability of similar data for tidal/wave developments. The consensus was the data exists, but it would take a substantial amount of time to assemble in the same format as the current wind database. GMRI has tidal data that can be used for the subcommittee's purposes.
- Additions to the bibliography include:
 - **Aquaculture** – seaweed harvest areas/algae harvest, aquaculture, salt marsh information

- Maine/New Hampshire Trawl Survey for distribution of inshore species, scallops, sea urchins, and ocean quahogs, herring spawning area, juvenile lobster areas, U.S. Census on Marine Life, trip reporting information.
- Coastal restrictions – dumping and spoil grounds. While a listing currently exists, new, potential sites will be created in the coming months and they must be accounted for.
- Acoustical work for floating turbines.
- Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is working with BRI regarding information pertaining to seaducks, etc. Project Puffin, Coastal Island National Wildlife Refuge.
- Post-studies on how to measure cumulative effects of several different wind farms on the coast of Maine.
- Chlorophyll A and Bottom and Surface Currents that will have an effect on siting.

Mr. Mahoney initiated discussion to get a collective sense of what the priorities are regarding the criteria.

- There are Policy restricted items and opinion-related items.
 - Use of a scale with a rating of 1-3 (three being the most important)
 - Section 1 (Gulf of Maine Wind Resource) – all sections categorized as “3”.
 - Section 2 (Boundaries/Municipalities/Population) – all section categorized as “1”.
 - Section 3 (Transportation) – all section categorized as “2” with the exception of the rail category, which is categorized as a “1”.
 - Section 4 (Infrastructure) – all section categorized as “2”.
 - Section 5 (Cultural/Historical Features) – all sections categorized as “1” with the exceptions being the Maine windjammer Association’s range and Fishing Charter operations locations being categorized as a “3”.
 - Section 6 (Wildlife and Habitat) – all section categorized as a “3” with the exception of the Gulf of Maine Dynamic Area Management Zones, which was categorized as a “1”.
 - Section 7 (Coastal Land/Economic Regions) – all sections categorized as “3” with the exception of Biomass, which was categorized as a “1”.
 - Section 8 (Coastal Restrictions and Marine Hazards) – All sections categorized as a “3” with the exception of Dragging Prohibited Zones, which was categorized as a “2”.
 - Section 9 (Physical Characteristics) – Maine 20 meter topography was listed as a “1”, geological depth profiles of sediment was categorized as a “2”, while Bathymetry was categorized as a “3”.

VI. Report Outs and Next Steps

- The information and ratings collected today will be placed into a spreadsheet.
- After the rating process is over the subcommittee must turn to siting and proposing specific sites.

There being no additional discussion, Chair Mahoney adjourned the meeting.