

Sunrise Wind Environmental and Fisheries Mitigation Plans Joint Environmental and Fisheries Technical Working Group Meeting Summary

Tuesday, August 17, 2021 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Virtual Meeting

Background

This meeting summary describes key discussion points and action items from the first Joint Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG) and Fisheries Technical Working Group (F-TWG) virtual meeting, which was held on Tuesday, August 17th, 2021 through a virtual meeting platform.

Goals for the meeting included:

- Provide an update and process for evolving the Sunrise Wind Project Environmental Mitigation Plan (EMP) and Fisheries Mitigation Plan (FMP)
- Review how past E-TWG and F-TWG comments have informed the most recent plans; and
- Begin to identify topics for further discussion at future E-TWG and F-TWG meetings with Sunrise Wind.

There were 58 attendees present on the Zoom meeting/conference line, including E-TWG and F-TWG members, the Sunrise Wind Project Team, and staff from NYSERDA, Tetra Tech, Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI), and the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) providing technical, facilitation, and logistics support.

This summary is organized to align with the structure of the meeting agenda. Opinions below are not attributed to specific E-TWG 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:

- Mitigation Plans (EMP and FMP) and (draft) fisheries and benthic survey plans will be made available for review by August 23, 2021.
 - NYSERDA requests questions and feedback from TWG members be sent to Kate McClellan Press and Morgan Brunbauer by September 24, 2021.
 - The Sunrise Wind Project Team requested specific input items from E-TWG and F-TWG; these items are described below.
- A scheduling poll will be provided for follow-up E-TWG and F-TWG meetings (est. early October 2021).
 - TWG-specific meetings will be based on comments received and will be led by developer subject matter experts.
 - E-TWG and F-TWG members provided initial thoughts on key future discussion topics; these are summarized below.

Sunrise Wind Presentations (Sunrise Wind Project Team: Lia Howard, Ross Pearsall, Greg DeCelles, Laura Morse)

The Sunrise Wind Project Team presented on the following topics (slides are available on the [E-TWG](#) and [F-TWG](#) websites.):

- Project Overview: Status and Schedule
 - Onshore and offshore project components
 - Completed and ongoing surveys
 - Permitting overview and status
- Environmental Mitigation Plan (EMP) Overview
 - Marine mammals and sea turtles
 - Birds and bats
 - Fishes, invertebrates, and habitats
- Fisheries Mitigation Plan (FMP) Overview
 - Communication and outreach plan
- Overview of Key Subset: Draft Fisheries and Benthic Survey Plans
 - Trawl survey
 - Highly Migratory Species (HMS) acoustic telemetry survey
 - Electromagnetic field (EMF) acoustic telemetry survey
 - Benthic habitat monitoring
- Other Funding Initiatives
 - NOAA MOA update
 - Science Initiatives Review Group (Dr. Susan Parks; Dr. Brandon Southall)
 - Atlantic Marine Conservation Society (AMSEAS) Seal Tagging Study (PI: Rob DiGiovanni)
 - Stony Brook North Atlantic Right Whale Prey Study (PIs: Dr. Joe Warren; Dr. Lesley Thorne)
 - Stony Brook Thermal Camera Marine Mammal Automated Detection Project (PIs: Dr. Alexander Borowicz; Dr. Lesley Thorne)
 - Syracuse University Baleen Whale Acoustic Ecology (PI: Dr. Susan Parks)
 - Regional efforts: NYSERDA State of the Science workshop; ROSA; RWSE

The Sunrise Wind Project Team is seeking input from E-TWG and F-TWG regarding:

- Research priorities; and
- Organizations to support

For the Fisheries and Benthic Monitoring Plan, Sunrise Wind is seeking input from E-TWG and F-TWG regarding:

- Priority species for biological sampling during the trawl survey;
- Proposed reference site locations for the trawl survey;
- Priority species for the EMF telemetry study along the Sunrise Wind (SRW) Export Cable route;
- Receiver array locations along the SRW Export Cable route; and
- Benthic sampling locations along the SRW Export Cable route

Several broad discussion topics emerged during Project Team presentations and TWG breakout sessions:

Refining TWG Input Process

Some TWG members recommend that Project Teams provide EMP and FMP documents prior to Project meetings to facilitate and inform productive input. Meeting recordings, transcripts, and/or presentation

slides should be made available to all attendees following each meeting. Suggestions for streamlining the present input process include:

- Providing additional background regarding which fisheries stakeholders and organizations were involved in prior Sunrise Wind outreach efforts, as well as the outcomes of those engagements; and
- Providing a clear process through which TWG members can submit feedback for developer incorporation into EMP and FMP documents.

The EMP and FMP will be made available to TWG members for comment no later than Monday, August 23, 2021. Presentation slides will be uploaded to the TWG websites. Ross Pearsall will provide additional information on prior stakeholder engagement efforts. At present, TWG members are encouraged to contact the Sunrise Wind Project Team directly to provide EMP/FMP feedback

Defining Key Terminology: Mitigation

- TWG members recommend defining key terminology to inform feedback. Developing a definition for “mitigation” was identified as a core action item following this meeting. Specifically, the definition should provide a clear distinction between mitigation efforts and monitoring efforts and should clarify that mitigation efforts are intended for situations where project impacts cannot be avoided. The required elements of NYSERDA’s mitigation plans are described in the 2018 OREC solicitation, [Environmental Mitigation Plan](#) and [Fisheries Mitigation Plan](#).

Discussing Compensatory Mitigation for Fisheries Losses

TWG members identified compensatory mitigation for fisheries losses as a core discussion topic for future meetings. NYSERDA is exploring the ways in which other Atlantic coast states facilitate compensatory mitigation.

Clarifying Converter Station Cooling Water Intake Structure Design

Sunrise Wind offshore project components include an offshore converter station that will require a once-through cooling water intake structure (CWIS). The CWIS is expected to have an estimated design intake flow (DIF) rate of 4 to 12 million gallons per day. The Sunrise Wind Project Team is currently consulting with EPA, NMFS, and BOEM for CWIS permitting requirements. TWG members request more information on CWIS design from the Project Team as a core action item following this meeting, including CWIS location/configuration, hydraulic zone of influence, and thermal impacts.

Discussing Pre- and Post-Construction Monitoring Methods

Survey-specific questions emerged during Sunrise Wind Project Team presentations, including:

- Will New England Aquarium (NEAQ) marine mammal aerial surveys be extended beyond 2021 and will results provide data on post-construction impacts? How many years of pre-construction surveys are planned for the Sunrise Wind Project?
 - Sunrise Team Response: NEAQ surveys were designed to provide baseline pre-construction data collection, but TWG members are encouraged to contact NEAQ directly for information on future survey efforts. At least two years of pre-construction surveys are scheduled.

- How does the proposed density of trawl surveys compare to other offshore wind (OSW) trawl survey efforts?
 - Sunrise Team Response: The present trawl survey plan includes 20 tows per season in the impact area and two reference sites; this density is comparable to other OSW efforts.
- Will EMF acoustic telemetry surveys include summer flounder, black sea bass, and longfin squid as focal species based on sensitivity to EMF? What is the current mitigation plan should the EMF survey indicate negative impacts of EMF on resident species?
 - Sunrise Team Response: The focal species of the present survey plan include American lobster, horseshoe crab, winter skate, and coastal sharks, all of which were selected specifically for sensitivity to HVDC cables. The short lifespan (approx. one year) and small body size of longfin squid are not well-suited to telemetry surveys intended to monitor species across different stages of construction; however, squid can be incorporated as a target species in trawl surveys. TWG members have identified mitigation actions for negative EMF impacts to resident species as a core discussion topic for future meetings.
- Is the Sunrise Wind Project Team coordinating with Mid-Atlantic OSW developers to establish consistent survey methodologies? Will raw survey data be made available to the public?
 - Sunrise Team Response: The Project Team is committing to survey methods that have been adopted by other OSW developers – e.g., other developers are collecting acoustic telemetry data of HMS and resident species, which will offer complementary datasets. The Project Team is also committing to publishing raw survey data and is in the process of determining the best platform for data sharing.
- What evidence indicates that a 1nm x 1nm turbine spacing layout reduces risk of bird and bat collision, barrier effects, and displacement?
 - Sunrise Team Response: The 1nm x 1nm layout offers greater spacing between turbines than European OSW layouts, and there is regional consensus among developers for this spacing layout.

Additional Themes from TWG Questions/Comments:

- TWG members requested more clarity regarding how the Protected Species Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, Avian Monitoring Plan, and Fisheries and Benthic Monitoring Plan are integrated within the overall EMP and FMP.
- The EMP and FMP should provide a summary of prior OSW monitoring efforts, including an analysis of typical survey spatial extent, duration, intensity, and regional coordination.
- TWGs also requested more clarity regarding the criteria the Sunrise Wind Project Team use to select research projects to fund and expressed interest in seeing developer commitments to ongoing monitoring efforts to ensure both short-term and long-term project-specific and regional impacts are examined.
- TWGs identified standardization of survey plan design, data collection, and data storage and transparency as a critically important topic. Regional coordination between OSW developers along the Atlantic OCS is also important in the development of standardized mitigation plans.
- TWG members have identified clarification of the geographic extent of the 1x1 nautical mile layout as identified as a regional consensus as a topic for future meetings.



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Rules of the Road for TWG-Project Dialogue

This is the first joint E-TWG and F-TWG meeting. The meeting and discussions will be structured to give a higher-level overview of both fisheries and environmental mitigation plans. Separate E-TWG and F-TWG meetings will be set up in September to allow for more detailed discussions.

To foster effective discussions, we put forward the following rules of the road:

- Other than the Sunrise team, only non-developer E-TWG and F-TWG members will attend
- A meeting summary without attribution will be developed from the dialogue and made available to all E-TWG and F-TWG members and posted on their respective websites.
- The project teams are not required to agree with nor act on the advice or comment of E-TWG and F-TWG members, but are expected to take it seriously, consider the merits, act when possible, and explain why key advice was not taken.
- The project teams should understand that while these meetings are not public, there is no guarantee of confidentiality and the meeting summary will be made public. Thus, project teams should be mindful when / if they choose to share proprietary data.
- The dialogue with individual project developers is expected to be on-going and no one single meeting is intended to serve as the sole forum or time for dialogue. As noted above, NYSERDA will convene separate follow-on meetings with the E-TWG and F-TWG to foster more detailed discussions on the respective mitigation plans.
- Through individual project discussions, the E-TWG and F-TWG may identify common themes and issues that need to be discussed across projects and these may be brought to future TWG meetings where all members, including developers, are present.



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