

Northeast Regional Ocean Council

Ocean Planning Committee

April 2, 2020 Webinar Summary

Introduction

On April 2, 2020, the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) Ocean Planning Committee (OPC) held the first in a series of webinars in lieu of a scheduled in-person meeting that was cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis. This document includes the webinar agenda, links to the presentations for each agenda topic, a summary of the discussion for each topic (if there was one), and a list of the over 140 webinar participants. The intent of the original in-person meeting was to obtain an update and information about the various offshore management, planning, and regulatory considerations over the next several years, and to consider additional information needs and the opportunities for NROC and its partners to provide support or information as each effort moves forward. The April 2 webinar focused on federal administration priorities and offshore wind. It will be followed by additional webinars covering additional offshore topics.

OPC Co-Chair Update

The meeting began with an update from the NROC OPC Co-Chairs. After having served for three years, the Federal Co-Chair position will move from Mel Coté at EPA to Chris Boelke with NOAA Fisheries. The State Co-Chair position will likely rotate in the Fall of 2020 from Ted Diers at NH to a representative from another state. The selection of a Tribal Co-Chair has been affected by the lack of ability to meet in-person around the scheduled April meeting.

Review of NROC's Ocean Planning Activities

Emily Shumchenia and Nick Napoli, NROC staff, provided an update on NROC's ocean planning activities since June 2019. The update was focused on activities most relevant to the topics being discussed during the webinar and therefore was not a comprehensive overview of all ocean planning activities. The presentation can be found [here](#). For additional information, please contact Nick Napoli at nnapoli@northeastoceancouncil.org or Emily Shumchenia at emily.shumchenia@gmail.com.

Update on Federal Interagency Ocean Policy Committee

Deerin Babb-Brott, Principal Assistant Director for Oceans and Environment at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, provided an update on the activities of the Federal Interagency Ocean Policy Committee. The update included policy actions to advance:

- Mapping, exploring, and characterizing the US Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Alaska
- Efficiency in authorizations for research, mapping, and exploration
- Regional and national data and decision-making capacity

The context for these initiatives, including relevant Executive Orders, Presidential Memoranda, and Ocean Policy Committee work plans and meeting summaries can be found here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/initiatives/ocean-policy/>

Discussion and Responses to Questions

After the presentation, there were several questions related to priority setting for mapping and exploring the EEZ, including whether the Administration's mapping priorities were related to a particular industry and how states and the public were or can be involved in priority setting. Deerin responded that the intent for the mapping project is broadly applicable and seeks to balance the interests of various ocean activities and industries. The Administration issued two Requests for Interest in February of 2020 to obtain input on efficient permitting and on a national strategy for mapping, exploring and characterizing the US EEZ. Those RFIs have since closed and the Administration is currently evaluating the input that was received as it develops the strategy. For more information on the RFIs, please see the following links:

- Request for information on ["Efficient Permitting of Ocean Research, Mapping, and Characterizing Activities"](#)
- Request for information on the development of a ["Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone"](#)

Update on the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan Revision

Ben Haskell, Deputy Director for the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary provided a brief update on the Sanctuary's process for updating the Sanctuary Management Plan. Ben will provide a more complete update on future webinars. Ben's presentation can be found [here](#).

Offshore Wind in the Northeast - Federal Offshore Wind Energy Program Update for the Northeast

Jim Bennett, Program Manager for BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy, provided an update on the federal offshore wind energy program in the northeast, including an overview of the projects in various stages on the Atlantic Coast for the areas that are already leased, and expectations for the New York Bight and the Gulf of Maine (GOM) Task Force. Jim's presentation can be found [here](#).

Discussion and Responses to Questions

Jim responded to several questions and discussed the following topics with webinar participants.

- *Gulf of Maine Task Force*: In response to a question about what is next for the GOM Task Force, Jim responded that at this point, he expects the next Task Force meeting will not be held before the Fall of 2020. In response to a question about opportunities and venues to provide stakeholder input into the GOM Task Force process, Jim commented that BOEM is always welcoming input. Stakeholder input can be directed to BOEM, the three states (MA, NH, and ME), and through specific solicitations throughout the process. In addition, BOEM will make use of any information and would be willing to engage with other entities, including NROC, to obtain input on issues related to the Gulf of Maine.
- *Habitat Assessment Guidelines for Developers (note: additional information provided by BOEM since the webinar is included)*: Mapping recommendations, including interpreting geophysical data at a finer scale to better resolve complex habitats, were developed by NMFS following a NMFS conservation recommendation in June 2019 for the Vineyard Wind project. The "final draft" recommendations were transmitted to BOEM on January 31, 2020. These recommendations are considered technical guidance from NMFS to BOEM in regard to providing sufficient information for Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultations. BOEM is sharing these recommendations with lessees for informational purposes and consideration in developing a

Construction and Operations Plan. The NMFS recommendations do not supplant existing survey guidelines on BOEM's website: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/survey-guidelines-renewable-energy-development>. BOEM is considering the recommendations and how BOEM can ensure that sufficient information necessary for an efficient EFH consultation process is collected.

- *BOEM use of the recommendations from the USCG Port Access Route Study for the lease areas offshore MA and RI (MARIPARS):* In response to a question about requiring the use of the MARIPARS recommendations for approval of a Construction and Operations Plan (COP), Jim stated that MARIPARS is an integral part of the overall decision-making process. In addition, the MARIPARS is still draft and it is premature to make a commitment to using the MARIPARS recommendations as a condition of approval of a Construction and Operations Plan for any particular project.

Offshore Wind in the Northeast - Port Access Route Studies (PARS), including the PARS for the Areas Offshore of Massachusetts and Rhode Island

Michele DesAutels from the First Coast Guard District provided an update on the status of PARS development, including the MARIPARS being conducted for the southern New England offshore wind lease areas. Michele's presentation can be found [here](#).

The Federal Register notice for the MARIPARS, including the draft report and comment letters, can be found here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/01/29/2020-01522/port-access-route-study-the-areas-offshore-of-massachusetts-and-rhode-island>

Discussion and Responses to Questions

Michele responded to several questions about the possibility of the MARIPARS results informing recommendations related to offshore wind elsewhere or whether additional PARS will be conducted in other parts of the region. Michele stated that recent developments in the Gulf of Maine, primarily the initiation of the Task Force process, has prompted the USCG to consider a PARS for the Gulf of Maine. In addition, an existing offshore wind energy lease and draft wind energy areas in the NY Bight have prompted the USCG to consider developing a PARS that will leverage the previously published Atlantic Coast PARS and consider routing measures with respect to all potential uses, not just offshore wind.

Offshore Wind in the Northeast - Power Grid and Transmission Planning

Fara Courtney, from Outer Harbor Consulting and the facilitator for the Grid and Transmission Working Group of the Business Network for Offshore Wind, provided a summary of the current practice of developing the offshore transmission infrastructure associated with offshore wind, the potential for increased coordination and planning, and NROC's potential role in providing information and convening interested parties. Fara's presentation can be found [here](#).

Discussion and Responses to Questions

Fara responded to several questions and discussed the following topics with webinar participants.

- *Public and state participation in transmission planning:* There currently is no formal regional grid and transmission planning process for offshore wind that considers issues related marine planning; there is an opportunity for interested individuals to participate in individual project-level environmental reviews. There are also ongoing state-level discussions about grid requirements. In addition, the states have authority over transmission in the offshore environment because cables have to pass through state waters to onshore connection points.

This speaks to the need for coordination across states and with the federal agencies. Last, NROC could convene interested parties to better understand the issues and provide input, especially in the Gulf of Maine where projects have not already proposed individual grid connections. NROC also provides important information via the Northeast Ocean Data Portal to inform grid and transmission planning considerations.

- *Coordination with regional grid operators and entities:* Studies being conducted by [ISO New England](#) as requested by the [New England States Committee on Electricity \(NESCOE\)](#), including an economic study for the interconnection of offshore wind and a grid congestion analysis, are important context for identifying areas where energy from offshore wind may connect onshore and where there may be a need to move some congestion issues offshore.
- *Interactions with existing uses and resources:* Several participants noted that there are important considerations around potential cable impacts and interactions with existing uses and important marine life and natural resources. This includes commercial fisheries and the maritime industry – as an example, there currently are concerns about interactions between transmission lines and anchorage areas in Delaware. This also includes the potential impacts of geophysical surveys on North Atlantic Right Whales.
- *Grid system robustness:* Participants noted that system robustness, redundancy, and resilience are key considerations, including preventing the loss of transmission capacity when there are issues with connection points.

NROC Ocean Planning Committee April 2 Webinar - Registered Participants

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Deerin	Babb-Brott	White House OSTP
Michelle	Bachman	New England Fishery Management Council
Jerry	Barnes	U.S. Coast Guard Fifth District (Mid-Atlantic Region)
Carolina	Bastidas	MIT Sea Grant
Michael	Behrmann	Clean Energy NH
James	Bennett	Bureau of Ocean Energy Mananagement
Rick	Bennett	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Kaitlyn	Bernard	The Nature Conservancy Maine
David	Beutel	RICRMC
David	Blatt	CT DEEP-LWRD
Christopher	Boelke	NOAA/NMFS
Andrea	Bogomolni	
James	Boyd	RI Coastal Resources Management Council
Margaret (Peg)	Brady	NOAA Fisheries
Monica	Bridgelall	Student
Jeffrey	Brodeur	Woods Hole Sea Grant
Priscilla	Brooks	Conservation Law Foundation
Leann	Bullin	BOEM
Brandon	Burke	
Shelby	Butz	CSO
Todd	Callaghan	MA CZM
Merry	Camhi	Wildlife Conservation Society/ NY Aquarium
Drew	Carey	INSPIRE Environmental
Andrea	Carpenter	Navy
Ashley	Chappell	NOAA
Alison	Chase	
Doug	Christel	National Marine Fisheries Service
Jesse	Cleary	Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University
Monica	Coffey	
Sean	Cosgrove	Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
Melville	Cote	U.S Environmental Protection Agency
Fara	Courtney	Outer Harbor Consulting
Steve	Couture	NHDES
corrie	curtice	Duke University
michele	desautels	
Ted	Diers	NHDES
Dan	Dorfman	CSS Inc
Lisa	Engler	MA CZM
Susan	Farady	University of New England
Jennifer	Felt	Conservation Law Foundation
Marianne	Ferguson	
Darlene	Finch	NOAA Office for Coastal Management
Kristen	Fletcher	Naval Postgraduate School
Jeffrey	Flumignan	Maritime Administration
Kathryn	Ford	Mass Division of Marine Fisheries
Darryl	Francois	BOEM
Clark	Freise	
Grover	Fugate	CRMC
Melissa	Gates	Surfrider Foundation
Wendy	Gendron	USACE
Taylor	Goelz	
Brent	Greenfield	National Ocean Policy Coalition
Matthew	Harke	Gloucester Marine Genomics Institute
Adrienne	Harrison	NOAA OCM/Lynker
Ben	Haskell	Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary
Kevin	Hassell	NJDEP Office of Policy and Coastal Management
Annie	Hawkins	RODA
Glen	Herbert	Fisheries & Oceans Canada
Lyndie	Hice-Dunton	Responsible Offshore Science Alliance
Christine	Hirt	National Offshore Wind Research and Development Consortium
Fiona	Hogan	RODA
Brian	Hooker	BOEM
Heather	Hopkins	Department of the Navy
Sherryll	Huber Jones	NYSDEC
Rafeed	Hussain	Ocean Conservancy
Onni	Irish	SubCom
Zachary	Jylkka	NOAA Fisheries
David	Kaiser	NOAA Office for Coastal Management
Alison	Krepp	NOAA - Sea Grant
Kelly	Kryc	New England Aquarium
Paula	Kullberg	US Army Corps of Engineers - New England
John	Kuriawa	NOAA
Bob	LaBelle	NH citizen

NROC Ocean Planning Committee April 2 Webinar - Registered Participants

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Alix	Laferriere	TNC
Ron	Larsen	Sea Risk Solutions LLC
Joan	LeBlanc	NROC
Naomi	Lewandowski	U.S. Department of Energy - Wind Energy Technologies Office
Kathleen	Leyden	Maine Coastal Program/ME DMR
Allison	Lorenc	Conservation Law Foundation
Becky	Love	NOAA OCM
Tony	MacDonald	UCI
Kevin	Madley	NOAA NMFS
Ted	Maney	Salem State University NEMAC Mussel Farm
Michael	Marsh	USEPA
Daniel	Martin	NOAA contractor
Meghan	Massaua	
Mike	Matthews	Dc Dept. of Energy and Environment
Paul	Mayo	
Jen	McCann	URI
Christopher	McGuire	The Nature Conservancy
Meredith	Mendelson	Maine Dept. of Marine Resources
Roosevelt	Mesa	NOAA
Ivy	Mlsna	US EPA
Katie	Morgan	
Mary Anne	Morrison	Navy
John	Moskal	EPA Region 1
Jackie	Motyka	NERACOOS
Peter	Murdoch	USGS
Candace	Nachman	NOAA Fisheries
Nick	Napoli	Northeast Regional Ocean Council
David Moe	Nelson	NOAA/NOS/NCCOS Marine Spatial Ecology
Becca	Newhall	NOAA/OCM
Betsy	Nicholson	NOAA
Thomas	Nies	New England Fishery Mgmt Council
Lauren	Nutter	
Kevin	O'Brien	CT Dept of Energy & Environmental Protection
Larry	Oliver	US Army Corps of Engineers
Ken	Ortiz	NOAA Fisheries
Brittney	Parker	CSO/FEMA
Monica	Pepe	Whale and Dolphin Conservation
Elise	Rapoza	University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth
Jessica	Redfern	New England Aquarium
Jennie	Rheuban	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Evan	Ridley	Rhode Island Marine Trades Association
Meagan	Riley	NOAA
Jocelyn	Runnebaum	
John	Ryan-Henry	Coastal States Organization
Charles	Scaife	Department of Energy - Water Power Technologies Office
Kelsey	Shebey	
Sydney	Sheridan	Orsted
Laura	Singer	
Nick	Sisson	NOAA Fisheries/Integrated Statistics
Ian	Slayton	BOEM
Jeannot	Smith	Vineyard Wind
Susan	Staeble	ERT, Inc. ctr at NOAA Fisheries Policy Office
Kevin	Staples	NROC
Jessica	Stromberg	BOEM
Peter	Taylor	Waterview Consulting & Northeast Ocean Data Portal
Talya	ten Brink	NOAA (GARFO)
Paul	Ticco	NOAA/ONMS
Timothy	Timmermann	EPA
Amy	Trice	Ocean Conservancy
Prassede	Vella	MA CZM
Sharri	Venno	Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
Pooh	Vongkhamdy	USDA NRCS
Jeffrey	Waldner	boem
bettina	washington	Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)
Bradley	Watson	CSO
David	Weeden	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
Elizabeth	Weidner	Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping
Jennifer	Whytlaw	Old Dominion University
Marcia	Wilkins	Sierra Club Connecticut
Kate	Williams	Biodiversity Research Institute
Chris	Williams	New Hampshire Coastal Program

Northeast Regional Ocean Council

Ocean Planning Committee Webinars

First Webinar: Thursday, April 2, 2020, 10:00-12:00

Additional Webinar(s): Date(s) To Be Determined

The Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) Ocean Planning Committee (OPC) was originally scheduled to hold an in-person meeting on April 2, 2020. Due to recent events, the NROC OPC decided instead to hold a series of webinars starting on April 2 and seek to hold its next in-person meeting in the fall of 2020. The following agenda shows which topics will be addressed during the April 2 webinar and which topics will be on the agenda for future webinars.

Webinar Objectives

- Review NROC OPC activities since the last public meeting in June 2019.
- Obtain an update on federal progress implementing Executive Order 13840 and recent activities of the federal interagency Ocean Policy Council.
- Review the status of the various ocean planning considerations throughout the region, provide feedback on NROC member and stakeholder needs associated with each, and consider NROC's role in providing data and supporting best practices for decision-making.

Draft Agenda for Webinar 1: April 2, 2020, 10:00-12:00

10:00 Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review, Co-Chair Update

Mel Coté, NROC Ocean Planning Committee Federal Co-Chair, Chief, Surface Water Protection Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1

Ted Diers, NROC Ocean Planning Committee State Co-Chair, Administrator of the Watershed Bureau of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

10:15 Review of NROC's Ocean Planning Activities Since June 2019 Meeting

Co-chairs and staff will provide a brief summary of ocean planning activities since the last meeting in June 2019.

*Speakers: Ted Diers and Mel Coté
Nick Napoli, Ocean Planning Director, NROC
Emily Shumchenia, NROC*

10:25 Update on Federal Interagency Ocean Policy Committee Activities Since June 2019 Meeting

A presentation on the activities of the federal interagency Ocean Policy Committee will be followed by input and questions from meeting participants.

Speaker: Deerin Babb-Brott, Principal Assistant Director for Oceans and Environment, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

10:45 Update on the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan Revision

A brief update on the Sanctuary's Management Plan Revision process.

Speaker: Ben Haskell, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

10:50 Offshore Wind in the Northeast

The June 2019 NROC OPC meeting focused on offshore wind and resulted in the identification of several issues that informed NROC's work plan. Each of the following presenters will provide a brief update and reflect on issues relevant to NROC such as the use of data and best practices, data and information needs, and specific aspects of the process where NROC may be able to provide information and support. This will be followed by questions from meeting participants and discussion.

- Federal Offshore Wind Energy Program Update for the Northeast
Speaker: Jim Bennett, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
- Port Access Route Studies (PARS), including the PARS for the Areas Offshore of Massachusetts and Rhode Island
Speaker: Michele DesAutels, U.S. Coast Guard
- Power Grid and Transmission Planning
Speaker: Fara Courtney, Outer Harbor Consulting and Facilitator for the Grid and Transmission Working Group of the Business Network for Offshore Wind

12:00pm Adjourn

Topics for additional webinar(s): Date(s) to be determined

I. Offshore Wind Research and Monitoring in the Northeast

In the last year, there have been efforts to establish regional entities focused on coordinating wildlife and habitat science, research, and monitoring related to offshore wind development. The following speakers will provide a brief update on each organization and consider intersections with NROC's work plan and projects, including the Northeast Ocean Data Portal. This will be followed by questions from meeting participants and discussion.

- Proposed Regional Wildlife Science Entity for Offshore Wind
Speaker: TBD
- Responsible Offshore Science Alliance
Speaker: Lyndie Hice-Dunton, Responsible Offshore Science Alliance

II. State Ocean Planning

Speakers from Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Maine will provide updates on their individual state ocean planning processes and comment on coordination with NROC's ocean planning work plan and projects. This will be followed by questions from meeting participants and discussion.

- Connecticut Blue Plan
Speaker: David Blatt, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
- Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan
Speaker: Lisa Engler, MA Office of Coastal Zone Management
- Rhode Island Ocean and Bay Special Area Management Plans
Speaker: Grover Fugate, RI Coastal Resources Management Council
- Maine Offshore Wind Initiative
Speaker: TBD

III. Other Ocean Planning Considerations

Speakers will provide an update on several other ocean planning considerations in the region including offshore aquaculture, fisheries management, the National Marine Sanctuary, and cable projects. This will include speaker perspectives on existing or potential coordination with NROC and it will be followed by questions from meeting participants and discussion.

- Update on Offshore Aquaculture and Discussion of Potential Co-Location with Offshore Wind
Speaker: Kevin Madley, NOAA Fisheries
- The Northeast Ocean Data Portal as a Tool to Support New England Fishery Management and the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment
Speakers: Michelle Bachman and Tom Nies, New England Fishery Management Council
- Findings of the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Condition Report and an Update on the Sanctuary's Management Plan Revision
Speaker: Ben Haskell, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary
- Update on Telecommunications and Other Cable Projects
Speaker: TBD