

Offshore Wind Energy: Determining Sea Grants Role
Northeast Sea Grant Regional Conference
April 24, 2020, 2:00- 3:00pm
Summary notes

This webinar was part of the virtual webinar series for the Northeast Sea Grant Regional Virtual meeting.

The **purpose** of this webinar was to initiate an informal discussion to understand Sea Grant's existing role with offshore renewable energy (ORE) and begin to identify information/technical needs and topics of interest as we explore a potential role for Sea Grant.

Welcome and Overview:

Jennifer McCann (RI Sea Grant) began the meeting by providing a brief overview of the state of ORE in the United States. Major points included:

- This growth of ORE is now accelerating all along the East Coast and moving to the West Coast and beyond.
- Currently there are 16 federal lease blocks and the U.S. federal government is leasing about 1.7 million acres of the ocean bottom specifically for the development and siting of offshore renewable energy (ORE) facilities and projects. It is proposed that these lease blocks will be developed by 2030.
- The demand for an accelerated ORE industry is coming from the states, to respond to their clean energy goals (totaling 30MW demand for ORE) and also to promote economic development
- Extensive infrastructure and workforce development, both on land and at sea, will be required to support ORE.
- There is a need to coordinate both regionally and nationally on this growth to contribute to minimizing its impact on existing human activities and wildlife.
- Issues that Sea Grant could respond to: 1) Researchers, industry and states need a vehicle for collaborative problem solving; 2) Stakeholders need knowledge and skills to actively take part in ORE decisions; 3) Misinformation is hindering ORE development; and 4) There is a growing demand for an ORE workforce.
- Actions that we should take: 1) Ensure Sea Grant programs have the continued capacity to assist their stakeholders in understanding and responding to offshore renewable energy issues (e.g. understanding potential impact, policy, management strategies, multi-use techniques); 2) Coordinate, and assist in the prioritization, development and diffusion of educational/research information and activities amongst government and local efforts to minimize redundancy and more effectively respond to stakeholder needs; and 3) Implement multi-use strategies to support the intentional joint use of ocean space and resources.

State-by State Overview

Jeffery Brodeur (Woods Hole Sea Grant) facilitated a state-by state overview provided each Sea Grant Directors describing: 1) ORE activity in their state; 2) SG Program involvement; and 3) Needs and/or topics they would like to further understand/discuss. The following is a summary of this report out.

New York (Becky Shuford, Director, NY Sea Grant)

State

- Solid investment by Universities, developers, and industry –9,000MW investment
- Aggressive legislative agenda for clean energy and jobs.
- 3 proposed wind farms –South Fork, Sunrise Wind, Empire
- National Offshore Wind Research R&D Consortium (DOE/State support)
- NY positioning to be the leader and major player in the ORE supply chain. Proposed investment in port infrastructure, wind training institute and other training institutes, development of offshore transmission grids.
- Coalitions to support the growth of ORE

SG involvement

- Limited capacity and resources, fact finding initiatives

Topics/Needs

- Strategize with Sea Grant colleagues to determine best role for NY Sea Grant
- What actions are other SG programs taking to respond to their stakeholder needs.
- What are these stakeholder needs?

Connecticut (Sylvain De Guise, Director, CT Sea Grant)

State

- 2019 State RFP to commit to promoting clean energy, some coming from offshore renewable energy.
- Commission was established to inform RFP with the purpose of being proactive, strategic and ensure appropriate growth of ORE.
- Major focus on understanding appropriate mitigating measures, understanding environmental impacts during all phases of development.
- There is a significant concern about the effects of this new industry on fisheries. Fishermen are pushing back specifically concerning navigation and loss of fishing grounds. Fishermen are not clear on priorities and what their preferences should be for the future. Haven't had a chance to talk about those things.
- The State Commission meets quarterly with Vineyard Wind.
- Many issues are regional in nature - landing cables, determining cable corridors, EIS coordination. How can we coordinate better?
- There is investment by state and Vineyard Wind in bolstering port infrastructure in both Bridgeport and New London, however it is not coordinated.
- Vineyard Wind is funding University of Connecticut to partner in marine research.

CT Sea Grant

- Should SG engage in this UConn/Vineyard Wind partnership?
- What should CT Sea Grant's role be with research, extension or education on this topic?

Topics/Needs

- Would like to know more about how we address decision points?
- Do we work together make decisions as one region?

Rhode Island (Dennis Nixon, Director, RI Sea Grant)

State

- Ocean SAMP (2007 – 2011) led to the Block Island Wind Farm (active in 2016), providing clean energy to 17,000 households
- Revolution Wind will provide 400 MW
- Governor's executive mandate 100% renewable energy by 2030 (most aggressive in the nation) Some of that will be from ORE
- Orsted Innovation Hub and commitment to bolstering the ORE supply chain

RI Sea Grant

- RISG played a leadership role in the development of the Ocean SAMP (2007 – 2011)
- Involvement in Northeast Regional Ocean Plan
- Bringing the best available science to resource users, researchers, and regulators
- Capacity building for practitioners (international reach) for MSP
- Serving as a clearinghouse of objective information (e.g. Baird – lessons learned from Europe)
- We would like to continue this role as a Sea Grant national coordinator for ORE (support from DOE and NOAA/NFSC are supportive).

Needs/Topics of interest

- The need to work regionally and nationally on this topic: We have submitted proposals in response to the Workshop and Liaison RFP (with lots of support from many of you) to enable this to happen.
- Understanding the cumulative effects of ORE – we understand the effects from the BIWF, but what about when there are hundreds
- Multi use solutions: Are there technologies or policies that can be put in place to encourage/minimize multi use conflicts (e.g. mussel growing on turbines, fishing gear technologies to allow fishing to take place)

Massachusetts (Matt Charette, Director, Woods Hole Sea Grant and Michael Triantafyllou, Director, MIT Sea Grant)

State

- There are clearly potential impacts (e.g. from cables coming ashore, and impacts on fishing community) and benefits (e.g. less dependency on fossil fuels) connected to the growth of this new industry.
- More than 150 WHOI scientists and policy experts are providing expertise in the development of industry EIS's, AUV's and policy creation related to ORE.
- There exist many collaborations and continued collaborative opportunities to pool industry money to continue this significant involvement.

Woods Hole Sea Grant

- Would like to be involved from the research and workforce development perspective.
- Would like to engage with the existing researchers and also workforce development partners – Mass Maritime and Cape Cod Community College - to bolster these activities.
- Would like to assist the state and the fisheries issues. For example, there is no GPS data on lobster boats. WHOI could possibly play a role.

MIT Sea Grant

- Currently not directly involved but looking forward to opportunities to engage. MIT has been involved from an engineering perspective.

Topics/Need

- Would like to explore how they can best play a role in the research and workforce development angle.

New Hampshire (Erik Chapman, Director, NH Sea Grant)

State

- January 2019 – Governor requested a BOEM task force for New Hampshire. This evolved into the BOEM Gulf of Maine task force.
- New Hampshire has been at the center politically and geographically.
- Fishing community does not want to engage as they consider ORE is bad.

NH Sea Grant

- Held a seminar to educate stakeholders, including state decision makers, about ORE and also prepare them to engage in the process. Lessons learned
- Grover Fugate (Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council) worked with their staff and encouraged the need to be creative and invest resources so the state can capture value for the state.
- Erik is a member of the state habitat working group which informs the BOEM Task Force.
- Working with other state representatives and industry to make connections with university expertise.
- In Webinar chat, Erik mentioned that NH Sea Grant has funded social science research exploring attitudes about offshore wind among recreational users of the NH Seacoast, and how it might impact the tourist industry. The results supported a general comfort level with offshore wind development and limited reported opposition to offshore wind. the PI's intend to build off this work.

Needs/Topics:

How do we take a regional approach to build our capacity to respond to the following topics?

- Research and technical solutions that minimizes user conflict
- Enhancing risk literacy for our Stakeholders
- Workforce development.
- Integrate this into sustainable and resilient coastal economies
- Facilitate current use mapping
- Stakeholder engagement

Maine (Gayle Zydlewski, Director, ME Sea Grant)

State

- In 2019 Governor announced a goal 5,000MW of ORE by 2030
- Maine is part of the Gulf of Maine BOEM Task Force.
- Governor established a Fisheries Offshore Advisory Group.
- At the Maine Fisheries Forum fishermen (<https://mainefishermensforum.org/wind-seminar-informational-links/>) stated they wanted to build their understanding and ability to engage. During this event fisheries experts shared their expertise with both the process and the technology (e.g. floating turbines).

Maine Sea Grant

- Maine Sea Grant and the University of Maine have been involved with ORE since 2008. Major undertakings have included engineering programs for a test site, turbine deployment and stakeholder engagement around this test site. This experience is extremely relevant moving forward and should be shared with other programs.

Needs/Topic

- Maine Sea Grant has developed strong and trusted relationships with its coastal stakeholders. Maine would like to identify the needs and concerns of the stakeholders and then respond through funding research and extension.
- Would be interested in funding regional research
- We should work regionally to identify pinch point decisions and strategically engage

Delaware (Ed Lewandowski, Coastal Communities Development, DE Sea Grant, and Bonnie Ram, Associate Director of the [Center for Research in Wind](#), University of Delaware)

State

- 2 wind farms are being proposed off Delaware coast. The first one is expected to be active in 2023.
- State will receive \$18 million for park improvement from the developer to compensate for using the park as its interconnection area.
- There is a concern about the effects on coastal tourism, which is a significant economic sector.
- The Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is with Maryland. In addition, Ørsted will be investing about \$250 million for workforce, infrastructure and business development. The plan is for Maryland to be an ORE hub.

- Many of these decisions are being made in closed sessions with little organized stakeholder engagement.

Sea Grant

- DE Sea Grant organized a public workshop to help stakeholders understand the issues a few years ago. It is possible this workshop was done too early.
- Staff are keeping up to speed on the projects and meeting with developer and local representatives and other stakeholders to make sure they are aware of activity and asking the right questions.
- They are also organizing stakeholder events to share the risk literacy.
- Organized stakeholder knowledge exchanges.

Needs/Topics

- Need for a more robust local stakeholder engagement strategy
- Demand for more topical risk literacy.
- How do we best coordinate with the researchers and coastal resilience issues in siting ORE, specifically cable and how to reduce user conflict.

Next Steps

This initial discussion highlights both the need and the desire for Sea Grant programs to work both regionally and nationally to share expertise and experience. There is recognition that offshore renewable energy activity, including but not limited to infrastructure growth, workforce development, monitoring, research, and technology needs and gaps, multiuse strategies, and stakeholder engagement, are areas where Sea Grant could make a difference to ensure the appropriate growth of this industry. All recognized that although the growth of this new industry will likely impact their existing stakeholders and work, current limited staff capacity and resources will constrain their ability to appropriately take on this topic. Working together to strategically identify defined specific roles and decision points will allow for Sea Grant to have a greater impact given these constraints.

There was a commitment to continue this conversation to identify an appropriate role. One idea was to identify 3–4 topic areas where SG participants could more freely discuss priority topics. Another idea was that the organizers post a short survey form to the participants along with the summary notes to gain a broader understanding of topics future webinars/discussions.

Kola Garber of the National Sea Grant (NSG) Office informed the group that Elizabeth Rohring (NSG) and she were meeting with US Department of Energy (DOE) to discuss possible coordination opportunities on this topic. This would build upon Sea Grants existing relationship as DOE has hosted about 14 Knauss Fellows over the years.

It was noted that with letters of support from nine Sea Grant Programs, RI Sea Grant is responding to the SG Workshop/training RFP in hopes of organizing a workshop in the summer/fall to continue this topic. In addition, RI Sea Grant and Woods Hole Sea Grant are co-leading an effort to respond to the SG Liaison RFP with the goal of securing a Sea Grant ORE Liaison, partnering with US Department of Energy and NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center.

Please attend the other NE Sea Grant Webinar – <https://seagrants.who.edu/ne-sea-grant-regional-meeting/>

Attachments:

- 1) Powerpoint