

Environmental Monitoring Advisory Committee (EMAC)

Progress Report #9 –28 March 2012 Meeting

NOTE: EMAC Progress Reports provide an update on the activities of EMAC but do not include a record of internal discussions at EMAC meetings which are confidential to the Committee and FORCE. The Terms of Reference and a list of EMAC Members are available on the FORCE Website at: www.fundyforce.ca .

The 9th Meeting of EMAC was held on Thursday March 8th 2012 at the Minas Basin Development Center in Hantsport, NS. The following participated:

Attendees: Gordon Beanlands, Chair
Don Aldous
Michael Brylinsky
Allyn Clarke
Graham Daborn
Donald Gordon
Andrew Hebda
Robert Miller
Mark Taylor
Michael Stokesbury

Joe Kozak , FORCE (Secretariat)
Nalani Perry , FORCE (Secretariat)
Jeremy Broome, Acadia University
Wayne Linkletter, Weir Fisher
Darren Porter, Weir Fisher

Meeting Summary/Highlights:

Gordon Beanlands welcomed the Committee members and noted that it was the first meeting under the new Terms of Reference, with one chair rather than two co-chairs. He introduced Don Aldous as a new member of EMAC and also noted that Jeremy Broome would provide an update on studies underway at Acadia University and that Darren Porter and Wayne Linkletter, weir fishers, would discuss their knowledge of the fisheries resources in the Bay of Fundy.

Graham Daborn provided an update on the DFO-sponsored workshop on marine renewable energy (MRE) held in Montreal in late January, which focused on information gaps and research priorities to assist DFO in the environmental assessments of future MRE projects.

On behalf of FORCE, Joe Kozak presented an update on activities relative to the Demonstration Project, noting that Alstom has delayed deploying their turbine until 2013 to allow time for additional field testing. The FORCE substation is completed and the transmission line to the Parrsboro substation is under construction and will be completed spring 2012.

Gordon Beanlands gave a brief overview of the meeting held with weir fishers in Five Islands on February 16th and introduced Darren Porter and Wayne Linkletter , who provided their perspectives and concerns related to the potential impacts of tidal energy development on various species of migrating fish in the area. It was obvious that the fishers are very knowledgeable about the fisheries in the inner Bay of Fundy and the Committee expressed an interest in seeking ways to incorporate that knowledge into the design of an environmental monitoring program.

Jeremy Broome of Acadia University, with input from Mike Stokesbury, provided status reports on the EEM studies at the FORCE site and Minas Passage, including tagging and tracking studies on fish and lobsters, a passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) study for mammals, and a benthic characterization study for the area. Joe Kozak discussed the EEM studies for 2012, and indicated that FORCE has committed to continuing the observation surveys for seabirds and marine mammals, the lobster and fish tagging studies, and the PAM surveys in 2012. The Committee was asked to provide feedback on the draft report on the effects of electromagnetic fields (EMF). Graham Daborn also updated the committee on the workshop on Environmental Monitoring Tools and Systems held in Halifax in January, 2012.

Gordon Beanlands led the discussion on the need to collect more baseline data and an analysis of key monitoring gaps, in particular the ability to monitor fish avoidance around turbines. Following the discussion it was recommended that an EMAC subcommittee be formed, including representatives from the weir fishery, to investigate opportunities to utilize weir catch data to assist in defining fish movements in the Minas Channel. The Committee agreed that monitoring fish avoidance was a key gap for EEM and the members were asked to provide feedback on this and other potential research topics for discussion at the next EMAC meeting. The possibility of holding a workshop involving selected experts involved in fish avoidance behaviour was suggested and will be discussed further at the fall EMAC meeting.

Next Meeting

The next EMAC meeting is scheduled for Friday September 28, 2012 in Hantsport.