

Environmental Monitoring Advisory Committee (EMAC)

Progress Report #17

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 EMAC Members list are available on the FORCE Website at: www.fundyforce.ca.

The 17th Meeting of EMAC was held on Monday September 14th, 2015 at the Scotia Investments Building, 3 Bedford Hills Road, Bedford, NS.

Attendees: Gordon Beanlands, Chair
Don Aldous
Allyn Clarke
Allanah Hunt
Timothy Milligan

Observers

Anne-Marie Belliveau , FORCE
Jessie Ross, FORCE
Angie Gillis, MCG
Anna Redden, Acadia
Joe Kozak, FORCE contractor*
Kris MacLellan, Minas Energy
Craig Chandler, Black Rock Tidal Power
Nick Fyffe, Emera*
Alan Howell, NS Energy
Bridget Tutty, NS Environment

*via phone

Meeting Summary/Highlights:

- Gordon Beanlands, EMAC Chair, welcomed the Committee members and observers to the 17th EMAC meeting. Today's meeting's key objective was to discuss FORCE's EEMP monitoring priorities for the remainder of 2015 and beyond. The Chair also asked the members to reflect on what has been accomplished to date and what is EMAC's future direction.
- Administrative and Action Items from the 15th and 16th EMAC meetings were reviewed and discussed by the Committee. The main Action Items and decisions were as follows:

- New EMAC members: New members are required. This was deferred until the present committee membership renewals are reviewed, as a member's term is 2 years. After this renewal process is completed, the potential new members will be contacted.
 - Formation of a Lobster subcommittee: Anne-Marie Belliveau and Alannah Hunt were asked to prepare a proposal for discussion at the next meeting.
 - Revised EMAC Terms of Reference (TOR): The draft revisions were reviewed and the members were asked to provide suggested edits within one month. The revised TOR requires approval by NS Environment and DFO.
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- FORCE staff provided an update on FORCE project, which covered the following items: electrical upgrades of the substation to 30 MW; the status of the small and large FAST Project platforms which are presently being tested; anchoring and station keeping trials at the FORCE site; and upcoming engagement activities by the Province and Cape Sharp Tidal Venture (CSTV).
 - The Chair led the discussion on an EMAC retrospective. There was an active discussion by members and generally, the issues were related to the ability to monitor fish and mammal interaction with operating turbines and the management of environmental data. It was also noted that it may be difficult to measure changes in environmental parameters in the Minas Passage because of the large natural variability and relatively small number of turbines that will be deployed at FORCE. The use of modeling to predict potential effects as tidal projects are scaled up in the future was discussed; and, it was suggested that this may be useful, but we must be aware of the limitations of this approach.
 - The EEMP monitoring priorities for 2015 and beyond were discussed in detail using the information from the Final SLR EEMP Design report (which had been circulated to members in June) and previous FORCE EEMP studies. The Committee initially suggested the following priorities: high – fish and mammal interaction with operating turbines, lobster catchability studies, and acoustic monitoring (ambient background marine noise); medium – seabirds monitoring; and, low – benthics, with a focus on scouring effects. An overarching concern identified was the need for a comprehensive data management system for the FORCE project due to high volumes of data that will be generated by the EEMP studies. Draft EMAC Recommendations on the SLR EEMP Design report will be prepared and circulated to the members for their review, prior to formal submission to FORCE.
 - Nick Fyffe of Emera responded to members' questions on the proposed CSTV EEMP. The CSTV document is presently being reviewed by the regulators. Committee members had a number of questions regarding the technical monitoring aspects of the program, but were also interested in the availability and reporting of the environmental data for review by EMAC and others.