Change, Space, and Place: Renewable Ocean Energy's Social Challenges and Opportunities

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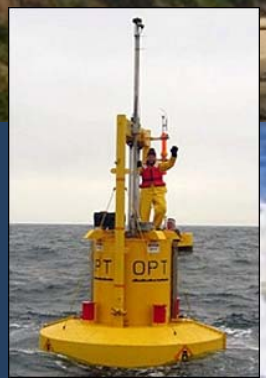
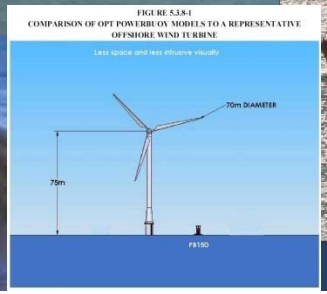
Change, Space, and Place





Working out the technical kinks is critical.

Having the best available data and management practices about the environmental dimension is vital.

Permitting processes rarely fail on technical or science grounds. *Rather, because of a failure to pay attention to the human dimension*.

Decision makers need an understanding of how people experience and relate to the ocean.

The emerging marine renewable energy industry has the opportunity to be developed in a socially responsible manner.

- ✓ **What does "developed in a socially responsible" manner mean?**
- ✓ **What are the steps it should take to assure this?**
- ✓ **Who needs to be involved to assure this?**

HDWE studied…

- Public's knowledge and values and their opinions re: wave energy.
- Link between knowledge/understanding and acceptance or lack of support re: wave energy.
- Wave energy information sources.
- Wave energy and community well being.

Six research projects in four thematic areas:

1. Socioeconomic and Sociopolitical Influences on Permitting and Planning
2. Comparison of Wave Energy to other forms of Electricity Generation
3. BMP for Permitting and Management
4. Perceptions of and Effects on Communities of Place and Interest

Lessons Learned re:

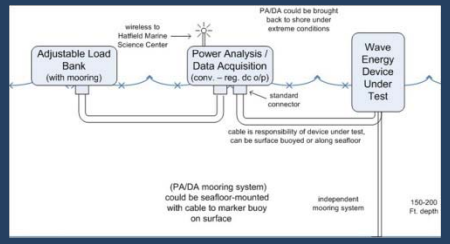
- **Governance**
- **Socioeconomic and Sociopolitical Influences**
- **Putting Perceptions and Perspectives to Work**

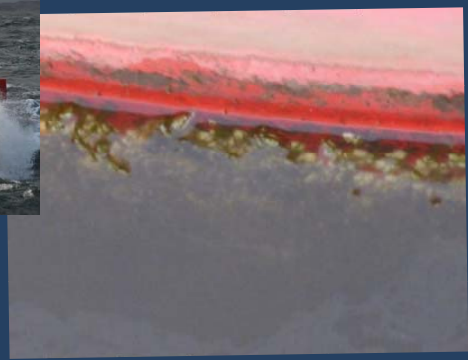
Governance

- Sound planning is critical.

- Invest in research.

- Testing projects was the greatest area of support and agreement among stakeholders and policy actors.





- Share results with the public.

Socioeconomic and Sociopolitical Influences: Public Perceptions

- Regional differences in attitudes and familiarity with wave energy exists; coastal residents hold more defined and intense opinions.

- Positive attitudes, yet not enough info to form an opinion.

Socioeconomic and Sociopolitical Influences
Communities of Place

- Perceptions on MRE not based on demographic group or place. All expressed a concern for community well-being.

- On the coast, threats/opportunities were shaped as much by imaginations as by empirical evidence.

- Misconceptions fueled by mutual distrust. Until MRE is experienced “on the ocean” it remains to be seen how community well-being will be impacted.

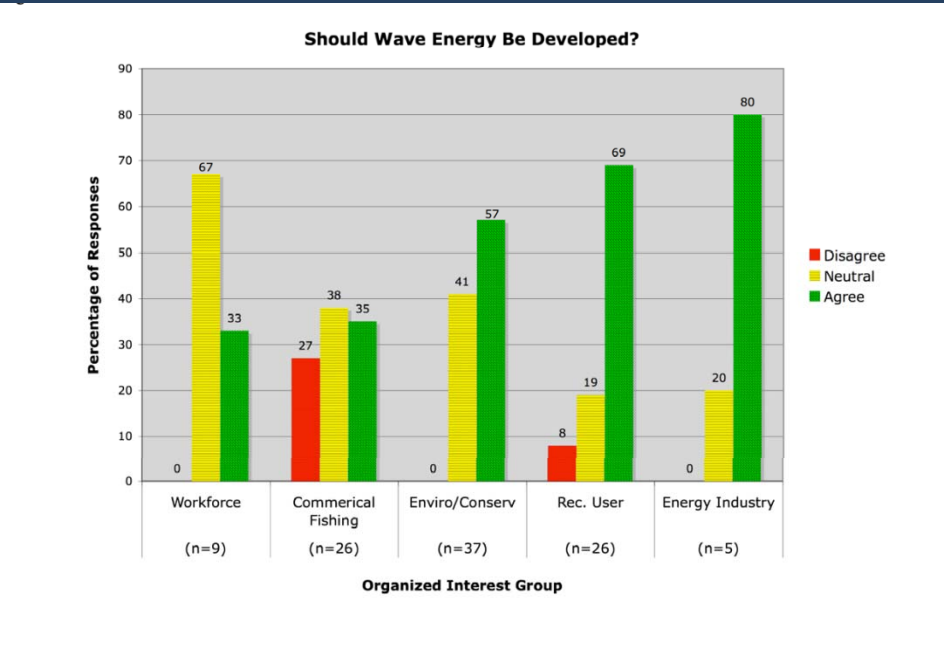
Socioeconomic and Sociopolitical Influences
Communities of Interest

- Ally networks exist within government; and b/t conservation and technical experts, and local government and ocean users. Opponent networks exist b/t ocean users and the energy industry, technical experts, federal and state government.

- Primary source of information were the energy industry, utilities, and technical experts. Most trusted source of information were technical experts, energy industry, and local government. Least trusted source of information were energy industry, technical experts, and the media.

Coastal communities of place and of interest are:

- Interested
- willing to accept some change, but
- they feel the Oregon coast is worth slowing the wave energy process down so that they can work with others to reach a desired, mutually-beneficial future.



Lessons learned that are directly applicable to developers/agencies

- Public meetings are important BUT few utilized them to gain new info or learn about wave energy.
- Focus outreach efforts on *local* newspapers/media.
- Avoid pre-determined locations and/or commercial scale projects before demonstration.
- Use local and state government as political mediators.

- Design the outreach and engagement process.

- Engage early and often.
- Expect challenges and successes; learn from both.

- Find answers to questions; build partnerships within the community to cooperate in the research process.