

**Will Hopkins**  
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## **ALL SITING IS LOCAL**

To Lib Butler and Sean O'Neill for inviting me to present --- thank you.

After the engineering innovations, after the early stage financing, after the tank tests and scaling up, after the harmonized permitting processes are in place, the rise or fall of ocean energy projects depend on obtaining access to appropriate sites: those places in someone else's backyard or viewshed or fishing grounds or habitat or migratory path that possess that elusive combination of characteristics essential to generating economically viable renewable energy. And to get that access to those sites you need the participation of the stakeholders; the relevant and affected parties in the community.

In 2006 a research team from the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) selected the Western Passage in Eastport, Maine as the prime site for tidal power generation in Maine. While we at the Resource Center did expect that the selection would result in project proposals, we were surprised by the speed with which three entities submitted preliminary FERC applications.

We understood that the benefits of developing non-fossil fuel technologies right in our backyards might be significant; but so might be the impacts on the Cobscook ecosystem and the people whose livelihoods depend on it. Given the mission and experience of the Resource Center, it was nearly impossible to avoid involvement with tidal power issues. We have worked with fishermen since 1998 to protect the last good scallop beds in Maine and in the ongoing battles over siting LNG terminals we have witnessed what can happen in the absence of an even-handed and trusted approach to civil discourse.

So we decided to act as a clearinghouse on tidal power issues; convening and facilitating discussions, and communicating the information that Cobscook residents might use to make up their own minds as to whether each of these enterprises is a viable project, or just another grand scheme.

There are now several Cobscook area proposals, including those from Ocean Renewable Power Company, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and a group called Tidewalker Associates who are proposing to build a 1200' dam across Half Moon Cove.

We hosted three conferences over a two-year period focused on renewable energy, inviting representatives of tidal projects to share their plans and updates with the public.

We facilitated a number of meetings between ORPC and the Cobscook Bay Fishermen's Association. ORPC and the Association considered three different sites for the one-third scale test deployment before they found the right one. After conversations with area residents, ORPC increased the depth at which they will moor their turbines to better accommodate boat and ship traffic. And when ORPC redesigned their turbine blades they received estimates from firms outside of the area of up to two months to build the blades at considerable expense. Working with a Cobscook crew the new blades were built in 16 days with local fabrication skills and materials.

Initially ORPC and the Passamaquoddy Tribe held opposing intervenor status for competing projects. We facilitated contact between ORPC and Tribal leaders, which led to withdrawal of opposing intervenor status and to mutual support for each other's preliminary permit applications to the FERC.

To date ORPC's involvement with the community has been effective. What did they do right?

- They articulated their broad goal of developing this technology...and then asked local people for their help.
- They developed an MOU with the local city government.
- They kept the community informed of their plans and progress.
- They listened to local knowledge...and then, they actually acted on what they'd learned.
- They hired local talent.
- They invested significantly in the local community.
- So far they've worked at the right scale; they haven't overpromised.
- They've undertaken an incremental scaling up of tests and growth.
- They've built relationships and established credibility.
- They've identified themselves as a partner in community development.

The day may come with full-scale commercial development when there is real conflict between fishermen and tidal power developers. If that time does come, those developers who have invested time and energy in building relationships instead of just rushing in to build projects may be the ones who end up getting gear in the water.

Thank you.

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