Environmental Studies Program: Studies Development Plan FY 2017-2019

Study Area(s): Atlantic

Administered By: Office of Renewable Energy Programs

Title: Archaeological Scientific and Technical Services in Support of Renewable Energy Development on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf

BOEM Information Need(s) to be Addressed: BOEM is considering issuing leases and grants and approving plans for renewable energy development throughout planning areas, Wind Energy Areas (WEAs) and associated Rights-of-Way (ROWs) on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). BOEM needs baseline data for these areas regarding archaeological resources in order to make sound decisions about how to minimize impacts; to inform its responsibilities under Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act; and to inform post-construction comparisons. Additionally, previously identified geophysical targets (e.g. side scan sonar contacts and magnetic anomalies) in these areas may prove to be archaeological resources that should be avoided, or they may prove *not* to be resources and therefore should not prevent development. Archaeological ground-truthing of these targets is necessary for informed, responsible decision-making and to consider the effects of our undertakings subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Approx. Cost: (in thousands) $1,000 **Period of Performance:** FY 2015-2019

Description:

Background: BOEM is seeking to marry its need to gather baseline data with efforts to leverage partnerships with other Federal agencies and state partners. Doing so creates efficiencies and reduces expenditures for our agency and others; builds relationships that will extend these efficiencies and cost reductions into the future; and provides needed data to inform sound decision-making in the present. Based on previous and successful collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Monitor National Marine Sanctuary (NOAA, MNMS), BOEM has elected to continue this relationship through an Interagency Agreement (M15PG00003) for archaeological scientific and technical services in support of renewable energy development on the Atlantic OCS. NOAA MNMS will provide scientific and technical specialists and services, share resources, and assist BOEM with conducting and analyzing the resulting data. BOEM also will contribute scientific and technical specialists and share resources for the benefit of these investigations.

Objectives: The goal of this agreement is to collaboratively obtain limited baseline archaeological data near and within WEAs, wind planning areas, and associated ROWs in order to inform decision-making. Each year the agencies will finalize a research design detailing the objectives and methods for each survey effort. The yearly objectives will be based on information needs related to BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy

Program's priority NEPA analyses and Section 106 reviews. The agencies will then work together to perform the surveys and field investigations, analyze results, and prepare a jointly-authored technical report.

Methods: The survey and investigations may involve gathering baseline geophysical survey data (e.g. side scan sonar, magnetometer, mutibeam echosounder) within and near wind planning areas, WEAs, or ROWs; the collection of geophysical survey data on selected targets of archaeological interest located within these areas; performing diver investigation of targets; gathering photography and videography; or employing other methods as determined appropriate by the team via the annual research design.

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