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Feeling those important marine minerals between your toes



Renee Orr, Chief of the BOEM Office of Strategic Resources

When you reach the beach this summer, consider that there is more to the sand under your feet than meets the eye. One component of BOEM's offshore responsibility includes the management of sand resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). In 1994, Congress enacted Public Law 103-426 and the Bureau began a process allowing localities, states and Federal agencies to use OCS sand resources. The use of this material is noncompetitive and applies to certain nationally beneficial purposes including beach nourishment and coastal restoration projects.

To date, BOEM has conveyed rights to about 58 million cubic yards of OCS sand for 31 coastal restoration projects in 5 states - the equivalent of 42 Empire State Buildings full of sand. These projects have resulted in the restoration of 180 miles of the nation's coastline, comparable to the coastline of South Carolina, protecting billions of dollars of infrastructure as well as important ecological habitat.

Examples of the BOEM [Marine Minerals Program](#) work are projects completed at Assateague Island, MD and Wallops Island, VA. Measures taken by the Marine Minerals Program prevented the breaching of Assateague Island, in 2003, by rapidly providing the use of OCS sand from an offshore borrow area.



Assateague Island BOEM beach nourishment was completed in 2003

A more recent example of BOEM collaboration was an agreement reached between BOEM and NASA in 2011 to provide 3.2 million cubic yards of OCS sand for a beach nourishment project. The project aimed at protecting Wallops Island Facility, with assets valued at over \$1 billion, where there is an increasing risk from extensive shoreline retreat.

In Louisiana, where it has been documented that coastal erosion rates are the fastest in the nation, BOEM is working with the State to provide over 20 million

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cubic yards of OCS sediment resources to construct six barrier island restoration projects within the next two years. This will restore over 30 miles of barrier island shoreline and backbarrier wetland habitat and protect the nationally important interior wetlands and estuaries of the Mississippi River delta plain.



Sandridge Beach, VA beach nourishment took place in 1998, 2002 and 2007

Federal OCS marine mineral resources must be managed wisely to ensure that environmental damage to the marine and coastal environments is minimized, mitigated, or does not occur. Historically the Marine Minerals Program uses two types of research including Environmental Studies and Marine Mineral Resource Evaluations. The Bureau uses this research to identify suitable OCS sand deposits and provide needed environmental information to make decisions regarding the use of Federal sand.

Every study conducted by the Marine Minerals Program can be found on the BOEM website [here](#).

As the demand for OCS sand increases, sand management issues have become more complex. In 2004, BOEM identified the need to form Sand Management Working Groups that would be used to create a communication network between BOEM, localities, States, other Federal agencies, educators, specialists, regulators, policy makers and end-users. Currently the Program manages three groups, one in the Gulf of Mexico, one in Florida and one on the Atlantic Coast.

Today, the BOEM Marine Minerals Program is involved in more marine mineral leases than ever before and is seeing an increase in the requests for OCS sand. If you are interested in the Program, the research, the meetings or offshore sand resources we invite you to visit our website at [this link](#) for more information. Enjoy the summer ahead knowing that this small but important program at BOEM is dedicated to restoring our nation's coastlines and mitigating sea level rise.

- Renee Orr

Renee Orr has more than 23 years of experience with the Department of the Interior. Ms. Orr has overseen the staff implementation teams that have been at the core of the Bureau's reorganization effort, and previously served as Chief of Leasing, where she was responsible for the development and completion of several 5-Year Oil and Gas Leasing Programs.

Did you know...

..that **coastal and marine national parklands contributed an estimated \$3.5 billion to local economies in 2010**? [For more information](#), see the entire National Park Service report, which includes information on visitor spending by park and by state, online.

Ocean Research

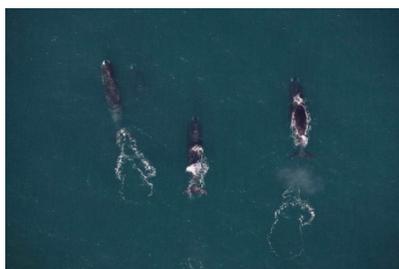
Updates on BOEM national and international activities

Funding Opportunity for Arctic Studies

BOEM is collaborating with the National Science Foundation and other federal and international organizations in a joint solicitation to support integrated Arctic research. Proposals will be received by NSF, which is coordinating the application process, until



September 14, 2012. Pending availability of funds, up to \$12 million USD will be available for proposals responding to this solicitation. NSF anticipates making five to 15 awards as standard or continuing grants. The actual number of awards to be made and average award size and duration are subject to the availability of funds. Meritorious proposals may be funded by one or more agencies at the option of the agencies, not the proposer. For BOEM support, the proposals should be relevant to BOEM's mission. The U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, two other Interior Department bureaus, are also supporting this Arctic initiative. [Find information and the solicitation.](#)



Bowhead whales

A Year in the Life of the Bowhead Whale and other new study awards for Alaska

Continuing its 19-year relationship with the University of Alaska Fairbank's Coastal Marine Institute (UAF/ CMI), BOEM recently signed three cooperative agreements with the institute to advance the shared goals of disseminating

environmental information relevant to oil and gas, renewable energy and marine ecosystem needs. One project will develop an animated film titled, "A Year in the Life of the Bowhead Whale," which is expected to be completed in about two years and will focus on improving public understanding of the arctic marine ecosystem, with emphasis on the bowhead whale and its zooplankton prey. When complete, residents and visitors to Fairbanks will be able to view the film at the Museum of the North, <http://www.uaf.edu/museum>, located at UAF.

The second new study, "Evaluating Chukchi Sea Trace Metals and Hydrocarbons Sourced by Nearby Coastal Rivers," is designed to yield an inventory of trace metals and organic pollutants that emanate from the Yukon, Kobuk and Noatak Rivers in Alaska and flow northward through the Bering Strait into the Chukchi Sea. Data from this analysis will be combined with other data from BOEM's Chukchi studies, notably the multi-year COMIDA studies, to increase understanding of the source of pollutants in the Chukchi. Alaskan tribal leaders will provide logistics support while local students will learn how to collect samples. By collecting and analyzing core sediment samples from river deltas and coastal waters, researchers will develop a data base to help differentiate between sources of pollutants going as far back as 150 years. Researchers plan to share that knowledge with Alaska's coastal communities. The third study award to the CMI will examine the migration patterns and habitat of the Dolly Varden fish in northwest Alaska's Wulik River in order to establish baseline ecological and biological information about the fish. There is limited data available about the fish's oceanic ecology in the Chukchi, but because they are a critical subsistence resource in northwestern Alaska, BOEM needs to understand their biology and ecosystem in order to assess their vulnerability to development and extraction activities. The total amount awarded to the Alaska CMI for the three studies is nearly \$467,000. The CMI was established in 1993.

About BOEM

As part of the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) manages the exploration and development of the nation's offshore energy and mineral resources. The bureau seeks to balance economic development, energy independence, and environmental protection through responsible management of offshore conventional and renewable energy development based on the best available science.



For more information, please visit: www.BOEM.gov

