

BOEM ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: ONGOING STUDIES

BOEM OCS Region: [Gulf of Mexico](#)

Title: Social Capital and Offshore Oil Development in St. Mary Parish (GM-92-42-110)

Planning Area: Gulfwide

Total Cost: \$256,000

Period of Performance: FY 2005-2009

Conducting Organization: [Coastal Marine Institute](#), Louisiana State University

BOEM Contact: [Dr. Harry Luton](#)

Description:

Background: This study will address some of the social changes that have taken place with the presence and growth of OCS activity in Morgan City, Louisiana and the surrounding area of St. Mary Parish. This is one of the areas in the GOMR most directly tied to and impacted by the OCS petroleum industry. The study also addresses the problem of identifying and assessing the long-term, cumulative impacts of the industry on a local community, a question that has not been resolved in BOEM EISs. Thus, the information and analysis that this study can provide will be of great value to future BOEM assessments.

Objectives: This project will examine the degree to which the substantial fluctuations in the economic environment of South Louisiana's oil patch has interacted with or influenced social biographies and social change in particular communities. The project will use data from discussions with individuals in the designated area, Census data, and an extensive review of previous research. This project will document individual/familial life experiences and social histories of communities within St. Mary Parish and describe how OCS activity has contributed to their experiences both directly and indirectly. The goal of the project is to build upon a long history of research by BOEM and others in this area and provide a broader interpretation of the effects of OCS activity on the lives of those that have experienced them. The topics to be examined include: descriptions of social, business, political, ethnic, religious, and cultural characteristics; social, human, and cultural capital; and social change.

Methods: This project uses data from discussions with a sample of St. Mary Parish residents, decennial Census data (1940-2000), and an extensive review of previous research. This triangulate methodology, involving the three forms of data collection and analysis, will produce an in-depth, baseline study of a specific Gulf community and the experiences of its people with offshore oil and gas development.

Products: Annotated bibliographies, final report.

Importance to BOEM: The BOEM is mandated by NEPA to analyze the social impacts

of OCS development on GOM communities for EIS and EA documents. St. Mary Parish is one of the areas in the GOMR most directly tied to and impacted by the OCS petroleum industry. BOEM is also charge by NEPA with assessing the cumulative effects of the industry. This fifty-year history in Morgan City, LA and surrounding communities will assess long-term cumulative effects on a historically oil-involved community and its residents. In addition to addressing cumulative effects of industry activity, BOEM has been requested by the Science Committee and others to synthesize its socioeconomic research findings. This study will include an in-depth review and synthesis of existing research literature on the effects of OCS activity in St. Mary Parish and will include any ongoing BOEM research in this area.

Current Status: Study in progress was delayed due to unexpected problems with fieldwork. The draft final report was delayed but is now under review by BOEM.

Final Report Due: November 2008

Publications: None

Affiliated WWW Sites: None

Revised date: January 2012

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