



Construction and Operations Plan

Lease Area OCS-A0534

Volume III Appendices

February 2024

Submitted by
Park City Wind LLC

Submitted to
Bureau of Ocean Energy
Management
45600 Woodland Rd
Sterling, VA 20166

Prepared by
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Epsilon
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New England Wind



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In Association with:

Baird & Associates	JASCO Applied Sciences
Biodiversity Research Institute	Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.
Capitol Air Space Group	RPS
Geo SubSea LLC	Saratoga Associates
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Appendix III-R – Draft Piping Plover Protection Plan

Draft Piping Plover Protection Plan
New England Wind Phase 1/New England Wind 1 Connector
Craigville Public Beach Landfall Site and Covell's Beach Landfall Site, Barnstable, MA
NHESP File No.: XX-XXXX

Introduction

Park City Wind LLC (the Proponent) has prepared this draft Piping Plover Protection Plan (PPPP) per consultation with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) on April 15, 2020 regarding the New England Wind 1 Connector (NE Wind 1 Connector). The New England Wind 1 Connector PPPP aligns with the Vineyard Wind Connector 1 PPPP, which was developed in collaboration with NHESP to avoid noise-related impacts to nesting piping plovers from horizontal directional drilling (HDD) activities at the Covell's Beach Landfall Site in Barnstable, MA. The NE Wind 1 Connector will utilize a landfall site at either Craigville Public Beach, approximately 0.4 miles west of Covell's Beach, or at the Covell's Beach Landfall Site. Since both landfall sites have similar characteristics and resource areas, the New England Wind 1 Connector PPPP applies to both landfall sites under consideration for NE Wind 1 Connector.

For Vineyard Wind Connector 1, NHESP requested the following:

Please provide a Piping Plover protection plan that addresses measures to protect state-listed species and their habitats during the nesting season (April 1 – August 31) and a contingency plan in the event problems arise during the HDD cable installation, including:

- a. Work begins prior to April 1 and lapses for 3 or more days.*
- b. Weather or other unforeseen problems arise which delay the start of work to April 1 – August 31.*
- c. Problems with the HDD drill arise which require physical access to the coastal beach or result in physical disturbance to the coastal beach (e.g. obstructions, blow-outs).*
- d. Details regarding how the work area will be delineated to prevent encroachment onto the coastal beach.*

I. Commencement of Work

The Proponent is developing a construction schedule that anticipates commencing HDD activities at either the Craigville Public Beach Landfall Site or the Covell's Beach Landfall Site prior to April 1. It is possible that HDD activities at the landfall site could extend beyond that date. It is extremely unlikely that the Proponent would initiate landfall site HDD activities *after* April 1. However, if for some currently unforeseen reason it is necessary to initiate or re-initiate after a work stoppage of over 48 hours during the Piping Plover nesting season, the Proponent will implement the following measures to avoid disturbing any nesting Piping Plovers near the landfall.

A. Notifications

The Proponent will notify NHESP, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), and US Fish and Wildlife Service, (collectively referred to as “the agencies”) if the need to initiate activities after April 1 arises, including the reason, the anticipated duration of the work, and any other information requested by the agencies.

B. Monitoring by Credentialed Biologist

Plover monitoring as described in this plan will be carried out only by qualified biologists from an accredited organization or an individual who has at least one year of previous experience at an accredited organization conducting shorebird monitoring for Piping Plovers.

C. Pre-Mobilization Plover Survey

The Proponent will employ a shorebird monitor to perform a pre-mobilization survey of the beach and dune area adjacent to the parking lot being utilized for HDD staging at the landfall site. The purpose of this survey will be to ascertain the presence or absence of any nesting plovers within 200 yards of the work zone. For the purpose of performing plover monitoring surveys, the work zone will include a portion of the landfall site parking lot as well as the proposed HDD alignment extending across the beach area from the parking lot to Nantucket Sound.

If there are no Piping Plover nests, scrapes, or territorial pairs identified within 200 yards of the work zone, the shorebird monitor will document the findings, report to the agencies and the Proponent, and the Proponent will be cleared to mobilize into the area within 48 hours with no further monitoring activities required. However, if any Piping Plover nests, scrapes, or territorial pairs are observed within 200 yards of the work zone, the shorebird monitor will record their locations and will report back to the agencies and the Proponent, and the Proponent will implement the plover monitoring as outlined below.

D. Plover Monitoring Plan

Monitoring, if necessary, will be consistent with the procedures established under the Massachusetts NHESP’s “Guidelines for Managing Recreational Use of Beaches to Protect Piping Plovers, Terns, and their Habitats in Massachusetts” for use of roads and parking lots in areas where unfledged chicks are present.¹ Daily monitoring will be conducted from the time construction equipment is mobilized to the landfall site parking lot extending through the construction phase, including equipment demobilization.

¹ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, “Guidelines for Managing Recreational Use of Beaches to Protect Piping Plovers, Terns, and their Habitats in Massachusetts”, 1993, page 8.

Under this protocol, the monitoring intensity will increase with increasing proximity of nests and/or chicks relative to the work zone and will also increase with increasing frequency of chick observations. If plovers are less than 200 yards from the construction activity, then a qualified monitor must be present to observe if nesting plovers or their young are disturbed from the activity (for example observing an increase in vocalizations, adults repeatedly leaving the nest, or adults staying off the nest for more than a few minutes). If a nest or brood consistently remains more than 100 yards from the work zone, the nest will be monitored once per day at dawn (before 0600 hours) prior to the onset of work during appropriate weather conditions. Nests or broods showing a tendency to occur within 50–100 yards of the work zone will be monitored twice per day at dawn prior to the onset of work and dusk (before 0600 hours and after 1900 hours) during appropriate weather conditions. Note that no mobilization of construction equipment to the landfall site parking lot will be allowed if any plover nest is observed within 50 yards of the work zone, unless specifically permitted by NHESP.

If the qualified shorebird monitor observes that state-listed birds are disturbed by the initiation (or re-initiation) of work, or by construction activities, then all work shall cease until such time as the plovers move away from the area (beyond 200 m) or after consultation with the agencies.

E. Training of Construction Personnel

This Piping Plover Protection Plan will be incorporated into the construction management plan that is being prepared for the HDD operations, so it can be understood in advance and implemented by site personnel should it be necessary to mobilize for HDD operations after April 1 or if ongoing HDD drilling operations at the landfall site are halted for over 48 hours after April 1.

II. Work Stoppage for over 48 Hours and Resumption

In the event that HDD operations are paused for over 48 hours after April 1, then work will not resume until a shorebird monitor inspects the area to identify any plover nests within 200 yards of the work zone. If any nests are observed within 200 yards of the work zone, the project will comply with the procedures described above for initiation of construction activities after April 1.

III. Delineation of work area to prevent encroachment onto coastal beach

The HDD staging area will be located entirely within the paved parking lot at either Craigville Public Beach or Covell's Beach, and will be secured within a fenced and gated perimeter. If equipment access on Craigville Beach is required for any reason during the shorebird nesting season, then in advance of equipment access, notification and proposed monitoring procedures to be undertaken by the shorebird monitor must be provided to the agencies.

IV. HDD Design and Breakout Prevention

The likelihood of needing physical access to the coastal beach or the risk of impacts to the beach itself are both very low. The HDD design has been informed by site-specific geotechnical data to

minimize the risk of a surficial release of drilling mud. These investigations have enabled the Project to understand the containment capacity of the soils at the drill entry point, and to establish maximum drilling pressures to prevent a breakout on the beach. To further reduce the potential for a breakout on the beach, the drilling will likely be conducted within an entry casing first 100-150 feet of the HDD, at which point the drill head will be approximately 20 feet below the grade of the beach.

Furthermore, the Project will use a drilling fluid composed of bentonite clay or mud. This benign, natural material will pose little to no threat to water quality or ecological resources in the rare instance of seepage around the HDD operations.

Effective construction management during HDD operations will further minimize the already-remote potential for beach or seafloor disturbance through drilling fluid seepage (i.e., frac-out). Drilling fluid seepage can occur when pressurization of the drill hole exceeds the containment capacity of the overburden soil material, but by providing adequate depth of cover for the HDD installation, the risk of seepage can be substantially reduced. Nonetheless, the Proponent will adhere to the operational standards discussed below to minimize the chances of drilling fluid seepage.

In the contingency planning for the HDD, prevention of drilling fluid seepage has been a primary consideration in the trajectory of the installation. As such, the HDD drill hole will likely descend from the HDD pit location to a depth of approximately 30 feet below the seafloor before rising toward the exit hole on the seafloor where installation will transition to cable burial. As the pilot hole approaches the targeted exit hole location, the contractor will minimize the amount of drilling fluid near the head to minimize the potential for a release of drilling mud as the drill head reaches the surface of the seafloor.

The geometry of the drill hole profile can also affect the potential for drilling fluid seepage. In a profile that makes compound or tight-radii turns, down-hole pressures can build, thus increasing the potential for drilling fluid seepage. The proposed drilling profile, with its smooth and gradual vertical curves, will avoid this potential effect. In addition, horizontal curvature of the HDD route will minimize the potential for pressure buildup caused by drill hole geometry.

In the unlikely event that a disturbance of the coastal beach occurs between April 1 and August 31 associated with the HDD, the Proponent will immediately mobilize a shorebird monitor to survey the site in advance of any equipment access on the beach, and will ensure that no remedial actions on the beach interfere with nesting Plovers or their chicks. The monitor will remain on-site until the equipment involved in the remedial operations on the beach has returned to the work limits within the landfall site parking lot.

V. Reporting

If monitoring is required (because HDD activities begin after April 1, or if there is a work stoppage of over 48 hours after April 1), the shorebird monitor will prepare daily field reports that will be

provided to the Proponent and the agencies on a weekly basis until plover chicks from any of the nest being monitored have fledged. In addition to reporting on the status and location of the nest and brood relative to the work zone, the report will provide other pertinent details such as weather, wind direction and velocity, evidence of predators, etc. Photographs will be included to provide a visual record of any unusual observations. Following demobilization of construction equipment from the landfall site parking lot, a summary report describing the monitoring effort will also be prepared and provided to the Proponent and the agencies.

VI. Modifications to Plan

Any changes to the PPPP must be requested in writing at least two weeks prior to the anticipated implementation of said changes for review and written-approval by the NHESP.