OCS Scientific Committee Orientation Meeting

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Chief Environmental Officer
Office of Environmental Programs
BOEM manages development of the nation’s offshore resources in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

BSEE develops and enforces safety and environmental regulations.
BOEM Environmental Programs

Office of Environmental Programs
Led by the Chief Environmental Officer
Dr. Alan Thornhill

Division of Environmental Sciences
Dr. Rodney Cluck

Division of Environmental Assessment
Mr. Jim Bennett
Environmental Stewardship

Applied Science for Informed Decision Making

**BALANCING:**

- Nation’s energy needs
- Environmental sensitivity and marine productivity
- Multiple use of sea and seabed
Drivers – Legal Mandates

- **Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA)**
  Conduct activities on Federal Offshore lands so as to “prevent or minimize damage” to the environment.

- **2007-2012 Interior Strategic Plan**
  “Manage or influence resource use to enhance public benefit, responsible use and economic value (energy).”

- **President’s National Ocean Policy**
  Challenge: “Increasing energy supply while protecting the environment.”

- **Compliance with environmental statutes**
  NEPA, ESA, MMPA, MSFCMA, CWA, CAA
Information Needs

- Partnerships: NPP, NOAA, DOE, USGS, USFWS, EPA.....
- Five-year schedule

Pacific
- Developed/producing leases
- Renewable energy

Atlantic
- Sand and gravel
- Renewable energy

Gulf of Mexico
- Deepwater
- Active leasing
- Sand and gravel

Alaska
- Beaufort, Chukchi Sea exploration
Federal Agencies with Ocean Role

- Department of Defense (DOD)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Department of Commerce (DOC)
- Federal Maritime Commission (FMC)
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
- National Science Foundation (NSF)
- Department of Interior (DOI)
- Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE)

- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Department of Energy (DOE)
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
- National Science Foundation (NSF)
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)
- Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE)

- Department of Transportation (DOT)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- Department of State (DOS)
The Environmental Studies Program supports many programs in BOEM, BSEE and Other Regulatory Agencies

- Environmental Assessment
  - NEPA
  - Permits
- Marine Minerals Program
- Oil Spill Modeling Program
- Environmental Compliance
Goals of Environmental Assessment

- Accurate Scientific Analysis
- Foster Better Decisions
- Public Disclosure and Involvement
- Focus on What is Affected
- Consider Cumulative Effects
- Consider Alternatives
- Identify and Assess Mitigation
- Adaptive Management
Environmental Assessment
Traditional Energy

5 Year Program – Nationwide

Lease Sale – Region Specific
(e.g., Gulf of Mexico)

Exploration Plan – Specific Project

Development Plan
Specific Platform(s)

* also develop activity-specific NEPA documents
(e.g., seismic surveys, explosive removals of platforms)
Renewable Energy Program

- Energy Policy Act 2005 gave authority to DOI and Secretary delegated to BOEM

- Final Rule published in April 2009

- First Lease Issued – Cape Wind

- Moving forward in Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, Delaware and Massachusetts
Oil Spill Modeling Program

Oil-Spill Risk Analysis estimates likelihood of spill occurrence and the transport and fate of spilled oil.

Integrate results into NEPA, CZMA, ESA, CWA and other environmental reviews.
Marine Minerals Program

- 58 million cubic yards of OCS sand conveyed through 31 negotiated noncompetitive agreements
- Projects completed in Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, South Carolina, and Virginia
- 180 miles of the Nation’s shoreline have been replenished/restored
Environmental Studies in Support of Marine Minerals Program

- $12 million spent on Environmental Studies
- More than 40 studies
  - Site-Specific and Programmatic
- 8 Ongoing programmatic studies
- Have been referenced or represented in:
  - International Studies
  - Nationwide Studies
  - Peer Reviewed Journal Articles
  - USACE Analysis and Research
  - FWS/NMFS documents
  - Master thesis and PhD dissertations
  - Conference Presentations/Proceedings
  - In-house documents
Federal Advisory Committee (FACA).

Advises BOEM on the feasibility, appropriateness, and scientific value of the information provided by the ESP.

Participates in an annual meeting to review Studies Development Plans.

Includes specific sub-committees.
Annual ESP Process

- Cyclical Process—adaptive feedback-loop
  - Previous year’s process overlaps with planning for upcoming years
  - BOEM Scientists will be writing Statements of Work and overseeing ongoing studies while preparing profiles for studies needed in upcoming years
Scientific and scholarly information considered in Departmental decision making must be robust, of the highest quality, and the result of as rigorous scientific and scholarly processes as can be achieved.

Most importantly, it must be trustworthy.
Importance of Scientific & Scholarly Integrity Policy at DOI

“Because robust, high quality science and scholarship play such an important role in advancing the Department’s mission, it is vital that we have a strong and clear scientific integrity policy.”

Interior Secretary, Ken Salazar
Goals of the Policy

- DOI decisions are based on science and scholarship and are respected as credible;

- DOI science is conducted with integrity and excellence;

- DOI has a culture of scientific and scholarly integrity that is enduring;

- DOI scientists and scholars are widely recognized for excellence; and

- DOI employees are proud to uphold the high standards & lead by example.
Applies to All DOI Employees, Including Political Appointees

...as well as:

- contractors
- cooperators
- partners
- permittees
- leasees
- grantees
- and volunteers

when they engage in, supervise, manage, or influence scientific and scholarly activities, or communicate information about the Department’s scientific and scholarly activities, or utilize scientific and scholarly information in making agency policy, management or regulatory decisions.
Principles and Expectations

- Define expectations of behavior for all and ensure training makes expectations clear
- Encourage the free-flow of information
- Establish transparency expectations
- Make scientific credentials part of hiring criteria
- Encourage scientists to communicate openly
- Reinforce principles of whistleblower protection
- Encourage scientists to engage with communities of practice
- Examine issues and correct any problems that arise
- Ensure best practices throughout the Department

Expect a culture of integrity—and contribute to making it a reality.
Future Ocean Energy Challenges

- Leasing in new areas, especially with limited baseline information
- Climate change and ocean acidification
- New Frontiers in Policy: Marine spatial planning
- Integrating new energy technologies, mainly renewables and alternate use (carbon sequestration)
www.boem.gov/studies

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