

Environmental Studies Program: Studies Development Plan | FY 2022–2023

Title	Capacity Building and Collaboration with the Aquinnah and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribes (NT-22-01)
Administered by	Office of Environmental Programs
BOEM Contact(s)	John Primo (john.primo@boem.gov)
Procurement Type(s)	TBD
Conducting Organization(s)	TBD
Total BOEM Cost	\$650,000
Performance Period	FY 2022–2026
Final Report Due	TBD
Date Revised	November 8, 2022
PICOC Summary	
<i><u>Problem</u></i>	BOEM needs an improved understanding of the relationships Tribes have with the marine and coastal environments to better assess the potential effects of OCS Wind Energy. To do so, BOEM must overcome a legacy of poor relations between Tribes and the US government.
<i><u>Intervention</u></i>	This study implements a collaborative research effort that addresses BOEM’s information needs and enriches relations between BOEM and various Tribes of the Northeastern US (NE Tribes). BOEM aims to do this via adhering to the principles of collaborative research and co-production of knowledge in which these entities identify research objectives, methods, etc. <i>jointly</i> .
<i><u>Comparison</u></i>	The use of comparison is to be determined, as this study is purposefully designed to be jointly determined by BOEM and the NE Tribes. Comparisons may be supported by the study’s baseline characterizations of the marine environment.
<i><u>Outcome</u></i>	Information objectives include documentation of tribal understandings of the marine and coastal environments and the identification of best practices for Tribal consultation. The major outcome is to inform NEPA and OCSLA work associated with the pending Wind Energy Development boom on the Atlantic Coast. The collaborative study process itself is part objective and outcome as it results in the joint development of this research effort, mutually identified objectives (e.g., information needs, practical deliverables/outcomes) of value to Tribes and BOEM, and enriched relationships between the Tribes and BOEM.
<i><u>Context</u></i>	Tribes and associated areas in the NE US; associated with Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, and several other states in the region.

BOEM Information Need(s): The Atlantic Coast is experiencing a ‘boom’ in offshore wind energy activity. The latest mandates from the Biden Administration (e.g., ‘30x30’) have energized the national effort to expand the nation’s renewable energy supply (Whitehouse.gov). At present there are no less than 15 developments in the Atlantic’s offshore wind pipeline. BOEM has a significant information gap that needs to be addressed soundly and innovatively. BOEM requires baseline information to document Tribal understandings and utilization of the marine environment and associated key resources to inform

environmental assessments and ultimately OCS decision-making (NEPA, OCSLA, EAct). As part of BOEM's mandate it must engage in a government to government relationship with Federally recognized Tribes (NHPA, EO 13175). This study aims to meet these needs by using a collaborative research approach that aims to understand the marine environment through Tribal perspectives, and by identifying best practices for government to government consultations associated with OCS Wind Energy development activities.

Background: For BOEM to meet its responsibilities to Federally recognized Native American Tribes, BOEM must further understand Tribal interests associated with the OCS and the marine environment. BOEM has done this over the years by studying traditional ecological knowledge, subsistence practices, and various cultural aspects (TCPs, landscapes, etc.). The Alaska Region has led this type of research, and there have been studies in the Pacific and elsewhere (Ball, et. al., 2015; Galginaitis, 2014; Kofinas, et. al., 2016). These studies have increasingly demonstrated a high degree of collaboration between the Bureau, scientists, and Native peoples. This effort aims to expand on this burgeoning direction of work to improve our understanding of Tribal interests in the Northeastern Atlantic Region. Just as importantly, this study aims to take a further step on that continuum of collaboration toward an equal partnership in co-producing knowledge in further clarifying Tribal interests.

Objectives: The Environmental Studies Program aims to meet both traditional program information objectives and non-traditional objectives, namely:

Traditional objectives:

- An enhanced understanding of the marine environment in the Northeastern US, as understood through the Tribes' perspectives.
 - An understanding of *Tribes history, current state*, demographics, languages, ties to other Tribes, governance structure, and their general views on offshore wind development
 - An understanding of the significance of the *relevant marine and terrestrial environment* to Tribes
 - An understanding of current *socioeconomic* conditions – Tribal businesses, community economic strategies or goals, current or potential training or education programs
 - Identification and documentation of *socio-cultural resources* of significance in the coastal and marine environment – these could be ideological (beliefs/values 'aka' intangible), TCPs, sites, remains, etc.
 - Identification of Tribal concerns with OCS Wind Energy Development as appropriate in relation to each of the preceding domains – historical, current state, environment, socioeconomic, sociocultural
 - A better understanding of the culturally and/or historically significance to Tribes of places and resources on the OCS to better inform federal decision making related to avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating impacts.
- Insights on or best practices for government-to-government consultations/engagement on the development of offshore wind energy
 - Appropriate protocols for communication – representation, frequency, location/means, routine exchanges, etc.
 - Enhance/Assist information sharing – what is useful for Tribes, develop practices or protocols for gov and Tribes to use to exchange information on OCS Wind Energy
 - Identify avenues for increased participation of Tribes in the Wind Energy Industry –

identify businesses or skill sets that are in place

Non-traditional, relational objectives:

- Enhanced relations between BOEM and the Involved Tribes – as evidenced through the trust and cooperation needed for a successful collaborative research effort
- Capacity enhancement for Tribes – TBD (e.g., training, tool creation, outreach efforts)

Methods: The bedrock of this study is a collaborative research approach with the intent of BOEM being partners or co-producers in knowledge production with a self-identified group of NE Tribes. This approach has been broadly engaged over the last two decades in various fields such as international development, conservation and development, and Indigenous knowledge studies. There are various degrees of collaboration and measures of success noted in the literature (Isaac 2015; Koster, Baccar and Lemelin 2012; Kothari, Camil and Brown 2013). There are several key hallmarks with this type of research, namely, collaborative creation of the research objective(s) and design. The intent is that all parties are equal partners and have a legitimate influence in the research design, agree with the general direction of the study and have something of value to gain by the completion of objectives.

With this study BOEM aims to further an ongoing dialogue with NE Tribes by presenting the general concept of this study to them in seeking their partnership. BOEM would capitalize on the flexibility of its procurement process ('nimble') and use a collaborative research approach to engage Tribes as meaningful partners in the study design process and in the award/selection process. The literature asserts that this is essential for there to be a successful collaborative study (Isaac 2015; Koster, Baccar and Lemelin 2012; Kothari, Camil and Brown 2013).

Specific methods for the study, beyond its collaborative approach, are TBD. However, BOEM's information objectives necessitate some type of sociocultural approach. Potential research approaches include, but are not limited to the following, a cultural landscape approach, ethnography, and/or cultural modelling. Likely methods include, semi-structured discussions, focus groups, participant observation, unstructured discussions, literature/archival review, etc. One overarching epistemological objective would be to garner information about the marine and coastal environments through the perspectives (i.e., how they perceive or interpret the environment, understand, and know it) of the various NE Tribes. This is the only way to understand what is significant to these Tribes and what might be affected by OCS Wind energy development.

Specific Research Question(s): Overarching Queries: How do NE Tribes view and relate to the marine environment (coastal and related lands, and ocean areas)? What are their concerns/understandings of OCS Wind Energy Development (e.g., effects – positive, negative, uncertain)? How can Tribes and BOEM best work together to address the challenges inherent to OCS Wind Energy planning and development?

- Are there social, cultural, historical and economic features or aspects of the environment that hold significance? What are they? What is their significance?
- Are there specialized or unique Tribal ways of understanding the environment that are of import to Tribes and are not easily translated or understood by non-Tribal members?
- What are Tribes concerned with regarding the development of OCS Wind?
- What lessons can be learned about collaborative research from this effort? Are there best practices or useful insights that support successful collaboration?

Current Status: N/A

Publications Completed: N/A

Affiliated WWW Sites: N/A

References:

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