

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY
MANAGEMENT
OCS SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

Other Plenary Session Presenters



James E. Bennett

Chief

Division of Environmental Assessment

Division of Environmental
Assessments
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
381 Elden Street
Herndon, Virginia 20170-4817

office: 703-787-1660
e-mail: James.Bennett2@boem.gov



Mr. James F. Bennett is an environmental specialist with the Environment Division of the Offshore Program. His background is in community planning, environmental impact analysis, natural resource damage assessment, and geographic information systems. He holds Masters degrees in Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia and in Computer Systems Management from the University of Maryland. His 18 years experience with Interior includes the MMS, the Department's Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, and the National Capital Planning Commission. He is currently serving as the Team Leader for the Environmental Design Team--the steering group for the environmental component of the MMS corporate database.

Joseph Christopher

Regional Supervisor
Office of the Environment
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

1201 Elmwood Park Blvd
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123

office: 504-736-2759
e-mail: joseph.christopher@boem.gov

Mr. Joseph Christopher is the Regional Supervisor for the Office of the Environment in the Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Region of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, in New Orleans, Louisiana, and is responsible for the Gulf Region's leasing and adjudication activities, environmental studies program, pre- and post-lease environmental assessment processes, and the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP.) He has over 30 years of experience with BOEM and various aspects of the Region's Outer Continental Shelf Program.

Mr. Christopher started with BOEM in 1978 when the agency was known as the United States Geological Survey (USGS). He has held various positions in his career including Chief of Environmental Assessment. Mr. Christopher received a BA in Geography from the University of New Orleans in 1978 and an MA in Management and Supervision from Central Michigan University in 1986.

Rick Yarde
Regional Supervisor
Office of the Environment
Pacific OCS Region

770 Paseo Camarillo
Camarillo, California 93010

office: 805-389-7810
e-mail: richard.yarde@boem.gov

Mr. Rick Yarde has degrees in wildlife science, renewable natural resources policy, and law. Consequently he has worked at universities, with environmental consulting firms, and with a law firm, but most of his career has been with the federal government at the Departments of Energy and Interior. He likes to figure out how things work but he is not an engineer. When he is not working he enjoys reading Scandinavian murder mysteries and doting on his dogs.

Lisa Toussaint
Regional Supervisor
Office of the Environment
Alaska OCS Region

3801 Centerpoint Drive Suite 500
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

office: 907-334-5272
e-mail: lisa.toussaint@boem.gov

Dr. Lisa Toussaint is the Regional Supervisor for the Office of Environment with the Alaska OCS Region of BOEM. At BOEM, Dr. Toussaint oversees programs that conduct environmental analyses of oil and gas activities, as well as biological studies to inform BOEM decisions. Before joining BOEM in 2013, she worked for the United States Fisheries and Wildlife Service (FWS), where she supervised and provided leadership to field offices charged with managing and regulating activities affecting marine mammals, endangered species, and other fish and wildlife species. Prior to working for FWS, she spent almost 20 years as an environmental, public land and natural resources attorney, first representing industry and municipal clients at a large Midwestern law firm, and then representing Department of Interior agencies at the Regional Solicitor's Office in Alaska. She has extensive experience litigating cases and advising on regulatory issues under a variety of environmental laws, including the Endangered Species Act; Marine Mammal Protection Act; National Environmental Policy Act; Oil Pollution Act; pollution control laws; and oil, gas and mining laws. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Mathematics from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin; completed a Fulbright Fellowship at the University of Munich, Germany; and holds a Juris Doctorate from the University of Minnesota Law School where she was the Director of the Environmental Law Moot Court.

Michelle V. Morin
Chief
Environment Branch
Office of Renewable Energy Programs

381 Elden Street
Herndon, Virginia 20170

office: 703-787-1722
e-mail: michelle.morin@boem.gov

Ms. Michelle Morin is the Chief of the Environment Branch of BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy Programs. In addition to ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws, her branch is responsible for managing the coordination of the Atlantic OCS Region studies program to support decisions related to renewable energy leasing and activities. Prior to her current position, she was an environmental protection specialist in the Headquarters Branch of Environmental Assessment. Ms. Morin holds a B.A. in Geography from the University of New Orleans, and was a NEPA coordinator in the Gulf of Mexico Region for several years.

Jonathan N. Blythe
Science Data Manager
Branch of Biological and Social Sciences
Division of Environmental Sciences

381 Elden Street
Herndon, Virginia 20170

office: 703-787-1543
e-mail: jonathan.blythe@boem.gov

Dr. Jonathan Blythe is a Scientific Data Manager for the Environmental Studies Program in the Branch of Biological and Social Sciences in Herndon, VA. He is responsible for metadata development, and scientific data and information processing for ESP data products. He is also a technical contact for several scientific literature initiatives that the bureau is currently undertaking to improve its data and information systems, including the Environmental Science Program Information System, the Eco-Spatial Information Database, and the BOEM Journal Access initiative. Dr. Blythe holds a Ph.D. in biological oceanography from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution/ Massachusetts Institute of Technology Joint Program in Applied Ocean Science and Engineering, and a B.S. in aquatic biology from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Mike Rasser
Marine Ecologist
Branch of Biological and Social Sciences
Division of Environmental Sciences

Division of Environmental Sciences
Branch of Chemical and Physical Sciences office: 703-787-1729
381 Elden Street e-mail: Michael.Rasser@boem.gov
Herndon, Virginia 20170

Dr. Mike Rasser currently serves as the national headquarters marine ecologist in the BOEM Environmental Studies Program overseeing the planning, initiation, coordination and budgeting of applied marine ecology studies. His areas of expertise include salt marsh ecology, coastal processes, scientific data management and the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing as tools for environmental monitoring and assessment. He holds an MS from the University of Florida, PhD from the University of Texas Marine Science Institute and a BA from Florida International University. Prior to joining BOEM in 2009, Dr. Rasser worked as a lead ecologist for a consultancy on large-scale environmental planning projects including the siting of interstate electric transmission lines.