



BOEM

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

BOEM Environmental Review Process

Florida Renewable Energy Task
Force Meeting

Isis Johnson, Florida Environmental Review Lead
Office of Renewable Energy Programs

December 11, 2014



Presentation Overview

National Environmental
Policy Act

Scoping

Environmental
Assessments

Environmental
Consultations

Environmental Studies
Program

Questions



The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- **NEPA** is a procedural law that requires Federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed action(s), and reasonable alternatives, prior to making decisions

- **Major Actions/Decision Points**
 - Lease Issuance (survey work)
 - Plan Approval (Site Assessment, Construction and Operation, or General Activities)
 - Decommissioning Activities

- **BOEM NEPA Process**
 - Scoping
 - Environmental Assessment
 - Notice of Availability
 - Finding of No Significant Impact or Environmental Impact Statement
 - Comment periods and opportunities for stakeholder involvement are present throughout

- The Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) is a Federal Register Notice published to:
 - Notify the public of BOEM's intent to prepare an EA
 - Solicit input on what resources and issues BOEM should consider (typically a 30-day comment period)
 - Identify alternatives to be considered in the EA
- Public Information Sessions



An NOI would be published concurrently with the Call for Information and Nominations or in response to an unsolicited application

Preparing Environmental Assessments (EA)

Preparing an EA involves the development and analysis of the proposed action:

- **Lease issuance** - site characterization activities (i.e. surveys)
- **Site assessment activities** - (e.g., mooring and telemetry buoys; includes technology testing)



Analyze environmental and socioeconomic resources

Environmental and Socioeconomic Resources Considered

■ Physical

- Air Quality
- Water Quality



■ Biological

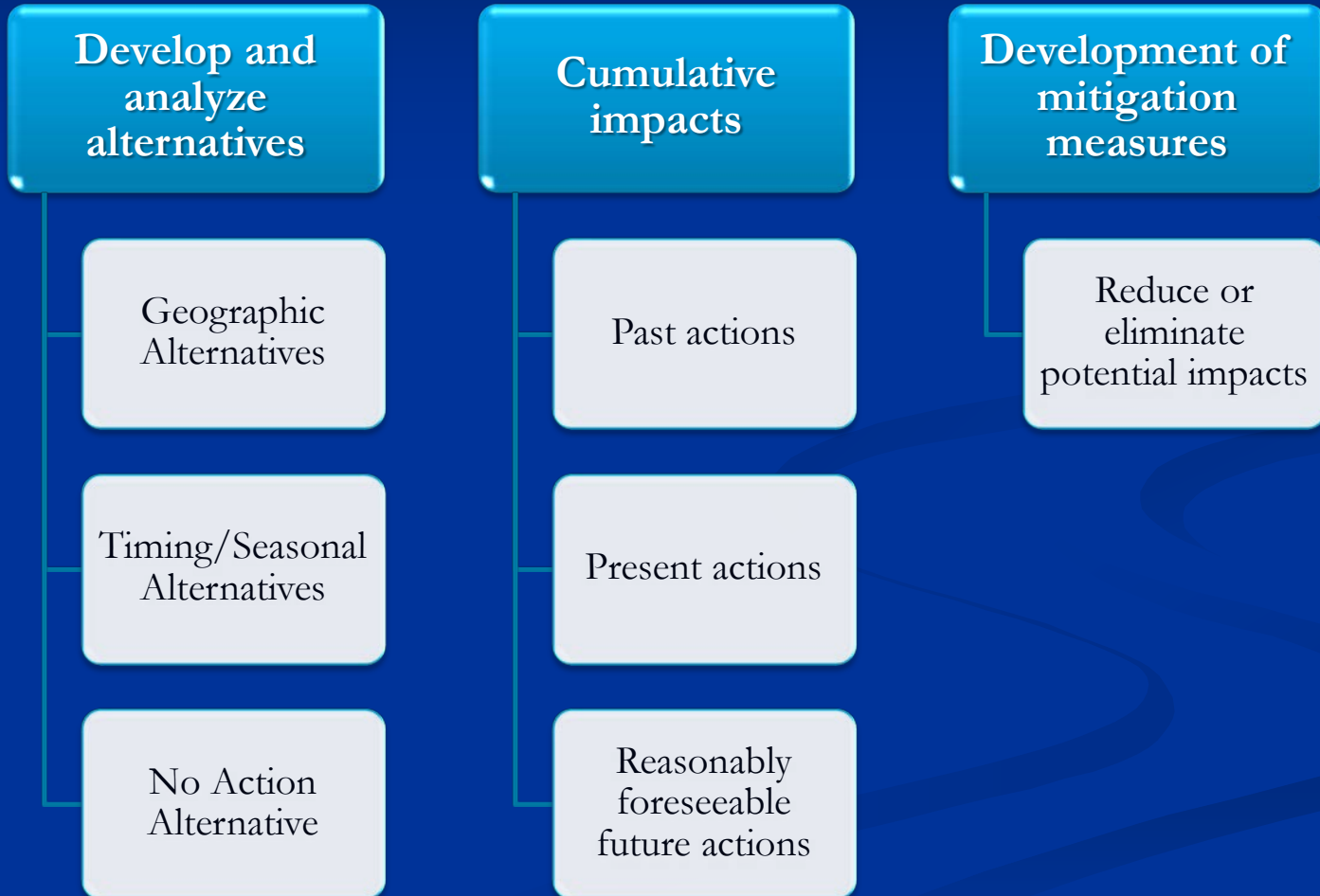
- Marine Mammals
- Sea Turtles
- Fish and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)
- Coastal Habitats
- Benthic Resources
- Avian and Bat Species

■ Socioeconomic

- Commercial and Recreational Fishing Activities
- Aesthetics and Visual Impacts
- Cultural Resources
- Military Uses
- Environmental Justice
- Land Use and Coastal Infrastructure
- Tourism and Recreation
- Demographics and Employment

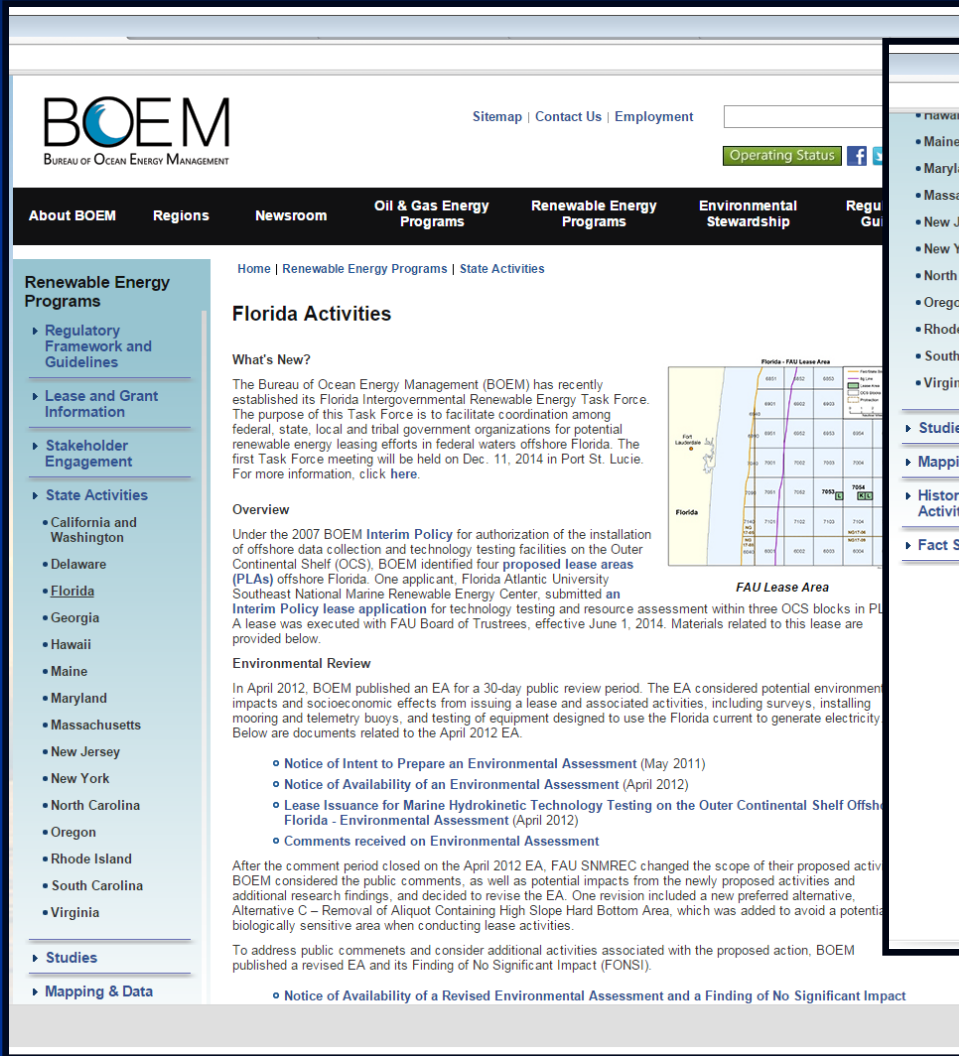


Preparing Environmental Assessments Cont.





Additional Environmental Review Elements



BOEM BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

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Operating Status

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Florida Activities

What's New?

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has recently established its Florida Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force. The purpose of this Task Force is to facilitate coordination among federal, state, local and tribal government organizations for potential renewable energy leasing efforts in federal waters offshore Florida. The first Task Force meeting will be held on Dec. 11, 2014 in Port St. Lucie. For more information, click here.



FAU Lease Area

Overview

Under the 2007 BOEM Interim Policy for authorization of the installation of offshore data collection and technology testing facilities on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), BOEM identified four proposed lease areas (PLAs) offshore Florida. One applicant, Florida Atlantic University Southeast National Marine Renewable Energy Center, submitted an Interim Policy lease application for technology testing and resource assessment within three OCS blocks in PL A. A lease was executed with FAU Board of Trustees, effective June 1, 2014. Materials related to this lease are provided below.

Environmental Review

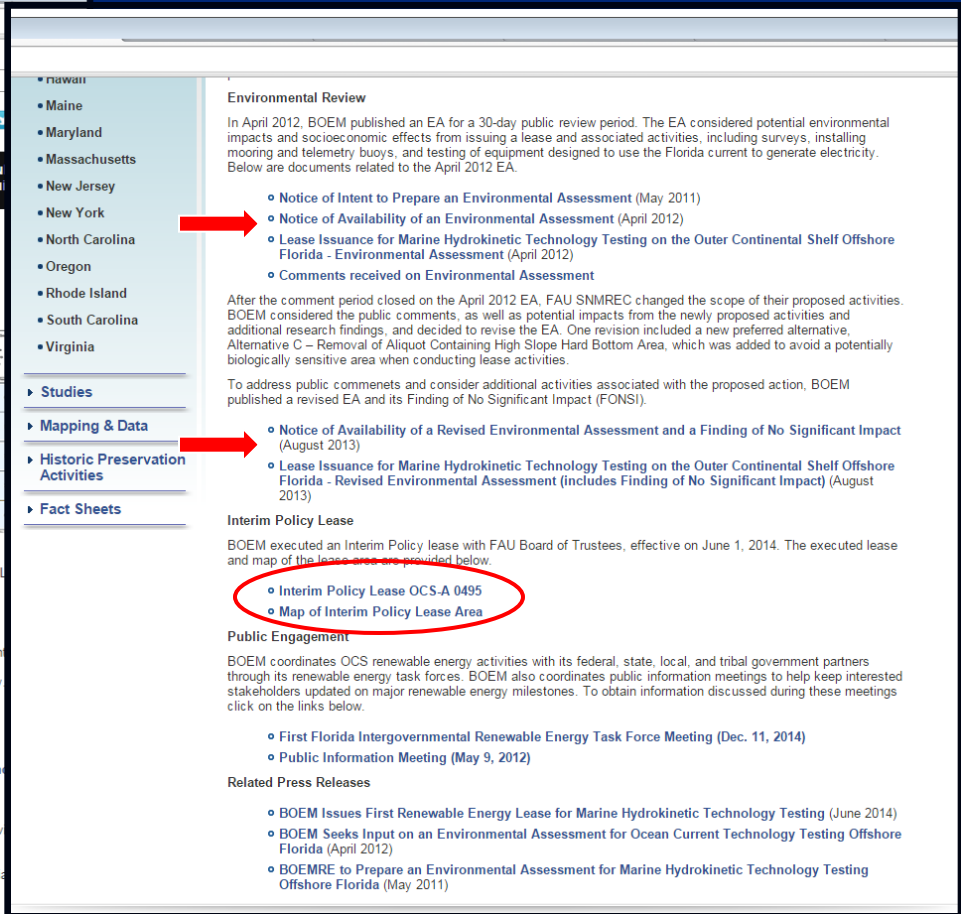
In April 2012, BOEM published an EA for a 30-day public review period. The EA considered potential environmental and socio-economic effects from issuing a lease and associated activities, including surveys, installing mooring and telemetry buoys, and testing of equipment designed to use the Florida current to generate electricity. Below are documents related to the April 2012 EA.

- Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment (May 2011)
- Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment (April 2012)
- Lease Issuance for Marine Hydrokinetic Technology Testing on the Outer Continental Shelf Offshore Florida - Environmental Assessment (April 2012)
- Comments received on Environmental Assessment

After the comment period closed on the April 2012 EA, FAU SNMREC changed the scope of their proposed activity. BOEM considered the public comments, as well as potential impacts from the newly proposed activities and additional research findings, and decided to revise the EA. One revision included a new preferred alternative, Alternative C - Removal of Aliquot Containing High Slope Hard Bottom Area, which was added to avoid a potentially biologically sensitive area when conducting lease activities.

To address public comments and consider additional activities associated with the proposed action, BOEM published a revised EA and its Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

- Notice of Availability of a Revised Environmental Assessment and a Finding of No Significant Impact



Environmental Review

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- Notice of Availability of a Revised Environmental Assessment and a Finding of No Significant Impact (August 2013)
- Lease Issuance for Marine Hydrokinetic Technology Testing on the Outer Continental Shelf Offshore Florida - Revised Environmental Assessment (includes Finding of No Significant Impact) (August 2013)

Interim Policy Lease

BOEM executed an Interim Policy lease with FAU Board of Trustees, effective on June 1, 2014. The executed lease and map of the lease area are provided below.

- Interim Policy Lease OCS-A 0495
- Map of Interim Policy Lease Area

Public Engagement

BOEM coordinates OCS renewable energy activities with its federal, state, local, and tribal government partners through its renewable energy task forces. BOEM also coordinates public information meetings to help keep interested stakeholders updated on major renewable energy milestones. To obtain information discussed during these meetings click on the links below.

- First Florida Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Meeting (Dec. 11, 2014)
- Public Information Meeting (May 9, 2012)

Related Press Releases

- BOEM Issues First Renewable Energy Lease for Marine Hydrokinetic Technology Testing (June 2014)
- BOEM Seeks Input on an Environmental Assessment for Ocean Current Technology Testing Offshore Florida (April 2012)
- BOEMRE to Prepare an Environmental Assessment for Marine Hydrokinetic Technology Testing Offshore Florida (May 2011)

- **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**
 - Section 106 requires Federal agencies to take in to account the effects of their undertakings on cultural resources
 - Requires BOEM to identify the appropriate consulting parties, identify cultural resources, assess impacts and mitigate potential adverse effects

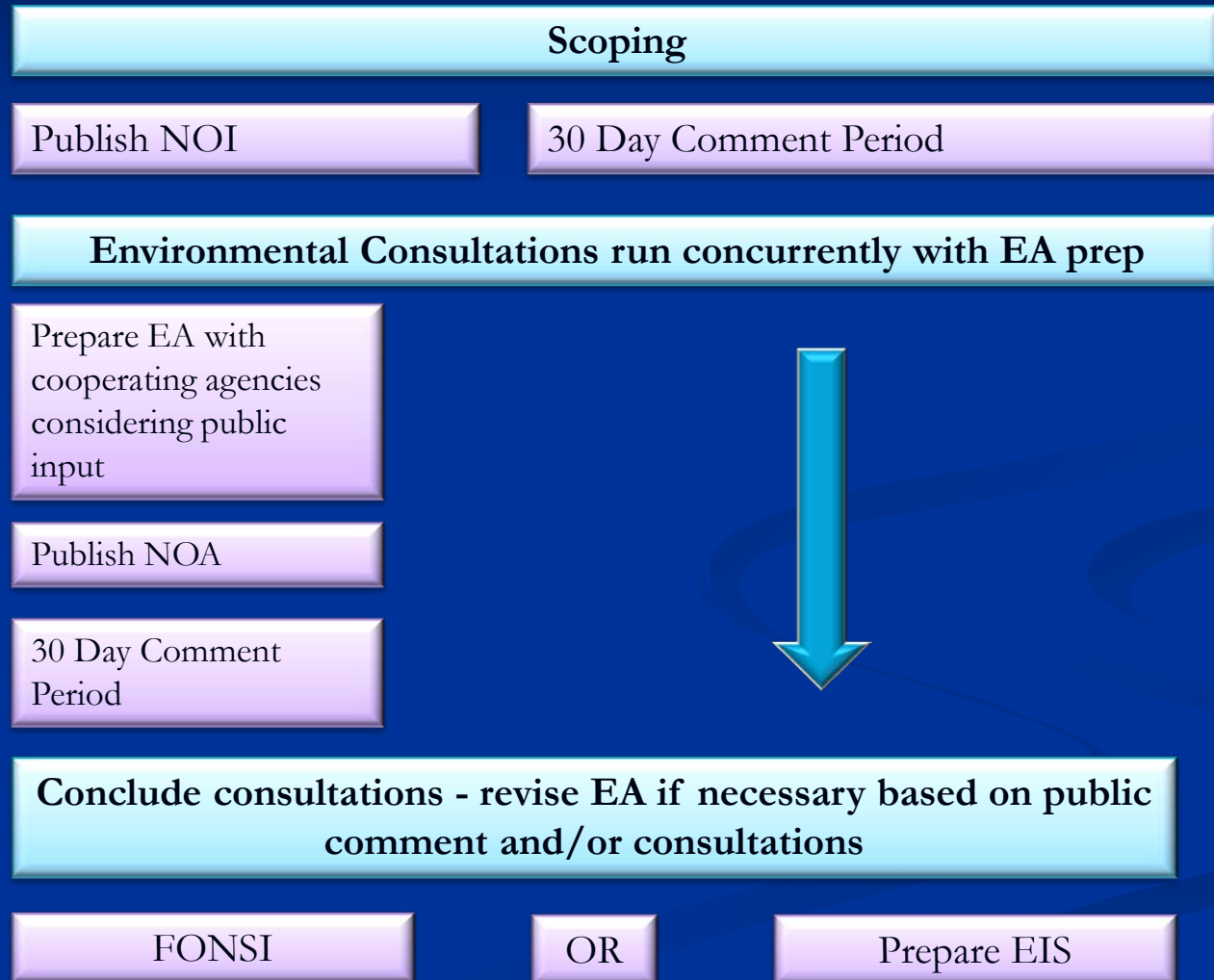
- **Endangered Species Act (ESA)**
 - Section 7 requires consultation when BOEM believes a proposed action may affect ESA-listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitat
 - BOEM will coordinate with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

- **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Essential Fish Habitat)**
 - If BOEM funds, permits, or undertakes activities that may adversely affect EFH, BOEM is required to consult with NMFS

- **Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)**
 - All marine mammals are protected under the MMPA, which prohibits (with certain exceptions) the “take” of marine mammals in U.S waters.
 - The Lessee would consult with NMFS regarding any potential take of marine mammals under the proposed action

- **Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)**
 - Federal actions that are reasonably likely to affect coastal use or coastal resource must be “consistent to the maximum extent practicable” with relevant enforceable policies of the State’s federally approved coastal management program
 - BOEM would coordinate appropriately with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

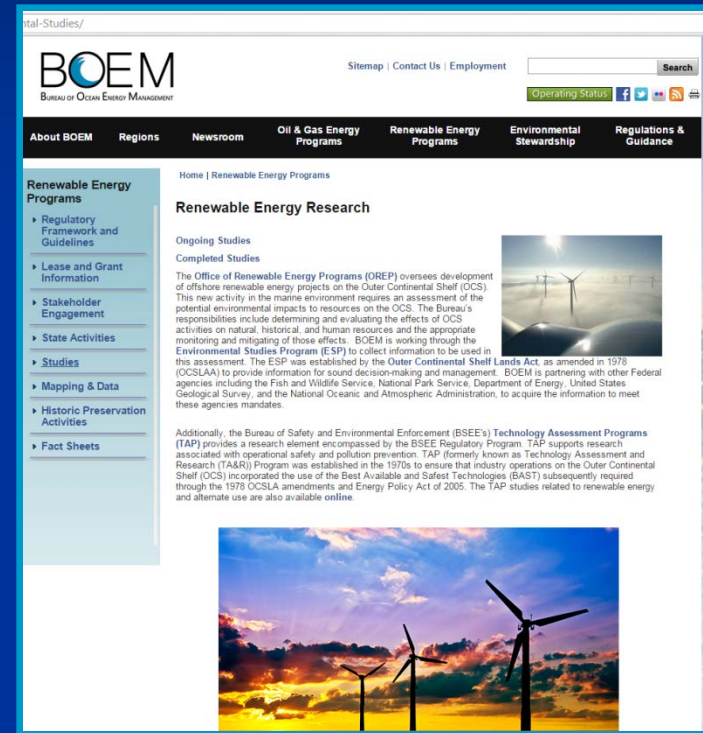
Overview: Standard NEPA Process



Environmental Studies Program

BOEM's **Environmental Studies Program** develops and oversees research to facilitate an understanding of potential impacts of energy development actions on the OCS

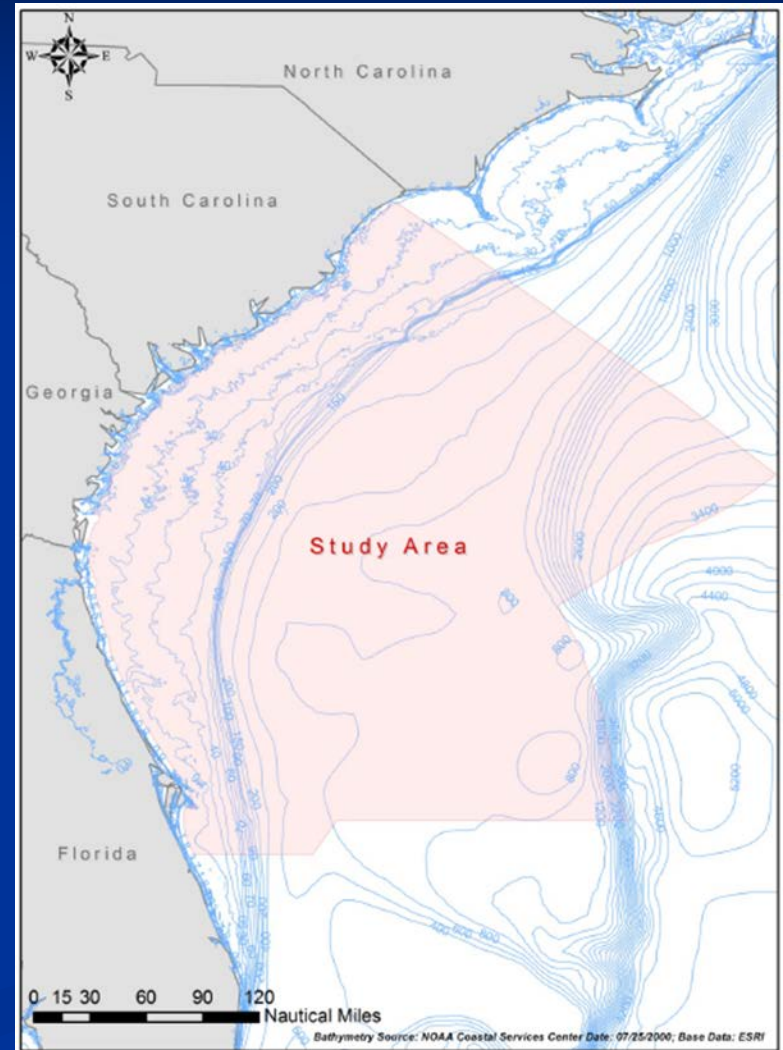
- Annual request for public input (late Fall)
- Opportunities for cooperative and/or interagency agreements



<http://www.boem.gov/Renewable-Energy-Environmental-Studies/>

South Atlantic Information Resources: Data Search and Literature Synthesis

- Included northern Florida
- Objectives:
 - To develop comprehensive literature syntheses of the environmental and human aspects
 - Assess ecological communities and dominant physical oceanographic, and other processes that drive the shelf and deep sea ecosystems
- Data gaps and information needs
- Can inform NEPA



■ Soft bottom benthic communities

- Distribution patterns, life history, seasonal dynamics, detailed mapping
- Impacts of electromagnetic forces/electric cables

■ Hard bottom habitat

- Habitat distribution, comprehensive mapping
- Less information on shelf edge coral habitats

■ Fish and Fish Habitat

- Non-commercial species
- Effects of sound waves and electromagnetic fields

■ Sea Turtles

- Response to anthropogenic noise

■ Marine Mammals

- Distribution and density in the winter
- Response to sounds produced during construction



Questions



Contact Information: Isis Johnson
Environmental Protection Specialist
isis.johnson@boem.gov
703-787-1522