

WEST COAST RENEWABLE ENERGY SCIENCE EXCHANGE

Q&A Summary for July 8, 2020 Webinar

Overview of BOEM-funded Historic Preservation Research on the Pacific OCS

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Q: What are “historic properties” (i.e., what is the definition)?

A: As defined by the [National Historic Preservation Act](#) (54 U.S.C. § 300308), “historic properties” means “any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included on, or eligible for inclusion on, the National Register [of Historic Places], including artifacts, records, and material remains relating to the district, site, building, structure, or object.” Properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to Tribes or Native Hawaiian Organizations may also be determined to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register (54 U.S.C. § 302706). The Department of Interior’s National Park Service maintains the National Register of Historic Places, and in *National Register Bulletin 15* provides information in evaluation criteria.

Q: How deep does the sub-bottom profiler go below the seafloor?

A: A sub-bottom profiler is designed to image sediment layers and other geomorphological features below the seafloor. It operates like a fish-finder (echosounder), but typically at a lower frequency and with higher-resolution capability. The depth of signal penetration depends, in part, on the type of sediment layers being imaged and the type of sub-bottom profiler system used. For archaeological purposes, [BOEM](#) is interested in imaging the upper 15 meters (50 feet) of sediment below the seafloor in order to identify potential intact submerged landforms, features that could possibly contain archaeological deposits.

Q: Can you please explain why 1 mile was used as the distance to evaluate for coastal properties?

A: The 1-mile distance from the coastline threshold was established as part of the [BOEM Pacific Region baseline update of archaeological and historic properties](#). The primary goal of the coastal properties inventory was to provide BOEM with an initial understanding of types of historic properties that exist along the U.S. West Coast (California, Oregon, and Washington) that need to be considered in relation to potential viewshed impacts from offshore wind energy development. As this effort applied across entire the west coast, the information was designed to be limited in scope in order to maintain cost control. When BOEM receives a [construction and operations plan](#) related to offshore wind energy development and officially begins its review of that plan, additional consultation will be conducted to identify historic properties that exist within an area of potential effect.

Q: Do you feel there is a gap between the UCH [Underwater Cultural Heritage] laws as compiled now and the more intangible cultural heritage as discussed in the TCL [Tribal Cultural Landscape] model?

A: The BOEM/NOAA [Underwater Cultural Heritage Law Study](#) was designed to look specifically at legislation that provides protection for tangible UCH on the Outer Continental Shelf. In the BOEM Pacific Regional Office, we have tried to work closely with indigenous communities to develop best

practices for consultation that allows for the inclusion of tangible and intangible information. In 2017, the BOEM Pacific Regional Office published [A Guidance Document for Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes](#). This was followed by [A Guidance Document for Characterizing Native Hawaiian Cultural Landscapes](#). Both of these were collaborative efforts, where BOEM, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, and NOAA's Maritime Heritage Program worked with Tribal and Native Hawaiian leaders (respectively) to develop a holistic cultural landscape approach to consultation that integrates science with historical, archaeological, and traditional knowledge.

Q: With regard to identifying viewsapes, given the permit history for the Cape Wind Project on the East Coast, is it likely that even those cultural practices that are determined to be eligible for NR [National Register of Historic Places] listing, actually affect the outcome of offshore wind projects?

A: Consultation and communication with interested Tribes at the earliest point in the review process is important to understanding and identifying information on historic properties and cultural practices that could be impacted by offshore wind energy construction. This includes both physical impacts from seafloor-disturbing activities as well as viewshed impacts to sites listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places. Given recent and proposed changes to federal environmental regulations, early communication is critical.

Q: What, if any, are the potential cultural properties identified off of the Central Coast of California?

A: Based on the submerged landforms model developed as part of the BOEM-funded study [Inventory and Analysis of Coastal and Submerged Archaeological Site Occurrence on the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf](#), parts of the central California coast appear to have a moderately high likelihood for the presence of relict features that could potentially contain pre-contact archaeological deposits. The BOEM Pacific Regional Office is currently working to further [update our model of submerged landform potential](#) on the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf. Regardless of the model, however, additional geophysical surveying (primarily using a sub-bottom profiler) and geotechnical testing (i.e., vibracore sample collection) are still necessary to confirm the potential for submerged pre-contact sites in this area. Additionally, there are several known and reported historic shipwreck losses along the central coast, including, for example, [SS Montebello](#), which was sunk by a Japanese submarine in 1941.

Q: How confident are you that your approach to identifying potential offshore cultural landscapes, absent a TCL [Tribal Cultural Landscape], would be sufficient to identify potential significant places outside these near coastal areas? I am reminded of the controversy surrounding the establishment by DFO [Fisheries and Oceans Canada] of the SGaan Kinghlas-Bowie Seamount off Haida Gwaii in BC [British Columbia] and its cosmological importance to the Haida First Nation.

A: While not fully aware of the issues in establishing the [SGaan Kinghlas-Bowie Seamount Marine Protected Area](#), early and meaningful consultation is very important in identifying potential significant places that need to be considered in relation to agency actions and undertakings. A [TCL approach](#) can provide a proactive and holistic approach to better identify tangible and intangible information that should be considered in the federal review process.

Q: Are there TCL [Tribal Cultural Landscape] studies planned for the Atlantic or Gulf coast?

A: Currently, the BOEM Pacific Regional Office is the only BOEM office that has developed a Tribal cultural landscape study, as defined in the [TCL Guidance Document](#). Recently, BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy Programs released [Developing Protocols For Reconstructing Submerged Paleocultural Landscapes And Identifying Ancient Native American Archaeological Sites In Submerged Environments](#), focused on the Atlantic, which includes a [best practices](#) document. Information on Tribal engagement for all BOEM Regions can be found [here](#).

Q: In reference to core samples, you mentioned there is a limited chance of finding any artifacts, then how is this information used? In other words, how useful are the cores?

A: Different types of analysis can be conducted on samples from sediment core recovered offshore. Sediment core data may provide important information on relative and/or absolute dates of different layers within the core, as well environmental and geological information that is important in reconstructing what is referred to as the paleoenvironment. Information collected from offshore sediment core samples are used to further refine our submerged landforms models.

Q: Do we know how long the human race has existed on the Pacific coast? Could it go back 19,000 years?

A: Data suggests that some of the earliest archaeological sites in the Americas may date back at least 19,000 years. Along the west coast of North America, one of the oldest sites can be found on the Northern Channel Islands, offshore Santa Barbara, California, dating to about 13,000 years ago. A good summary of west coast sites can be found [here](#).
