

Outer Continental Shelf Resources and Coastal Restoration

Talking Points for BOEM Deputy Director Walter Cruickshank
American Beach and Shore Preservation Association
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I. Introduction

Thank you for that kind introduction.

And good morning to all of you.

It's an honor to speak before this distinguished and diverse audience, and I especially welcome those of you who have traveled here from other parts of the country for this important Coastal Summit.

With over half our population living within 50 miles of the coast, and countless more enjoying the recreational opportunities it provides, there is no doubt that management of our shoreline is an issue of national importance. Your Association's work to preserve, protect and enhance our coastal resources fills an essential role in finding successful solutions to the issues we share.

I understand that you have heard from many of my federal colleagues this week – people from our sister agencies in the Department of the Interior (U.S. Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service) as well other agencies -- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Federal Emergency Management Agency, among others.

Together we form the fabric of the federal partnership that works with you regarding our nation's oceans and coasts.

We share a common interest in the state of our nation's beaches, regardless of whether we are government officials, scientists or engineers, teachers or business people.

For each of us, our coasts represent an integration of values – economic, environmental, security and some that are aesthetic and intangible.

I think that we all recognize in light of Superstorm Sandy, and storms from years past in other parts of the country, that significant weather events can affect the economy of the Nation, the health of our environment, and significantly impact public health and safety. Furthermore, our Nation's coastlines provide critical resources and benefits to the American people, so we all have a role to play in determining how to respond to these impacts.

I will discuss BOEM's role in responding to Hurricane Sandy in a few minutes. First I'd like to tell you a little about BOEM's Marine Minerals Program, which began in 1992 – 21 years ago.

II. BOEM's Marine Minerals Program

Authorities:

BOEM is mostly known for managing the development of offshore energy resources on the Outer Continental Shelf -- oil and gas resources in the Gulf of Mexico, off Southern California and Alaska – and renewable energy along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

While many agencies have responsibilities related to the ocean, BOEM is the only agency responsible for managing development of OCS marine mineral resources.

The OCS begins generally 3 miles from the coast (Texas and west coast of Florida 3 marine leagues (@10.5 miles) out to the extent of US jurisdiction (200+ nautical miles) offshore of the 50 states.

The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA)

- provides BOEM the authority to manage minerals on the OCS. This includes the subsoil and seabed of all submerged lands beyond State-owned waters.
- A 1994 amendment to OCSLA allows BOEM to negotiate, on a noncompetitive basis, the rights to OCS sand, gravel, or shell resources for shore protection, beach or wetlands restoration projects, or for use in construction projects funded in whole or part by or authorized by the Federal Government.

This is the core of our authority, though there are a host of other environmental and resource management statutes that apply (such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act and the National Historical Preservation Act).

Context:

As part of managing access to offshore resources, including sand, BOEM has other important ocean stewardship roles on the OCS. This involves:

- taking a national view of coastal and offshore needs,
- promoting environmental stewardship and protection of national resources, and

- utilizing OCS resources in a judicious and responsible manner to protect the human, marine and coastal environments.

As you can appreciate, by meeting our ocean stewardship responsibilities, BOEM's sand program helps our government partners achieve important results, among them:

- protecting property and infrastructure,
- protecting ecosystems and restoring shorelines, and
- preserving coastal areas for recreation, eco-tourism, general business, fishing, national defense, and other uses.

Components of the Program:

Within BOEM, our efforts are managed by the Marine Minerals Program. There are five components to the program:

- non-competitive leasing,
- competitive leasing,
- policy development,
- outreach, and
- research (including resource evaluation to identify and delineate suitable OCS sand and gravel borrow sites, and our environmental studies program).

Today I will focus on three of these components:

- non-competitive leasing,
- research and
- outreach.

I suspect these are the most relevant to your concerns.

Noncompetitive leasing:

The majority of our work involves noncompetitive leasing, which is the conveyance of OCS sand and gravel for use in beach nourishment and coastal restoration projects. What makes it noncompetitive is that when a public entity, for example, a town or government agency, requests the sand for a public works project, we can proceed to negotiate a lease agreement directly with that entity without having to put it up for competitive auction.

In the 20 years of the Marine Minerals Program, BOEM has completed 38 projects and conveyed more than 73 million cubic yards of sand and gravel -- equivalent to about 53 Empire State Buildings -- to replenish more than 202 miles of coastline in six states.

Examples include places such as:

- Jacksonville Beach and the City of Naples, Florida,
- Lafourche and Jefferson Parishes and the Caminada restoration projects along Louisiana's coast,
- Assateague Island, Maryland,
- Bogue Banks, North Carolina,
- Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and
- Sandbridge Beach and NASA Wallops Island Space Flight Facility in Virginia.

There are a number of projects planned for Fiscal Year 2013. BOEM has completed the leasing process for four of them:

- Patrick Air Force Base in Florida,
- Long Boat Key, Florida,
- Bogue Banks, North Carolina (due to Hurricane Irene), and
- Sandbridge, Virginia.

As you can see, we've had some repeat customers, due to Hurricane Sandy and other storms. But not all of the projects are a result of hurricanes or Nor'easters. Some are due to natural erosion of beaches, dunes or wetlands over the years, or to man-made stressors that affect the sand transport systems along the coast.

And we expect demand for OCS sand to grow as states deplete resources closer to shore or to avoid environmental or use conflicts in an increasingly busy ocean.

Research

When funding is available, BOEM conducts research and analysis to characterize sand resources and to evaluate the effects of proposed dredging operations, as required under current environmental laws.

The two main areas of research are:

- Resource Evaluation, to identify and delineate the location, types and volume of sand or gravel sources available for dredging (more than 70 studies over the years) and
- Environmental Studies
 - funded through BOEM Environmental Studies Program, often in partnerships with other federal and state agencies
 - more than \$12 million spent on MMP Environmental Studies since 1990, with at least \$1.5 million in MMP Environmental Studies in the last two years.
 - nearly 50 site specific and regional studies, and
 - 8 ongoing programmatic studies; and more are planned for next fiscal year.

Our most recent issue of *Ocean Science* magazine, available here and on-line (see www.boem.gov), outlines a number of Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico environmental studies on sand borrow sites for various restoration projects.

Studies are key to guiding BOEM's leasing decisions, and facilitating the proper management of OCS marine mineral resources to ensure that risks are minimized and resources are used in a wise manner.

The four general environmental areas we study and evaluate are:

- the impacts on marine and coastal life both from dredging operation and from the placement of offshore sand on the beach,
- how changes in the sea floor from dredging might affect wave or current action,
- how dredging techniques possibly affect, physical, chemical or biological resources in the borrow areas, and
- how different mitigation techniques can best minimize possible impacts. The results are incorporated, as appropriate, into lease requirements and stipulations for the dredging of OCS sand.

Studies often involve the consideration, cooperation and involvement from our partners, such as the Army Corps of Engineers, NASA, and state-level geological surveys.

BOEM studies are often the only studies available on US marine mineral resources. Other agencies heavily rely upon the studies as they seek to minimize impacts caused by dredging and benthic disturbance.

One last comment about our studies: They do not stand in isolation. When we receive an inquiry from a locality for a restoration project, we will evaluate it in the context of the research that might have already been done in that area, work with them and other partners to determine if additional research is needed, and collaborate to develop an appropriate restoration plan. Increasingly, states are looking at preventative measures for the longer term. Your states' geological surveys and natural resource departments are important partners in these initiatives.

Outreach –

Our program depends on robust partnerships with groups such as ASBPA, universities, and state and federal agencies.

At the local level, we participate in Sand Management Working Groups. These groups serve as an umbrella under which we and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers coordinate very closely and involve other federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, universities and private sector members. Working Group discussions are informal, foster information sharing and help identify issues and future needs. Currently we have Sand Management Working Groups in Gulf of Mexico, Florida and the Atlantic (covering NC and SC).

With that background on our Marine Minerals Program, I would like to take a moment to update you on BOEM's plans to help address the damage brought about by Hurricane Sandy.

III. BOEM AND SANDY RESPONSE

As Hurricane Sandy approached the coast, models predicted that more than 90 percent of coastline along the Delmarva Peninsula, New Jersey, and New York would experience beach and dune erosion. BOEM anticipated that it would be called upon to work with partners at all levels of government to help restore coastlines and communities devastated by Hurricane Sandy.

The Sandy Supplemental appropriation will enable us to get to the task at hand. It provided over \$50 billion for Hurricane Sandy response.

Of that, \$829 million is for Department of the Interior efforts, which includes \$360 million to increase the resiliency and capacity of coastal habitat and infrastructure to

withstand storms and reduce the amount of damage caused by such storms. This money will be shared among the Department's bureaus for priority projects.

As part of this effort, BOEM expects to be working with partners to identify sand resources and ensure that appropriate work is done so we can convey sand in a timely manner. We anticipate that this would involve:

- collecting data and identifying sand resources in Federal waters;
- initiating cooperative agreements with states and universities to help designate and delineate sand borrow areas;
- meeting with and supporting stakeholders in affected areas. In particular, we anticipate initiating a formal mid-Atlantic Sand Management Working Group to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers district offices in Philadelphia and New York, with states that have not previously requested sand from Federal waters, and with other stakeholders; and
- conducting environmental assessment and monitoring.

From its outset, BOEM staff have participated in the Department of the Interior's and Federal government's Hurricane Sandy Task Force.

We are coordinating regularly with the Army Corps of Engineers' Philadelphia and New York Districts and the New Jersey Geological Survey, in the needs assessments. New Jersey and the Army Corps are interested in pursuing OCS resource delineation for use in recovery efforts.

BOEM expect to support environmental studies. This will involve monitoring of OCS borrow area use and recovery of the marine life that lives on the sea floor.

While it appears that both New Jersey and New York will be able to accomplish some beach re-nourishment using state resources, both could require sand reconnaissance work in Federal waters to account for future resiliency and planning as state resources become exhausted or if there are environmental or use conflicts that prevent the use of state resources.

Although there is a long road ahead, BOEM looks forward to working with our partners to help the affected areas meet their coastal restoration goals.

VI. CONCLUSION

If you remember anything from what I've said this morning, I hope that it's

1) BOEM's Marine Minerals Program plays a significant and growing role in supplying sand for coastal projects that provide environmental, recreational and economic benefits to the Nation.

2) We are very mindful of the need and stand ready to help the states affected by Hurricane Sandy and other storms. BOEM is here to work with you and other partners to help restore and protect our coasts and wetlands.

3) Some of our Marine Minerals Program staff is here today. They are Colleen Finnegan and Jennifer Rose from our Leasing Division.

In addition, Geoff Wikel, the Branch Chief for Environmental Coordination in our Environmental Assessment Division, is here to participate in a panel following my talk. Feel free to contact them concerning your particular community's needs or with other questions.

Thank you for your time today; I would be happy to take your questions.

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