

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

Field	Study Information
Title	O`ahu’s Traditional Cultural Landscapes (PC-22-01)
Administered by	Pacific OCS Region
BOEM Contact(s)	Dave Ball (david.ball@boem.gov)
Procurement Type(s)	Interagency Agreement
Performance Period	FY 2024–2026
Final Report Due	TBD
Date Revised	September 15, 2023
Problem	Native Hawaiians have strong cultural ties to the ocean and its natural resources, and any development offshore Hawai`i has the potential to impact cultural and natural resources of significance to their communities. It is important for BOEM to fully understand the implications future offshore energy development may have on these resources in order to make informed decisions and comply with Federal and state environmental regulations.
Intervention	Implementing a cultural heritage landscape approach, researchers (including a lead knowledgeable and experienced in Hawaiian language and knowledge systems) will synthesize archival materials, oral histories, and traditional knowledge of the O`ahu viewshed and offshore environment, including neighboring islands.
Comparison	This research will build on the previous BOEM-funded Maritime Hawai`i study (Van Tilburg et al. 2017), focus specifically on the waters surrounding O`ahu, and include, among other things, cultural paddling and voyaging locations and the O`ahu cultural viewshed to/from neighboring islands.
Outcome	This study will blend traditional scientific research methodologies with traditional indigenous knowledge and methodologies to develop a holistic assessment of the cultural significance of resources offshore O`ahu in the areas that could be affected by wind energy development. BOEM will use this information to enhance consultation with the Native Hawaiian community and to better understand and describe the affected environment, develop alternatives to proposed actions, analyze potential effects, and develop mitigation measures.
Context	This research will focus specifically on the waters surrounding O`ahu and the islands neighboring O`ahu (vicinity of O`ahu in the area of potential offshore O`ahu wind energy development).

BOEM Information Need(s): The State of Hawai`i has mandated a goal of achieving 100% renewable energy by 2045. In order to meet this goal, development of offshore renewable energy resources may be necessary. BOEM has received several unsolicited proposals for wind energy development offshore O`ahu and identified two wind energy call areas. Under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), BOEM has an obligation to consult with Native Hawaiian Organizations on any undertaking that has the potential to impact historic or traditional cultural properties. To better understand the potential impacts

this development may have on tangible and intangible heritage resources of significance to Native Hawaiian communities, it is necessary to conduct archival research and oral history interviews with these communities. This information will assist BOEM, the State of Hawai'i, and Native Hawaiian communities in evaluating proposed offshore renewable energy projects, and to avoid or mitigate adverse effects to National Register (eligible or listed) Native Hawaiian sites during offshore energy development. BOEM will use this information in (National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NHPA documents, as well as consultations with Native Hawaiian communities. This research will also support the State's requirement for cultural impact assessments.

Background: In 2017, BOEM completed an initial research effort designed, in part, to develop best practices for consultation with Native Hawaiian communities and to provide a general understanding of Hawai'i's maritime cultural resources (Van Tilburg et al. 2017). The island of O`ahu consists of six distinct moku (traditional island districts) and as stated in the 2017 study, "consultation on the island poses unique challenges." From the 2017 study, we also know that wayfinding navigation and ocean patterns are important to Native Hawaiian practitioners like the Polynesian Voyaging Society; however, the identification of specific navigation routes and areas of importance were beyond the scope of that effort. Integration of traditional knowledge with archival research data will enhance BOEM's understanding and likelihood of identifying the presence of potentially significant cultural resources and identify appropriate mitigation measures to address those impacts. This proposed research will provide an opportunity to implement the consultation practices developed under the 2017 study, identify tangible and intangible cultural heritage sites of importance to Native Hawaiian communities, address stakeholder comments, and support the National Strategy for Ocean Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the US EEZ.

Objectives: The objective of this study is to develop a cultural landscape assessment of the environment surrounding O`ahu in support of potential future offshore renewable energy development.

Methods: To achieve the objectives of this study, researchers will implement the steps for characterizing Native Hawaiian cultural landscapes (Van Tilburg et al. 2017). This will include, among other things, identifying and engaging with Native Hawaiian community leaders to determine appropriate methods for incorporating traditional knowledge and oral histories. An examination of archival research will also be completed, which will include a review and transcription of Hawaiian language documents, as appropriate. Information acquired through this research will be incorporated into a cultural landscape assessment of the island of O`ahu and surrounding waters, including as appropriate, the neighboring islands of Kaua`i and Moloka`i.

Specific Research Question(s):

1. How can traditional knowledge and different perspectives of knowing the world inform our understanding of Native Hawaiian cultural landscapes surrounding the island of O`ahu?
2. What is the best culturally appropriate methodology to use when engaging Native Hawaiian communities (while also respecting the ethics, laws, and policies that acknowledge and protect traditional knowledge) in order to avoid or minimize impacts from BOEM-permitted activities?

Current Status: N/A

Publications Completed: N/A

Affiliated WWW Sites: N/A

References:

Van Tilburg H, Watson TK, Faria K, Hoomanawanui K, Ho-Lastiama I, Ritte W, Maly K, Nahoopii M, Horcajo K, Kaupiko K, Ball D. 2017. A Guidance Document for Characterizing Native Hawaiian Cultural Landscapes. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Pacific OCS Region, Camarillo, CA. OCS Study BOEM 2017-023.
<https://epis.boem.gov/final%20reports/5621.pdf>