

## **BOEM Pacific OCS Region: Ongoing Study**

**Study Area(s):** Northern California, Southern California, Washington-Oregon

**Administered By:** Pacific OCS Region

**Title:** Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes  
(Study #PR-12-TCL)

**BOEM Information Need(s) to be Addressed:** Understanding the types and locations of significant archaeological and cultural resources is essential to their preservation and consideration during planning for offshore renewable energy development. This includes, among others, resources and areas important to tribal and indigenous peoples, both historical and modern. As planning and development for offshore renewable energy projects increases, the potential for impacts to coastal and marine sites of significance to Native American communities will increase as well. These impacts can include physical disturbances to archaeological sites and traditional use areas, as well as view-shed impacts to sacred places through offshore siting. Government-to-government consultation is required under various federal laws and policies in order to identify potential impacts (c.f., NHPA, NEPA, E.O. 13175, S.O. 3317, etc.), and this effort will provide a transferable, transparent, and cost-effective method for tribes with a connection to the coast to document past and present places and resources significant to their communities and outside agencies, thus enhancing their capability for consultation.

**Total BOEM Cost:** \$500,000

**Period of Performance:** FY 2012–2016

**Conducting Organization(s):** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Maritime Heritage Program and Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

**Principal Investigator(s):** Dr. James Delgado and Dr. Valerie Grussing

**BOEM Contact(s):** [David Ball](#)

### **Description:**

**Background:** Native American communities have a special and unique understanding of the landscape and information about locations and traditional practices. Appropriate documentation and characterization of tribal areas must therefore include tribal engagement and input. Recognizing the significance of this information, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) recently completed a Native American Traditional Cultural Landscapes Action Plan to acknowledge and help identify these places of tribal significance. The plan lays out numerous action items intended to “promote the recognition and protection of Native American traditional cultural landscapes both within the federal government and the historic preservation community as well as at the state and local levels,” and also to “address the challenges of the consideration of Native American traditional cultural landscapes in the Section 106 review process as well as in NEPA reviews.”

This project, *Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes*, will utilize a team from NOAA's National Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Center and NOAA's Maritime Heritage Program, along with a Tribal Facilitator and representatives from three Native American communities along the west coast of the United States to develop a transferable best-practices methodology to help identify areas of tribal use and significance along the coast and offshore, which could be impacted from offshore renewable energy siting. Included in the project will be three case studies, one each from California, Oregon, and Washington. This effort will implement a holistic cultural landscape approach, which integrates environmental science with historical, archaeological, and traditional knowledge to provide a robust, transparent, and cost-effective procedure to document places and resources of past and present significance to tribal coastal communities. The cultural landscape approach recognizes that places and cultural heritage resources can have different or multiple meanings and levels of significance based on how people from different cultures, times, or backgrounds have interacted with the respective landscapes. Implementing this approach increases the likelihood that cultural heritage resources will be found, recognized, and appropriately respected as decisions are made about the siting and potential effects of offshore renewable energy projects.

Information obtained from this project will create a process that can be used by Native American communities to help recognize and record areas of tribal importance. It will also provide a vocabulary for agencies and tribes to facilitate communication and identify areas that could be impacted from proposed undertakings. The process will be transferable, and help agencies and stakeholders to: (1) properly engage with tribal and indigenous communities prior to the proposal of activities that may impact tribal resources and areas; (2) involve tribal and indigenous communities in the identification of their own significant resources and areas of use; and (3) elucidate tribal interests in specific planning areas. As a result, regional energy planning and siting decisions, and the underlying NHPA and NEPA analyses of cumulative impacts and synergies, can be made more efficiently, thus reducing conflicts, controversy, legal challenges, and procedural delays. This model can also help fill a critical data gap in ocean planning and management, and be applied to coastal and marine spatial planning efforts through the National Ocean Council.

Objectives: The overarching goal of *Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes* is to develop a proactive approach to working with Native American communities in order to identify areas of tribal significance that need to be considered in the planning process. Information from this effort will help facilitate decisionmaking processes that may impact or otherwise disturb these locales. Using a holistic cultural landscape approach, this project will develop:

1. A tool that identifies best practices for tribes to identify and convey areas of significance;
2. Case studies from three west coast tribes (one each in California, Oregon, and Washington) to demonstrate how to implement this tool.

Methods: The project will create a working group, led by a Tribal Facilitator and consisting of tribal representatives from three west coast tribes, as well as the NOAA

principal investigators and the BOEM project officer. The Working Group will host three regional inter-tribal workshops to bring together federal and tribal partners to identify best practices and general resources significant to tribal communities. Information collected from the workshops will be used to develop an Analysis Guide describing processes for identifying tribal cultural landscapes, including common terminology. The Analysis Guide will be used by representatives from the three west coast tribes to conduct limited Case Studies identifying tribal cultural landscapes within their separate communities. Data collected from the Case Studies will be treated as sensitive information and will not be included in the final report. Once the Case Studies are completed, the Working Group will reconvene to discuss the process, make revisions to the Analysis Guide, and provide a final report that details the process for identifying tribal cultural landscapes.

**Current Status:** The study was awarded through an interagency agreement on August 20, 2012. Three inter-tribal workshops (hosted by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Makah Tribe, and the Yurok Tribe, respectively) were held between August and December 2013. A draft guidance document was developed from these workshops and comments were received from workshop participants. The guidance document was finalized in December 2015, and is available online (see citation below). Work on the case studies and final report has continued through three no-cost contract modifications. The period of performance expired on May 19, 2016, and the final report is currently under review.

**Final Report Due:** May 19, 2016 (submittal pending; expected August 2017)

**Publications Completed:**

Grussing, V., D. Ball, E. Thorsgard, and B. Edwards. 2014. Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes for Resource Preservation and Protection. In *Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Underwater Cultural Heritage*, p. 61-72. <http://www.themua.org/collections/items/show/1581>

Grussing, V.J. 2015 Aug. Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes: A Collaborative Approach to Resource Management. *Anthropology News*. <http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2015/08/17/characterizing-tribal-cultural-landscapes/>

Ball, D., R. Clayburn, R. Cordero, B. Edwards, V. Grussing, J. Ledford, R. McConnell, R. Monette, R. Steelquist, E. Thorsgard, and J. Townsend. 2015. A Guidance Document for Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes. US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Pacific OCS Region, Camarillo, CA. OCS Study BOEM 2015-047. 32 p. <http://www.boem.gov/Pacific-Completed-Studies/>.

**Affiliated WWW Sites:** None

**Revised Date:** October 24, 2017