



BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT
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Operating Status



Office of Environment



Who we are:

The Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) contains 160 million acres, and of that, 6 million acres are producing oil and natural gas. For several decades, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) GOM Region's Office of Environment (OEnv) has been responsible for assessing environmental activities and conducting studies associated with mineral extraction carried out in the GOM OCS.

Office of Environment BOEM--GOM OCS Region
Office of the Regional Supervisor Deputy Regional Supervisor
Environmental Assessment Section Environmental Operations Section Biological/Social Sciences Section Physical/Chemical Sciences Section Environmental Studies Section

What we do:

Carry out the environmental policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior in accordance with NEPA and the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) 43 U.S.C. 1301-1356, as amended with regard to oil and gas in the GOM and Atlantic OCS and other mineral (salt and sulfur) extraction operations as well as renewable energy activities and alternate use of existing oil and gas structures in the GOM OCS. Responsible for all pre-lease environmental activities associated with the offshore mineral leasing program and for renewable energy and alternate use activities in the GOM OCS planning areas, including development of sales-related NEPA documents; gathering and cataloging socioeconomic and environmental information; and conducting public scoping meetings and hearings. Develops or evaluates post-lease operation-specific NEPA documents, and reviews environmental documents required by the lease; performs environmental investigations to assess the effects of OCS activities and/or compliance by operators with environmental requirements; and applies unique measures to mitigate potential environmental impacts of proposed activities. Consults with other Federal agencies regarding:

- Endangered Species Act 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Essential Fish Habitat) 16 U.S.C 1801 et seq.
- National Historic Preservation Act 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.
- Oil Pollution Act 33 U.S.C. 2701
- Marine Mammal Protection Act 16 U.S.C. 1361-1423h issues.

Coordinates with adjacent states to assure both pre-lease and post-lease compliance under the Coastal Zone Management Act 16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq. Develops, negotiates and supervises all environmental studies in the Gulf of Mexico and oil and gas related studies in the Atlantic OCS planning area. Manages the OCS Marine Minerals Program for the GOM. BOEM is responsible for "non-energy minerals" (primarily sand and gravel) excavated from the ocean floor. As steward for these resources, BOEM must ensure that the removal of any mineral resources is done in a safe and environmentally sound manner, and that any potential adverse impacts to the marine, coastal and/or human environments are avoided or minimized. Identifies and makes available sand deposits in Federal waters suitable for beach nourishment and levee and wetlands restoration projects; prepares leases, and associated environmental reviews for removal and use of sand deposits by developing and maintaining cooperative partnerships with Federal and state regulatory agencies and other interested parties in the GOM area; reviews environmental analyses prepared by other agencies/entities that contain marine mineral (sand/gravel) subject matter. Reviews all permitted seafloor disturbing actions for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Manages the Renewable Energy Programs for Alabama, Florida (west coast), Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

In 2011, the GOM's Office of Leasing and Environment was divided into the OEnv and the Office of Leasing and Plans to improve work processes and to better support the Department/Agency's new requirements. The restructuring of OEnv resulted in five sections:

1. The Environmental Assessment Section (EAS) addresses pre-lease (activities conducted prior to a federal offshore lease being given) requirements per National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, as amended.
2. The Environmental Operations Section (EOS) addresses post-lease (activities conducted after a federal offshore lease is given) NEPA requirements.
3. The Biological/Social Sciences Section (BSSS) provides scientific expertise to support NEPA and the Environmental Studies Program.
4. The Physical/Chemical Sciences Section (PCSS) also provides NEPA and environmental studies support.
5. Lastly, the Environmental Studies Section (ESS) supports the Bureau's decision making and science units.

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