

Environmental Studies Program: Ongoing Study

Field	Study Information
Title	West Coast Tribal Cultural Landscapes (PC-21-01)
Administered by	Pacific OCS Regional Office
BOEM Contact(s)	Dave Ball (david.ball@boem.gov), James Moore (james.moore@boem.gov)
Procurement Type(s)	Interagency Agreement
Conducting Organization(s)	John S. McCain III National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution (NCECR)
Total BOEM Cost	\$1,849,399 (includes Environmental Studies Program and Pacific Region funds)
Performance Period	FY 2021–2025
Final Report Due	August 30, 2025
Date Revised	October 31, 2023
Problem	BOEM needs a better understanding of the types of Tribal cultural landscapes that could be affected by wind energy development offshore the U.S. West Coast for consideration in leasing decisions, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) reviews, offshore wind plan reviews, and in direct response to recommendations from Tribes.
Intervention	BOEM Pacific OCS Region will work with local Tribal Nations to develop Tribal cultural landscape assessments (as defined by Tribes) near West Coast offshore wind energy planning areas, including the coast and offshore.
Comparison	This effort will provide BOEM with the needed Tribal cultural landscape assessments for its decision-making, and an opportunity to further implement the Guidance Document for Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes (Ball et al. 2015) and identify opportunities for revision. The study will provide a collaborative mechanism for Tribal voices to inform and illuminate offshore wind energy development decisions.
Outcome	Tribal cultural landscape assessments from several Tribes with ties to West Coast offshore wind energy planning areas, including coast and offshore areas.
Context	The geographic domain is the area of effect relevant to potential wind energy leasing areas offshore the BOEM Pacific Region.

BOEM Information Need(s): Proper and effective consultation on federal actions with Tribal implications requires a considerable amount of time, and typically more time than is available under the environmental review processes. BOEM needs to document areas and resource types of importance to Native American Tribal Nations that could be impacted by future BOEM actions offshore the U.S. West Coast so that impacts and adverse effects can be resolved in a timely manner. Information developed through this effort will directly support BOEM's leasing decisions, NEPA and NHPA reviews, environmental justice analysis, and Government-to-Government consultations on BOEM actions and undertakings related to wind energy leasing and development.

Each Tribal Nation may have their own definition of cultural landscapes and cultural resources, and thus it is critical that all potentially affected Tribes are able to speak into the BOEM offshore wind planning and authorization process.

Background: BOEM is currently considering potential wind energy development in multiple areas offshore California and Oregon. Multiple Native American Tribal Nations are known to have current or ancestral ties to these areas and possess knowledge of cultural resources and currently submerged cultural sites in these areas. Cultural resources, and particularly sites that are submerged, are still a source of cultural significance and thus become “deeply intertwined with the tribe’s current issues with federal land management practices,” (Garrett 2009). During information meetings with West Coast Tribal Nations for California offshore wind energy planning, Tribes requested that BOEM and its planning partners identify archaeological and cultural resources and areas of cultural sensitivity well ahead of project siting. Specifically, Tribes recommended: that such work be carried out via ethnographic and oral history inquiries with Tribal people; that any model for cultural resource data collection should accommodate many Tribes; and that analysis of Tribal cultural resources be non-invasive and culturally sensitive (Kearns & West 2018). For offshore wind energy planning in Oregon, the deep Tribal ties to the ocean and connected lands and resources were highlighted in a study idea submitted to the Environmental Studies Program by a group including multiple Tribal representatives. The study idea submittal also described the need for Tribes to define their own cultural resources and landscapes and the potential impacts from offshore wind development.

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 effort will implement the framework of the Guidance Document for Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes (Guidance Document) (Ball et al. 2015), which integrates environmental science with historical, archaeological, and traditional knowledge. The cultural landscape approach recognizes that places and 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 holistic approach increases the likelihood that cultural heritage resources will be identified, recognized, and appropriately resolved as decisions are made about the siting and potential effects of offshore renewable energy projects.

Objective(s): The overarching goal of this effort is to develop cultural landscape assessments of areas of Tribal significance that need to be considered near West Coast offshore wind energy planning areas. Information from this effort will help facilitate decision-making processes that may impact these locales while enhancing adherence to federal regulatory timelines.

Methods: This research will implement the framework of the Guidance Document and build upon the case studies completed previously by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Makah Tribe, and the Yurok Tribe (Ball et al. 2017). NCECR and its qualified contractors will work with West Coast Tribal Nations and the BOEM Pacific Region Office to identify Tribes who identify ties to coast and offshore regions near West Coast offshore wind energy planning areas. Working with West Coast Tribes and BOEM staff, the NCECR team will conduct a needs assessment and establish working groups for each area of interest in a manner that acknowledges Tribal sovereignty and ensures meaningful engagement through the study effort. Areas of interest will be determined by the BOEM project officer, BOEM Pacific Tribal Liaison, and NCECR and its qualified contractors after completion of the needs assessment. Each working group will host inter-tribal workshops in its respective area with the goal of bringing together Tribal partners to identify best practices and general resources significant to Tribal communities that

would enhance any future offshore wind project-scale assessments. BOEM's Guidance Document (Ball et al. 2015), and other agreed upon appropriate methods will then be used by individual participating Tribes to identify Tribal cultural landscapes within their individual communities. Protocols will be identified and implemented to address potentially sensitive information and any sensitive information will be excluded from the final report.

Specific Research Question(s):

1. What Tribes claim ties to West Coast offshore wind energy planning areas (including coastal and offshore regions)?
2. How do Tribes define cultural resources that may be affected by offshore wind development, and what areas and/or types of resource areas located near potential offshore wind development are of significance to Tribes?
3. What types of traditional cultural properties need to be considered in relation to offshore wind development, and how do Tribes recommend that BOEM ensure that Tribal voices inform and illuminate decisions regarding offshore wind energy development with a focus on considering and mitigating potential impacts to cultural resources?

Current Status: The BOEM-NCECR interagency agreement was awarded on August 31, 2021 and a post-award meeting was held on September 10, 2021. The needs assessment was completed in February 2022. The agreement was modified on September 13, 2022 to expand the geographic scope to include Washington, add funds, and extend the period of performance. Because initial cost estimates for involvement by all participating Tribes did not fully account for all costs to those Tribes, BOEM increased the study funding to ensure their participation. Participating Tribes are at various stages in development of their TCLs and the first inter-Tribal workshop in support of this effort was held on October 30, 2023.

Publications Completed: None

Affiliated WWW Sites: Tribal Cultural Landscapes Workshop, hosted by the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, June 8, 2022: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qt6o6l2Rx_o

References:

- Ball D, Clayburn R, Cordero R, Edwards B, Grussing V, Ledford J, McConnell R, Monette R, Steelquist R, Thorsgard E, Townsend J. 2015. A Guidance Document for Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes. Camarillo (CA): US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Pacific OCS Region. OCS Study BOEM 2015-047. 32 p. <https://www.boem.gov/2015-047/>
- Ball D, Clayburn R, Cordero R, Edwards B, Grussing V, Ledford J, McConnell R, Monette R, Steelquist R, Thorsgard E, Townsend J. 2017. Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes. Volume II: Tribal Case Studies. Camarillo (CA): US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Pacific OCS Region. OCS Study BOEM 2017-001. 232 p. <https://www.boem.gov/BOEM-2017-001-Volume-2/>
- Garrett BL. 2010. Drowned Memories: The Submerged Places of the Winnemem Wintu. Arch. 6(2):346-371.

Kearns & West. 2018. Outreach Summary Report: California Offshore Wind Energy Planning. 42 p.
<https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/renewable-energy-program/State-Activities/CA/Outreach-Summary-Report-September-2018.pdf>