

# Monthly Highlights

January - February, 2011



## NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

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## NORTHEAST REGION, HABITAT CONSERVATION DIVISION

### GLOUCESTER FIELD OFFICE, GLOUCESTER, MA

#### FEDERAL/STATE OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY TASK FORCES

Staff from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Habitat Conservation Division and Protected Resources Division has been involved in Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE)/State offshore renewable energy task forces that have been established in Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. These task forces serve as the intergovernmental forum for the Secretary of Interior's *Smart from the Start* offshore wind leasing initiative, and include members of federal, state, local and tribal governments. NMFS will continue to work through the task forces to engage in the BOEMRE process to ensure offshore wind siting occurs in a sustainable manner that minimizes adverse effects to NOAA trust resources and the sustainable harvest of fishery resources.

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[Susan.Tuxbury@noaa.gov](mailto:Susan.Tuxbury@noaa.gov), 978/ 281-9176)

#### COMMERCIAL LEASING FOR WIND POWER ON THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF OFFSHORE MASSACHUSETTS

BOEMRE published a Request for Interest (RFI) in the *Federal Register* on December 29, 2010 to solicit interest and information for potential development of wind energy projects within a proposed RFI area. The RFI area of interest is located south and east of Martha's

NOAA



Vineyard and Nantucket, and encompasses an area of approximately 2,224 square nm, and contains 321 whole OCS lease blocks, as well as 163 partial lease blocks. On March 8, 2011, NMFS provided information to BOEMRE regarding important ecological areas, fish habitat, protected resources, commercial fishing activities, and fishery management actions within the RFI area. NMFS will continue to work with BOEMRE to avoid and minimize adverse effects to NMFS trust resources and commercial fishing activities within the RFI area.

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### **MUSKEGET CHANNEL TIDAL ENERGY PROJECT**

The Town of Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard filed a Draft Pilot License Application (DPLA) with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on January 31, 2011 for the Muskeget Channel Tidal Energy Project (FERC No. 13015). The proposed hydrokinetic project is located in the Muskeget Channel between Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, Massachusetts. The proposed project would consist of: (1) 13 commercially operated OCGen™ horizontal hydrokinetic cross flow turbine generation units with a total installed capacity of 5 megawatts (MW), and one experimental turbine unit that would be used to test various tidal energy technologies; (2) a mooring and anchoring system attached to each unit consisting of four mooring lines, an anchor, and a clump weight; (3) two alternative submarine cable routes connecting the turbine

generation units to an onshore substation located either in the Chappaquiddick or Katama sections of Edgartown; (4) two alternative onshore transmission line routes consisting of a 34.5 kv transmission line connecting either the Chappaquiddick or Katama onshore station to an existing distribution line in Edgartown; and (5) appurtenant facilities. Comments on the proposed project are due to be filed with FERC on March 17, 2011. NMFS staff will provide comments on the project related to fisheries, essential fish habitat, and protected resources. NMFS will continue to work with FERC and the Town of Edgartown through the pilot license process to ensure protection of NOAA trust resources. ([Susan.Tuxbury@noaa.gov](mailto:Susan.Tuxbury@noaa.gov), 978/ 281-9176)

### **CLIMATE CHANGE PRESENTATION**

HCD staff gave a presentation to an advanced placement (AP) science class at the Essex Agricultural and Technical High School (Essex Aggie High) in Danvers, MA. The NMFS has hosted several student interns from Essex Aggie High over the years, and their AP science class has recently expressed an interest in climate change impacts on northeast US fisheries and other coastal resources. The presentation provided the students with the basis of climate change science and information on current and projected impacts on fishery resources, and ongoing science and services that NOAA has provided to address climate change. The students were also interested in the wide range of science, monitoring, and services that NOAA provides the various sectors of the US society. ([Mike.R.Johnson@noaa.gov](mailto:Mike.R.Johnson@noaa.gov), 978/ 281-9130)

### **HYANNIS INNER HARBOR DREDGING**

HCD staff reviewed and commented on two dredging and marina improvement proposals within Hyannis Inner Harbor in Hyannis, Massachusetts. The proposals were for two separate marina facilities at Dockside Marina and Hyannis Marine. Maintenance dredging is typically required for adequate docking in these areas to remove the accumulated sediments, which result from the turbidity plumes caused by large ferry vessels as they maneuver to and from the docking facility within Hyannis Inner Harbor. The applicant requested relief of the time of year restriction for dredging activities within the winter flounder spawning and juvenile development period due to the frequent turbidity and sedimentation in this area of the harbor, along with minimal use of the project area by winter flounder, as determined through surveys conducted over a three-year period. The surveys also detected the presence of eelgrass (*Zostera marina*), a type of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), with blades and clumps of uprooted eelgrass found through benthic trawling activities between several of the existing docks. The U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency has designated SAV as a “special aquatic site” under the Federal Clean Water Act, due to its important role in the marine ecosystem for nesting, spawning, nursery cover, and forage areas for fish and wildlife. It also appeared that a portion of the improvement dredging may have been proposed within intertidal areas, which are valuable coastal areas that support high densities and diversity of biota through the support of biological functions such as breeding, juvenile growth, feeding, and predator avoidance for foraging species. NMFS recommended that the applicants pursue less environmentally damaging alternatives to the projects, including no dredging within intertidal areas and that eelgrass surveys be conducted within the dredge footprints during the growing season prior to the proposed dredging so that it may be avoided if present. ([Jenna.Flynn@noaa.gov](mailto:Jenna.Flynn@noaa.gov), 978/ 675-2176)

### SANDY HOOK FIELD OFFICE, HIGHLANDS, NJ

#### LIBERTY NATURAL GAS

Public and agency scoping meetings were scheduled for February by the US Coast Guard and MARAD for Liberty Natural Gas’s proposed deepwater port offshore of Monmouth County, New Jersey for the importing of liquefied natural gas (LNG). The proposed LNG port consists of four subsea Submerged Turret Loading™ buoy systems which will receive and transfer natural gas from purpose-built liquefied natural gas regassification vessels and a 44.37 mile offshore subsea pipeline to Perth Amboy, Middlesex County,

New Jersey. The scoping meetings were canceled. The Deepwater Ports Act allows the governors of the coastal states to veto, or disapprove the license for deepwater ports offshore of their coast. New Jersey’s Governor Chris Christie notified MARAD that he was vetoing the proposed project in a letter dated February 8, 2011. ([Karen.Greene@noaa.gov](mailto:Karen.Greene@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3023 for HCD or [Danielle.Palmer@noaa.gov](mailto:Danielle.Palmer@noaa.gov), 978/ 282-8468 for PRD)

#### NATURAL CURRENTS ENERGY SERVICES LLC, SALEM RIVER TIDAL ENERGY PROJECT

Natural Currents Energy Service, LLC (NCES) has applied for a preliminary permit for another hydrokinetic project in New Jersey. In addition to two proposed projects in the Manasquan River and one in the Shrewsbury River, NCES is seeking a preliminary permit to study the feasibility of the installation of between ten and 30 NC Sea Dragon or Red Hawk tidal turbines at a rated capacity of 100 kilowatts (kW) in the Salem River between the confluence of Fenwick Creek just north of the Penn’s Neck Bridge on South Broadway in the City of Salem and the Mid-Atlantic Port Terminal. The initial estimated production would be a minimum of 3,504,000 kW hours per year with the installation of 10 units. HCD commented to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on the permit application. The Salem River provides habitat for a wide variety of NMFS’ resources including federally managed species and anadromous fish. Our concerns and comments were similar to those for NCES’ other projects. We have yet to receive any application materials from NCES, necessary baseline aquatic resource data is lacking, and consultations pursuant to the Magnuson Stevens Act and the Endangered Species Act will be needed. Since the Salem River is a tributary to the Delaware River, HCD is also coordinating with the Delaware River Fish and Wildlife Management Cooperative Fisheries Tech Committee. ([Karen.Greene@noaa.gov](mailto:Karen.Greene@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3023)

#### NEW JERSEY RENEWABLE ENERGY TASK FORCE

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement (BOEMRE) held a conference call with the members of the NJ task force to provide an overview of Interior Secretary's Smart from the Start initiative to streamline the process for the review and approval of wind farms in the outer continental shelf, to walk through the leasing process and the proposed changes, and to go over the revised draft Call for Information for New Jersey. It is expected that the Request for Information will be published in the Federal Register sometime this spring. ([Karen.Greene@noaa.gov](mailto:Karen.Greene@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3023 for HCD or [Julie.Crocker@noaa.gov](mailto:Julie.Crocker@noaa.gov) 978/ 282-8480 for PRD)

**AMSTERDAM, NEW YORK  
PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE, DRAFT  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
ASSESSMENT, U.S. COAST  
GUARD**

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region, Habitat Conservation Division received a notice announcing the availability of plans from the New York State Thruway Authority, the project's sponsor, to construct a pedestrian bridge across the New York State Barge Canal at Amsterdam, New York. The project is expected to comprise construction of a pedestrian link between the Amsterdam communities south of the Mohawk River, and the Amsterdam business district and neighborhoods north of the river. The bridge will be constructed on the site of the Old Bridge Street Bridge, removed in the 1980's after the adjacent Route 30 bridge was opened to traffic. HCD reviewed the document and concluded that no resources of concern to the NMFS will be impacted. As a result no further action is required.

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**PSEG SALEM AND HOPE CREEK  
NUCLEAR GENERATING  
STATIONS**

A formal request was received by HCD from the NRC requesting an abbreviated consultation with the NMFS as well as seeking conservation recommendations. The document was prepared under the provisions of the 1996 amendments to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) as part of the NRC's ongoing consultation process

with the NMFS pertaining to an application submitted by PSE&G Nuclear, LLC for the renewal of the operating licenses for Hope Creek Generating Station (Hope Creek) and Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1 and 2 (Salem) both located along the Delaware River. ([Stanley.W.Gorski@noaa.gov](mailto:Stanley.W.Gorski@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3037 or [Brian.C.May@noaa.gov](mailto:Brian.C.May@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3116)

**FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION (FERC),  
SPECTRA ENERGY CORPORATION (SPECTRA ENERGY)**  
HCD has reviewed the Pre-filing Draft Resource Reports 1-12 submitted to FERC by Spectra Energy as part of its application for the expansion of the Texas Eastern Transmission and Algonquin Gas Transmission interstate pipeline systems to transport natural gas supplies to high demand markets in northern New Jersey and New York City. The New Jersey-New York Expansion Pipeline Project (Project) will include constructing approximately 15.5 miles of new pipeline, which will run through parts of Bayonne, Jersey City, and offshore Hoboken in New Jersey, as well as parts of Staten Island and Manhattan in New York; replacing approximately five miles of pipeline in Linden, New Jersey, and Staten Island, New York; and, modifying existing facilities in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. HCD focused primarily on those Resource Reports more relevant to the NMFS's mission objectives and have concentrated our efforts on reviewing; 1 – Project Description, 2 – Water Use and Quality, 3 – Fish, Wildlife and Vegetation. A number of federally-managed species with designated essential fish habitat (EFH) under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and the Endangered Species Act, exist in the project areas. In addition, as part of the ongoing coordination and consultation the NMFS is expecting an EFH Assessment from FERC for the project. ([Karen.Greene@noaa.gov](mailto:Karen.Greene@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3023 or [Brian.C.May@noaa.gov](mailto:Brian.C.May@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3116)

**GLOUCESTER POINT FIELD OFFICE, GLOUCESTER POINT, VA**

**BOEMRE/NOAA MMC WORKGROUP, CHARLESTON, SC**

A focus group convened February 1-2, 2011 in Charleston, SC to review the utility of a new tool designed to be used in Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) and in the siting and review of offshore renewable energy projects on the outer continental shelf (OCS). Working together, NOAA Coastal Services Center (CSC) and the Bureau of Ocean Energy, Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) have developed a Multipurpose Marine

## In the News

Cadastre (MMC), a web-based tool providing spatial data using a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) platform. A cadastre is typically a term applied to the methodology of land-based property or boundary mapping. Some of the existing data layers provided by the MMC include marine habitat and biodiversity, human use,

sea floor sediment and underlying geology. Raw data from which the layers of the MMC are built are available through hot links to the authoritative source. The focus group worked to improve the current version of the MMC by identifying data gaps and providing suggestions to help improve the usability of the tool. It was reported that HCD in the Northwest Regional Office is presently using the MMC for project review and EFH consultation. The URL for the MMC website is <http://www.marinecadastre.gov/default.aspx>. **([David.L.O'Brien@noaa.gov](mailto:David.L.O'Brien@noaa.gov), 804/ 684-7828)**