

MBWG Meeting Notes

May 22, 2007

MMS 5 Year plan and Alternative Energy Initiatives

- As part of MMS' 5-year plan (2007-2012), they are proposing a change to their Gulf of Mexico planning areas and also a sale in the Mid-Atlantic planning area offshore of Virginia
- MMS is currently working on adjusting several of their administrative boundaries, which do not necessarily match state lateral boundaries.
- There are two provisions under Section 388 of the EPA2005 – one defines alternative energy, the other defines alternate use of existing oil and gas facilities.
- MMS has the following responsibilities regarding alternative energy: lease issuance, lease administration, project plan reviews, conduct of approved plan activities, and decommissioning
- A final programmatic EIS is slated to be completed by Summer 2007, with the development of the final rule occurring in 2008.
- Existing AEP projects include: Cape Wind and the Long Island Offshore Wind park, however, MMS will not issue any decisions on these until the Alternative Energy Program is in place.
- PowerPoint presentations will be made available to the group

Agency Updates

- *FGDC* – GLOB has been occupying most of FGDC's time. A FACA committee is being formed (private sector) to determine what activities FGDC should undertake. Also, there is a program to provide "Imagery for the Nation" – 333 Million over three years to provide 1 meter and 6 inch resolution imagery to be updated every three years
- *Maritime Boundaries project* – They just finished Alaska baseline points (took them 1 year). This will be available next month. They are in the process of updating the EEZ lines. New 3 NM lines will be developed and added around all US flagged possessions in the Pacific. They are also working on updating the Federal Register Notice from 1995 which references the limits of the EEZ. At issue is whether or not the updates should reference older datums or the newer WGS84. Also, we learned that there are some plans in the works to update the EVS shoreline.
- *IWG-OCM* – An effort is underway to create an inventory of offshore activities. A working meeting will be held during week of September 9 at CSC in Charleston.

They are not just looking for datasets, but also methodologies. It also includes future data acquisitions and efficiencies in doing this among different agencies.

- *Extended Continental Shelf (Article 76)* – Some states can lay claim to the continental shelf beyond 200 NM. DOS is currently exploring how to delimit and enact this over time. They will need bathymetry, seismic data, and gravity and magnetic data. This would be the single largest and most detailed research effort of the ocean bottom in U.S. history. It is estimated that \$50 M is needed over several years. About 60 countries have a potential ECS. 9 have made a claim. President is currently proposing \$8M to NOAA for ocean exploration.
- *USFWS* – DOI is creating an Office of Oceans and Coasts, which would facilitate intra-agency coordination and communication. It would pull resources from other agencies in DOI, however, no funding is available. USFWS is working on delineation of marine components of their wildlife refuges.
- *Navy* – Wanted to know the status of the MMA inventory.
- *Sanctuaries* – Lots of their boundaries are in flux (expansion of Fagatele, Flower Garden Banks NMS?). They are also developing some case studies and lessons learned regarding the technical issues of boundary delimitation.
- *MMS* – They are working with CA to fix the SLA boundary. They are also in conversations with FL to fix the SLA boundary in the Gulf.
- *NOAA CSC* – Dave made a request to the group to provide information on users of the Handbook for evaluation purposes.

MMC Project

- A proof-of-concept site has been developed and can be found at the following location: <http://csc-s-maps-q.csc.noaa.gov/MMC>. The site is currently in development and as such, is not to be considered public. Please do not distribute this link outside of the MBWG
- Data is currently shown from NOAA OCS, NOAA Sanctuaries, MMS, and USFWS. The data is available for download
- The current site pulls data from a centralized database that was populated manually – the next version of the project will rely on an automated routine to “harvest” data from AOR
- The MMC working group is currently asking for input on the proof-of-concept

2007 Submerged Lands Conference

- October 28 – November 2, Williamsburg, VA.
<http://www.submergedlands2007.com>
- In the past, both NOAA CSC and MMS have sponsored the conference in the past. Last year, CSC coordinated a mapping session with TNC – MMS also presented.
- Very good opportunity to reach out to state partners
- Two ideas for conference participation:
 - an MBWG presentation within the mapping session which would detail federal agency responsibilities and activities with regard to submerged lands and boundary development
 - an entire session devoted to the content of the Handbook. This would consist of a panel of experts (law, policy, GIS/mapping) that would give short presentations on the different sections of the Handbook, then take questions from the audience.
- NOAA CSC will follow up with Tony Watkinson, conference coordinator, to determine how to proceed with ideas.