

Region: Pacific OCS Region

Planning Area(s): Southern California

Title: Update of Summary of Knowledge: Selected Areas of the Pacific Coast

MMS Information Need(s) to be Addressed: To perform project reviews, MMS Pacific OCS Region scientists rely on environmental documentation written for previous Pacific OCS lease sales, platforms, pipelines, the undeveloped leases, environmental studies and other available documents and reports. Many of these reports, which MMS relies on for decisions, are no longer current. In addition, new projects for alternate use and renewable energy are on the horizon. Therefore, an updated summary of the current status of the marine and coastal environment is needed.

Cost Range (in thousands): \$700-800

Period of Performance: FY 2008-2010

Description:

Background: The purpose of this proposed work is to synthesize recent information concerning the marine environment along the west coast of the United States. The information will be used by MMS in the preparation of environmental assessments of present and future activities related to energy production on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). In particular, updated information is needed for the Southern California area to assess potential impacts from existing oil and gas platforms. Additionally, MMS has new responsibilities for regulating offshore alternative energy facilities and requires updates of baseline information for northern California, Oregon, and Washington.

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), by virtue of the OCS Lands Act and the Submerged Lands Act, and pursuant to delegation of authority by the Secretary of the Interior, has jurisdiction over leasing and development of OCS submerged lands for mineral development. In addition, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires all federal agencies to use a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to ensure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences in any planning and decision-making which may have a significant impact on the environment. The MMS Pacific OCS Region is a significant source of oil and gas for the nation. To perform periodic and project reviews of oil and gas production activities on existing leases in California, the MMS Pacific Region has relied on environmental documentation prepared for previous lease sales, platform and pipeline construction, undeveloped leases, and other documents and reports. The basis for much of this documentation comes from a summary of knowledge prepared for the MMS and eventually published as "Ecology of the Southern California Bight: *A Synthesis and Interpretation*" [Dailey, M.D., Reish D.J., and Anderson J.W., eds., 1993]. This reference summarizes available information for several key environmental subjects through the year of 1992. The MMS needs to update this summary of knowledge to include information for subjects where significant new information has become available since 1992.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 amended Section 8 of the OCS Lands Act (OCSLA) (43 USC 1337) to give the Secretary of the Interior authority to issue a lease, easement, or right-of-way on the OCS for activities that are not otherwise authorized by the OCSLA, including activities that produce or support production, transportation, or transmission of energy from sources other than oil and gas. This includes wind, wave, and current technologies. The MMS Pacific Region has previously prepared a summary of knowledge for areas beyond existing leases in southern California. MMS Reports BLM-ST-78-01, "Summary of Knowledge of the Oregon and Washington Coastal Zone and Offshore Areas" and BLM-ST-78-24 "Summary of Knowledge of the Central and Northern California Coastal Zone Areas" were completed in 1977. In addition to the information needs identified for on-going oil and gas production, the MMS needs to update its summary of knowledge for areas of the OCS suitable for the development of alternative energy (generally within 50 miles of the shoreline). This would include significant new information for the Pacific coast from Grays Harbor, Washington, to San Francisco Bay, California available since 1977. Section 388 of the OCS Lands Act precludes issuance of leases in marine sanctuaries, so sanctuary areas are not being emphasized in this study.

Objectives: The primary goal of this study is to collect and synthesize information that will be used for environmental review of OCS activities in the Southern California Planning Area, from northern Santa Barbara County, California, to the Mexican border, and for alternative energy activities on the OCS from Grays Harbor, Washington, to San Francisco Bay, California.

Methods: The methods to be used in this study are traditional literature reviews and effects analyses based upon both observational and experimental published research. The study will build upon previous environmental documents and MMS studies.

Revised date: May 1, 2008