

**Florida Sand Management Working Group (FL SMWG)
Meeting Minutes
23 January 2007
Bahia Mar Hotel, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida**

I. Introductions, Housekeeping Items, Review of Agenda

II. Establishment of the Florida Sand Management Working Group

- A. Intent and Purpose, Role of Members, Discussion of Authorities, Responsibilities
- B. Gaining a Perspective: Review and Discussion of Accomplishments of the Louisiana SMWG
- C. Discussion: One Florida working group or two? / Are the issues diverse enough to warrant the establishment of an east coast group and a west coast group?

The pros of two groups were discussed as follows:

- There would be smaller groups, more easily managed
- Federal agencies (USACE, NMFS) regional offices are divided by east/west coast
- There are different distances to the OCS which may affect sand resource issues
- There are different resource issues on each coast

The cons of two groups were discussed as follows:

- Many of the permitting agencies are not divided by coast, so they would have to attend duplicate meetings
- Could have sub-groups for special projects

It was decided to convene at one group and re-visit the issue later. It was recommended that meetings be coordinated with the semi-annual FSBPA meetings. The next meeting is 12-14 September 2007, Boca Raton, FL.

III. Discussion and Adoption of Charter for Group (Mission Statement, Activities, etc.):

Edits to the Charter were recommended, and the Charter as amended was adopted. The revised Charter is attached.

IV. Issues for Discussion and Identification of Tasks on Resource-Related Issues

- A. Development of reliable sand volume inventory and identification of resource locations for offshore Florida – what is known and what needs to be accomplished for the Federal OCS area.
- B. Data management – State of Florida’s Reconnaissance Offshore Sand Search database (ROSS) and USGS’s usSEABED
 - MMS/FGS investigations of OCS sand resources
 - USGS-sponsored investigations/Other investigations

- Identification of projects within the foreseeable future which will require Federal sand and development of database relative to volumes/schedule
- Coordination between MMS, FGS, FDEP, Army Corps and local jurisdictions relative to future sand searches

Ron Hoenstine of the Florida Geological Survey gave a presentation on their work to identify potential OCS sand resources. The Florida Ocean Alliance does identify priority issues and funding for offshore sand mapping projects. His presentation will be posted on the FL SMWG website.

Jack Kindinger of the USGS, Coastal and Marine Geology Program, Florida Integrated Science Center (FISC), St. Petersburg, Florida gave a presentation on their marine mapping and database studies. Projects include the Florida Shelf Habitat Map (FlaSH, <http://coastal.er.usgs.gov/flash>), a multi-agency approach to benthic habitat mapping which presents existing data, such as multibeam and side-scan sonar imagery of the shelf, still and video images, streaming resistivity, and sediment grabs in a user-friendly tool, Google Sea Floor, that is available to the general public, scientists, and managers. His presentation will be posted on the FL SMWG website.

Lyle Hatchett of URS Corp. gave a presentation on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Reconnaissance Offshore Sand Search database (ROSS) at: <http://ross.urs-tally.com>. Data are available for the Panhandle and SW coast for now. Data collection for the east coast is: SE coast is complete; Central coast is 30-40% complete; and NE coast is 0% complete. There needs to be better coordination with the ACOE data collected for projects; ACOE uses gINT which is compatible with ROSS. The ACOE will consider making it a requirement for contractors to deliver data digitally for inclusion in ROSS. His presentation will be posted on the FL SMWG website.

There were questions about biological data availability in the databases discussed. The Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) has funded the Geospatial Assessment of Marine Ecosystems (GAME) project to assemble existing physical, geomorphological, biological, chemical, and ecological data and information about the coastal ocean waters of Florida and the adjacent state waters (http://www.floridamarine.org/features/category_main.asp?id=2360). There has been some discussion about coordination between the ROSS and GAME projects, which should be improved.

C. Discussion of Project Priorities and Resource Availability Issues

- How best to establish project priorities/State and County perspectives on use of OCS sand resources vs. nearshore State resources
- Avoiding sand wars/issue of exclusiveness of OCS sand resources
- Multiple use issues and conflicts (e.g., wind farms vs. sand borrow areas)

FL DEP had identified critical erosion areas in the Critical Erosion Areas Report April 2006, which they expect to update in summer 2007 (http://www.dep.state.fl.us/beaches/publications/tech-rpt.htm#Critical_Erosion_Reports). Counties also do annual updates. MMS asked for input from those present as to their potential

needs for OCS sand, to assist them in planning. The following reports were made verbally or in follow-up emails.

Brevard County will send in their volume estimates.

Broward County has needs of 1.5 mcy in Segments 1 and 2 in the next few years, and 300,000 cy/yr in Segment 3. The shelf off Broward County is very narrow with limited sand resources that are too deep for available US dredging capabilities, so they are looking in Federal waters elsewhere and non-domestic sources.

Collier County used sand shoal T1 previously and intends to use it again for maintenance and emergency use.

Duval County went to MMS for Federal sand in 1995 and 2005.

Manatee County has access to nearshore sand for the next 50 years.

Martin County does not differentiate between State and Federal sand sources; they look for the closest compatible sand. Their projects are 800,000-1,000,000 cy per project, and projects are predicted on a 8-year recurring schedule. Significant storm events could increase their needs.

Nassau County expects to use sand in State waters.

Pinellas County has access to nearshore sand for the foreseeable future but they are always interested in potential Federal sand sources. They might require 10 mcy in the next 50 years.

St. Lucie County is staging studies for a project requiring 20 mcy for the project life.

Volusia County is working a lease with MMS for 4,164,000 cy of OCS sand for November 2007.

DOD Facilities in Florida: Historically, Patrick AFB has used between approximately 100,000 to 600,000 cy (123,400 cy over the period 1991-94; 541,400 cy over the period 2000-01) on an 'as needed' basis dependent on the amount of storm erosion.

The Cape Canaveral AFS beaches may have the potential need for sand if there was a significant storm event that undermined any of the infrastructure closer to the ocean; no clear amount was identified but it could be in the range of 100,000 to 300,000 cubic yards.

MMS noted that Federal sand was available for any restoration project, regardless of the local jurisdiction boundaries. Leases are valid for one year, with one-year extensions when warranted. The purpose is to prevent one group locking up a borrow site. There were concerns about entities doing baseline studies, then having another entity make an emergency request for the same site. MMS said that joint leases are encouraged but this has not happened in the past. MMS reiterated that there is no fee for a lease for public works use of the sand by a public entity.

In the event of competition for an OCS sand source, MMS said that the parties have to work it out. Leases could be for the same shoal but not the same borrow site. MMS will distribute an example lease agreement.

In discussions on how to prepare for emergency leases, it was noted that under NEPA, there is a mechanism for emergency conditions, where the lease is given then the NEPA analysis is conducted. Thus, there is no need to develop a process for emergency access.

DEP offered these codes of practice based on their experiences (they learned a lot from the St. Lucie shoal problems):

1. Everyone needs to understand the process; there have been a lot of misconceptions in the past.
2. The process needs to be transparent; surprises upset people.
3. Entities must responsibly manage what sand they have, including inlet by-passing, regional sediment management, etc.
4. Efficiency can be improved by considering distance to sand sources, teaming agreements, etc.

V. Issues for Discussion and Identification of Tasks on Environmental Issues

A. Environmental Studies and Research

- Review of completed and ongoing MMS borrow site investigations
- Identification of environmental issues yet to be answered/pooling of resources between Federal, State, and local jurisdictions for needed studies

Gary and Kim Zarillo of SEA gave a presentation on their MMS project to collect baseline data on OCS sand borrow sites in West Florida (Siesta Shoal, T1, and T2) and NE Florida (A4, A6, A8, A9, and B11). They noted the difficulty of availability and expense of vessels for these surveys and suggested that MMS contract for a research vessel when planning for such studies. Or, allow a long enough lead time so that vessels can be scheduled in an orderly fashion.

The ensuing discussion included questions such as: Do the sand shoals migrate and at what rate? Will the dredged areas persist or fill in? Will they fill in with the same or different sediment sizes? What are the effects of oceanographic processes on fish larvae distribution that might affect recovery? It was recommended that MMS reach out to groups who use the shoals to learn more about how and when they use them.

MMS indicated that their leases require that 2-3 feet of similar sediment be left at the borrow site. When asked if there were any examples of monitoring to document recovery at OCS sand borrow sites, MMS reported that there was one study conducted by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, but there were complications with the dredging schedule that complicated the results. MMS does have \$250,000/year for 4 years to monitor dredged sites, starting in FY07. In Florida, monitoring requirements for dredging projects include post-dredging bathymetry,

monitoring of coral reefs adjacent to borrow and placement sites, but no infauna or fish studies. The difficulty is determining the significant of measured changes.

It was recommended that MMS select 1-2 sites for intensive studies, as “model” demonstration sites, to identify the most important parameters to be monitored at all sites. There were questions as to whether or not the resource agencies would agree to apply the results from demonstration sites to other sites where less-detailed studies would be conducted. Perhaps the first step towards this approach would be to synthesize the results of all the studies of Florida sites and identify data gaps focused on Florida resource issues.

B. NEPA issues (including required EFH and ESA consultations)

- Coordination/conflict resolution between MMS, Federal, State, and local jurisdictions
- Discussion of possible programmatic EIS for OCS sand resources offshore Florida
- Discussion: Striking a balance between protection of the environment and maintaining the economic value of the State’s beaches

Will Waske of MMS led a discussion on environmental issues. MMS has experienced delays in getting Biological Opinions from NMFS on MMS projects in the SE Region, thus they are exploring the possibility of working on a Regional Biological Opinion with the NMFS Protected Resource Division for MMS projects. NMFS asked for an overview of dredging methods and effects of different techniques. The issue is complex; dredging in strips to leave undisturbed areas to increase recovery rates for benthic communities could increase risks to sea turtles when the dredge head is picked up off the bottom between rows. There are not enough data to evaluate the benefits of different methods and justification of costs.

The concept of a Programmatic EIS for dredging of OCS sand was discussed. MMS would take the lead on the offshore component and the State/ACOE would take the lead on the State waters/land component (but it was noted that MMS would have to look at the land-based issues as well). In talks with USFWS, they indicated that they were in favor of this approach. NMFS questioned whether or not a PEIS would really save time. For EFH, BMPs would have to be laid out, but they would still want to do a site-specific consultation. A map of the OCS sand borrow sites would be helpful to them. As a reviewed and accepted document, the PEIS could be a common document for site-specific consultations and speed the process for both MMS and local government sponsors. It was noted that MMS should solicit stakeholder input during the scoping phase.

VI. Action Items

1. Invite appropriate agency staff in Alabama to participate in the SMWG (MMS)
2. Compile updated estimates of sand needs (DEP to update their report by mid-2007)
3. Create maps showing the known sand borrow sites and volumes along with the boundary between State and Federal waters (MMS)
4. Agencies (e.g., ACOE, MMS) should make sure to submit geological data to DEP for inclusion in the ROSS database
5. MMS will distribute the report by the Scientific Review Team under contract to MMS to review their site-specific study methods to the SMWG when it is complete (MMS)

6. USGS will review the draft of this report and provide comments (Sulak, USGS)
7. MMS will look into contracting in advance for research vessels when planning studies within a region (MMS)
8. MMS will generate and distribute a list of MMS studies in Florida (MMS); however, it was recommended that the Florida studies be synthesized into an overview to identify data gaps for Florida specifically
9. MMS will distribute a current lease agreement for Federal sand as an example (MMS)
10. Members will submit names of people who should be invited to the next meeting to Jacqui Michel (All)
11. MMS will make sure that FWS representatives are invited to the next meeting (Michel, RPI)
12. At the next meeting, it would be good to have an overview of dredging methods, particularly to discuss the potential effects on biological communities with different techniques (MMS)
13. MMS should develop a FL SMWG website where information can be disseminated to the group (MMS)