



NEWS RELEASE

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MMS Announces Cape Cod Boundary Survey Results

The Minerals Management Service has concluded a series of field surveys that provide a complete and scientifically accurate accounting of features for establishing the federal/state offshore boundary in Nantucket Sound. These surveys were conducted in a joint effort with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to resolve questions over a number of features seaward of Hyannis that affect the determination of the Submerged Lands Act boundary, which marks the federal versus state jurisdiction over the seabed.

The four features in the Bishop and Clerks area and the feature known as "Bull Rock" were determined to be new valid baseline points. The surveys did not find evidence to support using the Collier Ledge feature as a valid baseline point. As a result of these findings, the Submerged Lands Act boundary will be adjusted further seaward of the Bishop and Clerks and "Bull Rock" features. The survey is part of a nationwide effort to review the Submerged Lands Act boundary.

"It's a complex operating environment out there that requires the best science and data available to ensure the management of our ocean resources is done properly. Gathering data on questionable features and working closely with communities are both important aspects of our federal mandate to administer these public resources," said Renee Orr, chief of the MMS leasing division.

On September 15, 2004, two areas were surveyed; the four most seaward rocks associated with the feature referred to as Bishop and Clerks, and the Collier Ledge feature. MMS staff, the Massachusetts Highway Department, and the State Geologist acquired positions using Global Positioning Systems (GPS), along with rock samples, measurements and depths for each of the questionable features. During the course of the first survey the "Bull Rock" feature was noted seaward of the Bishop and Clerks area but it was quickly submerged by the rising tide prior to a data collection attempt. A survey was conducted on December 30, 2004, to collect additional data on this feature. The data collected were separately verified from information obtained from a tide coordinated GPS controlled aerial photography project conducted on December 16, 2004, by the National Geodetic Survey.

After review of the samples collected during the survey, MMS and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have concluded that the four features in the Bishop and Clerks area are naturally formed features deposited by glacial action and qualify as valid baseline points from which to develop the Submerged Lands Act boundary. The additional seaward low water feature known as “Bull Rock” was also determined to be a valid baseline point. However, the samples and information collected at Collier Ledge did not support using this feature as a valid baseline point.

The recomputed Submerged Lands Act boundary for this area in Nantucket Sound is as shown on the attached graphic. Maps showing the entire recomputed SLA boundary for the Commonwealth are also available. Notification of the boundary determination will be published in the Federal Register on February 24, 2005. Maps are located on the MMS website at www.mms.gov/ld/MA.htm.

MMS, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, oversees 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf, managing offshore energy and minerals while protecting the human, marine, and coastal environments through advanced science and technology research. The OCS provides 30 percent of oil and 23 percent of natural gas produced domestically, and sand used for coastal restoration. MMS’s collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian lands, with Fiscal Year 2004 disbursements of approximately \$8 billion and more than \$143 billion since 1982. The Land and Water Conservation Fund, which pays for acquisition of state and federal park and recreation land, gets nearly \$1 billion a year.

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