

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: Studies Development Plan FY 2008-2010**

**Region:** Atlantic Region

**Planning Area(s):** North Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Florida Straits

**Title:** Evaluation of Visual Impacts on Historic Properties

**MMS Information Need(s) to be Addressed:** Section 106 consultations will be required for wind development projects that can be seen from shore. The MMS is responsible for making the determination of whether the impact is adverse.

**Cost Range:** (in thousands) \$200-\$300

**Period of Performance:** FY 2008-2010

### **Description:**

Background: One key concern with the development of offshore wind facilities is the visual impacts on shore, both from the structures and the lighting, on historic properties. Our coasts are lined with many historic properties that potentially could be visually impacted. The determination of whether a property is adversely impacted is required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the MMS is responsible for making this determination. The basis for making the determination of whether a property is adversely impacted depends upon the description within the property listing. If, within the description, the rationale for listing the property includes the visual aspects of its surroundings, then the property may be adversely impacted by visual disruption. If the listing does not incorporate visual aspects of its surroundings, then it is not adversely impacted.

Additionally, for analyses under NEPA, consideration must be made as to whether visual impacts could affect the revenue from the property. In particular, where a property is open to the public for a fee, a concern is whether visitation of the property would be affected by an altered visual experience. The first step in making this evaluation is to determine which properties are open to the public and what level of visitation occurs.

Objectives: The objectives of this study are to identify those properties that could be adversely impacted by alteration of the view of the ocean and to identify which properties are open to the public and generate revenue.

Methods: Collect information from each State along the eastern seaboard for every historic property that could be visually impacted by offshore development. With this information, create a searchable web-based database with the appropriate information to make Section 106 determinations.

**Revised Date:** September 28, 2007