Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes

Documenting culturally important areas - for tribes, by tribes

Purpose and Goals
Understanding the types and locations of significant archaeological and cultural resources is essential to their preservation and consideration during the planning process for offshore renewable energy development. The goal of this project is to develop a proactive approach to working with Native American communities to identify areas of tribal significance that need to be considered in the planning process. Information from this effort will help facilitate decision making processes that take into consideration the importance of these locales.

Salmon River estuary in Oregon.

Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes is a collaborative effort among the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the National Marine Protected Areas Center, a Tribal Facilitator, and representatives from the Yurek Tribe in California, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in Oregon, and Makah Tribe in Washington.

A Cultural Landscape Approach
Using a holistic cultural landscape approach that integrates science with historical, archaeological and traditional knowledge, this project will develop:

- A tool describing best practices for tribes to identify and communicate areas of significance, and;
- Case studies from three tribes demonstrating how to use this tool.

This effort will provide a transferable, transparent and cost-effective method for tribes with a connection to the coast to document past and present places and resources significant to their communities and outside agencies, thus enhancing their capability for consultation.

![Archaeological field school on Makah Reservation, led by THPO.](image)

Cultural resource types to be identified include:

- traditional cultural properties
- traditional subsistence and commerce activities
- residential and occupational activities
- spiritual and ceremonial sites and activities

Project activities will include:

- archival research
- field investigations and site visits
- community outreach
- oral histories
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The project will involve:

Inter-Tribal Workshops bringing together federal and tribal partners to identify best practices and general resources significant to tribal communities.

Analysis Guide describing processes for identifying tribal cultural landscapes, including common terminology.

Case Studies identifying tribal cultural landscapes for each of the three identified tribes. Databases will be created by each tribe and managed by each tribe.

Outreach describing the process, including methodologies, analysis and non-sensitive data.

Yurok singing to Klamath River whale from canoe.

The model will be adaptable by other Native American communities to help equip them to record geospatial information and attributes on areas of tribal importance. It will also facilitate communication among tribes, as well as help agencies and stakeholders to:

- Engage with tribal and indigenous communities prior to the proposal of activities that may impact tribal resources and areas;
- Involve tribal and indigenous communities in the confidential identification of their own significant resources and areas of use; and
- Clarify and promote tribal interests in specific planning areas.

This project will help regional energy planning and siting decisions, and the required impact assessments, be made more appropriately and efficiently, thus avoiding frequent conflicts, controversies, legal challenges and delays. This model can also help fill a critical data gap in ocean planning and management, and be applied to coastal and marine spatial planning efforts through the National Ocean Council and regional planning bodies.

Timeline

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<td>Workshops</td>
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