BOEM ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: ONGOING STUDIES

Region: Gulf of Mexico, OCS

Title: State Sponsored Oil Spill Research Relevant to the Regulation of

Offshore Oil and Gas Development (GM-14-03-04)

Planning Area(s): Gulfwide

Total Cost: \$91,841.40 Period of Performance: FY 2014-2016

Conducting Organization: Coastal Marine Institute, Louisiana State University

BOEM Contact: Sindey Chaky

Description:

Background: From 1993 to 2009 Louisiana State University (LSU) administered the Louisiana Oil Spill Research and Development Program (OSRADP) for researchers at Louisiana's universities. The program was financed by a sequence of three-year cooperative agreements between the University and the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinators Office (LOSCO). LOSCO was created after the Exxon Valdez spill in 1991 and funded by a per barrel charge levied on Louisiana refiners receiving crude oil via waterborne commerce. A research program very similar in both origin and structure to OSRADP was implemented in Texas under the General Land Office. Both the Texas and Louisiana programs supported a mix of investigators, from a range of institutions, and operated over an extended period of time. They were well established, substantial oil spill research programs. In Louisiana grants were made annually from 1994 to 2008 based on the advice and deliberations of two external committees. One committee identified relevant issues and areas of interest for investigation and the second evaluated the individual proposals submitted. Over the 15-year period of operation approximately 300 proposals were submitted by 19 different universities, of which 103 received funding and provided support for 128 individual researchers. Total cumulative funding under the program was about \$11 million. Funding from the Texas program totaled about \$21 million during this period.

This study will survey the research projects funded under these two state programs and analyze their relevance to the regulation of offshore oil and gas activities.

Methods: The methods for this study include:

- (1) Data collection and database construction resulting in a user-friendly, searchable database organized by topic, keywords, investigators, institutions and/or any other relevant attributes.
- (2) Critical analysis of the publications and work history of the researchers participating in the relevant studies to identify professional trends that may have derived from their spill experience, and identification of any potential causation and correlation.
- (3) Tracking and description of the researchers' related activities during and subsequent to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and response in order to derive effects on their professional pursuits.

(4) Evaluation, comparison and analysis of the procedures and approaches utilized by the oil spill research programs with regard to prioritization, proposal evaluation, and performance tracking and investigate, document, and compare differences found between the two programs and to identify best practices for future efforts.

Products:

- Database of offshore oil and gas related research funded by state-sponsored oil spill research programs
- GIS and metadata files
- Final Report

<u>Importance to BOEM</u>: The OSRADP and the Texas archives record almost two decades of experience and information that may be directly relevant to the natural resource, social, and economic consequences of the *Deepwater Horizon* event, one of the largest man-made disasters ever to eventuate from offshore oil and gas development. Accurately understanding the operation and output from these programs would assist in responding to the various calls for an expansion and improvement in oil spill research. It would also be consistent with the legislative intent of the legislation creating the state oil spill research programs to try to make these archives as useful and available to researchers as possible as well as to explore their effects on oil spill policy and research in a larger context.

Current Status: The project recently commenced in fall of 2014 and is currently progressing according to schedule..

Final Report Due: July 2016

Publications:

Affiliated WWW Sites:

Revised Date: January 20, 2015

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