



Tribal Consultation in Developing Fisheries Monitoring Plans for Offshore Wind Farms

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BACKGROUND

Indigenous communities have timeless relationships with fisheries that include a culture of respect, stewardship, and sustainability. Offshore wind farm (OWF) development involves fisheries monitoring that can conflict with Indigenous values. Standard fisheries monitoring typically involves extractive methods associated with:

- Benthic habitat disturbance
- High mortality
- Limited statistical power
- Non-targeted catches



TRIBAL CONSULTATION

Fisheries are a critical concern for Indigenous tribes, and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 Consultation is designed to involve Tribal communities in a meaningful way during the OWF development process, including development of fisheries monitoring plans (FMPs).

Effective consultation includes:

- Early and consistent Tribal involvement throughout a project's life
- Tribal capacity building for FMP design and review
- Use of Tribal laws and ecological knowledge when developing and implementing FMPs and interpreting survey results



FMP DEVELOPMENT SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THAT

- Fisheries are cultural, as well as environmental and ecological resources to Tribes
- Job creation opportunities include employing Tribal fisheries in the planning and execution of fisheries monitoring, use of tribal vessels, and data sharing
- Not all Tribes have the same cultural priorities and fisheries of concern
- Species of concern to Tribes and regulatory agencies may not overlap
- Tribes co-manage fisheries with states and the Federal government
- Tribal treaties grant rights to harvest fish and shellfish
- Use of non-extractive monitoring methods as a preferred approach

