BOEM Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Cook Inlet Area-wide Recreation and Tourism Inventory

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BOEM Information Need

- BOEM needs a baseline study regarding the relative importance of ocean-dependent and ocean-enhanced recreation and tourism for residents of and visitors to Cook Inlet.
- The central question is how could these amenities be affected by future OCS lease sales, exploration, and development.
- Results would be used to describe the affected environment, analyze potential impacts, develop and implement mitigation measures, and inform consultations and public involvement.

PICOC Summary

Problem	BOEM-authorized activities could affect recreation and tourism in the Cook Inlet region. Data on the characteristics, location, and timing of recreation and tourism for the area are dated which could result in inaccurate baselines and imprecise effects analyses.
Intervention	This study would develop information on the recreation and tourism resources of the Cook Inlet area.
Comparison	Study outcomes would be compared to results of similar studies conducted in other planning regions.
Outcome	Information would be used to describe the affected environment and potential effects, develop and implement mitigation of effects, and inform consultations.
Context	Cook Inlet Planning Area and adjacent coastal areas

Background

- Tourism and recreation are key sectors of the region's economy.
- Much of the emerging recreation and tourism is taking place on public lands.
- Recent industry interest and investment has focused on the state and OCS waters of the lower Cook Inlet. This renewed activity raised concerns for the potential effects on the region's recreation and tourism sector.
- Some studies have been conducted for Cook Inlet but were not comprehensive. Baseline data in these studies needs to be updated and expanded to capture changes that have occurred to the sector in the last 20 years.
- BOEM's other regions have completed similar work; doing so for Alaska-specific conditions would contribute to comprehensive OCS-wide data on this sector.

Study Objectives

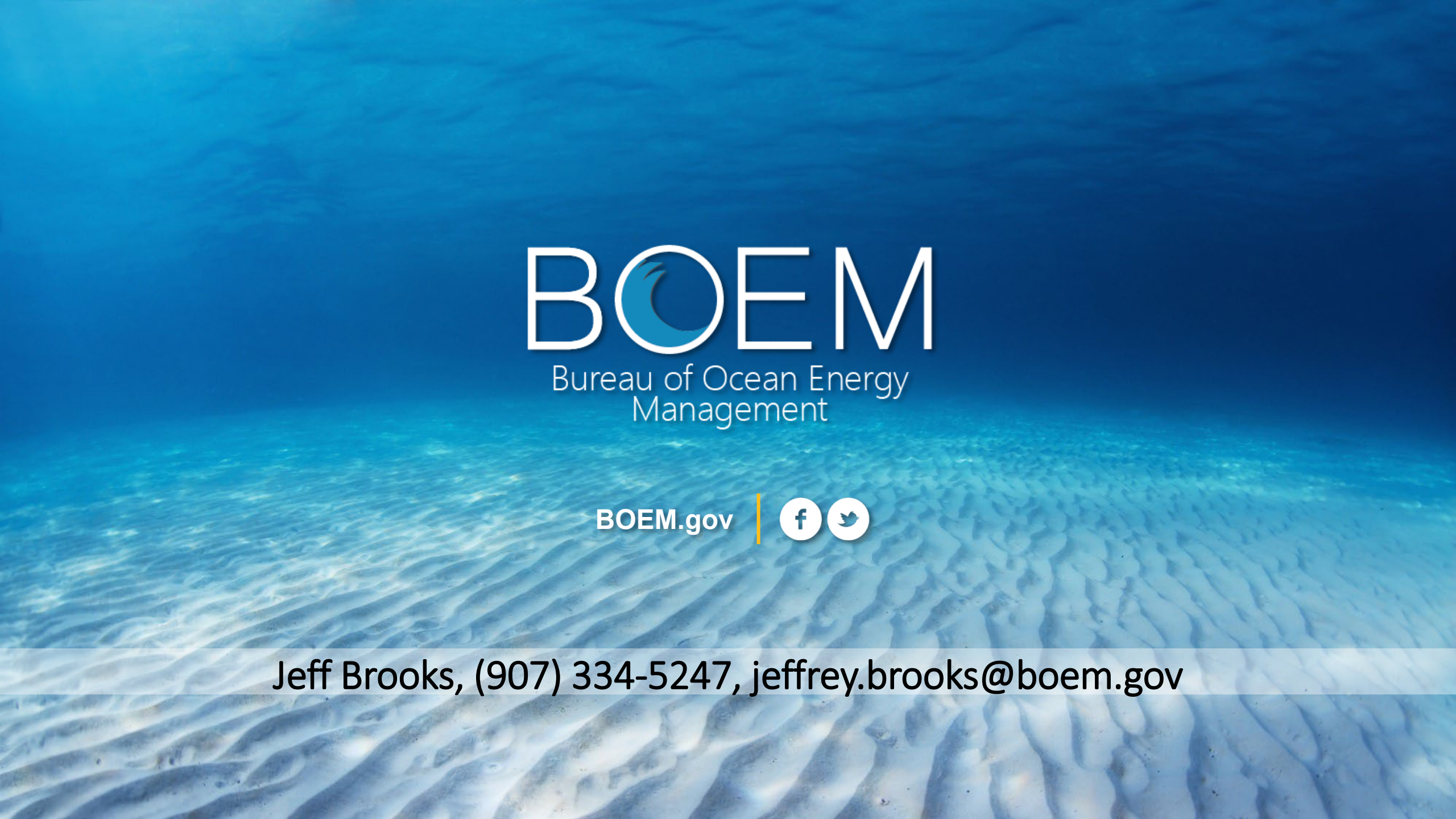
- Establish a baseline of recreation and tourism activities, amenities, and associated expenditures (*e.g.*, those that are dependent on or sensitive to coastal and marine resources).
- Identify the preferences that visitors and residents consider to be of value when making recreational choices and how these preferences might differ based on geographic location within the study area or between residents and non-residents.
- Document trends to better understand how the recreation and tourism industry has responded to Cook Inlet offshore energy infrastructure projects.
- Provide a framework for monitoring the spatial, temporal, and economic aspects of recreation and tourism.

Methods

- In year one, researchers would assemble baseline data on activity, location, timing, participation, past expenditures, and the amount of recreation and tourism that would be sensitive to OCS activities.
- In year one, a synthesis of existing information and secondary data would be compiled using literature reviews, archival research, and examination of publicly available data.
- In years two and three, primary data would be collected using a combination of focus groups, surveys, interviews, and community workshops, which would require travel to hub cities and smaller communities.
- Willingness to pay and/or choice experiments may be used to capture economic values.
- The methods would allow measurement of current preferences, values, and expenditures of residents and visitors.

Research Questions

- How could routine OCS activities and industrial accidents affect recreation and tourism in the Cook Inlet area.
- What are the specific recreation and tourism resources, activities, and expenditures in the Cook Inlet area and when and where do these occur?
- What measures could be used to monitor and mitigate effects to recreation and tourism?



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