



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20240-0001

Judith Swift
Director, NAC CESU and URI Coastal Institute
1 Greenhouse Road
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, Rhode Island 02881

RE: Letter of Federal Agency Support and Sponsorship - NITHPO Application to Join NAC CESU

Dear Judith,

On behalf of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), it is my honor to submit this letter of support for the *Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office* (NITHPO) to join the North Atlantic Coast - Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU). NITHPO, is a designated political division of the Narragansett Indian Tribe and is charged by Narragansett Tribal resolution to address issues of Tribal historic preservation. Acknowledged as "Narragansett Countrye" during the colonial era, the Narragansett Indian Tribe has been federally recognized as a Sovereign Nation since 1983. Their ancestral lineage dates to the aboriginal people of the region now known as Rhode Island. Their knowledge and tradition has been passed through generations of ceremony, stories and song. Indigenous Native American people tell their history in an oral tradition, other documentation may be found in rock formations, carvings or ways that must be interpreted. This becomes a challenge when a scientific approach is needed to establish cultural or ceremonial landscapes for protection and preservation under Federal or State laws.

BOEM has recognized this challenge and with the increasing focus of proposed offshore wind energy siting in this region, has initiated the development of a science-based, standardized "best practices" methodology for identifying submerged ancient Native American archaeological resources to assist BOEM, individual States, and Tribal communities in evaluating proposed offshore projects. With the goal of developing appropriate information gathering protocols and survey measures to avoid or mitigate adverse effects to National Register-eligible or -listed ancient Native American archaeological sites during Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) development.

Currently, the NITHPO is a research partner with the University of Rhode Island - Graduate School of Oceanography (URI-GSO) on a BOEM funded CESU cooperative study, "Developing Protocols for Reconstructing Submerged Paleocultural Landscapes and Identifying Ancient Native American Archaeological Sites in Submerged Environments," a recently awarded four year study. This is a multi-disciplinary field investigation of four areas located in Southern New England, onshore, nearshore and offshore waters of coastal Rhode Island, the ancestral homelands of the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

A critical element of this research project is to involve Tribal representatives in all phases of the project. NITHPO, the authorized preservation representative of Rhode Island's federally recognized Tribe – the Narragansett, is a partner in the leadership and execution in all aspects of the Project. And, NITHPO functions in a liaison role with neighboring Tribes within the study region. Input obtained from Tribal perspectives and oral histories are imperative to inform and improve the geospatial predictive models and be combined with evidence-based paleoenvironmental reconstructions and archaeological data to improve knowledge of Ancient human-landscape interactions.

April 8-10, 2013, the initial workshop was held at URI-GSO and the NITHPO Longhouse, where government, Tribal representatives, and scientists from the United States and several countries examined the current state of scientific and traditional knowledge utilized in the identification of ancient Native American submerged cultural resources on the Atlantic OCS. Doug Harris, Project Co-PI and NITHPO Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Preservationist for Ceremonial Landscapes, brought together an impressive representation of the Tribal communities, both Federally recognized and those that are still awaiting federal status. While workshop scientists' provided data and current survey methodologies, the tribal representatives provided interpretive meanings and historical perspectives that have been previously absent in the data interpretation. Knowledge of ancestral trade routes, seasonal habitation patterns, and stories of glacial retreat and sea level rise will be of great value to this study and the growing body of knowledge in this subject area for the region.

I have been personally impressed with Doug Harris for many years as he participated in the BOEM Atlantic Wind Energy Workshops, and continues his dedication to preservation with the National Ocean Policy – Marine Spatial Planning objectives and is an active member of the first recognized Regional Ocean Planning Body, located in the Northeast. There is a great deal of scientific merit to be discovered through the histories and values of traditional indigenous Native American knowledge. As the BOEM National Council Member, I believe the NITHPO will provide a capacity to contribute in an important and unique way to the CESU's mission, which includes devising management strategies for preserving cultural resources and maritime heritage.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Ewald". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jennifer Ewald

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Oceanographer
CESU National Council Member
1849 C Street, NW
Room 5227
Washington, DC 20240
202-208-6641