



INTERAGENCY DECOMMISSIONING WORKING GROUP (IDWG)

Minerals Management Service • California State Lands Commission • U.S. Coast Guard
California Coastal Commission • California Department of Fish and Game • Ventura County
National Marine Fisheries Service • U.S. Army Corps of Engineers • Santa Barbara County

STATUS REPORT

JULY 2002

This status report is published by the County of Santa Barbara Department of Planning and Development Energy Division with input from representatives of agencies on the Interagency Decommissioning Working Group (IDWG).

Action Plan and 1997 Workshop Proceedings

The IDWG prepared an Action Plan that lists and prioritizes issues identified during the 1997 decommissioning workshop. The Action Plan and the 1997 Decommissioning Workshop Proceedings are available at: www.mms.gov/omm/pacific/public/whatsnew.htm.

The action plan identifies 28 issues raised by workshop participants. They have been grouped into five major categories: (1) Technical, (2) Environmental, (3) Disposition, (4) Site Clearance, and (5) Policy. The plan prioritizes issues within each category and designates agency responsibilities for each issue. A public meeting was held on August 22, 1999, to receive comments on the Action Plan.

The goal of the IDWG Action Plan is to develop an effective process for: (1) addressing decommissioning issues, (2) collecting, sharing, and disseminating information with all interested parties, (3) promoting dialogue and communication among all parties, and (4) improving interagency planning and coordination in advance of future decommissioning projects. IDWG

member agencies fund scientific research, collect information, and sponsor workshops, symposiums and other public forums to disseminate information in a timely manner and facilitate discussion among interested parties.

Status of Chevron 4H Shell Mounds

In July 2001, Chevron submitted to the State Lands Commission (SLC) an application to amend the *4H Platform Abandonment Plan* for the purpose of addressing SLC's requirement that the area once occupied by Platforms Hazel, Heidi, Hilda and Hope be "trawlable" by commercial fishermen. Currently, there are four mounds consisting of drill mud, cuttings and shells (commonly referred to as "shell mounds") located at the site of the former platforms. In June 2001, the Coastal Commission voted to require Chevron to submit a coastal permit amendment application to remove the shell mounds, which Chevron submitted in July 2001.

Disposition of the shell mounds requires the preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and an environmental assessment (EA) under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The SLC has contracted with Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) to prepare a joint EIR/EA. The EIR/EA will analyze the potential environmental impacts of a variety of disposal options, including in-place abandonment, full removal (disposing of the material at either an offshore or

onshore disposal site), capping of the mounds, or partial removal.

SAIC sampled each mound in May to assess their physical and chemical constituents according to the "Green Book" and "Gold Book" disposal standards required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. That analysis will help to define the range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR/EA.

In early June 2002, SAIC issued for public comment a "Notice of Preparation" regarding the EIR/EA. The SLC expects to issue a draft EIR/EA for public review and comment in August 2002. Based on this schedule, the SLC and Coastal Commission will consider disposition of the shell mounds in late 2002 or early 2003.

Deep Water Removal Study

Twachtman, Snyder, and Byrd, Inc. of Houston, Texas has completed a decommissioning study entitled "State of the Art for Removing Large Platforms Located in Deep-Water." The Minerals Management Service funded the study. The study provides a review of the technology available for removing platforms having jacket weights over 10,000 short tons located in water depths exceeding 400 feet. Three Pacific OCS platforms (Hidalgo, Gail, and Harmony) were selected to encompass the range of decommissioning conditions and to provide a thorough review of issues related to removing deep-water offshore structures. The platforms are located in water depths of 430 feet, 739

feet, and 1,198 feet, respectively.

Technology reviewed in the study includes lifting, transportation, disposal, and explosive and non-explosive severing techniques. The three removal methods evaluated (using the best technology currently available) were Complete Removal, Partial Removal, (reefing in place) and Remote Reefing (reefing off site). Decommissioning cost estimates were prepared for the selected platforms and removal methods, including an evaluation of cost sensitivity (risk) issues and the cost of alternative technologies. Also assessed were environmental and human safety risks for current and evolving decommissioning technology. Specific recommendations were provided for industry and federal/state support for future developments. The report is available at <http://www.mms.gov/tarprojects>.

California Department of Fish and Game Status Report

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has released an important new report entitled California's Living Marine Resources: A Status Report. The 592-page document is a reference guide to marine life off California's coast that can be used by both the casual observer and the serious scientist.

Known as "The Blue Book," this report examines the current status of the state's commercial and recreational fisheries and discusses the natural history of many of the plants and animals of California's marine environment. The report was published by DFG in collaboration with the University of California's Sea Grant Extension Program, and involved dozens of California's and the nation's best marine scientists. The book provides a wide array of information on California's marine resources, and includes photos, along with population and biological

information on the current state of more than 150 marine species. It includes the writings and contributions of more than 125 leading marine scientists. The book uses the best available information on oceanic and environmental conditions, law enforcement efforts, and socio-economic considerations that affect management of the state's marine resources.

California's Living Marine Resources: A Status Report: (ANR Publication #SG01-11) can be purchased for \$25 (plus tax and shipping) from the Agriculture and Natural Resources Communication Services, University of California, 6701 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland, CA 94608; Tel: 800-994-8849; Web site: <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu>

To download a free copy of the report or to print individual chapters of species, logon to the DFG's Web site at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd-status/index.html>.

California State Lands Commission Hazards Removal Program

The State approved \$1,181,000 for continuation of a program that began in 1986 to remove physical hazards within State tide and submerged lands managed by the California State Lands Commission (CSLC). A (CSLC) 1986 inventory identified over 400 hazards on lands within its jurisdiction. Several of those hazards, identified as high risk, have since been removed.

A total of \$931,000 was approved for the removal of deteriorated coastal structures on State sovereign lands in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. This funding is available through June 30, 2004 and will be used to remove as many hazards as economically feasible. Numerous hazards are remnants of prior oil and gas activities while others are the result of ancillary development along the Santa Barbara and Ventura County coastline. Hazard exposure is tide, sea state and seasonally dependent. These hazards may not be

exposed simultaneously, thus, this work will be completed in stages. Not all of the previously identified hazards will be removed.

The Mineral Resources Management Division (MRMD) in Long Beach will manage the identification and prioritization of hazard removal along Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties based on perceived risk exposure to the public. CSLC awarded the hazard removal contract to Divecon Services in June 2002.

For questions concerning the CSLC hazard removal program please contact Dave Brown of the CSLC at 916-574-1870.

Belmont Island Decommissioning Project

The Belmont Island Decommissioning Project off Seal Beach, California was completed in January, 2002.

Belmont Island was an oil exploration and production facility approximately 1 1/2 miles offshore from the City of Seal Beach on State lease PRC 186.5 in approximately 42 feet of water. In 1995 the oil production from the island was terminated and in 1996, the oil wells were plugged and abandoned.

Since the California State Lands Commission (CSLC) approved the removal of the island in December 1999, ExxonMobil dedicated about 120,000 Man-hours over a period of two years to completely remove the island. The Belmont Island Structure consisted of a 75-foot diameter steel sheet pile caisson filled with rock and sand, reinforced concrete deck for north and east wharves, structural steel south tower and south span modules, tube steel boat landing and spill boom storage deck and the tubular strut supports on west face of the north wharf.

It is important to note the outstanding

safety and environmental record during this entire operation. There was no significant incident related to the safety of people working on the project or to the environment from contaminants found on the structure. The silo structure provided a confined space that was effectively used to keep the contamination from spreading to the open waters. Most of the recovered material, 75%–80% was recycled. This was a unique, complex and difficult project that took a considerable amount of ingenuity and innovative solutions to achieve a successful completion.

After completion of dismantling, an ocean floor survey was performed and all the debris within a 1,000 foot radius from the center of island was removed. In June 2002, ExxonMobil submitted the final closure report that has been approved by CSLC. Thus, the Belmont Decommissioning project has formally been completed.



Belmont Island

Ventura County GIS Program

Planning Division staff is in the process of entering information contained in the Division's oil and gas permit files into geographical information system (GIS) format. When this project is complete, depiction of the location of wells, pipelines, facilities, and the background information supporting the maps will be available to staff.

MMS Issues Final Rule on Decommissioning Regulations

On May 17, 2002, a final rule was published in the **Federal Register** amending MMS regulations governing oil and gas operations in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) to update decommissioning requirements. The rule includes requirements for plugging a well, decommissioning a platform and pipeline, and clearing a lease site. The final rule also updates requirements to reflect changes in technology. In the Pacific OCS Region, an initial application to remove a platform must be submitted to the MMS at least two years before production is projected to cease. A final application must be submitted no later than two years after the date of submittal of the initial application. The final regulations are available at <http://www.mms.gov>

National Artificial Reef Plan - Update

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) developed the first National Artificial Reef Plan in 1985, as provided for in the 1984 National Fishing Enhancement Act. Significant advances in artificial reef research and technology have taken place since the first national reef plan was developed. To recognize the better understanding

of the science of artificial reefs acquired over the last 17 years, the NMFS is in the process of updating the national plan.

The revision follows the format of the 1985 Plan, incorporating changes to original text in key areas. The most significant deviations occur in the section dealing with materials. The revision also addresses several critical issues of national importance, which provide the focus for much of the debate regarding man-made reef activities. These include the permit programs, materials criteria, liability, research and evaluation, site location, and the roles of affected federal agencies and the regional fisheries management councils. In addition, one of the main areas of emphasis was to include language to reiterate the importance of man-made structures as a fisheries management tool. New language in the National Plan is consistent with the guidelines and recommendations of the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commissions and representatives of state artificial reef programs relative to artificial reef development.

The NMFS Recreational Fisheries Division completed a draft revision of the Plan that includes input from other interested Federal agencies in late 2001. The revised draft was made available for public comment (February 22 to May 23) and is now under final review taking public comments into consideration. The final plan is expected to be completed in late 2002, and will be a blue print for artificial reef planning, management and development well into the 21st century.

California State Lands Commission - Prevention First Symposium

Prevention First 2002 An Onshore & Offshore Pollution Prevention Symposium & Technology Exhibition

Major topics include:

- Decommissioning
- Marine Oil Terminal Engineering Standards
- Offshore Safety Audit Program
- Human & Organizational Factors
- Ballast Water Management

- Homeland Security
 - 42 Technology Exhibits
- September 10-11, 2002
The Westin Long Beach Hotel
Long Beach, California

Early registration fee—\$150
After August 20—\$195 Register by
phone (800) 858-7743 (916) 278-4960

Please visit the Santa Barbara County
Energy Division website at
<http://www.countyofsb.org/energy>

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