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Site Visit and Report FAQs

Published May 11, 2023

What are site visits?

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is required to conduct a site visit for proposed standard and experimental lease sites. DMR also has the discretion to conduct site visits for proposed standard lease expansions. Statute and regulation specify the elements DMR is required to document during the site visit, including bottom composition, water depth, typical flora and fauna, relative abundance of commercial and recreational species, evidence of fishing activity, distances to shore, and navigation channels and moorings.

Site visits are scheduled by science staff in the order proposals are deemed complete and at a time conducive to evaluate the proposed site and surrounding area. For example, staff may schedule the site visit around certain tidal stages, anticipated fishing activity in the area, or other considerations based on the nature of the proposal.

During the site visit, staff may SCUBA dive the proposed site or use a remote operated vehicle (ROV) or drop camera to assess bottom characteristics or other considerations. Staff may utilize other specialized equipment, including transom mounted depth sounders. Staff may be conducting work both within and outside of the proposed lease boundaries.

Are applicants notified when their site visit is scheduled?

No. However, applicants are sent a copy of the completed site report which details the findings of the site visit.

Can applicants or members of the public participate in the site visit?

No. It is important that the site visit is conducted objectively, so applicants and members of the public are precluded from participating in the assessment of a site. There are also certain safety protocols and procedures that must be followed, and staff are focused on making sure all elements are recorded. Scientists may invite other agency staff on a visit to provide additional assistance or expertise, but that is at the discretion of DMR.

What is the site report?

The site report is a written document that details the findings and observations from the site visit. The site report is required prior to a decision being issued on a new lease site. In cases where hearings are required, the site report needs to be made available 30-days prior to the hearing. DMR sends a copy of the completed site report to the applicant and posts a copy to our website.

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How is the site report utilized?

It becomes part of the agency record and helps the Hearings Officer write a decision on the proposed lease site. In cases where hearings are required, the site report is entered as evidence.

I disagree with the observations in the site report. What should I do?

Please remember that site visits are an assessment of the proposed lease site and surrounding area at a specific point in time. Individuals are encouraged to participate in the leasing process to provide their feedback on the application and relevant decision criteria. The site report is one document that DMR may utilize to render a final decision on the proposal. However, relevant testimony, evidence, or other materials may also be used in evaluating an application.