

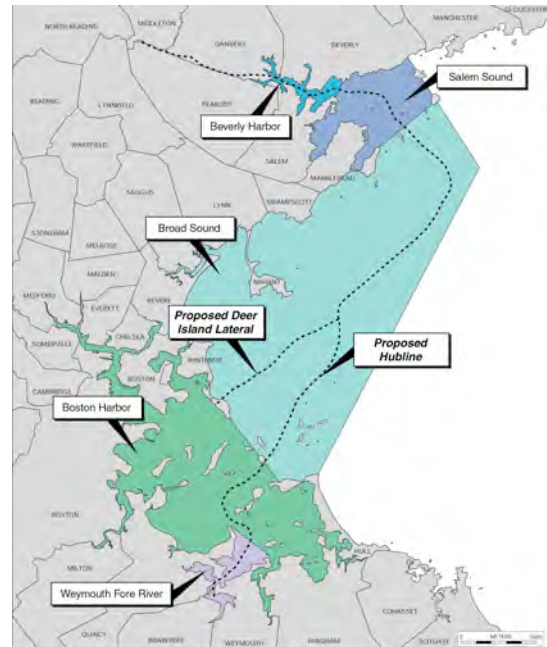
Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Maritimes Phase III/Hubline Project

Project Characteristics:

- *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the FERC*
- *Offshore Natural Gas Pipeline Project*
- *Physical and Biological Impacts*
- *Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment*
- *Effects of Turbidity and Sedimentation*

The Woods Hole Group teamed with Foster Wheeler, as an extension of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), to assess the physical and biological oceanographic impacts of the proposed Massachusetts Bay Hubline project. During the process, the Woods Hole Group became familiar with the creation of a FERC Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Within the scope of the project Woods Hole group interacted with numerous federal and state regulatory agencies (National Marine Fisheries Service, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, and Environmental Protection Agency).

The Woods Hole Group conducted background research on the marine biological effects of the proposed construction techniques; such as, horizontal directional drilling, dredging, jetting, plowing, hand jetting, armoring, surface lay of submerged pipe, and sub-surface blasting practices. Potential effects studied included short- and long-term modifications to bottom type, including siltation, modifications in grain size, and coverage of hardbottom habitat. Disruption of organism behavior and displacement of species due to turbidity, noise, and vibration effects were also evaluated. The assessment included the potential for mortality to benthic food sources, eggs, larvae, and juveniles, and physiological stresses to juveniles and adults associated with the turbidity plume, such as short-term respiratory difficulties and long-term reductions in feeding rates and successes.



Woods Hole Group prepared an Essential Fish Habitat Assessment (EFHA) covering the 29 federally managed species for which EFH has been established in the region of the proposed project. Life history stages from eggs to adults were studied for potential impacts to the habitat and associated species.

Woods Hole Group completed the study in a prompt and timely manner and presented the results to Foster Wheeler within the deadline for submitting the EIS to FERC. The 29.4 mile long Hubline project was constructed during 2002 and 2003. Time-Of-Year construction windows had to be extended, resulting in requirements for mitigation and restoration for short or long-term impacts to aquatic resources.