

Leland F. Thormahlen

Development Of the Territorial Submerged Lands Act Boundary And Various Associated Marine Boundaries For the United State Virgin Islands.

Biography

Lee Thormahlen began his career with the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management in 1963 and transferred to the Minerals Management Service when it was created in 1981. He has served as Chief, Mapping and Boundary Branch since 1982. The main function of the Branch is to define the Submerged Lands Act and Territorial Submerged Lands Act boundaries and map the offshore limits between coastal States, territories and the commonwealth of Puerto Rico and other Federal Government jurisdictions. The Branch is currently responsible for mapping and preparing legal descriptions for approximately 2,062,560 square nautical miles of Federal submerged lands. Lee also serves on a number of national committees including; the Ad Hoc Baseline Committee, Chaired by the Department of State, Federal Geographic Data Committee's (FGDC) Cadastral Subcommittee, FGDC Shoreline and Spatial Data Subcommittee and Co-Chairs the FGDC Marine Boundary Working Group. Lee has provided technical expertise for 9 Submerged Lands Act cases tried before the United States Supreme Court. He was a member of the treaty negotiations team for the Western Gulf of Mexico Treaty with Mexico and on a routine basis provides technical assistance to the Department of State for international boundary computations. In 1999 under special assignment from the Secretary of the Interior the Branch determined the Territorial Submerged Lands Act boundary and created boundaries for an offshore National Park and a National Monument in the United States Virgin Islands. In addition, the Branch has been assigned under the Office of Management and Budget A-16 Process the responsibility for developing the offshore "marine" cadastre for the United States.

Abstract

This paper will look at and discuss boundary related issues and methodologies associated with the development of the Territorial Submerged Lands Act (TSLA) boundary and various other marine boundaries associated with the United States Virgin Islands.

Development of a TSLA baseline for use in determining the offshore boundaries of the United States Virgin Islands employing for the first time the Territorial Submerged Lands Act. Upland ownership considerations as they apply to the Territorial Submerged Lands Act will also be discussed. Boundary considerations will include methodologies employed in the development of international boundaries, a median line between the United States Virgin Islands and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, offshore boundaries of the Virgin Islands National Park, and the Virgin Islands Coral Reef and Buck Island Reef National Monuments.

The official output products derived as a result of this effort, e.g., Official Protraction Diagrams NE20-04 (St. Thomas) and NE20-07 (St. Croix) and the corresponding Supplemental Official OCS Block Diagrams, can be viewed on the MMS website located at www.mms.gov/ld/maps.htm