

## **CHARTER OF THE LOUISIANA SAND MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE**

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Formalize an environmentally responsible process for assisting the MMS in planning and decision-making relative to the use of Federal sand for beach nourishment, coastal restoration, and wetlands protection projects along the Louisiana coast.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Promote coordination among stakeholders and potential users of Federal sand in Louisiana.
- Establish a pro-active, interagency Task Force, charged with the responsibility.
- Identify potential problems, collect appropriate information needed to address the problems; based on scientific analyses of information, propose and implement needed solutions in a timely manner.
- Require long-term commitment, by each organization and the individuals assigned to participate in the process.
- Promote information sharing among stakeholders through open meetings, web-based data sharing, conference and other innovative means where issues can be raised and discussed.
- Provide management, policy and technical support for sound MMS decision-making; offer guidance and consultation to MMS as it sets priorities and goals. Facilitate resolution of issues through discussion, data collection, exchange, and interpretation, and consensus building.
- Identify key data gaps, develop and implement study plans to fill those data gaps, evaluate data and form scientific conclusions and recommendations based on these evaluations in light of environmental objectives, and policy and management responsibilities.

### **General Goals**

- Avoid or minimize the environmental impacts to OCS sand borrow sites that may represent long-term sources of sand for coastal protection and restoration in Louisiana, including any adverse biological, physical or chemical impacts or effects to the borrow sites, the surrounding pelagic benthic environment, and to the long term wave/current effects on the coastline resulting from modification of the sand deposit areas.
- Reduce the time and costs to efficiently access OCS borrow sites.
- Promote coordination among stakeholders to assist the MMS in efficiently and expeditiously completing the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and related environmental compliance (e.g., Endangered Species Act, Essential Fish Habitat) relative to proposed restoration projects, as well as the negotiated agreement lease process in general.

- Promote coordination among restoration projects that will need OSC sand to maximize cost-effectiveness.
- Encourage adaptive management, learning from past projects to better manage future projects.
- Evaluate the current processes for planning, implementing, and coordinating OCS dredging projects, and identify potential problem areas. Set priorities for working on problems.

### **Specific Activities**

- Compile inventory of projected sand needs from all entities in coastal Louisiana for the next 50 to 100 years.
- Compile inventory of known sand resources available, including both nearshore and offshore sand borrow sites. Of the known volumes, determine how much is realistically available, considering oil and gas infrastructure and other restrictions on use.
- Identify critical data gaps in the resource inventory and potential environmental and cultural/archaeological concerns; recommend actions to address these gaps.
- Develop guidelines for sand resource allocation (volume available versus short- and long-term needs). The objective is to preclude future "sand wars", as well as define appropriate current and new uses of available sand resources.
- Develop and keep updated a master schedule of proposed OCS sand dredging plans.
- Evaluate strategies for permit streamlining, e.g., define up-front what information is needed to consider a permit to dredge and then move ahead in deliberate and efficient manner to collect the information and address concerns. Streamlining does not mean cutting corners and neglecting assessment tasks just to ease the permitting process.
- Develop procedures for accessing sand under emergency conditions.
- Establish monitoring requirements and recovery endpoints.
- Develop techniques for dredging that maximizes use of the site and minimizes potential environmental impacts, by testing different dredging and engineering methods (e.g., dredging in strips that leave undisturbed areas to promote rapid recruitment; designating specific sites or types of sites as preferred dredging zones, to concentrate impacts in more restricted areas, how to deal with overburden on buried sites, etc.).
- Identify time windows for the Louisiana area that are best/worst times for dredging to protect sensitive species, minimize impacts to commercial fishing), etc.