

# Louisiana Beach to Receive Sand for Restoration Project



*Maintaining healthy beaches has long been a priority of the Minerals Management Service's Sand and Gravel Program.*

*By Walter Bonora*

**A** beach restoration project that will help protect fragile Louisiana wetlands began in May at Holly Beach in Cameron Parish. This project will reverse the area's alarming rate of shoreline erosion and protect more than 10,000 acres of fragile wetlands critical to the sustainability of the communities in the parish.

"The Holly Beach area has long been a high priority of the state's coastal restoration program," said Jack Caldwell, secretary of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources.

In a negotiated lease with the state's Department of Natural Resources, MMS will authorize the removal of nearly 4 million cubic yards of sand from federal offshore sites for the project.

"In keeping with our obligation to the environment, I am pleased that this project will enhance the overall health and safety of the area's fragile habitat," said MMS Director Johnnie Burton. "We take seriously our commitment to help protect eroded beaches and U.S. coastlines."

The sand will be placed along five miles of shoreline behind existing breakwaters and will extend the existing shoreline so as to create a buffer to better protect Louisiana Highway 82, local coastal communities, and the threatened coastal marsh areas behind the beach.

Before issuing the lease, MMS worked with Louisiana state officials to develop an environmental assessment. The lease contains stipulations to protect against damage to archaeological resources, wildlife, and endangered species and contains a provision to safeguard against the digging of a deep pit on the ocean floor.

MMS has long worked with certain coastal states to help restore damaged or eroded coastlines. Through agreements with local and federal agencies, sand is removed from federal offshore sites and used for beach restoration.