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MMS EXTENDS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH NORTH CAROLINA
TO STUDY OFFSHORE SAND RESOURCES

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) awarded \$80,000 to North Carolina's Department of Environment Health and Natural Resources, MMS officials announced today. The money funds a continuing effort to assess potentially suitable sand resources for beach nourishment along the North Carolina Outer Banks.

"The MMS is committed to assisting coastal states in locating federal sand resources to restore and preserve their beaches," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "The MMS/North Carolina Sand Resources Task Force has been very successful in planning and implementing surveys of offshore sand resources. These new data will provide us with a better understanding of the area's sand resource potential. MMS is pleased to be a partner with North Carolina in promoting good science that will help restore eroding coastlines."

The task force is working to interpret 535 nautical miles of digital seismic and sonar data showing water depth and topography information about the ocean bottom along the North Carolina coast from Oregon Inlet to Duck. Scientists will collect up to 150 sediment samples to supplement the digital and sonar data and verify whether the sand's type, texture and grain size is consistent with beach sand along the North Carolina Shore.

Similar efforts to evaluate marine mineral resources -- including other non-energy minerals -- in federal waters have been initiated with other states on the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico.

The MMS' Office of International Activities and Marine Minerals (INTERMAR) is responsible for managing sand and other non-energy mineral resources in federal waters on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). For more information contact INTERMAR at (703) 787-1300.

The MMS is the federal agency that manages the nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the OCS, and collects and disburses about \$4 billion yearly in revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

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