



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Office of Public Affairs**

NEWS RELEASE

For Release: April 22, 2004
Release: 3079

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**Cape Area Elementary Students, Minerals Management Service
Celebrate Earth Day on Restored Cocoa Beach**

Today, in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Cape View Elementary School students along with Minerals Management Service and local and state representatives came out for Earth Day in celebration of the restored area's beaches, their history and the life the beaches support.

Students, parents, and local government officials gathered on Cocoa Beach near Cape Canaveral to hear MMS Director Johnnie Burton and Brevard County Natural Resources Management Office Director Virginia Barker describe the process of beach and dune restoration that has given new life to the nationally renowned stretch of beach. Also participating in the event were Pam Gillespie, of Rep. Dave Weldon's staff along with Cape Canaveral Mayor Rocky Randels.

According to Burton, coastal areas account for less than 10 percent of America's land area, but are home to half the population, and 40 percent of new commercial and residential development. She noted, "The population explosion is only part of the new environmental stresses being put on the nation's coastal areas. Our coastal areas are under constant assault from the elements, with erosion now affecting 90 percent of the World's coasts. Proactive management and coastal restoration efforts like the MMS beach renourishment partnership program are critical to stabilizing these receding shorelines."

About 20,000 acres of coastal wetlands disappear every year in the United States.

"Earth Day is a perfect opportunity to appreciate our restored beaches, as we wiggle our toes into the very sand provided by the Minerals Management Service," said Barker. "Where we have gathered today was a very narrow, eroded shoreline until a host of government agencies worked together to rebuild this beach with carefully selected sand. We will talk today about what makes this sand right for this beach. We will appreciate the importance of clean, healthy, sandy beaches to Brevard County residents, visiting tourists, nesting sea turtles, feeding shorebirds, and many other wildlife species."

After remarks by Ms. Barker and Ms. Burton, attendees sifted sand and took a close look at sea oats, learning about the process of determining the appropriate type of sand for use in the beach renourishment process, and found out more about the sea turtles that call the local beaches home.

About 30 students from the nearby Cape View Elementary School, faculty members, members of the school's Science Advisory Council, the Brevard County School Board, residents of the local area, representatives of the Minerals Management Service, the Florida Geological Survey and the Corps of Engineers were on hand for the celebration.

MMS manages the nation's oil, natural gas, and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf in federal offshore waters. MMS also collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from federal and American Indian lands. Between 1982 and 2003, MMS distributed more than \$135 billion in revenues from onshore and offshore lands, an average of more than \$6 billion per year, to the Nation, States and American Indians. Nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund annually for the development of State and federal park and recreation lands.

*** MMS - Securing Ocean Energy and Economic Value for America ***

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