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Secretary Salazar Announces \$8 Million Award Grant for Alabama Gulf State Park Pier

Grant will support coastal conservation activities in Gulf Shores, Alabama

NEW ORLEANS, LA – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced that the Department has awarded an \$8 million grant to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for a conservation education initiative that will restore part of the historic Gulf State Park Pier.

“Having the Interior Department partner with Alabama on valuable conservation projects demonstrates our commitment to protecting natural resources and promoting environmental education,” said Secretary Salazar. “Helping gulf coast states recover and enhance their natural resources damaged through hurricanes is extremely important to Interior.”

The original Gulf State Park Pier, located in Gulf Shores, Alabama, in coastal Baldwin County, was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004. The grant will be used for reconstructing a portion of the wooden boardwalk and its supports and 25 conservation education exhibits along the boardwalk. The award was issued by Interior’s Minerals Management Service through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program. This is the first CIAP grant to be awarded since the state’s overall plan was approved in April 2009.

The CIAP was created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Through the program, MMS will provide \$250 million in grants annually, from 2007-2010, to six eligible Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas producing states – Alabama, Alaska, California, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

The allotted funding to Alabama under the CIAP includes \$25.5 million for each of the fiscal years 2007 and 2008, and \$19.7 million for each of the fiscal years 2009 and 2010. Two coastal counties share in the funding of projects outlined in the state’s approved plan. The grants could not be awarded until the state had completed its overall plan for use of CIAP funding.