



## **NEWS RELEASE**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Offshore Sand for Pelican Island Restoration Project in Louisiana**

*Up to 5.5 million cubic yards to stabilize and protect barrier island and wetlands*

**NEW ORLEANS** — The Department of Interior’s Minerals Management Service (MMS) will provide up to 5.5 million cubic yards of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) sand for a shoreline stabilization and marsh creation project at Pelican Island, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana.

A negotiated agreement was signed by MMS, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the State of Louisiana’s Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) to allow for the removal of sand from two offshore borrow areas in the West Delta Area.

“This joint agreement is a great example of our commitment to assist the States in coastal restoration initiatives and the rebuilding of barrier islands. I am extremely pleased that this project will use OCS sand to aid in the protection of a portion of the Louisiana coast,” said MMS Director Randall Luthi.

As part of the Barataria Plaquemines Barrier Island Complex Project, approximately 2.6 miles of barrier beach and more than 250 acres of marsh habitat are being restored. The restoration will help protect Louisiana’s coastal communities and infrastructure from the impact of storm damage and flooding, as well as maintain the integrity of the landward estuarine system.

The Pelican Island project, funded through the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA), is the second agreement that MMS has entered into with the State of Louisiana. The first agreement, signed in 2002, provided sand for placement at Holly Beach in Cameron Parish along the southwestern Louisiana coast. The material served to protect the coastal wetlands and associated ecosystem inshore of the beach during the passage of Hurricane Rita.

Enacted in 1990, CWPPRA, also known as the Breaux Act, provides approximately \$50 million a year for coastal protection and restoration in Louisiana. MMS successfully worked with NMFS, the Federal sponsor for this CWPPRA effort, and LDNR to complete the required environmental work and negotiations in order to provide this valuable resource.

“Restoring and maintaining the Pelican Island area is very important to us,” said Jim Balsiger, Acting Assistant Administrator of NMFS. “Wetlands and barrier islands are nature’s way of protecting the coast from erosion and storm surges, and they provide valuable habitat for fish and other wildlife.”

To date, NMFS has constructed more than 20 projects, representing about one third of all completed CWPPRA projects. However, this represents the first NMFS project where OCS sand will be used.

Since the early nineties, MMS has worked with states along the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic coasts to assist in the location of OCS sand for coastal projects and help restore damaged or eroded coastlines. MMS has conveyed more than 30 million cubic yards for projects that have restored over 100 miles of the nation’s shorelines.

—MMS—

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