



Minerals Management Service

People Promoting Energy, the Environment, and the Economy

News Release

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MMS Awards First Grants to Support Conservation, Protection and Restoration of California's Coastal and Marine Environments

Funding provided through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program

CAMARILLO, CA — The Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS) awarded two grants totaling \$222,000 to the California Coastal Conservancy and California's Santa Barbara County to support programs to reduce marine debris and watershed pollution. The grants are the first to be awarded to California and a coastal county through the MMS Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP).

"Stewardship of America's treasured ocean and coastal resources is an important mission of the Department of the Interior and the MMS," said MMS Pacific Region Director Ellen Aronson. "The Coastal Impact Assistance Program provides us with the opportunity to support our partners in implementing important projects that promote conservation and restoration of coastal and marine habitats. I am pleased to announce these first two California CIAP grants and look forward to announcing additional grant awards in the coming months."

A \$210,000 grant to the California Coastal Conservancy will fund the Santa Cruz Marine Debris Reduction Program, a locally based pilot program to demonstrate techniques for engaging citizens, businesses, and government in the prevention and reduction of marine debris (e.g., plastics, fishing gear, cigarettes). The program will identify debris sources, pathways, and hotspots during routine watershed and beach clean-ups and use the data collected to develop effective marine debris prevention and reduction strategies that can be implemented at a local level.

A second grant, for \$12,000, supports the Creekside Resident Water Pollution Education Project in Santa Barbara County. This grant funds a multi-pronged public awareness campaign that utilizes printed material and public signage to inform the public about the relationship of the local watershed to the ocean and outlines measures the public can take to prevent pollutants from entering the watershed. The public awareness campaign targets residents living adjacent to inland creeks, addresses the sensitivity of these resources, and identifies ways to protect and improve water quality through property management practices.

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“Protection of our coastal and marine environments starts onshore. Through this grant, the MMS is pleased to assist Santa Barbara County in reinforcing the important connection between onshore human activity and the natural world,” said Regional Director Aronson. “We all have a role to play in the stewardship of our coastal and marine resources. These projects will not only underscore how onshore actions impact coastal and marine habitats, but it will also highlight steps that can be taken to be responsible stewards of the environment.”

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 – Louisiana, Alabama, Alaska, California, Mississippi, and Texas. The funding to California included \$7.4 million for each of the fiscal years 2007 and 2008 and \$4.9 million for each of the fiscal years 2009 and 2010.

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