



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

FOR June 10,
RELEASE: 1996

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MMS Extends Cooperative Agreement with the State of Florida

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today that it has awarded \$96,346 to the Florida Geological Survey for further investigation of federal sand resources along the central east coast of Florida.

This contract continues a partnership between MMS and the Florida Geological Survey to examine sand resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) within a 550-square-mile study area. The study site borders a 90-mile stretch of coastline extending from Cape Canaveral in Brevard County southward to Palm Beach County/Martin County. "The state reports that the four counties located in the study area are experiencing critical erosion along parts of their coastlines," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman.

"This cooperative, multi-phased geological investigation will support the state's efforts to combat beach erosion by locating sand bodies suitable for Florida's beach nourishment projects," she added. MMS has similar agreements with most of the eastern and Gulf Coast states.

In Florida, 44 percent of the state's sandy beach shoreline is eroding. Beach erosion is a chronic and potentially serious problem affecting both the environment and the economy. The state is committed to maintaining its beaches, in part through a program of beach nourishment projects. As onshore and nearshore sand deposits suitable for beach nourishment are depleted, it is necessary to identify and evaluate suitable sand resources farther offshore. "MMS is dedicated to helping the states locate suitable sand resources from federal waters and making them available for restoring and preserving the states' coastal beaches and adjacent wetlands," Quarterman said.

A final report summarizing the first phase of work under this cooperative agreement is now available. Phase 1 inventoried, interpreted, and documented existing geological information in the study area and included acquisition and analyses of a limited number of onshore cores to establish baseline information. Phase 2 will collect and study additional offshore geological and geophysical data to provide more detailed information on the location, extent, thickness, and quality of sand bodies for a 250-square-mile study area offshore southern Brevard County. Phase 2 is scheduled to be completed by June 1997.

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

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