

The NewsRoom

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Secretary of the Interior Kempthorne Presents Cooperative Conservation Award for Earth Day to the University of Alaska Coastal Marine Institute and the Minerals Management Service

WASHINGTON, D.C.—At a ceremony in the nation's capital today, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne recognized the partnership of the University of Alaska Coastal Marine Institute and the Minerals Management Service as one of 21 recipients nationwide of the Department of the Interior's Cooperative Conservation Award.

The 21 awards recognized the work of more than 700 groups and individuals who achieved excellence in conservation through collaboration and partnerships.

"These outstanding partnerships and cooperative efforts represent a fundamental way in which our Department provides stewardship for America with integrity and excellence," Secretary Kempthorne said. "They embody a broad spectrum of conservation work from restoring wetlands, rangelands and mine lands to protecting wildlife, conserving water and fighting invasive species to teaching conservation values to the next generation."

The award to the University of Alaska Coastal Marine Institute and the Minerals Management Service, which is part of the Department of the Interior, recognizes the partnership's outstanding contributions to collecting and disseminating environmental information for use in key decisions in oil and gas exploration and development within the Alaska Outer Continental Shelf.

"In its first 14 years of operation, 49 organizations have made matching contributions, leveraging \$13 million of Minerals Management Service funds into \$26 million worth of relevant marine-based research," the award noted. "This partnership strengthens research in the areas of fisheries protection, biomonitoring, physical oceanography, and the fate of oil in the marine environment."

The Department of the Interior's Cooperative Conservation Award recognizes conservation achievements resulting from the cooperation and participation of individual landowners, citizen groups, private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and Federal, State, local, and/or tribal governments.

"This is a fitting start to a week of Earth Day activities," the Secretary told the crowd at the main Interior auditorium. "If anyone were to ask me why America is the world leader in conservation of natural resources, I would simply point to the people in this auditorium. You are the spirit and you are the hands of cooperative conservation."

**University of Alaska Fairbanks / Minerals Management Service
Coastal Marine Institute (Alaska)**

Nominated by the Minerals Management Service

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Vera Alexander
Michael Castellini
Ruth Post

Minerals Management Service

James Cimato
Cleveland J. Cowles
James J. Kendall
Charles W. Monnett
Richard T. Prentki
Celeste H. Rueffert
Kathleen L. Wedemeyer

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