

MARINE MINERAL ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY RELEASE  
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INTERIOR DEPARTMENT RELEASES  
MARINE MINERAL ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) has released Synthesis and Analysis of Existing Information Regarding Environmental Effects of Marine Mining which compiles available information on the potential environmental effects of marine mineral development. The \$150,000 study contract was managed by Continental Shelf Associates in Jupiter, Florida; the environmental analysis was undertaken by two well-known marine mining experts from the University of Hawaii, Drs. Michael J. Cruickshank and Charles L. Morgan.

The 18-month study summarizes the existing literature regarding the potential environmental impacts of offshore mineral extraction on the marine, coastal, and onshore environments; approximately 340 references were used during the final analysis stages of the project. The report discusses the effects of development of ocean mineral resources relevant to factors such as water quality, seabed organisms and habitats, recreation and coastal facilities. Also reviewed are references that address mitigating measures or techniques to minimize possible adverse effects of mineral removal on the marine environment. The report presents the strengths, weaknesses and appropriateness of each mitigating measure, as well as numerical models that might be useful in predicting impacts from offshore mineral development.

MMS has spent over \$500 million dollars since 1974 on scientific research to help ensure the environmentally responsible management of America's offshore resources. This effort represents the first study specifically geared for marine minerals funded by the MMS's Environmental Studies Program. The Agency is also conducting a field study off the west coast of Florida which is evaluating the effects of dredging activities on benthic organisms.

The final report and details regarding the MMS marine minerals program may be obtained by contacting the MMS's Office of International Activities and Marine Minerals, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, Virginia, 22070. Telephone: 703-787-1300.