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MMS AWARDS \$177,000 TO LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
(#40056)

The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) awarded up to \$177,000 in matching funds to Louisiana State University (LSU) under the Coastal Marine Institute (CMI) program to study a federal sand source offshore Louisiana for beach replenishment purposes, MMS officials announced today.

"Isles Dernieres, part of Louisiana's barrier island system in the central Gulf of Mexico, is retreating up to 65 feet a year because of coastal erosion," said MMS Director Tom Fry. "It's one of the most rapidly deteriorating areas in the nation. Fortunately, nearby Ship Shoal may be a source of clean quartz sand for beach replenishment."

During the two-year study on Ship Shoal, researchers will use numerical modelling and scenarios involving various methods of sand removal from the shoal to predict the effects on the wave and current patterns in the area. They will examine current and wave patterns around Ship Shoal and the adjacent Louisiana barrier islands, Fry said.

Since 1992, MMS has supported 16 research studies at LSU under the CMI program, amounting to a contribution of approximately \$2.5 million. The \$177,000 in MMS funding for this study will be in two installments, with the second payment contingent on the availability of funds. MMS funding will be matched by LSU.

Efforts to evaluate marine mineral resources in federal waters have been initiated with all other states on the Gulf of Mexico and the East Coast.

MMS administers federal offshore mineral programs and manages the federal mineral royalty program. The MMS Office of International Activities and Marine Minerals (INTERMAR) is responsible for the management of mineral resources other than natural gas and oil -- such as sand and gravel -- on the Outer Continental Shelf.

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