

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
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**MMS ANNOUNCES COOPERATIVE WORK WITH GULF OF MEXICO STATES ON OIL SPILL
CONTINGENCY PLANNING**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) today announced cooperative agreements totaling \$885,720 with Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi to create an authoritative geographic database for oil spill contingency planning.

Each state will contribute funds according to the agreement. Agreements will also be signed later this year with Florida and Alabama.

Working cooperatively with MMS, the five states will combine state environmental and geographic data with federal information to produce a comprehensive data base for the entire Gulf of Mexico. The data base will be used by industry, state and federal agencies in oil spill contingency planning. Louisiana State University (LSU) will create the database from the consolidated information forming the Gulf Wide Information System. This portion of the project is being conducted under the Coastal Marine Institute (CMI) cooperative agreement with LSU.

"These agreements are perfect examples of how MMS continues to work cooperatively with state and local governments," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "The federal-state collaboration and funding, are especially important in projects such as this one since we all share a concern for safeguarding the environment of the Gulf of Mexico. With the combined expertise of the five states bordering the Gulf of Mexico and that of the federal government, the data base will be of great use to all parties in oil spill contingency planning, and environmental and oceanographic studies."

The database is scheduled for completion by May 1998.

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 federal offshore leases and federal and Indian onshore mineral leases.

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