

The NewsRoom

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MMS Awards \$67 Million for CIAP Grants in 2009

Funding Provided to Eligible States, Political Subdivisions

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today that it awarded \$67 million in grants to Alabama, Alaska, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas and their political subdivisions in 2009 through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP).

Created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the CIAP provides funding to the six Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas producing states to mitigate the impacts of energy development on marine and coastal areas.

“The MMS is committed to protecting our nation’s natural environments,” said MMS Director Liz Birnbaum. “Under the CIAP, we funded important projects that promote conservation, restoration and protection of natural coastal resources to ensure that present and future generations will be able to explore these environments for years to come.”

MMS awarded funds to the eligible states in 2009 for 86 projects - Alabama, 3; Alaska, 14; Louisiana, 29, Mississippi, 20; and Texas, 20. California’s first grant award is expected in the coming weeks.

The majority of the projects focus on conservation, protection and restoration of coastal areas, including wetlands, which have been an important part of the states’ CIAP plans.

“MMS is proud to partner with the states on their important coastal restoration projects, which is critical work for the American people and for the Nation’s economy,” said Birnbaum.

Other projects that received funding included a wide array of initiatives, such as protection of wildlife, conservation education, building artificial reefs, and plugging abandoned wells in coastal state waters.

Some specific CIAP projects include one in Louisiana, the first state to receive funding under the CIAP in 2007, which was awarded a \$10.6 million coastal restoration grant for Grand Lake. The grant will be used to construct a rock breakwater to halt erosion on the south shore of Grand Lake, located in the Mermentau Basin in Cameron Parish, Louisiana. Shoreline erosion rates in the Grand Lake area can be as high as 32 feet per year.

Texas received a \$1 million coastal protection grant in 2009 for Pelican Island, a critical bird habitat located near Corpus Christi. Funding from the grant provides erosion protection for approximately 1,000-1,500 linear feet of the northeastern shore.

The MMS also awarded a \$700,000 grant in 2009 to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources for a project that will test for environmental contaminants in fish populations throughout Alaska, thus addressing ways to protect both fish and the wildlife that consume them.

Shortly after Alabama’s CIAP plan was approved in April 2009, MMS awarded an \$8 million grant to the state’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for a conservation education initiative in tandem with the restoration of the historic Gulf State Park Pier. The grant is being used to construct 25 conservation education exhibits and restore a portion of the boardwalk.

Similarly, Mississippi’s Department of Natural Resources was awarded a \$276,000 grant to construct a new Marine Education Center in Ocean Springs that will allow hands-on educational activities relating to ocean research.

Each state is required to submit a plan for the MMS’s approval outlining the projects that would be undertaken with the funds. The projects have to meet requirements of at least one of the five authorized uses ranging from conservation and education to environmental restoration and preservation. Once the state’s plan has been approved, the individual projects can be processed and begin receiving grant awards.

2009 CIAP Award Projects

For a complete list of grants awarded to each state in 2009, please visit www.mms.gov.

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