

MMS Alaska OCS Region News Release



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Robin Lee Cacy
907-271-6070
1-800-764-2627
www.mms.gov/alaska

MMS and UAF Extend Coastal Marine Institute Agreement for Five Years

The U. S. Minerals Management Service and the University of Alaska Fairbanks have extended a cooperative agreement that provides support to University of Alaska scientists to conduct marine research related to oil and gas development in Alaska's coastal waters. MMS will provide up to \$1 million a year to UAF from 2003 through 2009.

"We are pleased to continue our partnership with UAF, and to have their scientists and students involved in gathering the information that we and the State need to understand what is happening offshore" says MMS Regional Director John Goll. "We can take full advantage of their knowledge of Alaska, its marine waters, and the oil and gas industry."

The Alaska CMI is administered by the University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. Dr. Vera Alexander is the Director of the CMI. The University of Alaska is uniquely suited to host a CMI because of its flagship status within the State and its internationally recognized marine and coastal expertise relevant to a broad range of Outer Continental Shelf program information needs.

In addition to the extension of the MMS/UAF Coastal Marine Institute Cooperative Agreement, eight new studies were funded to start this summer and fall.

In Cook Inlet, studies will be conducted on water and ice dynamics and on temperature, salinity and circulation. In the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, UAF researchers will study the migrations of King and Common Eiders past Point Barrow, populations of Common Eiders nesting on barrier islands near oil facilities, breeding and habitat use of King Eiders, recolonization of the hard bottom communities in the Beaufort Sea, and the relationship of marine life and sea ice. UAF will also hold a workshop on sea ice circulation and modeling.

MMS developed the Coastal Marine Institute concept in 1991 to take advantage of the high quality, scientific expertise found at universities in states which have ongoing offshore oil and gas development. Reliable scientific information is needed by MMS, the State, and communities potentially affected by offshore operations to make informed

decisions. The Alaska CMI is one of three such Institutes in the United States, with the others in California and Louisiana.

MMS is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas and other mineral resources on the OCS in federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from federal and Indian leases. These collections totaled nearly \$8 billion last year and more than \$110 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and federal park and recreation lands. Alaska shares the revenue for activities within federal waters 6 miles of the coast.

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