

FOR RELEASE: September 30, 1994

CONTACT: Lee Scurry
(202) 208-3983

MMS EXTENDS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH MARYLAND TO STUDY SAND RESOURCES

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) has awarded \$49,087 to the Maryland Geological Survey to investigate and inventory federal sand resources along the state's coastline for potential use in future beach restoration projects, MMS officials announced today.

"This contract will provide funding for the third year in an assessment of sand and gravel resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) between Ocean City, MD and Cape Henlopen, DE," said Acting MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman.

"Researchers are looking for sand that closely matches the characteristics of the beach areas to be restored. A suitable match will greatly enhance the success of any restoration efforts to combat the severe erosion at Ocean City and Assateague Island State Park in Maryland," Quarterman said.

Work will include the acquisition of geological and geophysical data to determine sand thickness and quality in both state and federal waters from the Ocean City Inlet to the Maryland-Virginia Line.

"The sand and gravel studies will also ensure that any potential future use will have minimal environmental impact on the ocean floor," Quarterman added.

This study is a continuation of a three-party agreement between MMS and the states of Maryland and Delaware. MMS recently announced a grant of \$44,000 to the state of Delaware to continue work along their coastline.

Similar efforts to evaluate marine mineral resources -- including other nonenergy minerals -- in federal waters have been initiated with all other states on the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico. As with MMS' other cooperative programs, the focus is on the assessment of selected sand deposits, and the evaluation of environmental, engineering and economic impacts related to sand extraction and placement.

MMS administers the federal offshore minerals program and

manages the mineral royalty program for federal and Indian lands. The MMS Office of International Activities and Marine Minerals (INTERMAR) is responsible for the management of federal OCS sand and other nonenergy mineral resources. For more information contact INTERMAR at (703) 787-1300.

-MMS-