

THE NEWS ROOM

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BOEMRE Approves \$150,000 in Grants for Mississippi

Funding Will Protect Gulf Islands National Seashore and Assist Reforestation Efforts

NEW ORLEANS – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) has awarded two Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) grants totaling \$150,000 to the State of Mississippi for projects to conserve and protect critical seagrass beds within the Gulf Islands National Seashore (GINS) and educate citizens on reforestation issues along the Gulf Coast.

Created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, CIAP provides funding to the six Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas producing states to conserve and protect the coastal environment. CIAP is an ongoing program with grant funding that is allocated based on the offshore energy revenues collected by the United States.

“BOEMRE will continue to support essential conservation, preservation and education initiatives, such as these two projects, in Mississippi’s coastal communities,” said BOEMRE Director Michael R. Bromwich. “This funding enables us to help state and coastal communities analyze sensitive ecosystems and educate the public on vital initiatives to revitalize Gulf Coast habitats.”

The first grant will provide \$100,000 for the Mississippi Sound Sea Grass Project, an initial mapping of critical seagrass areas, and the mapping and marking of existing natural and constructed channels, including islands adjacent to the GINS. Grant funding will also support a public outreach and awareness campaign, including signage materials to promote recreational boating that would be considered compatible in these sensitive areas. The grant will also help support a monitoring program and the production of a final report on the overall condition of seagrass beds within the project boundaries.

The project area is located within the Mississippi Sound, north of Ship, Horn and Petit Bois Islands within the management boundary of the GINS in Harrison, Hancock and Jackson Counties.

The second grant will provide \$50,000 for public educational outreach materials regarding tree maintenance, storm resistant tree species and reforestation to assist in the recovery, rebuilding and sustainability of Gulf Coast forest habitats.

CIAP will receive \$250 million in appropriated funds for each of the Fiscal Years 2007-2010 to be disbursed to six eligible OCS oil- and gas-producing states – Mississippi, Alabama, Alaska, California, Louisiana, and Texas.

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