

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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SECRETARY SAYS INTERIOR SEEKS BETTER WAYS TO LIVE
WITH NATURE RATHER THAN WAGING CONSTANT WAR ON NATURE

Secretary Cecil D. Andrus said tonight that the Department of the Interior is searching for new ways through which man can live with nature rather than engaging in constant and costly fights against nature.

"We don't believe it makes any sense to have federal policies which encourage people to build and rebuild where risks are extremely high," Andrus said. "We don't believe it makes sense to have federal policies which encourage people to, in effect, destroy the very values which attract them to an area."

Andrus made his remarks in addressing the Collier County Conservancy in Naples, Florida, after the organization awarded him its silver Conservancy Medal for rendering outstanding service in the conservation of natural resources and protection of the environment.

The Secretary cited the destruction of Florida's wetlands as an example of unwise development which is detrimental to the environment and eventually to the quality of life for people in the area.

"At one time we looked upon these wetlands as wasteland, useless to man unless converted through dredge and fill into subdivisions and other development," Andrus said. "But destruction of the wetlands has extremely detrimental effects on the environment. One obvious effect has been a major decline in the commercial and sport fishing."

Andrus praised the Collier County Conservancy for its extensive work in preserving wilderness, providing miniparks and beach preserves, environmental research programs and extensive educational efforts.

"Those of us in government who practice a conservation ethic are deeply grateful to organizations such as yours which promote conservation and which work actively to discourage unsound development," Andrus said.

Andrus emphasized that while there is a strong environmental ethic in the Carter Administration, the economic needs of Americans are being fully considered in all conservation actions.

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"What President Carter and I have sought to do during these past three years is to establish new approaches, to encourage new attitudes, to establish better machinery of government, so that we do not have a situation where for one good cause to win, another good cause has to lose," Andrus said.

He cited the Department's proposals for conservation of Alaska's natural resources as an example of well-balanced approach to open vast areas to economic development while protecting the unique wildlife, scenic and other values in the state.

"This is a plan to take the resources we need out of the deep freeze in Alaska without spoiling the other important resources of that magnificent state," Andrus said.

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