



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SECRETARY CLARK HONORS TENNECO OIL COMPANY FOR WETLANDS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Secretary of the Interior William Clark today presented to Tenneco Oil Exploration and Production the Department's prestigious Conservation Service Award for an innovative wetlands protection project the firm has initiated in Louisiana's coastal marshes.

In presenting the award to Dr. Philip Oxley, President of Tenneco Oil Exploration and Production, during a ceremony at the Department, Clark congratulated the company for its "demonstrated concern for this Nation's wildlife heritage, and for the world environment."

Clark said Tenneco approached the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service more than a year ago with a proposal to intensively manage for wildlife a 5,000-acre marshland tract Tenneco owns in the Louisiana Delta. The program involves installation and operation of a series of water control structures to prevent saltwater intrusion and preserve the marsh.

Recent studies by the Service indicate Louisiana loses approximately 40 square miles of coastal marsh to saltwater intrusion and erosion each year. Under this new project, the Service will allow management of this area by Tenneco as mitigation or compensation for environmental impacts accompanying future projects undertaken by the firm in the Delta region.

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"Through this project, Tenneco is leading the way for other companies to follow in developing new approaches to wetlands conservation," Clark said. He also noted that the company has a long history of concern for the environment. In 1982, knowing that a submerged oil platform would make an excellent artificial reef to attract marine life, Tenneco removed one of its old 500-ton platforms from the Gulf of Mexico and towed it nearly 300 miles to coastal Florida, where it was submerged to benefit fishing. This action helped stimulate widespread interest in what has come to be known as the "rigs to reefs" program. Among its other environmental activities, Tenneco is currently working with the State Department in providing technical assistance on environmental issues to less developed countries.

Upon accepting the award, Dr. Oxley said, "The success of these projects has encouraged us to think of other ways in which we can make our activity as an oil company not only harmonious with the environment as it exists, but to provide a positive impact and improvement for fish and wildlife in the areas where we operate."

"It is gratifying to see a private corporation acting to protect wildlife values, especially wetlands, while responding to increasing pressure to produce vital energy resources for our country," Clark concluded.