



# News Release

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Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas)

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Texas Chenier Plain National Wildlife Refuge Complex Receives U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Award**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced the recipients of the Environmental Leadership Awards. These awards recognize the Service's offices and employees for their exceptional achievements in sustainable design/green buildings, recycling, waste/pollution prevention, energy efficiency and renewable energy, environmental management systems, environmental cleanup/restoration, minimized petroleum use in transportation, and green purchasing.

This year's awards were given in four main categories: Refuge of the Year Award, Hatchery of the Year Award, Facility/Office Environmental Leadership Awards and the Individual Environmental Leadership Award. The Texas Chenier Plain National Wildlife Refuge Complex's Winnie Depot and Visitor Center-Headquarters have each received the Facility/Office Environmental Leadership Award for 'Building the Future.'

"These two facilities are representative of the forward thinking leadership and innovation within the Service and demonstrate our commitment to protecting the environment through green construction," said Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, Director for the Southwest Region. "We are committed to doing our part to protect wildlife and their habitat and this is exemplified in the design and construction of these facilities."

The Winnie Depot, located in Winnie, Texas, has the capacity to serve as a command center in the event of an emergency and was built to withstand hurricane-force conditions. The Lead in

Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver-rated facility includes more than 17 acres and 13 buildings and is a built example of design innovation, operational efficiency and sustainable practices. A photovoltaic system provides solar power to the entire complex and is expected to save approximately 990,000 pounds of CO2 emissions over the course of 30 years. Localized HVAC units reduce unnecessary energy use, as does the orientation of the building, the use of extended overhangs to provide shade, and the use of natural ventilation and lighting. The Vehicular Wash Bay is built to retain virtually all of its used water, filtering and recycling it to be reused. This system allows the vehicle's exterior and under-carriages to be cleaned helping prevent the spread of invasive species.

In addition, storm water runoff for the site is drained to a surface pond (also used as an aesthetic feature), which also serves as the reserve fire tank for fire suppression. The Depot includes a 15-person bunk house, Wifi, high speed internet, and is fully accessible. It is designed to house a hurricane response team, as well as host Service training and small conferences. It is closed to the public.

The Texas Chenier Plains Refuge Complex Office and Visitor Center, located in Anahuac, Texas, serves as the headquarters for Anahuac, McFaddin, Texas Point and Moody National Wildlife Refuges. The 16,200 square foot facility includes a 5,500 square foot visitor center with an active environmental education and interpretative program and facilities to support 22 full-time staff, including a wildland firefighting team. The facility has a Gold LEED rating, the only such facility in the Service's Southwest Region.

Some of the more prominent features that led to a Gold rating include the solar photovoltaic system and solar hot water system, the use of automated HVAC systems and lighting systems, and the use of LED lights. These designed systems resulted in a reduction of 37% energy reduction based on the 1999 American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers standard.

Other measures used to reduce the energy costs of the building included the use of a breezeway that separates the office from the visitor center. The breezeway design allows for additional exhibits and information kiosks and provides comfort to the visiting public without increasing the building's heating and cooling spaces.

In addition to energy efficiency, the facility features a number of water saving systems, including low-flow toilets that serve the visiting public, refuge staff and volunteers and resulted in at least 18,000 gallons of water saved in 2011. A 5,000-gallon cistern captures rainwater used to maintain the visitor center's landscaping comprised of native plants adapted to the environment.

As part of its overall management, the facility recycles materials from the office operation, as well as from visitors. The amount collected during 2012 included 1,500 pounds of mixed paper, 110 pounds of plastic containers, 70 pounds of corrugated cardboard, 300 individual batteries and 326 pounds of aluminum.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).*

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