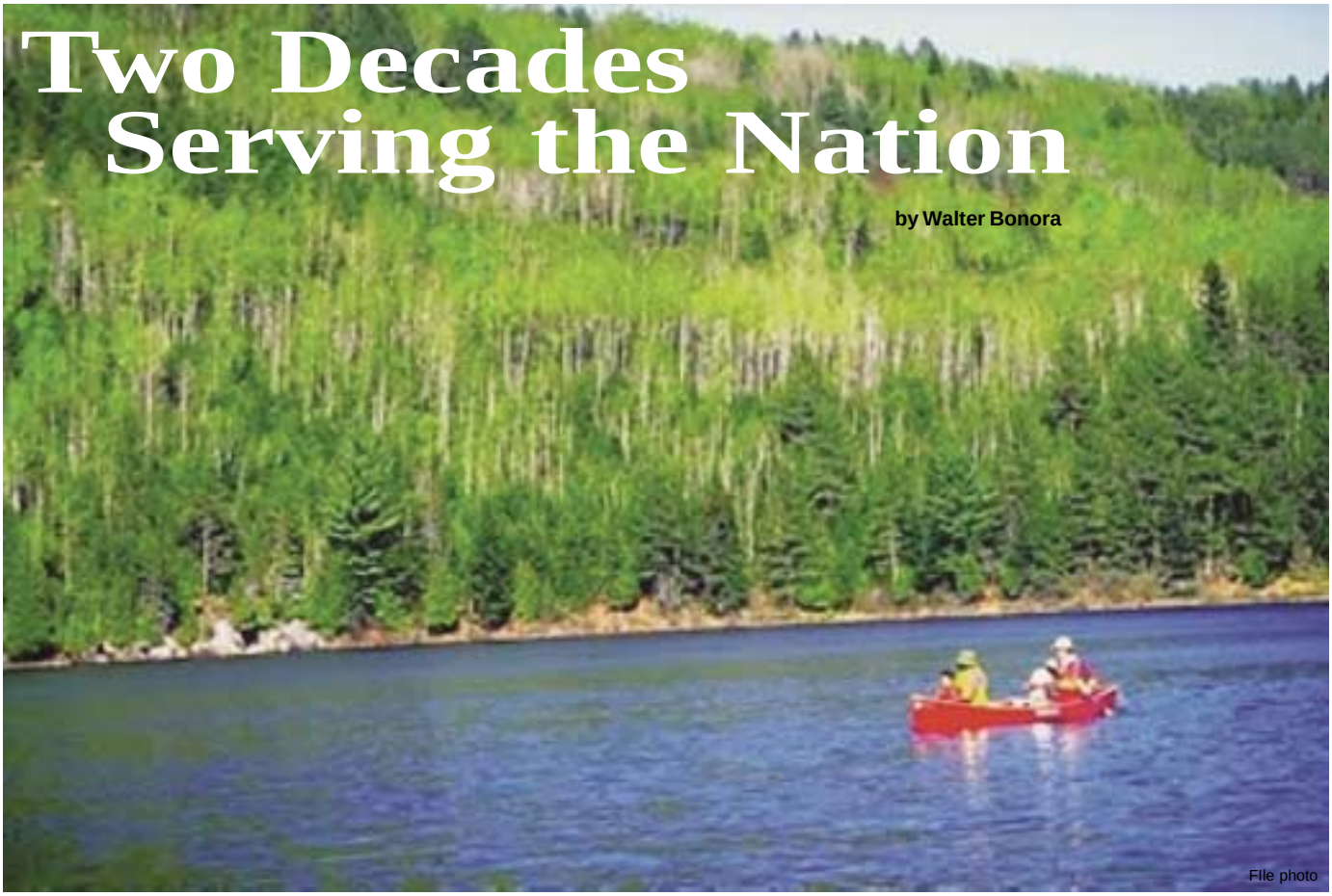
Working for America's Energy Future

The Minerals Management Service Celebrates 20 years

MMS Today

Two Decades Serving the Nation

by Walter Bonora



FIle photo

From the first Native Americans to Western pioneers, people have always recognized the immense value and importance of America's natural resources.

But what many don't fully grasp, is the vital role the federal government plays in ensuring the proper fiscal accountability and management of these assets.

Though the youngest member of the Interior family, the Minerals Management Service plays a key role in managing America's offshore energy resources.

Twenty years ago, MMS was given the mission of managing the oil, natural gas and other minerals developed by companies operating on the outer continental shelf (OCS) and collecting and distributing revenues generated from federal and American Indian lands.

As the nation's steward of offshore mineral resources, the agency is committed to achieving the proper balance between providing energy for the American people and protecting unique and sensitive coastal marine habitats. Before exploration and development can begin, MMS conducts environmental studies that generate the scientific research essential to making sound leasing decisions.

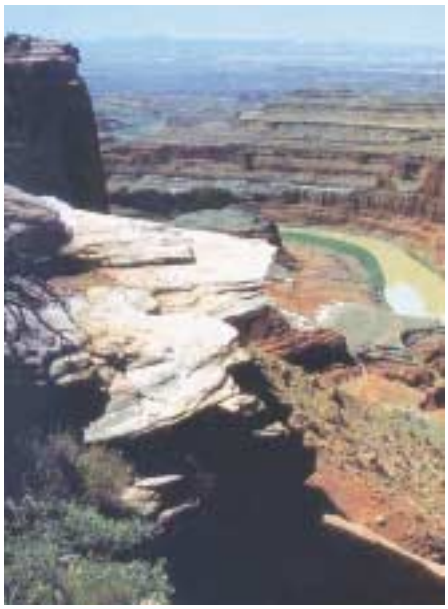
"In essence, we try to minimize the potential negative effect on marine habitats from offshore operations," said the agency's Acting Director Lucy Querques Denett.

The agency set a course through the 1990's which would take them on a journey of continuous self-improvement. Through these years the agency has gained a national and international reputation as a leader in resource management.

By any standard of measurement, MMS is a relatively small organization (about 1800 people) to be responsible for some very important functions.

Leasing offshore lands, collecting and distributing OCS revenues, funding environmental studies, protecting sensitive marine and coastal habitats and ensuring that when operations are completed, the site is properly abandoned are just some of MMS's many functions.

This year marks the agency's 20th serving the American people, and this issue of MMS Today highlights the agency's accomplishments and traces its evolution from its beginnings to the present while working for America's energy future.



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A portion of funds collected by the agency is used to maintain national parks.

"All of our work at MMS embodies the best meanings of the term equity. From ensuring value for America's finite mineral resources to protecting the environment and disbursing revenues, MMS juggles a host of responsibilities with speed, care and precision. A small agency, with a large impact, we never stop looking for the most efficient means to ensure that the nation receives the best value for its precious resources now and in the future."

--Lucy Querques Denett.--

MMS: At Home and Abroad

MMS developed two operational programs to carry out its mission—Offshore Minerals Management and Minerals Revenue Management (formerly known as the Royalty Management Program). Together these programs provide major economic and energy benefits on a national and local level to the taxpayers, states and the American Indian community.

The Offshore Minerals Management program oversees the exploration and development of oil, natural gas and other minerals on the nation's outer continental shelf. This area covers about 1.76 billion acres, and on 40 million of those acres, there are about 7,600 active leases.

The Minerals Revenue Management program is the collection arm of the agency and has distributed approximately $120 billion to federal, state and Indian accounts.

While continuing its stewardship domestically, MMS has also taken a prominent role on the world stage.

From Norway to China, and Kazakhstan to Bangladesh, MMS has lent support in exchanging technical and scientific information related to offshore mineral production.

MMS continues to look for better ways to serve the American people and to ensure that the nation receives the best value for its resources now and into the future.

Great Wall of China

A Look at the Agency's Environmental Studies Program

by Tom Ahlfeld, Jim Cimato and Walter Bonora

The agency balances the critical search for offshore energy with the protection of the human, coastal and marine environment

MMS file photo

Jacques Cousteau once said that, "the future of civilization depends on water...you now have the duty and the time to convince people."

As human populations grow, so will the pressures on the marine environment. The MMS takes seriously the protection of that environment by continuing to develop new regulatory measures, such as the MMS safety and environment management program, to ensure safe and clean offshore operations.

Through the years, MMS has funded hundreds of environmental studies encompassing biological, oceanographic, socioeconomic and ecological issues associated with offshore mineral exploration and development.

Established in the 1970's, the agency's Environmental Studies Program has spent over $650 million and completed nearly 1000 research projects.

It is a highly focused program of research designed to provide the information necessary for safe and sound management of mineral resources on the outer continental shelf.

The program not only supports decisions made within the Department of Interior, but also provides coastal states and local governments with the information necessary to ensure that all stages of offshore energy and mineral activities are conducted in a manner to protect both the human and natural environments.

From its inception, the MMS has pursued an emphasis on environmental stewardship and conservation, always looking for better ways to accomplish its mission.

Just over a decade ago the MMS initiated its Coastal Marine Institutes agreements with state universities in areas close to OCS activity. Using matching funds, the agency and respective universities have been able to carry out important research that might not otherwise be attainable.

Using renowned local scientists and qualified researchers and graduate students, the CMIs provide valuable information addressing issues of mutual concern. Currently, CMI partnerships are with University of California, Santa Barbara; Louisiana State University; and the University of Alaska.

Through the years, the environmental studies program has responded creatively to the need to conduct credible scientific research.

In partnership with other federal and state agencies, universities and industry, MMS has narrowed and often closed many of the information gaps in our understanding of the OCS program's impacts and related issues.

"There is always more to learn and better ways to protect both the natural and human environments," said Jim Kendall, Chief Scientist of the Environmental Sciences Branch. "The environmental studies program is dedicated to learning those facts and finding those ways."

(*Bill King contributed to this article*)

National Marine Fisheries Service photo

Jonathan Gordon, a world expert on sperm whales, and Bill Lang (right) of MMS look for the large mammals in a recent project to study how seismic noise might affect the whales' behavior.

Science has no Boundaries

MMS scientists, working with partners from various universities, gather needed information to ensure safe and responsible development of offshore mineral resources. The scientific information gathered by the agency is shared by coastal states and local governments in making responsible leasing decisions.

photo by Simon Ingram

MMS -- an Integral Part of Interior

The agency is an integral component of the Department of the Interior, the nation's principal conservation agency.

The DOI mission is to protect America's treasures for future generations. The Department provides access to our nation's natural and cultural heritage. It offers recreation opportunities, honors trust responsibilities to American Indians and Alaska Natives, conducts scientific research, provides wise stewardship of energy and mineral resources, fosters sound use of land and water resources and conserves and protects fish and wildlife.

The agency's efforts reflect the overall mission of the department. The work that MMS does affects the lives of millions of people; from the family taking a vacation in one of America's national parks to children studying in one of the Indian schools.

photo courtesy BLM

Sampling device used to measure seawater properties during a 4-year studyin the Gulf of Mexico from 1992-1995. The study looked at the effects of marine organisms exposed to contaminants.

Studies veteran looks back at the environmental studies program

by Jim Cimato

While the years have run together somewhat, I can tell you that the environmental studies program was a strong, vital environmental research program in the early '80's — perhaps matching the size and aggressive pace set by the offshore oil and gas leasing program at the time. In 1982 the agency's environmental studies budget was about $30 million — 50 percent more than it is today.

Thinking about the effects of inflation, our current program spending has diminished greatly from those early days.

What was going on back then? The agency was aggressively pursuing leasing in "frontier areas" like the Georges Banks in the North Atlantic, and leasing continued in areas already producing like offshore California and the Gulf of Mexico. Alaska offshore was huge - it had not only areas, but sub-regions. All of this served as the programmatic driver for the ESP.

Perhaps correlated to the novelty of the offshore program, the bulk of the studies research budget was spent in Alaska — almost 50 percent of the annual budget. The Atlantic received about a quarter of the research budget as we focused on meeting the critical environmental information needs of the time. MMS had already conducted expansive physical oceanography studies on Georges Bank, and the agency continued to support studies of marine mammals (particularly the right whale).

Of note, in the early 80's the industry was successful in getting permit approvals for exploratory drilling on Georges Bank and in the mid-Atlantic. As a consequence, we initiated major studies in both of these areas to study potential impacts related to discharges from exploratory drilling.

Simultaneously we commissioned the National Research Council to perform an exhaustive review of available information on the potential effects of drilling discharges in the marine environment.

These studies were well designed and carried out by highly renowned scientists, and the scientific approach served as a template for research in many years to follow.

Throughout these early years, much of the research was of a pioneering nature. No one had launched a program of such proportions to understand ocean circulation, marine mammal distribution and abundance and general knowledge of the benthic environment on the OCS.

Our research supported the early developmental stages of satellite tags, now used successfully to study whales around the world; our environmental chemistry studies pushed the technology to develop ever more powerful techniques and methodologies for measuring trace levels of contaminants in marine environmental samples!

From a research budget perspective, it wasn't until 1991 that our Gulf of Mexico program became the dominant program area for environmental research, accounting for more than half the ESP budget.

Since that time, with accelerated leasing activity and the tremendous push into "frontier" deepwater areas, the contribution our environmental research program makes in the OCS program is more critical than ever.

MMS file photo

Jim Cimato on a tour in Alaska. Cimato is an oceanographer for MMS where he develops management policies for the environmental studies program.

A Tale of the Rig

It began in 1896.
From a wooden pier off Summerland, Ca., the first offshore oil production flowed in the United States. Equipment and production was limited, but the seed was planted, and the United States moved onward into a new frontier.

Then, in 1938 the first discovery well was drilled in 14 feet of state waters in Louisiana. The well was drilled from a 100 X 300 ft platform secured to a foundation of timber piles. The first well drilled from a fixed platform almost out of sight of land in federal waters was in 1947.

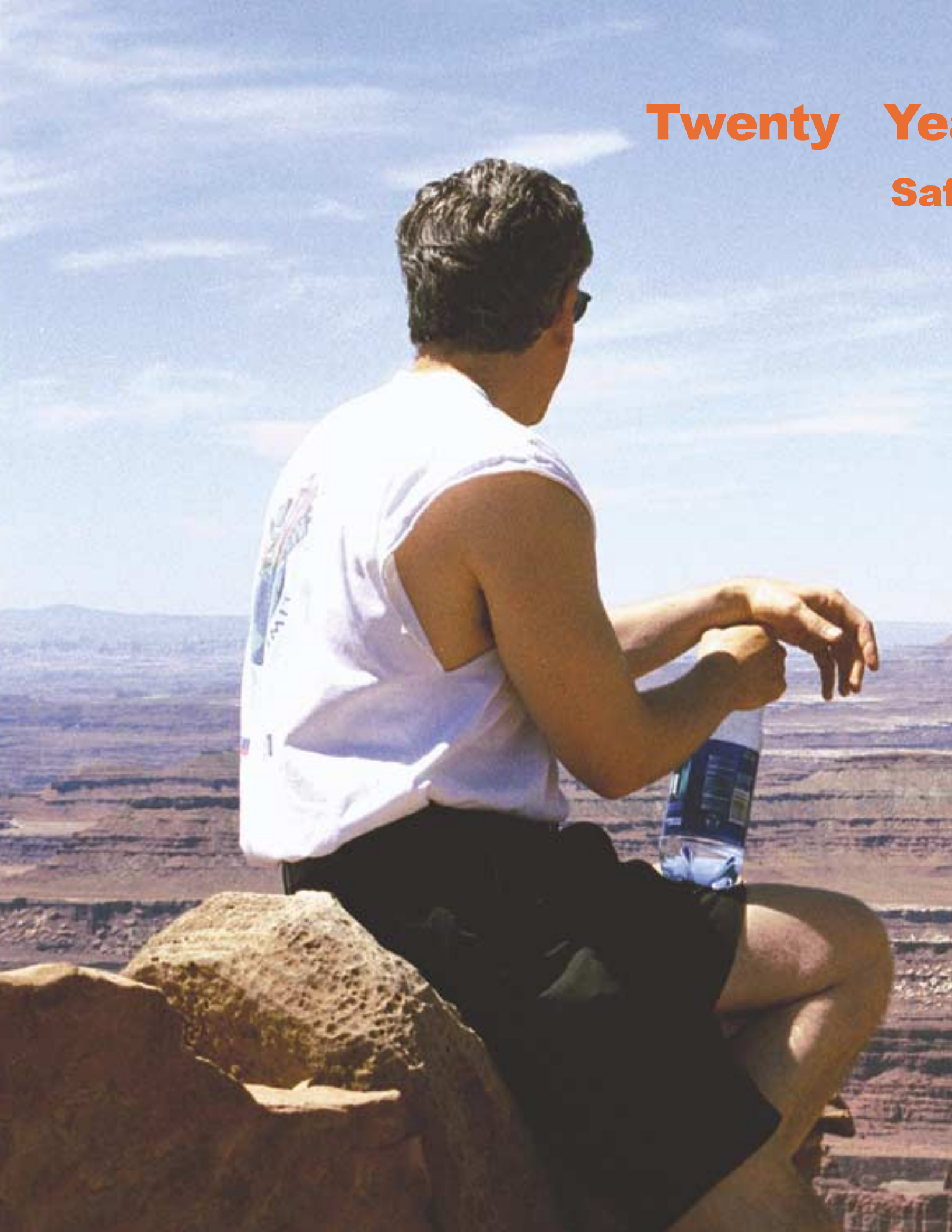
From those first wells, exploration and production jumped dramatically and today the offshore industry is venturing in water depths exceeding 10,000 feet.

Oil has given us our daily lives. It profoundly shaped and in some ways defined the 20th century. Oil has been a lifeblood for many, and the reason for brutal conflict for others.

In Daniel Yergin's book *The Prize*, the author refers to the twentieth century as the Age of Oil. "...every facet of our civilization has been transformed by the modern and mesmerizing alchemy of petroleum."

Today the offshore oil industry is a multibillion dollar business employing thousands of people. The industry is responsible for producing over a quarter of the nation's natural gas and oil. With more than 4000 platforms operating in the Gulf of Mexico and California and with production now flowing in Alaskan federal waters, the agency will rise to new challenges in this new century.

photo by Mieko Mahi


Twenty Yea
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feguarding America's Natural Treasures

America is a nation blessed with precious natural resources and treasures. A large portion of the revenue the agency collects from federal and American Indian lands is used to protect those treasures.

photo by Walter Bonora

America's national parks are a lasting symbol of the nation's commitment to preserving natural wonders for all generations to enjoy.

MMS file photos

Minerals Revenue Management's Key Role for the Agency

by David Izon

How many people think of the agency's Minerals Revenue Management when they walk through a state park or visit a national forest? Chances are, very few because they have never heard of MRM. So, what is the program? And, what's the connection to parks and forests?

The revenues generated from America's mineral resources on federal lands are the federal government's major source of funding to purchase parks and recreation areas. This money also helps individual states to fund recreation facilities.

Minerals Revenue Management collects and disburses all of these revenues and therefore plays an important role in protecting and preserving majestic landscapes and living treasures.

Since 1982, the Minerals Revenue Management program has distributed approximately $120 billion to federal, state and Indian accounts, including:

- $75.4 billion to the General Fund of the U.S. Treasury. This includes a one-time disbursement of almost $900 million to the Environmental Improvement and Restoration Fund.
- $13.5 billion to 38 states
- $27.9 billion to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the National Historic Preservation Fund and the Reclamation Fund
- $3.4 billion to the Department's Office of Trust Funds Management on behalf of 41 Indian tribes and 20,000 individual Indian allottees.

Moreover, revenues returned to the states and tribes from where the production occurred provides funding for state and Indian budgets for schools, highways and other social improvements.

Prompt access to these funds by states and Indians is essential; accordingly, MRM disburses revenue within one month of receipt. The program's goal is to continue reducing the turn around time to a minimum without compromising financial integrity. This will be accomplished as new equipment and software are installed in coming years.

The MRM program not only operates a comprehensive system that accounts for collections and distributions of revenue, it also conducts a compliance effort to ensure that royalty payments from leases are on time and accurate. This is a more complex and challenging assignment than one would think because of the nature of business transactions in the oil, gas and minerals industry.

"Production is frequently traded within and between companies or it may be consumed internally by the producer without ever having an open market sale," says Lucy Querques Denett, the agency's acting director.

"Also, adjustments to the sales value often must be made to account for costs of transporting or processing the production."

These accounting complexities may be difficult to resolve, so determining the correct value on which to base royalty payments can be challenging.

To meet the workload associated with assuring compliance MRM has, since the early 1980s, had audit agreements with states and tribes.

Under these agreements, states and tribes conduct audits of federal or tribal lease production on behalf of MRM. The partnerships forged through the program's agreements are a success story because they provide increased coverage of the many leases in production. Often, these audits will include state and county taxes and fees, thus overall efficiencies are gained through such efforts.

Taking these efforts one step further, the program also created the Farmington Indian Minerals Office which oversees all aspects of lease and revenue management. The office offers "one-stop shopping" to Navajo individual mineral owners by providing expedited service on many fronts such as leasing, production and lease accounts. A key aspect to this office was uniting the staffs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management and MMS under one director.

However, despite the program achievements gained since inception in 1982, MRM found that it must retool and reengineer its organization and processes to meet the challenge of accomplishing its responsibilities and to further improve efficiencies.

In 1997, MMS began a reengineering initiative to design new business processes and support systems for the 21st century. Prior to this time, the program's organization and business methods were functionally based, not process based.

Work was done incrementally in each functional area. The aging automated support systems and older technology were costly to maintain and change.

The initial design of systems and processes for MRM began in 1979 with the

MRM continued

establishment of a task force to develop the improved royalty management program. The task force report, delivered in 1980, conceptualized a royalty management program that featured a centralized accounting and collection activity supported by a field audit activity. This was in stark contrast to the highly decentralized royalty organization that existed at that time.

With the formation of MMS, the royalty organization was in place and development of its first automated system was nearly complete.

In January 1983, the President signed into law the Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act. This law provided additional statutory authorities for MMS to use in managing mineral leases, but it also introduced significant new requirements that triggered the first of many changes that would occur in subsequent years .

Collection and distribution of revenue from the early 1980s to the late 1990s was based on mainframe computers that often required manual data entry of reported information from industry.

Initially hosted on several minicomputers, MRM's principal accounting systems were threefold: the auditing and financial system which was the principal method used to receive and account for mineral revenues, the production accounting and auditing system, which tracks production, and the business information system which functions as the main management information retrieval system allowing MMS, and other federal agencies to access basic lease information.

Later these systems were centered on a mainframe computer. Over time, additional accounting responsibilities have been assumed and consolidated into MRM. For example, client/server applications provided functionality not delivered in the mainframe environment. Also, MRM added accounting functionality to the system to assume from BLM the accounting and collection responsibility for rental payments for nearly 100,000 federal nonproducing leases.

These business processes later became the program's approach to its mission and were concentrated in several operating divisions.

In 1996, Congress enacted the Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Simplification and Fairness Act which significantly changed MRM's historical operating assumptions and revenue processing methods.

The reengineered MRM is organized around two core business processes. The first is a financial management process that is focused on receiving, accounting for and rapidly disbursing mineral lease revenues. The second is a new compliance and asset management process that is focused on producing properties.

The reengineering effort is driven by performance goals designed to give program beneficiaries quick access to their money within 24 hours after receipt by MMS, and dramatically shorten the compliance timeframe from six to three years. Changes in business practices make the compressed revenue receipt and distribution a realistic goal.

Electronic payments, or wire transfers, and electronic reporting are becoming standard industry practices and MRM has implemented regulations requiring electronic commerce except in cases of hardship.

Significant benefits are expected from the reengineering investment including increased review and coverage of the many producing leases nationwide, earlier identification of market changes that may require new mineral revenue management initiatives and an improved end-to-end process that increases operating efficiencies.

The total reengineering investment is $38.5 million funded over a 4-year period (FY1998 through FY 2001). The agency's effort to reengineer its business processes has been a textbook example of this type of office restructuring.

Beginning in 1997, pilot teams implemented practices conducted by similar organizations. Initial efforts were undertaken to understand the scope of the effort. In 1999, operational model teams were organized and state and tribal audit program representatives were recruited to work in a collaborative setting with program staff.

New reporting and compliance practices were tested in a live environment using new systems provided by the contractor. By late 2000, the program began a full system implementation, including new compliance strategies necessary to achieve the three-year compliance goal.

The reengineered financial system came on-line November 2001. Implementation of the reengineered compliance strategy commenced simultaneously; however, several years will pass before compliance for all properties is fully transitioned to the three-year compliance timeframe.

To keep pace with changing economies and technology, MRM will continue to look for more efficient ways to serve the public.

In its reorganization in 2000, MRM not only adopted a more stream-lined structure, but it also established a center for excellence, which is tasked with the ongoing need for continuous learning and knowledge management.

This organization reflects a commitment for continued leadership and demonstrates a belief that a successful organization of the future cannot rest on its past accomplishments but instead must continually improve and adapt to ever-changing times.

Recent MRM Milestones 1997 - 2001

1997
- MRM began reengineering initiative to design new business processes and support systems for 21st century.
- RIK Implementation Team established to conduct feasibility study and proceed with RIK pilot projects in Texas and Wyoming.

1998
- MMS began taking oil under the crude oil in Wyoming RIK program in October 1998.
- RIK Pilot II program for natural gas in the Texas 8(g) zone of the Gulf of Mexico commenced in December 1998.

1999
- MMS published a final rule requiring electronic reporting except in hardship cases, effective November 1, 1999.
- MRM awarded Andersen Consulting, now Accenture, the financial systems development and installation contract in September 1999.
- The DOI began an initiative to transfer 28 million barrels of royalty in kind to DOE to replace SPR barrels that were sold in 1997 and 1998.

2000
- The program reorganized and changed its name from the Royalty Management Program to Minerals Revenue Management.
- In March, MMS published the Final Federal Oil Valuation Rule, effective June 1, 2000.
- All false claims oil suits were settled in principle for an estimated total additional royalty amount of $437 million.

2001
- New reengineered financial system was implemented in November 2001, on time and within budget.
- The Farmington Indian Minerals Office was established as a permanent office.
- The Administration announced an initiative utilizing RIK oil to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). By October 2002, 130,000 barrels per day of royalty oil will be transferred to the SPR.
- New Joan Killgore Award established to honor individuals from Indian tribes who have worked with MRM on various royalty management issues.

A Timeline of Key Events

1982 MMS is created and becomes a bureau of the Department of the Interior.

Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act is passed, establishing the framework to improve management of Federal and Indian mineral royalties.

1983 President signs a proclamation setting the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The EEZ is the area contiguous to the territorial sea of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Overseas territories and possessions. This zone extends 200 miles from the coastline.

1984 Total royalty collections $7.7 billion.
National Fishing Enhancement Act passed, encouraging the use of offshore platforms as artificial reefs.
Record number of exploratory drilled in a year. (597)
Record number of platform installations in a year (229)

1985 Eight states sign audit agreements with MMS.
The Navajo Nation signed an agreement with the agency, becoming the first Indian tribe with authority to audit revenues from mineral production.
The Royalty Management Program becomes operational. (The program has since undergone extensive reengineering and is now called Minerals Revenue Management)

OCS Lands Act Amendments to Section 8(g) are passed.

1987 The Bureau of Indian Affairs/Bureau of Land Management/MMS Joint Steering Committee established to integrate federal and Indian lease and royalty management program.

1988 Congress enacts first OCS drilling ban in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico.
1989 Completed conversion of all onshore oil and gas lease production accounting to MMS.

1990 Most natural gas produced in a year – 5.09 trillion cubic feet.
Amendments to Clean Air Act passed giving the Environmental Protection Agency jurisdiction for OCS facilities outside Central and Western Gulf of Mexico.
Oil Pollution Act of 1990 passed giving the Secretary of the Interior authority over offshore facilities, associated pipelines, and oil spill prevention.

1991 Deepest producing natural gas well in the Gulf of Mexico. (6,587 meters, or 21,612 feet.
Royalty Management Program receives an award for management excellence from the President's Council on Management Improvement.

1992 Secretary of the Interior delegates the authority stated in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to MMS.
Completed a departmental effort known as Contemporaneous Audit Initiative, which established timely audit completions on a contemporaneous basis.

1993 Most platform removals in a year (182)

1994 Indian Minerals Steering Committee is created to improve communications between the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, MMS, tribes, and allottees.

1995 Deep Water Royalty Relief Act is passed expanding MMS authority to grant royalty relief.
Pilot project initiated to collect offshore natural gas royalties in kind.
RMP successfully concludes electronic data interchange pilot project.

1996 Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Simplification and Fairness Act enacted to improve and streamline the federal royalty program.
MMS pursues millions in California offshore crude oil underpayments.

1997 MMS begins paying interest to companies on overpayments of royalties on Federal oil and natural gas leases.

1998 First freestanding offshore compliant tower and tallest freestanding structure in the world near the Flower Garden Banks in the Gulf of Mexico. The tower extends over 1900 feet above the seafloor to the tip of its flare boom.
Presidential directive prevents leasing any area under moratorium before 2012.
RIK pilots begun.

1999 Oil production form the deep water portion of the GOM surpassed production from the shallow-water areas.

2000 National Oceans Commissions Act passed.
MRM reorganized and changed its name from the Royalty Management Program to Minerals Revenue Management.

2001 GOM largest find to date and could produce up to 1 billion barrels of oil.
The Farmington Indian Minerals Office was established as a permanent DOI office. The office unites Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, and MMS under one director to better serve industry and American Indian stakeholders.

The National Oil Spill Response Test Facility in New Jersey

Ohmsett file photo

Moving Forward with Technology

MMS staff report

In a little town in New Jersey about a hundred miles from New York City, MMS oversees operations at the world's largest outdoor tank designed specifically to test oil spill recovery equipment and new technologies related to spill detection and response efforts. The town is Leonardo, and the name of the facility is OHMSETT - The National Oil Spill Response Test Facility.

Every year, academic researchers, members of the oil spill response industry and several federal agencies bring to the facility new concepts and equipment designed to make recovering spilled oil at sea safer and more efficient.

This is all part of the agency's commitment to technology research; an effort that helps protect the marine environment from accidental spills from oil and gas development activities on federal waters

"When a spill occurs at sea, you need the best equipment and the best trained personnel available to do the recovery job quickly and safely.," said Joseph Mullin of MMS. "The facility offers industry and government the possibility to accomplish that mission.

In a move to further improve testing, the facility will now be open year round so that industry and federal agencies can test equipment specifically designed to operate in Arctic waters.

"In short, the facility can now replicate broken ice conditions." added Mullin who is the agency's senior research advisor for oil spill response.

But more importantly, OHMSETT fits under a broader umbrella of the agency's technology research and assessment program. For more than 20 years, MMS has maintained a comprehensive, long-term research commitment to improve oil spill response technologies. This program has expanded the existing capabilities to respond to an ocean oil spill. MMS is the principal government agency funding offshore oil spill response research.

The program operates through contracts with universities, private firms and government laboratories to assess spill response related technologies and to perform necessary applied research.

The agency also works closely with foreign partners to develop initiatives that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of oil spill response technologies worldwide.

The MMS Technology Assessment and Research Program which houses both oil spill response research as well as offshorer safety and engineering related research is an important link in a chain of technical research that extends beyond the nation's borders.

For more information on MMS programs please check our website at **www.mms.gov**

Providing for our energy needs

Protecting the marine and coastal environments

Collecting revenue for the taxpayer

Improving our quality of life

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