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"The Venezuelan Amazon: It's Rocks and It's Indigenous People"

by

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Abstract

Venezuela, located at the northernmost part of South America, covers approximately one million km² (386,000 sq. miles). The northern half of the country consists mostly of Cretaceous and Tertiary rocks and large petroleum producing basins. The southern half, south of the Orinoco River, is a Precambrian Shield that occupies the Venezuelan Amazon and Guyana region and well known for its bauxite, iron, gold and diamond mining. The Shield consists of an igneous/metamorphic basement of mostly granitic rocks overlain by a thick layer (5000 feet) of quartz arenite belonging to the Roraima Formation. Scattered throughout the region are erosional remnants of the Roraima that form spectacular high, flat plateaus called "tepui" and separated from one another by tropical jungle and river valleys. These topographic features are important for their amazing fauna and flora unique only to these localities. Indigenous people inhabit the lower tropical jungle located between the "tepui". They belong primarily to the Pemon, Yecuana and Yanomami tribes, each with their own language and customs. Their vast knowledge of the rich flora and fauna within their natural habitat has been extremely enlightening to the few scientists fortunate enough to have been able to work among them.

Biography

Donald A. Goddard, retired from LSU in July 2009, where he was an associate professor at the Center for Energy Studies. He served first as coordinator and later as director of the Central Gulf Region Petroleum Technology Transfer Council (PTTC). In this capacity, with the help of Louisiana's Producer Advisory Board (PAG), Dr. Goddard was responsible for identifying and transferring upstream technologies to Louisiana independent producers. His petroleum research activities included integrated field studies of mature producing areas and regional production of Gulf Coast sedimentary basins. Professor Goddard began his career in 1965 with Gulf Oil Co. (Mene Grande) in Eastern Venezuela, and has more than thirty years of petroleum industry experience, both in exploration geophysics and production geology. Presently, he is President of Liverpool Petroleum, Inc. an upstream consulting company.

He has a B.S. degree in geology from Florida State University, and M.Sc. and Ph. D. degrees in marine geology and geophysics from the University of London (UCL), and a geological engineering degree from the Universidad Central de Venezuela. He is a member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, and was a member of the Baton Rouge Geological Society.

