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Gulf of Mexico Program

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MOBILE DISTRICT, ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS WINS 3rd PLACE GULF GUARDIAN AWARD FOR REGIONAL SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT DEMO PROGRAM

STENNIS SPACE CENTER, Miss. – The Gulf of Mexico Program recently announced that, the Mobile District of the Army Corps of Engineers will receive a third place Gulf Guardian Award for 2003 in the Government Category for the Northern Gulf of Mexico Regional Sediment Management Demonstration Program. The award will be presented to Army representatives at the Southern States Environmental Conference and Exhibition scheduled Sept. 23-25, in Biloxi.

Four years ago the Gulf of Mexico Program developed the Gulf Guardian awards as a method of recognizing and honoring the businesses, community groups, individuals, and agencies that are taking positive steps to keep the Gulf healthy, beautiful and productive. The Gulf of Mexico Program began in 1988 to protect, restore, and maintain the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem in economically sustainable ways. Award entries were received from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. A first, second, and third place award are given each year in six categories – individual, business, youth and education, nonprofit organizations, government, and partnership efforts.

“Our oceans and coasts are precious resources,” said Jimmy Palmer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator in Atlanta. “Coastal and marine waters provide some of the most diverse and biologically productive habitats on the planet,” he added. “This year’s Gulf Guardian Award winners are doing their part to keep these valuable resources healthy and productive.”

“The goal of the Northern Gulf of Mexico Regional Sediment Management (RSM) program is to better manage our sediment resources along the coast and associated bays and estuaries,” said Dr. Susan Rees, team leader for the Mobile RSM demonstration project. “Better managed sediment means that we view sediment as a valuable resource and try to use it to better the environment and minimize expenditures, all accomplished through partnerships with other federal, state, and local agencies.”

Julie Rosati, RSM Demonstration Program Manager at the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center in Vicksburg said, “The RSM Demo Program has U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District offices implementing projects throughout the United States.” “The project in Mobile was completed in 2003, and proven RSM concepts will be incorporated into Corps business practice with our partners.”

Gulf of Mexico Program Office Acting Director Bryon O. Griffith said, “Our 2003 Gulf Guardian Award winners are to be commended for taking action to preserve and restore the Gulf of Mexico.” “One out of every six jobs in the United States is marine-related, generating \$54 billion in goods and services annually. Protecting these waters makes sense economically, aesthetically, and

environmentally. Acting as one community to protect our one and only Gulf of Mexico is essential to our way of life and our standard of living.”

For a list of all the Gulf Guardian Award winners for 2003, visit the Gulf of Mexico Program web site at <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo> and click on the Gulf Guardian Award button on the left.

The Gulf of Mexico Program is underwritten by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and is a non-regulatory, inclusive consortium of state and federal government agencies and representatives of the business and agricultural community, fishing industry, scientists, environmentalists, and community leaders from all five Gulf States. The Gulf Program seeks to improve the environmental health of the Gulf in concert with economic development.

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Editor's Note: For more information about the Gulf Guardian Awards and the Gulf of Mexico Program, call Terry Hines Smith at 228-688-1159. For more information about the Regional Sediment Management Demonstration Project, call Dr. Susan Rees at 251-694-4141 or Julie Rosati at 601-634-3005.