

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Gulf of Mexico Program

Office of Public Affairs ♦ Bldg. 1100, Rm. 220F ♦ Stennis Space Center, Miss. 39529-6000
(228) 688-1159 ♦ Fax: (228) 688-2709 ♦ E-Mail: hines-smith.terry@epa.gov ♦ www.epa.gov/gmpo

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 28, 2003

GULF SPECIMEN MARINE LAB WINS 3RD PLACE GULF GUARDIAN AWARD

STENNIS SPACE CENTER, Miss. – The Gulf of Mexico Program recently announced that, Gulf Specimen Marine Lab will receive a third place Gulf Guardian Award for 2003 in the Youth and Education Category. The award will be presented to representatives of the lab 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.”

“Kids call Gulf Specimen the “touchy-feely” place,” said Jack Rudloe, Gulf Specimen Marine Lab spokesperson. “They build self-confidence and senses by holding scabbling horseshoe crabs and seeing orange starfish sliding over the bottom. They develop their sense of touch, smell garlic sponges and hear grunts grunt. They learn to appreciate the creatures that crawl, swim and burrow in the Gulf of Mexico, but for tasting, we recommend Panacea’s seafood restaurants, he added.”

Gulf Specimen Marine Lab has spent more than 40 years protecting the Gulf coast through education and activism. Many of their education campaigns have focused on the careless use of estuaries and the destruction of coastal salt marshes. The lab has made a point of focusing on opportunities for children to experience biology hands-on through marsh field trips. Jack and Anne Rudloe have published eight books and have numerous articles printed in major national magazines dealing with protecting the Gulf from pollution. They also have years of experience and have conducted extensive research in sea turtle rehabilitation.

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.

-30-

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 Gulf Specimen Marine Lab, call Jack Rudloe at 850-984-5297.