

The Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence

Executive Summary for Rachel J. Garren

Natural Resource Specialist, Rachel Garren's innovative efforts in interpretation and partnering have been outstanding in her 29 years of service, but never more so than in 2010, where a culmination of her efforts have produced an amazing year of achievements and have brought immeasurable honor and prestige to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Ms. Garren leads the St. Louis District Interpretive Services and Outreach Team and serves as the Assistant Manager of the National Operations Center for Water Safety on a part-time basis (40%). What she has contributed through her technical skills in the field of interpretation in both of these positions is remarkable. Ms. Garren's leadership on both the St. Louis District's Interpretive Services and Outreach (ISOP) team and Water Safety team has made them a model that other USACE districts want to emulate.

Her success is evident through the establishment of three new visitor centers within the St. Louis District that were funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2010; the development of partnerships, products, displays, and training of staff for the first-ever water safety exhibit area at the 2010 National Boy Scout Jamboree; and development of interpretive and water safety online training materials that will benefit the Student Conservation Association Public Safety Interns and USACE employees we hire for years to come.

On numerous occasions in 2010, Ms. Garren gave presentations on a variety of topics within her areas of expertise, including presentations at the Association of Partners for Public Lands Workshop and the USACE Natural Resources Management Conference. She is highly skilled at the art of using Freeman Tilden's six principles of interpretation in every program she presents, in each exhibit she develops, and even in her impromptu interactions with the public. She established an innovative partnership with Missouri Department of Natural Resources that provided interpretive training to 110 USACE and Missouri DNR employees in 2010. Ms. Garren utilized partnerships like this one to teach and mentor thousands of employees.

Ms. Garren does a remarkable job of working with partners that benefit the USACE. As the Co-subject Matter Expert for cooperating associations on the USACE NRM Gateway, Ms. Garren has provided information to numerous employees nationwide to establish these partnerships and improve them. In 2010, cooperating association agreements and real estate instruments in St. Louis District needed to be revised and created to accommodate the establishment of 3 new visitor center sales areas.

Through her leadership, she exemplifies the true spirit of Hiram M. Chittenden in each and everything she does and her achievements have created unprecedented value to our employees and customers. Ms. Garren is the best of the best in the USACE when it comes to interpretive services and is second to none in regards to her expertise, knowledge and guidance. Her work is the definition of excellence, and she genuinely deserves the honor of receiving the Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Services in recognition of her accomplishments in 2010.