



## Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Eriksen Captures Prestigious 2008 SETAC / Menzie Environmental Education Award**

**TAMPA, Fla. (November 16, 2008)** – The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry is pleased to announce Marcus Eriksen and the Algalita Marine Research Foundation as the recipients of the 2008 SETAC/Menzie Environmental Education Award. This award recognizes an individual, group, organization or corporation that has made a major contribution in improving environmental science education.

Eriksen and AMRF have played significant roles in contributing to environmental education and the awareness of hazards caused by plastic pollution and helping to curb the improper disposal of plastic waste. They have also assisted the University of Hawaii–Hilo in offering new undergraduate courses, including a course entitled Marine Debris in the Pacific. For middle and high school students, they developed Watershed Wonders, which provides a series of hands-on activities regarding watershed ecology and human impact. The team then produced Journey of the Fluke, a unique curriculum on wetland pollution featuring a boat constructed of recycled plastic trash. During the summer of 2008, Eriksen embarked on a public awareness campaign to bring attention to plastic marine debris by building a raft constructed from 15,000 plastic bottles, derelict sailboat masts and fishing nets, and the fuselage of a Cessina aircraft, traveling 2,600 miles from California to Hawaii ([www.junkraft.com](http://www.junkraft.com)). Eriksen and AMRF have prepared several fact sheets and brochures, given assembly presentations to more than 100,000 children in Southern California schools and established the Plastics are Forever program, which engages students in research and community service.

The recipient of the SETAC/Menzie Environmental Education Award must make significant advancements to environmental awareness education for youth, either through educating other instructors or by working with community groups and K-12 programs. Eriksen and AMRF have demonstrated these actions and continue to promote environmental education by the way of their innovative teaching.

SETAC is a not-for-profit, worldwide professional society founded in 1979 consisting of individuals and institutions from an array of scientific fields including environmental toxicology and chemistry, biology, ecology, earth sciences, atmospheric sciences, health sciences, hazard and risk assessment, environmental engineering and life-cycle assessment. For more information on the Society, visit [setac.org](http://setac.org).

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