



# GULF SPECIMEN MARINE LABORATORIES, INC.

*a non profit/tax exempt organization*

Nov 13, 2018

VIA EMAIL

Florida Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 12007  
Tallahassee, Florida  
32317

Re: [Gulf Specimens Marine Lab - Infrastructure Upgrades and Operations](#)

Dear Triumph Gulf Coast Board member:

After looking at the wreckage of Mexico Beach, I am thankful that Gulf Specimen Marine Lab is still here, and that Wakulla County was spared the brunt of the storm. We still have an aquarium standing, although it has taken severe damage. Our Living Dock and specimen aquaculture facilities were shattered, and my house survived with minimal damage, compared to so many structures around us. In comparison to the wreckage that lies to the west of us, our damage was far less severe.

However, it is enough to put us out of business unless we can get funding to put Humpty Dumpty back together again. The damage to our sea water system was severe, our pumps and sumps were damaged beyond repair, and the flooding damaged our offices and computer systems. Most of the aquarium specimens survived, because of previous upgrades to our facilities, and the experience we gained from previous hurricanes. We shipped our sharks to the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta, and our sea turtles to Sea World in Orlando to wait out the storm.

We are now back open for business, but barely. Amidst the wreckage of our town of Panacea with its closed down businesses, we are still managing to ship specimens to school and research laboratories around the country, and conducting field trips for regional schools, but without immediate funds, we are in danger of having to close our doors. We are in the process of trying to get a FEMA grant, but there is no immediate help in sight.

**P.O. Box 237 • Panacea, Florida 32346 • 850-984-5297**

Fax 850-984-5233 • [www.gulfspecimen.org](http://www.gulfspecimen.org) • [gspecimen@sprintmail.com](mailto:gspecimen@sprintmail.com)

I sincerely urge the Board to approve the GSML Proposal (link above) and if approved would it be possible that Triumph Gulf Coast can advance us five percent of the \$4,950,000 grant proposal or roughly \$250,000 on Gulf Specimen Marine Lab's application No. 95? It was submitted November 15, 2017 for Infrastructure Upgrades and Operations. All of the funds that we are now requesting, are in accordance with our original request to upgrade of our facilities described in pages 111-159 in our Triumph Application No. 95 under the Master Plan that was designed by Joe Chormanski, the former vice president of Ripley's Aquarium.

Prior to Hurricane Michael we met with Dr. Franks regarding our plans to issue Aquatic Life Support Technician certifications. At his suggestion, we then made contact with third part nonprofit educational groups like the Aquatic Animal Life Support Operators association and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Because Gulf Specimen's facility has a positive international reputation with our certifications, our students will stand a better chance of getting jobs in both the fields of aquaculture and marine aquarium maintenance. As soon as we are up and running we will finalize this association.

Gulf Specimen Marine Lab has been in existence for 56 years in Panacea, and we have been through years of hurricanes and hardships. With your assistance, we can continue to employ our staff, sustain our internship program and help the suffering local economy. Anything you can do to help while our application is being considered will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack Rudloe', with a large loop at the start and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jack Rudloe  
President  
Gulf Specimen Marine Laboratory