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## Corporate Award Taylor Guitar Company

The objective of the **Corporate Award** of the Ecological Society of America (ESA) is to identify and recognize a corporation, business, division, program, or an individual of a company for its accomplishments in incorporating sound ecological concepts, knowledge, and practices into its planning and operating procedures. This award was designed to encourage the use of ecological concepts in business and industry and to enhance communication among ecologists and the private sector. The Corporate Award is made annually in one of the six categories; the category for 2004 was "Sustainability of Biological Resources in Terrestrial Environments." The committee sought examples of corporate entities whose land resource management reflects a sound foundation in basic ecological principles and science.

The ESA Corporate Award Committee has awarded the 2004 corporate Award to the Taylor Guitar company in El Cajon, California, based on their innovative process of applying finishes to their guitars as well as their sustainable use of wood. The company has made significant efforts to reduce the amount of pollutants released into the air during the finishing process. Taylor Guitars is a leader in the acoustic guitar industry. The company is known for revolutionizing the design and manufacture of high-end acoustic guitars with significant innovations that produce superior instruments. These innovations are the brainchild of luthier/inventor/company president and co-owner, Bob Taylor, who pioneered the use of CNC (Computer Numerically Controlled) milling machines, Ultraviolet-cured finishes, laser cutters and various other high-tech procedures in the acoustic guitar building process.

Their central innovation and demonstration of commitment to environmental responsibility was the groundbreaking development of a more environmentally friendly finish for guitars. Taylor was the first acoustic guitar manufacturer to develop a guitar finish curable with Ultraviolet-light. Prior to 1995, UV-curable finishes were available only for metal or plastic, not wood. Collaborating with a chemist, Taylor worked for years to develop a finish that was more resilient, more environmentally friendly, and more aesthetically pleasing than the lacquers commonly used on wooden instruments. The company also had to design and build its own curing ovens to accommodate the new, fume-reducing spray formula. In 1999, the San Diego Air Pollution Control District presented Taylor Guitars with an award for developing a system that greatly reduces the emission of volatile organic compounds into the air stream. Other examples of their commitment to environmental responsibility: A current project is developing a robotic spraying system that is much more efficient than hand spraying, to minimize waste of materials. Another new project in the development stages will allow them to procure an important wood – Honduran Mahogany – by purchasing large quantities of storm-felled trees under the auspices of the C.I.T.E.S. treaty. In the past, in order to get Hawaiian koa they have worked with landowners who have the blessings of Greenpeace, The Nature Conservancy, and The Hawaiian Island Forestry Association. Occasionally they buy African ebony when the African government auctions a load that was felled during the construction of a road or something similar. In 2001, they donated a portion of sales for the Limited Edition Liberty Tree Guitars to American Forests, the nation's oldest conservation organization.



**Bob Taylor**  
President and Co-Owner  
Taylor Guitars

*Corporate Award Subcommittee:* Kate Lajtha (Chair), Joan Ehrenfeld, Greg Aplet, Laura Huenneke and Scott Stoleson