



Mark Van Thillo - Biography

Mark Van Thillo is currently a Director and the Chief Operations Officer of the Biosphere Foundation (BF) and its division the Planetary Coral Reef Foundation (PCRF).

On behalf of PCRF, Mr. Van Thillo has managed the logistics and technical operation of PCRF's coral reef research vessel – the only ship dedicated to the study of coral reefs on a planetary basis for 14 years; Wastewater Gardens®, a sub-surface constructed wetland for recycling of wastewater; and a 1,000 acre rainforest project in Puerto Rico. He is presently working with “Studio of the Sea”, a film studio dedicated to featuring films about ocean challenges, sea creatures and island cultures; assisting in the design and implementation of a marine conservation/community outreach center in Southeast Asia; and securing a vessel for PCRF's program at sea.

On behalf of Biosphere Foundation, Mr. Van Thillo designed and constructed a 12' diameter sealed system to grow plants and study soil, water and atmospheric dynamics in support of the design for a space-based human life support system. He also co-directed the conceptual design of Mars On Earth®, a simulation on Earth of an inhabited base for Mars. The goal of this project was to determine the feasibility of maintaining humans in a space-based self-sustaining system.

From 1991-1993, Mr. Van Thillo was one of the eight "biospherians" to live for two years inside Biosphere 2, a 3.15-acre Laboratory for Global Ecology. At Biosphere 2, Mr. Van Thillo was the Co-Captain for the two year, 1991-1993, Biosphere 2 experiment located outside of Tucson, Arizona, where he was responsible for the maintenance and operation of all technical equipment. Prior to that, 1986 – 1991, he was in charge of all construction quality control for the Biosphere 2 project and from 1993-1994, he was the Executive Manager of Technical Systems for Space Biospheres Ventures (the company managing Biosphere 2).

Previously, Mark was the Chief Engineer from 1983 – 1986 on a three year round-the-world voyage. He is a Fellow of the Explorers Club and a NAUI Dive Instructor and has been featured internationally for his work with Biosphere 2 and Biosphere Foundation's projects.