

The Coastal Waters Consortium Presents:

Scientist Spotlight



Dr. Anne Giblin

What is your educational background?

I got my undergraduate degree in biology from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and went on to receive a Ph.D. in Marine Ecology from Boston University Marine Program.

What inspired you to become a scientist?

When I was in elementary school three things really catalyzed my interest in science. One was going to the NY Museum of Natural History and seeing the dinosaur hall. The second was the excitement during the early days of the space program. When I was nine I really wanted to be an astronaut. But what set me on my present course was when my parents gave me a mask and snorkel at the beach and I became hooked on marine biology.

Can you describe what you enjoy the most about conducting scientific research?

I enjoy working with a team to solve a scientific puzzle. There is a lot of excitement and comradery both in the field and in the lab in the initial phase of the research when you are figuring out the best way to address the question, modifying your methods to improve upon things and finally getting everything to work. Then the next really fun part comes when you start to see something in the data, it might be what you expected but it might not be at all.



What is your role as a scientist for CWC?

I am working with Brian Roberts (LUMCON) and Anne Bernhard (Connecticut College) to see how bacterial processes in sediments might be changed by exposure to oil. Many important processes, such as those that cycle nitrogen or produce methane, are carried out by different types of microbes and some processes may be more affected by oil than others.

Can you summarize your oil spill research and describe any surprising findings you have come across?

For some microbial processes, such as nitrification, we have not found much of a difference between sites which were visibly oiled after the Deep Horizon spill vs nearby sites which were not visibly oiled. However our first sampling was 2 years post spill. We are seeing very strong small scale spatial patterns which relate to elevation and other soil properties.

The Coastal Waters Consortium's mission is to assess the chemical evolution, biological degradation, and environmental stresses of petroleum and dispersant within Gulf of Mexico coastal and shelf ecosystems.