

The Coastal Waters Consortium Presents:

# Scientist Spotlight



## Dr. Charlie Martin

### What is your educational background?

I have a BS in Biology and a PhD in Marine Science from the University of South Alabama and have spent time performing research and teaching around the world.

### What inspired you to become a scientist?

My curiosity about how the natural world works, and how humans have changed the world, drives my scientific research program.

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

My favorite part of research is answering questions about nature. I love the creativity involved in asking **novel** questions and figuring out new and **unique** ways of finding the answers. I feel satisfied with knowing that the science I participate in contributes to a greater understanding of our natural ecosystems and affects the decisions we make to **conserve** our planet.

### What is your role as a scientist for CWC?

While I perform some managerial tasks for the CWC (such as scheduling group field excursions, etc.), I also perform independent research collaborate on numerous projects with CWC members on topics ranging from plant ecology to fish and food web ecology.

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

I have been quite surprised by my research findings in that, in many cases, results highlight the **resilience** of Gulf of Mexico flora and fauna. For example, we have found that, despite oil exposure in numerous areas, communities and populations of marsh fishes are not reduced. Likewise, plants like *Ruppia maritima* (widgeongrass) grown in oiled sediments do not exhibit changes in growth (although oil induces other changes).



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.