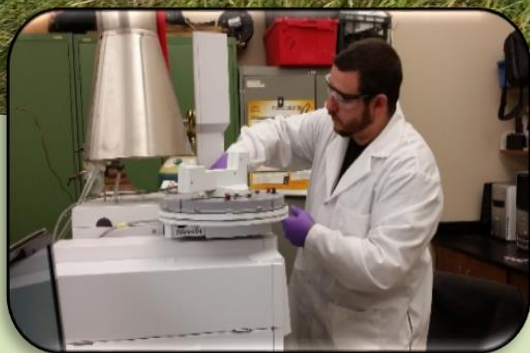


Scientist Spotlight



Dr. Gregory M. Olson

What is your educational background?

B.S. Environmental Science Education Grades 6th-12th, McNeese State, Lake Charles, LA
Minors in Chemistry and History

M.S. Environmental Science, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA
Conc. Environmental Toxicology

Ph.D. Environmental Science, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA
Minor in Food Science

What inspired you to become a scientist?

Initially, it was my desire to understand how the world worked. Eventually I decided that I wanted to share this desire through teaching and education. I was then given the opportunity to complete my advanced degrees doing what I love and in the process I had the opportunity to continue educating along the way.

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

I really enjoy field work. Getting out in the environment and being able to really make a connection with the numbers generated by your work is very satisfying.

What is your role as a scientist for CWC?

I am a Research Associate in the RCAT laboratory at LSU. My primary function is solvent extraction and GC/MS analysis of samples.

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

I assessed the Gulf menhaden population after the Deepwater Horizon Spill using total PAH concentrations, benzo[a]pyrene toxic and mutagenic equivalents of specific PAHs, total non-polar lipid content, and overall fish condition (using a standard weight equation I calculated from historic pre-spill data). My research showed a measurable decrease in PAHs and an increase in lipids and condition three years after the spill. A significant portion of the sampled fish containing elevated levels of PAHs in 2011 were no longer present in 2012 and 2013.

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.