

The Coastal Waters Consortium Presents:

Scientist Spotlight



Jacquie Levi

What is your role as a scientist for CWC?

I am a Research Assistant with the Roberts Lab of Ecosystem Ecology and Biogeochemistry. You can find me in the lab, working to process samples on the nutrient analyzer, gas chromatograph, or other analytical machines. During the summer you'll find me out in the marsh in the mud, sampling plants, greenhouse gases and taking soil cores.

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

The Roberts Lab researches the impacts of the oil spill on salt marsh biogeochemical processes like greenhouse gas production or nitrification. We have seen that many processes are somewhat resilient, but we have also found that methane production increases with oiling. Most processes are highly variable depending on the type of soil, elevation, and bacteria communities, and so it has been important for us to characterize these processes so that we can understand how they may be effected by oiling. We are currently working on installing mesocosm experiments in our lab, so that we can conduct more controlled experiments on how oiling changes biogeochemical processes in the marsh.

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.

What is your educational background?

I earned a Bachelor's of Science from the University of Washington in Biology (Ecology, Evolution and Conservation) with a minor in Aquatic and Fisheries Sciences.

What inspired you to become a scientist?

I have always been inspired by and fascinated with the natural world, especially growing up in Washington state near the mountains and the ocean. Becoming a scientist has been a natural transition for me into something I was already doing- being curious about the planet and concerned with its well-being.

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

The process of discovery is exciting and interesting to me. I enjoy searching for what hasn't been done and then finding creative ways to fill those knowledge gaps. I especially like participating in research that has implications for conservation and management objectives. Hopefully by participating I am helping to provide useful information that will aid in conservation of the natural world that I am so inspired by.

