

The Coastal Waters Consortium Presents:

Scientist Spotlight



Wendy Morrison

What is your educational background?

In 1987 I received a B.S. degree in Biology from Northeast Louisiana University (now University of Louisiana Monroe).

What inspired you to become a scientist?

Growing up in the country, I was immersed in the “natural world” from the beginning and grew up spending hours in the woods playing, hiking, camping, exploring with my Dad. I was very curious and in retrospect a natural observer (I still have a vivid memory from my childhood of sitting in the dirt in our driveway for about an hour watching a colony of ants go about their business). When I got to college I didn't really know what I wanted to do, but I had to designate a major. I remember thinking, “Well, I enjoyed my Biology class in High School...”. When my major courses began, I knew I had chosen the right path.

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

I like figuring things out. I find satisfaction in planning, organizing and implementing tasks that go toward answering big picture questions. I like focusing on the *details*, refining each task with the goal of making it better and more efficient. To my surprise, I have found the administrative work as challenging and stimulating as my research efforts for those same reasons. With 26 co-Principal Investigators in our consortium, it is quite a job keeping track of everything!



What is your role as a scientist for CWC?

My duties in CWC-II are much different than in CWC-I (where I assisted in the study looking at effects of the DWH oil spill on offshore phytoplankton). As Deputy Director, I now work mostly in an administrative capacity of program manager, maintaining the personnel roster, collating quarterly reports from the different research groups, tracking publications, organizing meetings, and generally assisting the Director to facilitate the research in any way I can. I am also part of the CWC Data team where I review and track datasets and metadata generated by consortia researchers.

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

Current results from CWC researchers can be found in various places (including the Scientist Spotlights!) and synthesis efforts are underway to provide a better understanding of the impacts of the DWH oil spill.

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.