

Marsh Musings

by Dr. Lenore Tedesco

With this article, I am starting a new tradition. As the new Executive Director of the Wetland's Institute, I will be starting a new column in *Views from the Tower* to share the many wonderful things that are happening at the Institute, to introduce you to the new programs and projects we will be undertaking, and to discuss many of the interesting developments in coastal and wetland research, education, and conservation that are happening around the world. I hope you will find the column interesting and informative. We welcome readers' comments and plan to publish some as part of each newsletter in a section called *Member's Corner*.

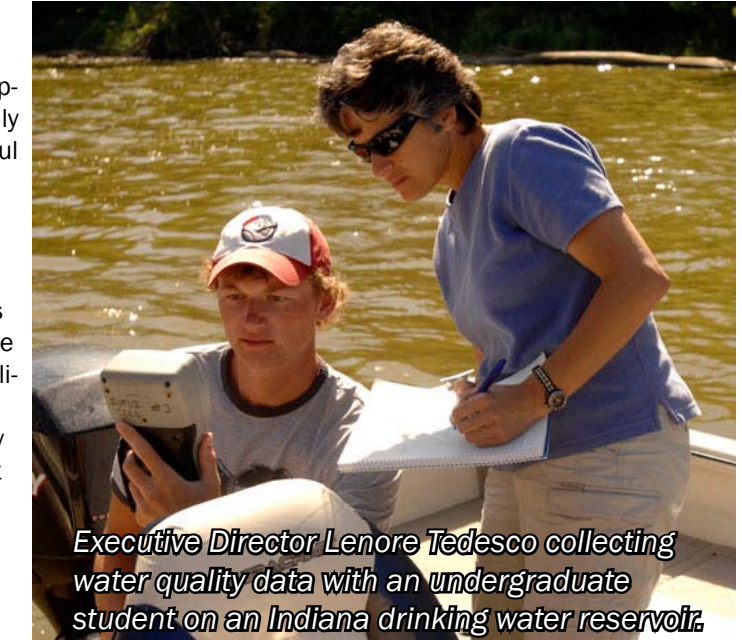
I hope by now you know a little bit about me and my journey so far. If not, check out my welcome statement on the website under the Meet the Staff link. We opened the next chapter at the Wetlands Institute on October 3, 2011, when I officially took the reins from Cindy O'Connor. Cindy has done a wonderful job growing the Institute and will be staying on as a consultant to me until the end of the year. Thanks for everything Cindy!

As I write this, I have been at the Wetlands Institute for approximately three weeks and have spent most of my time learning from everyone, about everything. I expect this process will continue for a long time, however I am excited to say that we have already started to implement some new programs and policies.

The Wetland's Institute has adopted a set of sustainability principals and is actively working across all areas to implement sustainable practices. So far we have a) shifted purchasing to recycled or sustainably produced products, b) upgraded our computing resources to Energy Star systems (and are responsibly disposing of our e-waste for reuse and recycling of components), c) switched our publications, communications and marketing materials to recycled papers, soy-based inks, and/or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified materials, d) switched to paperless purchasing and bill paying, and e) are developing an opt-in for e-newsletter delivery. There are many more things to do. We are investigating the costs and benefits of expanding the solar array on the roof to generate more renewable energy, conducting an energy audit to identify other opportunities for energy savings, reviewing the gardens and landscaping for opportunities to reduce water consumption, and many other things. We are working to add a Green Practices page to the website so that you can stay informed about our progress and get suggestions about things you can do to help "green your footprint." Look for the launch of that page in the coming weeks.

I have been enjoying the marsh ecosystem and the wealth of birds that are using the wetlands for feeding, resting and stop-over areas. I want to encourage our members to come out and bird the Wetlands Institute grounds and let us know what you are seeing. We have started a birding log and are posting it to the website under About Us. There will be a logbook at the front desk – or you can e-mail your sightings to Patty Davis for inclusion. Send your photos too!

Expect news and information about water resources and water quality in the tidal creeks, bays and wetlands around the Wetlands Institute and in Middle Township. My current research is focused on water resources and the impacts that land use has on water quality. I have brought research equipment from my former university position (and will be acquiring more) and hope to install some water quality probes at the Institute in the coming months. These probes can be deployed for extended periods of time and record information at 15 minute intervals providing a record of the conditions and cycles in the physical and chemical quality of the water in Scotch Bonnet Creek. This installation will be the first in what I expect to be many instruments that will form a network from a more open marine setting through estuarine (mixed salt and fresh water) areas and finally into the fresh water swamps on the mainland. The connectivity between the mainland freshwater systems and the bays and coastal environments is a critical component of the health and well-being of the wetlands and coastal ecosystems and even our drinking water. Understanding those linkages will form an important underpinning to the research, conservation, and stewardship programs that I expect to develop going forward.



Executive Director Lenore Tedesco collecting water quality data with an undergraduate student on an Indiana drinking water reservoir.

WHAT'S SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability is defined broadly as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (WECD 1987) It can encompass issues of local and global environmental quality, resource use, environmental literacy, and societal equity.

Stay tuned, send your ideas and comments, stop by for a visit, renew and expand your engagement, and be part of the new excitement, growth and development of the Wetlands Institute. We need your help and support to achieve the greatness I envision. Make no small plans for the Wetlands Institute – *be a part of it.*