

MARSH MUSINGS

by Dr. Lenore Tedesco, Executive Director



As we close out our summer season here at The Wetlands Institute, we are looking forward to the changing seasons and the next phase of our growth and development. This summer, we launched a \$500,000 Capacity Building Initiative. Our goal is to rebuild the organization by bringing top-notch professionals into leadership positions throughout the Institute and to rebuild and upgrade our facilities. In the last issue of Views From The Tower, I introduced many of the new staff – so you can see we are already well on our way. New staff are planning and implementing new programs and continuing the work of refining our organizational structure to create a strong foundation upon which to continue our growth. We hope to add a Director of Development to the team this fall and renovate additional office space to accommodate the hire.



Our rebuilding continues. The dock reconstruction continues to move along. At the end of July, the main dock structure was complete and the floating dock area under construction. We are still waiting for the railing systems and electrical systems to be installed. We will be really excited when the new saltwater pumping station is complete. Staff have been hauling 500 gallons of water per week up to the aquarium with a truck and trailer since Sandy struck! It will be really nice when we only have to open a valve.

We have just undertaken the next phase in the rebuilding – and its amazing. As part of our “building for the future” efforts, we will be replacing the Sandy damaged boardwalk with a new elevated walkway. The new walkway will be a 750 ft long loop walkway with a side spur. It will be elevated above the marsh and access the east side of the marsh from the Salt Marsh Trail. The walkway will provide excellent views of the osprey platform, the salt pannes and flats with all of the wading and shorebirds, and a complex of tidal creeks. There will be two areas with stairs to allow access to the marsh for research and education. We will also be installing a high-precision marsh elevation research station that will be accessed by the walkway. The station will allow Institute staff to document how the marsh is responding to changing water levels as storms and sea level rise continue to stress the ecosystem.



As I write this column, we have begun the design and engineering process and should have construction specifications shortly. Our goal is to construct the walkway this fall and winter and be ready for programming in early spring before the Osprey return.

All of this rebuilding of people and facilities is really exciting and continues to move us along our path to excellence. We are achieving important milestones every day and making notable strides. In June, we announced that we have successfully raised the first \$100,000 towards our Capacity Building Initiative Goal. We still have a long way to go and hope you will join us in our rebuilding and growth efforts. We are **Making No Small Plans** and want you to be a part of it!