

THE GENE E. LIKENS LABORATORY: ENHANCING RESEARCH AT IES

"By constructing the new building thoughtfully, with input from lab technicians and staff scientists, the Institute was able to maximize the efficiency of the lab."

Dr. Kathleen Weathers,
Associate Scientist & Head of
Laboratory Services



LOPI OUILLEN

Water samples from the Hubbard Brook Ecosystem Study awaiting analysis in the Analytical Laboratory.

In 2000, as a result of generous donations from Institute supporters, the Gene E. Likens Laboratory was constructed. Collaboration between the architects and the lab-users helped to ensure that the final product was tailored to the Institute's research needs. Temperature controls, air exchange, a streamlined work space, and natural light all contribute to a positive research environment.

To the casual eye, the lab's unique construction may not be obvious. The proof is in the details. In the new lab, architects used more stable building materials than in the old lab, which was designed for other uses. Instead of basing laboratory bench heights on aesthetics, they were based on technician comfort. The balance room, where samples are weighed on precise instruments, was built on its own slab floor. This ensures that building vibrations do not interfere with meticulous measurements.

The cornerstone of the building is the new Analytical Lab, which provides support to staff scientists. Previously housed in the Plant Science Building, in a space created for botanical storage, the new lab is better suited to chemical analyses. Water samples from the Hubbard Brook Ecosystem Study, rock-eating snail excrement, and Hudson River sediments are a few of the many things analyzed here. In the words of lab manager Denise Schmidt, "In addition to gaining a more effective lab, we also benefited from office space and a classroom. All the spaces are bright, airy, and interconnected. It has improved our work environment tremendously."

The Likens Lab also created much-needed personal laboratory space for Institute researchers. Prior to its construction, Drs. Michael Pace, Nina Caraco, Gene Likens, and Kathleen Weathers did not have personal labs. Others, such as Dr. Richard Ostfeld, had inefficient labs in the Plant Science Building basement. Ms. Vicki Kelly, who manages the Environmental Monitoring Program, was upgraded from a piece of counter in the basement to a modern lab. "What I have now is perfect. I am close to the facilities I need and I feel much more connected to other researchers," comments Kelly.

The Institute is truly grateful for the donors that made the Gene E. Likens Laboratory possible. This gift will continue to give back, in the form of research results, well into the future. The laboratory is sited to allow expansion as program needs dictate in the future.



ROY GUMPEL

Laboratory Technician II Denise DuBois and Analytical Lab Manager Denise Schmidt in the new Likens Lab.