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San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science: **Next Steps**

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EDITORIAL

This issue of *San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science* is the 15th that we have published since the introduction of the journal in 2003. Some of you may have noticed this is the first issue published in 2009. Unfortunately, along with thousands of other state contract projects supported by bond money, work on the journal was suspended in December 2008 by the State of California because of the state's unprecedented fiscal crisis. The suspension was lifted in July 2009, and SFEWS is now back in business. During that period authors continued to submit papers. And the Associate Editors, our Managing Editor Lauren Muscatine, and I were able to keep the flow of reviews and revisions going. Thanks to hard work from everyone, we have enough completed papers to publish two issues of SFEWS within the next several months. Our goal is to release a third issue around the end of 2009, in keeping with our record of publishing three issues per year. Thus, in 2010 there will be no backlog of papers, and the publication process should proceed in a timely fashion for all submissions. Reinstating the suspended contract was a direct result of the strong commit-

ment that the CALFED Science Program has shown to SFEWS. The success of the journal reflects this commitment and the free access to readers that goes with it.

We believe the journal remains in good health and the future is bright, largely thanks to the hard work and the solid base established by the founding editors, Randy Brown, Fred Nichols, and Jim Quinn. Fred did an excellent job of carrying on after the untimely death of Randy Brown. Downloads from the journal continue to increase, as we displayed on our poster at last year's CALFED Science Conference. Lauren and I have instituted a few, relatively minor changes since taking over the journal last year. We have doubled the size of the editorial board (we call them Associate Editors). Each submission to SFEWS is assigned to an Associate Editor who, in turn, assigns reviewers and draws conclusions from those reviews. As our submission rate increased it was important to find a way to reduce the workload of individual Associate Editors and to increase the breadth and depth of expertise on the board. We now have a

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strongly qualified board of 30 Associate Editors. The range of expertise on the board is sufficient to cover the full range of submissions we receive, and the numbers are sufficient to avoid over-working individuals within this dedicated group of volunteers.

We had a productive discussion with this expanded group late last year about the “Aims and Scope” of the journal. Three things are worth noting from that discussion. First, we want to explicitly encourage submission of certain policy-oriented papers:

SFEWS is interested in papers that present original research on policy issues, or analyses that evaluate policy options, but will not publish articles that advocate *specific* policies.

Secondly, we also want to encourage certain kinds of comments on articles:

Comments – Critiques of data and interpretations in articles and notes already published in *San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science*. Not to exceed one to two pages, comments must be constructive, balanced, and fully supported by citations from the published literature. Statements of opinion will not be accepted. We are interested in receiving rebuttals to any comment, and will selectively publish one per comment.

Thirdly, we continue to get queries about special issues. We are interested in publishing special issues if they fit appropriately within our “Aims and Scope.” In some cases a special issue editor may be necessary to help manage the peer review process, although all final judgments will remain the prerogative of the Editor-in-Chief or a designate.

Finally, our year or so of experience indicates that the bottleneck in the publication process is often due to revision of articles that have been peer reviewed but require some additional work. We state in our policies that revisions must be re-submitted within six months of the publication decision, but we have not strictly enforced that policy. We believe it is in the best interest of timeliness to return to explicitly asking authors to follow that policy. The reinstated policy will go into effect for all new submissions. In return, if a paper has undergone serious and effective revision, we will try to avoid the endless loop of revisions

and delays that sometimes occurs at journals because of multiple, in-depth reviews.

San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science primarily depends upon its authors, its reviewers, and its readers for any success it attains. We have some terrific papers in the wings and look forward to many more submissions. We thank you for your support of the journal and urge you to continue to submit your work to SFEWS. Californians and the world increasingly recognize the importance of water issues. We believe SFEWS is a crucial communication outlet for all audiences as study and discussion of those issues proceeds.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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