

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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As 2013 comes to a close, I want to share my thoughts on another successful year for the National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP) and the *Environmental Practice* editorial office. In 2008, DePaul University entered into formal contract with NAEP to assume editorial duties for *Environmental Practice*. During this five-year period, the editorial office employed a coeditorship approach that alternated lead editorship annually between a natural scientist (James Montgomery) and a social scientist (Kelly Tzoumis). This approach proved quite successful because it allowed the lead editor to focus on the development of thematic topics while the coeditor engaged in strategic planning, including reaching out to authors, for his/her lead year. During this five-year period, the average number of typeset pages increased to approximately 125 while the rate of acceptance of manuscripts decreased to around 67%. Both of these are key indicators of the improvement in the quality of the journal. The coeditorship model was also integral in maintaining the three “ships” that are vital to sustaining NAEP: membership, authorship, and readership. Finally, this approach of shared leadership was very effective in introducing new perspectives and topics on environmental issues to achieve greater interdisciplinarity, as well as in maintaining the mission of NAEP by providing quality manuscripts that balance interests of both the practitioners and the scholars in the environmental profession.

In August 2013, NAEP and DePaul entered into a new contract for the editorial office. At that time, Kelly Tzoumis decided to step down as coeditor in order to pursue other interests. I am grateful to Kelly for her devotion to and passion for the journal. Indeed, at the urging of NAEP member Ron Deverman, she prepared the original proposal to NAEP in 2008 to have DePaul assume the duties of the editorial office. She led the redesign of the journal’s front cover,

jettisoning the bland battleship gray look in favor of a more environmentally pleasing cover. She worked to develop a broad base of expertise on the journal’s editorial advisory board, and during her years as lead editor she secured top-notch guest editors to oversee submission and editing of manuscripts on the thematic issues. Indeed, her thematic issue on brownfields was so successful that it had to be printed in two successive issues. During her latest stint as lead editor (volume 15), she focused on international environmental problems and issues. Thematic areas included environmental issues in the European Union and the environmental challenges faced by China. Indeed, that China issue, guest edited by Dr. Phillip Stalley at DePaul University, topped out at over 200 typeset pages! As I assume sole duties as editor in chief, I wish Kelly well in her future endeavors.

We have an exciting lineup of thematic issues for 2014 (volume 16). Issue 1 (March) is focused on environmental and public health risks associated with climate change, a theme that was suggested to me several years ago by longtime NAEP member Bob Michaels. Bob graciously decided to serve as guest editor and developed a framework of topics that we both felt would be of great practical interest and use to our readership. These include mold and indoor air quality, the effects of increased frequency and magnitude of high-flow events in rivers subjected to environmental and navigational dredging [e.g., dredging of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)], the emergence of diseases as a result of climate-induced changes, climatic stresses to populations and resulting changes in species composition, richness and diversity of communities, evolutionary adaptive responses of gene frequencies and of species morphology and ecological range responding to stresses of changing climate, stresses on agriculture systems and irrigation due to changing climate, and climate change-induced stresses on freshwater supplies. Bob has lined up a passel of informative and thought-provoking articles.

Issue 2 (June) is devoted to the NAEP Annual Conference theme of “Changing Tides & Shifting Sands.” The annual conference, to be held April 7–10 in St. Petersburg, Florida, contains several interesting tracks, including the multiple uses and priorities that impact our oceans and coasts, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), brownfields, water resources, and sustainability. I encourage anyone presenting at the annual conference to submit a manuscript for publication in issue 2.

Because of the economic drivers underlying resource use, economic knowledge is an essential component of sustainability. Indeed, economic studies have moved to the forefront of sustainable ecosystem management, and recent research has focused on quantifying the monetary benefits of ecosystem services such as pollination, water filtration, and carbon storage. Dr. Christie Klimas, my colleague in the Department of Environmental Science and Studies at DePaul, will serve as guest editor of issue 3 (September), which will deal with some of the recent work in the field of ecological economics. Christie is an ecologist and ecological economist who specializes in population ecology, resource valuation, tropical forest management and conservation, and demographic population modeling. She is looking for manuscripts addressing valuation of natural resources or ecosystems, ecologic-economic modeling, the use of ecological economics to inform conservation, and the application of ecological economics in the preparation of environmental assessments and environmental impact statements.

NEPA has often been criticized as costing too much, taking too long, and accomplishing too little. With this in mind, issue 4 (December) will focus on practical improvements for better implementation of NEPA. I am most grateful to Ray Clark and Owen Schmidt for agreeing to serve as guest editors. Ray and Owen invite manuscripts that focus on the fundamental

purposes of NEPA: (a) to inform public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken, and (b) to facilitate public involvement in decisions that affect the quality of the human environment. I suspect this issue will be a meaty one full of relevant information for NEPA practitioners.

Finally, I would remiss if I did not recognize the significant contributions to the editorial office of our managing editor, Dan Carroll, who runs the day-to-day operations of the editorial office, ensures that manuscripts are reviewed in a timely fashion; performs technical editing; communicates with authors, peer reviewers,

the Publications Committee, and Cambridge University Press; and performs various and sundry other tasks. Dan and I look forward to continuing the work of the editorial office.

James Montgomery