

LETTER FROM THE EDITORIAL OFFICE

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One of my major roles as editor in chief of *Environmental Practice (ENP)* is to work with managing editor Dan Carroll and the National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP) Publications Committee to identify relevant, timely topics that we feel are of interest to the *ENP* readership. In many cases, however, it is NAEP members and other *ENP* readers who suggest topics they feel are germane to practitioners. Indeed, in 2010 a survey was sent to NAEP members to solicit their assistance in identifying thematic topics. Members identified issues including climate change, transportation, endangered species, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) updates, and international environmental issues as candidates. Engagement among the editorial office, the Publications Committee, and readership is vital to sustaining NAEP's membership, authorship, and readership. Furthermore, such collaboration has been quite effective in elucidating new perspectives and topics on environmental issues to achieve greater interdisciplinarity, as well as maintaining the mission of NAEP by providing quality manuscripts that balance interests of both the practitioners and the scholars in the environmental profession.

This issue of *ENP* addresses some of the recent work in the field of ecological economics. Since economic drivers underlie resource use, economic knowledge is an essential component of sustainability and conservation. Economic studies have moved to the forefront of sustainable ecosystem management, and recent research has focused on quantifying the monetary benefit of ecosystem services like pollination, water filtration, and carbon storage. More research is needed in the application of ecological economics in the valuation of natural resources and in the preparation of environmental assessments (EAs) and environmental impact statements (EISs), as well as integrated

ecologic-economic modeling, communicating ecological economics in the undergraduate curriculum, and communicating ecological economics by fostering sustainable behavior at different scales.

The guest editor for this issue is Dr. Christie Klimas, assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Studies at DePaul University. Christie teaches courses in ecological economics, sustainability, and applied ecology, and her research brings together ecology and economics, in urban and tropical settings, to address questions of sustainable resource use. Her international research, primarily in the Amazon region of Brazil, couples ecological knowledge with economics to provide alternatives to deforestation via community-based forest management. Her urban research in Chicago involves valuing the ecosystem services provided by green spaces and open lands, including quantifying the value of creating green space in low-income communities.

This issue contains a variety of research articles, reviews and case studies, and perspectives from the field. **Jeffrey Cook** begins this issue with "Explaining Innovation: The Environmental Protection Agency, Rule Making, and Stakeholder Engagement," in which he unpacks the decision-making process involved in the EPA's shuttle diplomacy program. Cook uses original interviews to assess the agency's methods in adopting shuttle diplomacy and the implications for the future success of those methods. **Regina Ostergaard-Klem and Kirsten Oleson** review the application of the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) to island environments in order to determine how effective a standardized GPI model can be in assessing local policy. In "GPI Island Style: Localizing the Genuine Progress Indicator to Hawaii," they argue in favor of local context over a national standard. Game-based pedagogy has spread beyond the confines of university computer science

courses and is now becoming commonplace in other disciplines. In "Using Simulation Games to Teach Ecosystem Service Synergies and Trade-offs," **Gregory Verutes and Amy Rosenthal** apply gamification to environmental education, asking whether game-based learning can be used to teach the valuation of ecosystem services. They lay out a set of learning principles to be used in the development of education about ecosystems services. Guest editor **Christie Klimas** continues this theme of environmental education in "Importance of Ecological Economics in the Undergraduate Environmental Sciences and Sustainability Curricula." She stresses the importance of teaching critical thinking about the interdependence between the economy and the environment, comparing the techniques of neo-classical economics, environmental economics, and ecological economics to determine which is best suited for the task. **Han Jiang**, in "The Laws of Climate Change in China," provides an international perspective, with a review of environmental reviews in China, one of the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases. Finally, **Margaret Kucharski and Rona Spelleccacy**, in "Environmental Re-evaluations for Design-Build Highway Projects: Implementing the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program," analyze the challenges of design-build highway projects in the context of NEPA to examine how a reevaluation process can help documentation keep pace with design. In our Perspectives section, **Philippe Baveye** weighs the interests of financial markets against the needs of the environment with his "Ecological Economic Perspective in Environmental Practice: Much-Needed Common Sense Amidst Overwhelming Market Rhetoric," and **Ron Nahser** responds to the editorial office through "The Practice of Ecological Economics."

We have an exciting lineup of thematic issues for 2015 (volume 17). Issue 1 (March) is devoted to the 40th anniversary of the signing into law of the Endangered

Species Act. The ESA was written under the leadership of Dr. Russell Train, the first chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, with the stated purpose of not only protecting species but also the ecosystems upon which they depend. The guest editors are Anna Muñoz and Marjorie Nelson in the branch of Conservation Integration/Ecological Services in the Washington, DC, headquarters of US Fish and Wildlife Services. Some of the themes that will be addressed in this issue are conservation of endangered species that is informed by structured decision making/decision analysis and/or adaptive management, practical use of modern quantitative modeling tools in ESA decisions, and endangered-species conservation in the face of climate change.

Issue 2 (June) is devoted to the NAEP Annual Conference theme: “Mauka to Makai: Environmental Stewardship from the Mountains to the Sea.” The conference, which will be held April 13–17 in Honolulu,

Hawaii, covers several important themes, including coral reef impacts and protection, ecosystem management and services, and life-cycle analysis and sustainability. I encourage anyone presenting at the annual conference to submit a manuscript for publication.

Issue 3 (September) is devoted to the application of Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) technologies (i.e., drones) for land and natural resource management. UAS technologies have made dramatic technical advances in the past decade. Their use domestically is currently tightly constrained by existing Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations. Within the next few years, the FAA is expected to provide a regulatory framework that enables the role for UAS in domestic airspace to expand greatly for a wide variety of applications. One of those will be remote sensing for land and natural resource monitoring. From hazardous waste site characterization to assessment

and monitoring of public land resource quality, UAS can be expected to revolutionize the quantity and quality of data sets available to decision makers and environmental practitioners while significantly reducing the cost of acquiring such data sets. Our guest editor for this issue is Konstance Westcott, environmental scientist/team lead in the Land Management Team, Environmental Science Division at Argonne National Laboratory.

As of this writing, issue 4 (December) has not yet been fleshed out, but we are leaning toward covering aspects of transportation. The editorial office is devoted to providing NAEP members and *ENP* readership with a journal consisting of high-quality, relevant, and timely information. We welcome your suggestions of topics for future thematic issues and ways we might improve *ENP*.

James Montgomery, Dan Carroll