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An Opportunity for Scientists and Policy Makers Alike

It is with particular pleasure that I introduce the first issue of *San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science*. My experience over the past three years as Lead Scientist for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program has clearly demonstrated the need for a way to more fully communicate, to all interested parties, the rapidly growing body of new scientific information being generated about California's Central Valley and the San Francisco Estuary, in a peer-reviewed format. The rate at which new science, of the highest quality, is being generated in this system has increased, perhaps dramatically, since 1997. That new science often includes details that are critical to Bay-Delta and watershed issues, but might be less interesting to a generic international audience. Many of our new studies are widely interdisciplinary; often the traditional, discipline-specific journals capture only a part of the audience interested in such work. As stated in the welcome by the Editors in Chief, the flexible electronic journal format will accommodate a wide range of papers from technical notes to monographs. In this way it also can help meet the need for a way to communicate both tightly focused individual studies and papers such as longer or more detailed reviews of the state of a science that are applicable to the issues of our system. It is exciting, then, that the purpose of this journal is to provide an outlet of the highest quality for new knowledge about our system, and to expand access to that knowledge. It seems to me that this is an opportunity for scientists from all relevant disciplines to publish rich detail about our region that might be cut from a more generic journal article or might end up in files and office reports, while maintaining the professional stature that comes with peer-reviewed publication.

The new journal is also an opportunity for the growing knowledge base to find the audience that is most likely to directly apply it to one of the important issues of our time. Over the next three or more decades CALFED and its member agencies will be working to restore riverine and estuarine ecosystems and at the same time beneficially use the water flowing down the streams to the estuary for California's cities and farms.

Making this all work will require some tough decisions – decisions which in many cases must be based on a strong scientific foundation. The new journal will be an important component of this foundation. When regionally-specific studies are accepted for publication in international journals, they can miss a good portion of that local audience where they might have their most applied impact. The journal is one way to help avoid that. Similarly, publication in its pages could become one of the ways we implicitly define the credibility of the science applicable to these issues. Due to the almost unprecedented scope and complexity of our water management and restoration efforts in this system, we also hope the scientific information will be of general interest to scientists and managers who are contemplating or conducting similar efforts elsewhere.

The new journal is one part of a growing effort in our system to communicate scientific knowledge, as it develops, among various audiences. The Interagency Ecological Program has a long history behind its effective annual workshop and quarterly technical newsletter. The Science Program, within the California Bay-Delta Authority, sponsors numerous seminars, workshops and symposia. CALFED sponsors a biannual Science Conference, and works with the San Francisco Bay's Estuary Project on the biannual State of the Estuary Conference, both of which highlight much of the new work leading to better understanding of the multiplicity of scientific studies underway – from groundwater modeling to water conservation to the life histories of endangered fish. The Bay-Delta Science Consortium (the sponsor of this journal) is an active new entity dedicated to facilitating collaboration and communication among institutions. All these efforts help us improve the quality of science and encourage investigators – whether they work for state and federal agencies, universities, NGO's or in the private sector – to disseminate their results. The goal of the new journal is to supplement these efforts and those of the existing scientific journals, not supplant them.

In conclusion I thank the Editors in Chief, the Managing Editor, the California Digital Library staff, the members of the Bay-Delta Science Consortium, the CALFED Science Program, and staff of the UC Davis' John Muir Institute for the Environment for moving the journal from a concept to a reality. I also thank Larry Brown and the co-authors of the first issue for agreeing to be the test case – and for their patience – as we all learned the intricacies of electronic publication.

Please consider publishing some of your latest results in this new journal.

Samuel N. Luoma, Lead Scientist
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