

## Editorial

# A New Editorial Vision for *EcoHealth*



This issue marks the official handing over of journal leadership as Editor-in-Chief from Bruce Wilcox to myself. *EcoHealth* is now at the end of its seventh year of publication, and our ability to thrive and grow during these years has been a direct product of Bruce's energy and vision. His leadership has been invaluable in setting the direction for our journal, and building the quality that I now inherit. I am grateful for this and am pleased to announce that Bruce will continue to work with us as a member of the Executive Editorial Group.

As your new Editor-in-Chief, I believe that the *original vision for EcoHealth remains strong and viable*. Although the wording of the text on the inside cover will evolve as we grow, I believe that we have broadly got the niche right: *EcoHealth bridges the gaps among disciplines central to ecology and health; humans and nature*. My job as Editor-in-Chief is to maintain a balance among these disciplines, expand our output in some areas of focus, encourage quality submissions from new fields, and above all, publish the very best papers. I have listed below some of the goals

that the Executive Editorial Group and I have already set and some of the ways that we hope to achieve them, working closely with the International Association for Ecology and Health (IAEH) Board, Springer, the contributing authors, and the readers of our issues.

## EFFECTIVE JOURNAL MANAGEMENT

My goal is to manage journal operations openly, transparently, efficiently, and accountably. To do this, the Executive Editorial Group has committed to meeting every two months and reporting our progress at each IAEH Board meeting. To encourage openness, we will continue our "Meet the Editors" session at each IAEH biennial conference where we will take open questions from the IAEH membership on the journal's strategic vision and operation. During the last six months, I have been working with Bruce to transition into my new role. I am proud to say that we have already done a great deal to increase the efficiency of journal operations. We've created new rules for issues with special sections, so that we will manage these in a more timely way. We have revisited the role of the Editorial Advisors and Review Editors, setting targets and job descriptions, reevaluating each member's workload and output for the journal, and making personnel changes. As you will see on the inside cover, we have expanded the number of Review Editors, especially from fields that have been underrepresented in the past. This expanded group will help us to achieve a critical selling point for *EcoHealth*: our rapid turnaround time. *It is my goal that the time from submission to publication will be reduced further during my tenure*, so that authors of accepted manuscripts are able to see them in

press and printed within 12 months or less of first submission.

Editing a journal is made a great deal easier by the plethora of statistics available to monitor success. *I can report that already, during the past 6 months, We have cut in half the time it takes for a paper to be reviewed and a decision to be reached by EcoHealth.* We have rapidly caught up with backlogged issues and will be publishing Volume 8 on time and in advance as we move through 2011. During the second half of 2010, the number of submissions and our rejection rate (a measure of quality) have increased, and our Impact Factor has remained stable above 2 (2.089 for 2009). Each year, performance against these and other goals will be reported to the IAEH Board, and I will use them to ensure that all of us on the Editorial Board work effectively and accountably.

## INCREASING THE QUALITY AND DIVERSITY OF SUBMISSIONS

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One of my key goals will be to ensure that the balance of papers reflects the diversity of disciplines within the IAEH and the ecohealth movement and that their quality remains high and increases. In particular, the IAEH Board, the Executive Editorial Group, and I believe that we need to increase the pipeline of high-quality papers on ecohealth issues of *Social Science, Public Health, Earth/Environmental Science, and the "One Health" movement*, while maintaining our leadership in Conservation Medicine and the Ecosystem context of Health. We have already begun to reach out to leaders in these fields and encourage submission of insightful reviews and especially primary data papers. To increase the quality of the papers we publish, we are tightening up our editorial process, increasing the rejection rate, and actively editing papers with authors to make them more readable and more citable.

One of my first tasks as Editor-in-Chief was to assess the geographic diversity of papers that we have published during the past few years and identify gaps. We will actively solicit high-quality ecohealth manuscripts from authors in Europe (a target region identified by Springer and the Board) as well as developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We will be inviting regular *Forum* pieces from authors in these countries to help set the scene and encourage would-be

authors that our journal is a good place to publish their papers. Finally, we will maintain our strong commitment to equity, accessibility, and diversity in the way we solicit articles, and review and publish manuscripts.

## SUPPORTING THE GROWTH OF THE JOURNAL AND THE IAEH

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*EcoHealth* is linked intrinsically and synergistically with the IAEH, and I aim to actively develop ways to foster this synergism. With this in mind, the Executive Editorial Group is examining ways to bring the very active Student Section of the IAEH into the journal, with a regular forum piece written by their membership. To make the journal more topical and therefore more desirable to readers, *we will encourage Policy papers in EcoHealth.* We aim to invite well-placed colleagues of Editorial Board members to write Editorials, Policy Forum pieces, and other Policy "White Papers" for our journal. To better grasp opportunities to influence policy, we will use our efficient editorial process *to coincide manuscript publication with relevant and key policy meetings*, giving our journal more impact and the IAEH a stronger voice.

Supporting the growth of *EcoHealth* will take more than these commitments, and I will continue to work tirelessly to raise funds in collaboration with the IAEH Board, for support of the journal editorial team, and the commitment to our publishers. As President of EcoHealth Alliance, I will continue to commit staff time to support the IAEH and journal activities and I am delighted to report that our extremely efficient Managing Editor, Aleksei Chmura, will continue to serve in this capacity. We will continue to liaise regularly with our Springer point-of-contact, Janet Slobodien, who has been a long-time supporter of our activities and will continue in this role.

While all of these goals are worthy, it is important to remember that what makes a good journal great is publishing articles that garner interest and excitement in the community. What is it that makes a person decide to publish high-quality papers in *EcoHealth* and not another journal? I believe that our beautiful covers, our rapid turnaround times, and the diversity and high quality of the work that we publish are key to attracting a growing readership and high-quality authorship. Our new

Executive Editorial Group has the commitment, competence, and experience necessary to maintain *EcoHealth's* momentum. But we depend on you, our readers and authors, to maintain a pipeline of high quality manuscripts. Please consider this message as an open invitation to submit your very best work and ensure that *EcoHealth* continues to be the voice for a new way of understanding health.



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