



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Natural Resource Stewardship and Science
Inventory and Monitoring Division
1201 Oakridge Drive, Suite 150
Fort Collins, Colorado 80525

May 22, 2015

Jamie Womble
National Park Service
3100 National Park Road
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Jamie:

Thank you for submitting an abstract for the *Ecosphere* special issue highlighting the value of inventory and monitoring activities conducted in the National Park Service, to be published in conjunction with our agency's 2016 Centennial.

Our committee has reviewed the abstracts received, assigning them rough scores based on several criteria (attached). We used these scores to help us provide feedback to authors on the possible strengths and shortcomings of each paper relative to the special issue, and to identify potential additions or issues for authors to address if they choose to submit a full manuscript for review.

At the committee level, manuscripts will be judged by the same criteria used to assess the abstracts. In addition, we strongly encourage authors to take advantage of the special capabilities of *Ecosphere*'s electronic-only format, which allows for color graphics and images as well as multi-media. Finally, please highlight any possible tie-ins of your work with the National Park Service (NPS) Centennial, such as placing your work within the context of the broad Centennial themes outlined in the NPS Call to Action Plan¹ or by discussing your work within the context of future directions for the agency in its second century of operation.

Your abstract was well-written and received strong reviews from committee members. While it is not entirely clear from the abstract, it appears you may be using more than one vital sign in your models, and this will lead to higher ratings when we review the full manuscript. However, would the paper benefit from inclusion of the food web implications of too few or too many seals? The abstract is a bit too focused on methods – we expect this is due to the work not being complete, but please emphasize results over methodology. Finally, the work appears to have strong and direct management implications, but these are not developed in the abstract. Successful papers will be those that meet several criteria and demonstrate a contribution of long-term data sets to NPS and the broader scientific community-at-large.

If you wish to discuss our interpretation of your abstract, please feel free to contact Billy Schweiger or Tom Rodhouse at Billy_Schweiger@nps.gov or Tom_Rodhouse@nps.gov. At the

¹ National Park Service. 2014. A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement. Available at http://www.nps.gov/calltoaction/PDF/C2A_2014.pdf.



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time of submission, your manuscript will be assigned a point of contact or corresponding editor from the committee with knowledge of your topic.

As you prepare your manuscripts, please consult the *Ecosphere* instructions for authors for guidance on style and formatting: <http://esapubs.org/esapubs/AuthorInstructionsESP.htm>. *Ignore the submission instructions*; for this special issue, you will submit to our committee. We will run a blind review process, providing you with an opportunity to revise based on this review, and then submit a package of revised manuscripts to a handling editor at *Ecosphere*. Submissions should be e-mailed to Billy_Schweiger@nps.gov or Tom_Rodhouse@nps.gov.

The deadline for submission of full manuscripts is December 1, 2015. However, we ask each group of authors to check in with a status update, outline or partial draft by August 1. Further, if you have any concerns or questions about framing your paper to best meet the criteria and goals of this special feature, or would like feedback on some aspects, we encourage you to reach out to us. Part of the role of the committee is to help you submit the strongest paper possible for this special feature.

Also note that ESA strongly encourages (and may soon require) the data behind your paper to be submitted to a permanently archived, publicly available data repository. Their data policy recommends several general repositories; the NPS IRMA DataStore qualifies as an institutional repository. In order to have a direct link from your published paper to the data, you will need to ensure that the data have been reviewed and accepted in a repository before your *Ecosphere* paper is published. More information is available at <http://esapubs.org/esapubs/DataReg.htm>.

Again, thank you for your participation in the special issue of *Ecosphere*.

Sincerely,

/s/

Billy Schweiger
Ecologist
Inventory and Monitoring Division

/s/

Tom Rodhouse
Ecologist
Inventory and Monitoring Division



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REVIEW CRITERIA

Is the paper collaborative, with an NPS Inventory & Monitoring connection/emphasis?

Collaboration is not required, but we want to highlight the collaborative nature of most of our work. Some nexus with I&M is a requirement, whether the authors include someone from NPS I&M or someone else from NPS doing I&M-related work.

General high quality of science

Is the paper data-driven and/or results-based (more desirable), or is it process-based (less desirable)?

Papers predominantly describing the methods or design of monitoring will need to describe something novel and potentially useful for other monitoring programs.

Is the paper compatible with ESA-caliber publications?

Papers forwarded to the *Ecosphere* editorial office will need to clearly meet the standards of the journal.

Does the paper uses spatially extensive data sets OR smaller-scale data that tell a great story, have direct implications to park management, or are broadly applicable to other systems?

Does the paper focus on multiple networks or parks?

Analyses and perspectives that span multiple parks and networks highlight one of the strengths of our program.

Is the paper synthetic?

Papers that integrate multiple and potentially disparate vital signs are strongly encouraged.

Does the paper have a strong/clear management connection?

Fundamental or basic research advancing ecological science is valuable but one goal of this special issue is to demonstrate some strong connections between I&M science and NPS park management, as that is a fundamental goal of our program.

Does the paper use long-term data sets?

The ability to conduct long-term monitoring is a particular strength of I&M and should be emphasized in the special issue. Short-term or one-off research projects may be considered but may not align as well with I&M's goal of developing and implementing scientifically-based long-term ecological monitoring programs for NPS units.