18. Copy-edit introduction: does it still fit the results/discussion? It is poor form to use author's names in text very often (E.g., "X, Y, and Z are important considerations for non-timber forest product management (Peters 1996)" is better than "Peters (1996) identified X, Y, and Z as important considerations for non-timber forest product management.").
19. Update title.
20. Check for cohesion: this is an essay, does it flow? Do the paragraphs connect?
21. Check language: grammar OK? Consistent style (e.g., use of "plot" throughout rather than plot, site, stand, etc.)? Use of tense?
22. Write figure and table captions such that they stand alone.
23. Insert figures into end of Word document for review.
24. If you have co-authors, send draft around for comment. For the first time the draft has circulated, the most efficient thing is to send it to one co-author at a time, have them use Track Changes, incorporate their changes as needed, and send the next version to the next co-author. You may need to give them due-dates. Send to the co-author with the fastest turn-around time first.
25. Double-check all references (first check that what is in Lit Cited is in the paper, then that what is in paper is in the Lit-Cited). Avoid citing texts you haven't actually seen.
26. Double-check formatting: order of references in text (alphabetical or year), numbers written out?, formula symbols, "and" or ampersand, tables headings and lines, page numbers, line numbers, double-spacing, etc.
27. Format figures for final publication size: check Info for Authors and a recent edition and resize figures to fit, adjusting font sizes accordingly.
28. Write cover letter; check Info for Authors. Should be short and simple: Please find attached the manuscript entitled "xx" by Myself and Others for consideration for publication in *Journal*. No portion of this manuscript has been previously published or is under review elsewhere. Possible reviewers include: X, Y, Z. Thank you for taking this submission into consideration. Most Sincerely, Me.
29. Have Cover Letter and Manuscript documents open when go to submission website as you will probably need to copy some things into the submission forms (e.g., the abstract).
30. Upon receipt of reviewer comments, quickly skim them, decide if they are major or minor, and forward them to your co-authors immediately indicating that you will make a first stab at things. Then read them over again, and wait a few days. You will either be a) elated that they loved the paper (rare), b) decimated because you've embarrassed yourself (usually on the first paper or two), c) irritated because they want you to change things you think are fine (fairly frequent), d) placated because their suggestions are pretty good and you're willing to do almost anything to get the damn thing off your desk (common with later papers). Most of the time, criticisms and suggestions arise from a misunderstanding. Sometimes, they are stupid, but sometimes we just haven't explained ourselves as well as we thought.
31. Update Acknowledgements to include the (anonymous) reviewers.
32. Make changes and resubmit as quickly as possible. Send revision to co-authors and give them a window (2 weeks) to send their own comments/changes.

Steps to Writing a Manuscript

1. Identify the story: what are the implications of your results?
2. Articulate the story in one sentence. If you have co-authors, verify that everyone agrees with this sentence.
3. Draft a title from that sentence.
4. Identify the appropriate audience.
5. Select the journal for that audience.
6. Read similar papers in that journal to get a sense for structure and style.
7. Start a Word Document creating the structure for a paper using the sections and formatting for that journal.
8. Replace generic structure with titles, authors, section titles, etc. that fit your work.
9. Write methods section such that others could replicate the approach and so they understand the limitations: include site (including climate information if relevant), design, sampling methods, analysis methods. Include brand names and trademarks for specialized equipment/software. If you are unsure if your audience is familiar with a method, describe it generally in one sentence and cite a methodology paper.
10. Verify that your story can be supported by the methods that have been employed.
11. Outline parts of introduction: need/importance, theoretical or managerial background, logical buildup to choice of approach, final paragraph stating enumerated objectives. Verify that your stated objectives support your story. Include citations when they are at the tip of your tongue, otherwise insert "(CITE")" and move on; you can fill those in later. Engage readers: tell a story, defend an implausible statement, contradict an authority, contradict common sense, point out practical implications, etc.
12. Use your objectives to structure the results section.
13. Flesh out the results section by writing full sentences reporting the findings that relate to each objective. Make a side-paragraph indicating results you obtained that do not seem to fit in anywhere; you may or may not add these in somewhere later.
14. Outline discussion: for each objective, flesh out how what you found fits with our current understanding and/or how it is new. End with a concluding paragraph, summarizing your main points and the implications thereof.
15. Flesh out introduction: Write full sentences with a citation for each general statement. Save citations of very detailed studies for the discussion.
16. Copy-edit results to make streamlined and easy to read. Report a finding and put statistics in parens. Although 2-decimal points (0.05) is usually sufficient for p-values, estimates for other parameters should relate to your confidence in the measure (i.e., elevation is to full meters, but tree heights may be to tenths). Add tables or figures if text is overwhelmed with p-values and effect sizes. Consider saying in Methods that significance was determined at the p=0.x level and then don't report p-values for each individual test.
17. Copy-edit discussion, making sure to tell the story laid out in the introduction. Don't repeat results. It is acceptable to cite a figure for the first time in the discussion, but only if it seems to arise organically out of the "discussion" in the discussion section.