



Katherine Hayes
Department of Integrative Biology
University of Colorado Denver

Ecosphere

1990 M Street, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

To the editorial board,

Thank you for considering our manuscript, “Supporting Graduate Field Leadership through Community-Sourced Advice, Action, and Policy” for publication as an innovative viewpoint in *Ecosphere*. We have corresponded with Editor-in-Chief Dr. Laurel Hartley during the development of this manuscript, and she has encouraged our submission.

Leading a safe and successful field season is a critical component of completing many ecology or natural science graduate programs. Yet little formal resources exist to support graduate students in developing, training, and executing those skills. While graduate field leadership is receiving increased attention, particularly in the context of field safety, no one to date has explored how the ecological community perceives what makes a graduate student field leader successful. Here we present results from a survey distributed to the ecological scientific community that asked community members for their advice and recommendations, both for graduate students and for their principal investigators, labs, and departments.

Survey responses indicated the importance of two key themes. Firstly, the value of individual action, though graduate students developing and enhancing their communication, risk assessment and procedural skills. Secondly, the role of labs, advisors, and other formal institutions in supporting graduate field leadership via financial support, resources, and incentives. Because of its unique perspective, this study should shape how students, advisors and labs think about developing and encouraging the leadership skills required to complete a field season safely and successfully.

Thank you again for your consideration. To our knowledge, this is the first collection of community-sourced opinions on graduate field leadership. It will be of interest to a broad audience of ecologists, field scientists, and graduate students.

On the behalf of myself and my co-authors,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katherine Hayes'.

Katherine Hayes