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13th February, 2023

Dr. Marinus L. Otte

Editor-in-Chief

*Wetlands*

Dear Dr. Otte,

We are submitting an original research article to *Wetlands* entitled “Plant community compositional stability over 40 years in a Fraser River Estuary tidal freshwater marsh” for publication consideration. We have used two historical datasets and one new dataset to address the question ‘how has plant community composition and abundance changed over 40 years in a protected conservation area?’ We have found evidence for declines in native species richness, and increases in homogenization of compositional abundance, despite conservation status of this habitat and absence of direct anthropogenic disturbance (e.g., industrial or recreational development).

We feel this work is useful to inform conservationists and land managers of changes to a conservation habitat used as an ecological conservation and restoration benchmark. We feel it is particularly timely as the region grapples with how to appropriately respond to threats of sea level rise, which would submerge this conservation area within 50-100 years. Moreover, we feel this study is of broad international interest as it provides a case example of biodiversity loss in an ecosystem which is typically underrepresented in longer-term monitoring studies (as compared to inland wetlands, and other ecosystems such as grasslands or forests). If this manuscript is selected for peer review, we suggest the following reviewers (listed alphabetically by last name) with relevant expertise to evaluate this work:

* Dr. Thorsten Balke, University of Glasgow, [Thorsten.Balke@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Thorsten.Balke@glasgow.ac.uk); biophysical interactions in salt marshes.
* Dr. Amy Borde, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, [amy.borde@pnnl.gov](mailto:amy.borde@pnnl.gov), tidal wetland restoration & monitoring, including invasive species control.
* Dr. Tjeerd Bouma, Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, [tjeerd.bouma@nioz.nl](mailto:%20tjeerd.bouma@nioz.nl) ; vegetation as bioengineers in coastal ecosystems.
* Dr. Sally Hacker, Oregon State University, [sally.hacker@oregonstate.edu](mailto:sally.hacker@oregonstate.edu); community structure and function of coastal ecosystems, including invasive vegetation ecology.
* Dr. Tracy Quirk, Louisiana State University, [tquirk@lsu.edu](mailto:tquirk@lsu.edu); plant community ecology & human impacts on wetland ecosystems.

To the best of our knowledge, none of these suggested reviewers have any conflict of interest including financial or personal connection to our work.

Thank you sincerely for your consideration of our manuscript,

Stefanie L. Lane