



From the Editor

What's in a word?

Editors pay attention to words, evaluating the fit, sequence, and strength of each and the role they play in developing a story in a logical, understandable, and enjoyable way. The process of choosing the right words, a partnership of trust between author and editor, is one of exploration and discovery that ultimately blends science and art. With every science writing endeavor we have the opportunity to affect our readers—furthering knowledge, inspiring reflection, prompting action—by choosing our words deliberately so that our story interests and involves the whole person (as Freeman Tilden taught us about good interpretation) and appeals to the curiosity, intellect, emotions, sense of humor, and judgment of our readers.

One word that gets my attention because of its increasingly common use in *Park Science* is “landscape.” We are privileged to live and work among some of the most beautiful, awe-inspiring, and relatively undisturbed landscapes in the world. That’s a traditional use of the term. But in a park management sense “landscape” is a context that gets to the heart of our capacity to understand and protect heritage resources for the future enjoyment of this nation.

Modern landscapes are a complex combination of biophysical, chemical, social, and geographic processes that interact with each other largely irrespective of park boundaries. Ecology is delving ever deeper into illuminating important patterns and associations among these environmental factors in order to give us a more holistic perspective of the setting in which we strive to sustain park values. Increasing our knowledge of this milieu is fundamental to our ability to protect the integrity of national parks over the long term.

This concept of broad connections on the land is central to several articles in this issue, for example, the article about identifying environmental syndromes affecting trends in the condition of a park’s resources. It also figures prominently in the research we review about the relationship of the spatial arrangement of wetlands to bat activity and the consequences it has for bat conservation. Our interview with economist Bruce Peacock highlights the far-reaching influence of human values on natural resource conservation. The landscape perspective shows up in the journal article summary about the ecological costs of pervasive noise to wildlife. Finally, it is evident in the study of factors affecting sage-grouse numbers in Grand Teton National Park and the larger Jackson Hole.

Landscape ecology is not a new science; however, I am pleased to publish articles that explore this important discipline. Though it is just one term among thousands in this issue, “landscape” is a watchword for our time as we strive to fulfill the challenges of our noble mission.

—Jeff Selleck