

# SER) NEWS

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## Letter from SER's Incoming Chair, Alan Unwin

Dear SER Members,



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Alan Unwin, and I am the incoming Chair of the SER Board of Directors for the term 2015-2017. It will be my job over the next 24 months to ensure that this incredibly important organization continues to service the needs of our nearly 3,000 members representing 70 countries, while at the same time promoting science, practice and policy that supports global ecological restoration efforts. Accomplishing both of these priorities will be a challenging, rewarding endeavor to which SER remains firmly committed.

I have been involved with the Society for close to 15 years, chairing two SER World Conferences (Niagara Falls, Canada in 2001, and Madison, Wisconsin in 2013), and serving on the Board of Directors in various capacities since 2000. For me, the 2001 conference revealed the character, nature and culture of the Society and cemented my unwavering commitment to its members and mission.

The conference was slated to run from October 4-6, 2001 – three weeks after the horrible events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. As Chair of the conference, I had to seriously consider the possibility of cancelling outright in light of massive cancellations of both attendees and notable keynote speakers. Our registration leading up to the conference had been approaching 800, but quickly dropped to 350. We ended up being able to renegotiate several contracts with our conference venue and, as a result, decided it was very important to hold the event.

What ensued was a conference smaller in number of delegates, but huge in its influence and impact on those able to attend. Gaps in concurrent sessions resulting from the cancellations were quickly filled by audience members willing and eager to offer impromptu remarks about their own restoration work. It was truly an inspiration to witness how SER facilitated the forging of deep connections among colleagues around the world during such a difficult time. The theme of the conference was "Restoration Across Borders" – I would contend that borders no longer existed in the restoration community during those three days, and the word "restoration" not only applied to ecosystems, but to the human spirit. How could I not want to Chair an organization like SER following such an experience?

The SER2015 World Conference on Ecological Restoration held last month in Manchester, UK, served to reaffirm my admiration for the Society and its members. The enthusiasm for ecological

restoration was contagious, and left conference-goers inspired to continue to move the field forward in new and interesting directions.

This is an exciting time to be involved with SER as we usher in a group of new Board members and welcome new staff, including Executive Director Bethanie Walder, who introduces herself below. The combined experience and dedication these individuals bring to the Society heralds a positive future for SER. I look forward to the next 24 months, and hope to uphold the character and nature of this organization as we continue with the important work of assisting the recovery of damaged, degraded and destroyed ecosystems around the globe.

Sincerely yours,

Alan Unwin  
Chair, SER Board of Directors

## Letter from SER's Executive Director, Bethanie Walder

Dear SER Members,



I was in Redwood National Park, California, the first time I personally witnessed the hope and promise of ecological restoration. It was the late 1990s, and I was spending a week with restoration practitioners as they maneuvered their bulldozers and excavators to gracefully re-sculpt an old, decaying and highly erodible dirt road back into a mountain slope. I watched as these experts used their knowledge of the land and their machines to rework streambanks back to their natural contours. The rough, mechanical nature of the task gave way to surprisingly beautiful results. I was told of the years spent trying to control erosion with in-stream tools like check dams with little success as each rainy season washed tons of sediment from the mountains into the streams. The practitioners came to realize that if they wanted salmon populations to persist, they had to remove the primary source of sediments to the waterways – the roads. And with that, an important watershed restoration tool – road removal – was born.

I had the great fortune to work as an advocate for watershed restoration through road removal for nearly 20 years. During that time, I had many opportunities to engage with SER, and to see first-hand how the Society works to promote, study and improve restoration practices, science and policy. Without SER, healing the earth would be much more challenging.

I've always been impressed with the Society's members, its work, its vision and its achievements. I am incredibly honored to be SER's new Executive Director, and also aware of the magnitude of the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. SER is a great organization because it has so many dedicated restoration practitioners, scientists, consultants, land managers, artists, philosophers, and others working to improve the practice and science of ecological restoration. I am thrilled to be part of the team, and I look forward to working with all of you in the hopes that we can inspire current and future generations to embrace and invest in ecological restoration as a tool for restoring both ecological and human communities across the globe.

Best Regards,



Bethanie Walder  
SER Executive Director

## Introducing Marguerite Nutter, SER's new Membership & Communications Director



SER is thrilled to welcome Marguerite Nutter in her new role as Membership & Communications Director, where she is responsible for the relationship between SER's members and chapters and for overseeing the organization's communications and outreach activities, including *SERNews*, social media and other external communications.

Marguerite joined SER in August 2015 and brings more than 20 years of experience in member relations and communications. She came to SER from National Public Radio (NPR) where she was the liaison to the organization's member stations in the US's top 25 media markets, and worked on collaborative projects between stations and the network. She also worked at several public radio stations where she led various fundraising initiatives.

Marguerite has an MA in Theatre Arts from the Ohio State University and a BA in Communications from Indiana University. Her interest in restoration ecology started, literally, in her own back yard when she decided she wanted to introduce plants native to the DC area into her garden to attract butterflies and bees.

## Recap from SER's 6th World Conference in Manchester

The Society celebrated its 6th World Conference on Ecological Restoration (SER2015) from August 23-27, 2015 in Manchester, United Kingdom. Approximately 800 delegates from 64 countries gathered in the heart of the city—in what was formerly the central railway station, now a state-of-the-art convention complex—for five days of networking and knowledge sharing in this vibrant, cosmopolitan hub where vestiges from a rich Victorian past meld with modern architecture and innovative urban planning. As a city at the vanguard of modern globalization—and subsequently, a city forced to reinvent itself following the decline of its industries—Manchester was a fitting venue in which to explore



Manchester Town Hall (photo: Stephen Murphy)

the topic of resilience, an overarching conference theme, and to deepen our understanding of restoration's important role in responding to change—whether environmental, social or economic. It was also an opportunity to honor Tony Bradshaw's memory 15 years after he chaired the Program Committee for SER's conference in Liverpool in 2000, and to celebrate his seminal contributions to the field of restoration ecology.

We were truly excited to be back in the UK so many years after Liverpool and to once again host a World Conference in Europe, the first since SER's inaugural World Conference in Zaragoza, Spain in 2005. Following such a long absence from the region—and a series of highly successful chapter conferences hosted by SER-Europe in the intervening years—SER2015 saw strong participation from European delegates, with more than 44% of attendees coming from countries in the region and 20% coming from the UK alone. That compares to 24% from North America, 10% from Asia, and 7% from Australia/New Zealand. As is typical of SER conferences, delegates represented not only a great many geographic regions, but also a wide variety of professional backgrounds and experiences with restoration. This diversity made for dynamic interactions and thought-provoking discussions about ideas, challenges, techniques and trends in the field.

The SER2015 scientific program included a total of approximately 720 presentations—565 talks and 155 posters—and featured highly engaging plenary addresses by author Germaine Greer; CBD Executive Secretary, Braulio Dias; SER Regional Representative to the Pacific, Kingsley Dixon; ecologist John Rodwell; and Olivier Hamerlynck, a medical doctor and ecologist working in Africa. The conference theme, *Towards Resilient Ecosystems: Restoring the Urban, the Rural and the Wild*, highlighted restoration's role in fostering ecological and social integrity in the face of change and explored the interplay between urban, agricultural and 'natural' environments. Key strands within the program focused on science, culture, art and education.

It wasn't all business, though. In addition to stimulating discussions and thought-provoking presentations, the conference provided ample opportunity to venture out with friends and colleagues and enjoy a pint or some mushy peas. On Tuesday evening, August 25th, SER led a group of students to the famed Curry Mile—a Manchester hotspot for South Asian and Middle Eastern cuisine with more than 70 restaurants in a one-mile stretch—for a Student Mixer to help forge new connections among budding young professionals. On Wednesday evening, August 26th, the Society held its Gala Awards Dinner at the historic Midland Hotel to honor the recipients of the 2015 SER Awards.

The conference was great fun, and SER would like to extend a special thanks to the dedicated volunteers who generously gave of their time and energy to help make it a reality. We would also like to thank our Conference Sponsors, as well as our many Conference Partners: Marketing Manchester, the Manchester Metropolitan University, Landlife, the National Wildflower Centre, the Institution of Environmental Sciences, the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management, and the European Chapter of SER.

We look forward to our next opportunity to bring the restoration community together on the world stage, and we hope you will join us. Please mark your calendars for SER2017 in Iguassu Falls, Brazil in September 2017!

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Journalist and author Paddy Woodworth wrote two articles for the *Irish Times* in recent weeks based on his experience in Manchester. They are well worth the read!

- [Ecological restoration must be a priority for the planet](#)
- [Germaine Greer: my pet forest](#)

### **SER's new Board of Directors for 2015-2017 is off and running!**

SER's 2015-2017 Board of Directors began their term during the in-person board meeting in Manchester, UK, preceding SER's 6th World Conference. [View our website](#) for a complete list of the 2015-2017 Board of Directors, including Board member positions and contact information.



### **2015 SER Awards Honor Colleagues for Outstanding Achievements in Restoration**

The Society presented its 2015 SER Awards in conjunction with the SER World Conference in Manchester and recognized four colleagues for their outstanding achievements in the field of restoration. During a special evening at the historic Midland Hotel on August 26, 2015, participants at the Society's Gala Awards Dinner honored these individuals for their influential work. We are proud to present our 2015 award recipients!

## JOHN RIEGER AWARD – Cara Nelson

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(photo: David Thompson)

The John Rieger Award honors those who have dedicated their time and skills to advancing ecological restoration through the development of SER. This year's award went to Cara Nelson for her outstanding leadership and extraordinary dedication to both SER and its members over the past eight years, particularly during her tenure as Chair from 2013-2015. Cara stepped in during a leadership transition in March 2014 and assumed the role of acting Executive Director in addition to her many responsibilities as Chair – not to mention her regular job as a professor at the University of Montana. She has devoted countless volunteer hours and personal resources to the Society over the past two years, and has also contributed to the development of SER in numerous other ways since joining the Board in 2007 as the Regional Representative to the Pacific Northwest, North America. In addition to her service on the international Board, Cara is a long-time member of her local chapter, SER-Northwest, and also serves on the Editorial Board for Restoration Ecology.

## THEODORE M. SPERRY AWARD – Susan Page

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Susan Page (center) with members of her project team in Central Kalimantan investigating millennial-scale peatland carbon dynamics (photo: Angela Gallego-Sala)

The Theodore M. Sperry Award honors individuals who have made a significant contribution to advancing the science or techniques used in restoration practice. This year's award went to Professor Susan Page from the University of Leicester for her extensive body of work on peatlands and in particular, tropical peatlands. Having conducted research at diverse sites around the world and authored more than 100 journal articles, books, book chapters, and technical reports – including as a Lead Author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – Professor Page has contributed greatly to our understanding of peatland ecology and the role of tropical peatlands in the global carbon cycle. Her research, and that of the many students she has supervised, has also yielded important insights into the drivers and impacts of peatland degradation as well as approaches and barriers for their successful restoration.

## FULL CIRCLE AWARD – Samuel Israel Levy Tacher

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The Full Circle Award recognizes restoration projects that incorporate the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples in significant ways and reflect a balance between indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge and practices. SER presented this year's award to Dr. Samuel Levy Tacher from El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR) in Chiapas, Mexico for his more than 20 years of field experience working with the region's indigenous Lacandon Maya farmers to understand and apply their traditional techniques for facilitating forest succession after agricultural abandonment. Dr. Levy and his colleagues at

ECOSUR have used Lacandon practices to develop innovative approaches for restoring degraded tropical forest land in the region and addressing a number of long-standing social and ecological challenges. They are applying traditional knowledge to the rehabilitation of abandoned pasturelands and the restoration of forest clearings dominated by bracken fern, and are using traditional resource management strategies of local Mayan communities to promote landscape-level connectivity throughout the region. Dr. Levy's work exemplifies the principles of the Full Circle Award and has played an important role in improving local livelihoods and well-being.

## COMMUNICATION AWARD – Barbara Dean

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(photo: Barbara Dean)

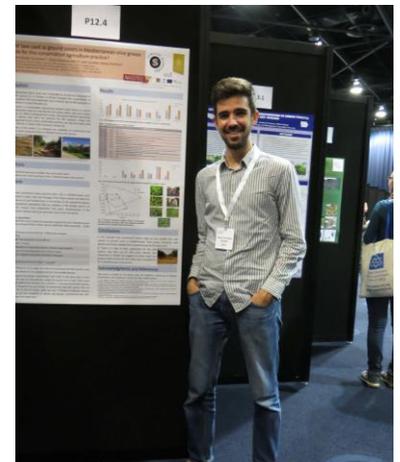
The Communication Award recognizes individuals that have made a significant impact in advancing the theory, practice or public awareness of restoration through innovative communication strategies. SER presented this year's award to Barbara Dean, the recently retired Executive Editor of Island Press, for her dedication to building the Press's Ecosystem Studies program during a career spanning more than 35 years. In 2002, Barbara embraced the concept of a collaborative book series with SER, "The Science and Practice of Ecological Restoration", which has grown to include over

28 titles. The Series has become the foremost forum in the world dedicated to advancing restoration science and practice through book-length treatments, and Barbara has worked tirelessly and creatively with dozens of dedicated natural and social scientists, professional practitioners, historians, and writers. The resulting books expand our understanding and communicate to broad audiences how ecological restoration and restoration ecology can help communities, nations, and global society make the urgently needed transition towards a sustainable and desirable future. See our interview with Barbara Dean below.

## WILLIAM NIERING STUDENT POSTER PRESENTATION AWARD - Matías Hernández González

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Matías Hernández González from Semillas Silvestres in Córdoba, Spain received the William Niering Student Poster Presentation Award at the closing ceremony of the SER2015 conference in Manchester for his poster presentation entitled: "Are the taxa used for ground covers in Mediterranean olive groves suitable for this conservation agriculture practice?". Together with his co-authors, Borja Jiménez Alfaro, Cándido Gálvez and Stephanie Frischie, Matías was chosen by the SER Awards Committee for special recognition of his outstanding presentation based on an evaluation process that used several criteria to score student posters, including: the logical structure of the poster, the explanation of the research question, the amount of background information provided, how well the implications of the research were explained, and the visual design of the poster. Congratulations to Matías and his colleagues! For details about their project, see the book of [poster abstracts](#) and refer to submission P12.4.



## An Interview with Barbara Dean, recipient of SER's 2015 Communication Award



As reported above, SER awarded Barbara Dean, co-founder and former Executive Editor of Island Press (IP), its 2015 Communication Award. We were very fortunate to have the opportunity to ask Barbara some questions about her influential career with IP, her collaboration with SER, and her advice to researchers and practitioners on communicating restoration topics to a broader audience. Follow this link to read the full interview. Barbara graciously shares experiences, advice and lessons learned based on 35 years in the environmental publishing industry.

SER awarded Barbara Dean its 2015 Communication Award in recognition of her dedication to the advancement of restoration theory, practice and public awareness through innovative communication strategies. During her 35-year tenure with Island Press (IP), Barbara played a fundamental role in building IP's Ecosystem Studies Program. As Executive Editor, Barbara embraced the concept of a collaborative book series with SER, "The Science and Practice of Ecological Restoration," which has grown to include over 28 titles. The Series has become the foremost forum in the world dedicated to advancing restoration science and practice through book-length treatments, and Barbara has worked tirelessly and creatively with dozens of dedicated natural and social scientists, professional practitioners, historians, and writers. The resulting books expand our understanding and communicate to broad audiences how ecological restoration and restoration ecology can help communities, nations, and global society make the urgently needed transition towards a sustainable and desirable future.

We were very fortunate to have the opportunity to ask Barbara some questions about her influential career with IP, her collaboration with SER, and her advice to researchers and practitioners on communicating restoration topics to a broader audience. In her responses below, Barbara graciously shares experiences, advice and lessons learned based on 35 years in the environmental publishing industry.

**SER:** *The origins of Island Press and the trajectory of your career with the organization make for such a fascinating story – Can you describe how Island Press came into existence, as well as your subsequent rise to executive editorship?*

**BD:** Island Press was founded in 1978 by a small group of people who wanted to publish books about nature and the environment. A few of us had recently moved to a remote ranch in northern California, where I was putting down roots that I hoped would be permanent. But I needed a job. I've often thought that my primary contribution to founding Island Press was simply being in the right place at the right time. The opportunity to be part of a new venture involving books, which had been a big part of my life since childhood, was truly a gift.

Today, publishing is a very tough business. From the perspective of 2015, when the book marketplace is dominated by a few large companies, and many mid-sized cities don't even have

a good bookstore, the publishing world in 1980 seems relatively friendly to small companies. But friendly or not, it didn't take us long to understand that Island Press wasn't going to be successful without a clearer publishing plan than "books about nature and the environment" and a location more convenient for doing business. So, in 1984, we embarked on the first of many strategic planning efforts. After surveying the universe of people (professionals, academics, and volunteers) working on different aspects of land conservation and management, and determining what information those people needed but didn't have, we reorganized Island Press to focus more directly on filling needs that other publishers were not meeting then—providing practical information for people who were actively involved in solving environmental problems.

We opened a new office in Washington, DC, an ideal location for productive collaborations with the busy NGO community as well as the thousands of federal agency professionals who were charged with managing public lands. Our restructured strategy included not only publishing our own books but also a distribution function, to help many of the excellent reports on environmental issues from NGOs reach the people who needed that information.

Although I supported these decisions and changes, I was not keen on moving to DC, where I had lived for a summer between college semesters. I had loved the city then—especially its beauty and history—but almost ten years later, my remote California home had become the center of my intellectual and emotional life. So, I discussed the possibility of staying in California and working from a home office with the Island Press Board of Directors. Happily, they were willing to give that arrangement a try. So I became a "remote" employee—a category that is a fixture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, but was very unusual in 1984.

My job title since the early days of IP had been Executive Director, and I stayed in that position while the DC office was getting established. But over the next several years, my exclusive focus became the editorial program, and my title transitioned to Executive Editor, with primary responsibility for developing the program we called Ecosystem Studies, which included books on science and management of rivers, wildlife, forests, and public lands. Problems and controversies on all these topics were taking shape around me in the West; I eagerly went to work finding authors who could write accessible, useful books for people working on solutions.

***SER:** From your perspective as a founding member, how has the broader mission of Island Press evolved over the course of 35 years, and what steps/strategies/developments have been most critical in establishing the organization as a leading conduit for ideas and information in the environmental field?*

**BD:** Essentially, the expansion of Island Press over the years has reflected the growing understanding among the global scientific and policy communities of the serious environmental issues we face, from habitat fragmentation to water scarcity to climate change. Motivated, inspired, and challenged by this context of rising and widespread concern, we expanded our subject areas and audience definitions to keep pace with the broadening need for solid scientific information and fresh ideas.

Although IP books focus on the information needs of professionals and practitioners, the larger US/global society provides the framework within which these people do their jobs (and budgets,

priorities, and staff sizes are set). So when environmental issues broke out of limited circles of scientific attention in the 1980s and '90s to become part of everyday awareness, we took note.

Looking back, two developments seem particularly significant for the issues I was most engaged in. Beginning in the 1980s, the term "biological diversity" or "biodiversity" became more commonplace on nightly news broadcasts and other general media, as new findings about the extent of the loss of global biodiversity had direct effects on scientific and environmental policy (and, therefore, individual lives).

In the same decade, climate change became part of conversations and worries about the present and future. On June 24, 1988, the front page headline on the *New York Times* was "Global Warming has Begun, Expert Tells Senate." Emphasizing the point, summer temperatures soared in New York City that year, converting former skeptics into believers. As you know, the flow of information in all forms—books, TV specials, films—hasn't let up; nor have the disagreements about causes and appropriate actions.

Within that general context, and more immediately relevant to my day-to-day responsibilities of guiding IP's ecosystem studies program, the founding of two new, mission-driven professional organizations in the 1980s was huge.

- May 8, 1985: Society for Conservation Biology was founded in Ann Arbor, Michigan; SCB was (and is) an international professional organization dedicated to the study and preservation of biological diversity.
- April 1987: Second Native Plant Revegetation Symposium was organized in San Diego, CA, and served as the catalyst for the creation of the Society for Ecological Restoration and Management in 1988. Now (as you know!) called Society for Ecological Restoration, SER is an international professional organization dedicated to reversing the degradation of nature and restoring the earth's ecological balance for the benefit of humans and nature.

Both SCB and SER quickly became important friends and collaborators for Island Press. We shared values and goals with both groups; all three organizations had (and have) science-based, mission-oriented programs, an interdisciplinary approach to the issues, diverse constituencies (including professionals, students, and practitioners), and a sense of urgency, driven by critical environmental needs. Island Press catalogs from the 1980s forward are peppered with books written by scientists and practitioners whom we met through SER and SCB conferences and common networks—and many members have become long-term key editorial contacts and friends.

Editors are always watching for signs that they are on the right track of big ideas. We keep up with the issues and the emerging research by attending professional conferences, reading the professional literature, staying in contact with people we respect who are doing the on-the-ground work and/or teaching the students who will be doing the work in coming years. Sounds like a dream job, right? I often think of my role of a book editor as being an eternal graduate student, taking courses that teach me what I really want to know. What a great way to spend my working years!

**SER:** *How do you prioritize which subject matter to target for a publication? Once a topic and author have been selected, what are the primary steps you take as an editor to ensure that the final publication is accessible to the intended audience without losing any essential components?*

**BD:** Editors tend to move through the world with antennae on full alert for authors and book ideas. Pretty much anything—an overheard conversation, a thought-provoking paragraph in a journal article, a hike through a forest devastated by wildfire—can provide the seed of an idea that may grow into an important book with the right author, careful research, and a fully fleshed-out plan. The process of getting from an idea to a complete proposal to a contract offer often takes many months of back-and-forth discussion among the author, editor, outside reviewers, and the publishing staff (especially marketing and production managers).

Everyone involved in this process is focused on evaluating the importance of the topic, the audience profile (does the intended audience really need/want this information?), if the publisher will be able to reach the audience (an increasingly difficult question as the publishing business depends more and more on on-line “discovery” and sales), and if sales are likely to be large enough to cover costs of publication.

By the time an author signs a contract, many of the tricky issues raised by the project will have been talked through. But it’s still a long way to a final manuscript. The working relationship between author and editor is the key to these next months; both author and editor are responsible for delivering a manuscript that meets the contract criteria, and different kinds of books and authors will need different approaches. Generally, editors review chapters as they are written (or in groups) to offer comments on writing “level,” style, content, references, structure. Depending on the book (particularly whether it is single-authored or a multi-authored volume), the full manuscript may be sent to outside expert(s) for a final review. At each point during manuscript development, the editor, author, and reviewers scrutinize the material to be sure that it matches the needs and background of the intended audience.

At Island Press, the final editorial/author sign-off is the transmittal of the complete and final manuscript to the production team. The “transmittal memo” (written by the editor) summarizes the project, highlights any changes from the initial contract discussions, lists items that may need special attention during production. The transmittal meeting brings together editorial, production, and marketing staff to be sure that everyone is on the same page. And then it’s on to transforming the manuscript to a book.

**SER:** *The Science and Practice of Ecological Restoration Book Series has been an integral tool for managers and students, scientists and practitioners alike. As one of the primary players responsible for bringing this now 28-title series into existence, can you describe what convinced you of the need for a series on this topic?*

**BD:** I was fortunate to be part of SER from its inception—as an early member and also an attendee of the first SER conference in Oakland, California, in 1989. Island Press recognized early on that the ecological restoration / restoration ecology subject area was an excellent match for our publishing program because of its science-based, mission-oriented goals, interdisciplinary approach, and its audience mix (professionals and practitioners). We published several

restoration books in the early IP years, before launching the book series—***The Tallgrass Restoration Handbook***, Packard/Mutel, '97; ***Restoring Streams in Cities***, Riley, '98; ***The Historical Ecology Handbook***, Egan/Howell,'01—which gave us some experience with the restoration author pool and audience.

After a number of months of informal discussions about the prospects of a book series, in July of 2002, Don Falk and John Rieger requested a formal proposal from IP and at least one other publisher. Here's a paragraph from our proposal that describes why we wanted to work with SER:

*"We believe a partnership between SER and IP would be uniquely effective in providing information and tools for the restoration community because of the extraordinary fit in mission and membership/readership between our two organizations. In publishing terms, the audience for restoration information is unusually complex, since it is both multidisciplinary and multilayered: books may be expected to address audiences not only across traditional fields (from biology to sociology), but also up and down levels of expertise (from scientists to volunteers). Island Press has experience working with authors to synthesize technical or specialized information so that it is accessible to a variety of users. Equally important, we are very close to our market, not only through traditional market research and monitoring, but also through the long-term, personal involvement of key staff and their network of contacts and activities. Finally, the synergy that exists within the Island Press program with books from related fields, especially conservation biology and landscape architecture, offers an important benefit for books as well as readers. We believe that no other publisher can match IP's commitment to the goals of SER and to meeting the needs of readers of SER-sponsored books."*

Developing the series—now with 28 books, as you note—has been a very collaborative process between IP and SER from the beginning. Members of the SER Editorial Board (James Aronson, Don Falk, Karen Holl, Richard Hobbs, and Margaret Palmer) have been the connection with people who are engaged in the many aspects of restoration, from developing theory and policy, to teaching students and volunteers, to applying new (and not-so-new) approaches to achieving goals in this dynamic field. The SER Editorial Board also offers a first (as well as a final) review function for new proposals and manuscripts. It's been a real pleasure for me to be part of the launch of the series; now that I am retired, I look forward eagerly to seeing what the SER-IP collaboration will produce in coming years. I know Erin Johnson, who has assumed leadership from the IP side, returned from Manchester with new ideas, and she welcomes your thoughts and comments going forward.

**SER:** *Communicating complex scientific ideas to a general audience is a challenging endeavor, and one that many researchers struggle with despite a desire to share their work outside of the academic sphere. What advice do you have for scientists who would like to successfully communicate their research to more general audiences?*

**BD:** Ah, very important question! We spend a lot of time talking with an author about audience before we commit to publishing a book. In our experience, trying to write for two different audiences usually results in missing both of them.

Reaching an audience (*any* audience) effectively means understanding what background information on the topic the reader will bring to the book, what reference style a reader is familiar with, and so on. If a reader has to turn pages with a dictionary by her side or to re-read key passages several times to understand their meaning, chances are good that she won't finish the book. Alternatively, if a researcher opens a book to find that it lacks references, he will know immediately that it's not going to meet his needs.

Publishers are as interested as authors are in reaching as many readers as realistically possible—and Island Press, in particular, is dedicated to publishing books that are accessible to non-specialist audiences. The approach we recommend is to identify (ruthlessly) primary and secondary audiences; then, generally, determine the major decisions about writing “level” (language and style), structure, background knowledge, reference style and “weight,” and so on by the make-up of the primary audience. Some of these decisions allow a bit of flexibility that can pull in a secondary audience, but your first priority has to be avoiding choices that will turn away your primary audience. You'll want to keep a clear mental image of someone who represents your primary audience right next to your keyboard—**that** is the person you are trying to communicate with.

Since the most common audience “split” is the one you highlighted in your question, here are a few tips for presenting scientific or technical information to readers who may have limited background in the field (but this secondary audience should usually have some experience with the topic even if not an academic degree):

- Writing style
  - Active rather than passive voice (good advice for all audiences!)
  - Don't “dumb down” the language, but include brief in-text definitions of important terms that may not be familiar to some readers
  - Be sure to give readers a “road map” of the book (and of each chapter) by providing good introductory paragraphs, topic sentences, summary paragraphs, and so on (to help readers understand where you are going)
- Reference style
  - If your audience (primary plus secondary) is academic / natural scientists, they will be familiar with author/date reference style (plus full bibliography)
  - Alternatively, a combination of end notes and references is likely to be friendlier for non-specialists while still providing necessary information for researchers
- Appendix material that may provide helpful information for non-specialists
  - Glossary
  - Annotated reading list for further information

These are just a sample of some of the approaches that may help broaden your audience. It's important to remember, though, that tips and tricks do not substitute for careful, realistic forethought about who really needs and wants the information you will present.

**SER:** *In your 35 years with Island Press, you have helped bring about the publication of works on a wide variety of environmental topics. What are some new or emerging topics that you think*

*Island Press will pursue for future publications? What topics or knowledge gaps in the field of restoration specifically would you like to see the SER series address in future titles?*

**BD:** Well, as I've already said, it's a tough time to be a publisher. But I also think it's an exciting time to be working on environmental issues. Problems are urgent, research is moving fast, and there are many bright, creative thinkers working on solutions—and wanting to share new ideas.

The restoration field offers special challenges and opportunities for many reasons, starting with the great diversity of people, problems, ecosystems, and knowledge (both theoretical and practical) that make up the field. Restoration is also particularly exciting because it is still taking shape, the interactions among member groups are dynamic, and both theory and practice are growing in response to serious global needs.

Despite my official retirement, I will no doubt chime in with suggestions of topics and authors now and then, but at present, I defer to my IP colleagues and the SER board and membership for ideas: you all are the people doing the work and needing information!

After so many years working with authors and manuscripts, my faith in the power of books to inspire, inform, surprise has only grown stronger. Whether read on paper or on tablets or absorbed via earbuds, I know that books can change lives—and help to save the planet. I can't wait to see what new topics and authors will lead that good work in years to come.

## **New National Seed Strategy for Landscape-scale Rehabilitation and Restoration in the US: The Right Seed in the Right Place at the Right Time**

*Contributed by Olivia Kwong and Peggy Olwell - United States Bureau of Land Management*

Large-scale disturbances and other stressors threaten important plant communities in the U.S. and the ecosystem services they provide. These stressors include altered wildfire regimes, habitat modification, land overuse, the spread of invasive plant species, and climate change. The National Seed Strategy for Rehabilitation and Restoration 2015-2020 aims to provide a more coordinated approach for stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration treatments in response to these disturbances.



With almost 30 percent of U.S. lands under Federal management, the Strategy encourages large-scale habitat restoration, while highlighting the need for broad public investment in commercial native seed production to benefit smaller-scale restoration projects. The Strategy is

national in scope and engages both Federal and non-Federal partners restoring public, tribal, state, municipal, and private lands.

Successful implementation of the Strategy on a national scale will be achieved through coordinated establishment of a nationwide network of native seed collectors, a network of farmers and growers working to develop seed, a network of nurseries and seed storage facilities to supply adequate quantities of appropriate seed, and a network of restoration ecologists who know how to put the right seed in the right place at the right time. Achieving this requires investments in identifying and meeting seed needs, research, improved decision tools, and enhanced communication.

The figure below provides an overview of the Strategy's underlying vision and goals.

### **The Strategy in Brief**

#### **Vision**

The right seed in the right place at the right time.

#### **Mission**

To ensure the availability of genetically appropriate seed to restore viable and productive plant communities and sustainable ecosystems.

#### **Goals**

- Identify seed needs, and ensure the reliable availability of genetically appropriate seed.
- Identify research needs and conduct research to provide genetically appropriate seed and to improve technology for native seed production and ecosystem restoration.
- Develop tools that enable managers to make timely, informed seeding decisions for ecological restoration.
- Develop strategies for internal and external communication.

Following its official launch in Boise, Idaho on August 17, 2015, the Strategy was covered in a presentation and highlighted during a plenary lecture at SER2015 in Manchester, UK. To learn more and download a copy of the document, visit <http://www.blm.gov/seedstrategy>.

## Getting to know our new Executive Director: Q & A with Bethanie Walder

**SER:** How did you become interested in restoration ecology?

**BW:** I began working in conservation nearly 25 years ago and quickly learned that conservation alone wasn't enough. If we really want to have a healthy planet to live on – one that sustains not only people, but wildlife, fish, plants, insects and even bacteria – then we need to repair some of the damage humans have caused. Most people who work in conservation focus on stopping activities that cause ecological damage – in so many instances, their job is to say “no.” Working in restoration enables you to focus on fixing what’s broken. Our job is to say “yes.” Ecological restoration provides opportunities to solve intractable environmental problems. Ecological restoration is a positive, proactive, solutions-based field – which is incredibly inspiring to me.



**SER:** Where would you like to see SER 5 years from now?

**BW:** Since I've only been on the job for a month -, that's a tough question to answer, but I'll try... I'd like to see SER membership grow significantly, especially outside of North America. It has been estimated that, across the globe, tens of thousands of people are working in the field of ecological restoration. We need to reach and engage those people. I'd also like to see SER playing a much more significant role in international environmental policy, especially in the context of climate change. I would like to see SER's chapters and members engaging directly with policy makers at multiple scales to increase investment in high-quality ecological restoration on the ground.

**SER:** If someone asked you why they should join SER, what would you tell them?

**BW:** SER is the only international society dedicated to enhancing the practice and the science of restoration. Ecological restoration is still a young field; we are still learning so much about how to implement projects on the ground, about what works and what doesn't work. SER provides a venue for scientists, practitioners, land managers, decision-makers and others to learn from each other, to share experiences, and to improve the field. Through our chapters and sections, members can interact with the leading thinkers in ecological restoration.

**SER:** What do you enjoy doing outside of the world of ecological restoration?

**BW:** Fortunately, I enjoy traveling, since it seems I'll be doing a lot of that with this new job. But mostly I enjoy playing outside – hiking, biking, Nordic skiing, and gardening. I love heading out into wild places where, around any bend, I might encounter a stunning vista or wild animal, and be instantly reminded of how small we are and how amazing this planet is. I'm happiest when I'm out in nature.

## SER Chapter Conferences & Events

### [SER Southeast Annual Meeting](#)

*Mussels and Mines: Restoring Disturbed Ecosystems of the Southeast*  
October 14-16, 2015 – University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee

This meeting, hosted by the University of Tennessee, serves the professional field of ecological restoration and is a forum to exchange ideas, learn about project results, and hear about the latest research from across the southeastern US.

### [SER Midwest-Great Lakes Webinar](#)

*Past Fire and Present-Day Mesophication: Implications for Oak Ecosystem Restoration*  
October 15, 2015, 12pm CT/1pm ET

SER MWGL and the Tallgrass Prairie and Oak Savanna Fire Science Consortium are teaming up to present this webinar featuring Gregory Nowacki, PhD (Regional Ecologist, Acting Soil Program Leader, Eastern Region, United States Forest Service). Register online [here](#).

### [SER Texas Annual Meeting](#)

*Celebrating 20 years of Ecological Restoration in Texas*  
November 13-15, 2015 – Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas

Join TXSER in celebrating 20 years of ecological restoration in TX by attending a variety of concurrent sessions, participating in field trips, challenging yourself in a Plant ID competition and much, much more. The early conference registration deadline has been extended to **October 9, 2015**.

### [SER Southwest Annual Meeting](#)

*Where Scientists and Practitioners Connect*  
November 20-22, 2015 – Reid Park Doubletree Hotel, Tucson, Arizona

SER Southwest encourages attendance at their annual meeting by “anyone who is interested in how to collaborate and make restoration efforts as ecologically effective as possible. Students, scientists, practitioners, consultants, agencies, conservation organizations – we want to have an open and welcoming dialogue with everyone. Our region covers all of Arizona and New Mexico, as well as the desert portions of southern California, Nevada, and Utah.”

### [SER Midwest-Great Lakes Annual Meeting](#)

*Eighth Annual Chapter Meeting*  
April 1-3, 2015 – Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

Call for Abstracts coming in November 2015!

### [SER Northwest Annual Meeting](#)

*Monitoring Ecological Restoration: Measuring Change and Seeing Results*  
April 2-6, 2016 – Red Lion Inn, Portland, Oregon

The Call for Abstracts is currently open for SER Northwest's Annual Meeting. They encourage oral and poster presentations speaking to the theme, "Monitoring Ecological Restoration," as well as presentations on a variety of other topics. Visit their [Abstract Submission Page](#) by December 31, 2015 if you would like to submit an abstract for consideration.

### **[SER Europe Conference 2016](#)**

*Best Practice in Restoration*  
August 22-26, 2016 – Freising, Germany

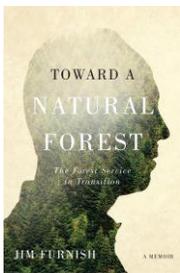
### **Save the Date for SER2017**

The 7th SER World Conference on Ecological Restoration will take place in Iguassu Falls, Brazil in September 2017. Be sure to mark your calendars for what promises to be a spectacular venue and spirited group of conference goers! Details are forthcoming.

## **New Publications**

### **Toward a Natural Forest**

*By Jim Furnish, current SER Board Member*



"In this revealing memoir, Furnish addresses the fundamental human drive to gain sustenance from and protect the Earth, believing that we need not destroy it in the process. Drawing on the author's personal experience and his broad professional knowledge, *Toward a Natural Forest* illuminates the potential of the Forest Service to provide strong leadership in global conservation efforts. Those interested in our public lands—environmentalists, natural resource professionals, academics, and historians—will find Jim Furnish's story deeply informed, thought-provoking, and ultimately inspiring."

—Oregon State University Press

## **Restoration Ecology Volume 23 Issue 4**

The July 2015 issue of [Restoration Ecology](#) (Vol. 23, Issue 4) is available online. Featured below are some "Editor's Picks" from the issue, courtesy of Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor of *Restoration Ecology*, Stephen Murphy and Valter Amaral.

### **[Comparison of reintroduction and enhancement effects on metapopulation viability](#)**

*Samniqueka J. Halsey, Timothy J. Bell, Kathryn McEachern, and Noel B. Pavlovic*



Metapopulation dynamics is like the weather – everyone talks about it, but few do anything about it. Not so with Samniqueka Halsey and colleagues. They show that for *Cirsium pitcherii*, the most bang for your buck occurs with the first reintroductions, and that you're better off putting more effort into saving what you have rather than adding more – this is germane to anyone trying to balance a budget in restoration ecology efforts. The authors also indicate that the strategy of creating on-site nurseries is a winner – an experience shared by many, but time-consuming even when worth the effort. They also are candid in explaining that this restoration ecology project will not become self-sustaining until larger connectivity issues are solved – and those are much harder to tackle. To your editor, this reiterates the need for more cross-scalar research.

### **[The food web of a severely contaminated site following reclamation with warm season grasses](#)**

*Ned Fetcher, Salvatore J. Agosta, John C. Moore, Jeffrey A. Stratford, and Michael A. Steele*

This study evaluates whether introduced warm-season C<sub>4</sub> grasses become integrated into surrounding C<sub>3</sub> vegetation or, alternatively, if they constitute a separate, isolated ecosystem. The site was an area affected by a zinc-smelting plant. The authors used several collection methods and conducted stable isotope analysis on specimens of plants, invertebrates, reptiles, birds and mammals. Three channels of carbon flux through the food web seem to be well established: one based on the C<sub>4</sub> grasses, one based on C<sub>3</sub> plants, and a third based on detritus. It seems that the introduction of warm season grasses may support a functioning ecosystem that includes viable components at all trophic levels.

### **[Tidal-flow restoration provides little nesting habitat for a globally vulnerable saltmarsh bird](#)**

*Chris S. Elphick, Susan Meiman, and Margaret A. Rubega*

Considerable efforts and resources are being devoted to restoring saltmarshes throughout the world. Usually, the focus of restoration in these systems is on vegetation and water circulation rather than the associated animals. Furthermore, the “field of dreams” hypothesis is often not verified when monitoring of animal species takes place. The bird communities of 18 saltmarshes in Southern New England (USA) were compared among sites with restored tidal flow, sites where invasive plants have been removed, and reference sites. Tidal-flow restorations resulted in vegetation characteristic of lower-elevation marshes, and proved to be unsuccessful in benefiting small saltmarsh sparrows – a highly vulnerable species. With this in mind, saltmarsh restoration projects should prioritize higher-elevation sites or include elevation-raising methods in the project design.

### **[Genetic effects of habitat restoration in the Laurentian Great Lakes: an assessment of lake sturgeon origin and genetic diversity](#)**

*Jamie M. Marranta, Amy B. Welsh, and Edward Roseman*

As a result of habitat loss and degradation, the natural populations of lake sturgeon have decreased considerably. Habitat rehabilitation may well be the best option to restore ecologically sustainable populations. Marranta and colleagues conducted a genetic analysis to evaluate the efficacy of three artificial reefs in increasing population sizes and maintaining genetic diversity.

Larger reefs, not older reefs, seem to support higher numbers of spawning adults. In turn, and despite evidence of founder effect in the reef populations, these large numbers of breeders seem adequate to maintain the genetic diversity of populations of the species. Habitat restoration through artificial reef installation is so far proving to be a successful option.

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## **Restoration Ecology Press Release**

### **The socioecological complexity of ecological restoration in Mexico**

*By Cristina Martínez-Garza<sup>1</sup> and James Aronson<sup>2,3</sup>*

This opinion article reviews the social and ecological complexity facing those engaged in ecological restoration activities in Mexico – one of 17 megadiverse countries recognized by Conservation International. This complexity is mainly due to intricate historical conflicts with land tenure, past restorative actions based on reforestation rhetoric lacking a firm ecological underpinning and, last but not least, a woeful lack of communication among key actors. Any evaluation of the state of the environment in Mexico provides ominous figures about the area affected by degradation: in 2008, approximately 50% of Mexico was considered degraded.

Since the 1930s, federal actions related to restoration have been attempted, and Mexico does have four legal instruments that refer to ecological restoration, albeit in very broad terms. However, most restorative actions to date have been focused on tree plantings and nothing more, and there is a huge decoupling of the estimated funding needed to truly recover degraded land (68 million US\$/yr.), and current levels of investment in restoration actions (2 million US\$/yr). To help encourage greater efforts to create legal instruments and greater government funding for restoration activities, the first ever Mexican Symposium on Ecological Restoration was organized by the University of the State of Morelos, in November 2014.

Some ecosystems such as dry tropical forests and islands have gained greater public awareness in recent years, while others, like mangrove forests, should receive much greater attention. To restore any and all degraded ecosystems in Mexico, it is clear that capacity building, including multidisciplinary approaches, is a top priority, and that we must also strengthen and build upon existing ties that link Mexican academic and NGO groups to international organizations such as SIACRE (the Sociedad Ibero-Americana y del Caribe para la Restauración Ecológica) and SER (Society for Ecological Restoration), and as well as the Mexican network REPARA (Red de Restauración Ambiental). At the 2015 meeting of SIACRE in Buenos Aires, a symposium on “Realities and perspectives of restoration ecology in member countries of SIACRE” included eight talks from five countries and the preeminent goals identified were to increase the number of graduate studies programs and to do everything possible to promote more and better legal instruments to support ecological restoration activities in Latin America and the Caribbean Region.

The article is available in *Restoration Ecology* Vol. 23, No. 4, pp 331-336, and [online](#).

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## Restoration in the News

In each issue we highlight restoration-related news stories from around the world. Use the [interactive map](#) to quickly navigate through our selection of articles, or browse through the detailed listing below.

### [Ecuador releases 201 tortoises to repopulate the Galapagos](#)

By Caroline Leopold for [digitaljournal.com](#)

With the goal of restoring giant tortoises to the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador released hundreds of animals similar in shape, size and genetics to the extinct populations of tortoise once found there.

### [Researcher seeks to maximize the health of native plants in restored environments](#)

From UC Irvine for [phys.org](#)

Scientists find that local mycorrhizal fungi are more beneficial to native plants than commercial fungi combinations often used in restoration projects.

### [Mighty oaks: Restoration projects aim to bring back an iconic Oregon landscape](#)

By Bennett Hall for the [Corvallis Gazette-Times](#)

Restoration practitioners in Oregon battle fir encroachment and invasive species in efforts to restore oak savanna to the landscape.

### [Smarter city needs better ecosystem](#)

By Radheshyam Jadhav for [Times of India](#)

The need to take urban ecology and ecosystem restoration into account when conducting city planning and expansion is becoming an increasingly important issue in growing Indian cities.

### [Building a Pathway for Aquatic Restoration Careers through Waders in the Water](#)

By Mary Ellen Sprenkel for the [Huffington Post](#)

The Conservation Corps' new program "Waders in the Water" provides young people with valuable training in aquatic restoration.

### [The False Promise of Ecological Restoration Projects](#)

By Richard Conniff for [Takepart.com](#)

Article author Richard Conniff describes widespread issues that influence the ultimate success of restoration projects such as allowing business to trump sound restoration science.

### [\*\*Rewilding isn't about nostalgia – exciting new worlds are possible\*\*](#)

*By Paul Jepson for The Conversation*

“Rewilding” can be an important conservation and restoration tool if current out-of-date regulations and ideas about the concept are brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### [\*\*Effort to restore Times Beach evolves into an ecological model\*\*](#)

*By T.J. Pignataro for The Buffalo News*

SER Organizational Member, Paul Fuhrmann, is a restoration specialist on a five-year demonstration project to restore a rare coastal wetland on Lake Erie.

### [\*\*Ecological Restoration Is A \\$25 Billion Industry That Generates 220,000 Jobs\*\*](#)

*By Kelli Barrett for Ecosystem Marketplace*

Based on the Restoration Ecology article featured in the last issue of *SERNews*, this article explains the significant contribution of the “restoration industry” to the economy.

### [\*\*Wetland International disburses credit to Niger Delta communities\*\*](#)

*From Worldstagegroup.com*

Using a microcredit finance mechanism, Wetland International is providing funding to communities that are involved in conservation and restoration activities.

### [\*\*Ontario Reviewing Wetlands Conservation Framework\*\*](#)

*From Net News Ledger*

Ontario makes wetland conservation and restoration a priority as it revisits its current framework in preparation to enact changes that reverse wetland loss and degradation.

### [\*\*Can Washington's wetland conservation inform flood prevention in China?\*\*](#)

*By J.M. Wong for the Seattle Globalist*

At the inaugural meeting of the China Coastal Wetland Conservation Network, US experts observed multiple parallels in the challenges faced by both the United States and China in addressing the increased risk of coastal flood events, and the potential for mitigation through wetland restoration.

### [\*\*Scientists favour return of Tasmanian devils; say they will restore ecosystems\*\*](#)

*By Ravi Mandalia for Techie News*

Declining dingo populations in some areas have led to ecological imbalances that researchers believe the return of the Tasmanian devil could help to correct.

### [\*\*Inaugural US Forest Service International Seminar on Forest Landscape Restoration Held in Oregon\*\*](#)

*By Aaron Reuben and Kathleen Buckingham for USDA Blog*

This summer, U.S. restoration practitioners shared their experiences with restoration professionals from 16 countries as part of the U.S. Forest Service's *International Seminar on Forest Landscape Restoration*.

### [What grows after natural disasters? U.S. plants new idea to restore landscapes](#)

*By John M. Glionna for The LA Times*

Land managers often find native seeds in short supply after natural disasters – one of the reasons for the National Seed Strategy for Rehabilitation and Restoration that launched last month.

### [Sierra Nevada parcel will test ways to reduce mega fires and increase snowpack](#)

*By Louis Sahagun for The LA Times*

A unique opportunity to test restoration treatments on a landscape reserved solely for that purpose: environmental groups band together to purchase a California land parcel for scientists to address pressing restoration issues.

### [As sixth largest salt lake dries up, Iran tries to save it](#)

*By Jennifer Viegas for Discovery News*

Iran plans to spend \$6 billion over the next decade to restore Lake Urmia – the most expensive environmental project in the country's history.

### [Tentative first steps for forest restoration in the Caribbean](#)

*By Veronica Anadon for BirdLife International*

The Sierra de Bahoruco National Park in the Dominican Republic is beginning to receive attention and support for restoration following years of deforestation for agricultural purposes.

### [Scientists say Maryland's gigantic new oyster reef is a pearl that could save the Chesapeake Bay](#)

*By Darryl Fears for the Washington Post*

The largest man-made oyster reef in the world could be key to filtering the pollutants that affect Chesapeake Bay, and help to spawn thriving underwater ecosystems.

## Social Media Corner

Below, we have previewed a few recent posts from SER's LinkedIn Group. You can join the group and become an active participant by clicking [here](#).

### LinkedIn Discussions

*The content for this section is taken directly from posts to SER's LinkedIn group and does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Society. SER does not endorse the subject matter of individual posts or the responses thereto.*

### [Is the loose use of the term 'ecological restoration' helpful – or is it lowering standards?](#)

*The current trend for many to use the term 'ecological restoration' as a catch-all phrase to include all environmental repair efforts irrespective of standards is attracting global attention and lots of feel-good agreements; but is it lowering standards where full restoration is desirable? [Read More and/or Comment](#)*

**Does anyone know of any ecological restoration design/construction guidelines, specifications, and/or design criteria at any levels from federal and state to local and NGOs?**

[Read More and/or Comment](#)

**Large wildlife bridge proposed in Calif.**

*Vehicles on a section of the US 101 Freeway in Agoura Hills, Calif., have killed a dozen mountain lions since 2002. To remedy the problem, the California Department of Transportation wants to build a 165-foot-wide, 200-foot-long animal bridge over the 10-lane roadway with landscaping to help guide animals across. [Read More and/or Comment](#)*

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