

JSWC EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* (JSWC) is a multidisciplinary journal of natural resource conservation research, practice, policy, and perspectives. The JSWC has two sections: the A Section containing various departments and features and the Research Section containing peer-reviewed applied research papers. Manuscripts must represent original work and address a topic related to soil and water conservation.

The purpose of this document is to serve as a guide for authors who would like to submit their manuscripts to the JSWC and for editors who review the manuscripts.

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A SECTION

A Section articles are typically between 600 and 4,000 words (including References section) and include high-quality supporting photographs. It is recommended that authors query the Director of Publications/Editor (pubs@swcs.org) regarding A Section article ideas before submitting. The articles should be submitted by email to pubs@swcs.org. The decision to publish A Section submissions is made by the Director of Publications/Editor based on how well a manuscript addresses a topic of current and ongoing concern to the readership and on the accessibility of the writing for a broad audience.

- Articles submitted to the JSWC cannot have been published previously.
- Authors may choose to include up to five figures, images, or tables in their articles. The figures and images should be submitted as JPEG or EPS files, at least 300 dpi.
- All figures, images, and tables should have descriptive captions and be referenced in the article.
- Authors should provide job position title, organization, city, and state for each author.
- The headings in the A Section articles should not follow the format of the Research Section articles (Materials and Methods, Research and Discussion, etc.). However, like the Research Section articles, A Section articles should have no more than two levels of headings and should include a References section if applicable.
- With the exception of the "Parts of the Manuscript" section of the JSWC Style Guide, A Section articles should follow the Style Guide (available at http://www.jswconline.org/site/misc/Style_Guide.pdf).
- There are no page charges for the articles published in the A Section. However, all authors are encouraged to pay a fee for open access, in which case their articles become available in the online journal to all readers—not only to subscribers.

RESEARCH SECTION

Manuscript Suitability

The following factors are considered in determining the suitability of a research manuscript:

- Manuscripts submitted to the JSWC cannot have been published previously.
- The manuscript should contribute to a new or better understanding of natural resource conservation.
- Studies must make a unique contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge and contain sufficient detail of research methods to be replicated or verified by other investigators.
- The research objectives and/or hypotheses must be clearly stated.
- Appropriate investigative techniques (including controls, if applicable) must be used.
- Manuscripts should demonstrate that the research design and methods for data analysis (quantitative and/or qualitative) are scientifically rigorous and appropriate for the research topic. Quantitative research deriving inferences about differences, trends, or other patterns must be accompanied by appropriate statistics.
- All social science research manuscripts received by the journal will be evaluated by the journal's social science panel. Social science research manuscripts must demonstrate that the research design and methods for data analysis (quantitative and/or qualitative) are scientifically rigorous and appropriate for the research topic. All qualitative research must adhere to social scientific standards for rigorous research design, data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- Data must be clearly presented.
- Interpretations must be supported with the data presented.
- All data sources, models, and other information must be fully documented.
- Implications of the results must be discussed.

Manuscript Preparation

Please prepare and submit the following:

- **Author Information File.** Submit a Microsoft Word file that includes the title of the manuscript, list of authors, and author bios. For the bios, include author names, job position titles (e.g., director or ecologist), name of institution, city, and state or country (if not the United States). Keep author names in same order for both the list and the author bio. Example: Reid Kreutzwiser is a professor and Rob de Loë is an assistant professor in the Department of Geography, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Upon request, the JSWC will identify the corresponding author within the author bios.
- **Manuscript File.** Submit a Word file of your manuscript. Be sure there is no identifying author information in your manuscript file (citations and references are acceptable). Your manuscript should include the following parts in the following order: title, abstract, key words, body, references, table titles and tables, and figure captions. Be sure that your manuscript is double spaced and that it includes line numbers and page numbers. It is recommended that manuscripts be between 5,000 and 9,000 words. Consult the JSWC style guide below for more detail.
- **Figure Files.** Figures may be included in the Word manuscript file, or they may be submitted as individual files when you upload your manuscript file. If a paper is

accepted, we will need access to high quality figure files that meet the following standards. We use EPS (vector) files for most charts/graphs and line illustrations, and we use high-quality TIFF or JPEG (raster) files for photographs and other nonvector-based images. Image size should be 4.75 inches wide at 300 dpi (1,425 pixels wide). It is recommended that the manuscript include no more than 12 figures and 10 tables. Figures submitted in color will be published online in color. Authors who prefer to publish figures in color in both the online and print publication will incur additional pages charges (see page charge rates below). If authors choose to publish in color online only, the same caption will appear on both the online (color) and print (black and white) versions. Authors should ensure that figures are legible and correspond to captions in both formats and should consider marking lines and graph bars with differentiating symbols and shading to assist with clarity in grayscale.

Style Guide

Authors should consult the JSWC Style Guide for manuscript preparation guidance before making a submission. **QUICK TIPS:** All units of measurement should be expressed in the International System of Units (SI). If authors desire, English or local unit equivalents may be provided as well. English or local unit values should follow the SI units and appear in parentheses. For non-English local units, conversion factors should be included at the first instance of inclusion. All references must be complete, with journal and publisher names spelled out.

Submissions

Manuscripts are submitted online and will be analyzed using iThenticate plagiarism software. Coauthors need to be listed during the submission process so that they are given the opportunity to view the article's progress throughout review. Upload your manuscript to the following Web page: <http://www.editorialmanager.com/jswc>.

Manuscript Review Process

The journal's Research Section has a rigorous peer-review process. Each manuscript is peer reviewed by experts in the manuscript's particular field under the direction of the research editor and associate editors. Authors may suggest potential reviewers for their manuscripts; however, it is not guaranteed that these reviewers will be asked to review their manuscripts.

Quick Release

In order to ensure rapid, high caliber reviews of research submissions, the Research Editor will review each manuscript, and the journal will “quick release” the following types of manuscripts without assignment to an Associate Editor for full review:

- Manuscripts with substantial language, typographic, or formatting error.
- Manuscripts that lack appropriate quantitative analysis (explicit research methods and statistical analysis) or appropriate qualitative analysis. Literature review papers, project reports, or opinion pieces will be quick released unless invited.
- Monitoring studies that lack critical assessment of conservation practices or processes.
- Manuscripts that do not provide a new contribution to soil and water conservation or have other deficiencies that make them ill-suited for the review process.

Released papers will not be reconsidered by the journal.

Turnaround Time

Authors are usually notified of the initial manuscript review decision within 10 weeks. Accepted manuscripts are typically published within 6 to 9 months from the date final files are submitted.

Page Charges and Reprint Orders

Authors are supplied PDF page proofs for final review and correction. Page charges are assessed based on number of pages in final page layout. Approximately 1,000 words fill a page, but tables and figures may add length.

Authors also have the option to purchase open access to their articles in the online journal and/or official reprints of their manuscripts.

RESEARCH BRIEFS

Research Briefs are short manuscripts that report upon research of high relevance, novelty, or emerging concern. These manuscripts will undergo full peer review following standard procedures. Research Briefs report upon promising, unique findings, such as new technologies, analytical methods, research of narrow scope, or new modeling routines. Research Briefs have a maximum of 3,500 words and contain no more than 3 graphics, but otherwise are subject to all the requirements of peer review for a standard manuscript. Manuscripts may be submitted as a Research Brief, or the Editorial Board may recommend that a manuscript be condensed from standard length to Research Brief as part of the review process.

RESEARCH EDITORIALS

On occasion, the Research Editor may invite an author to submit a manuscript as a Research Editorial or may suggest that a manuscript submitted for consideration as a Research Article be submitted for review (with or without revision) as a Research Editorial. These papers do not require a Materials and Methods section, although they must uphold the journal's standards of science and integrity. In general, Research Editorials must be comprehensive in nature or sufficiently authoritative to represent some aspect of the state of the science. Research Editorials are subjected to the journal's traditional peer-review system, and acceptance of a Research Editorial is contingent upon it passing the peer review. If a Research Editorial is accepted for publication, the authors are responsible for any and all publication fees.

JOURNAL SPECIAL ISSUES/SPECIAL SECTIONS RULES

Acceptance or Release of Special Issues/Special Sections Proposals

- A proposal for a JSWC special issue must be submitted to the Chair of the Editorial Board (Research Editor). The proposal must have a contact author.
- The JSWC reserves all rights to accept or release special issue proposals.
 - **First Step.** The Chair (Research Editor) of the JSWC Editorial Board will evaluate the proposal. The proposal will be evaluated based on how well it fits into the proposed special issue theme and its relation to soil and water conservation. Other factors that will be considered are the impact to basic and applied research and to new advances in soil and water conservation, the number of published manuscripts, and expertise of the authors. Additionally, special issues frequently stem from symposiums that have been sponsored by professional societies or professional organizations. The status of the professional societies and/or organizations that sponsored the symposium will be considered, particularly how the organizations' activities relate to soil and water conservation. The decision for the first step will be completed by the Chair within a week of proposal submission.
 - **Second Step.** If the proposal is accepted by the Chair of the Editorial Board, the proposal will be forwarded to the Editor of the JSWC. The Editor will evaluate the viability of the proposal with regard to resources and staff needed to handle the extra load of manuscripts. The cost of editing, publishing, and manuscript submission will also be considered. The decision for the second step will be completed by the Editor within a week.
 - **Third Step.** If the proposal is approved by the Editor, the Research Editor will email the proposal out to the entire Editorial Board for their vote. The members will have only one week to reply YES or NO. The Research Editor will count the votes by the end of the week. Only the emailed reply votes will be counted, and the majority's vote will stand as the final decision.
- The Research Editor will forward the final decision to the Editorial Board within a week.
- The final decision will be also emailed to the contact author within four weeks of the proposal submission. The Research Editor and Editor will have the right to modify the deadlines to fit the JSWC schedule. The contact author will be notified if any deadlines are changed.

General Information about Special Issues/Special Sections

- There is no limit on the number of proposals that the JSWC will consider. However, only a maximum of one special research issue and one special research section will be published per year. If the journal's funds allow, or if a proposal includes funding to help cover the publication cost of the proposed special issue/section, the publication of a second special research issue and/or a second special research section in the same year may be considered.
- The JSWC reserves the right to stop accepting proposals or to cancel special research issues/special research sections for a given year.
- Special issues are expected to be primarily composed of research articles. However, each special issue may have an overview paper that includes a glance at the published papers, the current status of science, and a literature review to establish the special issue theme

that can be published in the peer-reviewed research section. In some cases, additional review articles may be warranted for special journal issues, but substantial justification is required to demonstrate that the additional reviews offer information that cannot be provided via the special issue overview paper. However, in all cases, no more than two review articles (overview paper plus two additional review articles for the peer-review section) will be allowed in a proposal. In addition to the papers that pass the peer review for the special issue, the authors could coordinate with the Director of Publications to potentially publish one, two, or three Features in the A Section of the journal to accompany the special issue.

- Papers need to be formatted according to the requirements of the JSWC.
- Manuscripts for all accepted proposals should be submitted via the online manuscript review system under the theme submission type rather than as regular research manuscripts.
- A maximum of 20 research manuscripts and 1 overview manuscript will be submitted for peer review. A minimum of 12 research papers and 1 overview manuscript will be required in order to have a viable proposal for a special issue. A special section may have an overview paper that includes a glance at the published papers, the current status of science, and a literature review to establish the special issue theme, but a minimum of 6 papers needs to accompany a proposal for a special section (7 papers including the overview paper) so that the overview paper could synthesize a sufficient number of papers. Besides the overview paper, no additional review articles will be accepted for a special section. In addition to the papers published in the special section (overview paper and the research articles), the authors could coordinate with the Director of Publications to potentially publish one Feature in the A Section of the journal to accompany the special section.
- Only those manuscripts that pass the review process will be accepted for publication.
- There is no minimum of papers to be included in special issue/special section if the majority of the papers are released.
- Only the papers that are submitted by the deadline and logged on in the journal tracking system will be considered for the special journal issues. Once the papers are logged on, there cannot be any substitutions with different papers. No switching of papers will be accepted after the peer-review process has been started.
- Other authors are welcome to submit other papers to the traditional peer-review process that will be handled by the journal. However, these papers will be processed and published according to the traditional process and schedule of the journal.
- It should be clear to authors that their papers will undergo peer review and that the decision of whether or not their paper will be accepted will be made through the peer-review process.
- Each author is responsible for the publication cost of his/her article if the article is accepted.

Information to be Included in Proposal for Special Issue/Special Section

- The one-page proposals should include the contact author, postal address, organization, and email address.
- The proposal should include a title for the special issue (indicative of the theme).

- The sponsoring organization or professional organization(s) that sponsored the symposium or research should be listed in an appendix.
- A paragraph (or more) that describes how this special issue advances the area of soil and water conservation should appear in the proposal. Contributions to advances in basic and applied research in soil and water conservation also need to be included.
- Each proposal should include the date by which all papers will be submitted. The date by which all the papers will complete the peer-review process and date of publication of the special journal issue will be determined by the Editor and Research Editor, who will keep the contact author informed about the preliminary and final dates
 - Although our peer-review process for individual papers averages three months or less, for special journal issues, it historically takes one year or more from submission of proposal to publication. Although some papers may be accepted after they pass the peer-review process (within three months), others may need substantial revisions and therefore will take a bit longer. Only papers that pass the peer-review process by the established paper acceptance deadlines will be published in the special issue.
 - Any paper that is accepted earlier than the others will be held until published on the established special issue publication date.
 - Any paper still pending that has not been accepted by the special issue deadline will be moved to the regular review process within the online system to be considered for publication in a regular journal issue. If the paper that is pending is accepted and published at a later date, a footnote can be included at the request of the authors explaining that the paper was to be part of the special journal issue.
 - Papers released during the special issue review process will not be reconsidered by the journal.
 - Example of deadlines: Papers will be submitted to peer review by January 1. Only papers that are accepted by July 1 will be published in the special issue. Special issue will be published in December.
- A list of potential paper titles, along with potential authors and respective institutions, must be added to the one page proposal.

Peer-Review Process for Papers Submitted to Special Issue/Special Section

- If the proposal is accepted, the contact author will contact all other authors to ensure that all papers are submitted as special issue/section papers to the JSWC to undergo its peer-review process.
- The authors of each paper need to submit the manuscript to the JSWC with a cover letter informing the Editor that the manuscript is being submitted for consideration as part of the special issue (include name of special issue).
- All manuscripts will be submitted to the journal's online peer-review system.
- The manuscripts will then be forwarded to the Research Editor using the system.
- **Quick Release.** The Research Editor will review each manuscript. If the manuscript is not a new contribution to soil and water conservation or has other deficiencies that make it ill-suited for the review process, the paper will be quick released. In this case, the Research Editor will contact an Associate Editor from the journal so that each manuscript receives at least two initial reviews. If the Research Editor and Associate Editor are in agreement, the paper will be quick released. However, in the case of a disagreement, the paper will be forwarded for peer review and assigned to a journal Associate Editor.

- Released papers will not be reconsidered by the journal.
- If the paper appears to be ready for the peer-review process, the paper will be assigned to an Associate Editor.
- The Research Editor has the right to assign any manuscript to any of the journal's Associate Editors.
- The Associate Editors will forward the reviews and their recommendations to the Research Editor following the journal traditional peer-review process. The Research Editor makes the final decision to accept or release assigned manuscripts.

DOUBLE-BLIND PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

The JSWC has a double-blind peer-review process, which means that all manuscripts go through an unbiased peer-review process. The reviewers are not able to see the authors' names. The Research Editor and Associate Editors are able to see the authors' names because they need to be able to ensure that the manuscript is not assigned to an author or someone with a conflict of interest. Manuscripts where the Research Editor is an author or coauthor are handled by the Director of Publications outside of the editorial system to maintain the double-blind peer-review process.

The manuscripts are stripped of all author information, which is automatically done by the Editorial Manager system when the PDF file is created at the manuscript submission stage. In addition, the journal staff checks the files before the manuscripts are sent to reviewers to make sure no author names are accidentally left in the files.

The authors are not able to see who reviews their papers. If the name of the reviewer is accidentally disclosed to the author, then that reviewer can no longer be part of the blind review for that paper, and another reviewer will be appointed to avoid any potential problems of disclosure.

MANUSCRIPT APPEAL PROCEDURE

The JSWC is responsible for publishing high-quality material related to soil and water conservation. The persons responsible for this task are volunteers invited to serve on the Editorial Board and reviewers based on their professional qualifications. Members of the Editorial Board and reviewers are expected to perform their duties with diligence and in an unbiased manner.

Authors who disagree with the decision to reject their paper may appeal by communicating with the Research Editor/Chair of the Editorial Board. Appeal requests should be made in writing, not by telephone, and should contain the word "appeal" in the subject line along with the assigned paper number. Authors should provide detailed reasons for the appeal and point-by-point responses to reviewer comments and/or comments from the Associate Editor. The Research Editor will investigate and judge the merit of the appeal and perform one of the following: (1) reverse the decision to reject; (2) request a reconsideration of the original recommendation from the assigned Associate Editor, which may include a re-review with a new set of reviewers; (3) assign a new Associate Editor to the manuscript with a new set of reviewers; or (4) accept the original decision to reject and end the appeal. The Research Editor is the final adjudicator in these matters, but may form a panel composed of members of the Editorial Board to address especially difficult or contentious issues.

EDITORIAL ETHICS FOR AUTHORS, REVIEWERS, AND EDITORS

Author Ethics/Responsibilities

- Ensure that submitted papers are based on original research that has not been published elsewhere. It is unacceptable for an author to submit a manuscript (or a manuscript with very similar subject matter) to more than one journal at a time. At the time of submission, the authors should disclose any details of related papers or similar papers in press.
- Maintain full transparency and objectivity through disclosure of all financial/personal conflicts of interest that could undermine the credibility of the journal.
- Gather and interpret data in an honest way without fabrication (making up research data and results) or falsification (changing or omitting data or results in such a way that the research is inaccurately represented). Journal editors, referees, readers, and the publisher have the right to demand that submitted (and published) manuscripts do not contain scientific dishonesty, deceitfulness, and/or fraud.
- Avoid plagiarism, the deliberate use of other work without permission, credit, or acknowledgment. In order to ensure that the material published in the journal is the author's original intellectual property, the journal uses the sophisticated software to locate and mark suspected plagiarism in submitted manuscripts. It is the policy of the journal that all submitted manuscripts are checked with iThenticate software before proceeding to an Associate Editor for handling in the review process. It is incumbent upon the Research Editor to determine if the passages marked by iThenticate are simply commonly used phrases or are of sufficient length and similarity to constitute plagiarism and/or improper citations. At the present time, manuscripts with extensive suspected plagiarism and/or improper citations are released to the author, and those with much less suspected plagiarism and/or improper citations are passed along to the Associate Editor with a caveat from the Research Editor to receive further review and a second opinion as to fitness for sending to anonymous reviewers. Many university departments, government research agencies, and even private consulting firms publish the results of current research online to increase visibility and credibility with their stakeholders. These preliminary publications are rarely peer reviewed and do not constitute publication in a refereed journal; however, if the iThenticate software identified this material posted online as potential sources of plagiarism or improper citation, the authors will have to edit the submission to avoid this conflict with material already available or remove the online material before resubmission. The only material that can be identified by iThenticate software and be approved for publication is parts of a master's thesis and/or PhD dissertation that the main author is submitting for publication from his/her own thesis or dissertation. In addition to these online documents, many conferences encourage submission of short proceedings articles that are published in book or CD format for attendees. These may or may not be peer reviewed, but again they do not constitute publication in a refereed journal. The iThenticate software has many of these documents in the database against which a manuscript submitted to the journal is compared. Thus, it is quite possible for a submitted manuscript to be marked as plagiarized or having an improper citation, and the author will have to edit the material to avoid conflict with the iThenticate software. For the material identified as previously published to be considered for publication in the journal, the following conditions should be met:

- The marked passages are the author's own intellectual property published in the author's master's thesis.
- The marked passages are the author's own intellectual property published in the author's PhD dissertation.
- The material that has not been published in a peer-reviewed journal (for example, university departments, government research agencies, and even private consulting firms that publish the results of their current research online to increase visibility and credibility with their stakeholders) can be published in the journal as long as the material is the author's own intellectual property and has not been previously published in a refereed journal. However, the text will still have to be edited.
- The marked text is a short common description of materials, methods, and procedures, e.g., "samples were collected and oven dried," etc.

In the case where the submitted manuscript does not contain all the authors of the previous online document or conference/symposium proceeding, the corresponding author is responsible for obtaining a release and permission to publish from all the previous authors who are not listed on the submitted manuscript.

- Recognize previously published work relating to submitted manuscripts by way of accurate citation and reference. All sources should be disclosed, and an author should not use information obtained through manuscript review (or other private sources) without permission from the source (i.e., person, company, organization, etc.).
- Avoid unwarranted fragmentation of work into multiple manuscripts, otherwise known as "salami slicing." Editors have the right to reject submitted articles that share the same hypothesis, data, discussion points, conclusions, etc. as another submitted or published article.
- Ensure that submitted articles contain no personal criticism or denunciation of other scientists. An article may not contain any disparaging or otherwise actionable material.
- Accurate acknowledgement of all workers contributing to the research. Correctly naming authors who have contributed significantly to the research (i.e., made substantial intellectual contribution) ensures that the appropriate individuals get credit (and are accountable) for the research.

Reviewer Ethics/Responsibilities

To Authors

- Treat the author and the manuscript with respect: avoid personal comments or ad hominem criticism. Reviewers must recuse themselves if they have a bias against the research.
- Provide an impartial, honest, and constructive assessment of the value of the work based strictly upon scholarly merits and scientific efficacy.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the review process and not use the review process as a means to achieve personal or professional gain.

To Editors

- Decline the review invitation if the review cannot be completed within the specified time period or a clear conflict of interest exists.

- Note any ethical issues such as substantial similarity between the reviewed manuscript and any published paper or any manuscript concomitantly submitted to another journal of which the reviewer may be aware.

Editor Ethics/Responsibilities

To Authors

- Clearly communicate all journal editorial policies and standards.
- Treat all authors with respect, transparency, objectivity, and integrity.
- Follow established journal guidelines to ensure timely and efficient peer reviews.
- Maintain complete confidentiality of the peer-review process.
- Make editorial decisions in a timely fashion and communicate them in a clear, concise, and professional manner.
- Willingly cooperate with established journal appeal procedures for reevaluating editorial decisions.
- Editors must recuse themselves if they have a bias against the authors or the research.

To Reviewers

- Assign papers for review at a reasonable rate without overburdening any single reviewer; provide an appropriate amount of time for reviewers to complete reviews.
- Assign papers for review based on accurate assessment of reviewer expertise, knowledge, and area of interest.
- Inform reviewers that they cannot borrow, use, or distribute any work presented in the manuscript or directly benefit from knowledge gained through manuscript review before final publication.
- Follow established journal guidelines to ensure that reviewers complete reviews within specified timelines and treat all manuscripts as completely confidential.
- Request that reviewers identify any potential conflicts of interest and recuse themselves if they cannot provide an impartial review.

EDITORIAL TERMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Editor

The Editor/Director of Publications is responsible for directing and managing all aspects of the development, production, and marketing of the JSWC. Responsibilities include coordinating the scientific peer review of research reports, acquisition and editing of editorial and graphic content, supervision of contract service providers, quality control, and development and implementation of marketing plans.

The Editor oversees the copy editing of papers approved for publication, transmittal of proofs to authors, preparation of files for printing, and preparation of reprints of articles. The editor works closely with the Research Editor and Editorial Assistant to maintain the quality of the journal. This is a full-time position with the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Editorial Assistant

The Editorial Assistant is responsible for the manuscript tracking using Web-based Editorial Manager system, guiding tasks for the Research Editor, Associate Editors, reviewers, and authors as needed. The Editorial Assistant ensures that accepted manuscripts efficiently move into production, including obtaining final files. The Editorial Assistant formats and edits each manuscript to remove grammatical errors and to make sure every manuscript is consistent with the JSWC style guide; requests, checks, and modifies images as necessary to ensure that they are of publishable quality/correct color format; corresponds with authors of accepted manuscripts during the editing process; distributes proofs; incorporates author changes; and collects page charges forms. This is a full-time position with the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Research Editor

The Research Editor is appointed by the Director of Publications for the term of three years with the possibility of renewal. The Research Editor is responsible for assigning Research Section manuscripts to Associate Editors for peer review and makes the final decision on whether the manuscripts should be accepted or released based on the recommendations from the Associate Editors. The Research Editor also serves as the Chair of Editorial Board, which consists of Associate Editors, and invites members to serve on the Editorial Board. One of the important tasks is to ensure that the members of the Editorial Board represent a mix of specializations, based on the current needs of the journal. In case of an appeal of the manuscript release decision, the Research Editor investigates the issue and makes the final decision in the appeal process, but may form a committee consisting of Editorial Board members to address difficult issues.

Associate Editors

Each Associate Editor performs the duties for three years, starting on August 1st and ending on July 31st at the end of the three-year term. The term can start and end on a different date occasionally, depending on the load of papers the JSWC is receiving. It is expected that an Associate Editor will serve for a period of three years, with the potential for renewal(s) after this period.

The Associate Editors are responsible for providing a timely and ethical evaluation of manuscripts assigned to them by the Research Editor. It is their duty to assure scientific validity and suitability for publication of assigned manuscripts. As such, it is their responsibility to

identify and invite qualified reviewers. The Associate Editors may select reviewers from the existing reviewer database or may invite new reviewers. Three reviews, or minimum two, should be returned to the Associate Editor prior to making a recommendation to the Research Editor. The Associate Editor has an option of providing additional detailed comments to the peer review. It is the Associate Editor's prerogative whether or not they will invite reviewers suggested by the submitting author. The peer-review comments should be examined to assure that comments are appropriate and that reviewer identity remains confidential. The Associate Editor provides a recommendation with a brief rationale to the Research Editor. For manuscripts requiring revision, a clear list of constructive improvements should be provided to the authors.