

## EDITORIAL: CHANGES TO THE *JOURNAL OF CAVE AND KARST STUDIES*

Scott A. Engel  
Production Editor

In 2011, the *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* began transitioning to an electronic distribution process. While not all readership agreed with this change, it was done, in part, to address budgetary limitations within the National Speleological Society. But more importantly, it was done to conform with similar changes being done by peer publications and across the publication industry. As predicted, in the six years since we made this transition, the movement away from print distribution and toward electronic only distribution has continued to expand and evolve across the scientific community and the globe. In that respect, our experiment has been a success, and it is increasingly apparent that a return to full print distribution is unlikely and unnecessary.

With that in mind, this issue represents the next evolution of the *Journal* as we continue to modernize our production process. As you look through this issue, you will find that we have made two major changes to improve the *Journal*. A brief description of the changes and the reasons behind them are presented below.

### Publication Schedule

By transitioning to a predominantly electronic distribution, we have been able to control and reduce costs incurred by the National Speleological Society to produce and distribute individual issues of the *Journal*. As a positive outcome of these cost savings, the Board of Governors has authorized the *Journal* to increase our publication schedule from 3 issues per year to 4 issues per year. The last time the *Journal* had sufficient material and budget to produce 4 issues in one year was 1983. This is an important change that will help to reduce the time between a manuscript submission and publication, allowing current and topical research get out to the readership faster. Because we feel this is such an important improvement, we decided to not wait until the new year to implement this change. You may have already noticed that you did not receive the traditional August issue of the *Journal*. Instead, this issue is dated September, and is the first issue to represent our new quarterly schedule. Going forward, issues of the *Journal* will be published in March, June, September, and December.

### Format

With this issue, we are modernizing the *Journal* presentation format. The new format has been designed to improve online viewing and readability, to maintain a professional quality and look that is consistent with peer publications, and to reduce our production time. The most significant change is the transition from a multiple column format to a full page format. This should improve the electronic reading experience by eliminating the need to scroll up and down the page to transition between columns and by making individual pages easier to read at a higher magnification, regardless of the type of device or screen size used for viewing. Additional major changes include use of a more electronic friendly font, left justifying titles and section headers, eliminating the use of small caps to facilitate proper capitalization and italicization of biological names, and simplifying the author information footnotes format.

We, the *Journal* editorial staff, hope these changes will result in an improved experience for both authors and readers of the *Journal* going forward and will preserve and enhance our mission to promote cave and karst science research and education. We would welcome any comments or suggestions you may have in relation to the new format.

### JOIN THE JOURNAL OF CAVE AND KARST STUDIES STAFF

The *Journal* is seeking qualified volunteers to support our mission of providing a multidisciplinary platform for the publication of peer reviewed research related to caves and karst science. We encourage anyone interested in serving as an associate editor, reviewer, copy editor, or production assistant to contact the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Malcom Field with your qualifications.