**TO**: Potential co-authors

**FROM**: Lead author

**RE**: Authorship of manuscript titled: XXXX

The XXX collaborative group has drafted a list of responsibilities for manuscript co-authors. The goal is to have an open dialog regarding authorship and to clearly define each co-author’s responsibilities and accomplishments throughout the effort. Below are common contributions made by co-authors. We feel that co-authorship requires roughly 2-3 contributions below, the appropriate minimum depending on individual circumstances. We also feel that these contributions need to occur within the timeline established for each paper. Note that some contributions often relegated to the acknowledgments section are included, but that those who contribute in only one category would be placed in the acknowledgments.

We recognize that some co-authors may be employed by agencies that have agency review requirements, and we will respect that requirement as long as 1) co-authors are not obligated to accept proposed changes, especially those that are more political than scientific, and 2) review doesn’t introduce unreasonable delays. Thus, co-authors that work for agencies requiring reviews must take responsibility for scheduling and marshalling the review process, and getting the review comments back to the co-authors within 3 weeks of the request for the review. Finally, we clarify that only authors have editorial control over the paper, and agency review will not be used to suppress findings that the working group has collectively decided should be published. Should an agency review attempt to either prevent publication or significantly alter findings in ways that are not acceptable to the remainder of the co-authors, then the agency co-author will have the option to withdraw their name from the paper.

We highlight one view on this distinction below.

Weltzin et al. 2006: “*Drawing the line between acknowledgements and co-authorship can be challenging and one way of thinking about the differences may be to consider whether or not the participant is responsible and accountable for the article. A contributor receiving credit for the article should be willing to be held accountable for its contents and not be just responsible for a portion of work involved. In contrast, an acknowledgement may contribute formal or informal ideas to ongoing projects, collect enormous amounts of data, and develop and/or conduct statistical analyses, but may not be accountable for the final contents of all or even portions of the final manuscript.”*

We ask that you fill in the following table with the description of your contributions for each activity that applies.

These documents will be archived on our team’s collaborative website with each manuscript.

**Author contributions by:**  *Insert your name here and fill in table below*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Your specific contributions** |
| **Conceived of the idea for the MS** – e.g., framing the question or objectives, overall idea |  |
| **Designed the MS** – help determine structure of the MS, the intellectual content and scope, etc. |  |
| **Supervised** – oversight and responsibility for the organization of the project and manuscript |  |
| **Performed research - Data collection** |  |
| **Performed research - Data analysis or modeling** |  |
| **Contributed new methods or models** |  |
| **Drafted figures and tables** |  |
| **Wrote parts of the MS --** selected portions of the manuscript |  |
| **Performed critical reviews** – reworking the manuscript for intellectual context before submission, not just spelling and grammar checking, **within three weeks of receiving the draft**. |  |
| **Other** – other contributions not listed above, please specify. |  |

**Citations and guidelines**

Weltzin, JF, RT Belote, LT Williams, JK Keller and EC Engel. 2006. Authorship in ecology: attribution, accountability, and responsibility. Front. Ecol. Environ. 4(8):435-441.

Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT): <http://dictionary.casrai.org/Contributor_Roles>

**The Ecological Society of America guidelines** provided in its Code of Ethics (ESA 2006):



