



JOHN MUIR INSTITUTE OF THE ENVIRONMENT  
CENTER FOR WATERSHED SCIENCES

ONE SHIELDS AVENUE  
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616-8527

July 27, 2012

Selection Committee,  
Brown – Nichols Science Award  
7<sup>th</sup> Biennial Bay-Delta Science Conference

RE: Letter of Support for Dr. Wim Kimmerer

Dear Selection Committee members:

I am writing to offer strong support for Wim Kimmerer's nomination for the Brown-Nichols Science Award. I first met Wim in 1988, as I began my graduate research at UC Davis on the highly contentious striped bass decline. I was invited to present a talk at the former annual Striped Bass Workshop, hosted by Don Stevens, DFG. Wim, a consultant for Biosystems at that time, presented a conceptual model on improving interactions between research and management for striped bass. I can't remember exactly why, but I recall really disagreeing with his approach, and wound-up debating with him about the philosophy of science for the rest of the evening – this of course also meant during the famous wild duck dinner at Steven's house – including Randy Brown's baked beans and Lee Miller's Zinfandel wine. Needless to say, Wim and I still work very closely together, still influence each other's development as scientists, and still routinely debate just about everything. As scientists we have very complementary backgrounds and interests; he is also a very close friend.

Given our relationship, I was initially a bit hesitant to compose a letter of support for Wim. I know him too well both professionally and personally. However, I also don't believe there is anyone else in the Bay-Delta community who deserves to receive this award more than Wim does. So, I'm not going to provide a rehash of his CV, or tell more stories of our often crazy field exploits, or what he's like as a room-mate. Like most of us, Wim learned a lot from the folks who were here when we started; he was particularly close with Don Kelly, a consultant and fascinating character. Don was the unofficial leader of the Food Chain Group, an informal group of scientists (including Wim and I) who were invited by Randy Brown to provide oversight, and new ideas for addressing the thorny ecological issues of the time. This was the model for the IEP Project Work Teams, especially the Estuarine Ecology Team, which Wim continues to chair - since about 1994. It was an exciting time, enabling both of us to explore and expand our scientific breadth and basic knowledge of the estuary.

Wim and I, as so-called "soft-money" academic scientists, grew very close with and essentially worked for Randy Brown. It was almost impossible to say "no" to Randy, and he exposed us to a wide assortment of issues and tasks. Wim (and I) frequently acknowledges he would never have been able to remain in this system without Randy. For Wim, this often meant that Randy would involve him in a wide array of policy and management issues, as well as opportunities to provide guidance on the development of various management

studies. From these early experiences, Wim was instrumental in fostering more effective relationships between science and management; a more collaborative outlook which did not exist before, and which many folks take for granted these days.

In short, Wim has remained incredibly devoted to excellence in Bay-Delta science. He simply excels in all of the criteria required for this award; he works incredibly hard; he is considered the most knowledgeable overall of Bay-Delta science (even by me); he is well-known and respected nationally; and, he remains a devoted mentor to many students and agency researchers. In hindsight, knowing each of them well, I can't imagine that Randy wasn't in some way using Wim as a model when he and Fred developed the criteria for the Brown-Nichols award. Wim has remained one of the most important, effective, and productive forces in the development of the Bay-Delta science community. I will always just consider him my older brother; one who has been consistently fun, supportive, and curious, as well as occasionally a competitive and really stubborn friend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William A. Bennett". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

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