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Selection Committee
Brown-Nichols Award
Delta Science Program

10 August 2012

Dear selection committee members,

I am delighted to support Jeffrey Mount for the Brown-Nichols Award.

Jeff has long been the most important scientist for the Bay-Delta system in terms of both providing broad strategic thought and synthesis regarding the enterprise of science for the Delta and bringing ideas from science (both his and those of others) effectively into policy discussions. His ability, willingness, and eagerness to engage honestly with the range of stakeholder and scientific interests in the Delta has contributed to this success.

Jeff's willingness to acknowledge and work with the ever-changing implications of scientific knowledge about the Delta in a dynamic and often heated policy context are highly unusual, and have allowed him to become an honest broker for many in the system. At the same time, he is usefully willing to make conclusions regarding the policy implications of scientific results and perspectives on controversial issues. And he is willing to think and question hard and be convinced that his conclusions might be wrong, and then update his synthesis and conclusions. This willingness to be both critical and sometimes wrong is highly unusual and has helped many difficult Delta policy and scientific discussions to usefully progress. His persistent and energetic activities in this area are far too numerous to mention across a tremendous range of formal and informal settings.

Aside from this extraordinary scientific diplomacy skills, Jeff has also made fundamental contributions to scientific understanding of the Delta and the functioning of its ecosystem in at least two areas. Most famously is his 2005 paper, the famous Mount and Twiss 2005, indicating the geological foundations for the unsustainability of a significant number of subsided Delta islands. In some ways this paper led to revolutionizing public and much scientific thinking about the Delta from one of preserving stasis of the Delta to how to manage an inevitably changing system.

His second fundamental contribution has been in the area of developing Delta habitats that are likely to better support native fishes. Beginning with the Cosumnes floodplain, his work and the work of his collaborators from many disciplines demonstrated the importance of floodplain habitats for native fish species. This too has helped revolutionize thinking about the Delta ecosystem and promising ways that it can be adapted in the future to better support native aquatic species. This work has enriched scientific and policy discussions of the Delta and continues.

Jeff has made many other contributions, not the least of which are on the UC Davis campus. But his many contributions will already be well known to most members of any selection committee.

Jeff has provided fundamental scientific insights for the Delta, and, even more difficult and significant, made Delta science more synthetic and better contribute to Delta policy.

Science for the Delta would be far more arid, entropic, and even more abused without Jeff Mount's contributions. He's gotta deserve an award for this.

Sincerely,

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

Jay R. Lund, Director
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and Ray B. Krone Professor of Environmental Engineering
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