



## CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH

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Department of Biological Sciences, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach CA 90840

August 10, 2012

Dear Brown-Nichols Selection Committee:

I am pleased to recommend Dr. Brenda Grewell for the 2012 Brown-Nichols Science Award. Brenda typifies the type of scientist, conservationist, and mentor that this award was designed to honor. She has a long history of conducting significant scientific research in the San Francisco Estuary and watershed, she strives to translate her science into policy and management work, and she facilitates this science by mentoring students and other scientists as well as serving as a vocal advocate for estuarine conservation.

Brenda's career working in the San Francisco Bay Delta began 25 years ago with investigations into relationships between water management, aquatic/wetland ecology and ecological restoration. She has been awarded multiple honors for her research including a 1999 Switzer Foundation Fellowship and a 2003 Fulbright fellowship to study purple loosestrife in the Czech Republic. After receiving her Ph.D. from UC Davis in Ecology in 2004, Brenda has been working as a research ecologist with USDA-Agricultural Research Service's Exotic and Invasive Weeds Research group, with a faculty affiliation in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of California, Davis. In this position as a restoration ecologist, she conducts applied research supporting ecological restoration of weed-invaded wetland ecosystems, including invasive creeping water-primroses, research to support riparian restoration following invasions by multiple species of exotic weeds, and restoration of endangered salt marsh plant populations. Brenda has an impressive publication record with 12 peer-reviewed publications in the past five years.

Brenda accomplishes this publication and presentation record partially through her own scholarship and partially through collaboration with other scientists and resource agencies. The diversity of her projects reflects the breadth of Brenda's successful research program. She works with the NOAA National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) (see letter), academic scientists, CA State Parks, international scientists, and students. In this capacity, she is sought after for consultation on many ongoing restoration and management projects. Her participation in such projects through advisory boards, technical assistance panels, and academic workshops helps guide the important projects ongoing in the SF Bay Estuary. Brenda brings her adamant rigorous scientific standards and methods to the table while understanding how permitting regulations and on-the-ground politics influence the situation. Brenda's credibility as a strong scientist and her passion for estuarine conservation help her interact with land owners and managers.

My own first meeting with Brenda was through the NERR where I was a new post-doctoral researcher. In this capacity, Brenda introduced me to my field site, Rush Ranch Open Space Preserve where Brenda has been working for over 20 years. With this breadth of knowledge, she initiated a collaborative mentorship with me where I learned the natural history, botanical history, and current weed status and politics of the site. Having benefited immensely from Brenda's mentorship personally, I have since sent several of my M.S. level students to learn skills (such as organic matter testing) and to work with Brenda and her lab for field seasons. These students learn strong laboratory and field skills as well as how to successfully publish their research in top-name journals. Brenda leads by example; students are learning how to be good scientists by emulating Brenda's work ethic. She holds her students to the same high standards she herself upholds: long hours when necessary, great attention to detail, and rigorous understanding of the science and larger questions of the field.

I highly recommend Brenda for the 2012 Brown-Nichols Science Award. If you have any other questions or need more information, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

*Christine Whitcraft*

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