New Horizons—Changes ahead for Soil Survey Horizons

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I am pleased to announce exciting news concerning Soil Survey Horizons. As regular readers know, Soil Survey Horizons was established in 1960 as a medium for expressing ideas, problems, and philosophies concerning the study of soils in the field. Content includes research updates, soil news, history of soil survey, and personal essays from the lives of soil scientists. Contributors and readers include soil survey personnel, private consultants, soils educators, researchers, and students. Topics covered include soil survey problems, innovative methods and equipment, landscape and soil research studies, and case studies from consulting work. The journal is quite unique and fills an important niche not covered by many other soils journals.

While the content and readership of Soil Survey Horizons has remained strong, the journal faced several limitations: It was not available online, it was not indexed by on-line services, and it focused mainly on work within the United States.

Careful consideration of these limitations by the SSH board and Soil Science Society of America have led the journal to evolve; an evolution that will begin January 1, 2012. The Soil Science Society of America Board approved a host of changes related to SSH, changes that will improve the scientific rigor and readership of the journal, while recognizing the historical charge and focus of the journal. Specifically, the following changes will be enacted:

1. The name will be changed to Soil Horizons to broaden the focus and readership.
2. Application has been made to have the journal indexed by ISI and Elsevier Scopus (acceptance is not guaranteed and will take time, but this is clearly a direction we want to move toward).
3. We will begin online publication.
4. The manuscript submission/review process will be administered via Manuscript Central.
5. Strong efforts will be made to broaden the journal to include substantial international content. In support of this, several new associate editors from different continents will be sought for service on the editorial board.
6. Efforts will be made to transition from a strictly editor-reviewed content system to a joint editor/external peer review system.
7. All historical content will be captured, digitized, and made available only in a fully searchable format.
8. We will begin a series of regular updates (upcoming research, essays, announcements for the readership (upcoming instructors, etc.).

However, in making these changes, some things will remain the same, as the journal’s highly acclaimed graduate and undergraduate students will remain free of charge to authors. The journal will continue to focus on original research articles. The focus of the journal will remain its original mission. Illustrative photos and ancillary content can be encouraged. With the new move to online publishing, the journal will have the ability to link slide shows, panoramic photos, and dynamic content as part of published articles.

In addition to research articles and original manuscripts, Soil Horizons will feature invited original essays from the world’s leading soil scientists, giving their perspectives and insights to issues of relevance.

We have recently identified two new associate editors for Soil Horizons. We are excited to work with our new coeditors and are committed to writing a happy story about the future of Soil Horizons.