

(Schmidt 1987), it appears that Weltzin *et al.* (2006) do not disapprove of the notion that some contributors who do not write might be identified as "authors", and might not support the notion that those who contribute most to writing should be considered as the first author. While I agree that the extent of contributions needs to be acknowledged in publication, does not "authorship" connote some actual, original writing? As Mares (1992) proclaimed, "Authorship of a scientific publication is not a reward for having assisted in some way, however trivial, in making a research report possible"; rather, it should identify actual participation in the production of the manuscript. Of the many guidelines available to help sort out this issue, all but those including actual authorship can be used to identify who is asked to help co-author, or even take the lead in writing, an article, but then co-authors should ensure that each truly deserves the appellation. Those who can't or choose not to write should be acknowledged.

Todd K Fuller

Department of Natural Resources
Conservation, University of
Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
tkfuller@forwild.umass.edu

Ensuring that "authors" write

Having authors publish their contributions to a manuscript in a separate byline is a good idea for a variety of reasons (cf Maddox 1994), but in promoting this notion, Weltzin *et al.* (*Front Ecol Environ* 2006; 4[8]: 435–41) still do not identify the means to distinguish study participants as authors versus acknowledged contributors. They in fact add a bit to the authorship/editorship/contributorship conundrum by explicitly identifying their third author as the one who "wrote the first two drafts" of their own article. One would assume that such a contribution would be from the first author. Aside from missing several helpful citations of ecologists (Dickson and Conner 1978; Hunt 1991), including one from ESA

- Dickson JG and Conner RN. 1978. Guidelines for authorship of scientific articles. *Wild Soc B* 6: 260–61.
Hunt R. 1991. Trying an authorship index. *Nature* 352: 187.
Maddox J. 1994. Making publication more respectable. *Nature* 369: 353.
Mares MA. 1992. Authors and egos. *Nature* 356: 471.
Schmidt RH. 1987. A worksheet for authorship of scientific articles. *B Ecol Soc* 68: 8–10.