reply-to:

"Ecological Society of America: grants, jobs,
I would like to pose the following question to the
network "By what criteria should individuals be
included or excluded from authorship on a peer-reviewed
publication, e.g., journal article?" A potential problem
is that the combination of pressure to publish in academic
circles and increasing numbers of cooperative research
projects tends to elevate the number of authors on journal
articles and perhaps diminish the value of authors at the 3rd
and greater positions.

I have heard the following over the years
but am not convinced that all of these hold water:

1. When in doubt go ahead and include the individual, it's
   better for collegial relations.

2. "The scientific paper should list as authors only those
   who contributed SUBSTANTIALLY to the work" Day, 1983. How to Write

3. I seem to remember an article in the ESA Bulletin about this
   but the consensus of this escapes me at present.

4. All participants including those with scientific, analytical,
   editing, and maintenance roles should be included as authors.

5. All scientists involved in the experimental design of a
   research installation regardless of their intellectual
   contribution to the ideas discussed in the manuscript.

6. All participants, even very peripheral ones, should be
   asked by letter if they wish to be included as authors
   and if they say yes, they should be included.

7. Only the core of 1-3 individuals who actually do
   the bulk of writing, re-thinking, agonizing, and analyzing
   involved in the manuscript. For the others, an acknowledgement
   is adequate.

8. All investigators listed on a proposal should be included as
   authors on all publications that involved research that took
   place as a result of that funding.
By what criteria should individuals be included or excluded from authorship on a peer-reviewed publication, e.g., journal article?


Of course, what constitutes SUBSTANTIAL is open to interpretation. Is it the head of the lab that provided the money; is it the technician that spent the hundreds of hours actually collecting the data; how about someone who provides a critical idea even if it involved only 5 minutes of his/her time? In the end these are personal decisions that can not be reduced to hard and fast rules.

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