

Renovation of *The Sedimentary Record*

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The Sedimentary Record (TSR) originated in 2003 as a replacement for a Society for Sedimentary Geology (SEPM) newsletter, and since then, it has housed SEPM ads, news and opinion columns with fairly minimal scientific content. Leading up to this issue, approximately one research article per quarterly issue has been published, for a total of 76 scientific papers covering various topics of sedimentology, stratigraphy, and paleontology. While the journal has been in steady production for an impressive 18 years, it is time for a rejuvenation effort, in accordance with the evolving needs and goals of our academic discipline and scientific community. This editorial will outline the changes we intend to enact for *TSR* over the coming months and years.

THE FUTURE OF THE SEDIMENTARY RECORD

While *TSR* has always been open access, in 2020, the SEPM Headquarters Business Committee (HBC) and Council recommended that the publication undergo an expansion, with the goal of becoming a high impact, fully open-access journal over the next 3 years. As the new editors, we have been working toward this goal for the past few months and are now pleased to share our vision for the future of the journal and our progress thus far.

Ultimately, we envision *TSR* as the premier 'diamond' open access journal for short format papers focused on soft rock geosciences. We recognize the demand for open access publication opportunities within our discipline, and as a society-led journal, we are well-positioned to support the publication of scientific articles with no cost to either the author or the readership. We believe this will have a positive impact on the quality and number of articles submitted to *TSR* by facilitating the inclusion of a more diverse authorship spanning academia, industry, and non-affiliated researchers around the globe, as the burden to

pay fees to publish is removed.

WHAT IS DIAMOND OPEN ACCESS?

A diamond (also, 'platinum') open access publication does not charge readers to access content, nor are authors charged to publish. This is different from both 'gold' open access journals, which utilize Article Processing Charges (APCs) payable by the author to open access to articles for readers, and 'green' open access journals that allow authors to self-archive their articles. There are also 'hybrid' open access journals, which may utilize a combination of open access and subscription paywalls. Currently, SEPM publishes 2 hybrid open access journals, *Journal of Sedimentary Research (JSR)* and *PALAIOS*. With this minimum 3-year commitment to support *TSR* as a diamond open access publication, SEPM is at the forefront of the trending open access revolution within the sedimentary geoscience community.

HOW WILL THE CONTENT CHANGE?

For the time being, we plan to continue with four issues of *The Sedimentary Record* per year, but once we have a steady stream of high quality submissions, we will transition to a continuous publication format, meaning articles will be published online as they are accepted rather than batched for quarterly publication. Since *TSR* has ceased print publication, the move to continuous publication format, which is inconsequential to our operating budget, will facilitate more rapid publication and dissemination of information.

We are also removing the news and commentary content from *TSR*, in keeping with the style of other scientific publications. SEPM Executive Director Howard Harper is working to identify an alternative strategy for digital distribution of the news and commentary content that will be employed soon, if not alongside this first issue of *TSR*.

With these changes, *TSR* will be focused on timely, innovative, and provocative articles. We hope to cover topics of broad and current interest to the membership of SEPM, including all aspects of sedimentology, geomorphology,

Comparison of Open Access Publication Models

	Green	Gold	Diamond	Hybrid
Access for readership	Regardless of access type on publisher's website, authors may self-archive in open access repositories	Fully free, immediate access for readership (full open access) available on publisher's website	Fully free, immediate access for readership (full open access) available on publisher's website	Possibility for full open access is offered to authors: mix of open and closed access articles
Fees assessed to authors	Publishing costs are generally covered by journal subscriptions; usually no fee to author	Article Publishing Charges (APCs) are payable by the authors or their institutions	No fee to publish; sponsored by external sources, e.g., professional societies	APCs may be paid by the authors or the articles may be paywalled behind journal subscriptions

sedimentary geochemistry, stratigraphy, paleontology, ichnology, paleoclimatology, paleogeography, paleoecology, and even including topics that cross from the sedimentary domain to other sciences and applications, such as sustainability and coupled natural and human systems, for example. We will offer two new article formats with a limited size for each article:

1. High quality, fully developed Research Articles
 - limited to 5000 words excluding references and figure captions
 - up to 5 full-color figures and/or tables; and
2. Early Research Advances articles, which may share preliminary results, hypotheses, or broadly reach out to the community
 - limited to 2500 words excluding references and figure captions
 - up to 2 full-color figures and/or tables.

Author guidelines are posted on our new submission platform at <https://thesedimentaryrecord.scholasticahq.com>.

NEW SUBMISSION PLATFORM, ONLINE ACCESS, AND DATABASES

A professional, easy-to-use online submission platform is an important step in increasing submissions to *TSR*. After testing several options, we have contracted Scholastica as the new user-friendly, manuscript submission and review platform. We evaluated the software from the perspective of both editors and authors and so far have been very impressed.

Currently, *TSR*'s online archive is available at the SEPM website and includes *TSR* issues from 2003 to the present. While all volumes, issues, and articles have DOIs and are registered with CrossRef, we hope to cross-list future *TSR* articles with other major geoscience databases in order to increase accessibility and visibility of the content. Likewise, we have submitted applications toward getting *TSR* indexed with the major impact factor metrics such as Clarivate and Scopus. Along with SEPM staff, we are working

hard to accomplish this in a timely manner, acknowledging that both the databases and journal metric companies take some time to evaluate requests to be included.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

We understand that sometimes change can be uncomfortable, particularly when it involves an entity like *TSR* that has been around for nearly two decades. For those who may speculate so, we do not expect *TSR* will compete with *JSR* or *PALAIOS* submissions, which cater to full-length manuscripts. To reiterate, *TSR* will be a short-format journal focused specifically on soft rock geoscience. As *TSR* editors, we will strive to maintain a high bar for the quality of accepted manuscripts, and as part of that we will be reaching out to many of you as independent reviewers. As the number of submissions increases, we may ask for additional volunteers to help with various aspects of *TSR*, and if any of you in the SEPM community have constructive comments for us, please don't hesitate to reach out via email.

A WORD OF THANKS

We would like to thank the previous editors of *TSR* that have kept the journal going for nearly two decades. Dr. Lauren Birgenheier was particularly helpful in facilitating a smooth editorship transition. Likewise, Dr. Howard Harper, SEPM's Executive Director, and Rebekah Grmela, SEPM's Digital Marketer, were both instrumental in the renovation process. We also thank the SEPM HBC and Council for approving our proposal to fund *TSR* as a diamond open access journal for (at least) the next three years. Dr. Jamie Farquharson, Editor-in-Chief at *Volcanica*, and Dr. Jake Covault assisted quite a lot in the early ideation of the future of *TSR*. Finally, we are grateful to the authors that have submitted their manuscripts to our journal so far, entrusting and encouraging us to propel *TSR* toward leadership in the open access revolution.