# HOPE SHORTS

## Choosing hope

**HOW CAN ONE WRITE ABOUT HOPE** at a time like this? The theme for this issue— *Science & Hope*—germinated several months ago, but now it seems almost insensitive—naive at best. As I write these words, I have one screen open to a story about the successful restoration of lake trout in Lake Superior, and another with news about the dismissal of federal employees who implement the sea lamprey control that makes this restoration possible. Collaboration is the beating heart of IAGLR and large lake science worldwide. Yet news stories tell of U.S. scientists who are no longer allowed to freely communicate with their Canadian collaborators.

Does hope have something to offer us now? The benefits of hope on mental and physical health are well-documented. With hope, people better tolerate pain, adhere to medical treatments, and recover from illness. A recent global study suggests that people need hope from their leaders much more than trust, compassion, or stability. Other studies show that nonscientists overwhelmingly associate science with hope (see page 21 of this issue). This indicates that scientists can play a significant role in inspiring hope, especially in difficult times.

Elin Kelsey argues that the very nature of global environmental challenges requires hope. In Hope Matters, she writes that "the environmental crisis is also a crisis of hope." She believes that hope is essential to addressing climate change, biodiversity, and other environmental crises.

But what *is* hope? It's not just wishful thinking or optimism. Researchers highlight several dimensions with a common thread: hope involves envisioning a desired future, acknowledging challenges, and taking action. Kari Grain defines this combination as "critical hope" and says it requires engaging with current difficulties.

At the recent American Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting, CEO Sudip Parikh emphasized that hope must be channeled into strategy and focus. President Willie May went a step further, saying that scientists have a responsibility to envision the future and plan how to achieve it.

So, what can be done? Much advice centers on sharing stories about science. Communicate your work and its importance to your community and society. Have a conversation with your elected officials. Some groups encourage scientists to write opinion pieces in local newspapers and participate in rallies like the Stand Up for Science event on March 7, with the mantra that "science is for everyone." Multiple science institutions, including IAGLR, have issued statements, and their leaders advise scientists to "remain focused on the long game." This includes continuing to support students and early career researchers in this time of uncertainty.

Kelsey encourages us to look for and share proven trends that are providing the desired outcomes. In *The Book of Hope*, Jane Goodall also calls for sharing stories to fuel hope. She considers hope to be a




human survival trait that helps us take action toward our desired future, even in the darkest of times. Her co-author, Douglas Abrams, calls it a *social gift*.

In this spirit, the current issue of *Lakes Letter* highlights success stories throughout the large lake research community. These include habitat protection, species restoration, and the adoption of new technologies—all made possible by collaboration with diverse individuals and talents, even oil-sniffing dogs! We hope these stories guide us toward critical hope, providing examples of how we can move toward the future we envision.

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