

## **KQED QUEST - Bay Area Community Science Blog**

### **About QUEST**

On KQED TV and Radio, KQED.org and through KQED's educational network is QUEST, a new series about the people behind Bay Area science and environmental issues and how their work is changing the way we live. KQED's most ambitious local endeavor to date, QUEST utilizes all of our media platforms, educational resources and extraordinary partnerships. QUEST's geographic coverage will span from Mendocino to Monterey and from Sacramento to Santa Clara, and will focus on nine content areas: astronomy, biology, chemistry, engineering, environment, geology, health, physics and weather.

<http://www.kqed.org/quest/>

### **Bay Area Community Science Blog Overview**

"Weblogs" are online journals or diaries that are regularly updated and allow comments from readers. Blogs provide a significant opportunity for KQED to engage, inspire and inform its audience.

KQED's QUEST project will feature a dynamic and interactive website that offers commentary from staff members, along with a team of nearly a dozen bloggers who each post twice a month on average.

The bloggers will be selected from a broad background of experiences and expertise in science and environment issues.

### **What do I write about?**

There are as many writing styles as there are people. What you write is up to you, but I would suggest we work out a theme and/or format for your posts. That said, your theme must:

- Focus on Science, Environment, and/or Nature in the San Francisco Bay Area; or this stuff elsewhere that affects the Bay Area
- Relate back to at least one of our 9 themes for the show: Astronomy, Chemistry, Engineering, Physics, Weather, Geology, Biology, Environment, Health
- Be something about which you have some expertise and/or passion

I will be glad to help anyone who wants suggestions or guidance for the overall theme of their blog posts.

### **How often must I post a blog entry?**

We ask that each blogger regularly post 2 times each month.

### **Will I get paid?**

If your institution allows it, we can offer \$35 per approved, published post not to exceed \$140 in one month.

## When did this launch?

February 1st, 2007.

## Cool! How do I begin?

### Applying

We may not be able to accept everyone, but we encourage y'all to apply.

1. Read the rest of this document for rules and best practices
2. Contact us and we'll work out a theme for your postings.
3. Send me a writing sample based on your theme, and we'll review it together.

### Blogging

If everything looks good, we'll make you official then proceed.

1. Get your bio together (We'll send requirements)
2. We'll give you a tutorial on how to type in and publish your posts (it's easy)
3. I'll get the written agreement document together for you to review & sign, to make you an official KQED blogger
4. Start Blogging!

### Writing Standards

Once you've decided to write about, you'll want to follow some general guidelines for effective blog writing well. Here are some common practices for you to use.

- **Why does my grandmother care?** A key requirement of QUEST bloggers will be to explain scientific and environmental issues in a way that the general public can understand. Our audience is mostly made up of people who aren't scientists or environmental activists. Blogs should explain why the topics they are writing about are relevant Bay Area residents.
- **Get to the point.** Studies have shown that readers spend only a minute or two on most web sites before moving on. The average reader reads about 200 words a minute. Write tight, and lively. Keep it interesting and informative
- **Avoid jargon.** The purpose of good writing is to communicate clearly. Don't use complex, esoteric scientific terms. Instead of saying "non-point source pollution," say "polluted runoff." Instead of "extravehicular activity," say "space walk."
- **Be personal.** Relate personal experiences. Speak in the first person. Tell them where you saw the blue herons or which movie best depicts what a real moon base might look like. Find your own voice and write in a compelling, approachable way.
- **Be passionate.** Write about subjects and topics that you care about. Please don't feel you have to stick to a script or formula. Express yourself.
- **Drive traffic to the blog.** Place a link in your e-mails to the blog. Mention it on other web forums.
- Write for the bigger picture. Don't view the blog as a place just to promote your institution or pet cause. Keep in mind your audience is made up of a wide diversity of people, with wide interests.
- **Speak your mind, but check your facts** - or your audience will do it for you with painful results.
- **Know your fellow bloggers** - you'll be part of a vibrant community with fresh ideas and discussions nearly every day. Don't be afraid to comment on their posts, or link to their entries.

- Have fun with it!

### **Specifications for a typical post**

- Each writer will have a different topic and voice, but in general, try to keep entries between 150 and 300 words.
- Write short paragraphs (75 words or less)
- Use boldface headings (5-10 words max)
- Use bulleted or numbered lists to help readers scan
- We encourage you to include a bit of text and link back to your partner institution (if applicable). Please use no more than 40 words, and they must be clearly relevant to the topic and post. Posts cannot be wholly about events, but we do encourage promoting links back to appropriate events.
- Photos should be 300px width maximum, length can vary (do not remotely link to other sites, logos from products ok but not photos from other sites)
- Use a double dash for an em dash
- Use three periods for an ellipsis
- Use titles that reveal the essence of the post
- Each post should contain at least one photo (see Photos details below)