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EDITORIAL NOTE

The Rio dos Sinos watershed is one of the most important basin in the state of the Rio Grande do Sul, southern Brazil. The Rio dos Sinos Valley, the region where it is located the Rio dos Sinos watershed is the largest cluster of leather tanning sector in Brazil. The Brazilian footwear industry began in the Sinos Valley in June 1824. Currently, this region is highly industrialized, with high rates of urbanization. The population of the basin is about 1.2 million inhabitants. The rivers of the watershed receive the waste produced by population and industrial effluents. Enterprises located at Rio dos Sinos watershed produce wastewater with high organic load and significant inorganic loads characterised mainly by presence of chromium, cyanide and sulfides. Added to this, the environmental risks to health include lack of access to safe drinking water, low index of sewage treatment and air pollution.

Intense industrial activity causes serious environmental problems affecting the quality of water, air and soil as well as a marked reduction of biodiversity. Lacking biodiversity, forests, biomes will all be at risk. Water bodies depends upon forests to replenish atmospheric components and groundwater. This is why the conservation of biodiversity is fundamental for the sustainability of ecosystems. Maintenance of mosaics of vegetation and riparian forests is therefore of fundamental relevance.

This volume will present the results of research and scientific observations of the Basin. Then, due to the scientific relevance of the Brazilian Journal of Biology, justifies the decision to publish this special edition.

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