

NAEP Committee and Working Group News

Compiled by Gary F. Kelman

NAEP Committee and Working Group Chairs Interviewed

At the NAEP Board of Directors' meeting in Detroit in March, I had a chance to speak to several committee and working group chairs to get their perspectives on what their groups are working on and the overall value of participation in NAEP. I posed six questions. The first four concerned their involvement within their committees/working groups.

1. How do NAEP members benefit from the work of your committee or working group?

Bruce Hasbrouck, chair of the Chapters Committee stated that, "the Chapters Committee helps with starting new chapters, resurrecting dormant ones and data collection. Various aspects of the individual chapters can be helpful to other chapters so there is not a lot of reinventing something."

Fred Pinkney who leads the 1999 Conference Committee observed, that "NAEP members benefit by being able to congregate in a single location once a year to maintain, learn and otherwise gain knowledge of the status of their environmental profession. I visualize the primary goal of the 1999 Conference Committee as follows—to establish a platform where numerous opportunities exist for one to sample and obtain both the technical and personal knowledge other environmental professionals have acquired."

Jim Roberts of the International Committee feels that our members gain "international perspective and experience." He further states that, "exposure to ideas that have developed in other countries from which we can learn and opportunities to share our experience with other people" benefit our members.

David Griffin and Karyn Vandervoort, co-chairs of the Transportation Working Group answer the question by stating that, "the Transportation Working Group is a

new service to the NAEP organization. There are numerous consultants and government employees who are involved in transportation issues. Ground (highway/rail), air and water are all included. The Transportation Working Group gives an opportunity for members and non-members alike, to participate in a transfer of technology with a common thread of interest. Opportunities to have technical issues resolved, to float contentious issues among peers, to be exposed to new ideas and technologies and to be informed of legislative and regulatory changes and case law are all available."

Kara Downey of the Utility Working Group reiterates that, "the working groups of NAEP provide members with a means to establish a network of contacts in specific technical practice areas within the environmental professions. For example, the Utility Working Group is made up of members that work with environmental issues facing the utility industry. Working groups also offer NAEP a ready-made means of participating at state and national levels in development of strategies for implementing new regulations or other types of environmental initiatives. These types of efforts improve the visibility of NAEP and increase its vitality as a professional organization."

2. What benefits do your committee/working group members gain from participation on your committee or working group?

Bruce Hasbrouck answered that, "the benefits include the ability of working with numerous professionals throughout the country." Fred Pinkney stated that, "The best thing we all learn is about the individual—we develop lasting relationships that revolve around how we work with new teammates on a project that has high expectations from the entire NAEP membership." On a practical note, Geoff Elliott of the Internet Committee declared that, "working on Internet projects has kept us up to date on this new technology. Participating in turn in the dialogue and projects has kept us up to date with what others in NAEP are doing professionally and as committee members. That is, we benefit from the projects in the same way others do." David Griffin adds that, "there are opportuni-

ties for networking and marketing and developing professional recognition in our respective areas of expertise." Karyn Vandervoort stated that, "The Transportation Working Group provides an opportunity to interface with transportation agencies by providing professional opinions on regulatory transportation issues." Kara Downey felt that, "the primary benefit is access to the technical and practical knowledge of the members of the working group. By joining a working group when you join NAEP you have immediate access to a forum for exchange of ideas, problem solving and dissemination of information on issues important to your practice area. The working groups also offer professional development opportunities for those that are willing to assume leadership roles within the group structure."

3. How does your committee or working group contribute to the environmental profession?

Jim Roberts felt that, "We bring international members together to work on issues of cross-border significance, on issues which affect different countries either in the same way or in different ways and on issues that are independent of specific places, cultures or politics." David Griffin added, "The transportation arena involves a plethora of environmental regulations and standards of practice—not to mention that it requires project sponsors [such as departments of transportation] to be environmentally responsible for their actions." On a general note, Kara Downey stated that, "the availability of working groups allows professionals within the groups to work with others to formulate solutions and strategies for addressing environmental issues of concern. Such efforts always serve to enhance the status of the profession."

4. How does your committee or working group support the mission of NAEP?

The Chapters Committee's Bruce Hasbrouck stated that, "if we do our job well, NAEP will grow, chapters will learn and the whole process will be easier." Jim Roberts of the International Committee felt that, "our committee works to provide understanding of the ethics and professional practices

throughout the world and to gather information on international practices and make it available to our domestic members." Geoff Elliott stated that, "We have set very high standards for our work, and keep our projects in the best interest of the working Environmental Professional. Our WebPages at NAEP.Org are now visited regularly by folks from all over the world, serving as a connecting point for others and a tool for professional outreach." David Griffin added that, "In the past, transportation issues have surfaced in a passive sense. The Transportation Working Group expands the environmental practice—actively—into the transportation arena and opens doors for a new set of players. This supports the education aspect of NAEP's mission." Kara Downey sums it all up by stating, "Our working group focuses on products that are responsive to the current needs of our practice area and by extension, the profession. Thus, we are always working to contribute to NAEP's mission of maintaining a high standard of professionalism by focusing on maintaining a high level of education of our members on the issues that have the greatest potential to affect the environment and the profession."

I decided to ask two questions concerning the committee/working group chairs' reasons for volunteering their time, despite their full professional schedule, to NAEP.

5. Why did you join NAEP?

Bruce Hasbrouck: "I joined NAEP because I was interested in learning from others in the field. I originally joined [the Florida Chapter] and liked what I saw so I joined NAEP."

Fred Pinkney: "Kara Downey convinced me to join while she was at Burns & McDonnell and working with me. However, to be totally truthful, NAEP was the only organization that I could find that was general enough to satisfy my needs. I am a project manager, a NEPA specialist and a planner that works specifically with water resource and resource management projects. NAEP provided the broad variety of people, agencies, consultants or other groups that could help me stay in touch with individuals that worked with the dis-

ciplines included in my particular job and assigned responsibilities."

Jim Roberts: "My reasons for joining are threefold: (1) for professional networking, (2) to attempt to add to the profession and (3) to give back something to a profession that has given me a great deal."

Geoff Elliott (Internet Committee): "I, myself, joined in order to hang out with NEPA folks, which I did, and I still do, even if it is only electronically. Perhaps what continues to hold me here is the high level of professional ethics and overall spirit of optimism in NAEP. This is one Organization where you don't have to feel like an idiot asking serious questions about ethics and 'doing the right thing.'"

David Griffin: "Mostly for networking and technology transfer."

Karyn Vandervoort: "NAEP is the only organization that dealt with the interdisciplinary NEPA issues and provided an opportunity to converse with people that spoke the same professional language."

Kara Downey: "I joined NAEP at the encouragement of a colleague that was already a member. I immediately became involved in an effort to start a chapter in my area and through this process came to believe in the value of NAEP as a multidisciplinary organization. NAEP's structure gave me insight into a number of new practice areas and introduced me to a great number of professionals that I would otherwise not come into contact with in my daily job."

6. How has membership and involvement in NAEP improved your career?

Bruce Hasbrouck: "I have gained respect from upper management at HDR because of active involvement in NAEP and still staying on top of my other responsibilities."

Geoff Elliott: "My clients have come to expect me to be savvy and aware of national/international trends in environmental management. I credit NAEP."

David Griffin: "Professional development through interaction with peers, idea

exchange and discovering marketing opportunities."

Karyn Vandervoort: "Membership in NAEP has provided an opportunity to present technical papers on NEPA issues."

Kara Downey: "NAEP gave me my first opportunity to be a leader by encouraging my involvement in chapters, committees and working groups very early in my career. The lessons I learned as a result of these experiences have enhanced the skills that I bring to my daily job, making me a more effective professional. In addition, my involvement has allowed me to come into contact with a great number of fellow practitioners; contacts that I have had great personal and professional value over the years, as they have increased both my technical knowledge and my "people" knowledge. This group is made up of exemplary professionals, particularly because they are always willing to share and always willing to learn."

As you can see, the chairs of these committees/working groups have found a professional outlet in NAEP. This organization has provided them with a means to network, learn and advance their careers. They have discovered that, despite the time commitment, involvement with NAEP is a win/win situation and also a chance, to use a much overused phrase, to "think outside the box."

NAEP Offers Opportunities to Expand and Enhance Your Career

How can you get involved with NAEP? Currently, NAEP offers its membership the opportunity to participate in the development of their profession in several ways. Attendance and participation at the annual conference allows both members and prospective members to interact with each other and learn from each other's experience. We had a great conference in Kansas City in mid-June. General members can run for the Board of Directors. This is a fulfilling experience that not only affords interaction with fellow environmental professionals, but also allows direct influence in the direction of the organization. Participation in local chapter activities allows

members to learn about local and regional environmental issues. Chapter leadership provides the opportunity to work closely with the top environmental professionals in your area in planning these activities. There are chapters for members who have been practicing for years as well as chapters for students in many of the leading colleges and universities in the United States.

Another way members can share in the activities of NAEP is to join committees. Committees are groups that carry out specific missions to support and plan the business and activities of NAEP. They run the gamut from membership to national involvement to chapters to international activities. In all there are about 16 active permanent committees as well as several ad hoc committees. The President of NAEP also has the power to appoint task forces which are like committees set to complete a particular task. Once that task is accomplished, the task force dissolves. The President selects the best people to accomplish the task. That could be you.

There are also working groups, which are essentially permanently networking associates that work together to increase their involvement in their specialty by developing positions on issues. Currently there are six working groups: utilities, transportation, ISO 14000, Academic Centers for Environmental Excellence, sustainable development and internet. NAEP acts as an umbrella to organize, facilitate and to coordinate the activities of these groups. Opportunities exist for additional working groups to be created. For instance, a working group that brings together professionals who regulate industries or those that manage environmental areas.

Finally, members can become involved with their Association's journal, and thus impact the dissemination of knowledge in the environmental professions. Members are encouraged to provide feedback to the editors regarding the contents of *Environmental Practice* and to let the editors know whether it is meeting their needs. We are also interested in ideas for special issues of the journal. You can volunteer to serve as a book and/or manuscript reviewer for the journal. And of course, members are en-

couraged to submit manuscripts and news stories for possible publication. See the Information for Contributors or contact the Editorial Office.

Utility Working Group Sponsors Session at Conference in Kansas City

The Utility Working Group hosted two sessions at the NAEP annual conference. The first session focused on the volatile electric utility industry sector which is of interest not only to those in the industry, but also to those in the consulting sector and all of us, the ultimate end users. The session was titled "Utilities—Streamlining Permitting: Is it Possible? Case Studies from the Power Production Industry." The second session was "Utilities—Perspectives on Contaminated Site Clean-ups." The Utility Working Group also hosted a networking and mentoring session. The topics included current issues of interest to the electric utility industry. Discussions addressed the latest status 316(b), electric and magnetic fields and Toxic Release Inventory reporting. Discussion was lead by Arizona Electric, EPA and the Edison Electric Institute.

Internet Committee Brings NAEP Access to the World

The Internet Committee acts in a "support" role for other committees and the general membership, facilitating dialogue and information-sharing via the internet. Under the leadership of Geoff Elliott the committee is working on the following projects:

- 1) The Environmental Professional List-server is now almost four years old and has distributed thousands of messages between environmental professionals worldwide. This project has brought many people together, ignoring geographic limitations, and has become an important source for professional development and NAEP outreach.
- 2) Hosting/facilitating the NAEP-Chairs mail list with the express intent of improving inter-committee dialogue and information sharing.
- 3) Hosting the NAEP National Conference website, now including all available ab-

stracts on line. Both a by track and by principle authors index are available at:

<http://naep.org/Conference/1999/Abstracts/ByAuthor.html>

<http://naep.org/Conference/1999/Abstracts/BySession.html>

4) Hosting the website for *Environmental Practice*: <http://naep.org/Journal>

5) Hosting a resource list at <http://NAEP.Org>. The committee is now accepting and expanding/updating the resource list, particularly for job openings. This has become an important outreach as well, especially appealing to NAEP's younger members and potential members in college or just entering the professional arena.

The Internet Committee truly allows NAEP to benefit environmental professionals throughout the world and vice-versa.

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NAEP Chapter News

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Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Professionals (PAEP)

By the time this article appears in *Environmental Practice*, PAEP will have concluded its 1999 Annual Meeting. This year, we changed the format of the annual meeting to a one and half day conference! Typically the annual meeting was dinner and speaker and an opportunity for the three sections of PAEP to come together. The purpose of the changed format was to provide better services to our members. We felt that our members wanted an educational-type program which brought together environmental professionals from all sectors and from across the state in an informal setting. The conference was held on April 15-16 in the Poconos region of Pennsylvania. The conference titled "Implementation and Opportunities - Understanding the environ-