

Report on the 1999 NAEP Annual Meeting: *Environment in the 21st Century*

James A. Roberts, PhD, CEP

Everything really is up to date in Kansas City! For those of you who were there, you know what a good meeting it was; for those of you whom we wish had been there, you missed an outstanding Annual meeting. From the place (which was conveniently located near some of the finest restaurants and shops in the Country Club Plaza District) to the technical sessions, we can all give a vote of thanks to Fred Pinkney and his fellow conference organizers. Every participant seemed to find several "highlights" in the conference.

Technical Tracks and Panel Discussions

Virtually all of the technical tracks were well received; however, two seemed to stand out to many of the participants. The sessions on Sustainable Development and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) were particularly popular. It was interesting to hear the implications of sustainability for a variety of topics ranging from a national effort for sustainable management of the US National Forests and lessons that can be learned from developing cultures to the application of sustainability to "brownfields" redevelopment and a commercial/residential subdivision. The NEPA tracks covered everything from cumulative impact and the practitioners' point of view to application of NEPA to transportation planning and management issues. In addition to the technical papers, several excellent panel discussions were held on NEPA, the future direction of Academic Centers for Excellence (now called THE Working Group: Training and Higher Education), and Transportation.

Hot Topics

One of the most interesting series of events at the 1999 Conference was the Hot Topics. They started with a "Brown Bag Lunch" at which Bruce Plenk gave a stimulating and at the same time controversial (to some in

attendance, at least) presentation entitled "Message from the Court, No Detour Around NEPA for the Road to Nowhere." His talk gave a clear message that at every level, from national to local, NEPA can play an important part in the development process. One of the other Hot Topics was a session on "International Opportunities for Environmental Professionals at which Jim Roberts and Norm Arnold led a lively discussion of what, why, and how we can get involved in the "world environmental game." (See the article on the International Committee's activities in this issue.)

Courses

As usual, there was considerable interest in the courses on NEPA, ABCEP, and ISO 14000. Seems that every year we have been able to get a thorough update on NEPA. This year was no exception with an excellent course focusing both on a general update and on reducing vulnerability to litigation. The ABCEP course was particularly useful for those who are getting ready to take the examination toward becoming a Certified Environmental Professional. This was very timely since a large part of the NAEP Board's deliberations both on the Sunday before the conference and on the Thursday after the conference, were devoted to steps which we, NAEP, can take to enhance the value of the CEP to our members and to the environmental profession in general. Look for more information on the ABCEP incorporation as a step toward its accreditation.

Special Speakers

The conference organizers were particularly successful in getting participation from two exceptional keynote speakers. Dennis Grams, Administrator of EPA Region 7, opened the conference with a plenary session entitled "Environmental Challenges, Past, Present, and Future." One comment Dennis made that rang true to many of us was that despite all the technology available today—from monitoring tools to highly sophisticated computer aided graphics—the greatest tool we can bring to our profession is the power of our minds! As one participant said, he gave a very personal dimension to an agency that often seems remote and unavailable.

Maybe it is because he brings to his office experience as an environmental professional who got started in private practice and state experience before moving to the federal level. James Souby, Executive Director of the Western Governor's Association gave an outstanding presentation on "Enlbra: a Holistic Strategy for Natural Resource Management" that also provided insight into practical environmental management throughout the western states.

Social Events

But, hey, it was not all work! No Way! From the successful run at the tables—both to eat and to play—at the Station Casino—to successful runs by the Royals, it was hard to find anyone who did not have something special to say about the social events. Monday night we all hopped aboard buses to go to the Station Casino for an evening of food and play. The food was something else; five huge (!) kitchens to choose from serving everything from Italian Pasta to Chinese stir-fry! I cannot remember seeing plates with more types of food. Mexican, all-American, and Barbecue! All delicious and then there were desserts of every type you can imagine. After dinner quite a number of our group rolled into the Casino portion and paid their dues. It seems that our high winner walked away with more than \$1,400 for the evening! We tried to get him to spring for drinks for everyone all the rest of the week.

Two to two going into the bottom of the eighth. The Royals just came off a less-than-spectacular road trip for their first game in a three game stand with the Detroit Tigers. A double started the inning and then the stadium seemed to erupt when the Royals scored two to make it 4 to 2 going into the top of the ninth. Their relief pitcher got the first two outs then walked one and finally got the third out with a strong throw from the third baseman after a shot to deep third. It was fun and as one participant said "it was a perfect night for baseball: the temperature was just right, the game was well played, and the home team won!"

General Comments

Just a few of the comments from the participants pretty well sum up how we all felt

about the annual meeting: "The Hotel was great", "The food was really good—at the hotel and at the events", "the conference was well organized", "I liked the diversity of the tracks", "I liked having the Board meeting split into a pre- and post-meeting", "it was fun". What more do we need to say!?

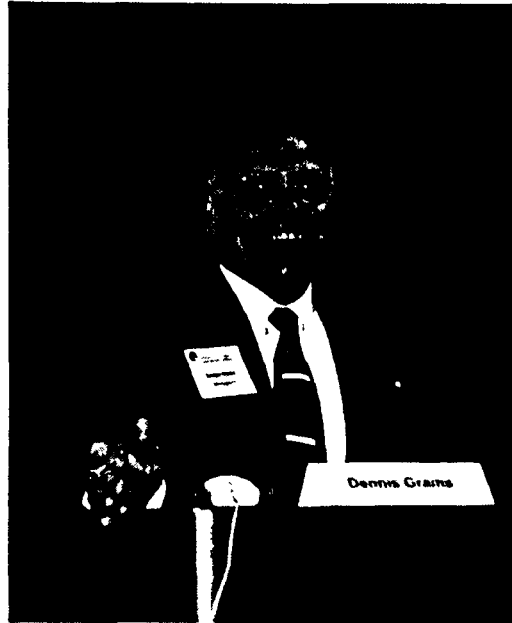
Come to Portland, Maine in June next year and look for a meeting to be held in Reno in 2001. Also try to attend the joint Cal-NAEP/AEP conference in Santa Barbara in May 2000. Look for details in this and future issues of *Environmental Practice*.

It seems to me that the "home team" won both for the ballgame and for the conference arrangements.

Address correspondence to James A. Roberts, 540 Morris Way, Sacramento, CA 95864; (fax) 916-484-7124; (e-mail) gems@ns.net

1999 NAEP Conference Kansas City, Missouri

Photos by Gary F. Kelman



There were several distinguished guest speakers at the 1999 NAEP conference. Dennis Grams of the US Environmental Protection Agency gave a presentation at the plenary session entitled *Environmental Challenges: Past, Present, and Future* (above). The keynote address, *Enlibra: A Holistic Strategy for Natural Resources Management*, was by James Souby, Executive Director of the Western Governors Association (top right). Hot Topic Lunch speaker Bruce Plenk (bottom right), gave a talk entitled, *Message from the Court, No Detour Around NEPA for the Road to Nowhere*.



Robert Cunningham, USDA Forest Service, presents his paper at one of the technical sessions. The paper is entitled *Sustainability: The Foundation for the Management of the National Forest System*.



Some NAEP members go to great lengths to coordinate their outfits for the annual conference. President, Andy McCusker (left), and Board Member, Michael Herbaugh (right).



NAEP was well represented at the Kansas City Royals baseball game.



Jackie Fox, US Journals Director for Oxford University Press, displays several Oxford journals, including the inaugural issue of the coolest of them all, *Environmental Practice*.



1999 Conference Committee Chair Fred Pinkney.



John Fittipaldi (left) and John Perkins during a conference reception.



Board Member Norm Arnold at the conference field trip to historic Leavenworth.



Kara Downey accepts for Arizona Electric Power the NAEP Presidential Award for Excellence, presented by NEPA Practice Award Committee member, Lance McCold (center). President Andy McCusker is on the right.



The California Chapter of NAEP received the Norm Arnold Award for highest participation by a chapter at the annual conference. Karen Frye, California Chapter Representative, accepts the award from Bruce Hasbrouck, President Elect.



President Andy McCusker presents Helene Merkel with the President's Award for her contributions and accomplishments as Chair of the Permanent Conference Committee, while continuing to be active in the Annual Conference and serving as NAEP Secretary. Donna Carter from the NAEP national office is on the right.



Norm Arnold and Karyn Vandervoort at the NAEP board meeting.