

NAEP International Committee Report

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Kansas City there we were! In addition to a regular committee meeting at the 1999 NAEP conference (see also next article), the International Committee sponsored a Hot Topics workshop on "International Opportunities for Environmental Professionals." There are some exciting things to report.

International Committee Initiatives

The Committee took the following actions on Sunday, June 20th:

- *Sweden Environmental Management Summit*—Reviewed a prospectus for an international Summit on Environmental Management in Sweden from June 28 to July 1, 2000. It is planned to invite 200 to 300 environmental managers from around the world to assemble and share experience of what makes for good environmental management. Several NAEP Board members are on the planning team for the Summit and proposed that the International Committee be one of the sponsors. The Committee voted unanimously to provide a modest fund from its existing budget and to request that the full NAEP Board consider adding to the sum to be a sponsor of the Summit.
- *Committee Goals and Objectives*—John Schultheis agreed to revise the Committee business plan to match the general, NAEP Business Plan developed and circulated by George Wood. John said he would try to get the materials e-mailed to us for review before September. You might be interested to know that the draft NAEP Business Plan will soon be placed on the NAEP web page <<http://www.naep.org>>. Watch it for details.
- *Next Year's Committee Meeting*—There was unanimous consensus that the Committee meeting should be during the middle of the conference in the future at breakfast, lunch, or dinner-time to be determined as appropriate. Watch for details as the plans for the 25th annual meeting are announced for Portland, Maine (June 25–29, 2000).
- *International Network of Environmental Managers (INEM)*—The Committee discussed the INEM materials distributed by James A. Roberts (co-chair of the International Committee) to the NAEP Board at the Detroit meeting and his subsequent conversations with INEM Executive Director and Board Member about the possibility of NAEP becoming a member of INEM. It was explained that INEM does not have a U.S. affiliate and is seeking a U.S. member organization. Roberts agreed to gather additional information on membership costs (and pros and cons of membership) for presentation at the September 1999 NAEP Board meeting. If you have ideas about INEM, please let Jim know.
- *Ford Foundation Grant Program*—John Schultheis reported on his correspondence about possibly providing a grant to support two foreign presenters at the next annual NAEP conference. He will provide additional detail when he hears more from the entities he has contacted. The Committee was unanimous in their support of the effort. It also agreed that if these details do not work out, we should keep this as an active initiative for the Committee.
- *Environmental Export Council (EEC)*—Jack Mulrooney reported on his conversation with the Executive Director of the EEC. After discussion it was agreed that Jack would do an article for *Environmental Practice* and continue to explore the specifics of what membership in the Council would mean for our individual and corporate members as well as for NAEP and report back to us. Watch for details in *Environmental Practice*.
- *Links to Other Nations' Environmental Organizations*—After discussion of what we had done in the past related to this, George Wood agreed to provide Jim Roberts and John Perkins (Editor-in-Chief of *Environmental Practice*) the list of former international members (that was developed about four years ago) so that we could notify them about the renewal of our journal.
- *1st Annual Prize for International Papers*—George Wood suggested that the Committee develop an annual prize to be awarded for papers submitted by non-US nationals working overseas and accepted after peer review for publication in *Environmental Practice*. The first award will be for \$150 (\$100 coming from the International Committee existing budget and \$50.00 coming from the ISO/NEPA/SD Ad Hoc Committee existing budget).

International Opportunities for Environmental Professionals

One of the best attended (and certainly one of the most active) Hot Topics meetings was the one sponsored by the International Committee on opportunities for environmental professionals throughout the world. Needless to say, we could not cover everything in two hours, but for the forty or so people who participated, we had an excellent opportunity to learn about some of the opportunities and hear some of the keys to getting involved in this exciting (and fun!) kind of work. The following notes provide a summary of what was discussed related to Needed Skills, Hints for Success, and Getting Started.

Needed Skills

"You have to have some skills to start with." We heard this from several different speakers; what were the skills they were describing?

- Whether it's NEPA or acoustical analysis experience, develop and hone your knowledge in a technical field.
- Develop language skills: read, write, and speak a language of the region in which you want to work.
- Cultural skills: learn the culture of the region including its customs, taboos, and the sports they love (remember that "futbol" is a world game!).
- Develop an open mind: what we find acceptable in the US may not be the way it is best done somewhere else. We don't have all the answers, and many we have are wrong.

Hints for Success

"You really should focus your efforts." This was clear from everyone; what did they mean?

- Invest in travel: all the travel you can take will give you understanding of what it takes to be a learning visitor in every country.
- Focus on one time zone (north-south is the best so far as jet-lag is concerned!) or one "language zone" (for instance once you learn one Scandinavian language the others are easier).
- Communicate: wherever you go, people will appreciate it if you can learn—and use!—some of the local language even if it is just to say "Thank you." Try it, you'll like it!
- NETWORK: develop your network of fellow professionals; join established international networks. (One opportunity is the NAEP International Committee: join us!)

Getting Started

"So, where can we go to get started?"

- Have you thought of the Peace Corps? Not only do you get a chance to *give* you have a chance to *get* the answer to the question: "Do you have two years of foreign experience?"
- Follow leads and follow what services are being solicited: US Asian Environmental Partnership (US-AEP), US Agency for International Development (AID), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), World Bank, Fulbright program, and Commission for International Cooperation are just a few of the many possible ways to get information on how you might become involved. Some at entry level, some after you have a technical background and some experience. How about an exchange? It is never too late.
- Watch the trends: follow the announcements to see what services are being sought internationally. Recently it has

been in ISO, "brownware," agribusiness, waste management, and water resources.

- VOLUNTEER: teach English, dig a well, help wherever it is needed. Just cleaning up after a hurricane or some other disaster can be learning experience. GET INVOLVED.

It was clear from the discussion that there is no "one sure way" to get into working internationally. "Be creative" might be the best suggestion. There are many more ideas on how you, personally, can get started but we hope these ideas will be of help. Let us know if you would like to link with others who are in the field or are also getting started. We'd love to hear from you!

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