

LETTER FROM THE EDITORIAL OFFICE

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As I write this, Pope Francis is visiting the United States, particularly New York City and Philadelphia, and has addressed the US Congress as well as delegates to the United Nations General Assembly. In his various addresses, he has exhorted all of us to take better care of creation and the environment. As I contemplated his words and their meaning, I was reminded of the work of the National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP) and its members. I know that many of you have been involved in projects assessing the various short- and long-term impacts of proposed actions and other projects on communities, cultures, and economies. I also suspect that you have devised ways to mitigate these impacts that focused on the needs of real people, rather than merely being another box to check on a required checklist. NAEP members can be proud of their service to their clients and of their attention to the needs of those impacted by a project. This is how we demonstrate our care for creation and the environment.

This issue of *Environmental Practice (ENP)* contains a mixture of interesting research articles, environmental reviews and case studies, and perspectives from the field.

In his research article, “**Show Me: Engaging Citizens in Planning for Shale Gas Development,**” **Orland** presents a communitarian approach to facilitating citizens’ participation in the design and planning of large-scale changes to the landscape of their community. Using various techniques, he projected areal land use changes that would result from the construction of access roads and pipelines needed to support shale gas development in northeastern Pennsylvania. He represented these projected changes using photo renderings and geographic information systems-based graphics that allowed the public to assess the visual impacts of these construction activities. These

materials were presented via a series of workshops for the informal science education of adults. In his article, **Orland** presents information on the evaluations of the participants in the programs, including their acquisition of new knowledge about land planning, their understanding of planning principles, and how they felt empowered to engage in the planning initiatives.

Kushto, McCann, and Deverman kick off a series of environmental reviews and case studies in their article, “**Setting Policy and Precedence: CREATE in Motion.**” **CREATE** is the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency, a nationally prominent rail infrastructure program. The **CREATE 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project** received a NEPA Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision in September 2014 and has set a national policy example with regard to mitigation under the environmental justice Executive Order (E.O.) 12898. This paper gives vital background on the **CREATE** program and the development of its environmental justice policy. The program identified best practices on how to evaluate other practicable mitigation measures that had merit under E.O. 12898. Additionally, the authors describe the lessons learned from this process as well as the dialogue necessary to obtain broad support from the **CREATE** partners for both needed rail improvements and additional mitigations that could provide offsetting benefits and opportunities to enhance Chicago-area communities and neighborhoods as well as residents’ quality of life.

In their case study, “**An Interdisciplinary Approach to Environmental Planning and Permitting: City of Seattle Elliott Bay Seawall Project Case Study,**” **Page and Jensen** note that guiding a project through the planning and permitting process requires a skilled and coordinated team equipped with a set of tools that must be integrated into all phases of a project. The authors discuss the importance of defining a project, effective project communication, developing an Environmental Approvals Approach, and

proper project scheduling to a smooth environmental planning and permitting process.

A common complaint among National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) practitioners is the glacial pace of the NEPA process. In their article, “**NEPA Strategies for Accelerating Project Delivery: Every Day Counts, Tiering, and Alternative Delivery in the I-70 Mountain Corridor,**” **Roberts and Wharton** present a case study on the *Every Day Counts* Shortening Project Delivery Toolkit used by the Federal Highway Administration and the Colorado Department of Transportation to accelerate the NEPA process for projects designed to relieve congestion and improve safety in the Twin Tunnels area of Colorado’s I-70 Mountain Corridor. Use of the toolkit effectively reduced the Tier 2 NEPA process for the Twin Tunnels improvements to half its normal duration, thereby accelerating overall project delivery. The authors also conclude that early and continuous engagement with partner agencies and other stakeholders provided quick feedback during the planning process as well as the necessary support to move the project forward quickly.

My colleague at DePaul University, **Dr. Joseph Schwieterman**, presents an economic analysis of the strategies described in the US Army Corps of Engineer’s *Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study*, which was released in 2014. **Dr. Schwieterman’s** article, “**Stopping the Asian Carp and Other Nuisance Species: Cost Projections for Separating the Great Lakes & Mississippi River Basins Using U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Inputs,**” examines fundamental questions, including: “How do the costs of the different strategies differ?” and “How would the costs be distributed across various stakeholders?” He uses the Corps study’s many cost estimates, considerations of net present value, and other tools to show how the costs of the various project alternatives would differ over a 50-year period. This information can help inform policy

makers about the best way to move forward with a cost-effective strategy to deal with aquatic nuisance species.

Much has been written about applying “lean” process technology, no doubt influenced by the research of the Toyota Motor Company to streamline the design, manufacturing and customer service processes. “Lean” is a customer-centric approach to systematically and continuously improve any process through the elimination of waste, grounded in the ideas of “Continuous Incremental Improvement” and “Respect for People.” ‘Can the “lean” paradigm be applied to the NEPA process? Long-time NAEP member **Yates Opperman** offers his opinion on this question, with particular emphasis on producing simplified environmental assessments and categorical exclusions. DePaul University is privileged to serve as the Editorial Office (EO) for *ENP*. One of the main tasks of the EO is to work with the NAEP Publications Committee to identify topics and issues that we feel are of interest to the *ENP* readership, and then present these topics to our readership in the form of thematic issues. Past thematic issues of *ENP* have been devoted to sustainability, fracking, Brownfields, environmental justice, professional ethics, and NEPA updates. All of these themes were suggested to the EO by *ENP* readers! Our thematic approach is vital to maintaining and sustaining the three “ships” of the NAEP: membership, authorship, and readership. Moreover, this tactic has been quite effective in incorporating new environmental issues and perspectives on them into the journal’s pages, to achieve greater interdisciplinarity, as well as maintaining the mission of NAEP by providing quality articles that balance the interests of both the practitioner and the scholar in the environmental professions. Looking ahead, the December issue of *ENP* will tackle transportation issues.

It takes a lot of effort to produce a thematic issue of *ENP*, and we need our readers’ assistance. Please send us your ideas for interesting and relevant thematic topics. If you are particularly passionate about a topic, then consider signing on as a guest editor. Dan Carroll has produced a set of

guidelines for guest editors, with the goal of making the editorial process easy for the guest editor. Contact Dan if you are interested in serving as a guest editor.

ENP currently contains five manuscript categories:

Peer Reviewed:

Research Articles
Environmental Reviews and Case Studies

Non-Peer Reviewed:

Perspectives from the Field
Reviews
Dialogue

Beginning with the March, 2016 issue, *ENP* will add the following categories:

Counterpoint

Some of us old geezers will remember the “Point/Counterpoint” segment of the CBS program *60 Minutes*, featuring journalists Shana Alexander and James K. Kilpatrick, in which the two commentators debated a particular issue. When the EO receives a potentially discussion-generating manuscript, we would like to recruit authors to write a response piece to the article. These manuscripts would be similar in length to a “Perspectives from the Field” piece, in the range of 1,000-1,500 words. It would, however, need to be grounded in literature citations in a way that a “Perspectives from the Field” piece is not, because the goal of a “Counterpoint” article is to respond to a cited, peer-reviewed article. These manuscripts would not be peer reviewed. If you wish to emulate Shana or James, contact Dan Carroll! Let’s engage in a rousing debate on hot-topic issues.

Working Group

In this article series, we will give NAEP working groups an outlet to report their findings in the pages of *ENP*. These

manuscripts would vary in length, according to the specific projects being reported on by the working group, but would be similar in length to our peer-reviewed manuscripts (roughly 5,000-6,000 words). These manuscripts would be peer reviewed.

Student Perspective

Students are the future of NAEP. As such, we will work with the NAEP student chapters to provide students with an outlet for their first publication and/or peer review experience. Functionally, these manuscripts would be the same as our existing peer-reviewed manuscripts, but would be identified as a student work. Ideally, this article series would highlight the work of up-and-coming student practitioners, aiding them in their future careers, and would also identify the NAEP as an organization that is beneficial to student practitioners, thus encouraging future members.

Career Development

This manuscript category would act as a topic-focused version of our “Perspectives from the Field” section. NAEP has members from a wide variety of fields, all of whom have particular insights into the future of careers in their industry. We would like to recruit these professionals to write short opinion pieces, in the range of 1,000-1,500 words, on career development, providing advice to other working professionals. These manuscripts would not be peer reviewed.

If you have ideas for other categories, please let us know!

Notes

- 1 Sayer, N.J., and B. Williams. 2012. *Lean For Dummies*, 2nd Edition. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 408 p.

James Montgomery, Dan Carroll