
Letter from the Editor

As the close of calendar year 2009 is upon us, it is an important time to reflect on the state of environmental policy for the nation and the world. This cannot be a reflection that excludes the national and international issues impacting our environment, such as the spread of nuclear weapons, conflicts in Afghanistan and Iran, and our turbulent economy. The economy is a major agenda item for all levels of government, and will be for some time into the future. The interconnectedness of world economies means increasingly that all nations share the impacts for economic downturns. For environmental professionals, the past year has had a significant impact on employment for seasoned practitioners, as well as on entry-level positions for college graduates. One area of the environmental profession that is well positioned for future investment and assistance with economic recovery is brownfield redevelopment. This is the second issue in a two-part sequence on brownfields. Because of the interest by professionals in this field, there was a large response to the call for papers. While there are several reasons for this response, one contributing factor involves the future of the environmental profession and its link to the economy. Several outstanding articles in this issue provide that link, as well as examples on what is occurring both in the United States and Europe.

As Evans Paull from the Northeast-Midwest Institute points out, using brownfield redevelopment as a source of community revitalization, particularly in urban areas with former industrial properties, can capture new sources of economic growth without the negative consequences of disjointed sprawl development. The most environmentally responsible way to accommodate the new engines of growth is to locate the new uses right where the old industrial plants were established with infrastructure in place and the workforce nearby. With an estimated 450,000 to 2 million brownfield sites nationally, the task at hand faces numerous obstacles. Public acquisition of brownfields is a key part of many cities' economic redevelopment strategies. Paull explains how tax liens, foreclosures, pur-

chases, and the use of eminent domain can be leveraged by local governments to take control of a brownfield site and then promote positive reuse. Paull presents an overview of several efforts by states to encourage economy recovery using brownfield strategies. Similarly, Susan Opp points out that brownfields can be real economic opportunities for local communities. Her comprehensive comparison of state programs explores the financial considerations and land-use controls governments have to consider. She finds that across the fifty states, no two states have exactly the same program, which will be a challenge for the environmental professional. She also thoroughly outlines the risks for brownfield redevelopment and potential unintended consequences. Shovini Dasgupta and Edwin Tam provide us with a comprehensive review of existing classification systems of brownfield sites. The authors evaluate contemporary brownfield classification systems in terms of strengths and weaknesses. They find a lack of multidisciplinary approach in the existing systems, whereas this approach could help decision makers by examining examples from other countries other than the United States, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and those in Europe. Bernard Vanheusden broadens the issue to include Europe's experience in brownfield remediation. He focuses on the Proposal for a Soil Framework Directive, the Waste Framework Directive, and the Environmental Liability Directive.

Kenneth Haberman evaluates Minnesota, whereas Michael Porter considers New York. Haberman provides a case study on Minnesota's legislative and state agency actions regarding brownfields. The author finds that for Minnesota it is critical that the legislature and the environmental regulatory agencies create policies and programs that provide meaningful incentives to encourage public and private remediation activities that are within a compatible time frame as other real estate transactions and property redevelopment schedules. Porter focuses on the voluntary compliance programs for remediating brownfield sites in New York. He finds that in New York City, even when controlling for spatial distribution of Brownfield sites, properties in the state Brown-

field Cleanup Program are disproportionately located in neighborhoods that are wealthier and predominately Caucasian and with high property values. This was particularly true for western Manhattan and to a lesser extent Gowanus.

Peter Meyer is also concerned with the economic perspective of a perceived conflict between brownfield redevelopment and emissions standards. He is particularly interested in intergenerational impacts. He finds that there is not a conflict but predicts a complementary relationship with a redeveloper being able to capture private and public returns from energy-saving investments of both buildings and transportation.

Separate from the brownfield theme is an article by Deborah Chavez and David Olson on how to measure participation patterns, site preferences, and visitor perceptions in four urban national forests. Both the methods and findings can assist environmental professionals in managing these types of outdoor recreational areas.

In this concluding issue for 2009, coeditor Dr. James Montgomery will lead the 2010 calendar year for the journal. Strategic planning will begin in 2010 for the journal issues in 2011, when I will return as lead editor. I welcome the input of readers, and suggestions for thematic issues in 2011. Please do not hesitate to contact me, so we can engage the needs and interests of both NAEP members and other readers of *Environmental Practice*. I hope to have a more formal survey instrument available during 2010 to collect the feedback from the readers, as well as some scoping of environmental professionals across the country to capture the issues on the cutting edge of our profession. This is in hopes of not only providing a contemporary journal meeting the needs of the readers, but also reaching out to new readers who seek information on the current trends in the environmental profession. I have enjoyed the first 1.5 years as editor with the transition of the journal to DePaul University. We have several accomplishments within the editorial office. Please accept my warmest wishes for a safe and happy new year and holiday season.