

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Innovation Demands Passion and Commitment

Brock Hoegh

On January 23, 2015, the National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP) Board of Directors initiated a 3-year strategic planning process with the goal of improving NAEP in critical areas, leading to the growth of the Association. As NAEP's new President, this was an important initiative for me heading into my second year as Vice President, and I want to personally thank the NAEP Board of Directors for volunteering their time and supporting me over this last year.

For all NAEP members and prospective members reading this journal, I want to stress that strategic planning is most successful when the entire Association is involved. I am writing to you now, at the very start of the process, to seek your involvement in our new strategic planning effort and to invite you to volunteer for the important initiatives outlined below. Implementing this strategic plan will be an exciting process, and I want you to be a part of it!

Strategic Planning

NAEP's last strategic plan (2008-2012) is now mature; many of the highest priorities from that plan (a revised Chapter Affiliation Agreement, as well as increased communication opportunities and educational opportunities, such as the NAEP webinar series, National Desk, and educational partnerships) have been accomplished. Therefore, it is time for NAEP to embark on a new planning process that will enable this already great Association to move forward in a bold manner. Done correctly, a strategic planning exercise can refine NAEP's mission and significantly advance the Association, thereby enhancing the benefits we can extend to our members. Finally, the strategic

planning process can help build a consensus on the path toward the Association's future.

Most members of the environmental science community would agree that NAEP does not have to undertake a long process of examining its fundamental identity. We are, and will remain, an interdisciplinary, educational organization of public and private sector professionals involved in environmental planning, permitting, and project implementation. The Association's core mission is to promote excellence in environmental decision making, especially in the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related laws, including those related to endangered species, clean water, clean air, wetlands, and cultural resources.

Within that context, a significant amount of our efforts during the next 3 years will involve refocusing on our strategic plan on a regular basis. The Executive Committee and Board of Directors regularly revisit NAEP's core mission, and our volunteers know the great importance of raising additional revenues for the Association to continue offering our great benefits, including this journal, to our members.

We also cannot afford to rely on a plan based on vague goals that cannot be accomplished. We want to move ahead with a clear list of tasks we are capable of realizing. Therefore, the strategic planning process will set ambitious, measurable, and achievable goals in key areas. Equally important, we will be clear on what aspects of NAEP we are not examining, because we cannot, and need not, focus on every area of the Association.

Process

NAEP selected an outside facilitator to conduct our strategic plan. NAEP's Executive Committee and Board of Directors,

including several Chapter Representatives and Presidents, participated in this meeting. Together, this group developed a set of "core principles" to guide the development and execution of NAEP's strategic plan. The group agreed that the strategic plan should:

1. Articulate performance measures (both for the duration of the plan and at interim assessment points);
2. Be crafted with fiscal responsibility at the forefront;
3. Include strategies to generate membership growth;
4. Not lose sight of who the organization serves;
5. Appreciate both successes and lessons learned from previous planning efforts and integrate these into the new plan; and
6. Take informed approaches to understanding available data and determining the desires of those the organization is meant to serve.

We also believe that the heart of NAEP is its committee structure, in which the Association's real work is done and which will, therefore, be vital to the implementation of this strategic plan. There are eight committees – Awards, Chapters, Communications, Conference, Education, Environmental Policy, Membership, and Operations. Each committee will seek new volunteers to be part of the initiatives they will undertake in the next few years.

Priority Setting – Key Initiatives Selected for This Strategic Plan

NAEP's strategic plan has four core aspects:

Investing in Our Chapters

NAEP's network of chapters does vital work in their local communities. Our strategic planning team, which includes

active chapter leaders, believes that by working with each chapter, we can heighten the organization's impact on the communities we serve. Both NAEP as a whole and the local chapter will benefit from this endeavor.

Investing in Telling Our Story

Over the next 3 years, NAEP will commit to strengthening how we tell our story, including how we effectively convey our impact on the environmental professions to non-members. We will undertake a bottom-up review of how we approach communicating with both our members and the broader community of environmental professionals, striving to ascertain and fulfill the evolving needs of both groups.

Investing in Sharing Impactful Information

If NAEP is going to make more of a strategic impact on the environmental professions, that impact will begin with our publications. NAEP's publications are critical channels for sharing key research, success stories, and new resources that members and non-members alike can take advantage of. Our organization's strategic plan includes a careful review of NAEP's publications, with an eye towards toward strengthening the ability of each title to share important, impactful information.

Investing in Each Other

Organizations like NAEP will not grow, and strategic plans like ours will not succeed, without a growing group of committed volunteers. Therefore, our strategic plan will prioritize finding and growing the next

generation of volunteers. Additionally, we want to accomplish this growth in a way that benefits the individual volunteer's personal and professional pursuits, because we believe that such a course of action strengthens NAEP in the long run.

Below is a "found poem" by Ron Deverman, past President of NAEP and a dear friend of mine, that resulted from our conversations at the strategic planning summit. According to Ron, a found poem is when you simply write down the words and phrases of others in such a way that, magically, those words and phrases are transformed into a poem, perhaps revealing a deeper level of significance to the captured moment. I want to share this poem with you all.

Come Home

- Ron Deverman

*Steady – resilienta reasonable cadence
40 years strong giving thanks
to the practice – core practice a driver
not the absolute.*

*There is a need to be symbiotic more
face to face – truth tells the implications
of which show we need more focus need
to do more provide more value.*

*Together let's find our way let's
change the conversation build on the story
natural and human – build on
mutual benefits deliver organizational health
more yearly touches. Let's be flexible change
behaviors integrate the "ologys" provide
answers demonstrate performance far above
the weighted average.*

*Let's move the needles toward advancement
advancing yes celebrating the professions
mentoring careers. Let's march toward*

*different mile markers a different passion
one of value delivery the light in us
igniting our collective spirit bursting
forth our most powerful ideas –
centers of excellence embracing and
strengthening relationships natural and
human.*

*It's where we belong our distinction –
How valued you are.*

Join NAEP and Become a Volunteer!

Lastly, for those of you reading this journal who are not members of NAEP, I implore you to join us. You may ask the question, why join? In short, joining NAEP will enhance your personal and professional network; will provide you with access to our quarterly journal, *Environmental Practice*, *NAEP National E-news*, discounted fees for NAEP events (such as our yearly National Conference), our NAEP webinar series, and various reports authored by our Committees (such as the *NEPA Annual Report*); and, finally, will offer you opportunities for leadership growth as a volunteer.

I often compare being a member of NAEP to the sitcom show *Cheers* and its theme song, "Where Everybody Knows Your Name." NAEP truly has that feeling, so join us, be a part of our strategic planning process, which will provide tremendous opportunities to advance the Association, and take advantage of the many opportunities we offer.

I look forward to serving you!

