

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF NAEP

You Tell Me. . .

Andrew J. McCusker

My little grandson, Jacob, has had a fun time exploring the rocky shore with his Mom and Dad. My daughter suggests, "Jake, tell Grampy about what you found when we were looking in that tidepool." Jake responds, looking for a little reminder of what he is supposed to tell me about, "You tell ME, Mom. You tell ME." She reminds him, and his eyes light up as he proceeds with an excited and animated explanation about the large starfish, or the little rock eel, or the large prickly green urchin covered with shell fragments whose spines moved when Jacob held it in his hands, and how he dropped it with a big splash back into the pool.

Like Jacob, the dedicated volunteers who are the end-of-the-century NAEP Board members and officers, and who are also practicing professionals, believe that we understand what the environmental professional needs and wants from our professional association. Like Jacob, however, we would like to know it from YOU.

The Environmental Profession and NAEP

You tell us in survey responses that you are diverse (see President's Message in the Oct/Dec 1998 issue of NAEP News). This diversity is reflected in the composition of the Board, by the way. Perhaps the most distinctive common element is that most of you either work across scientific, technical, engineering or legal disciplines (trans-disciplinary), or perhaps you are centered in one discipline but much of what you do interacts with other disciplines and specialties. NAEP is focused on that interdisciplinary point of convergence.

The discipline and practice diversity of our profession does not exceed the range of what our members seek from a professional association. There is no "average" NAEP member. No "median" that NAEP

ought to use to gear its services and priorities. Our strength is IN our diversity, and we believe that we need to provide services that meet the diversity of priorities and preferences from within our membership.

What do you think of these priorities for where NAEP should apply resources? How would you rank the following in relative importance: NAEP conference; support to chapters; national visibility; opportunities to participate nationally; networking opportunities; support of the Certified Environmental Professional (CEP) credential; publications and information; the activities of a specific committee or working group which could be NEPA, Utilities, ISO 14000, Sustainability, Transportation, International; NAEP website; and recognition to the profession? Well, let me tell you, whatever you put as your top three, there will be another member who has NONE of them as his or her top three!

By the time you are reading this, we will have received and processed an all-member survey sent out in March. I encourage you to go to www.naep.org and examine the results. An upcoming issue of *Environmental Practice* will also report the results. For the fun of it, I'll say that these items, based on average ranking WOULD come out something like this: publications, networking, committees and working groups, conference, CEP credential, chapters, website, national visibility, recognition to the profession, and opportunities to participate nationally, keeping in mind that some (e.g., national visibility) may be important for others (e.g., recognition to the profession), so a straight ordering doesn't mean an aspect is unimportant. You will find a fresh opinion question on the website as well, providing an opportunity for you to indicate your opinion and to see what other respondents think.

NAEP Focus

We are continuously re-evaluating our mission and priorities. We want to focus on the highest return items so we can accomplish them and be careful that we don't become too diffuse in our efforts. We have a business-planning exercise underway, led by Board member George Wood. This type of planning and prioritization is drawn into

our annual budget planning cycle, which leads to a draft calendar-year budget presented at our September Board meeting and a revised budget presented to the Board for approval in December.

Your Role and Opportunities to Contribute

Help yourself. Contribute to your profession. Let us know your thoughts or ideas on anything you consider important. We are listening. We are environmental professionals, just like you. We care about our profession and how environmental considerations are factored into humankind's actions. Just like you. Join in.

2000 Annual Conference and NAEP's 25th Birthday!!!

Join us in the celebration through the coming year. Join us in Portland, Maine (an OUTSIDE Magazine Top 10 Place to be located) for a great late-June Conference! Perhaps you might want to precede or follow the conference with a Maine and New England historical/recreational vacation! Check out NAEP's website for more information.

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What are you waiting for?

Add your voice to the thousands of NAEP members forging the future of the environmental professions.

JOIN NAEP TODAY!