

# Northwest Connections

*Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Northwest Association of  
Environmental Professionals*

## President's Letter



Aron Borok

### Calling ALL Environmental Professionals in Washington and Oregon!

Recently I was looking at the list of NWAEP members. I noticed that geographically our membership spans the boundaries of Washington and Oregon, from Klamath Falls to Seattle and beyond in the west, to Spokane and

LaGrande in the east, and many points in between.

Our programs don't reflect this geographical diversity. Up to this point, NWAEP events have been confined to the Seattle and Portland metropolitan areas. While we have had a few people from outside these urban centers come to meetings, it is an exception to the rule.

Now this is where our non-Portland/Seattle members come in! I am very interested in helping members and prospective members set up programs outside the usual locations. So if you're reading this in Bellingham or Bend, Kennewick or Klamath Falls, Salem or Spokane (you get my drift?), and you want to organize a speaker or an

informal networking event in your area, please contact me at [aron.borok@eilttd.net](mailto:aron.borok@eilttd.net) or (503) 484-5711. NWAEP can provide some funds for refreshments and can advertise the event through our e-mail distribution list. You would be responsible for securing the venue and speaker.

I look forward to hearing from all of you, no matter where you're from in the Northwest.

Aron



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## Portland Speaker Tackles Tough Topic



Ron Bass was our guest speaker for the July meeting in Portland. His topic:

Climate Change and NEPA. Inspired by the game show "Jeopardy," Ron addressed this tough topic with a series of answers and questions. The

crux of the challenge is that recent court ruling and a paucity of guidance are leaving many NEPA professionals scratching their heads. In this presentation, Ron considered what's enough and what's too much for a NEPA analysis.

Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to pose questions and share ideas about approaching climate change in EAs and EISs. The basic

question is, "How does my project affect this global problem?" Similarly, we asked, "How is global warming going to affect the future conditions for my project?" There were no clear answers on how to conduct an analysis, but it was a great conversation among NEPA practitioners. Our Fall Workshop offers more — see page 2.



Owen L. Schmidt

## NWAEP Fall Workshop: “Writing the Perfect Purpose and Need”

“*Writing the Perfect Purpose and Need*” is the third in a series of NWAEP workshops for those who write or read Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements. It focuses on the difficult problem of scoping alternatives in an EA or EIS. Owen L. Schmidt, the presenter, will demonstrate models that will account for alternatives to the proposal, the no-action alternative, and mitigation as an alternative. Models are supported by up-to-date case law. Major themes include

defining the range of alternatives, responding to issues raised in the public scoping process, cases where the underlying need itself was challenged and all of the rules for both alternatives that are necessary and those that can safely be left out. “Perfect.”

The workshop will be held **Friday, October 10, 2008**, from **8 am to noon**, at the Billy Frank, Jr. Conference Center, Ecotrust Building, 721 NW 9th Avenue, Portland. To register, call or e-mail NWAEP at (503) 296-5388 or

nwaepemail@verizon.net. Registration is \$95 for NWAEP members and \$115 for non-members. You can send in your membership application with the workshop registration and pay the member rate.

Owen L. Schmidt, BA, MA, JD, has more than 32 years of service with the federal government, most recently as Senior Counsel with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Portland, Oregon. He is a frequent author and lecturer on the National Environmental Policy Act.

## NWAEP Membership Update

Please welcome these new members:

Joe Depner  
Travis Hauk  
Sev Jones

### Rolling Membership System Takes Effect

In August NWAEP changed its membership program to a rolling membership. New memberships will now be good for 12 months from

when they are entered into our system, rather than for a January–December calendar year. We hope that this will encourage people to join NWAEP throughout the year.

## Upcoming Chapter Events

*Mark your calendar  
now for NWAEP  
monthly chapter events!*

### Portland

**Wednesday, September 24**  
**Solar Energy**  
**5:30 pm**

Cliff Schrock of Cascade Sunworks in Portland will be the guest speaker for our September meeting.

**Tuesday, October 21**  
**Greenhouse Gas**  
**Measurement Panel**  
**5:30 pm**

Hear this panel discussion at the Multnomah County Library. Watch your email inbox or [www.nwaep.org](http://www.nwaep.org) for more details on both events.

### Seattle

**Tuesday, September 16**  
**Brown Bag Lunch & Learn**  
**12-1 pm**

How can we most effectively guide decisions on directing resources to resolve toxic contamination in Puget Sound? Mike Ehlebracht will present findings of an initial investigation of toxic chemical loading into Puget Sound.

Please join us at the City Center Building in downtown Bellevue, at 500 108th Avenue NE, Suite 1200.

**Tuesday October 7, 2008**  
**Networking Social**  
**5-7 pm**

Join us for a networking social to mingle with your fellow environmental professionals. Bring your ideas for future events and activities.

Meet at Rock Bottom Brewery 1333 Fifth Avenue, Seattle (downtown on the corner of Fifth and Union).

## Member Spotlight: Steve Gerritson

Steve Gerritson began his career in the environmental field in 1981, conducting environmental reviews for housing and commercial development. "Those were the boom years," he says. "Pretty much anything that was proposed got built. Then came the savings and loan crisis. If it weren't for that, we wouldn't have any wetlands left."

In 1990 he became the first director of a regional air quality organization in Chicago, working with four states and the US EPA to control ground-level ozone. "We conducted the largest air quality study in history, and the results led to a major shift in EPA's thinking about ozone control — although not without a fight." He also oversaw the development of a new-generation computer model that eventually became EPA's model of

choice for air quality planning. This work led to an appointment to President Clinton's Clean Air Advisory Committee in 1993.

He and his wife moved to Seattle in 1994, although he continued to commute back to Chicago for two years to finish the air quality work. "Those were probably the worst two years of my life," he says, "although I didn't have time to think about it."

After leaving the air quality organization he became a consultant, working on a natural events action plan for the Department of Ecology and some transportation modeling for EPA. In 1999 he accepted the job as director of the Pacific Rim Enterprise Center, a Seattle-based organization that did contract work for the US Department of Energy. At the same time, he was elected Chairman of

the Washington state chapter of the Sierra Club. "It was like having two jobs," he says. "I spent a lot of time in Olympia and a lot in D.C."

A couple of years into the Bush administration, the DOE cancelled their contract with PREC." As PREC was winding down, Steve was offered a job as director of Commuter Challenge, a Seattle non-profit that worked to promote alternative means of transportation in the region. After a year in this position, he negotiated a merger with the economic development council of King County, enterpriseSeattle. In addition to running Commuter Challenge, Steve became the Business Development Manager for clean energy and clean technology, helping new companies to succeed and existing ones to grow.



Steve Gerritson with grandson Nate

"I feel like I'm on the cutting edge of a new movement," he says of his current position. "The things people are doing in this field are truly amazing, and our region is leading the way. I guess you're never too old to start something new."

Steve has been a member of NWAEP since 2004, and was elected to the Board of Directors in 2008. You can contact him at [sgerritson@earthlink.net](mailto:sgerritson@earthlink.net).

## Planning Underway for NAEP 2009 Conference: "Making Sustainability Happen"

Radisson Fort McDowell Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona is the venue for the 34th Annual National Association of Environmental Professionals Conference to be held May 3-6, 2009. Making Sustainability Happen: Goals, Practices and Challenges is the theme.

### Call for 2009 Papers

NAEP has already released a call for papers and presentations. Go to [www.naep.org](http://www.naep.org) for a list of possible topics, as well as guidelines for preparation of your abstract.



### Arizona Chapter Sets Up 2009 Conference Website

The Arizona chapter has created a website for the 2009 NAEP conference. Check it regularly at: [www.azaep.org/Conference.htm](http://www.azaep.org/Conference.htm).

### In Other NAEP News...

The NAEP Board of Directors held a special two-day meeting in Philadelphia on August 8 and 9 at NAEP's new management firm, Fernley and Fernley, Inc. The strategic planning session included an all-day

"visioning" dialogue, facilitated by an experienced instructor and member of the management team. It started with a thorough pre-meeting survey, sent to all NAEP board members and NAEP chapter leaders. It collected data regarding services NAEP provides, possible future objectives, perceptions about the current organization and the possible future of NAEP. The primary goal of the meeting was to use the survey to brainstorm how to best move NAEP forward.



*Quarterly Newsletter of the  
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Environmental Professionals*

We're on the Web:  
[www.nwaep.org](http://www.nwaep.org)

The Northwest Association of Environmental Professionals (NWAEP) was founded in 1992 and became official affiliate of the National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP) in 2005. We are a nonpolitical interdisciplinary organization made up of professionals in Washington and Oregon. Our members are from the full range of environmental professions, including environmental management, planning, impact assessment, environmental protection, compliance, research, engineering and education.

Our **goal** is to provide opportunities for and to encourage the professional development and recognition of members through meetings, conferences and other activities.

Our **policy** is to promote advancement in scientific interdisciplinary environmental education, research, planning, assessment, review and management.

Our **objectives** are to encourage and facilitate full participation in NWAEP goals and activities by all persons qualified to be members of NWAEP, and to encourage diversity among members of NWAEP in order to assimilate the widest range of views and concerns of professionals engaged in the environmental field.

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## Northwest Connections

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See page 2 for details on our Fall Workshop: Writing the "Perfect" Purpose and Need for an EA or EIS.