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PAEP

The Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Professionals

NEWSLETTER

Summer 1999

Selected excerpts from...

The Role of the New Environmental Professional and TEA-21

By L. Bert Cossaboon

PAEP Annual Meeting April 1999

If I may, I'd like to share my thoughts today on the role of the environmental professional or "EP" and where we need to go as a profession.

To address the role of the environmental professional or the new environmental professional, it seemed appropriate to do some research as well as thinking. I started with a dictionary and found that essentially "professional" means getting paid to do what amateurs do for free. I know you're pleased to hear that. How do you know you are an environmental professional? Maybe you are a geologist, biologist, planner or you have a job title that implies "I'm a professional."

I'd like to suggest that contrary to those qualifications, contrary to the fact that you are paid to do what amateurs do for free, it is not about what you know or what you know how to do. I believe being a professional is best reflected in the way we do our work. By this I mean the quality of what you do and the excellence you bring to your job. And I'd like to share some guidance for creating excellence in our profession.

I'd like to quickly review the attributes that will be demanded from the "New Environmental Professional," particularly in light of the implementation of TEA-21. I call these "NEPA" or the New Environmental Professional Attributes. Our ability to develop these attributes will define our level of professionalism.

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The Role of the New Environmental Professional and TEA-21

(continued from cover)

The first of these attributes is *vision*. By this, I mean having a sense of where we are as environmental professionals right now. This is a perspective of the past and view of the future. This requires a knowledge of our roots and direction: the conservation movement or ethic; Aldo Leopold, Gifford Pinchot, Rachael Carson, the first Earthday, NEPA, ISTEA, TEA-21, and so on.



We tend to think about where we are as an end point; however, our development is really a continuum that we can't see but is ever evolving.

Where are we going as professionals? Wherever it is, we can be sure we are not there yet! Do you have your own view of where our profession is going? TEA-21 has provisions that will require our best vision.

For example, I'm sure you are aware that a particular large transportation project through central Pennsylvania has been exempted from NEPA by TEA-21. Perhaps this anomaly represents an assault on 30 years of environmental progress since NEPA. Perhaps not. What greater challenge to our profession than to eliminate the EIS as a requirement? I guess we will have to stop doing what we do: (evaluating alternatives, identify needs and impacts, conducting public involvement, etc.) because it's required. Instead, we'll be doing it because there is a consensus that it makes sense for the

environment and our communities. Now that requires vision. What an opportunity!

A second important quality or factor for the NEPA (New Environmental Professional Attributes) will continue to be *integrity*. We don't talk about this very much, but something tells me we think about it a lot. With the kind of money that transportation brings forward (a billion dollars worth of construction each year in Pennsylvania) there are tremendous pressures on our profession to "go with the flow" and perhaps compromise the best environmental solution or decision. Sometimes, we are expected to put the "politically correct" alternative in the best environmental light possible with elaborate mitigation. We walk a fine line, and we must be guided by some kind of ethical compass along with our technology and regulatory framework.

I recently found and read the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Environmental Professionals (I found it on the NAEP web site).

- be personally responsible for the validity of all data collected, analyses performed
- encourage research, planning, design, management and review of activities
- not condone misrepresentation of work
- examine all of my relationships or actions which could be legitimately interpreted as a conflict of interest

The Role of the New Environmental Professional and TEA-21

(continued from page 2)

- not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation
- not accept fees wholly or partially contingent on the client's desired result

As implementors and facilitators of environmental policy and process, what possibly could distinguish us more as professionals than our integrity? I believe integrity is critical to the success of everything we do.

A third attribute for the "New Environmental Professional" is **accountability**. By this I mean taking responsibility for ourselves and what is going on around us in the name of environmental management. It's no accident that Section 1309 of TEA-21 provides for "environmental streamlining." When an EIS takes 5 or 10 years to be complete, it raises many questions by the public and public officials about the value of what we are doing.

It's true we operate in an increasingly complex society and increasingly litigious environment, but if we are not accountable for the complexity and time requirements of what we do, more projects will be exempted from NEPA and who knows what else will be pulled out from under us.

The fourth and last on my list of roles for "New Environmental Professional Attributes" is **leadership**. I believe we have to constantly remind ourselves of the difficulty of but critical necessity for leadership.

Leadership is always an uphill battle, against the odds. Frequently you are alone or in a small minority. Let's support each other to be the leaders our profession needs.

As we approach the year 2000, the challenges for the new environmental professional are many, whether implementing TEA-21 or just trying to do your job. Your next impossible challenge is your next opportunity. If you don't do it, it may never get done. Let's go for it!

In closing, I wish you vision, accountability, integrity, and leadership with TEA-21 and in the next millennium.

THE ETERNAL VERNAL POOL

Thursday, July 22, 1999

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Holiday Inn

Kulpsville, PA

For more information contact Julianne
Schieffer at (610) 489-4315

**The PAEP Newsletter is sponsored
by KCI Technologies, Inc. Graphics
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PENNDOT WETLAND PLANTING DAY AT DISTRICT 9-0

By: Bill Savage, PennDOT District 9-0 and Gretchen Yarnall, KCI Technologies, Inc.



Approximately thirty-five volunteers from natural resource agencies, consulting firms, and local conservation associations turned out for PennDOT's second annual Wetland Planting Day on April 23, 1999 in Fulton County. The goal of Planting Day is to plant seedlings on a recently constructed wetland site. Once established, the vegetation will provide valuable water quality benefits and enhance aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat.

PennDOT District 9-0 organized the event by sending advance invitations to the volunteers, obtaining the plantings, providing equipment, and arranging for the planting plan of the site. PennDOT employees and volunteers planted approximately 7,500 tree and shrub seedlings which consisted of a variety of species including dogwoods, willows, button bushes, alders, ashes, spruces and pines. Bird houses and bat boxes were also erected throughout the site. The seedlings were donated by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the PA Game Commission.

The *Haines-Seville Wetland Restoration Area*, named after two PennDOT Maintenance District 9-4 equipment operators who performed the earthwork and grading during the construction of the site, is an "Advance Wetland Compensation Site." The wetland is the third of its kind in Pennsylvania, built under the terms of the PennDOT District 9-0 Advance Wetland Compensation Interagency Agreement (IA), and was the first wetland banking agreement ever signed in Pennsylvania. The other two advance wetland compensation sites were built in Cambria and

Huntingdon Counties in 1998. The IA allows PennDOT to construct advance wetland compensation sites prior to incurring unavoidable impacts to wetlands associated with highway maintenance and construction activities.

Areas which typically lend themselves to the construction of new wetland sites are lands that were originally drained in the 1950's and 1960's for farming purposes, or were "prior converted (PC) farmland." By working in areas that were once wetlands, PennDOT can take a lot of the guesswork out of wetland mitigation. In many cases, simply changing the drainage of an area is sufficient to restore a wetland back to its original condition. The existing hydric soils are flooded and the seeds that had lain dormant for years become active and plants emerge voluntarily.



By using this approach, PennDOT has been able to drastically reduce the construction cost for wetland mitigation. In the past, PennDOT tradition-

ally created small isolated wetlands for minor impacts associated with bridge replacement and highway projects. Mitigating small areas of wetlands is very costly and does little to enhance the environment, not to mention offers few recreational or educational benefits to the public.

The District's goal in constructing the large advance wetland mitigation sites is to have pre-existing wetlands that are already built and functioning, so that when The *Haines-Seville Wetland Restoration Area* was developed in cooperation with the USACOE, USFWS, PADEP, PFBC, PADCNR, PGC, FCCD, NRCS, and Licking Creek Township. The EADS Group provided site design services.

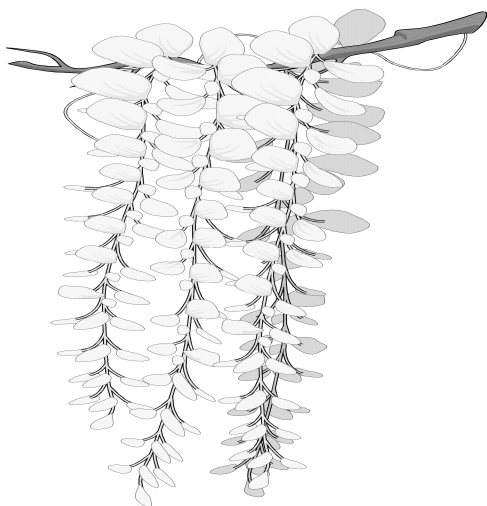
For further information about the Advance Wetland Compensation Site, or about future Planting Days, contact Bill Savage (814-696-7227) at District 9-0.

SECTION HAPPENINGS

PAEP would like to thank the Eastern Section for hosting the PAEP Annual Meeting. Specifically, Bob Hosking and the effort donated by McTish, Kunkel, and Associates.

EASTERN

On June 3, 1999, PAEP had the pleasure of hosting *An Evening at Bartram's Garden* in Philadelphia, PA. Jason Vendetti of A.D. Marble & Company gave an enlightening talk on the history of John Bartram and the gardens, and followed up with a tour of a freshwater tidal wetland mitigation site that his company designed. Featured in Mr. Vendetti's discussion were constraints related to construction of the site, design aspects of tidal wetland systems, plant materials used, and helpful hints for successful establishment of wetland functions and hydrology. The event ended with a lovely evening tour of the historic gardens surrounding John Bartram's house and outbuildings. Attendance consisted of PAEP members and nonmembers representing students, environmental consultants and landscape architects. The Eastern Section of PAEP thanks Jason Vendetti for volunteering his time and efforts for making this event a memorable one.



EMPLOYMENT MARKET

The following list contains members seeking positions in the environmental field and employment opportunities at firms. For full resumes, please contact the individual.

The Employment Market is a continuing service of the PAEP newsletter. Perspective employers contact Gretchen Yarnall or Deborah Henson at (717) 691-1340 for posting of positions.

Help Wanted

ENVIRONMENTAL & REGULATORY SPECIALIST

Statewide trade association seeks an environmental and regulatory specialist. person must have at least five years experience working with state regulatory programs and permitting processes. Excellent oral and written communication skills a must. We offer a 401(k) plan and health benefits.

Please send resume with salary requirements to: PA Builders Association, Attn: Regulatory Specialist Position, 600 North 12th Street, Lemoyne, PA 17043. No phone calls please.

PAEP News is published quarterly. Articles and comments are welcome and may be directed to Gretchen Yarnall at KCI Technologies, Inc. 5001 Louise Drive, Suite 201, Harrisburg, PA 17055 or e-mail at gyarnall@keystonekci.com. The deadline for the Fall 1999 Newsletter is August 20.