

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF NAEP

Environmental Professionals and Their Association

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Early in 1999, NAEP sent a survey to its members to do a "routine checkup" on their interests and priorities to ensure that the focus of the Association's energies is in alignment with members' needs. The survey results are presented in some detail on the NAEP website (www.naep.org). As President of NAEP, one of my responsibilities is to see that our resources are used effectively. Here are the *TOP TEN Observations and Lessons from the Membership Survey results*.

10. Twenty percent of our members responded; a good response for a voluntary survey. Are the results representative of the entire membership? Probably not, but what can we do?
9. Our respondents are characteristic of our membership, which tends toward senior level, experienced professionals. One-quarter were 26–35 years old, 1/4 were 36–45; 1/3 were 46–55 and 10% were 56–65. Only 2% were under 26; 3% were over 65. A full 98% had at least a bachelor's degree and 71% had masters or doctorate degree.
8. The results show that, as expected, our members have a number of different "profiles" of priorities, reflecting the diversity of their discipline specialties and practice areas.
7. Ninety percent considered it to be *very or somewhat important* that NAEP have an annual conference, that it should be broad in topical coverage, that it should include: speakers from government discussing pending or proposed legislation; case studies; and speakers on compliance and enforcement issues. Interestingly, only about 10% of the NAEP membership actually attends the annual conference! Our respondents favor spring and summer (30% and 28%, respectively), followed by winter (23%) and fall (19%) for our conference. Our recent conferences have been held during late June, notably on the cusp of spring and summer.
6. There were many NAEP benefits that respondents ranked as important to them now or in the future but that they were not fully accessing at this time. These include, in addition to the Annual Conference, a desire that NAEP provide strong support of the Certified Environmental Professional program and an indication by many respondents of their intention to *probably* become involved in many activities of NAEP Committees and Working Groups in the future.
5. Respondents indicated that the focus of NAEP should be on services that support their work or professional needs, that enhance the environmental profession, and that bring recognition to individual environmental professionals.
4. When presented with a series of NAEP initiatives, activities, and objectives and asked to classify them according to level of importance, even the items that were rated lowest were considered *very or somewhat important* to 2/3 of the respondents. These "lowest rated items" included having a membership directory, use of the Website, support of chapters, the annual conference, a membership database, and assistance in the job market. It is clear that a large majority of our responding members want all of the initiatives listed to be high on NAEP's priority list.
3. Over 84% of respondents believed that a peer-reviewed journal was very or somewhat important to them. Eighty-eight percent rated *NAEP News*, now part of *Environmental Practice* (first issue published shortly after the survey), to be very or somewhat important.
2. For Committees or Working Groups, highest numbers of interested respondents were found for ABCEP, followed by NEPA, Chapters, ISO 14000, Policy, and Sustainability. However, *future possible importance* was highest for NEPA/ISO, ISO and ABCEP, followed by International, the National Involvement

Initiative, and Policy. Of significant interest is that others, including the Utility Working Group and Transportation Working Group, were viewed as potentially important in the future.

1. Whether by design or luck, NAEP's resources ARE focused on our members' priority items.

I was pleased with the results of the survey. NAEP members are diverse and looking at NAEP for opportunities to grow, learn, and expand their professional horizons. They are looking for information on future trends and the opportunity to network with their peers and individuals in different practice areas. NAEP members realize that what they are doing today is not necessarily what they will be doing next year or in five years, and they want to anticipate and be ready for the changes that will come.

NAEP Directors, Officers, Committee and Working Group Chairs, and others who choose to be involved in NAEP are themselves environmental professionals with similar perspectives. The results of our 1999 Membership Survey reinforce my belief that we are focused on what is best for and wanted by our membership. I invite your response on these matters whether to me or in comment to *Environmental Practice*.

Next issue—Initiatives for 2000 and the 25th Birthday Celebration for NAEP!

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