



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD: GET INVOLVED IN 2015!

BY LAUREL LEES, SAN DIEGO AEP NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Welcome to 2015 – another year of exciting San Diego AEP workshops, luncheons, happy hours, awards ceremonies, conferences, and other events. We would like to begin this year by introducing your local chapter Board members, who you have voted to make our chapter the best it has ever been:

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Chapter Director | Mindy Fogg | County of San Diego | mindy.fogg@sdcounty.ca.gov |
| Chapter President | Corinne Lytle Bonine | Chambers Group | clytle-bonine@chambersgroupinc.com |
| Co-Vice President of Programs | Dana Martinez | Port of San Diego | sdaepprograms@gmail.com |
| Co-Vice President of Programs | Katherine Godfrey | Dudek | kgodfrey@dudek.com |
| Vice President of Membership | Malia Bassett | ICF International | sdaepmembership@gmail.com |
| Student Membership & Outreach Director | Holly Ayala | Amec Foster Wheeler | sdaepstudentoutreach@gmail.com |
| Treasurer | Julia Norris | Potomac-Hudson Engineering | julia.norris@phe.com |
| Secretary | Austin Melcher | Dudek | amelcher@dudek.com |
| Newsletter Editor* | Laurel Lees | AECOM | sdaepnews@gmail.com |

*The Newsletter Editor position is appointed by the Chapter Board

But these positions are not the only means of contributing to the success of our chapter – it takes you! San Diego AEP has over 300 members, and we are looking to enlist your expertise and passion for the environmental profession. There are many

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Get Involved in 2015!
by Laurel Lees
- 2 2014 Annual Awards & Scholarship Banquet
by Laurel Lees
- 13 Student CEQA Workshop Recap
by Laurel Lees
- 16 CEQA Basics Workshop Recap
by Laurel Lees
- 18 Meet A Board Member:
Austin Melcher
- 19 Meet A Board Member:
Malia Bassett
- 20 Announcements

(continued on page 2)



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD: GET INVOLVED IN 2015! (CONT.)

ways you can participate outside of the Chapter Board, and we welcome you to take an active role by:

- » Presenting a luncheon topic
- » Joining the 2015 Awards Committee or Awards Jury
- » Contributing an article to the newsletter
- » Posting relevant content on our social media sites
- » Being a photographer during Chapter events
- » Volunteering at the Holiday Party
- » Joining the 2016 State AEP Conference Committee

YES, WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE SAN DIEGO WILL BE HOSTING THE STATE AEP CONFERENCE APRIL 3-6, 2016!

Although it is next year, now is the time to start planning. We are looking for motivated members, both long-time and new, to help coordinate conference track topics, speakers, and mobile workshops, organize general

conference logistics and administrative needs, as well as collaborate on fresh ideas for showcasing our chapter. We will be scheduling regular meetings throughout 2015 and in the months leading up to the conference. Our chapter is one of the largest chapters in the state so we know there are a lot of brilliant and creative members who may either be interested in participating or have been waiting for the right opportunity to become more active in AEP. This conference is expected to continue to draw an attendance of over 300 environmental professionals from around the state.

If you are interested in participating in the 2016 AEP Conference Committee, please contact Marilyn Pongeggi and Julie Froelich, 2016 AEP Conference Co-Chairs, at 2016aepconference@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you and planning a successful conference in America's Finest City!

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact any or all of your San Diego AEP Board Members to discuss how you can GET INVOLVED IN 2015!

SAN DIEGO AEP 14TH ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

BY LAUREL LEES, SAN DIEGO AEP NEWSLETTER EDITOR

The San Diego Chapter of AEP celebrated 10 years of AEP scholarships at the 14th annual Awards and Scholarship Banquet on Thursday, October 2 at the Scripps Seaside Forum in La Jolla. Over 200 people participated in the event, which was hosted by Devon Muto and Chris Mendiara with guest speaker John Moore, Provost of the John Muir College of University of California San Diego (UCSD). The banquet included a silent auction, the proceeds of which go directly to fund the 2015 scholarships. The auction included generous gifts such as spa packages, a native plant basket, cases of craft brews, farm boxes and tours from Suzy's Farms, admission tickets to the Midway museum, a vintage lot of beanie babies and framed photos from our Environmental Photography Contest.



Over 200 Awards Banquet attendees enjoy coastal sunset dining at the Scripps Seaside Forum in La Jolla

(continued on page 3)



SAN DIEGO AEP 14TH ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (CON'T.)

First of all, thank you to the following banquet sponsors for helping support the event and provide scholarship funds:

| | | |
|--|--|---|
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Since 2004, the San Diego chapter of AEP has awarded more than \$48,000 in scholarships to over 20 deserving students from our local universities; San Diego State University (SDSU), the University of San Diego (USD), Point Loma Nazarene (PLNU) and UCSD. The scholarship winners majored in a wide variety of fields such as environmental studies, geography, political science, chemistry and urban and city planning. The scholarship winners represent the best of what we can do before we get into our fields. This year Provost Moore presented two \$2,000 scholarships to **David Fenn** (UCSD) and **Christina Hirt** (USD).



Devon Muto (left) helps Provost Moore (second from left) present scholarships to David Fenn and Christina Hirt (right)

David is a senior at UCSD majoring in Urban Studies and Planning with a minor in Business. He was born in a suburb of Cape Town, South Africa but grew up in Orange County after moving to the States in 1999. His childhood dream was to be an architect, but during college he realized that he could have a much greater impact on his community with a big picture approach. David participated in the 2014 Commercial Real Estate Association University Challenge, the San Diego American Planning Association (APA) Young Planners Group Mentorship Program, a campus LEED certification project, and an internship with Stantec Consulting. David's short term goal is to build experience and contacts in the planning profession towards a career in city, regional, or transportation planning with a personal emphasis on sustainable development, innovative transportation solutions, and smart growth.

Christina is currently an Environmental Studies major at USD. She grew up in Long Beach where she developed an ever-growing interest in preserving the natural environment that allows Southern California to remain the beautiful region it is. Christina also has passion for public health and was president of the National Marrow Registry at USD. She is also a Conservation Intern with the San Diego Audubon Society. Through her studies, Christina discovered how public health and the environment relate, particularly in the areas of water quality and hydrology issues. Christina plans on pursuing a career in environmental planning that would combine her passion for human health, sustainable development and a healthy natural environment.

(continued on page 4)



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SAN DIEGO CHAPTER
FEBRUARY 2015

SAN DIEGO AEP 14TH ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (CON'T.)

Thank you, students, for representing the best of what we can do before we get into our fields. Thank you, Provost Moore, for your efforts to promote awareness of environmental issues and the importance of our profession.



Mark Wardlaw (left) and Jason Giffen (right) smile at their "thank-you" gifts

The event culminated with the presentation of awards to recognize the top projects in 2014. Awards were presented to environmental professionals by **Mark Wardlaw** and **Jason Giffen**.

Mark is the Director of the County of San Diego Department of Planning & Development Services (PDS). Mark has also been the Community Development Director in Mammoth Lakes, Deputy Community Development Director and Planning Manager for Culver City and its Redevelopment Agency. Mark spent 11 years in San Diego with the City Planning Department, the Centre City Development Corporation and was part of the redevelopment effort of Downtown San Diego.

Mark received his Masters of Environmental Planning through the Graduate School of Architecture and Planning at Arizona State University and his Bachelors of Science from the University of Utah.

Jason currently serves as the Director of Environmental and Land Use Management with the San Diego Unified Port District. For the past 14 years, Jason has worked for three public agencies, including the County of San Diego, County of San Luis Obispo and the Port. He also has been a volunteer on the Institute for Local Government's Panel of Advisors for Public Outreach since 2012. Jason received his Masters in International Environmental Policy from the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and his Bachelors in Arts from Mercyhurst University.

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(continued on page 5)



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Mark and Jason presented the award for **Outstanding Environmental Technical Report** to the **Final Phase 1 Report: Upper Santa Ana River Habitat Conservation Plan** prepared by ICF International and the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District.

The listing of the Santa Ana Sucker (an endemic fish) and the subsequent designation of critical habitat in the Upper Santa Ana River watershed significantly impacted the ability of water resource agencies to capture and manage storm water, urban runoff, and treated sewage for groundwater recharge and water conservation in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. The affected water resource agencies sued the USFWS over the designation of critical habitat. The development of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) was proposed as a possible win-win that could solve the endangered species conflicts without costly and lengthy law suits and court battles. The Phase 1 Report determined the feasibility, cost, and timing to prepare an HCP by identifying and describing water agencies projects that would be covered by the endangered species permits, identifying other species to be addressed by the HCP, determining the Plan Area and permit area of the HCP, conducting a preliminary effects analysis, developing a preliminary conservation strategy, and identifying the costs and cost allocation among participating agencies for full preparation of an HCP. The purpose of Phase 1 was to provide the rationale for the water resource agencies in deciding to resolve the issues through an HCP rather than through the courts. Phase 1 was highly successful and gave the water resource agencies the confidence to move forward with the HCP.

Meritorious award: Sycamore to Penasquitos 230 Kilovolt Transmission Line Biological Report prepared by Busby Biological Services and San Diego Gas & Electric.

A new 230 kilovolt (kV) transmission line is needed to connect the existing SDG&E Sycamore Canyon and Peñasquitos Substations to increase the efficiency and supply of renewable generated power. SDG&E proposes to construct and operate a new, approximately 16.7-mile 230 kV transmission line between the existing SDG&E Sycamore Canyon and Peñasquitos Substations (SX-PQ). SX-PQ would also include the consolidation of two existing 69 kV power lines onto new double-circuit, steel structures that would replace existing, predominantly wood structures. All new transmission line facilities would be located within existing SDG&E Right-of-Way or within franchise position within existing public roadways. TRC Solutions, Inc. (TRC) contracted with Busby Biological Services, Inc. (BBS) to prepare the BTR for the project, which included conducting vegetation mapping, special-status plant surveys, and special-status wildlife surveys, as well as coordinating with Environmental Intelligence, LLC to obtain the wetland data and integrate it into the BTR. This challenging, fast tracked project was BBS' first opportunity to work directly with TRC and to provide SDG&E with a technical document prepared solely by BBS biologists. Because BBS is a small, 3-person firm, TRC and SDG&E anticipated many revisions. However, BBS provided an exceptional draft document that required few revisions before finalizing.

(continued on page 6)



SAN DIEGO AEP 14TH ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (CON'T.)

Meritorious award: **Noise Analysis for the Nob Hill Pipeline Improvements Project** prepared by RECON Environmental, Inc. and the San Diego County Water Authority.

At just over 50 pages, the Noise Analysis for the San Diego County Water Authority's Nob Hill Pipeline Improvements Project efficiently tackles a complex and controversial issue—noise and groundborne vibration in close proximity to residences. The report makes the analysis accessible to the average reader. The clear and concise study was instrumental in gaining community acceptance for the project, which includes the blasting and excavation of solid rock in proximity to a dense condominium community perched on a steep outcrop of solid Santiago Peak Volcanic rock. This report provides a great example of how to address construction noise and vibration for other projects that may involve blasting and heavy construction in close proximity to sensitive receptors by presenting standards from other agencies such as the City of San Diego, Caltrans, and the Federal Transportation Authority (FTA) and presenting that information in such a way that it is easy to understand and reassuring to the reader that it has been thought through.

The award for **Outstanding Planning Document** was presented to the **Otay Mesa Community Plan Update** prepared by the City of San Diego and RECON Environmental.

The comprehensive Otay Mesa Community Plan Update addresses substantial land use changes, both locally and regionally that have occurred over the past 30 years, including the loss of designated industrial and residential land resulting from adoption of the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) in 1997. The updated plan implements the General Plan with respect to the distribution and arrangement of land uses, local street and transit network, prioritization and provision of public facilities, community and site-specific urban design guidelines, and recommendations to preserve and enhance natural and cultural resources within the Otay Mesa community. The Update also implements General Plan policies and its City of Villages Strategy for comprehensively planning the Otay Mesa community planning area by evaluating and coordinating a multi-modal transportation network, balancing economic prosperity with housing needs, and coordinating infrastructure financing and phasing with complex land use decisions. The Draft Update provides comprehensive policy recommendations on complex land use issues that are sensitive to the public facilities needs and timely phasing of the infrastructure. The plan is intended to define new strategies for the way Otay Mesa would develop and function over the next 20–50 years.

Meritorious award: **Ramona Village Center Form-Based Code** prepared by County of San Diego, Planning & Development Services and Howard Blackson Consulting.

The Ramona Form Based-Code (FBC) is an innovative tool for developing, enhancing and preserving Ramona's Village. Establishing FBCs that promote compact and viable County village areas is a key component of the County General Plan. FBCs have been shown to be successful tools to help improve aesthetics and walkability, and increase the economic value of developments by diversifying properties with mixed uses. Development of the FBC began with a robust public outreach program that began in 2009 and culminated in 2014 with approval by the Board of Supervisors. Efforts to engage the public and address the communities concerns were deemed successful when there were no speakers in opposition when the Board approved the final FBC. By linking nature to the Village Center, the FBC provides a viable

(continued on page 7)



SAN DIEGO AEP 14TH ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (CON'T.)

development pattern that preserves the natural character of the Santa Maria Creek and promotes a compact and walkable Village. Within the FBC, graphics and diagrams are used to convey complex concepts and help to create a FBC that is easy to use and accessible to the public. The Ramona FBC is a logical and comprehensive document that will enhance Ramona's environment and sustainability as well as implement the community's vision for the Ramona Village Center.

Meritorious award: **City of San Diego Watershed Asset Management Plan** prepared by URS Corporation and the City of San Diego.

The City of San Diego Storm Water Division needed to respond to new and anticipated Total Maximum Daily Load regulations, a new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit regulating discharges into and from its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, and to realize efficiencies from integrating its flood control and stormwater quality protection functions. The Watershed Asset Management Plan (WAMP) approach was incorporated into a strategic business plan to communicate funding needs, tying those funding needs directly to regulatory requirements and desires expressed by citizens for City of San Diego Storm Water Division services. The purpose of this WAMP is to document the current state of assets (e.g., asset inventory, valuation, condition, risk) and to project the long-range asset renewal (rehabilitation and replacement) requirements for the City of San Diego Storm Water Division. An asset management plan is a long-range planning document used to provide a rational framework for understanding and planning the asset portfolio. The application of asset management to stormwater and watershed management, based on this WAMP, is a way to successfully optimize use of resources, integrate municipal flood control and stormwater quality management, and transparently justify funding requirements and management decisions.

The award for **Outstanding Environmental Analysis EIR/EIS** was presented to the **Final Legislative EIS for the Renewal of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Land Withdrawal** prepared by URS Corporation.

The 716 square mile Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR) is a live-fire range that supports training of all branches of the U.S. armed services. The Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) addresses the proposed renewal of the military land withdrawal and reservation of the CMAGR for military use. In accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, a legislative EIS, rather than an administrative EIS, was prepared to address the land withdrawal. The LEIS is the detailed statement required by law that was included in a legislative proposal to Congress and served as the basis for public and Congressional debate. The alternatives presented to Congress had to satisfy the needs of the Marine Corps, Department of the Navy, BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, local government agencies, and the public. Because no preferred alternative was selected, the action alternatives were designed to give decision makers and the public the greatest range of choices by taking each element of the alternatives that best met a purpose and need. To this end, URS developed the unique "buffet" approach that detailed how the four elements—boundary alignment and withdrawal area, withdrawal duration, agency management responsibilities, and disposal and management of land released—for the renewal of the CMAGR would be allocated among the four renewal alternatives. Because it is an LEIS and the decision lies with Congress, no Record of Decision was issued. Congress authorized continued use of the CMAGR through the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

(continued on page 8)



SAN DIEGO AEP 14TH ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (CON'T.)

Meritorious award: **Herbert Hoover High School Athletic Facilities Upgrades Project EIR** prepared by BRG Consulting and the San Diego Unified School District.

In 2010-2011, BRG prepared a MND for this project, which was adopted by the Board of Education on January 11, 2011. The MND was challenged by the Taxpayers for Accountable School Bond Spending. However, the District moved forward with the construction of the athletic facility upgrades. A lower court upheld the MND. That ruling was appealed and the appellate court ruled that the traffic analysis for the MND should have incorporated additional analysis and that an EIR should be prepared. The Supreme Court required the District to ban the use of the field lights; vacate the previously adopted MND; and prepare an EIR. The District moved forward with the preparation of the EIR. BRG oversaw the preparation of an enhanced traffic study and prepared a Draft and Final EIR, which was certified by the Board of Education on January 14, 2014. Despite the extensive amount of comment letters received during the public review period on the Draft EIR and during the public hearing against the project, the Final EIR was not challenged. The school will begin operating their field lights during the upcoming 2014 15 school year.

Meritorious award: **Campus Park West Final Subsequent EIR** prepared by HELIX Environmental Planning and the County of San Diego.

The Campus Park West Subsequent EIR addresses a proposed mixed-use development located on approximately 116 to 119 acres in the community of Fallbrook within unincorporated San Diego County. The Project proposes a tentative map to subdivide the property into 23 lots, a Specific Plan Amendment to amend the 1983-approved Specific Plan to the currently proposed mix of uses, a rezone from S90 to S88, and a General Plan Amendment to revise or reconfigure land use designations as well as amend the County General Plan Mobility Element. The current Project is a proposed amendment to the Hewlett-Packard Campus Park Specific Plan with two design scenarios, analyzed separately in the SEIR. Scenario 1 is sited within the original project boundaries and would include 283 multi-family residential homes, general commercial (including big box uses) with a mixed-use core, limited impact industrial/business professional uses, on- and off-site infrastructure adequate to support all of these uses, and open space. Scenario 2 would include the same elements as Scenario 1, but would also incorporate approximately 2.1 additional acres currently held as SR-76 right-of-way by Caltrans, as well as an additional 10,000 square feet of general commercial uses.

The award for **Outstanding Environmental Analysis EA/MND** was presented to the **San Diego Gas & Electric Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 Kilovolt Transmission Line Project** Proponent's EA prepared by TRC Companies, Inc. and San Diego Gas & Electric.

The San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 Kilovolt Transmission Line Project (Project) Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA) clearly organizes the PEA Summary, Purpose and Need, Project Description, environmental setting, and impact analysis. While organization of PEAs is based largely upon guidance from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), additional organizational elements were added to increase reader comprehension and document navigation. Being an applicant prepared impact analysis document, the project description is vital and is the most detailed component of the PEA. Therefore, the Project Description is written with references to other applicable



SAN DIEGO AEP 14TH ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (CON'T.)

PEA sections, and includes full discussions of integral programmatic requirements and processes that govern SDG&E’s transmission projects. Each section was prepared to include only enough information to completely define the applicable subject matter without inclusion of extraneous or unnecessary information. Use of acronyms was minimized to make the document easier to read for members of the public who are not always as familiar with industry acronyms. Where detailed information was necessary for the complete description of the Project, environmental setting, or potential impacts, appendices were utilized to ensure that the required detailed information did not disrupt the flow of the PEA or overshadow the conclusions and descriptions the detailed information supported.

The award for **Outstanding Environmental Resource Document** was presented to the **El Cuervo al Oeste Wetland Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan** prepared by URS and the City of San Diego.

The El Cuervo Al Oeste Conceptual Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (Plan) provides direction for implementing a program to restore native habitats to offset past, current, and future impacts resulting from channel maintenance activities associated with the City Master Storm Water System Maintenance Program (Master Maintenance Program or MMP). The MMP outlines maintenance procedures that would periodically clear out City storm water facilities to allow them to effectively convey storm water. The goal of the mitigation conceptual design for this site is to establish wetlands on a currently non-wetland area in accordance with mitigation requirements from USACE, CDFW, RWQCB, California Coastal Commission and the City. A restoration baseline grade was estimated in the conceptual grading cross-section. Elevations within the proposed mitigation site will vary around this baseline grade to reflect the incorporation of secondary channels, pits, ponds, and hummocks. The design incorporates a mix of herbaceous wetland, riparian scrub, and a riparian transition habitat. The design mimics the classic floodplain vegetation gradient. These features will be planted with the appropriate plant palette and are expected to increase habitat interspersed functions. The Plan includes (1) a description of the maintenance impacts, (2) a description of the El Cuervo al Oeste mitigation site, (3) a plan to create herbaceous wetland, riparian scrub, and riparian transitional habitat mitigation within the site at a 1:1 ratio relative to impacts to achieve “no net loss” of wetland function, and (4) a description of the 5-year maintenance and monitoring period following the installation of the site.

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(continued on page 10)



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SAN DIEGO AEP 14TH ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (CON'T.)

Congratulations, award winners and nominees! Thank you for your hard work on projects, which represents the best of what we do after we get into our fields.

The final recognition of the evening was awarded to a member who had demonstrated an exceptional commitment to our profession and has dedicated themselves to protecting our quality of life in San Diego. This award was presented by **Mindy Fogg**, San Diego AEP Chapter Director. Mindy provided the award to her dear friend, **Marilyn Pongeggi**, for **Outstanding Contribution to the Environmental Profession**. In her speech, Mindy stated that Marilyn’s “dedication to this industry throughout her career has been phenomenal”.

Marilyn’s career began when she graduated from Long Beach State with a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Public Administration. She then completed post-graduate paralegal training at USD. Marilyn’s first work experience in the field of land use and environmental planning came when she worked as secretary and code enforcement officer for the planning department of the newly incorporated City of Lemon Grove. She then worked as an associate planner for the City of National City where she managed a wide variety of projects for over five years. And, as the dedicated mother of two young children, she was also managing a variety of projects at home during this time. Marilyn



Mindy Fogg (left) presents her long-time friend, Marilyn Pongeggi (right), with the Outstanding Contribution to the Environmental Profession award

left the National City planning department to begin her own Environmental and Planning consulting firm. This endeavor allowed her to work on a wider range of projects throughout San Diego and Riverside County.

Around this time, she also became actively involved with AEP. She worked on the first State Conference that San Diego hosted, and she served on the San Diego Chapter Board as membership coordinator, secretary, programs coordinator, and chapter President. When the State AEP Board expanded to include Directors-at-Large, Marilyn was immediately elected to this role and served on the State Board for four years.

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Meanwhile, her consulting firm continued to thrive as she helped projects obtain entitlement permits and assisted in the preparation of Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs). She also represented citizen and neighborhood groups in opposition to certain projects. Mindy continued to state, “[Marilyn] proudly claims that she never represented a project she didn’t believe in. And she never worked for community or citizen groups unless she believed in their cause.”

One of Marilyn’s clients was the City of Chula Vista, where she had been contracted to do mitigation monitoring and environmental project management. In early 1999, she was hired by Chula Vista as a fulltime environmental project manager, and was quickly promoted to Environmental Review Coordinator that same year. In addition to managing the preparation of numerous CEQA documents, Marilyn oversaw the completion and implementation of Chula Vista’s Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan. She also completed the permitting and environmental review process for the Olympic Parkway. Marilyn became a Principle Planner for Chula Vista in 2007. Since then, she has been working on numerous long-range projects in Advance Planning. Notably, she helped manage the preparation and implementation of the City’s first Historic Preservation Program, including the Historic Preservation Ordinance - a project which also won an AEP award.

(continued on page 12)



THE

ENVIRONMENTOR

ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS
SAN DIEGO CHAPTER
FEBRUARY 2015

SAN DIEGO AEP 14TH ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (CON'T.)

Mindy finalized Marilyn’s award by recognizing her for even more successes. Mindy stated:

I met Marilyn in 2008 when she returned to the AEP San Diego board as Chapter Director, and I joined as membership coordinator. I can’t count the number of times I watched her successfully advocate for this chapter and its members to ensure the best possible services and benefits. She helped pull together student chapters, and monetary grants for student members. She also authored a student chapter manual to help other chapters around the state. And now, we are thrilled that she has agreed to be co-chair for the 2016 conference that’s coming to San Diego.

Whatever task is in front of her, Marilyn always gives it one hundred percent, and her passion is infectious. The amount of effort she puts into the environmental profession is only rivaled by the energy she dedicates to her amazing family – most importantly, her husband Larry; her daughter, Heather, her son, Marc, and her adorable four-legged daughter, Lucy the chocolate Labrador. As an exemplary leader in our organization, I’ve valued her as a mentor, but even more as a colleague and friend.

Please join the San Diego Chapter of AEP in continually showing our appreciation of and thanks to Marilyn for her Outstanding Contribution to the Environmental Profession. **Congratulations, Marilyn!**

Finally, thank you to the generous Awards Committee Members, without which the event would not have been so successful:

- Devon Muto, ICF International
- Austin Melcher, DUDEK
- Greg Kazmer, RECON Environmental
- Chris Mendiara, LLG Engineers
- Michael Page, RECON Environmental
- Kristin Blackson, County of San Diego
- Lauren Washington, SANDAG
- Holly Ayala, Amec Foser Wheeler
- Becky Malone, City of San Diego

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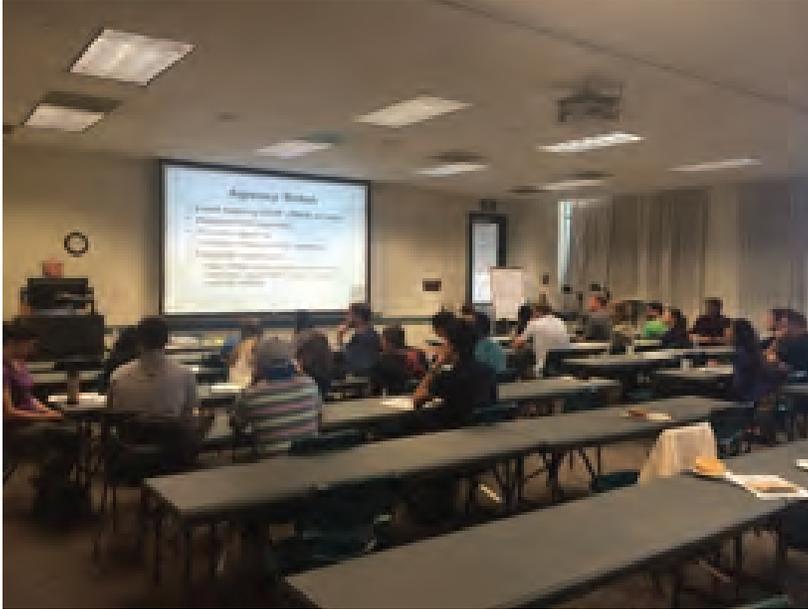
ANNOUNCEMENT:

As you continue working on projects in 2015, remember to brainstorm on the efforts you would like to nominate for an award at our 2015 Awards and Scholarship Banquet. Also, if you would like volunteer on the awards committee or jury, please contact San Diego AEP President, Corinne Lytle Bonine, at CLytle-bonine@chambersgroup.com.



STUDENT CEQA BASICS WORKSHOP RECAP

BY LAUREL LEES, SAN DIEGO AEP NEWSLETTER EDITOR



Mr. Norton explains the role of agencies in the CEQA process to over 30 students at the 2014 San Diego AEP Student CEQA Basics Workshop at SDSU

On Saturday, October 25, 2014 San Diego AEP hosted a half-day Student CEQA Basics Workshop at San Diego State University (SDSU). The workshop was a joint effort between AEP and the SDSU geography department, and was a building block for students to understand how to use and implement CEQA. Kent Norton, Senior Environmental Planner with LSA Associates, instructed the students on the basics of CEQA and how it is implemented by local agencies. The training enhanced the resume of each participant to demonstrate their mastery of the preeminent environmental regulation process in California.

The event is best summarized by one of over 30 attendees, Christina Hirt, student at University of San Diego:

“The CEQA Basics Workshop held by AEP was a great introduction to the history of the legislation as well as its technical components. With group activities and reference materials given to all attendees, the workshop was an engaging presentation, designed for anyone interested in entering a career in Environmental Consulting or just brushing up on their knowledge. Presenter Kent Norton even included time to discuss strategies for seeking employment within this career field. An absolute must for anyone looking to learn about CEQA and its applications!”

San Diego AEP would like to thank Katherine Godfrey for putting together such a successful event!

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Mark your 2015 calendars for the following Student Workshops:

- » February 18 - Resume Workshop at University of San Diego, Solomon Hall
- » March 18 - Speed Networking Event at San Diego Gas & Electric Innovation Center
- » April 25 - CEQA Practicum at Mission Trails

For more information, contact your local AEP Student Chapter President or the San Diego AEP Student Outreach Director, Holly Ayala, at sdaepstudentoutreach@gmail.com.



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2014 FALL CEQA ESSENTIALS WORKSHOP RECAP

BY LAUREL LEES, SAN DIEGO AEP NEWSLETTER EDITOR

On November 6, 2014, San Diego AEP held an all-day CEQA Essentials Workshop at Marina Village. We would like to give a very special “thank you” to Mindy Fogg, our Chapter Director, for assembling an outstanding panel of experts for the event; Alyssa Muto, Anna McPherson, and Claudia Anzures delivered the CEQA presentation to, and answered questions from, over 60 participants.

Thank you to the following three environmental professionals for their efforts:

Alyssa Muto is a Senior Project Manager at RECON Environmental. Ms. Muto received her master’s in Public Administration from San Diego State University and has over 14 years of experience in environmental and land use planning in both the public and private sectors. She began her professional career in the private sector, working primarily on privately-initiated development projects and school infrastructure improvement projects. She later took a position as a Land Use/Environmental Planner at the County of San Diego, where she was promoted to a Planning Manager. Ms. Muto had the opportunity to mentor and train her staff and others on the discretionary permitting process and compliance with CEQA. Ms. Muto has since moved back to the private sector after having three kids. She currently works with RECON’s public agency clients to provide support with both CEQA and NEPA compliance and regulatory permitting. Ms. Muto is also a former AEP Board Member and served as the VP of Membership and the San Diego Chapter Director of the State AEP Board.

Anna McPherson is a Senior Environmental Planner in the City of San Diego Development Services Department. Ms. McPherson received her M.A. in History (Art and Architecture History emphasis) in 1985, and has over 25 years of experience in land use planning. She is responsible for the environmental



review for development projects within the mid and southern section of the City. Ms. McPherson has had the opportunity to work on several major public and quasi-public projects, including the Barrio Logan Community Plan Update EIR. She also dealt with coastal resource issues as part of the environmental review for the seasonal closure of the Children’s Pool Beach in La Jolla during harbor seal pupping season. She served as the senior environmental planner for both the Plaza de Panama and the Cross Border Facility Projects. Both projects occupied a unique space between public and private, presented a set of incredibly complex issues, involved extensive public interest and comment, and were subject to legal challenges. Both were upheld.

Claudia Anzures is an attorney, specializing in CEQA and California Land Use Planning. She recently retired after 26 years with the County of San Diego, Office of County Counsel where she served as Chief Deputy over the Advisory Division. She was the lead counsel on a number of long term land use projects, including the County of San Diego South County Multiple Species Conservation Plan and the County’s General Plan Update adopted in 2011. She

2014 FALL CEQA ESSENTIALS WORKSHOP RECAP (CONT.)

also served as lead counsel for County public works and parks projects as well as advising Planning and Development Services regarding countless private development project issues. In addition to her expertise in CEQA matters, Claudia is also an expert in municipal law, the federal and state Endangered Species Acts and Native American legal issues, including tribal gaming issues.



The three panelists and the material they delivered received excellent feedback from newcomers and returning attendees alike:

“AEP’s CEQA Essentials Workshop was a great resource to increase my knowledge of CEQA. After working full-time preparing CEQA compliance documents for a few months as an Environmental Planner, I have only begun to scratch the surface on the complexity of CEQA; the workshop increased my understanding of not just the basics, but most importantly, the real-world implementation of the law (especially thanks to the vast and varied experience of the panel).”

– **Bill Vosti**

Mr. Vosti received his graduate degree from the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management at UCSB and is an Environmental Planner at HELIX Environmental Planning. Bill has been a member of AEP for two years.

“In 1997, I had my first job in the environmental consulting field and became a member of the San Diego AEP chapter, and subsequently served on the Board. As a young CEQA/NEPA practitioner, the CEQA workshop was a wonderful forum for expanding my network and staying up-to-date regarding recent case law and best practices. However, for the past ten years my career shifted away from CEQA to military planning projects. Recently, I have had the opportunity to move back in to the CEQA/NEPA practice and needed a CEQA refresher. I simultaneously became an AEP member again and registered for the CEQA Fall Basics Workshop. This workshop provided the recent case law and best practice refresher I was looking for, to bring me up to speed and ready to jump back in to CEQA projects. I would highly recommend this workshop for students, new CEQA practitioners, and those practitioners that want a ‘tune up,’ like I did.”

– **Krista Ellis**

Ms. Ellis is a Senior Planner at AECOM with over 15 years of academic study and presentation of environmental topics, emphasizing planning, regulatory, permitting, and social environmental issues. Krista has a B.A. and M.S. in Environmental Studies and is looking forward to becoming more involved in San Diego AEP.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

The all-day Spring 2015 Advanced CEQA Workshop will be held locally at Marina Village on Friday, February 27. Please click here: <http://www.etches.com/ehome/115278> to register online and to view program and fees. We look forward to seeing you there!



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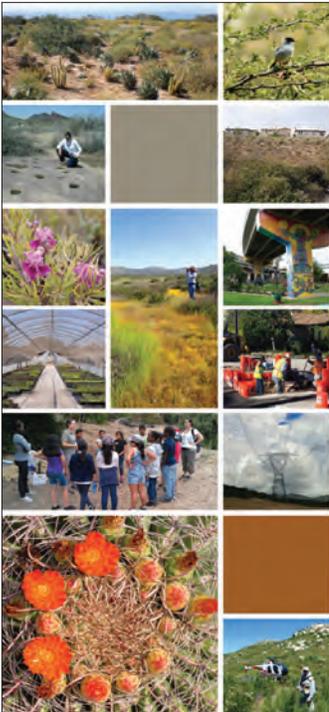
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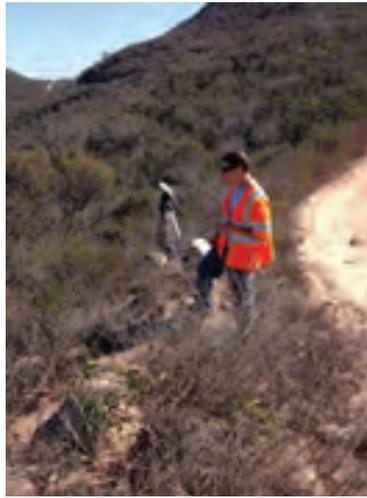


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MEET A BOARD MEMBER: AUSTIN MELCHER, SAN DIEGO AEP SECRETARY



Austin hiking in the San Jacinto Wilderness



Austin taking field noise measurements in north San Diego County



Austin photobombing at the 2014 AEP Holiday Party

What are some of your favorite San Diego activities?

Since I grew up in Michigan I love being outside to take advantage of the year-round beautiful weather in San Diego especially playing soccer in Mission Bay, hiking in east county, and biking around the city. I also enjoy



Austin Sailing in San Diego Bay

frequenting the amazing craft beer establishments in San Diego and occasionally making my own homebrew.

Austin Melcher grew up in East Lansing, Michigan. After studying chemical engineering and environmental sciences at Michigan State University, he moved to San Diego to pursue a career in the environmental field. Through his participation in AEP he was able to find an opportunity with Dudek, where he currently works as an environmental planner. Austin has previously served on the AEP Awards Committee and when he is not working or at an AEP functions he spends his time playing pickup soccer and enjoying San Diego's craft beer scene.

You've recently taken a new position on the board. What made you want to get more involved and take a leadership position with AEP?

When I moved to San Diego I didn't know anybody in this industry and AEP played a big role for me in establishing a professional network and directly led to the opportunity at my current job with Dudek. I think that AEP provides a great platform for learning about important issues and meeting new people in the environmental field and I wanted to be a part of providing that opportunity to others in San Diego.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

The thing I enjoy most about my work is the overall purpose of creating a world that is less environmentally impactful and more sustainable. I also really enjoy the variety of interesting projects and the amazing people that I get to work with who make my job a lot more fun.

What advice would you give to someone starting out in the environmental profession?

My advice would be to get exposure to as many different aspects of the environmental profession as possible early in your career. Being able to apply translational skills and knowledge from different parts of the industry is a great ability and you might even discover that you have a passion for something that you didn't even know was out there.



MEET A BOARD MEMBER: MALIA BASSETT, SAN DIEGO AEP VP OF MEMBERSHIP

Malia grew up in San Diego where she completed her undergraduate degree at UCSD and her Masters Degree in City Planning at SDSU. After graduate school, Malia served in Ghana as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Malia works as an Environmental Planner for ICF International. Malia enjoys spending her free time reading, adventure seeking (within reason), swimming, hiking, live music and walking with her dog, Grohl.

You've recently taken a new position on the board. What made you want to get more involved and take a leadership position with AEP?

Being on the AEP board provides a great platform to assist with the environmental profession in San Diego. It is also instrumental in both interacting and honing my professional skills.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I enjoy the variability that is in each project, which lends to constant thought-provoking work and knowing a little about a lot!

How did you get started in the field?

In graduate school, a major focus of my studies was the relationship between people and the environment we live in. When I joined the Peace Corps, I found that the relationship is something that the people have a responsibility to maintain as I witnessed environmental degradation first-hand in a developing country. I was



Malia hiking at Torrey Pines State Beach

ultimately in Ghana to help the locals better their quality of life, but I realized that wasn't possible if the natural environment wasn't considered in the process. Working as an environmental planner has given me a career path to fulfill those convictions.

What advice would you give to someone starting out in the environmental profession?

Get involved! Volunteer for an organization that matches your personal needs and professional goals. The more involved you are, the more well rounded you will be as a professional.

What is your current role?

Environmental Planner for ICF International.

What have you enjoyed most about working in the environmental field?

I enjoy meeting and working with people who are passionate about positive change through tangible projects.



Malia and Grohl at the beach



Malia tree-hugging internationally in Ghana



ANNOUNCEMENTS

2015 STATE AEP CONFERENCE

AEP is delighted that the 2015 Annual AEP Conference will be hosted by the Channel Counties Chapter in beautiful Santa Barbara, March 22-25, 2015. This year's conference theme is Land to Sea...Strategies to Solutions. The conference will be held in a relaxed, coastal setting at the Fess Parker Doubletree Resort, Santa Barbara. To access online conference registration, please go to <http://califaep.org/events/2015-conference>.



If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Lynne Bynder, AEP Executive Director, at lbynder@califaep.org.

AEP MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Hilary Bird was an Environmental Project Manager at RBF Consulting, a Company of Michael Baker International. Hilary is moving to Norman, Oklahoma to support the Baker operations in the Gulf Region, while continuing to assist the Southern California region as needed. Hilary served as the San Diego AEP Co-VP of Programs in 2014. She can be reached at Hilary.bird@mbakerintl.com. WE WILL MISS YOU, HILARY!

Cara Hilgesen was a Transportation Planner III at Linscott, Law and Greenspan, Engineers, and is now working as a Senior Planner with Latitude 33 Planning & Engineering. Cara was the San Diego AEP Treasurer for six years. She can be reached at cara.hilgesen@latitude33.com.

Laurel Lees was an Environmental Planner with AMEC Environment & Infrastructure, and is now a Project Manager/Senior Environmental Specialist at AECOM (formerly URS). Laurel currently serves as the San Diego AEP Newsletter Editor. She can be reached at laurel.lees@aecom.com.

Matt Valerio was a Senior Project Manager at AECOM, and is now working as a Senior Project Manager at DUDEK. Matt can be reached at mvalerio@dudek.com.

Michael Page was an Associate Principal Environmental Planner with AECOM, and is now working as a Senior Project Manager at RECON Environmental, Inc. Michael can be reached at Mpage@reconenvironmental.com.

Corinne Lytle Bonine was an Environmental Planning Project Manager at URS (now AECOM), and is now a Senior Project Manager at Chambers Group, Inc. Corinne currently serves as the President of San Diego AEP. She can be reached at clytle-bonine@chambersgroupinc.com.

STUDENT AEP MEMBERS SEEKING EMPLOYEMENT/INTERNSHIPS

Nicole Vetter attended the AEP Legislative Update Luncheon at the Courtyard Marriot on November 19, and stood up to introduce herself. Nicole is from Phoenix, Arizona and is currently a senior at the University of San Diego studying Environmental Studies. She had an internship as a research assistant with the United States Geological Survey, and is currently working as an intern providing community outreach and media services for a grassroots environmental campaign. Nicole is also working on a senior seminar on the effects of pollutants and pesticides in California killfish. Nicole was able to travel throughout South-East Asia, which allowed her to pursue her passion of studying new cultures and writing. In her spare time, Nicole practices yoga, and she likes to cook and hike. She is currently searching for a spring semester internship. She will be graduating in May 2015, at which time she would like to pursue a career in environmental consulting. Nicole can be reached at nicolevetter@sandiego.edu.

Christina Hirt also attended the AEP Legislative Update on November 19th. Christina is from Lakewood, California and is currently a Senior



ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONT.)

Honors Environmental Studies major with a Communications minor at the University of San Diego. She recently finished her senior thesis research project titled “Environmental Social Activism in the San Diego-Tijuana Transborder Region” and is currently working as the Conservation Program Intern for the San Diego Audubon Society (SDAS). Last fall she was able to travel to sixteen different countries while studying abroad on Semester at Sea, pursuing her love of travel and the global environment. In her spare time she enjoys running in Mission Bay, playing pick-up soccer games, and taking road trips. Christina will be graduating in May 2015 and finishing up work with the SDAS this summer, at which time she will be pursuing a career in Environmental Planning. Christina was also selected as a 2014 San Diego AEP scholarship recipient. Christina can be reached at cmhirt@sandiego.edu.

Mohamed Alaoudi recently graduated (August 2014) from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) with a BA in Urban Studies & Planning and a minor in Political Science. Mohamed is originally from the Bay Area. His interest in planning has always surrounded transportation and environmental planning. Throughout his courses at UCSD, he has learned about current transportation and environmental issues and challenges, particularly as they pertain to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Mohamed held a research internship at the World Trade Center where he studied, analyzed and wrote about potential partnership with overseas markets and promoted trades. He also held a research internship at Civic San Diego working on reaching out to community members about Civic San Diego’s plans and community development ideas. Mohamed is currently volunteering in the County of San Diego at the Advance Planning Department working on the Updated General Plans Amendments. In his spare time Mohamed enjoys swimming, playing soccer, cooking and traveling. Mohamed can be reached at alaoudi.mohamed@gmail.com.

Matthew Stewart is a junior studying Environmental Sciences at San Diego State University (SDSU). In June 2014 he participated in a study abroad program in Sweden where he examined how Sweden and California are affected by climate change and infectious disease. He has volunteered at the San Diego Earth Fair and is always educating himself on new ways he can be more sustainable. Matthew is a proud member of the SDSU men’s rowing team. He loves the dedication and hard work necessary to be a successful athlete. Matthew is searching for either a spring or summer internship where he will gain valuable experience in the environmental field. He can be reached at matthewlstewart3@gmail.com.

Do you want to make an announcement in our newsletters? Contact the San Diego AEP Newsletter Editor, Laurel Lees, at laurel.lees@aecom.com or sdaepnews@gmail.com.

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Board Meetings are typically held on the second Tuesday of each month. All members are invited to attend. If you would like to attend, please contact the Chapter Secretary, Austin Melcher, for more information. Minutes from each meeting are posted on the Chapter website.