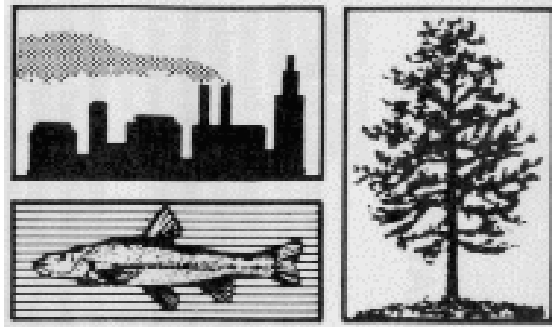


SENRA Newsletter



American Society for Public Administration

November Greetings By David H. Davis

BP Flop in the Lake By Paul J. Culhane

We have set the day and time for our Section annual meeting at the ASPA convention in Dallas. We will gather for breakfast on Sunday, March 9. Note that the conference schedule is almost a day earlier than last year, so make your air reservations to arrive on Friday or Saturday. Again we will have a booth, and so are looking for volunteers to sit there for an hour or two. It is a great way to see your friends.

This is a bonus issue due to the fact that we had so many submissions for the September *Newsletter*. Paul Culhane describes

During the heat of this past summer, the Chicago area boiled with public indignation over a proposed expansion at the BP refinery located at Whiting, Indiana, just east of Chicago on Lake Michigan. On July 15 the *Chicago Tribune* printed a front-page headline “BP gets Break on Dumping in Lake.” The Indiana Department of Environmental Management had issued the company a new NPDES permit allowing significant increases in pollution, including a 54 percent increase in ammonia and 35 percent increase in total suspended solids that included a significant increase in mercury.

The Whiting refinery is BP’s major facility in the Chicago area, and is preparing to refine Canadian heavy crude oil from the tar sands in Alberta.

This permit had gone through an irregular regulatory process off the public radar. On the one hand, some key environmental groups in January 2007 convened a committee of experts – scientists and former EPA officials – to meet with BP to resolve permit issues. On the other hand, after the usual public hearings concluded in

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Editorial concluded

the blundering as the BP refinery in Indiana sought a new effluent permit. At one level it was a PR disaster harming the corporation's green image, but at a higher level it demonstrated conflicts between the international and regional levels of BP. This is one of the most environmentally sensitive companies in the world.

From the other side of the world, Elizabeth Overman and Patsy Daniels tell of their month long visit to Beijing to study its quest to hold a Green Olympics next year. Next Laura Carlson-Humphrey asks whose job is it to conserve the land? From her perspective at the Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Wisconsin, she despairs at declining Federal budgets, and wonders how states and communities can protect their soil and water. Our correspondent in France, Richard Miller, reports on the Grenelle conference. Finally Mary Timney tells of attending a conference with ecological economists, where she found soul mates. These are people who put the environment first, not the almighty dollar.

On the practical side, the links to the Senra web site with the new URL are working. Visit us by the hot link in ASPA or direct at www.utoledo.edu/as/pspa/faculty/davis/senra.htm. Membership is free, but you need to sign up every year when you renew your ASPA membership. In anticipation of the National Conference, the next issue will be in February with a deadline in January .

Next May will mark a hundred years since Theodore Roosevelt's 1908 White House Conference on the Conservation of Natural Resources. What are your agencies doing to mark the centennial?

BP Flop continued

May, the Indiana agency issued its permit in five weeks, an astoundingly fast time considering that it included contentious legal issues. The US EPA regional office declined to use its authority under Clean Water Act section 403 (b) to object to the permit.

After the *Tribune* story broke on Sunday, the permit generated a firestorm of public protest and awful PR for the BP corporate image. On Wednesday, the City of Chicago announced its opposition. Mayor Richard Daley, who has fostered a green image for the city, was livid. That same night, Cameron Davis, president of the Alliance for the Great Lakes, and David Ullrich, director of the Great Lakes Cities Initiative, were on the PBS long-format news program, but BP declined to send a spokesman. This empty-chair debate focused, not on issues like effluent limitation guidelines, but on how this permit ran so counter to BP's efforts to develop a green corporate image.

Within a week, the Chicago Park District mounted a petition drive among visitors to Chicago's beaches against BP's permit. (Yes, having employees of a special purpose district conduct a petition drive is very unusual.) Chicago environmental groups joined in this petition drive.

The entire Chicago regional congressional delegation came out against the permit. Senator Richard Durbin, the deputy majority leader, and Representative Rahm Emanuel, the Democratic political strategist in the House, urged beach-goers to sign petitions. Representative Mark Kirk, who holds one of the Republicans' most marginal districts, located in the suburban North Shore, sent out special constituent

BP Flop continued

newsletters showing him on the beaches fighting BP. A bipartisan group of eight House members wrote the EPA regional office demanding a review of the permit. On July 25, the US House passed a resolution condemning the permit, as did the Illinois Legislature. The issue was just as controversial on the other side of Lake Michigan, with several Michigan municipalities passing anti-BP resolutions. Emanuel's co-sponsor of the anti-BP resolution was Vernon Ehlers, a Michigan Republican. In addition, the City of Chicago began a fleet boycott of BP products, the longtime budget chairman of the city council called for a consumer boycott, and environmentalists picketed a few BP stations. But both the regional and national EPA administrators backed the Indiana permit.

In fact the permit involved a tension between two statutory provisions: nondegradation versus effluent limits. As both the environmental and regulatory professionals understood, the Indiana NPDES permit increased BP's allowable pollution levels, but within the effluent limitation guidelines. Moreover, BP's actual pollution load had been substantially *below* the levels allowed under its prior permit. So what was the problem? On one hand, BP was shifting its refinery processes to accept Canadian tar sands heavy crude, so the refinery faced engineering uncertainties, and wished to hedge its bet by having a higher level. However the environmental advocates, including a group of activist former EPA regional officials, emphasized the nondegradation policies of the Clean Water Act. The BP permit, though for a major facility, would seem relatively small – *if* its increment were the only

change in Lake Michigan. But after two decades of trying to decrease pollution in the Great Lakes, environmentalists feared this permit would set a bad precedent.

In any case, after meeting cooperatively with environmental groups earlier, BP dove into a foxhole after the permit was released, apparently hoping the press coverage and public fracas would blow over. However, from July 15 through August, the *Chicago Tribune* carried sixteen articles or Op-Ed items on the BP case, averaging seventeen column-inches and including six front-page stories. For example on July 20 Mayor Daley and the mayors of Toronto and Racine (co-chairs of the Great Lakes Cities Initiative) published an anti-BP letter on the *Tribune* Op-Ed page, next to the paper's editorial calling the permit "stunningly bone-headed." The coverage was comparable on television and in the southwest Michigan, northwest Indiana, and southeast Wisconsin media markets, as well through viral (Fwd: Fwd: Fwd) e-mail.

The first BP rejoinder came in a letter to the editor on August 8. But the fracas was then out of control. BP North America corporate headquarters removed the case from its Indiana office, and announced on August 16 that it was reconsidering. On August 23 BP caved in and promised to abide by the terms of its old permit.

A conflict like this is never over until it is over, of course. But early in October, Indiana proposed another revised NPDES permit obfuscating effluent limits, this time for the US Steel Gary Works. As insiders noted earlier, the BP permit could be viewed as minor, but the Gary Works is of the three largest pollution sources on the Great Lakes – a giant. The day after the story of the US Steel case broke in the press, the EPA regional office, singed after the BP case, announced it had instructed Indiana, under its 403 (b) review

The Green Olympics in Beijing

By Elizabeth S. Overman and Patsy J. Daniels

Last summer we spent a month studying the urban situation in Beijing. For seventeen days we were joined by seven students from Jackson State University. We were especially interested in the 2008 Olympics, which China has claimed will be environmentally friendly. Unfortunately we found Beijing is not about a Green Olympics as much as about industrial expansion.

In 1949 Mao's Communist army captured Beijing after years of civil war and struggle against the Japanese. Four years later, city leaders developed the first plan for its Reconstruction and Expansion. The latest plan covers the period from 1991-2010. Today this municipality of 6,500 square miles with 12.5 million residents is the third most populous in the world. The area embraces mountain ridges and a desert. The winters are bitterly cold, and the summers are hot and humid. The municipal boundaries contain six UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Sites.

Between 1990 and 2001 investment in urban infrastructure increased from US\$ 180 million to \$2.2 billion. Because urban sprawl is gobbling up what was once countryside and home to thousands of peasants, city officials have had to upgrade huge ex-

panses into districts before they could be absorbed by Beijing. These areas are the sites of industrial coal burning enterprises.

Beijing has shared in the extraordinary growth of China. The national economy, which has grown 9 percent year after year, expanded to 11 percent in the last quarter. Visitors can attest to the unevenness of the development.

We saw every type of conveyance humans have devised on the clogged streets. Buses, some of which are double decked and air-conditioned, supplement a beautifully modern subway system. Private limousines, luxury cars like Lexus and Mercedes, and thousands of cheaper middle-class cars race or crawl along vast boulevards, super highways, and through alleys beside horse drawn carts, and cyclists. We saw men and women pulling or peddling rickshaws. Taxis are everywhere.

Thousands of cranes foretell the appearance of even more corporate office buildings and fashionable modern condominiums. However, most people live in drab ten-story apartments. There are also families living in storefronts. Some of the very poorest, who are usually also the very oldest, reside in *hutongs*, the ancient courtyard houses clustered along narrow alleys.

Starting in 1998, Beijing authorities began to control air pollution by encouraging the use of low-sulfur coal coupled with clean energy practices. They wanted to strictly check automobile emissions and reduce industrial pollution. They aimed to control dust pollution at construction sites and storms from the Gobi desert. Since then over 75,000 coal-fueled boilers have been renovated. Car emissions continue to

BP Flop concluded

authority, under no circumstances to issue the proposed US Steel permit before receiving regional office approval.

Paul J. Culhane is a member of the board of the Alliance for the Great Lakes.

Beijing concluded

climb because the municipal efforts to curb auto pollution are compromised by a national policy that seeks to provide an automobile for every family. Estimates are that a thousand new cars come onto the streets of Beijing daily.

To solve seemingly unrelated problems of huge garbage dumps and the large demand for air conditioning and light, the municipality burns trash to generate electricity, thus polluting the air. The aquifers are empty. Municipal officials have spent untold sums seeding clouds with dry ice fired from rockets to induce rainfall. Water is diverted from other provinces to the capital. Efforts to reduce dust storms include turning cultivated lands and mountainsides into forests by planting trees. The municipality also seeks to ban nomadic herding near the city and to reforest the pastureland. There are five nature preserves within the municipal boundaries, and plans are on line to turn more city-space into green areas.

In preparation for our trip, the students read the Susan Brownell article "China and Olympism" which delineates the Chinese promise to host the world's first green Olympics. Upon arrival, the first significant sight is the Beijing National Stadium, dubbed the Bird's Nest. This is where the opening and closing ceremonies will be held. Made of 45 tons of unwrapped steel beams which mutually support each other, the stadium converges into a gird-like formation with interwoven twigs. Architects hail it as "an aesthetic marvel." The Germans call it an "uber-green machine."

However, questions of waste, efficiency and cost have surfaced. The city budget has been compromised. The design-

ers originally planned to install a rainwater recuperation system, but this was scrapped. They planned to use the sunlight that filtered through the translucent roof to grow a lawn of bluegrass while providing passive ventilation. The roof would have also transformed the open-air stadium into a year round arena. Now there will be no roof. The grass will continue to grow in the open air, but without a roof, the stadium will be far too cold in winter. It is remarkable that the International Olympic Committee believed it would be possible to have the world's first green Olympiad in a country immersed in the problems that come with the world's largest industrial expansion.

Elizabeth S. Overman and Patsy J. Daniels teach at Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi.

1908 White House Conference

Next May 13-15 marks the centennial of the White House Conference on the Conservation of Natural Resources called by Theodore Roosevelt. The organizer was Gifford Pinchot, the new head of the US Forest Service. One result was the National Conservation Commission, which issued a major report the following year.

John Muir was not invited because his goal of protection differed from the practical Pinchot. He and Roosevelt sought efficient use of timber for housing and dams for electricity and irrigation. On the positive side, Roosevelt set aside nearly 200 million acres for national parks and preserves.

Whose Job is Land Conservation?

By Laura L. Carlson-Humphrey

Fall is nearly over. Here in Wisconsin we have enjoyed the spectacular colors. Yet a month after the beginning of the fiscal year, Congress still has not voted annual appropriations for many agencies. Looking at next year, budget discussions will again be held on cutting funds, and demonstrating to constituents how well they have spent tax dollars. They will look at items line-by-line to determine if a program has produced tangible results. It is only with proof that governments can convince tax payers that it was worth the investment of their money. Those items that are not flashy, or are long-term -- such as conservation practices -- are always in jeopardy.

Conservation practices such as prairie and wetland restoration, small watershed dams, wildlife habitat, or no-till planting are usually part of a federally funded program adopted from the nation's earliest conservation efforts that recognized that soil conservation was in the public interest. Local governments have relied on the national government to provide technical assistance and cost-share funds. The 2002 Farm Bill, which rewards conservation, is currently being rewritten by Congress. Conservation programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Watershed Operations, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and the Wetlands Reserve Program, to name a few that provide cost sharing, are subject to being reduced in funding or eliminated to decrease the deficit. These programs are the carrot to landowners and local communities to encourage conservation.

So if the national government cuts

funding for these programs (which is highly likely), whose job will it be to ensure stewardship of our homeland? The national level must do its part, and should consider that without a homeland there will be no need for any homeland security against terrorists. However states, local communities and private citizens must assume their share of leadership and responsibility. Partnerships must be established and local leadership must assume responsibilities for funding shortfalls.

How can Members of Congress convince their constituents that it is worth their money to invest in conservation practices that take many years? Too often local governments and citizens say "we have lived here forever and nothing major has happened." Hurricane Katrina obviously was not listening. Closer to me, there was the flooding of the Mississippi in 1993, and recently severe flooding in southern Wisconsin. Although this area was in a designated 1000 year flood plan, so far floods have risen to this level twice this year, sweeping away roads, bridges, and endangering emergency dam spillways.

Government agencies can make general forecasts of catastrophes to serve as guidelines, but the exact devastation to land, buildings or life is not known until after the event. The fact is that since the formation of the Soil Conservation Service in response to the Dust Bowl, the benefits of soil conservation are well known. Now renamed, the Natural Resources Conservation Service continues the work. The August flooding in southwest Wisconsin threatened many dams in the area, but all

Ecolo-Zarko in Grenelle, France

By Richard O. Miller

As part of his recent election campaign, the new president of France, Nicholas Sarkozy, promised an environmental forum. The conference met at Grenelle, west of Paris, for three months. On October 25, with guest of honor Al Gore by his side, Sarkozy, spoke at the conclusion. The summit had brought together scientists, agriculturalists, business and industry and NGO's to develop a national plan. The final days were overseen by Jean-Louis Borloo, the Minister of Ecology.

"Ecolo-Zarko," as *Le Monde* dubbed him, could take pride in the success at Grenelle, as it marked a major change. For the first time, environmental and other NGO's were part of decision-making processes. The groups mapped out a plan to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, lower pollution and promote biodiversity.

The proposals are far reaching. Key features for transportation are freezing new highway and airport construction, selling more fuel-efficient cars, expanding tramways and the TGV train system, and moving

trucks onto cross-country rail links. For agriculture, pesticides are to be reduced by 50 percent and the amount of land devoted to bio-farming is to be raised to 20 percent. Genetically modified crops are a contentious issue. Sarkozy endorsed the idea of a moratorium on commercial GM crops pending further study of their risks.

Nuclear power, which generates 80 percent of France's electricity, was not open for discussion. However, Sarkozy urged a freeze on new plant construction. He also suggested imposing a tax on goods imported from countries that were not party to the Kyoto agreement.

Richard O. Miller, who is a past chair of SENRA, resides in Uzes, France.

Visions of Dallas

Dallas, site of our conference in March, has a dry climate and few factories, so its air rates as moderate non-attainment by EPA. Water is always scarce on the high plains, and this past year had shortages. Visionary leadership began in the 1880s when businessmen enticed the Texas & Pacific Railway to come using bribery and a last minute rider on a bill before the legislature.

Economists concluded

per. I encourage SENRA members to check out www.USSEE.org.

Mary Timney, who teaches at Pace University, is the author of *Power for the People*.

Soil and Water concluded

held and prevented millions of dollars in property damage and loss of life. Now through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program, NRCS is providing critical dam repairs and removing debris from waterways that could be disastrous in the event of additional rain.

Laura L. Carlson-Humphrey is the area administrator for the USDA Natural Resources Conversation Service in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Environmental Economics By Mary Timney

In June my university, Pace, hosted the fourth biennial conference of the US Society for Ecological Economics. I am not an economist, and in fact, I am an outspoken critic of market economics when it comes to solving environmental problems. Nonetheless, it seemed like an opportunity to make my arguments inside the lion's den.

What I found, however, was pretty amazing. These are my kind of economists, and the conference was the most interdisciplinary in terms of program and participants that I have ever attended. Besides economists, there were biologists, geographers, foresters, engineers, and sustainable developers. There were green roof developers, hydrologists, and two public administrationists. A total of 250 attended from around the world: Brazil and India for example.

In his keynote, David Orr of Oberlin College predicted that if we do not have policies in place to stop climate change within ten years, then the planet will be lost. The first plenary featured Eban Goodstein, a young economist from Lewis and Clark College, who is organizing Focus the Nation, a teach-in on January 31. He is looking for universities to participate (www.focusthenation.org). Mathis Wackernagel of Global Footprint Network discussed sustainable development twenty-five years after the Brundtland Report.

The papers included some defenders of mainstream economics, but the overall focus of ecological economics is to put ecology first, and then figure out economics that work with the environment rather than trading it off or destroying it. Charles Hall of the Environmental and Forest Biology

Win \$500 Book Prize

The annual Senra book prize contest is underway. The book should have been published in the past year, and written or edited by a Section member on the topic of the environment or natural resources. Our criteria are outstanding accomplishment of the research objectives, high-quality writing, and a lasting contribution to scholarship and research. The winner will receive a prize of \$500 presented at the Dallas conference. The judges are Mary Timney, Mary Belefski and Lee Lamb.

As the first step, send an e-mail to Mary Timney at Pace University with the title, author, publication date, and a short justification. Then send three copies of the book by January 15. Earlier is better. If you are not able to send three copies, we will try to accommodate you by finding copies in libraries or by interlibrary loan. Send the information to MTimney@Pace.edu or telephone 212-346-1469. Mail books to 1459 Summit Avenue, Peekskill, NY 10566.

program at SUNY-Syracuse delivered a provocative paper entitled "The Necessity of Replacing Neoclassical Economics with Biophysical Economics." He pressed every speaker at panels that he attended to justify the commodification of natural entities.

This was the most interesting conference I have attended in a long time. I told my husband after the first day that I had found the organization I have been looking for for thirty years. The organization could use more public policy experts, as well as more government practitioners. My paper on the role of the states in sustainable development policy was the only policy pa-