



PNWIS STRATEGIC PLAN

BLUE SKY III

MAY 31, 2006



**AIR & WASTE MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION**

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SINCE 1907

Pacific Northwest International Section

PREAMBLE

The Pacific Northwest International Section (PNWIS) of the Air & Waste Management Association (A&WMA) held a strategic planning session April 7-8, 2006. The session was the third of a series of formal strategic planning sessions held in the past decade and as such it was called "Blue Sky III."

The Section last engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process in 1999 (Blue Sky II). Since that time, the Section has become stronger on a number of fronts. It has become financially stronger, better organized and structured, generated more energy and momentum amongst the members, sponsored a number of successful events, and developed a strong Student Environmental Challenge program. It is on this solid foundation that the PNWIS Board wanted to determine the Section's future direction based on the evolving needs of the organization and its members.

The purpose of Blue Sky III was to review progress since Blue Sky II and update the PNWIS strategic plan. The Strategic Planning Committee members who participated in Blue Sky III are listed below. The members were selected on the basis of geographic distribution, a mix of veterans and people new to PNWIS, and representation from each of the chapters and the PNWIS Board. There was also a "legacy" representative for a connection to the A&WMA parent organization. The session was facilitated by Bert Zethof, CMC, of The Zethof Consulting Group Inc.:

- Dave Dornbush, PNWIS President 2005-06
- Denise Newbould, PNWIS President, 2006-07
- Dan Mahar, PNWIS President-Elect 2006-07, Communications/Membership Committee Chair
- Al Trbovich, Alaska Chapter, Technical Committee Chair
- Ken Reid, BC/Yukon Chapter
- Kevin Schilling, Idaho Chapter
- Beth Fifield Hodgson, Inland NW Chapter
- Kumar Ganesan, Montana Chapter, Environmental Challenge Committee Chair
- Kathi Futornick, Oregon Chapter
- Steve Rybolt, Puget Sound Chapter
- Chris Robins, Vancouver Island Chapter
- Jay Willenberg, A&WMA Sections and Chapters Representative

The Committee felt that the new strategic plan needed to focus on a few priorities to ensure follow through on the action plans. With limited resources and volunteers, it was important to have a realistic to-do list. After some discussion, it was concluded that PNWIS will focus on three top priorities: ensuring members receive value; support for the Section's chapters; and mentoring of environmental professionals.

The Strategic Planning Committee developed a strategic plan in draft form. After presentation to the PNWIS Board during the May 5-6, 2006 meeting, the plan was finalized and posted on the PNWIS web site in June, 2006. PNWIS membership feedback will be requested and then factored into Board discussion of Blue Sky priorities and implementation of associated action plans.

The main body of this document sets out the mission statement, goals, priorities, action plans, and next steps resulting from Blue Sky III. The Blue Sky III agenda and the Committee's notes on the situation assessment are attached as appendices.

If you have any comments or suggestions pertaining to the strategic plan, contact any of the past, current or incoming PNWIS presidents:

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Committee updated the Section's mission statement consistent with A&WMA's core purpose.¹ The PNWIS mission statement answers why the organization exists, its business niche, and who it serves. The Vision statement from Blue Sky II was not incorporated into this strategic plan since it is the intention of PNWIS to share the organizational vision set forth by A&WMA.

PNWIS is an environmental leader providing a neutral forum for discussion, education, and networking to promote environmental stewardship in the Northwest U.S., British Columbia and Yukon Canada.

VALUES

The PNWIS values and beliefs, first articulated at Blue Sky II, are presented below. Because an organization's values are timeless and permanent in nature, they have been carried forward into this updated strategic plan. The planning group did not discuss this list of values explicitly at Blue Sky III, although the continuing importance of these values was evident throughout the planning session:

- We strive for cohesion with other parts of A&WMA.
- We are a catalyst and provide support for chapters within our Section.
- We value the uniqueness of having both US and Canadian members.
- We encourage open communication and integration.
- We focus on technical information to make informed environmental decisions.
- We respond to the needs of our chapters and members.
- We encourage mentoring of environmental professionals
- We provide opportunities for personal leadership, development and growth.

¹ The strategic plan developed at Blue Sky II in 1999 stated that PNWIS shared A&WMA's vision statement. Subsequently, A&WMA decided to incorporate the essence of its vision statement into a core purpose statement which reads: "To improve environmental knowledge and decisions by providing a neutral forum for exchanging information." The essence of the A&WMA core purpose is captured in the updated PNWIS mission statement.

GOALS

Goals are the desired outcomes or results that PNWIS intends to achieve in the process of carrying out its mission. From these goals, PNWIS can develop performance measures for tracking success in implementing the strategic plan. The success measures established in Blue Sky II formed the basis for discussion and development of these goals:

- Financially viable.
- Active and diverse membership.
- Mutually supportive relationships between leadership of A&WMA, PNWIS and the Chapters.
- Accessible PNWIS services and activities.
- Excellence in technical programming and networking opportunities.
- A growing cadre of new environmental professionals.
- An informed public.

All of these goals are important, but the Section is doing better with some of the goals than with others. For example, the Section has improved its financial position significantly in recent years. The aim is to continue the activities that are working well, while focusing on those goals that need more attention. Hence, the planning group identified three priorities for action in the near term that are intended to have a major positive impact on the achievement of the goals. Of course, this doesn't mean the Section will ignore other goals; and, will continue to maintain its current strengths.

PRIORITIES

The strategic planning committee identified three priorities to focus on in the near term: ensuring membership value; supporting the Section's chapters; and mentoring of environmental professionals. Results in these areas will go a long ways towards achieving the Section's goals. Action planning, including status and completion dates, will continue as part of PNWIS Board quarterly meeting agenda's. Other priorities will be identified and addressed as time and resources permit.

MEMBERSHIP VALUE

This priority is about ensuring that PNWIS members get good value for their membership.

RESPONSIBILITY: Membership Committee

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- PNWIS Board to establish a budget (e.g. information/welcome package).

ACTION PLAN:

- Complete posting of PNWIS Officers and Directors biographies on the web site (encourage chapter parallel).
- Define what constitutes a "member" for whom PNWIS provides services and support (May 2006) and revise PNWIS bylaws as necessary.
- Conduct a membership needs survey, coordinating with chapters where appropriate, and covering PNWIS "members" residing in both active and inactive chapter regions.
- Follow-up on survey results.
- Develop a PNWIS welcome package and information package. (timing depends on budget)
- Post expert technical papers on web site, starting with technical papers presented at PNWIS annual meetings and events. (2008)
- Promote PNWIS' services. (Ongoing)

CHAPTER SUPPORT

This priority is about strengthening relationships with chapter leaders and champions throughout the Section and providing support for chapter success.

RESPONSIBILITY: To be determined by Board.

Options: Past President, Membership Committee, or a new committee for chapter relations.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Board to establish a budget, e.g. travel. (May 2006)
- Number of chapters represented at PNWIS Board meetings.
- See A&WMA criteria for active chapters.

ACTION PLAN:

- Review and evaluate chapter annual reports and records to assess “state of the chapter” and developmental needs. (May 2006)
- Approach chapters to determine support needs – annual visits by PNWIS Board leadership (i.e. past, current or incoming PNWIS president) . (May 2007)
- Evaluate feasibility of video conferencing for PNWIS Board meetings. (report 2008)
- Restructure the PNWIS Board meeting agenda to ensure enough time for chapter reports and networking, with a more formalized networking/dialogue opportunity at every February PNWIS Board meeting.
- Put *“Guide to Planning a PNWIS Annual Meeting and Conference”* on the PNWIS web site. (November 2006)

MENTORING OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS

This priority is about mentoring environmental professionals as they progress from being students to graduates building their careers in the environmental field, and participating as A&WMA members.

RESPONSIBILITY: Student Programs Committee (for Board discussion)

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Board to establish a budget. (May 2006)
- To be determined after market research done. Consider number of educational institutions on board, number of students involved, and number of new student chapters.

ACTION PLAN:

- Post internship opportunities on the PNWIS web site. (September 2006)
- Conduct research and build a database to identify environmental programs, instructors, and students. (report May 2007)
- Establish performance measures with targets based on the results of the research step. (May 2007)
- Collaborate with chapter Boards in planning and implementation.
- Engage faculty instructors as the “go-between”: hold workshops, establish new student chapters, and attract student members. (September 2007)
- Develop a mentoring program for students and graduates, adapting the A&WMA mentoring program where appropriate. (February 2008)
- Organize career workshops on environmental topics.

IMPLEMENTATION

With a view to implementing the strategic plan, the planning committee developed steps to stimulate and maintain a dialogue about this plan with chapters and members. The committee also intends to embed strategic planning more fully into PNWIS business practices so that the plan is reviewed and updated frequently.

1. Present the strategic plan to the PNWIS Board for review and approval. (May 2006)
2. Incorporate Board comments and finalize the strategic plan. (May 2006)
3. Post the strategic plan on the PNWIS web site and request membership feedback. (June 2006). Member comments received will be factored into Board discussion of priorities and implementation of associated action plans
4. Present a PNWIS annual report and the new strategic plan at the PNWIS annual meeting in Victoria. (November 2006)
5. Provide a hard copy summary of the strategic plan in the delegate registration package at the PNWIS annual meeting in Victoria. (November 2006)
6. Each PNWIS quarterly board meeting will include discussion of the PNWIS Strategic Plan and implementation of Blue Sky III priorities and action plans.

APPENDIX I

PNWIS STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – BLUE SKY III

APRIL 7-8, 2006

AGENDA

TIME	DESCRIPTION
Friday, April 7	
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and Introduction• Visioning• Progress Assessment• Situation Assessment
Saturday, April 8	
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goals and Priorities• Action Plans• Implementation and Next Steps

APPENDIX II

SITUATION ASSESSMENT

The Strategic Planning Committee discussed the current situation facing PNWIS. The committee: (1) defined the Section's unique and valued role to reach a common understanding of the core reason for being; (2) identified the needs of the members served by PNWIS; and (3) identified the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the Section (i.e. SWOT analysis).

Understanding the current situation was the first task undertaken at Blue Sky III and was a necessary exercise to review and update the strategic plan. Having a dialogue on the current state is an effective way for veteran members to remind themselves about why the organization exists and for new participants to understand the organization's roots and aspirations. It gets everyone on the "same page." It is recommended that the PNWIS Board conduct a similar current situation assessment whenever revising or updating the strategic plan.

UNIQUE AND VALUED ROLE OF PNWIS

- Clearing house for information and communications hub
- Collaborative mechanism for chapter leaders
- Support and resources for regular and student chapters
- The connector for A&WMA activity in the PNWIS region

MEMBER NEEDS²

- An environmental community
- Belonging to an effective organization
- Mentoring to bridge academic and professional worlds
- Networking and connecting with people in a neutral forum
- Opportunity to contribute
- Opportunity to pool resources
- Personal and professional growth
- Prestige of association

² Based on the knowledge of the members of the strategic planning committee.

PNWIS STRENGTHS

- Annual meeting
- A&WMA connection
- A&WMA is #1 in air quality
- Can change organization direction easily
- Central web site (hosting) for PNWIS and its chapters
- Corporate sponsorships
- Cost/value effective programs
- Current financial state
- Diverse but interconnected PNWIS leaders
- Diversity of geography and culture; international
- Experience and team leadership
- Fun factor
- Leadership succession
- Networking opportunities
- Spirit of volunteerism
- Student activities
- Well-established reputation, recognition, and image

PNWIS WEAKNESSES

- Communication gaps (e.g. between conference chairs, chapter chairs, officers)
- Confusion about relationships between A&WMA, PNWIS and chapters
- Gaps in membership base (i.e. waste-oriented, industry, government)
- Lack of basic training programs for members
- Lack of information about membership needs/activities
- Lack of diversity in technical forums
- Limited outreach and support for university/college students (except the Student Environmental Challenge program)
- Need to enhance Canadian content of technical programs
- Not addressing some environmental issues
- Small core group of volunteers
- Some inactive chapters
- Weak relationship with A&WMA Technical Council

OPPORTUNITIES

- Accessing funding available for new programs
- Addressing new environmental issues
- Capitalizing on high level of public interest in environmental issues
- Diversifying our membership base and scope of technical programs
- Forming partnerships with other associations
- Improving relations with A&WMA
- Linking with A&WMA programming activity in Canada and the US.
- Outreach to more educational institutions
- Public outreach
- Right sizing our events to fit the market
- Tapping into A&WMA Technical Council
- Using electronic communication more effectively

THREATS

- Competition from other environmental organizations
- Delivery of A&WMA technical programs in our region that are not coordinated with PNWIS
- Economic downturn and budget constraints preventing member participation in PNWIS events
- Important benefits of A&WMA membership are intangible and difficult to promote
- Inadequate attention paid to future PNWIS leadership succession
- Internet training and information resources impacting on technical programs
- Large geographic area to cover
- Loss of membership/interest if increase diversity of programs
- Reduction in support from some organizations (e.g. EPA)
- Scarcity of industry members
- Trying to do too much at expense of excellence