**2014 NAEP Conference Track Descriptions**

**Brownfields**

The responsible redevelopment and productive reuse of Brownfield sites can mean new sustainable development opportunities, improved community and environmental stewardship, and the elimination of potential impacts to human health. The public sector can benefit from an increased number of employment opportunities, increased local and state tax revenues, improvements in the community’s quality of life, and a reduction in urban sprawl. The Brownfield track will cover these topics and more as they relate to the redevelopment of Brownfield sites in our communities.

**Cultural Resources**

Cultural Resources are often an afterthought in world of environmental compliance and yet by law they are equally as important. Indeed, neglecting to address them adequately can lead to anything from project delays, at best, to political black eyes at worst, and everything in between. The sessions in the Cultural Resources track are designed to assist environmental professionals understand and negotiate some potential pitfalls of cultural resources compliance.

**Geology/Subsurface**

The goal of the Geology/Subsurface track is to provide examples of alternative and useful tools with which the environmental professional can implement into their assessment. Various techniques may include geophysical or geochemical methodologies. Additionally, this track is to educate professionals on the importance of understanding the geologic structure for which they are working in. To better understand this concept could result in saving precious time and money.

**Land Management**

This session will look at the mitigation, monitoring, and adaptive management of solar energy production on public lands in two presentations from representatives of Argonne National Laboratories.  Environmental stewardship and property rights will be assessed in respect to changing economic conditions as a result of the recent increases in energy production.

**NEPA**

The purpose of the NEPA track is to provide practitioners with a comprehensive overview and refresher of the most important recent NEPA policy and legal updates, as well as tips, techniques, and case studies for improving NEPA analyses in a number of key practice areas. This year’s panel and individual paper sessions will address topics including: Annual NEPA Case Law and Policy Update; NEPA Compliance in Emergency Situations; NEPA Best Practices; Analysis of Noise Impacts; NEPA Analysis for Wind Energy Projects; and Impact Analysis for Night Sky Resources.

**Oceans: Multiple Uses and Priorities**

The purpose of the Oceans Track is to explain the multiple uses and priorities that impact our oceans and coasts. America is intricately connected to and directly reliant on the oceans and coasts. With more thanr 95,000 miles of coastline and the largest exclusive economic zone in the world, America benefits from a wealth of goods and services derived from ocean and coastal ecosystems. America’s stewardship of the oceans and coasts is intimately linked to environmental sustainability, human health and well-being, national prosperity, adaptation to climate change, and national security. Our welfare depends on healthy marine ecosystems and these same systems are vulnerable to various competing human actions such as aquaculture, fishing, energy production, military uses, shipping, and tourism.

**Remediation**

The Remediation Track is a forum to promote partnerships among public- and private-sector environmental professionals. Our goal is to exchange information on technologies, operations, management approaches, economics and public policies in the critical areas of environmental protection, assessment and remediation. Industry experts will be presenting on leading edge technologies that provide the latest update on new advances, development and challenges while showcasing best practices, cost-effectiveness and sustainability. These sessions are an opportunity to develop new collaborations and gather experts on the different topics such as pollution detection; environmental remediation; pollution prevention; water, soil and air pollution and treatment; wastewater management and treatment; desalination; renewable and non-renewable energies; oil spills and cleanups; Florida’s Oil & Gas Program; and impacts of industrialization on the environment.

**Sustainability**

This track will have several presentations and panel discussions of sustainability practices throughout our profession including incorporating sustainability concepts into site cleanups, local environmental protection efforts, and implementing sustainability in large public organizations.  Specific approaches will be provided in presentations on infrastructure rating systems, solar energy compliance manuals, animal telemetry observation networks, and global Environmental Health and Safety management systems.  Presentations will address fish hatcheries, a river, green water fronts, and an urban forest.

**Transportation**

The Transportation Track consists of single and panel presentations that focus on various modes of transportation strategies for addressing environmental issues of transportation projects, and best practices and lessons learned from recent or ongoing projects. Past sessions have focused high speed rail, passenger rail, bridge reconstruction, complicated highway projects, and streamlined permitting for transportation projects. Other modes of transportation that are of interest are trails, bicycles, barges, and cargo shipping. Many of the speakers focus on the environmental clearance challenges including permitting, interagency and tribal coordination, and compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In addition, the 2013 transportation legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), contains significant provisions to streamline the environmental review process for highway and transit projects, and the implementation of the act’s provisions are of interest to not only transportation but regulatory and resource agencies.

**Visual**

The major theme for the visual track is the 'visual landscape impact in the coastal zone' and 'renewable energy development siting issues on shore and offshore'. We are in the processing of recruiting speakers from NOAA addressing the issue of docks and piers impacts, plus other speakers who will address renewable energy development visual impact in Maine, Massachusetts and North Carolina. There will likely be some representation from Argonne National laboratory who is doing much of the visual impact assessment research for USDI BLM and National Park Service – specifically wind and solar VIA.

**Water Resources**

One of the most pressing issues facing planners today is the effective management of our water resources, including ensuring that healthful, potable water supplies are available to everyone, and that our communities are protected from the devastating impacts of flooding.  As the world’s population expands, it is becoming increasingly apparent that a large percentage of the world’s population does not have access to reliable water supplies that meet basic health standards. The Water Resources track covers the broad range of integrated water resource planning issues, including: water supply, wastewater treatment and disposal, recycled water use, water conservation, groundwater management, sustainability, watershed protection, stormwater management, flood protection, and water quality. The focus is clearly on the field of integrated water resource management and planning- learning to maximize this precious resource while protecting environmental, economic and societal interests, all in the face of potential climatic changes and the required adaptation strategies that may be necessary to mitigate any resulting impacts.

**Wetlands**

Wetlands are an integral part of the landscape. Identifying them and understanding how they work are crucial factors. They can enhance a project, provide recreational and wildlife viewing opportunities, support listed species, provide storage or attenuation, be part of the stormwater treatment train, serve as conservation areas, or mitigation to off-set unavoidable impacts. Wetlands can also present challenges to projects. This track will provide examples, lessons learned, trends, and new cutting edge approaches through presentations by private and public sector professionals.

**Wildlife**

Wildlife poses a variety of management, regulatory and study issues due to their complexity and mobility in the environment.  Understanding their interaction with flora, other fauna and the physical environment is a fascinating and an ongoing field of study.  Recent developments in our understanding of wildlife have improved how we conduct our businesses and how governmental agencies regulate our activities within the environment.  The wildlife track will delve into how we as professionals can improve upon our practices, develop public-private partnerships, and build infrastructure that meets the needs of wildlife.