**TRACK DESCRIPTIONS**

**Brownfields**

This year’s Brownfields Track is spotlighting projects located across the State of Oregon.  We will hear from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) about their role in the Portland Harbor Superfund project and their site assessment work as part of the State Response Brownfield EPA grant program.  We will also hear about a unique approach taken by the City of Portland to engage the community affected by a brownfield site and the lessons learned along the way.  Lastly, we will hear about a third generation brownfield project in the South Waterfront of Portland involving multiple state and local stakeholders that incorporates environmental cleanup, economic uplift, and long-term benefit to the community. As with all of our conference sessions, there will be an aspect of multidisciplinary cooperation that will be discussed as part of these presentations.

**Cultural Resources**

Cultural Resources are often an afterthought in the 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 this year are designed to assist environmental professionals in understanding and negotiating some potential pitfalls of cultural resources compliance. The first session examines topics surrounding cultural landscapes, including the little understood and much-maligned traditional cultural property, highway projects’ impacts on native plant use, and agricultural landscapes in Europe. The second session uses case studies to explore the thorny issue of “recent-past resources”—those that have recently achieved fifty years of age. Panel participants will discuss current compliance requirements and newly evolving best-practice standards as regard national highway projects and disaster-relief efforts from federal, state, and architectural history perspectives. The third session uses one topic—producing gold on public lands—as the center point around which to facilitate discussion about NEPA and Section 106 compliance during pre-exploration planning, exploration, and operations expansion. A fourth session uses a tunnel lid retrofit project within a historic commercial district to discuss how a multidisciplinary team approach coupled with robust public involvement can successfully lead to engineering solutions that minimize adverse effects to both historic properties and local businesses while also meeting technical project needs.

**Energy Bootcamp: Environmental Professionals and the Renewable Energy Economy**

Energy supplies, energy installations, and energy uses occupy a central role in modern economies, and they generate an increasing amount of work for environmental practitioners in government, companies, consultancies, and academia. All too often, however, the training of environmental practitioners has not emphasized the breadth of perspective that enables them to work at the highest level possible. This track will outline a broad framework of factors that impinge upon renewable energy projects. The first session will provide perspective on the fossil fuels and nuclear power so that practitioners will better understand the ways in which renewable energy sources fit within the current energy economy. Emphasis will be on electricity, but the holistic model of the energy economy will include biomass and transport fuels. We will discuss federal, tribal, state, and local powers and their affect on the politics of energy development. Site selection for renewable energy projects, financing, and legal matters will also be presented.

The second session will focus on efficiency, the harvesting of energy through pipelines and transmission facilities that stretch across right-of-ways and vast stretches of land, and climate change and energy. The session will wrap up with a presentation forecasting the political climate in 2012 and its potential impacts on the energy economy.

**Land & Watershed Management**

Land and watershed management decisions are often the most far reaching “big picture” determinations facing federal, state, and local agencies. This track will address many environmental issues that cross jurisdictional borders and resource disciplines. Presentations will include emerging mitigation practices and several case studies highlighting emerging planning techniques.

**NEPA**

The purpose of the NEPA track is to provide practitioners with a comprehensive overview of the most important recent NEPA policy and legal updates, as well as tips and techniques for improving NEPA analyses in a number of critical areas. This year’s panel and individual paper sessions will address topics including: NEPA and Climate Change; Assessing a Reasonable Range of Alternatives; NEPA Case Law and Policy Update; Effective Use of Categorical Exclusions; How to Successfully Implement Third-Party NEPA Analyses; How to Define the Proper Scope for Transboundary Impacts; and numerous case studies of NEPA analyses in the Pacific northwest.

**Professional Development**

Environmental professionals need to stand out in order to compete for jobs or to advance their careers. It is critical to stay abreast of the latest changes in regulations, technology, and best practices.  Continuous professional development has always been essential for individuals who want to achieve high performance in environmental planning, management, and compliance.   With the most difficult economy in 75 years, it is even more crucial to build up one’s knowledge, skills, abilities, and credentials to add value to our organizations and to our career growth and job security.

This year’s Professional Development Track focuses on vital continuing education, expanding our body of knowledge, achieving professional certification, and learning what employers want in both existing employees and new hires. The Academy of Board Certified Environmental Professionals (ABCEP) and American Public University (APU) collaborate to share how education and certification can help you reach your career objectives.

ABCEP advances the cause of maintaining a body of knowledge that will help both new environmental professionals develop their skills and experienced professionals access information that is needed to carry out activities in this field. The Environmental Career Center hosts the 6th annual NAEP Green Careers Seminar. The panel of employers will help students, aspiring environmental professionals, and career changers learn what employers look for in prospective staff.  You'll find out what education, personal attributes, training, and specialized experience are needed, along with inside tips you need to secure a career that makes a difference!

**Public Participation**

Successful projects require meaningful public engagement but how can we do that? There are a number of public participation tools out there today but which ones are effective and when? This track will provide the practitioner with insight into a number of different ways and tools for engaging the public, how they work and when they are the most effective.

**Transportation**

The Transportation Track has four intriguing sessions each addressing different aspects of environmental clearance challenges for transportation projects.  Session 1:  Focuses on environmental issues that go along with bridges including birds, endangered species, and historic resources.  Session 2:  Panelists from Pacific Northwest agencies and consultants will talk about the challenges of three large, technically difficult, and politically charged projects involving numerous jurisdictions and multiple lead and cooperating agencies. Session 3:  Learn how high speed rail projects in Washington State and the West Coast use public outreach, enhanced NEPA analysis, and inter-agency teams to reduce project risk’s and keep projects on schedule.  Session 4:  Learn successful strategies for streamlining environmental approvals and permits.  Recent studies conducted by the Transportation Research Board investigating the causes of delays in transportation NEPA and permitting processes will be discussed.  In addition, learn how developing an environmental approvals and permit guide is being used by the California’s High-Speed Train project to meet ambitious project construction schedules.

**Visual Resources**

Scenery management and visual resource impact assessment (VIA) has emerged as a “hot button” topic in environmental permitting. The increase in energy and transmission projects proposed on both public and private lands emphasizes the need for further discussion on how best to address potential impacts to our landscape. This 3-day track builds on the preceding “Advanced Topics in Scenery Management and Impact Assessment” training by bringing together federal and state agencies, developers, NGOs, and environmental practitioners

engaged in this topic. The goal is to expose participants to the latest technological advances and research in scenery management and VIA.

The Scenery Management and VIA Track will address the contemporary scenery management planning scenarios of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, the Maine Wind Energy Act, regional regulatory review of off-shore wind development in Cape Cod, and landscape planning in Germany. Presentations will also speak to broad subject matter pertaining to VIA, including the following topic areas:

* Visual Impact Risk Assessment
* Visual Impact Threshold Distances
* Visual Magnitude
* Mitigation and Design
* Aesthetic Perception and Experience
* Cultural Landscape
* Scientific, Economic, and Legal Views
* VIA practices in State DOTs
* Scenic Byways and Scenic Prioritization
* Cross-jurisdictional Coordination

A poster session will include presentations of project-specific VIA. Attendees are encouraged to use this opportunity to explore the broad application of project design, mitigation, and VIA under varied project scenarios.

**Wetlands**

This year the wetland track will focus on two main topics over two sessions.  The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) have issued guidance regarding which waters/wetlands are regulated and protected under the Clean Water Act (CWA).  One of our sessions will discuss the scientific basis of the current draft guidance and the role science, politics and policy have in determining “significant nexus” which is utilized in determining whether a

Subject water body, stream, or wetland is protected under CWA. The other session will highlight restoration, enhancement, and creation projects through updates, discussion of design guidelines, and discussion of performance measures related to 4 unique projects.  These include post Hurricane Katrina finfish and shellfish recovery in Alabama, restoration efforts in the middle reaches of the Columbia River, restoration within Florida Bay as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP), and Loxahatchee Mitigation Bank.