



AIR & WASTE MANAGEMENT  
ASSOCIATION

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SINCE 1907

PACIFIC NORTHWEST  
INTERNATIONAL  
SECTION

# PNWIS STRATEGIC REVIEW AND PLAN

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## BLUE SKY II

**FINALIZED NOVEMBER 7, 2000**

# PREAMBLE

The Pacific Northwest International Section (PNWIS) of the Air & Waste Management Association (A&WMA) held a strategic planning session October 1-2, 1999. The session was coined "Blue Sky II".

Blue Sky II was the section's first dedicated strategic planning session since February 1993, when the first Blue Sky planning retreat was held. The purpose of Blue Sky II was to assess progress against the 1993 strategic plan, to revisit and revise the strategy in preparation for the new millennium, to foster greater communication within the PNWIS family, and to build a consensus around a vision, mission, and actions for PNWIS.

The Strategic Planning Committee members who participated in Blue Sky II are listed below. The session was facilitated by Bert Zethof, CMC, of CrossPoint Strategic Inc.:

- Jim Pfeiffer, President
- Chris Robins, Vice President
- Christy Schmitt, Secretary
- Steve Van Slyke, Treasurer
- Angela Blaisdell, Past President
- Beverly Williams, Education and Public Outreach Committee Chair
- John Core, Strategic Planning Committee Chair
- Dave Dornbush, Puget Sound Chapter member
- Melissa McAfee, Director and Technical Committee Chair
- Martha Moore, Director
- Jay Willenberg, A&WMA Director

The Committee concluded that the 1993 strategic plan is still fundamentally sound. What is needed is greater enthusiasm and more widespread participation by PNWIS members in the association. A new priority arising from Blue Sky II is more communication with and between members and chapters as a critical ongoing process for injecting more energy into PNWIS and for supporting the A&WMA mission.

The Strategic Planning Committee developed a strategic plan in draft form. This draft plan was posted on the PNWIS website for an extended period with a request for comments and feedback. Member feedback was incorporated into the plan and the plan was finalized in November 2000.

The main body of this document sets out the vision, mission statement, success measures, core strategies, actions plans, and implementation plan resulting from Blue Sky II. The Blue Sky II agenda and the Committee's notes on the assessment of the internal and external environments are attached as appendices.

# VISION

The PNWIS vision represents the chapters' and members' shared hopes, dreams, and image of the future. As a section of A&WMA, PNWIS shares the corporate vision. The planning horizon used by the Strategic Planning Committee was three to five years into the future.

*PNWIS shares A&WMA's vision to be the premier, international environmental organization helping air and waste professionals promote environmental responsibility.*

The PNWIS vision is founded on the following values and beliefs:

- We strive for cohesion with other parts of A&WMA.
- We are a catalyst and provide support for the chapters within our section.
- We value the uniqueness of having both U.S. 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.

# MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement tends to be more practicable than a vision statement and answers the questions why PNWIS exists, what business it's in, and whom it serves.

*PNWIS is a catalyst for environmental leadership by providing a neutral forum for discussion, education, and networking on technical issues relating to environmental management in the U.S. Pacific Northwest and Western Canada.*

# SUCCESS MEASURES

Use of success measures is necessary to ensure that PNWIS is continually moving toward achieving its vision, mission, and core strategies. It is important to check progress against these measures so that PNWIS' growth and development stays on track.

- Strong and energized chapters in the section where membership characteristics support it.
- High attendance of diverse professional interests and chapters at the PNWIS annual meeting.
- Ability to attract and sustain new members to A&WMA, PNWIS, and chapters.
- Consistent staging of technical functions in the PNWIS region.
- Financial viability of PNWIS.
- Active participation by members in the PNWIS and chapter Boards, committees, and programs.
- Visibility and recognition of A&WMA as a valuable organization within the PNWIS region.

# CORE STRATEGIES

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## **1. BETTER COMMUNICATE THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN AMWA, PNWIS, AND ITS CHAPTERS.**

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** PNWIS Communications Subcommittee/All Committees

### **ACTION PLAN**

People in this region who join A&WMA or PNWIS can get a range of valuable membership benefits, however the take-up is not as strong as it should be. This core strategy is intended to better communicate the benefits of membership.

- 1) Plan and implement the communications program with the “wise elder members” of the section.
- 2) Conduct an annual member survey at the PNWIS annual meeting (put survey form under the plate).
- 3) Contact senior decision-makers at key organizations, which are not currently involved with PNWIS, but whose involvement is critical, about the value and importance of participation in PNWIS (e.g. EPA).
- 4) Revitalize the PNWIS content in the A&WMA membership information kit.
- 5) Include a membership information kit in the registration package at the PNWIS annual meeting.
- 6) Increase the A&WMA/PNWIS brand identification through the use of business cards, display panels, banners, and tattoos.
- 7) Continue to produce a strong newsletter, covering both recent activities and future plans and events.
- 8) Find more opportunities to show the A&WMA slide show and PNWIS sponsored materials (e.g. at PNWIS booth at annual meeting).
- 9) Make it easy to contact PNWIS Directors and Officers (e.g. put their names and numbers on the website).
- 10) Promote A&WMA/PNWIS/Chapters at all PNWIS and chapter meetings; promote each other’s chapters.
- 11) Issue more press releases and assist the chapters to issue more press releases about newsworthy events.

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## **2. INCREASE MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN PNWIS AND ITS CHAPTERS.**

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** PNWIS Membership Committee Chair.

**ACTION PLAN:**

In general, PNWIS strives for an active, energized section, which together with strong chapters will prove irresistible to existing and potential new members. This path will encourage more members to become involved, helping to prevent volunteer burnout and to create a more vital association.

- 1) PNWIS directors and members to act as ambassadors to make this happen at the chapter level.
- 2) Provide mentoring and advice to chapters on how to increase member involvement – make use of A&WMA resource materials (e.g. Top 10 Secrets; How to Run a Volunteer Organization).
- 3) Develop and disseminate to the chapters tips on how to increase member involvement; the content can include:
  - Ask a new member to do something within the first three months of them joining.
  - Recruit colleagues of colleagues, using the power of referrals and the joy of camaraderie to build the organization.
  - Recruit members when they are at an early stage in their career and interested in making new contacts and developing their leadership skills.
  - Create a list of target candidates and then “draft” them into a committee.
- 4) Invite A&WMA members and other environmental professionals moving into the PNWIS region to participate in PNWIS (A&WMA Pittsburgh can provide a list of A&WMA people who have moved into the region).
- 5) Have an annual meeting of the chapter membership chairs at the PNWIS annual meeting to strategize and share ideas.
- 6) Have an ongoing dialogue with members in Idaho and Montana to ensure that PNWIS meets their needs.

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### 3. ENHANCE THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** PNWIS Technical Committee Chair and Annual PNWIS Meeting Chair.

**ACTION PLAN:**

Recent member surveys conducted in the region found that professional development ranks high as a reason why people join A&WMA. This core strategy is about continuing and enhancing the section's professional development activities.

- 1) Continue staging a strong PNWIS annual meeting.
- 2) Continue staging Spring Specialty Conferences like the VOC Ozone Workshop held in Seattle in 1999 and the Air Toxics Conference staged jointly with CPANS in 2000.
- 3) Foster a diversification of the technical content so that it is multi-media (i.e. air, land, water) and multi-disciplinary.
- 4) Support the development and staging of technical seminars at the Chapter level.
- 5) Communicate to chapters and members the suite of A&WMA courses and training resources being offered within the PNWIS region.
- 6) Offer "Back to Basics" courses in the PNWIS region at the rate of about two courses per year:
  - Include topics like air monitoring, waste characterization, permitting, compliance, and QEP training and testing.
  - Collaborate with Chapters to organize and stage the courses.
  - Collaborate with other organizations that wish to deliver courses.
  - Model new courses after proven popular courses (e.g. California).
  - Acquire and deliver courses already developed by EPA and other agencies.
  - Continue to stage courses such as the November 1999 courses on *Combustion Theory* (with Puget Sound Chapter) and on *Characterization of Air Emissions from Area Sources*.
  - Include the PNWIS annual meeting as a venue for the courses.

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#### **4. STRENGTHEN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAM WITH A PRIORITY ON POST SECONDARY AND K-12.**

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** PNWIS Education and Public Outreach Committee Chair and Environmental Challenge Committee.

**ACTION PLAN:**

The education program is instrumental for achieving the PNWIS mission and is an effective way to reach out to young people who are exploring their career options and to educate young people about the environment.

#### **POST-SECONDARY**

- 1) Continue the student presentation awards at the annual meeting.
- 2) Jump-start the Environmental Challenge Program by working with the chapters to increase funding to make the program a reality.
- 3) Recruit university/college professors into PNWIS and chapter activities.

#### **K-12 (KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12)**

- 1) Replicate the success of the Alaska initiative in other chapter areas where there is a chapter champion to lead it.
- 2) Continue to promote the Environmental Resource Guide for teacher training in chapter areas where there is an interest.
- 3) Promote and distribute the CD-ROM sponsored by PNWIS.
- 4) Collaborate with other agencies to deliver K-12 education where it makes sense.

#### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

- 1) Conduct public outreach by using the A&WMA slide show, CD-ROM, website, and other resource materials available through A&WMA.
- 2) Purchase A&WMA public outreach materials for chapters that express an interest and demonstrate a commitment to follow through.

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## **5. BROADEN THE PARTICIPATION BASE FOR PNWIS AND ITS CHAPTERS.**

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** Everyone

**ACTION PLAN:**

In recent years, the section and some of the chapters have lost the participation of some of the key actors in the environmental field, especially the participation of regulatory and industrial sectors. PNWIS needs to get these groups involved in the association.

- 1) Make a personal appeal to senior decision-makers within organizations that should be part of PNWIS (e.g. EPA, provincial/state Departments of Environment, electric utilities, urban planners).
- 2) Nominate representatives of key organizations to run for the PNWIS and chapter boards.
- 3) Collaborate with chapters that are interested in staging technical events that appeal to the target sectors and organizations.
- 4) Realize the mutual benefits of partnerships between governments and A&WMA to deliver certain initiatives.

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## 6. IMPROVE THE SECTION'S BUSINESS PRACTICES.

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** President.

**ACTION PLAN:**

A major challenge for volunteer organizations is to “institutionalize” sound business practices. Blue Sky II focussed on reinforcing important business practices.

- 1) Give a high priority to implementing a firm budget policy with the following components:
  - Commit to an annual budget cycle (i.e. prepare budget by June 1 every year).
  - The Vice President is responsible for working with the committee chairs to compile the budget.
  - The committee chairs should inform the Vice President if they are discontinuing their duties before the expiration of their term.
  - Separate budget projections for baseline operating needs from discretionary program needs.
  - Allow flexibility to adjust the budget during the year.
  - Institutionalize the budgeting process (e.g. incorporate the budget policy and procedures into the Incoming Officers Guide, President to reinforce importance).
  - Make a policy to establish a buffer amount that should be maintained in the bank account.
  - Develop a contingency plan in the event of major financial losses.
  - Complete the development of financial reporting tools (e.g. cash flow reports).
- 2) Establish a long-term relationship with an outside professional accountant.
- 3) Develop and maintain an ongoing computerized list of PNWIS Board policy decisions (Secretary to go back one year to extract from minutes).
- 4) Review the status of each of the business practices action items from the 1993 Blue Sky retreat.

# IMPLEMENTATION

With a view to creating lasting and positive change, the Strategic Planning Committee focussed on how to have a dialogue about this strategic plan with chapters and members and how to embed the strategic management process into the way PNWIS does business.

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## **OBTAINING CHAPTER AND MEMBER INPUT ON THIS STRATEGIC PLAN:**

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- 1) Communicate the results of Blue Sky II and the draft strategic plan to the chapters and members.
  - Have the President make a presentation about the strategic plan at PNWIS events.
  - Put a summary of the strategic plan (i.e. vision, mission, success measures, core strategies) on the PNWIS website and in the PNWIS Newsletter.
  - Make copies of the strategic plan available to those that request it (e.g. at the PNWIS booth and on the website).
- 2) Inform the members and invite chapter and member feedback and comments about the strategic plan at each annual meeting.
- 3) Incorporate member feedback into the strategic plan at the Board changeover meeting.

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## **EMBEDDING STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT INTO HOW PNWIS DOES BUSINESS:**

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- 1) Recognize that the PNWIS Board is responsible for strategic management of the section's mandate.
- 2) Conduct annual strategic reviews.
- 3) Continue to use a systematic approach to strategic management, which includes budgeting, implementation of the core strategies and actions, and reporting on progress and financial results.
- 4) Evaluate all existing and new programs, initiatives, and proposals using the success measures.
- 5) Give the annual officers' changeover meeting a strategic focus – section and chapter officers to discuss activities and plans in the context of PNWIS core strategies and success measures.

# APPENDIX I

## PNWIS STRATEGIC REVIEW AND PLANNING SESSION

OCTOBER 1-2, 1999

### AGENDA

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#### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1

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1:00 PM	Welcome/purpose
1:15	Where are we going? Mission?
2:30	How are we doing?
3:00	Break
3:30	Current situation
4:30	Member needs and expectations
6:00	Dinner
8:30	Barriers to success/actions needed

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#### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2

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8:30 AM	Develop core strategies and action plans
10:00	Break
10:30	Implementation
12:30	Adjourn

# APPENDIX II

## ASSESSMENT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS

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### PNWIS STRENGTHS

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- Welcoming/facilitative attitude.
- Organizing technical meetings and events.
- Financially secure.
- Having fun/socializing/networking.
- Recognized as a neutral forum.
- Air quality management.
- Established and technically credible.
- Consistency of member involvement in annual meeting.
- Receive generous amounts of in-kind support from members and their employers.
- A corp of “wise elders.”
- Both male and female members.
- Diverse geographic representation and activity.
- Education program.
- Ability to stay abreast of new environmental issues and trends.
- Facilitating change and progress through symbiosis.
- Demonstrated ability to attract environmental professionals.

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### PNWIS WEAKNESSES

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- Inconsistent staging of technical meetings.
- Perceive declining visibility and prestige of A&WMA/PNWIS/chapters.
- Losing participation of regulatory and industrial sectors.
- Weakness in reaching out beyond a core group of active members.
- Not as diverse as desired in different environmental media.

- Less emphasis on scientific and peer review of technical papers compared to the past.

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## **OPPORTUNITIES**

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- Environmental management is evolving and broadening to include other disciplines and professionals.
- Trend away from end-of-pipe pollution control to pollution prevention (P2) and environmental management systems (EMS).
- People have less time for long meetings and conferences – they like short meetings and combining business with pleasure.
- Directors and members are acquiring in-kind support from their employers.
- The Internet provides an opportunity to decrease costs, increase speed, and increase profile of A&WMA/PNWIS/chapters.

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## **THREATS**

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- The membership base is shrinking – who will run PNWIS?
- Lessening employer support for joining associations (i.e. can now join one instead of two).
- Do members get rewarded by their employers for their participation in PNWIS?
- See more personal decisions to join or sponsor the association and less organizational support.
- PNWIS needs volunteers to run, but there is increasing competition for volunteers' time.
- There is a low awareness of AMWA/PNWIS/chapter benefits.
- Communication is difficult over the region but technology is evolving to offset.
- PNWIS is expensive to operate (e.g. printing costs); able to survive because of in-kind support.
- A&WMA has been addressing financial challenges.

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## **MEMBER NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS\***

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- Many members do not understand the difference between A&WMA, PNWIS, and chapters – How does the association function?

- There is a small core of members in the section who have all three levels of membership – They tend to join for professional development and like the A&WMA publications, annual meetings, technical conferences, and networking.
- A large number of members belong only to a chapter or to a chapter and the section – they tend to be interested in local activities like monthly luncheons, networking, and technical seminars.
- Various chapters are finding the best ways to meet local member needs – one size does not fit all.
- Members tend to get more involved at the local chapter level but face barriers going to the PNWIS annual meeting (cost, distance, time) – “If I can drive there, I can usually sell it.”
- Members who go to the PNWIS annual meeting are looking for technical information and networking.
- Members want more coverage of different environmental media and disciplines.
- Members want to keep the PNWIS annual meeting.
- Members want more technical meetings about environmental management.
- There is member support for public outreach but members want to know about the effectiveness.
- Members suggest improvements in member communications, for example, by making more announcements, using email, and putting meeting minutes on the website.
- Members want entry level technical training for their non-strength area.

\* These member findings are based on recent member surveys in the Oregon, Puget Sound, and Vancouver Island Chapters. They are not statistically valid but they provide an indication of member opinion.