

FLORIDA BEACON

From the President's Desk Gina Chiello



Florida Association of
Environmental Professionals
Fall 2025



Dear FAEP Members and Friends,

FAEP Board of Directors

As September comes to a close, Florida's long, hot summer is finally giving us a break! With the peak seagrass growing season wrapping up, many of us can finally dry out a little after months of feeling like we lived more underwater than on land. Whether it was dodging afternoon thunderstorms in the field, wrestling with dive gear, or trying to explain to friends why your car permanently smells like the Intracoastal, this season always keeps us on our toes.

For those of us working in monitoring, permitting, restoration, or education, the end of the season is a natural checkpoint. It's when we tally up what we've seen, compare notes, and ask the big questions: Did conditions improve? Did restoration efforts take hold? Did our sunscreen actually work?

As we move into the last quarter of the year, I want to thank you all for the work you do—whether knee-deep in a mucky mangrove swamp, out on a boat, or behind a desk helping make sense of it all. Here's to enjoying Florida's waters this fall, hopefully a little more from the surface than below it.

Back to business—after taking a swim break, some of our organizational members reunited at the **Environmental Permitting Summer School Conference**, held July 15–18 in Marco Island. This premier event drew over 1,000 attendees, including attorneys, consultants, engineers, state and local government officials, developers, landowners, and others committed to Florida's environmental future. With over 700 members, FAEP is proud to remain a strong presence at this conference as the state's leading environmental professional organization.



Photo: FAEP members attending the Environmental Permitting Summer School Conference

Gina Chiello – President & TC Chapter

Elva Peppers – Past President

Joshua Hirten – Vice Pres. & CN Chapter

Kelley Samuels – Treasurer

Jen Savaro – Secretary & SO Chapter

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Ryan Sipe – NE Chapter

Michael Cobb – NW Chapter

George Sprehn – SW Chapter

Sheri Huelster – TB Chapter

Susan Martin – At Large Member

Amy Guilfoyle – At Large Member

Niki Desjardin – At Large Member

Don Medellin – At Large Member

Tim Perry – At Large Member

Jane Gregory – At Large Member

Courtney Arena – NAEP Rep.

Check the last page of our newsletter to determine if you qualify for a discount on your FAEP membership!

New FAEP membership rate for Retirees offered!

Looking ahead, mark your calendars! The next **FAEP 2026 Annual Conference & Training Symposium**, hosted by the Treasure Coast Chapter, will take place **April 29–May 1, 2026**, at the Marriott Hutchinson Island Beach Resort. **Attendee Registration** can be found [HERE](#), and **Field Trip Registration** can be found [HERE](#). The **Call for Abstracts** went out on **August 15**, and the submission deadline of **October 15** is approaching quickly! Don't miss this chance to showcase your work and engage with colleagues in a fun and impactful setting. Instructions on how to submit your abstract can be found on our website's [Home Page](#).

The **NAEP 2026 Annual Conference & Training Symposium**, will take place **May 11-14, 2026** in Anchorage, Alaska! More details coming soon - check their website <https://www.naep.org>.

Warm Regards,



Gina Chiello
FAEP President 2025-2026

Find out more about FAEP
Member's Benefits at our
website:
WWW.FAEP-FL.ORG

Thanks for reading our newsletter!

Co-sponsored by the FAEP / NAEP

FAEP and NAEP Co-sponsored the 2025 Corridor Connect Summit in Orlando, FL June 3-5, 2025. The \$2500 co-sponsorship was split by NAEP contributing \$1500 and FAEP contributing \$1000. Below is a summary of our joint participation and feedback from the Event.

Four attendees were included in the co-sponsorship. The attendees were as follows:

- Courtney Arena, NAEP and FAEP Chapter Representative, Board of Directors
- Josh Hirten, NAEP At Large Board Member, FAEP Vice President and Central FL Chapter President
- Elva Peppers, FAEP Past President
- Jane Gregory, FAEP At Large Board Member, Central FL Area

Details of the Event:

Corridor Connect brings together leaders from the business and conservation community to look for solutions and identify ways to help balance Florida's growth while protecting the Florida Wildlife Corridor. The 2025 summit reflected unprecedented growth, collaboration, and momentum across Conservation nonprofits, Government agencies, Planners and Developers, Tribal nations, Academic institutions, Landowners, Agribusiness, scientists, artists, and more. Together we can permanently connect, protect, and restore the Florida Wildlife Corridor. Thank you to the 700+ attendees across 80+ partner organizations who came together to connect, build solutions, and amplify the Corridor movement during our 2025 Summit. See you in 2027!.

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The Summit featured a variety of field trips, sessions for regional conservation and land use planning, a large exhibit area called the Collaboratory, Solution Lab and Corridor Academy tracks and the Sabal Awards. The year 2027 is the next anticipated occurrence for this event.

The Summit occurs every other year. In 2023, there were 500+ attendees. This year in 2025 there were 700+ attendees and the event is gaining traction.

This year 2025 Summit was held at the Coronado Springs Disney Resort in Orlando, FL. Disney was the Title Sponsor and Mickey Mouse donated \$1 million dollars to the FL Wildlife Corridor Foundation which was a surprise. Other notable major sponsors included local based Subaru Dealers and the Nature Conservancy. Visit <https://corridorconnect.org/page/summit-2025> for more information.

Below are photos of the active participation in the 2025 Corridor Connect Summit along with a summary of the 2025 sponsors:



Thank you to our 2025 Sponsors!



Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

Event	Date	Place
American Institute of Professional Geologists National Conference	October 4 – 7, 2025	St. Louis, MO
AEHS Foundation, Annual East Coast Conference on Soil, Water, Energy, & Air	October 20 – 23, 2025	Amherst, MA
Association of Water Technologies Annual Convention & Expo	November 12 – 15, 2025	Colorado Spring, CO



2024 TBAEP Photo Contest Fan Favorite – Allison Dhand, Manatee Snoot

Science Shorts ~NPR Short Wave~ The Science Behind the Headlines

Untangling the science of octopus arms.



Octopuses and their arms are a bit of a mystery. Not because scientists don't know how they work; they're boneless hydrostats, made up of groups of muscles working together and capable of bending, twisting, elongating or shortening — like a frog's tongue, or an elephant's trunk. But scientists are still figuring out how most octopuses use those arms in the wild..

What is the legacy of Yellowstone wolves 30 years after their reintroduction.



Thirty years ago, park rangers reintroduced grey wolves into Yellowstone National Park. They wanted to restore the ecosystem and get the elk population, which had decimated the plant community, in check. And it worked – or so the popular narrative suggests. But is it really so simple? Today on the show, we explore how the Yellowstone ecosystem has changed since wolves returned and whether those changes can really be pinned solely on wolves. Plus, how the narrative of the Yellowstone wolf legacy could affect wolf reintroduction elsewhere.

Toxicity is a good defense, until it isn't.



Imagine, you're a toxic toad hanging around South America. No other animals are gonna mess with you, right? After all, you're ~toxic~! So if anyone tries to eat you, they'll be exposed to something called a cardiotoxic steroid — and may die of a heart attack. Well, unfortunately, for you, some animals have developed adaptations to these toxic steroids. Evolutionary biologist Shabnam Mohammadi has spent her career studying how these adaptations work — and says even humans have used these toxins to their advantage since ancient Egypt. So today on Short Wave, we get a little... toxic (cue Britney Spears). Host Regina G. Barber talks to Shabnam about how some predators can get away with eating toxic prey.

Why mapping the entire seafloor is a daunting task, but key to improving human life.



Scientists have mapped less than 30% of the world's seafloor. Experts say that getting that number up to 100% would improve everything from tsunami warnings to the Internet and renewable energy. That's why there's currently a global effort to create a full, detailed map of the seabed by 2030. On today's Sea Camp episode, we talk to Dawn Wright, a marine geographer and chief scientist at the Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri) about this effort.

Announcements from the NAEP (National Association of Environmental Professionals)

2025 PROJECT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP SERIES

VIRTUAL FOUR-PART SERIES
AUGUST 13, SEPTEMBER 24, OCTOBER 8, AND NOVEMBER 5

2025 Virtual Project Management Workshop Series

NAEP's [2025 Project Management Workshop Series](#) is a four-part virtual workshop designed for NEPA professionals ready to strengthen their project management skills and manage NEPA in a time of change.

Each module will include a combination of presentation, instructor/student interactions, project examples, important elements of project management, and project management responsibilities.

The first module for this workshop series took place August 13, but anyone who registers now will gain full access to module recordings.

Remaining Workshop Dates:

- [Module 2](#): September 24 - Threshold Determinations and Pre-NEPA Planning
- [Module 3](#): October 8 - Stakeholder & Public Engagement Challenges
- [Module 4](#): November 5 - Regulatory Coordination Challenges

LEARN MORE at <https://www.naep.org/2025-project-management-workshop>

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Environmental Professionals Radio

Environmental Professionals RADIO 



Environmental Professional's Radio will be bringing to you anything and everything related to being an environmental professional. Including but not limited to the following topics:

- Sponsor and partner updates
- Career advice and insights
- NEPA and other Policy Updates
- Women in STEM
- Special interest
- and More!

New episodes coming out weekly on Fridays!

Now Accepting Abstracts for NAEP 2026

NAEP is **now accepting abstracts** to showcase your work to an audience of national and Alaskan environmental professionals at the **NAEP 2026 Annual Conference & Training Symposium**, happening **May 11–14, 2026**, in Anchorage, Alaska. Accepted formats include oral presentations, posters, workshops, and special sessions. Submit by **November 1, 2025**, for best consideration, but late entries may still be reviewed until the schedule is finalized in January.



Photo credit: K Adams on Unsplash

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A vertical map showing the outlines of five Southeastern United States states: Virginia (Va), North Carolina (Ri), South Carolina (W), Georgia (Ba), and Florida (My).

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ABCEP



The Academy of Board Certified Environmental Professionals (ABCEP) is the certifying body for NAEP and the lead organization certifying environmental professionals; maintaining exemplary standards of ethics and technical practice; and supporting individuals, our profession, and the public relying upon our services. It is a board-certified recognition. Beyond the acknowledgement by your peers, earning and maintaining the Certified Environmental Professional (CEP) designation is beneficial as a key differentiator when bidding on projects. It also opens new doors personally and professionally.

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ABCEP would like to enhance the CEP (and CEP-IT) by growing our numbers and raising the awareness and value of the credential. If interested, you can find more details about the CEP and the application process on our website <https://www.abcep.org>. If you email the office (office@abcep.org), our Administrator will follow up to see if you have additional questions about the application process and offer to assign a mentor to help guide you through it.

The initial CEP application fee is typically \$200. ABCEP is offering a 10% discount through the end of 2020 reducing the initial CEP application fee to \$180. This is a great time to submit your application! We also have a CEP-IT application for those that don't quite meet the CEP requirements.

Making the decision to pursue a certification can feel like a daunting task, but in this climate, having the designation after your name can prove that crucial differentiator. Please share this with anyone in your office that might be interested.

**The FAEP Board of Directors would like to extend a big
THANK-YOU
to the organizations who continue to support FAEP
with group memberships for five or more of their employees.**

AECOM	Ecological Associates	Palm Beach County	Terracon Consultants, Inc.
Ardurra	EPC of Hillsborough County	Martin Passarella & Associates, Inc.	Tetra Tech
AtkinsRealis	FDEP	Quest Ecology	Turrell, Hall & Associates
CDM Smith	Florida Environmental & Land Services	RES Florida Consulting, LLC	University of South Florida
City of Tampa	GeoSyntec Consultants	SFEC	University of West Florida
Cummins Cederberg, Inc.	GHD Services Inc.	SFWMD	Verdantas
Dewberry	Johnson Engineering, Inc.	Smart-Sciences, Inc.	VHB
DRMP	Lewis, Longman & Walker	Stantec Consulting	WRA Engineering, LLC
EarthBalance	NV5	SWCA	

Did you know that you can arrange to renew all your employees at one time?

If your employer would like to take advantage of the Group Membership discount* and utilize FAEP's company invoicing services please email info@faep-fl.org.

***GROUP MEMBERSHIP** Each group membership will be for a minimum of 5 qualified employees.

Group memberships are available to corporations, government agencies, and/or other entities involved in and related to the environmental profession. Employers that do not have 5 or more employees who are members can join as General or Associate members. The cost of each Group Membership is \$45.

**Interested in advertising to almost 2000 Environmental Professionals in the FAEP's newsletter and on our website?
One-year sponsorships also get your organization logo on our webpage!**

Sponsorship Rates

Size	One Issue	One Year Plus Logo on Website
Biz Card	\$35	\$100
¼ Page	\$100	\$375
½ Page	\$175	\$650
1 Page	\$250	\$900

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Andee Richards, Administrator

4601 N Alexander St

Plant City, FL 33565

Email: info@faep-fl.org

If you would like to submit an article to the Florida Beacon, contact the administrator at info@faep-fl.org.