

a. Who are we as a group?

The Northwest Regional Chapter (Chapter) is a local chapter of the Florida Association of Environmental Professionals (FAEP). It is an organization comprised of students, scientists, engineers, environmental consultants, environmental professionals from industry and regulatory agencies, and academic environmental professionals. The NW Chapter is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the general membership. It provides a forum for the exchange of ideas with other professionals and the opportunity to participate in events at the Chapter, state (FAEP) and national (NAEP) levels. The NW chapter holds regular monthly lunch meetings with speakers who present unbiased fact-based environmental scientific information.

b. What is our mission?

The NW Chapter does not have an official mission statement. But here is a statement that possibly summarizes what we do: The Chapter was formed to recognize and attempt to reconcile societal and individual human needs with the responsibility of enhancing, maintaining and protecting natural resources and environment.

Based on the Chapter's By-laws, the Chapter's goals are to do the following:

1. Encourage compliance with the NAEP code of ethics and cooperation with the goals of NAEP and FAEP.
2. Improve public awareness of the need for environmental involvement.
3. Improve communication between the environmental professional and regulated communities and between practitioners within the environmental professional community.
4. Improve methods for the collection and utilization of environmental information and providing a forum for dissemination of this information.
5. Encourage the utilization of resources and research for the benefit of the environment.
6. Encourage and provide educational programs which will benefit the environment.
7. Promote and enhance recognition of the environmental professionals by seeking State certification.

c. What is the state (FAEP) mission?

FAEP mission is to further the practice of Environmental Professionals in Florida.

FAEP is:

1. An interdisciplinary association of environmental professionals in Florida.
2. A forum in which the state-of-the-art environmental planning, research, and management is advanced.
3. A focal point for objectivity, ethical standards, and technical excellence in our diverse profession.
4. A vehicle for the growth and advancement of FAEP members around the State.
5. A medium of professional contact and information exchange among colleagues in business, government, and academia.

6. A foundation for structured career development from student to registered environmental professional.
7. A regional chapter of the National Association of Environmental Professionals founded in 1975 and now having 2,000 members worldwide.

d. Can the Statewide Mission be applicable or translate to our area?

Absolutely. Both FAEP and the NW Chapter have the same goals, mission, and ethical obligations as environmental professionals. There is nothing in their mission or goals that are specific to a given geographical region. Therefore, it is applicable for our area. The purpose of the local chapters is to disseminate scientific data through regular meetings and workshops which are pertinent to its regional area. The local chapters accomplish this task following the guidelines in the chapter's by-laws and the other items listed in a-c above.

e. Where do we want to go?

We would like to continue the monthly lunch meetings, begin evening social hours, hold an annual banquet with a scholarship and awards program, provide a small gift to speakers, and continue to offer environmental awareness and education to professionals and the community. In addition, we would like to form additional partnerships with other environmental organizations. We would like to continue conducting community outreach events such as coastal cleanups and begin to conduct education outreach with other groups such as realtors, home builders, government employees, and children in grades K-12.

f. How do we increase membership during difficult economic times?

Membership can be increased through holding regular monthly meetings with speakers that attract the interest of other environmental professionals. Monthly lunch meetings are usually held at the Institute of Human Cognition but it can be alternated with other locations such as the University of West Florida. Altering the locations may allow college students and other professionals to attend the meetings.

Evening social hours can be conducted on a monthly or quarterly basis. They can be utilized to offer networking opportunities in a social environment.

Regular night meetings with speakers can be held to allow an alternative time for attendance.

It is recommended that a "happy hour" event occur prior to the starting of our regularly scheduled meetings to help members get to know each other.

g. What value does FAEP provide to our members and the community?

The FAEP provides our members with special workshops and conferences throughout the state with discount rates for members. The educational sessions also are beneficial to network with other Environmental Professionals and better understand what environmental issues are important and keep informed on new initiatives in various communities throughout the state. All members receive a quarterly newsletter, The Florida Beacon. Any member can submit an article to the Beacon for publication. Any member can put a paid advertisement in the Beacon to advertise their business. **Chapter members have access to an online directory of all FAEP members statewide which is a great networking tool.** Chapter members have the ability to participate in environmental enhancement events throughout the state. Lastly, the FAEP provides representation with the National Association of Environmental Professionals.

Each Chapter has the opportunity for representation by their President at the monthly FAEP Board meetings held via teleconference and in person. During this meeting, all upcoming Chapter events and specific Chapter issues are discussed. They vote on issues that come before the Board and any financial expenditure by the Board. The Board members, including the Chapter Presidents, share ideas with each other including how to improve membership. FAEP does not want Chapter membership to decline because that situation defeats the FAEP mission to promote the environmental professional. The model of FAEP association means that Chapters get support from other Chapters and statewide memberships through FAEP. The old saying holds true here: 'you get out of it what you put in it,' meaning if the Chapters don't support FAEP, it is difficult for FAEP to support the Chapters.

h. Which market sectors should/do we target? And how can we reach them?

We should target groups that have not been attending our meetings. These include: the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Defense, US Army Corps of Engineers, ECUA, and University of West Florida. We should also increase attendance by consultants in the area. We can host workshops, alternate locations and time (lunch and evening) regular meetings, and host social hours for meet and greet networking time. The speakers must conduct their presentation in an unbiased and fact-based professional manner without personal opinion and editorializing. Otherwise we won't be successful in getting regulatory or industry professionals to attend. This ethical practice is required in our By-laws but even beyond that, the Chapter won't increase membership and may lose membership if the chapter is viewed as an environmentalist or activist group.