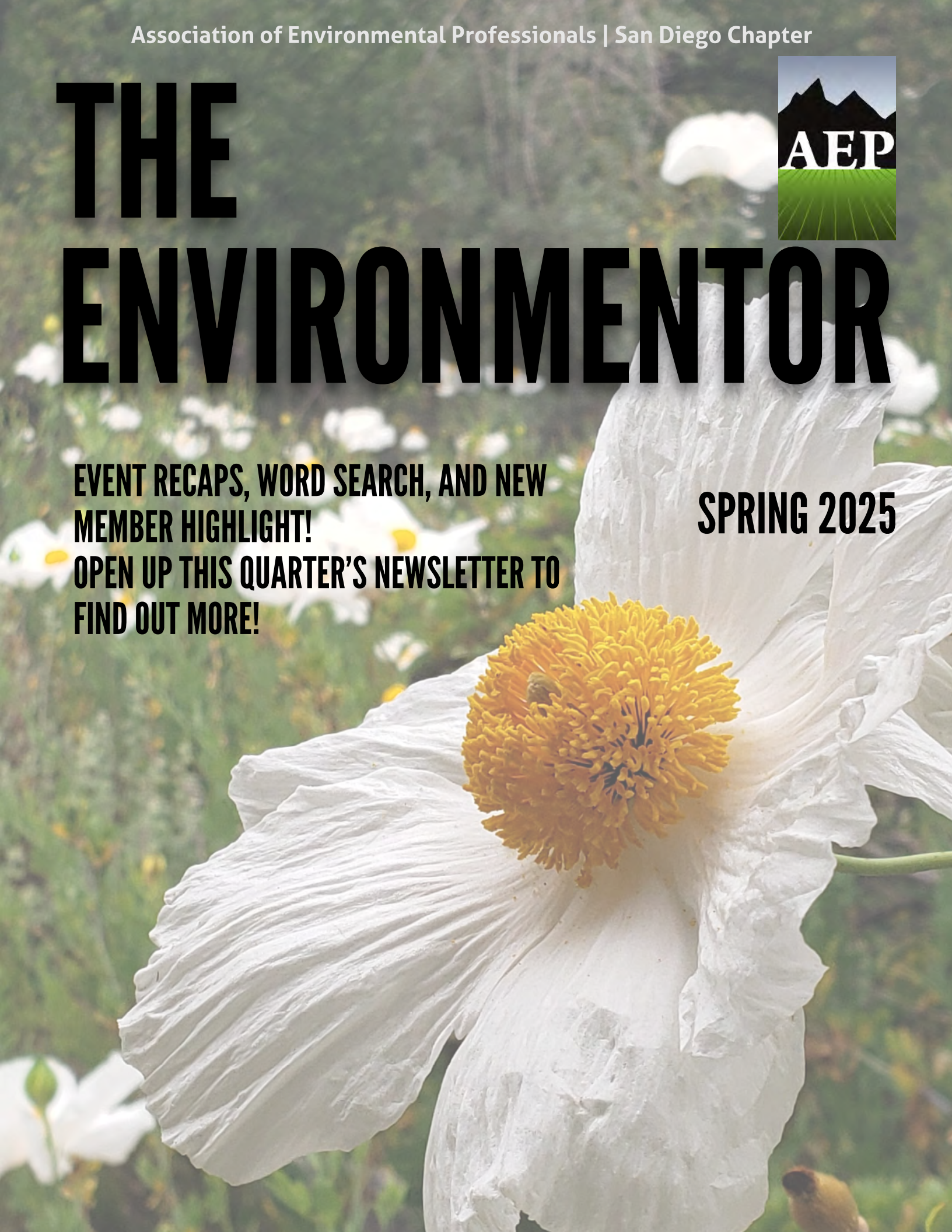


THE ENVIRONMENTOR

**EVENT RECAPS, WORD SEARCH, AND NEW
MEMBER HIGHLIGHT!
OPEN UP THIS QUARTER'S NEWSLETTER TO
FIND OUT MORE!**

SPRING 2025





MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

BY KELSEY KAWKINS, SAN DIEGO AEP DIRECTOR

Happy Spring!

We are happy to share some exciting updates and happenings with our San Diego and Imperial Counties environmental professionals.

We kicked off local programming with the Advanced CEQA Workshop on February 27th at the Marina Village Conference Center overlooking Mission Bay. We had over 100 attendees embark on an all-day seminar as experts in the field discussed various CEQA topics from newest case law and legislation, addenda, streamlining tools, triggers for re-circulation, AI, and increasing accessibility for CEQA documents.

For our students, we held an in-person speed networking event at the end of February at the Mission Valley Library. This wildly popular event was greatly attended and offered students a chance to have some valuable one-on-one facetime with current professionals in the field.

Finally, our SD Board just returned from the State AEP Conference, which was held at Zachari Dunes in Oxnard from April 6th through 9th. The day prior to the conference, board members from throughout the state gathered together to attend the State Summit, an all-day event focused on collaborating together and improving programming. The conference itself was a smashing success! The legendary AEP Jam Band kicked us off, the conference sold out the hotel, and offered some incredible sessions on a range of topics including wildfire and evacuation, climate adaptation and resiliency, VMT, and newest updates in air quality and GHG analyses, among others.

Next up, San Diego will be hosting the State Conference in 2026! We look forward to sharing updates with our valued members in the coming months.



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SPEED NETWORKING

Written by: Shelby Bocks

On February 24, 2025, students and recent graduates met with environmental professionals for an evening of speed networking hosted by San Diego AEP. This was our first in-person speed networking event since the pandemic, and it was a hit!

Students and recent graduates paired up and met with professionals to learn about environmental career paths, discuss their interests in the industry, and ask for job search advice. The professionals that attended had a wide variety of experiences and specialties, which allowed student members to explore the range of opportunities available within the environmental profession.

Thank you again to all of the professionals who volunteered their time to engage with our students!



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ADVANCED CEQA WORKSHOP

Written by: Melissa Whittemore

On February 27, 2025, AEP San Diego hosted another successful Advanced CEQA Workshop with 108 attendees, making the San Diego Chapter's workshop the most attended workshop this year! The workshop was held at Marina Village near Mission Bay, providing serene waterfront views during lunchtime. This year's workshop was led by the following CEQA experts:

- Jennifer Kazmer (Chief of Long Range Planning, County of San Diego)
- Bob Stark (Associate Vice President, Michael Baker International)
- Suzanne Varco (Owner/Attorney, Environmental Law Group LLP)
- Andrea Contreras (Owner/Attorney, Law Offices of Andrea Contreras)

In addition to the typical annual case law update, this year's workshop covered:

- Best practices for Addenda to EIRs and MNDs
- Current standards for air quality and GHG emissions analyses, as well as health risk assessments
- Tools for streamlining housing projects
- Triggers for document recirculation
- Emerging trends and potential uses for AI in CEQA analysis
- Current accessibility requirements for documents published on CEQAnet (the State Clearinghouse)

Speakers and attendees continued the conversations and networking immediately after the workshop with a well-attended happy hour at Coronado Brewing Company in Bay Park.

Thank you to our speakers for presenting this year's materials in an easy-to-understand format, and for adding some humor to keep the attendees engaged!



2025 AEP CONFERENCE

Written by: Sydnie Margallo

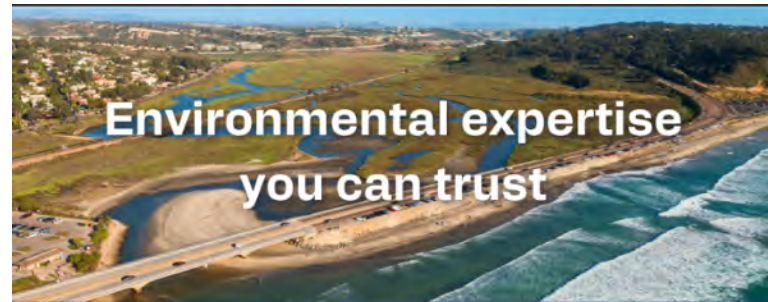
The San Diego Board recently attended the State AEP Conference in Oxnard, California, from April 6-9. The day before, Board members from across the state gathered for the Annual Summit, where they discussed common AEP issues, brainstormed ideas, and set goals for the year.

Both the Summit and Conference were held at the Zachari Dunes on Mandalay Beach, with beautiful views of sand dunes and the ocean. In this setting, time spent outside felt like a luxury. Many Conference attendees raved about stolen moments between sessions to catch some sunshine and a glimpse of the ocean. The Conference kicked off with an Opening Reception featuring delicious food, drinks, and great hits played by the AEP Jam Band, though the party moved indoors when the weather turned.

Several engaging panels covered CEQA topics such as climate adaptation, equity, vehicle miles traveled, wildfire response, mitigation, habitat conservation, and recent case law and legislative updates. Networking events, including the Opening Reception, the 2024 Awards Program, and a Wine and Cheese Reception, filled the evenings.

Fun mobile workshops offered activities like a Whale Watching Cruise and Port of Hueneme Tour, and keynote speakers shared insights on wildlife management along the Central Coast and Channel Islands.

It was a fantastic Conference in a beautiful setting, and we're excited to host next year's State Conference in San Diego!



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MEET A BOARD MEMBER: JORDAN WERKMEISTER



1. Please share your background, education, current employer, hobbies, etc.

I graduated from UC Davis with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Policy, Analysis, and Planning. I am an Environmental Planner and Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Specialist at Psomas. In my free time, I enjoy surfing, biking, swimming, and snowboarding; I also play water polo in my free time with a number of masters teams.

2. What made you want to get more involved and take a leadership position with AEP?

I decided to take on a leadership role with AEP because I was excited about the opportunity to meet others in our field and give back to our industry. AEP is continuously putting out great programming and educational resources and I was eager to be a part of that.

3. What advice would you give a recent graduate or young professional in the environmental industry?

Ask questions and build connections! Don't be afraid to ask questions—thanks to the dynamic nature of our industry, we are all continuously learning. Therefore, it's important to make sure you are continuously learning at every stage of your career.

4. What have you enjoyed most about working in the environmental field?

I love that this field is always evolving, offering new opportunities for learning and thinking outside of the box every day. Additionally, working with like-minded individuals and organizations towards a common goal can be very fulfilling!

5. Share your favorite fun fact with us!

I am an avid open water swimmer and have swam from Alcatraz to Aquatic Park Cove in San Francisco!



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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ISAAC ISRAEL

Background

I'm balancing two internships (biology with the City of San Diego and planning with the City of Carlsbad) while pursuing my Associate's in Biology. I'm focused on environmental planning, habitat conservation, and climate-resilient urban development.

AEP Involvement

I joined AEP in March 2024 with no prior experience in environmental consulting or CEQA. Since then, I've gained two internships, volunteered at the AEP and APA conferences, and connected with professionals from various fields. These experiences have helped me build valuable relationships and clarify my career direction.

Advice to College Undergraduates

If you're unsure about your career path, start by identifying your "why"—what drives your interest in the field and what personal experiences or important issues, either in your own life or within your community, are inspiring you to pursue environmental work. Once I had a clear direction, I found it much easier to engage with new people, network effectively, confidently answer questions during job interviews, and also ask insightful questions about potential opportunities.

College Graduation Celebration

I've accepted an internship with ICF this summer, where I'll gain experience in environmental impact assessments, land use planning, and climate resilience. I'm also excited to explore Southern California's parks, spot wildlife on hikes, and be a groomsman at a friend's wedding.

Enjoyment in the Environmental Field

The openness and generosity of professionals in the field has been incredible. People are always willing to share their knowledge and experiences, which has helped me learn and grow in ways I never expected.

Favorite CEQA Topic

My favorite CEQA topic is mitigation measures that reduce environmental damage and protect sensitive areas. I'm particularly interested in green infrastructure and nature-based solutions which use natural features to promote climate resilience and sustainable development. This approach combines environmental protection with practical, long-term solutions for urban growth.



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