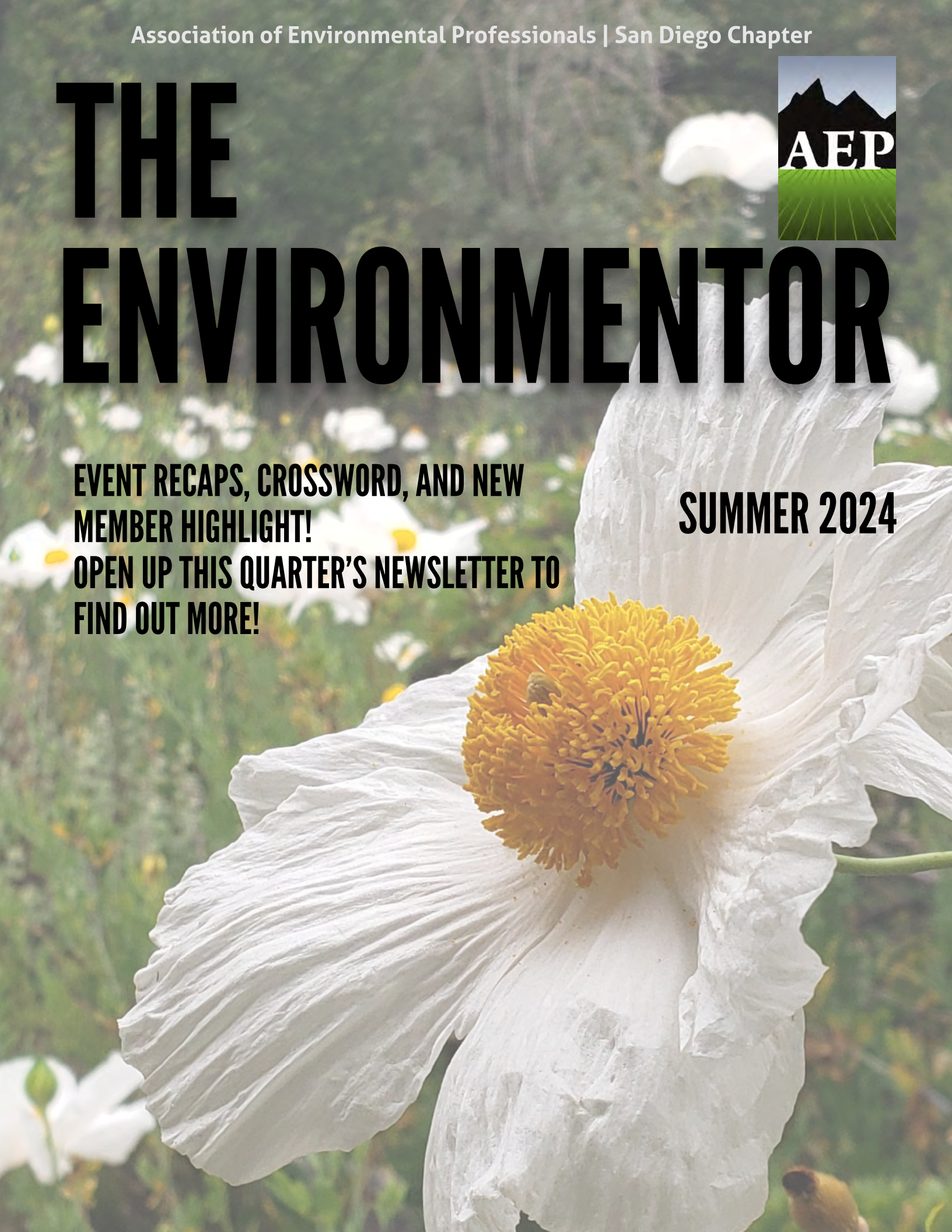


THE ENVIRONMENTOR

**EVENT RECAPS, CROSSWORD, AND NEW
MEMBER HIGHLIGHT!**

SUMMER 2024

**OPEN UP THIS QUARTER'S NEWSLETTER TO
FIND OUT MORE!**





MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

BY KELSEY HAWKINS, SAN DIEGO AEP PRESIDENT

Hello and happy summer! I hope everyone has had the chance to soak up some sunshine and enjoy the beautiful San Diego weather.

We have continued to host some fantastic events and educational webinars. This included the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station Decommissioning webinar, a rundown of the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and their role in influencing growth and development, and a CEQA/NEPA 101 training focused on developing strategies to analyze projects with appropriate environmental requirements.

In June, we partnered with WTS San Diego for an urban hike centered around the North Coast Corridor project and environmental mitigation programs in San Elijo. We had great attendance

and sincerely hope this is the first of many joint events with WTS in the future. We also held our Professionals and Pints event at Pure Project Brewing earlier in July and had a fantastic time mingling with other local professionals!

Finally, awards season is upon us! This year's Awards Banquet is set to take place October 9, 2024 at Encore Events Center in Kearny Mesa. Award nominations are now OPEN. Please consider submitting a nomination from your firm or agency.

We know there are some incredible projects completed by our membership and we wouldn't want to miss the opportunity to celebrate them!

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2024 CEQA PRACTICUM

Written by: Melissa Whittemore

AEP San Diego held its 10th annual CEQA Practicum for college students on Saturday, April 20, 2024, at UCSD. College students from UCSD, SDSU, USD, San Diego City College, and UC Irvine were introduced to CEQA and how environmental professionals implement it.

The students and professionals conducted a site visit for a mock mixed-use project to look at existing features on and adjacent to the project site that could be affected by construction or operation of the mock project. Upon returning to the classroom, the students broke into small groups, each lead by a professional, and discussed potential impacts and mitigation measures for the mock project for using the Environmental Checklist Form (Appendix G) of the CEQA Guidelines. The groups shared their findings with the rest of the class, including some differing points of view.

A big thanks to our professional volunteers at this year's CEQA Practicum for making it a success, including John Boarman, P.E. (LLG Engineers), Travis Whitney (Rocks Biological Consulting), Jason Runyan (HELIX Environmental Planning), Shelby Bocks (HELIX Environmental Planning), and Melissa Whittemore (AECOM)!



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PROFESSIONALS AND PINTS

Written by: Jasmine Osman

On July 11, 2024, San Diego AEP held its first Professional and Pints event of the year at Pure Project Brewing in Banker's Hill. This local brewery provided an ideal setting for fellow environmental professionals to gather and relax after the workday. Attendees enjoyed a variety of locally crafted beers while engaging in lively conversations about ongoing projects and upcoming events.

For those of who missed this gathering, there are plenty of exciting events on the horizon. In August, we look forward to hosting our Member Appreciation Event which will be followed by the Awards Banquet in October. These events promise further opportunities to network, learn, and celebrate the contributions of our members to the environmental community in San Diego and beyond.



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STUDENT MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

KAYLEE ANGELINE L. PALMARES

Background

Upon graduating from the University of San Diego (USD) with a degree in Environmental and Ocean Sciences, I will be transitioning from an environmental planner intern to a full-time environmental planner at Dudek. With experience in diverse environmental projects, particularly in solar/wind energy and industrial development, I've sharpened my skills in GIS analysis, research, and regulatory compliance.

AEP Involvement

I have been involved with AEP since 2022; volunteering at the San Diego chapter events not only allowed me to connect with industry professionals but also created new friendships and a supportive community. As a Filipina American, being a part of this field holds personal significance for me, and through these experiences, I gained valuable insights into various sectors of the industry. This has helped me to find my areas of interest and potential specialization.

Advice to College Undergraduates

My advice is to prioritize networking! Engage with professionals in the industry and join organizations like AEP to expand your connections. Seek out internships, volunteer opportunities, or research projects aligned with what you want to do after graduation. I recommend participating in events and volunteering at AEP – it can lead to many great opportunities. I got my current position through networking, so it shows that these connections can really open doors for you!

Favorite CEQA Topic

My favorite CEQA topic is biology because I have a deep passion for the natural sciences, particularly terrestrial and coastal ecology! Studying native and invasive plants for my senior thesis at USD deepened my interest in flora and fauna, forming a passion for understanding the biodiversity of different areas and recognizing their ecological significance.

Next Place to Travel

I'm excited to explore new destinations, and next on my list is Ireland. Its beautiful landscape and vibrant culture interest me. I'm especially looking forward to immersing myself in a new culture and exploring ancient castles.



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If you are a student/recent graduate interested in being featured in the newsletter, please contact the Student Membership & Outreach Co-Directors
Melissa Whittemore
(Melissa.Whittemore@aeacom.com) and
Shelby Bocks (ShelbyB@helixepi.com)






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MEET A BOARD MEMBER: SHELBY BOCKS



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

I grew up in Lafayette, California and moved to San Diego in 2017 to attend the University of San Diego. I majored in Environmental and Ocean Sciences as planned but added on minors in Business and Political Science along the way as I realized I enjoyed a more interdisciplinary approach to studying environmental science. During my senior year of college, I took a course in CEQA compliance and discovered this career was a great mix of my interests. After an internship with the City of San Diego Stormwater Department, I joined HELIX Environmental Planning as an Environmental Planner in 2022. Outside of work, you can usually find me trying a new coffee shop in my neighborhood, watching a soccer game (go Wave!), or at trivia.

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

After attending AEP student events last year as a professional, I realized how much I enjoyed discussing potential career paths with students

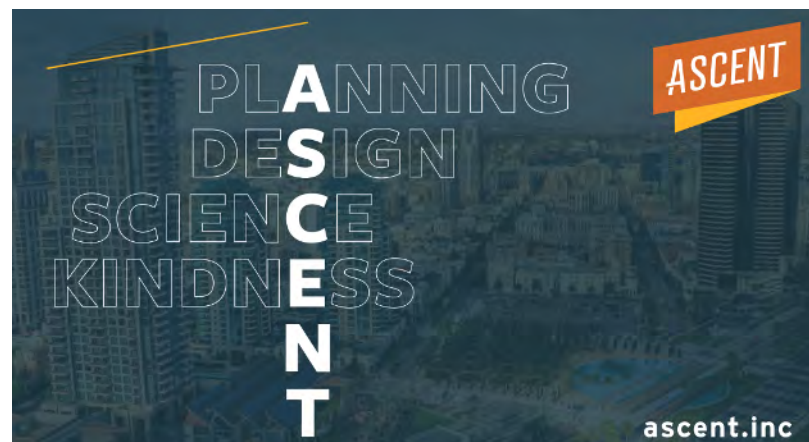
based on their interests and introducing them to the variety of opportunities in the environmental industry. When the Student Membership and Outreach position opened up last year, it was an easy decision for me to join the Board and be involved in planning these events for students.

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

Try a little bit of everything! In the beginning of my position at HELIX, I had the opportunity to be trained in air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise analyses. These technical topics have been part of my position as a planner that I have enjoyed the most. This industry has so many different niches and there is something for everyone, but you have to be willing to try new projects to figure out what you like best.

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

Every day is something new! Whether I am working on a new project type, with a new agency, or learning new technical skills, there is always a new challenge to keep the job interesting. I also enjoy being involved in the development process for nearby projects and seeing projects I have worked on come to life.



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AEP/WTS NORTH COAST CORRIDOR URBAN HIKE

Written by: Melissa Whittemore

June Gloom resulted in perfect hiking weather for the AEP/WTS joint urban hike on Saturday, June 1, 2024, where more than 25 members and friends met to explore the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve. This area was improved as part of the I-5 North Coast Corridor project – a project which many local AEP and WTS members worked on. After extensive coordination with numerous public agencies, the project resulted in the expansion of I-5 and lagoon restoration to help ensure climate resilience due to sea level rise. Starting on the east side on I-5, our group walked along a multipurpose pathway and trails under I-5 and the LOSSAN railway, traveling a 4-mile loop around San Elijo Lagoon. Although no one in our group was a professional biologist, some were able to point out native vegetation, some invasive plant species, and a few special-status bird species, including the federally endangered Ridgway's rail!

If you have a project location where AEP can host another hike urban, please contact AEP Vice Presidents of Programs Brent Burmeister (bburmeister@asmaffiliates.com) and Hannah Gbeh (hannah@resolutionenvironmental.com).





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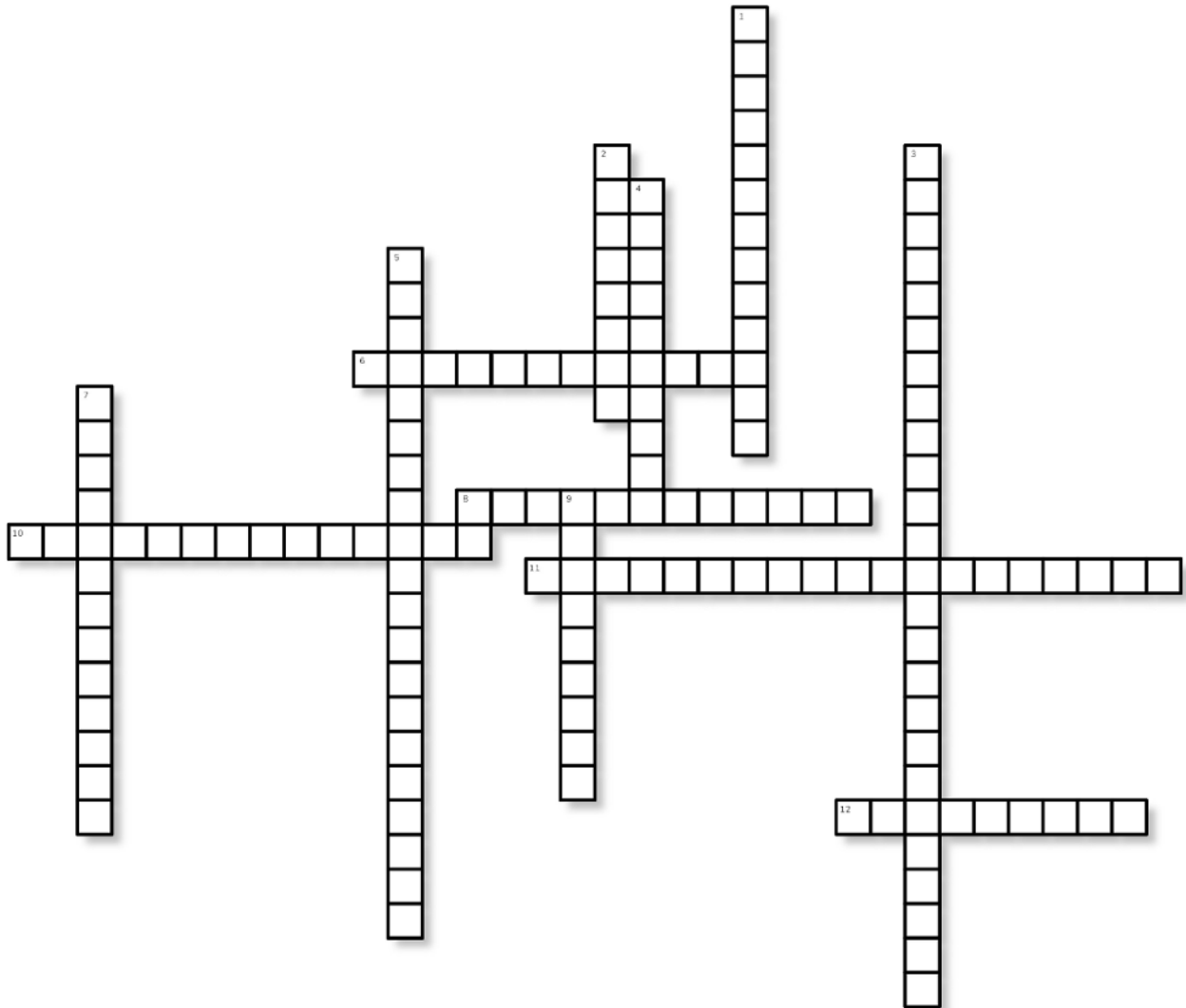
CEQA Jargon Crossword

Across

- 6. Importance or magnitude
- 8. Other options considered
- 10. Announcement of upcoming EIR
- 11. Determination that project has no significant impact
- 12. The line that triggers environmental review

Down

- 1. Input from community members
- 2. Sufficient level of detail in EIR
- 3. Detailed analysis of project's effects
- 4. Action taken to reduce negative environmental impacts
- 5. Fair treatment of all communities
- 7. Agency responsible for protecting resources affected by project
- 9. Certain projects may be exempt from CEQA review process



Answers: **Across**. 6. Significance, 8. Alternatives, 10. Notice of Intent, 11. Negative Declaration, 12. Threshold. **Down**. 1. Public Comment, 2. Adequacy, 3. Environmental Impact Report, 4. Mitigation, 5. Environmental Justice, 7. Trustee Agency, 9. Exemption

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