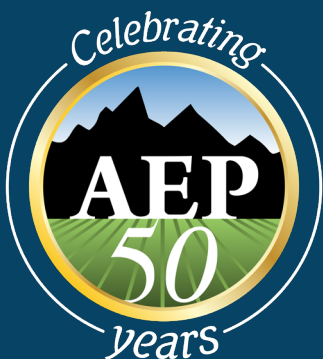


AEP 2025

CA State Conference
Seeds of Change,
Waves of
Progress

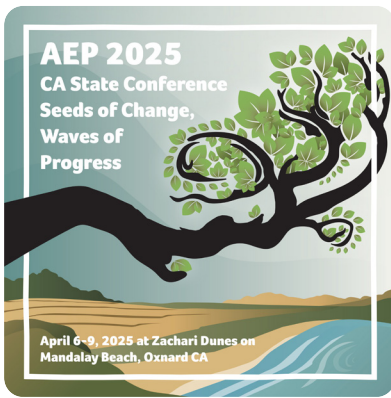
April 6-9, 2025 at Zachari Dunes on
Mandalay Beach, Oxnard CA



Conference Program

Seeds of Change, Waves of Progress

Zachari Dunes on Mandalay Beach, Oxnard



Thank you Sponsors

AEP California State Conference 2025



Table of Contents

Thank you Sponsors	2
Table of Contents	3
Welcome Message from the AEP President	4
Monday Opening Keynote Speaker	5
Tuesday Morning Keynote Speaker	6
Tuesday Keynote Lunch Speaker	7
Thank you to the AEP 2025 Conference Committee	8
2025 Conference-at-a-Glance	9
Conference Abstracts	13
Thank You AEP 2025 Exhibitors	43
Thank you Sponsors	45



Welcome Message from the AEP President

Placeholder Text: Welcome to the 2025 Association of Environmental Professionals Annual Conference! Please join me in thanking our Conference Chairs, Jacqueline Protsman Rohr, PlaceWorks and Brandi Cummings, SWCA and the Conference Committee for their hard work, organization, and leadership in making this Conference a huge success. The 2025 team put forth tremendous effort to make this conference the best to date. They have planned an outstanding schedule of sessions and events to challenge and inspire our thinking, support our professional development, and to allow us to have some fun and expand our networks.



We also cannot forget the tireless efforts of Lynne Bynder, CMP our Executive Director and Candace Davis, our Operations Director who makes our conferences a success year after year.

Finally, we all extend our gratitude to our many sponsors. Without their support the conference would not be possible.

We hope you enjoy the conference and make time to experience the City of Oxnard and the beautiful Channel Islands Coastline.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M Fogg". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mindy Fogg
AEP President

Monday Opening Keynote Speaker

Time: 8:00 am- 8:45 am

Location: Tides Ballroom

About Supervisor Matt LaVere

Matt LaVere was elected to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in March 2020 and formally took office as the District 1 Supervisor in December 2020.

Prior to taking office as County Supervisor, Matt served on the Ventura City Council from 2016-2020, and was Ventura's Mayor from 2018-2020. During his time on the Ventura City Council, Matt's key priorities were economic development, affordable housing, environmental initiatives, homeless services and supporting our first responders.

Matt is a 2nd generation Ventura County native. He grew up in Ventura and Ojai, attending Loma Vista Elementary School, Mira Monte Elementary School, Matilija Junior High School and Villanova Preparatory School. Following graduation from Villanova, Matt attended Pepperdine University where he earned a bachelor's degree with honors and distinction in 2000. Matt earned his law degree from the Pepperdine University School of Law.

Professionally, Matt has worked as a lawyer in private practice since 2006. He has also held positions in the White House, as a legislative aide on Capitol Hill, and worked a six month position with the United States Attorney's Office Organized Crime Strike Force in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Matt has also served on the Board of Directors for Project Understanding, the Downtown Ventura Rotary Club, and continues to serve as an Executive Board Member of the Ventura College Foundation, which supports the thousands of students attending Ventura College through scholarships, free textbooks and other assistance.

Matt lives in Ventura with his wife Alicia and his two daughters Lucia and Lorenza.

Tuesday Morning Keynote Speaker

Time: 8:00 am- 8:45 am

Location: Tides Ballroom

Gabe Teran, Mayor Pro Tem, City Council member, District 2

Gabe Teran is a nearly life-long resident of the City of Oxnard and currently serves as the elected District 2 City Councilmember and Mayor Pro Tem. Professionally he brings over 20 years of statewide youth development, human services and community advocacy work to the dais.

Gabe previously served as a Neighborhood Council Chair (2018-2021) and as a Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Commissioner (2017-2021).

Through this service experience, he worked to evolve what it means to meaningfully engage with constituents- especially via social media. In every role he takes on, he seeks collaborative work with stakeholders, equitable outcomes for all, and is always working toward continuous improvement throughout the Oxnard community.

Gabe holds a Master's degree in Management and Leadership, a Bachelor's degree in Information Technology, an Associate's in Addictive Disorder Studies, and two certifications for substance use disorder counseling in the State of California.

Tuesday Keynote Lunch Speaker



Time: 12:30 pm- 1:45 pm

Location: Tides Ballroom

Holly Lohuis, Marine Biologist, Naturalist and Marine Educator

Holly Lohuis, Marine Biologist, Naturalist and Marine Educator March 2025 Holly Lohuis is a marine biologist, conservationist, and educator known for her passionate advocacy for ocean conservation. With over 30 years of experience, she has dedicated her life to studying and protecting marine ecosystems around the world. Graduating from University of CA, Santa Barbara in marine science, her work includes over 25 years with Jean-Michel Cousteau and his marine conservation organization.

Most recently, Holly has become the Co-Director of the newly designated Santa Barbara Channel Whale Heritage Area, highlighting the region's commitment to responsible tourism and conservation initiatives aimed at protecting whales, dolphins, and their marine habitats.

Thank you to the AEP 2025 Conference Committee

Conference Co-Chairs:

Jacqueline Protsman Rohr, PlaceWorks, jprohr@placeworks.com

Brandi Cummings, SWCA, Brandi.Cummings@swca.com

Track Chairs:

Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates) Elizabeth Moreno, County of San Luis Obispo, emoreno@co.slo.ca.us

Beet the Heat (Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience) Jacqueline Protsman Rohr, PlaceWorks, jprohr@placeworks.com

Cultivating Innovations Across Fields (New Tools, Case Law, CEQA Streamlining, AI) Shauna Callery, Rincon Consultants, SCallery@rinconconsultants.com

Watering the Plants, Flooding the Fields (Coastal Development, Water Supply, and Stormwater Management) Nicole West, Rincon Consultants, nwest@rinconconsultants.com

Tilling the Soil (Technical Studies and Best Practices) Lindsey Sarquilla, Rincon Consultants, lsarquilla@rinconconsultants.com

Growing Your Expertise (Students, Emerging Professionals, CEQA and Topic Area Basics, Technical Skill Development) Cassidy Bewley, SWCA, Cassidy.Bewley@swca.com

People & Culture, Jacqueline Protsman Rohr, PlaceWorks, jprohr@placeworks.com

Mobile Workshop Chair:

Brandi Cummings, SWCA, Brandi.Cummings@swca.com

Emily Creel, SWCA, ECreel@swca.com

Student Volunteer Chair:

Cassidy Bewley, SWCA, Cassidy.Bewley@swca.com

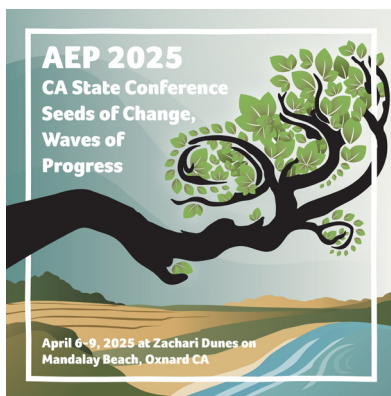
AEP Conference Support Staff:

Lynne C Bynder, CMP, AEP Executive Director, lbynder@califaep.org

Candace Davis, AEP Operations Director, membership@califaep.org

Jaimie Jones, AEP Publications Director-SWCA, jmjones@swca.com,

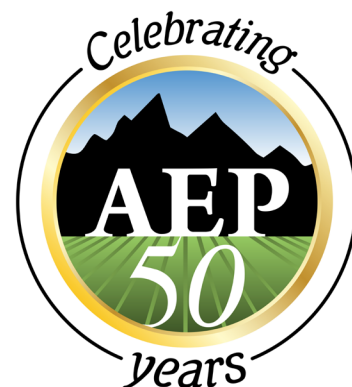
Grant Reddy, AEP Graphic Designer, PlaceWorks, greddy@placeworks.com



2025 Conference-at-a-Glance

5 Session Tracks:

- » **Bananas for CEQA**
- » **Beet the Heat**
- » **Cultivating Innovation Across Fields**
- » **Watering the Plants, Flooding the Fields**
- » **Tilling the Soil**
- » **Growing Your Expertise**
- » **People & Culture Session**



2025 California State Conference

Conference-at-a-Glance | 1

Sunday, April 6, 2025

11:30 am – 6:30 pm	Conference Registration – <i>Foyer</i>				
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Exhibitor Set-up – <i>Tides Ballroom</i>				
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm	<u>BANANAS FOR CEQA</u> The Industrial Revolution: AB 98's Impact on Cities, Developers, and in CEQA Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal Ballroom 1	<u>BEET THE HEAT</u> Air Quality and Climate Change Workshop- Part 1 Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Tides Ballroom A	<u>GROWING YOUR EXPERTISE</u> Oh the Places you COULD Go! Realistic Career Paths...from Graduation to Environmental Planning Expert Room: Constellation	<u>TILLING THE SOIL</u> Unique Challenges & Solutions to Mitigate Major Tree Removal for Alternative Transportation Project Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 Credits: AICP 1.5	
3:15 pm – 4:45 pm	<u>BANANAS FOR CEQA</u> Cracking the Code of Cumulative Impacts, A Practical Guide Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal Ballroom 1	<u>BEET THE HEAT</u> Air Quality and Climate Change Workshop - Part 2 Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Tides Ballroom A	<u>CULTIVATING INNOVATION ACROSS FIELDS</u> Reach Codes: Yes We Still Can! Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Tides C	<u>GROWING YOUR EXPERTISE</u> Do This, Not That: Project Description Edition Room: Constellation	<u>TILLING THE SOIL</u> How to Write a Geology Section 101 Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Coastal Ballroom 2
4:45 pm – 5:30 pm	1st Timer, New Member, Mentor/ Mentee Reception – <i>Playa Vista Lawn</i>				
4:45 pm – 6:00 pm	Exhibitor Set-up – <i>Tides Ballroom</i>				
5:30 pm – 8:30 pm	Opening Reception – <i>Playa Vista Lawn</i> – <i>Sponsored by Stantec & Harris and Associates</i>				
6:00 pm – 8:30 pm	AEP Jam Band – <i>Playa Vista Lawn</i>				

Monday, April 7, 2025

7:30 am – 6:00 pm	Registration – <i>Lobby Foyer</i>
7:30 am – 6:30 pm	Exhibits Open – <i>Tides Ballroom</i>
7:30 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast Buffet – <i>Tides Ballroom</i> – <i>Sponsored by ICF & ESA</i>
8:00 am – 8:45 am	Opening Keynote Speaker – <i>Matt LaVere, Ventura County District 1 Supervisor</i> – <i>Tides Ballroom</i>

Monday, April 7, 2025 (Continued)

9:00 am – 10:30 am	<u>BANANAS FOR CEQA</u> Judicial Streamlining - Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Initiatives (LCI) Panel Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal 1	<u>CULTIVATING INNOVATION ACROSS FIELDS</u> What's New in Subsequent Review Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Tides Ballroom C	<u>GROWING YOUR EXPERTISE</u> Planning, Networking, Careers – Oh My! Making the Transition from Student to Professional Room: Constellation	<u>TILLING THE SOIL</u> Unexpected Infill Site Hazard Discoveries. What is Enough Analysis Under CEQA? Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal Ballroom 2	<u>CEQA LAW AND ETHICS</u> Credits: AICP 1.5, CM Law 1.0, CM Ethics 1.0 Room: Tides A
10:45 am – 12:15 pm	<u>BANANAS FOR CEQA</u> Mitigation Fails: When Good Intentions Go Awry Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal Ballroom 1	<u>BEET THE HEAT</u> Riding the Waves of Progress: Navigating the Energy Transition, Climate Adaptation, and Building Resilience Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Tides Ballroom A	<u>CULTIVATING INNOVATION ACROSS FIELDS</u> AI AI OhhhhhMG! The Sequel! Room: Tides Ballroom C	<u>TILLING THE SOIL</u> No Longer a Controlled Burn: Latest in Emergency Evacuation Planning, Impacts, and Mitigation Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal Ballroom 2	<u>PEOPLE & CULTURE SESSION</u> Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Shifting from Cultural Competency to Cultural Humility Credits: AICP 1.5, CM Equity 1.0 Room: Constellation
12:15 pm – 1:45 pm	Keynote Lunch – William Hoyer, Natural Resource Manager, San Nicolas Island, Naval Base Ventura County (Grab and Go Lunch Provided) – Tides Ballroom – <i>Sponsored by BBK & SWCA</i>				
1:15 pm – 4:45 pm	Mobile Workshop #1 – Winter Whale Watching Tour (\$50 additional fee)				
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm	<u>BANANAS FOR CEQA</u> Keep Your Eye on the Findings Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal Ballroom 1	<u>BEET THE HEAT</u> Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience Credits: AICP 1.5, CM Sustainability & Resilience 1.0 Room: Tides Ballroom A	<u>CULTIVATING INNOVATION ACROSS FIELDS</u> More Than a Conservation Project - Washoe Land and Water Back; An Eco-Cultural Reunion and Land-Back Template Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Tides Ballroom C	<u>WATERING THE PLANTS, FLOODING THE FIELDS</u> Navigating CEQA for Complex Water Projects Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Constellation	<u>TILLING THE SOIL</u> Healthy Roads, Healthy Communities: How VMT Reduction and Safe Roadway Systems Can Address Our Public Health Crisis Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Coastal Ballroom 2
3:15 pm – 3:45 pm	Take a Sponsor Break – Tides Ballroom				
3:45 pm – 5:15 pm	<u>BANANAS FOR CEQA</u> A Peculiar Kind of Exemption That Yields Particularly Good Results- Take Homes from <i>Hilltop v. County of San Diego</i> Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal 1	<u>BEET THE HEAT</u> Navigating Wildfire Prevention: Integrating CEQA, Biological, and Cultural Perspectives for Effective Vegetation Management Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Tides Ballroom A	<u>CULTIVATING INNOVATION ACROSS FIELDS</u> A VMT Mitigation Program Framework Powered by Community Input Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Tides Ballroom C	<u>WATERING THE PLANTS, FLOODING THE FIELDS</u> Achieving Mitigation Goals in a Public Agency Despite Turnover Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Constellation	<u>TILLING THE SOIL</u> Carbon Sequestration and Land Management on Natural and Working Lands: Analysis, Planning & Implementation Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Coastal Ballroom 2
5:30 pm – 7:00 pm	Awards Reception – Tides Ballroom – <i>Sponsored by Envicom</i>				
6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	AEP 2025 Awards Program – Tides Ballroom – <i>Sponsored by AECOM</i>				

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

8:00 am – 6:00 pm	Registration – Lobby Foyer				
8:00 am – 6:30 pm	Exhibits Open – Tides Ballroom				
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast Buffet – Tides Ballroom – <i>Sponsored by WSP</i>				
8:00 am – 8:45 am	Keynote Speakers – City of Oxnard- Gabe Teran, Mayor Pro Tem and Kathleen Mallory, Planning and Sustainability Manager – Tides Ballroom				
9:00 am – 10:30 am	BANANAS FOR CEQA Best CEQA Practices for BESS Facilities Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal Ballroom 1	BEET THE HEAT Driving Science to Action: Using Community-Based Research to Inform Local and Regional Climate Adaptation Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Tides Ballroom A	CULTIVATING INNOVATION ACROSS FIELDS Beyond the Boundaries: Regional Climate Planning in a World of Local Authority Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Tides Ballroom C	WATERING THE PLANTS, FLOODING THE FIELDS California Offshore Wind: Agency Authority, Impacts, Technology, and Development Challenges Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Constellation	TILLING THE SOIL Methods of Assessing Natural and Working Lands in Climate Action and Adaptation Planning Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Coastal Ballroom 2
10:45 am – 12:15 pm	BANANAS FOR CEQA Saved by the Bill: Discussing Make UC a Good Neighbor v. UC Regents and AB 1307 with the Team Who Wrote and Defended the UC Berkeley EIR Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal Ballroom 1	BEET THE HEAT Creating and Implementing Community Wildfire Protection Plans Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Tides Ballroom A	CULTIVATING INNOVATION ACROSS FIELDS Unique Technologies Require Unique Approaches: Balancing the Delivery of First-Last Mile Solutions with CEQA and NEPA Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Tides Ballroom C	WATERING THE PLANTS, FLOODING THE FIELDS Addressing Habitat Restoration & Conservation Needs in the Imperial Valley Amidst Water Scarcity Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Constellation	TILLING THE SOIL Parking in the Spotlight: CEQA Compliance and Community Impact in a Changing Regulatory Environment Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal Ballroom 2
12:30 pm – 1:45 pm	Keynote Lunch – Holly Lohuis, <i>Whales and Wilderness: Safeguarding the Channel Islands Fragile Ecosystems (Grab and Go Lunch Provided)</i> – Tides Ballroom – <i>Sponsored by Yorke Engineering & Placeworks</i>				
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Mobile Workshop #2 – Port of Hueneme Tour (\$35 additional fee)				
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm	BANANAS FOR CEQA Talk to My Lawyer: A Planner's Guide to Enhancing Legal Defensibility in CEQA Documents Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Coastal Ballroom 1	BEET THE HEAT Planning for a Resilient, Zero-Emissions Transportation Future Credits: AICP 1.5, CM Resiliency 1.0 Room: Tides Ballroom A	CULTIVATING INNOVATION ACROSS FIELDS Embedding Equity into Climate Action Planning Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0 Room: Tides Ballroom C	WATERING THE PLANTS, FLOODING THE FIELDS PFAS Predicaments & Progress Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Constellation	TILLING THE SOIL Navigating Compensatory Mitigation Challenges in California- Strategies for Early Planning and Scarce Credit Solutions Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Coastal Ballroom 2
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Take a Sponsor Break – Tides Ballroom				

Tuesday, April 8, 2025 (Continued)

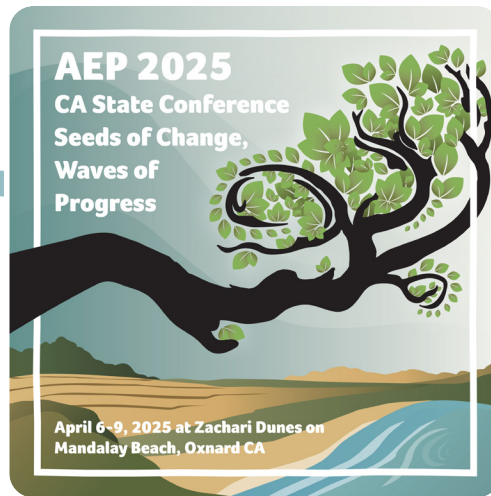
4:00 pm – 5:30 pm	<u>BANANAS FOR CEQA</u> Housing Exemptions Streamlining Roundtable Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Coastal Ballroom 1	<u>BEET THE HEAT</u> Sandy Cells: Coastal Adaptation Planning in the Santa Barbara/Ventura Littoral Cell Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Tides Ballroom A	<u>WATERING THE PLANTS, FLOODING THE FIELDS</u> Categorical Exemptions for Revisions to the Los Angeles County Floodway Maps for the Santa Clara River Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Constellation	<u>TILLING THE SOIL</u> Clearing the Air: Practical Tips for Reviewing Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analyses Credits: AICP 1.5 Room: Coastal Ballroom 2
5:45 pm – 7:00 pm	Wine and Cheese Reception – <i>Tides Ballroom</i> – <i>Sponsored by Sapphos Environmental & Envicom</i>			

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

8:30 am – 10:00 am	Registration – <i>Lobby Foyer</i>
8:30 am – 12:00 pm	Exhibits Open – <i>Tides Ballroom</i>
8:30 am – 9:45 am	Brunch – <i>Tides Ballroom</i> – <i>Sponsored by SWCA</i>
9:00 am – 12:00 pm	2025 CEQA Update – Credits: AICP 3.0, MCLE 3.0 – <i>Tides Ballroom</i> : Presenters – William Halligan, Harris and Associates; Amanda Daams, BBK; Kristin Blackson, WSP – <i>Sponsored by SWCA</i>
12:00 pm	Exhibitor Teardown – <i>Tides Ballroom</i>



Conference Abstracts



Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates)

The Industrial Revolution: AB 98's Impact on Cities, Developers, and in CEQA

Sunday, April 6, 2025

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 1 | Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Paul Herrmann, TE, Senior Associate, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Iddo Benzeevi, President and CEO, Highland Fairview

Panelist: Kimberly Ruddins, City of Ontario Sustainability Program Manager at City of Ontario

Panelist: Jolene Hayes, AICP, Senior Associate, Fehr & Peers

Abstract:

Assembly Bill 98 (AB 98) was recently signed into law in an effort to mitigate the negative health impacts associated with warehouse and logistics facility uses have on nearby communities, primarily focused on the Inland Empire. Agencies, developers, and planners are now all scrambling to adjust to the new requirements and maintain compliance. What does this mean for my City's ongoing warehousing development projects? Do I as a developer need to redesign my site plan? Or worse... do we need to reopen CEQA??? This session brings together the perspectives of developers, City staff, City politicians, and transportation engineers and planners from the Inland Empire to discuss these pressing questions.

Iddo Benzeevi, CEO of Highland Fairview and developer of the 40 million-square-foot World Logistics Center (WLC) project in Moreno Valley, will discuss the similarities in AB 98 and the forward-thinking project features incorporated into WLC environmental documents. How will these requirements affect existing and future projects?

Carole Kendrick, who serves as both Community Development Director at the City of Beaumont and City Council Member for the City of Hemet, will discuss from both perspectives how Cities are responding the latest requirements of the bill. How will Beaumont's recently adopted general plan and circulation element be affected by the bill? How will these disadvantaged communities be positively or negatively impacted by this legislation?

Jolene Hayes is a nationally recognized freight expert and transportation planner that will provide insight and best practice recommendations on how to address the requirements of the new bill in CEQA and in future project planning. What do planners need to know about AB 98?

The session will include an interactive exercise evaluating “what if?” questions related to truck routing, warehousing siting, and getting projects approved through CEQA.

Beet the Heat (Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience)

Air Quality and Climate Change Workshop - Part 1

Sunday, April 6, 2025

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm | Room: Tides A | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Michael Hendrix, Michael Hendrix Consulting

Panelist: Rich Walter, Vice President, ICF

Panelist: Nicole Vermillion, Principal, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Sarah Halterman, Dudek

Panelist: Jennifer Reed, Air Quality Manager, Dudek

Panelist: Brian Schuster, Director Air Quality, Climate, Acoustics, ESA

Panelist: Cheryl Laskowski, Principal/Owner, Cheryl Laskowski Consulting

Panelist: Shannon Hatcher, Air Pollution Specialist, California Air Resources Board

Panelist: Andrew Mutziger, Manager-Planning, Monitoring and Grant Division, San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District

Panelist: Paul Philley, Transportation and Climate Change Program Manager, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District

Panelist: Poonam Boparai, Principal, Ascent Environmental

Panelist: Tammy Seale, Principal, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Haseeb Qureshi, Principal, Urban Crossroads

Abstract:

The 2025 Conference Air Quality and Climate Change Workshop is a half-day (3-hour) workshop packed with the latest methods and thresholds related to CEQA/NEPA analysis of air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change. The summary of the thresholds will be followed by an interactive problem-solving project example designed to engage the audience and solicit questions. We will also provide an overview of legislation, recent Executive Orders issued by President Trump, and published court cases with audience discussion of how the latest legislation, Executive Orders, and case law affects CEQA analysis of projects, Climate Action Plans, and General Plans. In addition, the workshop will include a deeper dive into how the State goal of net Carbon Neutrality works, and how that will impact GHG thresholds. This last topic is a continuation of the discussion from last year's conference and will include lessons learned. The AEP Climate Change Committee will provide new information on the Central Coast Carbon Collaborative's methods of sequestering carbon emissions through Climate-Smart Agricultural methods, how those methods are being used in climate action plans, and reduction quantification related to working lands. Finally, the workshop will provide some sobering climate modeling that predicts drastic changes in natural habitats, and how CEQA mitigation of habitat conservation needs to take the predicted changes into account.

Oh the Places you COULD Go! Realistic Career Paths...from Graduation to Environmental Planning Expert

Sunday, April 6, 2025

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm | Room: Constellation

Moderator: Melissa Whittemore, Senior Environmental Project Manager, Michael Baker International

Panelist: Claudia Garcia, AICP, Assistant Director of Community Development, City of Vacaville

Panelist: Vicky Rosen, AICP, Environmental Planner, Michael Baker International

Panelist: Oscar Escobar, Environmental Associate, Michael Baker International

Abstract:

Are you curious about what your first day, week, month, and year will be like as an environmental planner? Are you interested in learning potential career paths once you have a couple years of professional experience as a CEQA/NEPA practitioner, including technical scientist, project manager, group director, and more? During this interactive session, learn about the typical responsibilities of an entry-level environmental planner, as well as future roles in the environmental planning field. Panelists will cover topics such as: how much time you will spend in the field versus conducting research and writing reports at a computer versus talking with clients and community members; the differences between working at a private company and a public agency; whether a graduate degree is appropriate for you; and more. Panelists will also share feedback from all levels of professionals about why they chose environmental planning and why they find it rewarding. Additionally, panelists will discuss other similar career paths that are available, such urban planning and sustainability, and touch on the differences between these roles. This session will include advice on how to secure your first job after college graduation, including tips for networking, resume and cover letter, and interviewing, as well as tips for succeeding during your first year as a professional environmental planner.

Tilling the Soil (Technical Studies and Best Practices)

Unique Challenges & Solutions to Mitigate Major Tree Removal for Alternative Transportation Project

Sunday, April 6, 2025

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 | **Credits:** AICP 1.5

Moderator: Kate Elliott, Director, Environmental Planning & Compliance, Harris & Associates

Panelist: Grace Blakeslee, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, Senior Transportation Planner

Panelist: Justin Davilla, Senior Ecologist/Regulatory Compliance Specialist, EcoSystems West

Panelist: Bill Davilla, Principal and Senior Botanist, EcoSystems West

Abstract:

The City of Santa Cruz (City), County of Santa Cruz (County), and Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) face the unique challenge of mitigating for the removal of 1,000+ trees for the Coastal Rail Trail Project, with no room along the rail corridor for tree replacement, and the challenge of justifying the trade-off for alternative transportation. The challenges include minimizing the significant and unavoidable impacts to biological resources (monarch roosting habitat, wildlife movement, and habitat fragmentation), as well as aesthetics and

greenhouse gas emissions (climate change), with multiple agency stakeholders (City, County, SCCRTC, California Coastal Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board) in a politically contentious community. The solutions include 1) a comprehensive mitigation program that looks beyond traditional tree replacement ratios, and 2) a cooperative multi-agency agreement that requires collaboration with competing interests. Easy peasy? Not! The panel includes agencies and biologists who tell the story and discuss the unique challenges, creative solutions, and lessons learned along the way. The audience will be encouraged to ask questions and share their experiences and solutions.

Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates)

Cracking the Code of Cumulative Impacts: A Practical Guide

Sunday, April 6, 2025

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 1 | **Credits:** AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Nicole West, Senior Supervising Environmental Planner, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Panelist: Hannah Park, of Counsel, Best Best & Krieger

Panelist: Alex Garber, Senior Technical Planner, EPD Solutions, Inc.

Panelist: Katherine Fikan, Environmental Planner, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Abstract:

Cumulative impacts can be one of the most challenging aspects of CEQA to grasp and write about, yet they are increasingly litigated. In this session, we'll cover the basics of cumulative impacts, breaking down confusing terms and concepts, and then dive deeper into how to effectively write clear, defensible cumulative impact sections. Attendees will leave with a formulaic approach and real-world examples to simplify their process.

Interactive Component: We'll engage attendees with a hands-on exercise: breaking into small groups, participants will review sample cumulative impact sections, identify common errors, and rewrite them using the formulaic approach introduced.

Beet the Heat (Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience)

Air Quality and Climate Change Workshop - Part 2

Sunday, April 6, 2025

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm | Room: Tides A | **Credits:** AICP 1.5

Moderator: Michael Hendrix, Michael Hendrix Consulting

Panelist: Rich Walter, Vice President, ICF

Panelist: Nicole Vermillion, Principal, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Sarah Halterman, Dudek

Panelist: Jennifer Reed, Air Quality Manager, Dudek

Panelist: Brian Schuster, Director Air Quality, Climate, Acoustics, ESA

Panelist: Cheryl Laskowski, Principal/Owner, Cheryl Laskowski Consulting

Panelist: Shannon Hatcher, Air Pollution Specialist, California Air Resources Board

Panelist: Andrew Mutziger, Manager-Planning, Monitoring and Grant Division, San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District

Panelist: Paul Philley, Transportation and Climate Change Program Manager, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District

Panelist: Poonam Boparai, Principal, Ascent Environmental

Panelist: Tammy Seale, Principal, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Haseeb Qureshi, Principal, Urban Crossroads

Abstract:

The 2025 Conference Air Quality and Climate Change Workshop is a half-day (3-hour) workshop packed with the latest methods and thresholds related to CEQA/NEPA analysis of air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change. The summary of the thresholds will be followed by an interactive problem-solving project example designed to engage the audience and solicit questions. We will also provide an overview of legislation, recent Executive Orders issued by President Trump, and published court cases with audience discussion of how the latest legislation, Executive Orders, and case law affects CEQA analysis of projects, Climate Action Plans, and General Plans. In addition, the workshop will include a deeper dive into how the State goal of net Carbon Neutrality works, and how that will impact GHG thresholds. This last topic is a continuation of the discussion from last year's conference and will include lessons learned. The AEP Climate Change Committee will provide new information on the Central Coast Carbon Collaborative's methods of sequestering carbon emissions through Climate-Smart Agricultural methods, how those methods are being used in climate action plans, and reduction quantification related to working lands. Finally, the workshop will provide some sobering climate modeling that predicts drastic changes in natural habitats, and how CEQA mitigation of habitat conservation needs to take the predicted changes into account.

Cultivating Innovation Across Fields (New Tools, Case Law, CEQA Streamlining, AI)

Reach Codes: Yes We Still Can!

Sunday, April 6, 2025

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm | Room: Tides C | Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Eli Krispi, Senior Associate II, Climate Action & Resiliency, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Chris Read, Sustainability Manager, City of San Luis Obispo

Panelist: Demian Hardman-Saldana, Principal Planner, Climate and Energy, Contra Costa County Department of Conservation & Development

Panelist: Lauren Tarpey, Attorney, Shute, Mihaley, & Weinberger LLP

Abstract:

Transitioning buildings off of natural gas is vital for achieving deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and a carbon neutral future. However, recent federal court decisions have struck down some types of mandatory local ordinances that many cities and counties have used to meet decarbonization goals, leaving us facing uncertainty and jeopardizing our climate commitments. Making matters more complicated, the latest updates to the Building Standard Code bring a host of new requirements and compliance methods. What happens now? Several communities are figuring out ways improve energy performance and to reduce or eliminate natural gas use and in new buildings while avoiding legal pitfalls. This interactive session will feature a deep dive (but approachable and understood by reach code novices!) into this important topic and engaging small group discussions facilitated by the panelists. Hear from agency staff who are developing and implementing the next version of the reach code,

and from legal experts who can speak about crafting reach codes that keep even the most cautious city attorney happy. Learn about what's different in these new reach codes, how effective they are in reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, how they support climate action plan goals, and what you need to do to set one up in your community. Attendees will work through the equity considerations of reach codes and how to ensure that everyone in your community can benefit from greener and safer buildings. We'll talk about barriers and solutions to a reach code development and implementation, including costs, developer education, compliance monitoring, and making sure that these regulations don't conflict with your housing goals and other important community priorities. Equip yourself to be a New Reach Code Expert and help lead California into our carbon neutral future.

Growing your Expertise (Students, Emerging Professionals, CEQA and Topic Area Basics, Technical Skill Development)

Do This, Not That: Project Description Edition

Sunday, April 6, 2025

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm | Room: Constellation

Moderator: Shannon Reese, Supervising Planner, County of Santa Barbara

Panelist: Eric Hughes, Division Manager/Environmental Coordinator, County of San Luis Obispo

Panelist: Stuart Muerth, Associate Project Environmental Planner, SWCA Environmental Consultants

Panelist: Matt Ottoson, Principal Planner, RRM Design Group

Panelist: Emily Creel, J.D., Principal Planning Team Lead, SWCA Environmental Consultants

Tilling the Soil (Technical Studies and Best Practices)

How to Write a Geology Section 101

Sunday, April 6, 2025

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Stephanie Standerfer, Vice President, Albert A. Webb Associates

Panelist: Lisa Battiato, PG, Senior Geologist/Regional Manager, Geocon

Panelist: Kevin Hunt, Principal Archaeologist, South Environmental

Abstract:

California is famous for our geology—we all live within 5 miles of an earthquake fault. Given this inherent risk, along with the diverse geology of our state, how does a CEQA Practitioner know how to get good answers to address the Geology and Soils CEQA threshold questions? Geotechnical reports are the sources typically used by CEQA Practitioners to write Geology sections, but how do we know we are getting to the real issues that could affect our analysis and more importantly, the mitigation measures we might need to incorporate. And we can't forget Paleontology—now that it has moved in under the Geology section, this too is often an issue area that is overlooked by CEQA Practitioners as a potential issue. Yet, across the state, paleontological finds are happening. This panel, comprised of a Professional Geologist, a CEQA Practitioner, and a practicing cultural and paleontological resources specialist, will provide a dynamic and crowd-engaging discussion and tutorial on how to decipher what is needed from both a geotechnical report and a paleontology report to write a great CEQA Geology and Soils section.

Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates)

Judicial Streamlining - Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Initiatives (LCI) Panel

Monday, April 7, 2025

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Coastal Ballroom 1 | **Credits:** AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Araceli Mohseni, Outreach Specialist, Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)

Panelist: Zach Miller, Principal Transportation Planner, Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)

Panelist: Natalie Kuffel, Deputy Director of Land Policy, Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)

Panelist: Austin Kerr, Greenhouse Gas & Air Quality Analyst Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)

Abstract:

Are you bananas for CEQA? This track focuses on expanding practitioners' CEQA foundation and knowledge. These "Bananas for CEQA" panels will address the nuts and bolts, best practices, and emerging topics- from writing the perfect mitigation measure to tiering and streamlining. Panels on this track may also discuss the nuances of project permitting requirements and any other relevant updates.

Cultivating Innovation Across Fields (New Tools, Case Law, CEQA Streamlining, AI)

What's New in Subsequent Review

Monday, April 7, 2025

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Tides Ballroom C | **Credits:** AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Megan Kilmer, Associate, Best Best & Krieger LLP

Panelist: Amanda Daams, Partner, Best Best & Krieger LLP

Panelist: Travis Randel, Deputy City Manager, Development Services, City of San Jacinto

Panelist: Alicia Gonzalez, Senior Associate | Planning Department Manager, Michael Baker International

Abstract:

Your city has adopted its housing element and now the housing project applications are rolling in. What do you do regarding environmental review? Can you tier from the housing element EIR or MND? Make a consistency finding? And what happens if the project is proposed in an area not properly zoned for housing? This session will examine how housing element EIRs and MNDs can be useful documents for tiering, particularly regarding housing. In this interactive panel discussion, we will examine recent CEQA case law related to subsequent review, focusing on the reach of addenda and Guidelines Section 15183 consistency findings. While addenda to a city's general plan have often been used for individual projects, the articulations of the appropriate standards of review may make consistency findings under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 a more defensible option. Specifically, this session will address whether the two-prong test for evaluating the applicability and use of addenda in Save Our Access limits the use of addenda following program-level documents? Does the 'substantial evidence' standard articulated for Section 15183 findings in Lucas makes consistency findings a better option? Our panel of professionals will provide best practices for preparing these environmental documents with a focus on housing projects. Our panel will also engage the audience with a series of questions on experience in preparation of these documents as issues of concern and best practices.

Growing your Expertise (Students, Emerging Professionals, CEQA and Topic Area Basics, Technical Skill Development)

Planning, Networking, Careers – Oh My! Making the Transition from Student to Professional

Monday, April 7, 2025

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Constellation

Moderator: Dan Klemann, WSP- Assistant Vice President / UCSB- Lecturer, WSP and University of California Santa Barbara

Panelist: Kaitlyn Halpin, Associate Consultant, Environmental Planning, WSP

Panelist: Samantha Senaldi, Consultant, Environmental Planning, WSP

Panelist: Megan Musolf, Assistant Planner, City of Carpinteria

Tilling the Soil (Technical Studies and Best Practices)

Unexpected Infill Site Hazard Discoveries - What is Enough Analysis under CEQA?

Monday, April 7, 2025

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 | **Credits:** AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Laura Kaufman, AICP, VP, Environmental Services, Envicom Corporation

Panelist: Spencer Kallick, Esq., Operating Partner, Allen Matkins, Century City Office

Panelist: Loren Witkin, REA, LEED, AEP/AHERA Accredited, CEO, Citadel EHS.

Panelist: Bill Piazza, Owner, Air Quality Dynamics

Abstract:

As development of infill sites becomes increasingly prevalent, the likelihood increases of encountering hazards and hazardous materials during the evaluation of new development project sites. These hazards and hazardous materials require proper identification, characterization, remediation and disposal. Our panel will explore the best practices for preparing Environmental Site Assessments (Phases I and beyond) and for utilizing them properly to respond to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. We will explore how the results of these assessments may warrant analysis beyond the Hazards and Hazardous Materials chapter of your CEQA document, such as evaluation of air quality, health risk, noise and vibration, and transportation effects. In order to avoid falling into the trap of deferred analysis and mitigation and thus leaving your CEQA analysis open to scrutiny and legal challenge, the panel will also explore how much and what type of field exploration and hazard characterization should be undertaken and how much detail on the remediation program must be defined in the CEQA analysis to provide a good faith effort at full disclosure, as compared to what may be accomplished as part of well-designed performance-based mitigation measures. When is the remediation program straight-forward enough to be considered regulatory compliance? When does case law allow you to defer? Our panel will explore and shed light on the gray areas, which are most relevant to small, infill projects. Our DEI component will be to include a discussion of NEPA-relevant environmental justice concerns for such projects, with case studies. Our audience participation component will be to include audience 'show of hands' related to the presentation materials (such as who has dealt with a project of this type, what segment of the industry are you in, etc.) and a Q&A at the end.

CEQA Law and Ethics Session

Monday, April 7, 2025

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Tides Ballroom A

Credits: AICP 1.5, CM Law 1.0, CM Ethics 1.0

Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates)

Mitigation Fails: When Good Intentions Go Awry

Monday, April 7, 2025

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 1 | Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Emily Creel; J.D., Principal Planning Team Lead, Principal Planning Team Lead SWCA Environmental Consultants

Panelist: Eric Hughes, Division Manager/Environmental Coordinator, County of San Luis Obispo

Panelist: Travis Belt, Natural Resources Director, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Panelist: Brooke Langle, Vice President, Northern and Central California, SWCA Environmental Consultants

Panelist: Cindy Chambers, Senior Planner, County of San Luis Obispo

Abstract:

In the world of CEQA, the road to effective mitigation is often paved with good intentions, but can occasionally be littered with problematic missteps. This session will highlight the critical importance of well-crafted mitigation measures and the mayhem that can ensue when those measures fall short. Join us as we dive into a series of entertaining and enlightening case studies, revealing the pitfalls of ambiguous language, overly prescriptive measures, and lack of insight into how measures are implemented in the field.

Discover how such oversights can lead to project delays, unnecessary added costs, and other unintended consequences. We'll equip you with strategies for developing clear, explicit, enforceable mitigation measures that strike a balance between defensibility and flexibility and achieve the desired environmental outcomes.

Expect insightful discussions, practical advice, and best practices as we explore how to turn potential mitigation fails into success stories. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in an interactive activity where we'll navigate a road trip through mitigation potholes. Through these cautionary tales, we'll highlight key lessons learned and offer actionable strategies for creating defensible and implementable mitigation measures. Whether you're a seasoned pro or new to CEQA, this session promises valuable insights and a few laughs along the way.

Beet the Heat (Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience)

Riding the Waves of Progress: Navigating the Energy Transition, Climate Adaptation, and Building Resilience

Monday, April 7, 2025

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Tides A | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Brianna Pilkinton, Senior Principal, Business Center Practice Leader, Stantec

Panelist: Renee Yarmy, LEED AP O+M, Program Director, Maritime Sustainable Development, Port of San Diego

Panelist: Jennifer Medina, Hydrogen Engineering Team Lead, Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas)

Panelist: Kerrie Skillen, M.E.S., Vice President, U.S. Renewables Sector Leader, Environmental Services, Stantec

Panelist: Vicky Furnish, REHS, MA, Principal Manager of Environmental Compliance Division, Southern California Edison (SCE)

Panelist: Jennifer Kaminsky, Manager, Electric Assets & Compliance, San Diego Gas & Electric

Abstract:

Infrastructure is pivotal in the global shift from fossil fuel-based energy to a zero-carbon economy. This session, titled "Riding the Waves of Progress: Navigating the Energy Transition, Climate Adaptation, and Building Resilience," will provide valuable insights into our industry's preparation for this transition and how we, as environmental professionals, can contribute to solving some of these challenges and understanding the hot topics our clients and policymakers must navigate. This all-female-led session will feature extraordinary leaders from various public infrastructure sectors and backgrounds, including hydrogen/natural gas utilities, sustainable maritime infrastructure (i.e., ports), electric transmission and distribution (i.e., electric utilities), and renewable energy. We will delve into capital challenges, asset transformations, and the development of new infrastructure. Additionally, the discussion will cover strategies for stabilizing capacity and fostering collaboration among investors, corporate stakeholders, and policymakers. This will be an interactive session with a breakout collaboration component in small groups. Attendees will come away with an enhanced understanding of energy transition as it pertains to various aspects of preparation to make infrastructure more resilient and less dependent on carbon. Each participant will have the opportunity to brainstorm through challenges and come up with solutions related to the energy transition and sustainable infrastructure planning in conjunction with our panelists in small groups.

Cultivating Innovation Across Fields (New Tools, Case Law, CEQA Streamlining, AI)

AI AI OhhhhhhMG! The Sequel

Monday, April 7, 2025

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Tides Ballroom C

Moderator: Michael Parker, AICP, Principal, Ascent

Panelist: Christy Ryan, Marketing Director, Ascent

Panelist: Curtis Alling, AICP, Principal, Ascent

Abstract:

During the 2024 AEP Conference, a group of moderators led the audience in a crowd-sourced panel exploring AI, including how it is currently being used in the environmental planning industry, its risks and benefits, and our feelings about this powerful and quickly evolving technology. We're back again! This year we will review several transformational updates in generative AI and other applicable AI technologies and use cases, and we will engage with the audience-panel on how they may have evolved over the past year in their use of AI and any new insights they've discovered. We will use SLIDO polling again and will compare results to last year's polls to reveal changes in use of and attitudes associated with AI. We will also again lead small group discussions to promote innovation sharing.

Tilling the Soil (Technical Studies and Best Practices)

No Longer a Controlled Burn; Latest in Emergency Evacuation Planning, Impacts, and Mitigation

Monday, April 7, 2025

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 | **Credits:** AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Panelist: Amanda Daams, Partner ,Best Best & Krieger LLP

Panelist: Sean Bechta, Senior Project Manager ,Ascent Environmental

Panelist: Paul Herrmann, TE, Senior Associate, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Ian Barnes, PE, Principal, Fehr & Peers

Abstract:

The climate crisis has elevated the need to proactively consider strategies to improve community resilience against environmental hazards such as wildfires, floods, and earthquakes. While emergency evacuation impact analysis has been required by California State law (as a function of several CEQA challenge rulings) for several years, there still is a lack of clarity around what is required in CEQA documents by agencies and for individual development projects. As projects must approach each assessment on a case-by-case basis, best practices are being developed and case law is being established that environmental consultants need to understand to serve their clients. This session will guide the audience through the latest updates in emergency evacuation planning, impact analysis, and mitigation in CEQA. These CEQA practitioners and transportation engineers will provide insight on how to approach impact analysis to satisfy State requirements, how to address thresholds of significance at the project level, and how to establish suitable and implementable mitigation to offset impacts. This session will also focus how agencies are addressing equity in evacuation planning. The session also includes a CEQA Attorney that specializes in emergency evacuation to discuss how technical work addresses established case law and the latest legislative requirements. In addition to the risks each impact analysis approach poses, the panel will also discuss the consultant's risks in performing these assessments and how to negotiate fair contract language. The session will include an interactive exercise in which we will evaluate several case study impact analyses and take audience suggestions on decisions to disclose an impact and how to appropriately mitigate, with our panel as referees.

People & Culture Session

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Shifting from Cultural Competency to Cultural Humility

Monday, April 7, 2025

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Constellation | **Credits:** AICP 1.5, CM Equity 1.0

Panelist: Vanessa Toscano, Principal Planner, HELIX Environmental Planning

Panelist: Chief Esparza, Human Connection Strategist, Association of Environmental Professionals (staff)

Panelist: Claudia Garcia, Assistant Director of Community Development, City of Vacaville

Panelist: Marie Campbell, Principal and CEO, Environmental Protection Specialist, Sapphos Environmental, Inc.

Panelist: Mindy Fogg, Principal Planner, City of Carpinteria

Panelist: Mike Coleman, Environmental Planning Program Manager (Aviation Manager), Denver International Airport, City and County of Denver

Panelist: Grace Constantian, Student, University of California, San Diego

Panelist: Xela Brainin Godinez, Student, Cal State University Channel Islands

Abstract:

The California Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) has moved from the strategic planning phase to the first implementation phase of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Spoiler alert—it's not what we thought it was. But then, did we really know what it would be? With the help of our People & Culture Committee and our Human Connection Strategist, we have shifted away from notions of Cultural Competency and made way for Cultural Humility. AEP remains committed to creating a welcoming and safe space that supports and nurtures prospective, current, and retired environmental professionals. In this session, we'll explain how AEP's goals and commitments remain the same but the perspectives have changed to embrace the importance of storytelling and social connectivity within our industry. This reframing has shaped our organization's approach to implementation of the DEI Strategic Plan, including how we form affinity groups, conduct chapter and student outreach, and initiate a pilot Environmental Justice Fellowship. As with previous years, session attendees will be encouraged to provide input and to participate in some fun group activities. Come prepared to learn what you cannot know and to embrace your Cultural Humility.

Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates)

Keep Your Eye on the Findings

Monday, April 7, 2025

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 1 | **Credits:** AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Heidi Mekkelson, Senior Managing Director, ICF

Panelist: Harold Freiman, Partner, Lozano Smith

Panelist: Rich Walter, Vice President, Environmental Planning, ICF

Abstract:

If an EIR were a movie, the findings would be the final scene. The airport farewell in Casablanca. The closing door in The Godfather. The ogre wedding in Shrek. While sometimes overshadowed by the arduous work of preparing the EIR, findings are a critical part of the EIR process and provide important legal coverage for the lead agency. This panel will delve into the statutory requirements for EIR findings under CEQA, and how they are rooted in broader administrative law principles for evidence-based decision making. We'll discuss what CEQA case law has to say about findings and conduct our own case study examination. We'll cover best practices for preparing EIRs that pave the way for writing clear, comprehensive, and legally sound findings. We'll also discuss how to write findings that are digestible and understandable to decision-makers and the public. A good CEQA practitioner keeps their eye on the findings, and this panel will help you do exactly that.

Beet the Heat (Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience)

Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience

Monday, April 7, 2025

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Room: Tides A

Credits: AICP 1.5, CM Sustainability & Resilience 1.0

Moderator: Hannah Kornfeld, AICP, Climate Practice Leader, Ascent

Panelist: Amaury Berteaud, Program Manager, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

Panelist: Clesi Bennett, Senior Environmental Scientist, California Natural Resources Agency

Panelist: Erik de Kok, AICP, Director of Interdisciplinary Planning, Ascent

Abstract:

This session will explore advancements in nature-based solutions (NBS) for climate mitigation and resilience, featuring two brief presentations followed by an interactive planning activity. First, a representative from the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments will showcase their recently completed Monterey Bay Natural and Working Lands Climate Mitigation and Resiliency Study, which will highlight innovative approaches to integrating NBS into regional planning, demonstrating how these strategies can enhance climate adaptation and mitigation efforts while providing multiple co-benefits to communities. Next, a speaker from the California Natural Resources Agency will present on the newly adopted Assembly Bill 1757 Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets, outlining the State's ambitious goals, the science behind the targets, and the potential impacts on environmental planning and policy across California. Following these presentations, attendees will participate in a hands-on activity to apply their newfound knowledge. Working in small groups, participants will engage in a rapid planning exercise, incorporating NBS to address specific climate and environmental challenges. This interactive component will allow attendees to collaborate, share ideas, and gain practical experience in NBS planning. Key takeaways will include: emerging trends in regional NBS planning and implementation, understanding of state-level NBS targets and their implications, practical strategies for integrating NBS into local and regional climate resilience efforts, and collaborative approaches to NBS planning. This session will provide valuable insights for planners, policymakers, and environmental professionals seeking to leverage NBS in their climate mitigation and resilience work.

Cultivating Innovation Across Fields (New Tools, Case Law, CEQA Streamlining, AI)

More Than a Conservation Project- Washoe Land and Water Back; An Eco-Cultural Reunion and Land-Back Template

Monday, April 7, 2025

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Room: Tides Ballroom C | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Coleen Shade, Principal- Environmental Planning, Stantec

Panelist: Melanie Greene, Sr. Associate Environmental Scientist, Stantec

Panelist: Brian Wallace, Executive Director, The Sierra Fund (Indigenous Lead NGO focusing on the Sierra)

Panelist's Name: Lisa Grayshield, Evaluator researcher of Native Health and Wellness, Washoe Health Center

Panelist's Name: Shelton Douthit, Director, Feather River Land Trust

Abstract:

Indigenous land back efforts are being successfully implemented through partnerships with tribal communities, NGOs and both public and private landowners across the West. Presented by Washoe Tribal members, the Feather Land Trust program manager and the planning consultant; the Washoe Land & Water-Back project's vision for reconciliation is much more than a conservation project; it is a historic return of the Washoe people to their rightful role as stewards of the lands. It is an acknowledgement that indigenous wisdom and leadership are not just valuable, but essential to the health and wellbeing of our natural environments and Washoe and non-Washoe communities. The Washoe's traditional knowledge, honed over millennia, offers us invaluable insights into sustainable land management practices, yet, the Washoe and other indigenous cultures have lost the ability and or space in which to practice and pass on traditional land management knowledge. Knowledge and practices that can mitigate the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. More than just symbolic, it is a living, breathing manifestation of healing generational wounds by bringing back to the land the people whose relationship and history were interrupted and can now move into the future on land they control to regain cultural, environmental, and spiritual resiliency. Team members of the Land and Water Back Project our panelists will share their perspec-

tives on the approach for identifying the Land & Water-Back opportunity, developing the Indigenous informed vision, and laying out the action steps that will be needed to move the vision forward. Panelists will also discuss lessons learned and what they feel are best practices to be considered and incorporated into what is typically a western planning approach that now becomes tribal led based on the cultural needs, environmental stewardship practices and economic resilience. A world-cafe style Q/A session will follow.

Watering the Plants, Flooding the Fields (Coastal Development, Water Supply, and Stormwater Management)

Navigating CEQA for Complex Water Projects

Monday, April 7, 2025

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Room: Constellation | Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Amanda Antonelli, Senior Environmental Planner, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Panelist: Becca Bugielski, PE, Director of Strategic Initiatives, MKN & Associates, Inc.

Panelist: Joe McDermott, PE, Assistant General Manager, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

Panelist: Sean Carlson, MS, MURP, ENV SP, Team Manager- Environmental Planning, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Abstract:

This session will explore key CEQA considerations and strategies for water resources projects, including water supply, wastewater, groundwater, stormwater, and water reuse projects. We will dive into the common components of these projects, discuss the typical environmental resources they impact (e.g., noise, water quality, listed species, cultural resources), and share best practices for analysis and mitigation. Attendees will learn how to effectively prepare a project description at different levels of project design and how to efficiently integrate environmental review with the engineering design process. The session will emphasize practical strategies for addressing challenges that arise during CEQA analysis, such as defining the project footprint during an evolving design process and developing feasible and cost-effective mitigation measures, with real-world case studies to provide clear guidance. Panelists will provide a variety of public agency, engineer, and consultant perspectives on the unique nuances of the CEQA process for water resources projects and how to balance environmental protection with other project drivers, such as regulatory orders, grant funding deadlines, and cost limitations.

DEI Component: The session will address the importance of equitable access to water resources and explore how the CEQA process can be used to build open, collaborative relationships between public agencies and disadvantaged communities that may benefit and/or be impacted by implementation of water resources projects through diverse stakeholder engagement that leads to more inclusive and equitable outcomes from the CEQA process.

Interactive Component: The session will include a “real-world scenario” exercise in which participants will work in teams to identify potential CEQA challenges, propose mitigation measures, and analyze potential mitigation implementation challenges for a hypothetical water resources project. Teams will compete to draft the best CEQA approach with interactive voting and feedback from panelists throughout the exercise. This engaging activity will encourage collaboration and problem-solving while reinforcing best practices shared during the session.

Healthy Roads, Healthy Communities: How VMT Reduction and Safe Roadway Systems in CEQA can Address our Public Health Crisis

Monday, April 7, 2025

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Matt Goynes, PE, Principal, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Sherie George, Acting Transportation Review Team Lead, San Francisco Planning Department, Environmental Planning Division

Panelist: Justin L. Robertson, AICP, Senior Planner, PLACE Program, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Division of Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention

Panelist: Jose Rivera, EIT, Associate Engineer, City of Oxnard- Public Works Traffic Engineering Division

Abstract:

In the pursuit of California's climate and roadway safety goals, practitioners are learning that strategies to address Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and roadway safety are also critical to addressing our public health crisis. Per California Public Resources Code 21000(d), the intent of the legislature in creating CEQA is to "identify any critical thresholds for the health and safety of the people of the state and take all coordinated actions necessary to prevent such thresholds being reached." Further, the intent of Senate Bill 743 included the "promotion of public health through active transportation" in addition to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and VMT. Transportation planning in CEQA can influence public health through many avenues, including the number and speed of vehicles traveling on our roadways, the presence of roadway design hazards, the generation of particulate matter, and access for emergency vehicles or evacuations. The public health pyramid from the National Institutes of Health creates a framework that lead agencies can use to understand what types of VMT and roadway safety interventions are most effective towards improving public health outcomes and addressing environmental impacts in CEQA.

This panel will include a public health professional to provide the context for understanding the role that public health interventions have in health and safety outcomes, local agency representatives that have experience integrating Vision Zero policies into local planning and CEQA processes, and a practitioner with experience helping a range of communities adopt VMT and safety policies. Attendees will learn about the relationship between the public health pyramid, the Safe Systems approach, and VMT reduction strategies. This panel will provide examples of how multi-disciplinary practitioners can leverage the CEQA process to ensure the most effective interventions are considered to protect vulnerable populations and the health, safety, and well-being of communities throughout the state.

Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates)

Peculiar Kind of Exemption That Yields Particularly Good Results: Take Homes from *Hilltop v. County of San Diego*

Monday, April 7, 2025

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 1 | Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Darin Neufeld, AICP, Director, Harris & Associates

Panelist: Lisa Gibson, Environmental Review Officer, City and County of San Francisco

Panelist: David Hubbard, JD, Partner, Gatzke Dillon & Ballance, LLP

Panelist: Sean Kilkenny, Partner, Nolen Communities

Abstract:

CEQA Section 21083.3 and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 (“15183 exemption”) provide streamlining for projects that are consistent with an agency’s general plan, zoning, or community plan for which an EIR has been certified. Qualifying projects shall not require additional environmental review, except to examine whether there are project- or site-specific significant effects which are “peculiar.” Although the so-called 15183 exemption has been around for decades, its use for qualifying projects throughout the state has been inconsistent/limited due in part to it being viewed as an optional streamlining tool. But a 2024 landmark appellate court ruling could change all of that.

The Hilltop Group, Inc. v. County of San Diego (2024) ruling introduces a watershed moment in how we apply the exemption under the 15183 exemption. David Hubbard, who litigated Hilltop on behalf of the applicant, will summarize the landmark findings of Hilltop and other recent cases, with a focus on the evolution of caselaw defining use of the exemption. Lisa Gibson will detail the City and County of San Francisco’s use of the 15183 exemption and more recent tiering off the city’s EIR for its 2022 Housing Element Update, which planned for 82,000 units. Lisa will present experience and best practices learned from issuing hundreds of 15183 exemptions since 2009 and defending many on appeal. Sean Kilkenny of Nolen Communities will provide examples of streamlining for housing under CEQA to deliver quality and attainable housing. The panel will explore misconceptions about this streamlining tool, potential concerns by stakeholders with a focus on equity, and how expanded application of this exemption can benefit housing production at all income levels, as well as advancement of climate action goals. The panel will utilize polling to engage the audience and solicit feedback.

Beet the Heat (Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience)

Navigating Wildfire Prevention: Integrating CEQA, Biological, and Cultural Perspectives for Effective Vegetation Management

Monday, April 7, 2025

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Tides A | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Andy Johnson, Senior Wildfire Planner, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Panelist: Travis Belt, Natural Resources Director, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Panelist: Christopher Duran, Principal and Senior Archaeologist, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Panelist: Celine Moomey, Pre-Fire Specialist, Ventura County Fire Protection District

Panelist: Daniel Sanchez, Deputy Forester, Los Angeles County Fire Department

Abstract:

This session will cover how to accomplish wildfire prevention/vegetation management projects from a CEQA, biological resources, cultural tribal resources, and funding perspective. This broad ranging discussion will include guidance on different CEQA pathways to streamline wildfire hazard fuel reduction and the benefits and drawbacks of each, using examples from Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. The panel will discuss how biological resource analyses need to be conducted to produce ecologically sound vegetation management and how tribal relationships are critical to accomplishing wildfire prevention/vegetation management projects, e.g. re-invigoration of cultural burning and integrating nature-based solutions into projects. The cultural resources discussion will include a summation of Assembly Bill 52 streamlining and how this Programmatic EIR differs from typical tribal noticing requirements and also showcase a Los Angeles County project with the end goal of restoring the land back to local tribal groups. We will follow the biological and cultural topics with a conversation about funding limitations and how an expansive project scope can be navigated through a step-wise approach within CalVTP. Finally, we will include a brief discussion of the shortcomings of the program and how they've been successfully navigated thus far in the short lifetime of the CalVTP Programmatic EIR. Attendee interactivity will be encouraged through a scannable QR code throughout the presentation to get participants insights on related presentation topics such as conducting CEQA for wildfire prevention/vegetation management projects and associated needs, challenges, and what was learned from the panel.

Cultivating Innovation Across Fields (New Tools, Case Law, CEQA Streamlining, AI)

A VMT Mitigation Program Framework Powered by Community Input

Monday, April 7, 2025

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Tides Ballroom C | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Daniel Rubins, PE, Senior Associate, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Alexandra Lee-Gardner, Senior Planner, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Deanna Bolio, Community Outreach Supervisor, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

Panelist: Jhaid Parreno, Community Engagement Manager, Catalyze Silicon Valley

Abstract:

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), is leading one of the first local efforts in the state to develop a framework for an equity-centered countywide vehicle miles traveled (VMT) mitigation program for land development projects “ the Equitable VMT Mitigation Program for Santa Clara County. The program intends to reduce driving and expand travel options for Santa Clara County residents, students, and workers in a way that works across jurisdictional lines and improves outcomes for communities that need it most. This framework is the initial step in that effort. To engage the audience, the panel will gather feedback on one of the examples VMT mitigation actions shared with the community. This feedback will be used to highlight some of the lessons learned by the project team. Following the engagement exercise or interactive exercise, the panel will describe and share equity definitions, lessons learned about the project’s multi-phased engagement approach, and how community and agency partner engagement influenced implementation feasibility and efficacy considerations for three VMT reduction project types: 1) financial incentives, 2) capital projects, and 3) services. The panel will also share additional supportive actions identified by community members to ensure the usefulness of example VMT mitigation actions.

Watering the Plants, Flooding the Fields (Coastal Development, Water Supply, and Stormwater Management)

Achieving Mitigation Goals in a Public Agency Despite Turnover

Monday, April 7, 2025

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Constellation | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Christine Rothman, AICP, Development Program Manager, III, City of San Diego Stormwater Department Mitigation Team

Panelist: Alexandra Kookootsedes, Habitat Restoration Ecologist, Dudek

Abstract:

The City of San Diego (City) Stormwater Department (SWD) Mitigation Team is tasked with meeting compensatory mitigation requirements (primarily wetlands) that stem from SWD's infrastructure maintenance. Compensatory mitigation was required for select stormwater maintenance projects beginning in the late 1990s. Increases in regulatory oversight have resulted in a need to develop compensatory mitigation prior to conducting maintenance in extensive portions of the City's inventory of stormwater infrastructure, resulting in a maintenance backlog. With increases in unpredictable and more extreme weather events, the SWD Mitigation Team is under increased pressure to deliver compensatory mitigation. The SWD Mitigation Team manages multiple, concurrent mitigation projects at various stages of development. This can be especially challenging in a public agency where there is a loss of historical project knowledge due to staff turnover, which leads to delays on a project type that takes several years to design, permit, and implement. To reduce these delays, the City worked with Dudek to develop Mitigation Process Standard Operating Procedures (Mitigation SOP) in 2022. This Mitigation SOP outlines the mitigation process from start to end, with specific steps that allow new staff to understand the stage of development for each project and how to advance projects to the next stage. The Mitigation SOP outlines pre-planning, design, permitting, bid and contracting, construction, installation, 5-year maintenance and monitoring, and long-term management stages. Each step includes an extensive list of tasks with links to appropriate guidance documents and/or tools. Having this list minimizes the potential that projects will be delayed by overlooking a requirement or key study. The panel will discuss how the Mitigation SOP was developed, how it is implemented, and how it helps the SWD Mitigation Team more effectively manage mitigation projects. The City SWD Mitigation Team lead, Christine Rothman, and Dudek consultant, Alexandra Kookootsedes, will present the topic.

Tilling the Soil (Technical Studies and Best Practices)

Carbon Sequestration and Land Management on Natural and Working Lands: Analysis, Planning & Implementation

Monday, April 7, 2025

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Lexi Journey, Natural and Working Lands Program Manager, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Panelist's Name: Gina Gerlich, GIS Analyst & Drone Pilot, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Panelist: Emily Nye, Agricultural and Environmental Sustainability Spec, Ventura Resource Conservation District

Panelist: Simone Albuquerque, Climate Resiliency Analyst, Sonoma County

Abstract:

Learn how carbon sequestration analysis on natural and working lands is currently being conducted and how it is being used in land management planning and project implementation to maximize sequestration, limit wildfire risk, and support local farming communities. On September 16, 2022, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 1757 into law, which requires the State to develop an achievable carbon removal target for natural and working lands. California's emphasis on carbon sequestration as an important strategy to reaching the State's climate goals provides local agencies with unique opportunities for cutting-edge projects and funding. Panelists will present their most recent projects to showcase how carbon sequestration projects are being planned for and implemented collaboratively with local partners to help local growers, improve climate resilience, and help meet the State goals. The panel will also discuss the broad funding landscape available for carbon sequestration programs and other nature-based solutions and provide case-study examples of how this funding has helped growers with their operations and increase climate resilience in rural communities. The panel will be interactive by starting and ending the session with a game/quiz/survey that will help attendees learn about climate smart practices, their potential for carbon and sequestration other co-benefits, funding available for planning and implementation, and ultimately, how this work is needed to support increased food and economic security for under-resourced communities.

Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates)

Best CEQA Practices for BESS Facilities

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Coastal Ballroom 1 | Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: John Bellas, CEQA Technical Director, Michael Baker International

Panelist: Anastasia Shippey, Senior Planner, Sacramento County Planning & Environmental Review

Panelist's Name: Qaim Syed, Lead Project Manager – Development, NextEra Energy Resources

Abstract:

As the demand for renewable energy solutions grows, battery energy storage systems (BESS) have emerged as a critical component in stabilizing and optimizing energy grids. However, the deployment of BESS projects in California presents unique CEQA challenges, particularly as the technology is outpacing the regulatory framework, leaving CEQA documents to deal with the potential environmental hazards of these facilities. This session will delve into the potential environmental impacts of BESS facilities and the best practices for analyzing and mitigating those impacts.

Driving Science to Action: Using Community-Based Research to Inform Local and Regional Climate Adaptation

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Tides A | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Emely Anico, Senior Climate Research Specialist, Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation

Panelist: Elea Becker Lowe, Climate Assessment Manager, Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation

Panelist: Jesse Norris, Coordinating Lead Author for the Los Angeles Regional Report for California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment, Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at UCLA

Panelist: Jessica McCool, Resilient Community Associate Planner, CA Strategic Growth Council

Panelist: Leila Hakimzadeh, AICP, Planning Manager, Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation

Abstract:

Worse and more frequent extreme weather events and trends are impacting the state every year, making up-to-date information on climate change imperative to driving sound policy and investment decisions. California's Climate Assessment is a multi-year research effort with government, academic, tribal, and community partners to generate original research on the ways climate change is impacting California's diverse communities. From the North Coast through the San Joaquin Valley and down to San Diego, the Climate Assessment examines climate change impacts at a regional level while also highlighting statewide priorities, such as climate justice, biodiversity, and public trust lands. This presentation will explore how the Climate Assessment is developing actionable research and tools that strengthen our understanding of climate vulnerability of communities across the state and support environmental professionals, decision-makers, and the communities they serve to better implement adaptation solutions based on the best available science. This includes new data and projections, original climate research, region-specific reports, tribally led research, and statewide analyses. Participants will then engage in breakout group discussions to answer the questions:

- How can the Climate Assessment's community-driven research approach be leveraged to support greater capacity for environmental professionals?
- How can new research, climate data, and scenarios projecting the impacts of climate change in California be used to inform regional and local investments and planning?
- How can collaboration on Indigenous Knowledge and tribal expertise inform research and adaptation efforts?

Cultivating Innovation Across Fields (New Tools, Case Law, CEQA Streamlining, AI)

Beyond the Boundaries: Regional Climate Planning in a World of Local Authority

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Tides Ballroom C | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Paul Philley, AICP, Program Supervisor, Sac Metro Air District

Panelist: Abby Young, Climate Protection Manager, Bay Area Air Quality Management District

Panelist's Name: Victor Brfiones, Program Administrator, County of Ventura

Abstract:

The State of California has set ambitious carbon reduction targets for 2030 and 2045, and much action to achieve these targets will need to happen at the local level through land use authority, project implementation, and ordinances. While most Californians live in major metropolitan areas, those areas are typically filled with multiple cities five miles across with multiple counties. Creating and following through on cohesive strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled, sequester carbon in natural and working lands, and transition to zero-emission fuels and energy require intensive coordination and implementation across regional jurisdictions, not all of whom may have the same vision, goals, or resources. Recognizing this, the US EPA through the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program funded \$1 million each to 10 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) in California for climate action planning. Currently in year two of this four year program, this panel is comprised of MSA lead agencies who will discuss the perils and promise of regional planning and finding the momentum and resources to spur local action to achieve our climate goals.

Watering the Plants, Flooding the Fields (Coastal Development, Water Supply, and Stormwater Management)

California Offshore Wind: Agency Authority, Impacts, Technology, and Development Challenges

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Constellation | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Susan Lee, M.S., Vice President, Aspen Environmental Group

Panelist: Vida Strong, MUP, Vice President, Aspen Environmental Group

Panelist: Sharon Kramer, Principal, H.T. Harvey & Associates

Abstract:

Our panel of experts is supporting multiple agencies and developers with contracts related to the development of offshore wind providing California with renewable electricity. This power is essential to meeting the State's Senate Bill 100 renewable energy goals. The panel will explain the agency authorities, permits required, and processes in place for development of offshore wind projects. We will describe the existing offshore wind leases and their development timelines, and we will describe future potential lease areas. We will describe the key challenges facing offshore wind development at-scale, including environmental impacts and mitigation (focusing on seabirds and marine mammals), turbine and electric transmission design, onshore transmission requirements, and port development.

Tilling the Soil (Technical Studies and Best Practices)

Methods of Assessing Natural and Working Lands in Climate Action and Adaptation Planning

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator's Name: Michael Hendrix, Michael Hendrix Consulting

Panelist's Name: Rich Walter, Vice President, ICF

Panelist's Name: Sarah Halterman, Climate Change Specialist, Dudek

Abstract:

In 2019 the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research and California Air Resources Board recommended including natural and working lands within climate action and adaptation plans (CAAPs). This session will discuss how natural and working lands should be included as a sector within the baseline greenhouse gas inventories and forecasts within CAAPs, including current methodologies for assessing existing carbon stocks and developing strategies that enhance carbon sequestration within natural and working lands, including advise on what can be used and what is speculative. This session will also provide funding mechanisms related to Climate Smart farming practices and natural habitat restoration planning. The session will end with a problem-solving session going through the methods and uncertainties of assessing natural and working lands within CAAPs and how to provide legally defensible solutions.

Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates)

Saved by the Bill: Saved by the Bill: Discussing Make UC a Good Neighbor v. UC Regents and AB 1307 with the Team Who Wrote and Defended the UC Berkeley EIR

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 1 | Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Alexis Mena, LEED AP, Associate Principal, PlaceWorks

Panelist's Name: Alison Krumbein, J.D., Senior Principal Counsel, Senior Principal Counsel University of California Office of the President

Panelist: Raphael Breines, Senior Planner, University of California, Berkeley

Panelist's Name: Nicole Gordon, J.D., Partner, Partner The Sohagi Law Group

Panelist's Name: Terri McCracken, Principal, Principal PlaceWorks

Abstract:

Every so often, a California project becomes so newsworthy that CEQA finds itself on the pages of even The New York Times. Such was the case for the UC Berkeley Long Range Development Plan and Housing Projects #1 and #2 Environmental Impact Report, which addressed programmatically topical issues like campus growth and housing needs, and evaluated project-level plans for developing two UC-owned properties with housing. One of the housing projects was proposed on the site known as People's Park, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of its political and historic significance. The July 2021 certification of the EIR was the start of a long legal journey that culminated with the California Supreme Court's June 2024 upholding of the document.

Learn the ins and outs of the court case commonly known as *Make UC a Good Neighbor v. the UC Regents*, as well as the plot twist that came when the California State Legislature passed urgency legislation resolving the key issues in the court case. For this complex case study in alternatives, noise, and program-level analyses, as well as procedural legal and legislative issues, this session will begin with an interactive poll to learn more about the experience and interests of session participants so that the conversation can be tailored to the audience in the room. Session attendees will have a unique opportunity to peek behind the curtain and learn about this significant court case and its ongoing implications from the consultants and lead agency staff who prepared the EIR and the attorneys who defended it.

Beet the Heat (Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience)

Creating and Implementing Community Wildfire Protection Plans

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Tides A | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Scott Eckardt, Forester/Fire Protection Planner, Dudek

Panelist: Dana Link-Herrera, AICP, Wildfire Resilience Planner, Dudek

Panelist's Name: Robert Hazard, Board of Directors, Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council

Panelist: Mark vonTillow, Fire Inspector II, City of Santa Barbara Fire Department

Panelist: Dustin McKibben, Fire Captain, Santa Barbara County Fire Department

Panelist: Whitney Wilkinson, MS, Supervising Planner, County of Santa Barbara

Abstract:

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) are important planning documents that assist communities in addressing wildfire threats and increasing resilience to wildfire impacts. CWPPs are developed collaboratively with input from the community, fire and forest management agencies, land managers, fire safe councils, and other interested parties. This session will provide an overview of the CWPP development process and will explore the role these documents play in helping communities prepare for wildfire. Additionally, this session will explore the various options for environmental review for implementation of projects identified in a CWPP. The session will provide perspectives from City and County staff that have been involved in CWPP preparation, environmental review, and implementation of projects following completion and approval of the plans. Two specific CWPPs in Santa Barbara County will be used as real-world examples of different CWPP and CEQA review approaches. These two recent CWPPs are adjacent to each other, one in the City of Santa Barbara and one in Santa Barbara County jurisdiction. City and County staff, as well as consultants engaged in both projects, will provide their perspectives on CWPP development, project implementation, and the benefits and challenges of each CEQA review approach.

Cultivating Innovation Across Fields (New Tools, Case Law, CEQA Streamlining, AI)

Unique Technologies Require Unique Approaches: Balancing the Delivery of First-Last Mile Solutions with CEQA and NEPA

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Tides Ballroom C | **Credits:** AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Susan J. Harden, FAICP, CNUA, Vice President/Senior Managing Principal, Circlepoint

Panelist: Matt Kelly, Principal Transportation Planner, Contra Costa Transportation Authority

Panelist: Miguel Nuñez, Principal, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Matthew Moore, Project Manager, Circlepoint

Panelist: Mike Thompson, Vice President of Project Development, Plenary Americas

Abstract:

In recent years, the ‘first-last mile’ problem has been met with a wide range of innovative, technology-based solutions. These range from rentable electric modes such as scooters and bicycles, to on-demand micro-transit and ride-hailing services, and now autonomous vehicles utilizing existing and new infrastructure. Our industry cannot afford to overlook these new technologies, as they are increasingly becoming an entrenched part of solving the first-last mile puzzle, especially as regards improving equity for individuals with impaired mobility. Further, delivery of these solutions frequently require public-private partnerships, use of federally- or locally-administered funding, and/or changes in the physical environment, all of which can trigger CEQA and NEPA compliance. And, as with any new technology that disrupts existing systems, there are novel challenges that require unique approaches to make sure they do not ‘die on the vine’. To that end, this session will provide an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by these new technologies, as well as ‘best practices’ for creating a flexible and defensible approach to environmental review that facilitates, rather than inhibits, delivery of these first-last mile solutions. Throughout the interactive session, attendees will be invited to chime in with their thoughts and experiences, pose questions, and learn about how to solve this problem in their local communities. Attendees will also get to hear first-hand from a diverse set of panelists who represent all angles of the problem, solution, and the community. Don’t miss out on this rare meeting of the leading voices in this sector join us and learn how to thrive on the cutting-edge at the intersection of technology and CEQA/NEPA!

Watering the Plants, Flooding the Fields (Coastal Development, Water Supply, and Stormwater Management)

Addressing Habitat Restoration & Conservation Needs in the Imperial Valley Amidst Water Scarcity

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Constellation | **Credits:** AICP 1.5

Moderator: Jennie Shield, Western Regional Director, Great Ecology

Panelist: Camila Bautista, Audubon California

Panelist’s Name: Jessica Humes, Imperial Irrigation District

Abstract:

The Imperial Valley faces growing environmental challenges as continued development in California and Arizona intensifies water scarcity amidst a region already facing significant impacts from climate change. Water conservation by upstream users is contributing to the degradation of the Imperial Valley's primary geographic feature, the Salton Sea, and ongoing treaty negotiations over Colorado River water allocations to basin states and tribal entities continues to create a complex geopolitical environment around water supply. Yet the need for habitat restoration and conservation—and their positive impacts to water quality, air quality, biodiversity, and regional ecology—remain constant. As water allocation policies, resiliency planning, and development collide, how will planners, policy makers, and restoration practitioners meet the need for further restoration and conservation within the Imperial Valley? This session will highlight ecological restoration strategies being implemented to address habitat loss in the face of a warming climate and less predictable water supplies in the Imperial Valley, as well as the scientific and technological advances that are helping to improve the effectiveness of regional efforts in habitat restoration and water management. Our panel will consider current and future restoration efforts in the Imperial Valley with a focus on innovative strategies to recover wetland habitats and improve water quality, and regional initiatives aimed at creating economic and ecological benefits.

Tilling the Soil (Technical Studies and Best Practices)

Parking in the Spotlight: CEQA Compliance and Community Impact in a Changing Regulatory Environment

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 | **Credits:** AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Kristi Black, JD, Principal, Environmental Planning, ICF

Panelist: Matt Goyne, PE, Principal, Fehr & Peers

Panelist's Name: Frank Petrilli, Partner, Coblenz Patch Duffy & Bass LLP

Abstract:

Parking has always been a hot topic in transportation and land use planning. Concerns over lack of parking shaped traditional planning practices and led to a built environment in California often oriented around automobile storage rather than people. The regulatory environment around parking has shifted dramatically in recent years to limit how much new parking jurisdictions can require (often none, in the case of projects close to transit) and the need to evaluate effects that excessive parking have on the environment related to generating vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These changes have led to confusion and tension between decision-makers who see merit in reducing parking requirements and their constituents who want to see more parking in order to avoid potential impacts related to neighborhood intrusion, business disruption, and other concerns. This panel will examine how lead agencies and their consultants can consider parking at all stages of the planning process to best address community and decision-maker concerns, as well as regulatory requirements. The panel will:

Discuss CEQA guidance for parking impacts in urban and suburban environments, incorporating reduced parking as an alternative or mitigation measure, and trade-offs when considering on-site parking reductions versus off-site mitigation measures for VMT or GHG impacts

Provide recommendations for a more comprehensive approach to updating parking standards that balance local parking-related preferences (where allowed by State law) with VMT/GHG reduction and equity goals

Facilitate discussion of planning and CEQA scenarios so attendees can work through issues with the benefit of the panel content and other attendees' knowledge and experience

Offer strategies for addressing community concerns about perceived impacts of projects not providing adequate parking

We hope attendees gain a better, more nuanced understanding of requirements and approaches around parking as part of project and long-range planning, CEQA, and equity.

Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates)

Talk to My Lawyer: A Planner's Guide to Enhancing Legal Defensibility in CEQA Documents

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 1 | Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Jasmine Osman, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Steve Velyvis, Partner, BWS Law

Panelist: Carole Kendrick, City of Beaumont Interim Community Development Panelist's Title: Interim Community Development Director and Director & City of Hemet Mayor ProTem

Abstract:

CEQA documents often face scrutiny from labor unions, vocal community members, and other stakeholders, making legal defensibility essential. Navigating the complexities of CEQA can be challenging, particularly when it comes to ensuring that environmental documents are legally defensible. This session will highlight practical strategies for enhancing the legal resiliency of CEQA documents, examining recent case law, case studies, and best practices. Participants will learn how to identify common pitfalls and avoid them—from document preparation to public engagement (and everything in between). By the end of the session, attendees will be equipped with knowledge on how to bolster CEQA documents to ensure defensibility against potential legal challenges.

Key Takeaways:

Identify Common Pitfalls. Attendees will learn how to recognize and address common pitfalls that threaten the legal defensibility of CEQA documents.

Implement Best Practices. Attendees will learn best practices on how to strengthen the legal defensibility of a CEQA document to avoid potential legal challenges.

Understand Key Case Law. Attendees will gain an understanding of relevant case laws through the session's interactive component.

Beet the Heat (Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience)

Planning for a Resilient, Zero-Emissions Transportation Future

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Room: Tides A | Credits: AICP 1.5, CM Resiliency 1.0

Moderator: Erik de Kok, AICP, Director of Interdisciplinary Planning, Ascent

Panelist's Name: Margaret Cederoth, Director of Planning and Sustainability, CA High Speed Rail Authority

Panelist's Name: Lani Ho, JD, Senior Environmental Planner, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)

Abstract:

Transportation is the largest source of GHG emissions in California, yet the transportation systems we use and rely upon daily are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and protecting and sustaining them will be critical. This session will focus on how both state and local agencies are facing these challenges head-on through bold, transportation-focused plans and projects that are advancing equitable mobility, carbon neutrality, and resilience in our communities. The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority will share insights from their recently adopted Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and current implementation efforts. The California High-Speed Rail Authority will share insights from their ongoing statewide efforts to plan, design, and build a new sustainable, carbon-neutral, and climate-resilient high-speed rail network.

Tangible lessons/key takeaways for participants: gaining insights into diverse perspectives across both local and statewide transportation system planning scales on (1) climate adaptation and resilience planning strategies, (2) GHG mitigation and carbon neutrality strategies, and (3) how the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged communities are being addressed, both in the short term and in future phases of implementation efforts.

DEI component: Panelists will highlight how they are advancing equity and prioritizing the needs of vulnerable or disadvantaged communities in their planning and implementation efforts. Additionally, invited panelists will both be women and may also include BIPOC individuals.

Cultivating Innovation Across Fields (New Tools, Case Law, CEQA Streamlining, AI)

Embedding Equity into Climate Action Planning

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Room: Tides Ballroom C | Credits: AICP 1.5, MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Meghan Kelly, MS, MBA, Group Program Manager, County of San Diego

Panelist: Ariel Hamburger, MPH, MA, Planning Manager, County of San Diego

Panelist: Darin Neufeld, AICP, Director, Harris & Associates

Panelist's Name: Poonam Boparai, MS, Principal, Ascent Environmental, Inc.

Abstract:

Climate change and equity are inextricably linked and it's imperative for government agencies to approach the development and implementation of their climate action plans accordingly. The County of San Diego's CEQA-qualified 2024 Climate Action Plan (CAP) took a holistic approach to integrating procedural, distributional, and structural equity into its development and implementation plans. This session will provide an overview of the County's process to create meaningful opportunities for community members to guide the CAP's development. The County's goal was to create a plan that can be implemented to prioritize the equitable distribution of re-

sources and address historical disparities. The discussion will include details on how elements of the CAP such as community priority scores, co-benefits, and equity-based outcomes were conceptualized through community input and presented to decisionmakers and the public. Additionally, the session will cover how the County developed an Equity Implementation Framework to guide implementation of the CAP to ensure community priorities are front and center and County investments are equitable. For example, the Equity Implementation Framework is guiding the County's development of its Equity-Driven Tree Planting Program by identifying various health and socioeconomic indices, working with environmental justice experts on program development, and establishing equity metrics. The session will include interactive components like live polls to encourage conversation and smaller breakout groups where participants can engage in an exercise using equity as a frame of reference to inform implementation of sample CAP measures. Session participants can expect to gain an understanding of how to tailor outreach efforts to reach community members from various backgrounds to craft measures that reduce emissions, enhance co-benefits, and integrate equity into climate action planning and implementation. Learning objectives for this session include an understanding of the County's approach to climate equity in its CAP and tools for integrating equity into climate action planning.

Watering the Plants, Flooding the Fields (Coastal Development, Water Supply, and Stormwater Management)

PFAS Predicaments & Progress

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Room: Constellation | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Samuel Johnson, Associate, Best Best & Krieger LLP

Panelist: Anya Kwan, Associate, Best Best & Krieger LLP

Panelist: Jeffrey V. Dagdigian, PhD, Waterstone

Panelist: Ken Sansone, SL Environmental Law Group

Abstract:

A flurry of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) has generated significant outcry from various stakeholders, reflecting concerns over their underlying science and their impacts on industry and municipal services. In this chaos, little time has been spent discussing the labyrinth these regulations pose for stormwater systems. PFAS are a group of highly stable compounds that persist indefinitely in the environment and are used in anything from fire suppressants to various household items. Among the array of recent actions, on April 10, 2024, the EPA issued new national primary drinking water regulations for six PFAS: perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorohexanesulphonic acid (PFHxS), hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (GenX), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), and perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS) under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Additionally, on April 19, 2024, the EPA issued a regulation designating PFOA and PFOS, and their salts and isomers, as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. The purpose of this talk will be to explain the current federal regulations on PFAS and provide an update on how these PFAS regulations could be impacted by the latest Supreme Court decisions.

Tilling the Soil (Technical Studies and Best Practices)

Navigating Compensatory Mitigation Challenges in California; Strategies for Early Planning and Scarce Credit Solutions

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Amanda Dwyer, Sales and Business Development Manager, Westervelt Ecological Services

Panelist's Name: Mark Noyes, Senior Ecologist, Stantec Consulting Services

Panelist: Angela Lagneaux, Senior Conservation Planner, Westervelt Ecological Services

Panelist's Name: Jeff Phillips, Conservation Banking Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ventura Field Office

Abstract:

Finding appropriate compensatory mitigation solutions throughout California is becoming an increasingly common challenge for all development and infrastructure projects. The standard mitigation measure in CEQA/NEPA documents, which requires the purchase of credits from an appropriate mitigation bank, may no longer be adequate, given the scarcity of credits throughout the state. This question-and-answer presentation will delve into the intricacies of compensatory mitigation in California, providing a comprehensive overview of early planning strategies and potential actions when mitigation credits are scarce. We will explore the importance of proactive measures to ensure compliance with environmental regulations while minimizing project delays and costs. Attendees will gain valuable insights into the mitigation process, including the identification of appropriate mitigation solutions. Project developers and environmental professionals will see examples of mitigation strategies to help navigate the complexities of compensatory mitigation effectively and contribute to the preservation of California's natural resources. Panelists include mitigation practitioners, environmental consultants, and regulatory experts.

Bananas for CEQA (Emerging Trends in CEQA and Regulatory Updates)

Housing Exemptions & Streamlining Roundtable

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 1 | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Emma Rawnsley, Senior Environmental Planner/Project Manager, AECOM

Panelist: Manira Sandhir, Planning Manager/ Zoning Administrator, City of San Mateo

Panelist: Bridget McDonald, JD, Associate Attorney, Remy Moose Manley, LLP

Panelist: Matthew Gerken, Associate Vice President, AECOM

Abstract:

Many communities in California, struggling with high construction costs and in desperate need of additional housing, are in search of tools to streamline and create more certainty in the entitlement process. This roundtable discussion, with panelists from all corners of the CEQA world (consultant, lead agency, and legal counsel) will discuss the various streamlining tools and exemptions available for housing projects, tips and tricks for making the most of them, common hurdles to their use, and recently passed and pending housing-related legislation.

Sandy Cells: Coastal Adaptation Planning in the Santa Barbara/Ventura Littoral Cell

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm | Room: Tides A | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Nick Garrity, PE, Southern California Environmental Hydrology & Design Director, ESA | Environmental Science Associates

Panelist: Valerie Vartanian, Pest Management Coordinator, Natural Resources Land and Wetland Program Manager

Panelist: Andrew Raaf, Environmental Manager- Santa Barbara County Flood Control District

Panelist (INVITED): Melissa Hetrick, Interim Creeks Restoration & Clean Water Manager

Panelist (INVITED): Marc Beyeler, Executive Director, BEACON

Abstract:

Santa Barbara and Ventura County jurisdictions are on the forefront of sea level rise and coastal adaptation planning, preparing for the resiliency of some of California's most iconic beaches and communities. This session will include a mix of panel discussions and small breakout group activities to share knowledge and brainstorm innovation. Topics will include the County of Santa Barbara's sediment management plan for coastal watersheds and beaches, Naval Base Ventura County's proactive adaptation actions, the City of Santa Barbara's multiple asset-specific adaptation planning efforts, and the BEACON joint powers authority's Regional Coastal Adaptation Monitoring Program for the Santa Barbara/Ventura coastal "sand shed" littoral cell.

Small group discussion topics may focus on:

1. Hazards: how the region is analyzing compounding coastal hazards, including sea level rise, increased extreme precipitation, combined coastal and creek flooding, shoreline and bluff erosion, and groundwater rise
2. Vulnerabilities: key regional risks projected with future sea level rise and climate change, including potential impacts to beaches, public and private property, harbors, utilities, Navy facilities, sensitive habitats, disadvantaged communities, public access along the coast, and economies.
3. Adaptation approaches and planning: nature-based solutions, including use of native materials and dune features for coastal protection, green-gray hybrids of nature-based and traditional coastal armoring, feasibility issues with flood management for low-lying areas, as well as adaptation planning approaches based on thresholds, triggers, and monitoring.
4. Adaptation monitoring: ongoing efforts lead by local jurisdictions and the U.S. Geological Survey; emerging technologies, including satellite imagery; and BEACON's current effort to plan and promote regional monitoring collaboration and consistency.

The session will conclude with speakers summarizing key discussion points, new ideas, and resources for participants' use.

Watering the Plants, Flooding the Fields (Coastal Development, Water Supply, and Stormwater Management)

Categorical Exemption for Revisions to the Los Angeles County Floodway Maps for the Santa Clara River

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm | Room: Constellation | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Aimee Frappied, Environmental Compliance Director, Sapphos Environmental, Inc.

Panelist: Patricia Wood, PE, Senior Civil Engineer, Los Angeles County Public Works

Panelist: Laura Male, AICP, Environmental Compliance Team Lead, Sapphos Environmental, Inc.

Panelist: Rory Baker, Environmental Compliance Coordinator, Sapphos Environmental, Inc.

Abstract:

Effective Use of Categorical Exemptions: Revisions to the Los Angeles County Floodway Maps for the Santa Clara River. Drawing the line between changes in mapping and physical changes in the environment that are not caused by the change in the policy. The importance of proper description of the action, the identification of the appropriate categorical exemption, and making the right decisions prevailing litigation.

Tilling the Soil (Technical Studies and Best Practices)

Clearing the Air: Practical Tips for Reviewing Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analyses

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm | Room: Coastal Ballroom 2 | Credits: AICP 1.5

Panelist: Elena Nuno, Senior Air Resources Specialist, Dudek

Panelist: Jennifer Reed, Air Quality Services Manager, Dudek

Panelist: Danielle Morone, Partner, Gatzke Dillon & Ballance LLP

Panelist: Sarah Halterman, Air Resources Specialist, Dudek

Panelist: Brian Grattidge, Senior Project Manager, Dudek

Abstract:

This insightful and practical session is designed for anyone tasked with reviewing air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions technical reports for CEQA compliance and anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of these technical reports. This session will provide essential guidance and best practices for non-specialists ensuring a thorough and accurate review process.

Key Topics Covered:

- **Understanding the Basics:** An overview of air quality and GHG principles, including common pollutants, sources of emissions, toxic air contaminants and health risk assessments, and regulatory frameworks.
- **CEQA Requirements:** Detailed exploration of CEQA guidelines related to air quality and GHG impacts, including key thresholds and significance criteria.
- **Report Components:** Breakdown of typical components of air quality and GHG technical reports, helping you identify and understand critical sections.

- **Practical Review Tips:** Step-by-step guidance on how to effectively review technical reports, with a focus on ensuring compliance and identifying areas that may require further analysis or clarification. We will also identify and address frequent issues and errors found in technical reports.
- **Case Studies:** Real-world examples and case studies to illustrate effective review practices and common challenges.

2025 CEQA Update

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

9:00 am – 12:00 pm | Room: Tides Ballroom | **Credits:** AICP 3.0, MCLE 3.0

William Halligan, Harris and Associates; Amanda Daams, BBK; Kristin Blackson, WSP

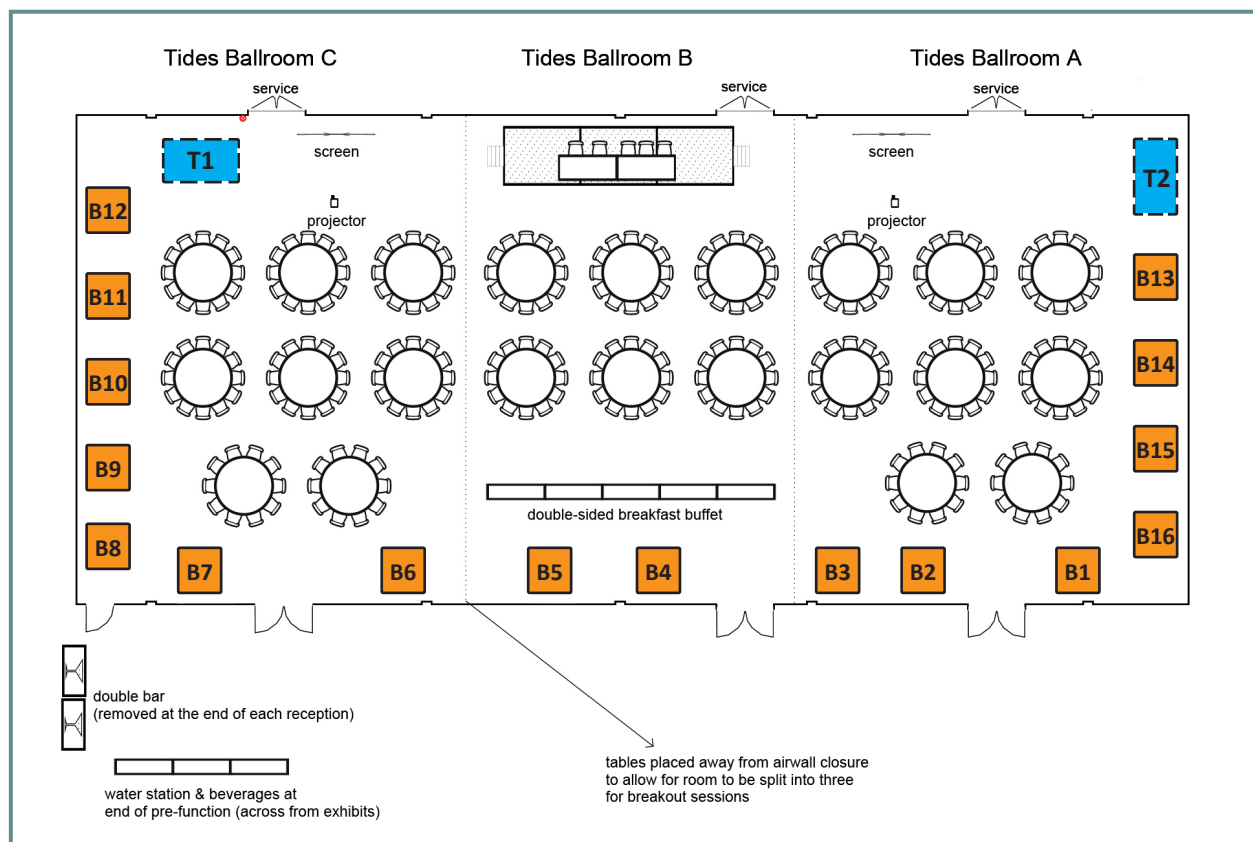


2025 Conference Exhibitor Map



Thank You AEP 2025 Exhibitors Seeds of Change, Waves of Progress

Zachari Dunes on Mandalay Beach, Oxnard
April 6-9, 2025: Tides Ballroom



Booth

- Booth 1:** ASM
- Booth 2:** WSP
- Booth 3:** RES
- Booth 4:** CSG
- Booth 5:** Westervelt Ecological Services
- Booth 6:** Stantec
- Booth 7:** Helix Environmental
- Booth 8:** Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group

- Booth 9:** GEI Consultants
- Booth 10:** Envicom Corporation
- Booth 11:** Aspen Environmental
- Booth 12:** AECOM
- Booth 13:** SWCA
- Booth 14:** Anchor QEA
- Booth 15:** Placeworks
- Booth 16:** HMMH

Table

- Tabletop 1:** EDR/Lightbox
- Tabletop 2:** Ascent



For more information, please contact:

Lynne Bynder, AEP Executive Director: lbynder@califaep.org

*Table/booth sizes:

Booth Space: 8 ft long x 6 feet deep.

Tabletop Space: 6ft long x 6 feet deep.

AEP 2026 State Conference

Sands to Shores

**Pathways to
Thriving Communities**

**Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina
San Diego, CA: April 23-26, 2026**



Save the Date!

For the most current information:

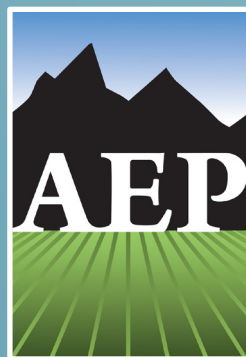
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