

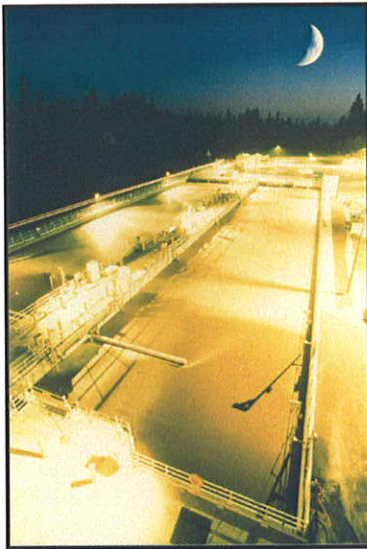
People involved in protecting our planet's precious water resources are passionate about what they do. They are passionate about how they do it. They are passionate when they explain what they do to others. So why not kick it up a notch? Use this passion to maximize your potential, have fun and gain an even greater personal sense of satisfaction. Like the word passion, you'll find a lot of words in this Tip Sheet that start with the letter "P" and describe what you can achieve by becoming more involved in your profession.

PE TIP SHEET NO. 15:

Passionate Professionals

BY

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I recently participated in the annual Leadership Development Workshop hosted by the Florida Water Environment Association. The two-day workshop was attended by FWEA board members, chapter leaders and committee chairs and vice chairs. Do you know what I was once again reminded of? I was reminded that water professionals have an extraordinary *passion, propensity, proclivity, penchant, preoccupation, partiality, partisanship, pathos* -- you choose the word -- for what we do to *protect* and nurture our precious water resources. So I just had to say to myself, "Wow! How can we take this passion to the next level?"

During the workshop, I gave a short presentation on the achievements and goals of FWEA's Public Education Committee. I finished my presentation by evidencing my own *passion* for protecting our water environment. I told the group that my wife says I'm the only person she knows that thinks the moon rising over a treatment plant is romantic. True statement! So am I a geek?

Not really when you think about how we can utilize our *pathos* for what we do as a means to engage and involve the public we serve. You can make a difference. As Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote, "Let me count the ways."

Get More Involved

Since you are reading this Tip Sheet, you likely are already a member of the FWEA, the FW&PCOA or the FSAWWA. Maybe you also belong to other professional associations or environmental non-profit groups. Congratulations! You, by this alone, are already involved. How, you say? These and other "green" associations and groups provide a valuable service – education. Through your annual membership fee, your organizations are able to serve as mouthpieces for environmental stewardship. Now maybe is a good time to kick it up a notch.

Participate in Professional Association Activities

Join a committee. Serve on a board. Volunteer to set up the FWEA, FW&PCOA or FSAWWA booth at local environmental fairs or civic events. *Participate* in chapter or section events by making a presentation.

Join a Speakers Bureau

Many utilities, municipalities and counties have established speakers bureaus. The professional organizations you belong to or your employer may operate such a bureau. Often public service groups like the Rotary Club have speakers bureaus or the need for speakers, as do organizations like the American Association of University Women and the League of Women Voters. Find a speakers bureau in your neighborhood and sign up today. You can go to FWEA's web site public education resources page at <http://fwea.cnsusa.com/cms/index.cfm?&PrimaryKeylist=,234,248,266,1737,1740> and search the links found there to look for a speakers bureau near you.

Judge at a Science Fair

There are more than 50 local and regional science fairs held in Florida each year. Many volunteers are needed at these fairs to judge projects of all different types. You can go to <http://www.floridassef.net/> to locate science fairs in your area and to volunteer as a judge. Besides having fun, you may be surprised what you will learn from the students who have entered projects into these fairs. As an example, the project submitted at a local science fair by last year's Stockholm Junior Water Prize Florida winner, Hasib Nasirullah, then a junior at American Heritage School in Plantation, was entitled "An Interdisciplinary Approach to Trichloroethylene Pollution in Groundwater Systems." See the October 2005 issue of the *Florida Water Resources Journal* for his article describing Phase II of his research or go to http://fwrj.com/TechArticle05/1005%20FWRJ_tech%201.pdf to download this article.



Hasib Nasirullah, third from right

Interdisciplinary Approach to Trichloroethylene Pollution in Groundwater Systems." See the October 2005 issue of the *Florida Water Resources Journal* for his article describing Phase II of his research or go to http://fwrj.com/TechArticle05/1005%20FWRJ_tech%201.pdf to download this article.

Participate in a School Career Day

Virtually every school conducts career day type events where professionals are invited to make presentations on their professions to the students. Universities and colleges also host career information seminars and fairs where professionals, including recruiters have a chance to talk with students. Talk with your children's teacher about an opportunity to participate or call your local school district or school to see how you can get involved.

Join a Watershed Organization

Volunteer to help a watershed organization. If there are no active groups, consider starting your own. Use EPA's Adopt Your Watershed's Catalog of Watershed Groups (<http://www.epa.gov/adopt/network.html>) to locate groups in your community or visit the Watershed Information Network's How to Start a Watershed Team page at <http://www.epa.gov/win/start.html>.

Clean Up a Beach

Organize or join in the cleanup of a beach, stream, estuary, or wetland. For example, *participate* in the National River Cleanup Week, which this year is May 13th through the 21st, or the International Coastal Cleanup on the third Saturday of every September. Be sure to follow safety guidelines for any cleanup activity!

Organize a Storm Drain Stenciling Project

Organizing a storm drain stenciling project in your neighborhood will help your neighbors realize the importance of not putting bad stuff down the storm drains. Check first with your local utility and homeowners association to make sure such a project is OK in your neighborhood. *Produce* and distribute a flyer or door hanger for households to remind residents that storm drains dump directly into your local waterbody. Click here http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/invol_6.cfm for guidelines on how to conduct a storm drain stenciling project.

Enter Environmental Art and Poetry Contests

Help your children to enter the International "River of Words" Poetry and Art contest (<http://www.riverofwords.org/>). This contest is open to youth between the ages of 5 to 19 and invites youngsters and young adults to explore and interpret their world of water resources through the arts.

Engage Your Organization

Get your organization more involved in public outreach. Use another of your "P" word traits, *persuasiveness*, to convince your organization that it can benefit from reaching out to the public it serves. If your organization owns and operates water, wastewater or stormwater facilities, help them organize and host a Clean Water Day and conduct tours to showcase your facilities. Make sure to notify the media when an employee is given an award or advances his or her certifications. Convince your management to sponsor or donate interested employee time and/or money to local worthy environmental events or campaigns.

Help your organization to sponsor a Watershed Festival. Organize the festival around a water body in your watershed (estuaries, etc.), an issue (protecting drinking water sources), or a national event (Coast Week in September). Find out how to organize an event using the Water Environment Federation's Walk Your Watershed Festival Organizing Kit. Call WEF at 1-800-666-0206 to get your Organizing Kit.

Tell a Friend

Your enthusiasm can be contagious. Tell your family and friends about what they can do to protect the environment. Using one more of your "P" word traits, *prod* them to get involved and to reach out and touch another person.

WIIFM

What's in it for me, you say? Herman Melville wrote, "We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes

and return to us as results.” Results bring the respect of your *peers* and the satisfaction of giving back to your *profession* and the community.

There are three more “P” words that apply here. The *power* and *prestige* you will attain by becoming more involved and the *pride* that comes with your achievements. Look at what you like to do outside of work – things that you like to do in your spare time. Then apply these skills to take your *passion* for what you do to even higher heights.

You can download a reprint of this and other PE Tip Sheets from the FWEA web site at <http://fwea.cnsusa.com/cms/index.cfm?primarykeylist=,234,248,266,1669,1675>