



Society of Women Environmental Professionals of Greater Philadelphia (SWEP GP)

Q1 2024 Newsletter

Outgoing SWEP GP Chair, A Tribute

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Becky Buchanan for her role as the SWEP GP Chair for the last 4 years. Becky is an Environmental Manager for AECOM, with over 15 years' experience in environmental permitting, impact assessment, project management, business development and environmental site compliance. She joined SWEP GP in 2018 and initially joined the Website Committee to help. She then joined the Executive Committee as Co-Chair with Beth Brandt and rose to Chair after Beth's departure. Becky's timing was unfortunate as COVID hit a mere 6 months after she was elected to the Executive Committee, but she persevered and successfully led the organization through the transition to online programming. SWEP GP even held the first virtual Touchstone Awards Event during her tenure, which had a great online turnout. Becky also had to navigate through some challenging administrative events which required a lot more time and effort, and close management of funds. In addition, during her tenure we saw growth in the DEI Committee, interesting programming which brought more diverse members to the organization, and updated Committee Roles and Responsibilities, among other things. Reflecting on her years on the Board Becky opined:

“SWEP Greater Philadelphia has an amazing group of volunteers that pull together some great opportunities for our members. The events we plan (both technical and fun/social events) are some of the best I have attended and are always well planned and well attended. I really enjoy the PADEP/regulatory update meetings, Touchstone, and our golf events- though this past Flyers game was something we should keep in our calendars each year! The other great benefit to SWEP is the in-person connections you make, the networking and opportunities to chat with peers in your industry. It’s really a great organization! If I were to offer some parting words of wisdom to future SWEPers- it would be to VOLUNTEER! Being a volunteer and helping to run and plan an organization is really rewarding because you can be more involved on a personal level, give something back to an organization that means something to you personally, and can affect change in a positive way. I would love to see some new faces and new members step up to be our future Board members and Directors. THANKS to EVERYONE who has committed so much of their time in the past as volunteers and to our current group leading the way for 2024-2025.”

Thank you, Becky, for all that you have done for SWEP GP. Your hard work and results are appreciated. (Pictured here Becky Buchanan, Past Chair on the left with Vicky Bisbing, Past Board Secretary at the recent Networking Night At The Rink)



Meet the 2024-2025 Executive Committee:

Hello, my name is Beth Davison Hyde. In January of this year, I jumped into the position of Co-Chair as a veteran with 24 years of SWEP GP involvement. I attended my first Touchstone Reception in 2000 and three amazing women were recipients of the hallowed award that year. Martha E. Candiello, Esquire (Counsel, Rohm and Haas Company), Joanne R. Denworth (President, 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania), and Ruth Patrick, Ph.D. (Francis Boyer Chair of Limnology, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia). To give you an idea

of the impact of these remarkable women, Dr. Patrick was the person who coined the phrase eco-system and was a real trailblazer in the early days of the environmental field. More remarkable was the fact she was a woman in a man's field.

I actually met Sonya Ward at that event. We worked together on the Board in the ensuing years and this year, Sonya has also resumed a position on the SWEP GP Executive Committee as Treasurer. I have a vast wealth of knowledge about the workings of SWEP GP as I was not only a former SWEP GP Chair, rolling off in 2013, but at various points over the 13 years that I was initially on the Board, I also headed the Scholarships & Grants Committee, a committee that I am still a member of, the Touchstones Committee, Programs Committee, and Membership Committee for SWEP GP, was the NJDEP Liaison and served as Secretary. In 2015 I joined the ranks of those amazing women that we honored at my first SWEP GP event when I was the recipient of the Touchstone Award, an honor I remain tremendously proud of. The theme that year was Preparing for the Future through Leadership and Mentoring. "The beauty of SWEP is the close industry friendships that are developed, opportunities to grow in one's career and develop leadership skills through Committee and Board involvement." In my day job, I am the Director of Business Development for Roux, an environmental engineering and management company. I hold a bachelor's degree in urban and environmental studies from Trinity College, have two adult children, enjoy all kinds of racket sports, golf, sailing and birdwatching in Cape May.



I would like to introduce myself as Co-Chair of SWEP GP beginning 2024. My name is Andrea DeCola. I have been a member of SWEP for over 15 years and active on several Committees and the Board of Directors for the past 3 years. In 2023 I chaired the Membership, Touchstones, and Touchstone Fundraising Committees, and was a volunteer on the Social Events Committee. Professionally, I am currently in the role of Senior Account Manager with Eurofins Lancaster Laboratories, holding this role for just about 5 years. Past employment roles included lab analyst, lab project manager, lab business development, and environmental contracting business development with a total of 33 years in the environmental industry.

I am looking forward to a great year of networking and technical events. SWEP GP is an excellent organization and a great way to meet people in the environmental field, volunteer for committees, and have fun while doing so. Here's to a fun and educational 2024!!



Hi, I'm Sonya Ward, the newest Treasurer for the SWEP GP Executive Board. I am a PG, LSRP, CHMM, LRS, CGWP, and the Operations Manager & Principal Hydrogeologist at Tetra Tech, Inc. in Whitehouse Station. As Beth mentioned, I am returning to the SWEP GP Board after several years away. I have a Bachelor of Science in Geology with a chemistry minor from the University of Louisiana (Monroe) and a Master of Science in Environmental Science (hydrogeology) from Baylor University in Waco, Texas. With over 30 years' experience assisting clients in site investigation and remediation, environmental compliance, due diligence, and risk-based closure and projects that include work for utilities, the manufacturing, chemical, and petroleum sectors, and local and state agencies throughout the US, Canada, South America, Asia, and Europe I definitely have some great stories to share. In addition to my involvement with SWEP GP, I am also Chair of the National Chapter of SWEP, serve on the NJ SWEP Steering Committee, and Co-Chair the NJ SWEP Gala Committee. And while you are probably already wondering how I do it all, I am also a member of CIANJ, BCONE, AHMP-NJ and on the Board of Trustees for the New Jersey Licensed Site Remediation Professionals Association. When not working, I travel, indulge in my love of photography, volunteer for Bucks County Habitat for Humanity, coach future homeowners, and enjoy time with family and friends.



What do you do when you like both writing and environmental engineering? You become the SWEP GP Secretary! My name is Marie Forney, and I am delighted to take on this new role. I have been a member of SWEP since 2019 and have worked as an environmental engineer since 2016. Protecting the planet is a passion that began after I saw my first light-pollution-free night sky. My employment has included positions in civil/stormwater engineering, E&S controls, and most recently, environmental remediation. Currently, I am employed at Tetra Tech as an Environmental Engineer. Outside of work, my passions include my family (including a rescue dog and a 4-month-old daughter), music, writing poetry, bingewatching sci-fi and fantasy shows, playing online and tabletop games, and my faith. I am excited for the continued opportunities that SWEP offers, both for my own and others' professional development! Thank you for the honor of being your secretary!



The SWEP GP Executive Board would like to encourage you (even the men reading this) to reach out and let us know how you would like to get involved. You can contact any of us individually or email us at info@swepweb.com. From organizing a technical program, a hike, or a networking event; joining any of our [Committees](#); or participating on the Board¹, more hands make light work!

¹ Note, Board positions are limited to women.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE



February – Black History Month

Black History Month was initiated in 1926 when Carter G. Woodson, scholar, historian and Harvard alumnus, committed to raising awareness and educating people about the vast achievements of Black people that were often ignored, diminished or suppressed in society. But civil rights initiatives and actions have a long history, including here in the greater Philadelphia region.

Did you know that America's first formal protest against slavery was written in 1688 in Germantown, PA? The Germantown Quaker Petition against slavery was the first such protest against African American slavery made by a religious body in the English colonies. The resolution was written by Francis Daniel Pastorius and three other Quakers to raise objections to slavery. The resolution called for justice and equality for all people, recognizing the parallels of the treatment of black people and slavery to the persecution the Quakers had faced in Europe and in the colonies.

A key activist who was also an educator in the City of Philadelphia was Caroline Le Count. She was the first black woman in Philadelphia to pass the teaching exam and became the second black female principal in Philadelphia in 1868. This was an extraordinary accomplishment at the time as black teachers were required to achieve higher test scores than white teachers to obtain their certifications. Le Count was also part of the Ladies' Union Association, a group of women who supported the Union during the Civil War, riding streetcars to deliver supplies to troops. While performing these important deliveries, black individuals were often forced off streetcars. Le Count and others fought for the courts to ban discrimination on streetcars and more broadly, segregation. In 1867, Philadelphia passed a law banning segregation on public transport, and Le Count filed charges against a streetcar operator

that denied her access. This resulted in the city publishing an official notice to transit operators that all passengers were to be treated equally.

~ Article Contributor: Valerie Coghlan, SWEP GP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Chair



Women's History Month – March

As members of the Society of Women Environmental Professionals, you may already know that the month of March is designated as Women's History Month. While inequalities persist, it is important to take time and reflect on how far women have come in achieving equality in the United States, notably by achieving the right to vote.

The fight for women's right to vote dates back to July 1848, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, NY. The convention produced a list of demands referred to as the Declaration of Sentiments, which was modeled after the Declaration of Independence and called for increased educational and professional opportunities for women, as well as the right for married women to control their wages and property. The Seneca Falls Convention marked the beginning of women's voting rights becoming a central issue in the United States.

In 1869, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). In parallel, the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) was formed by Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. The primary difference between the two groups was their support of the 15th Amendment, which was ratified in 1870 granting black men the right to vote. The NWSA did not support the 15th Amendment, on the basis that it excluded women, while the AWSA supported the 15th Amendment. Both groups maintained their own tactics for fighting for women's rights, and eventually merged into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1890. Elizabeth Cady Stanton became the President of NAWSA, Susan B. Anthony became the Vice President, and Lucy

Stone became the Chairman of the Executive Committee. NAWSA reorganized in 1919 and became the League of Women Voters.

Notable supporters of women's suffrage included members of the black community. Frederick Douglass, a formerly enslaved man and lead of the abolition movement, attended the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention and published the following in his newspaper *The North Star*:

"...in respect to political rights...there can be no reason in the world for denying to woman the elective franchise..."

Members of the Douglass family went on to sign a petition to Congress to prohibit states from "...disenfranchising United States citizens on the account of sex".

Further, members of the black female community also supported the cause. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a leader in the crusade against lynching, Mary Church Terrell, educator and first president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), and Adella Hunt Logan, Tuskegee Institute faculty member, were all prominent African American suffragists.

Throughout the first two decades of the 20th century, suffragists continued to fight for equality. On March 3, 1913, over 5,000 suffragists from around the country marched down Pennsylvania Avenue, from the U.S. Capitol to the Treasury Building. The National Woman's Party (NWP) organized the first White House picket in U.S. History on January 10, 1917. Suffragists continued to hold vigil at the White House, demonstrating in silence six days a week for almost three years. In 1917, New York state adopted woman suffrage, and in 1918, President Woodrow Wilson changed his position to support the 19th Amendment, which would become ratified in 1920, granting women the right to vote. With the ratification of the 19th Amendment, the face of the American electorate had been forever changed. Decades of struggle to protect the right to vote for African American and other minority groups continued and was ultimately enforced under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which protects the right to vote for all citizens under the provisions of the 15th and 19th Amendments.

Each year, the National Women's History Alliance (NWHHA) decides a theme to direct the celebration of Women's History Month. The 2024 theme is "Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion". As we educate ourselves and one another on the history of the Women's Suffrage Movement, it is evident that key participants and leaders who have and continue to work towards achieving equality, come from a diversity of backgrounds and communities. As stated on the NWHHA website:

Women from every background have long realized that an uneven playing field will never bring equality or justice. Many feel the critical need to speak up and work harder for fairness in our institutions and social interactions.

During 2024, we recognize the example of women who are committed to embracing everyone and excluding no one in our common quest for freedom and opportunity. They know that people change with the help of families, teachers and friends, and that young people in particular need to learn the value of hearing from different voices with different points of view as they grow up.

Sources:

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/woman-suffrage#background>

<https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/2024-whm-theme/>

<https://www.senate.gov/about/women-of-the-senate/nineteenth-amendment-vertical-timeline.htm>

~ Article Contributor: Valerie Coghlan, SWEP GP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Chair

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE



It's never too late to register as a member of SWEP GP! Visit our [membership page](#) to view the different [membership categories](#) or, if you haven't renewed yet, log in to your account. Some of the benefits of membership include reduced registration fees for most events, a free member event (e.g., member breakfast or lunch), and first choice on presenting at our programs. We are currently planning our 2024 Member Appreciation event for early Q2, so be sure to watch your email and the website for details.

For 2024, Membership Levels and Rates are:

<u>2024 Membership Levels</u>	Rates for 2024 Memberships
*Joint= Joint membership with NJ SWEP and SWEP GP Chapters	
Corporate (single chapter)	\$385
Corporate Joint	\$500
Individual (single chapter)	\$140
Individual Joint	\$175
Individual Gov't/Non-Profit Single Chapter Membership	\$35
Gov't/Non-Profit Joint Chapter Membership	\$50
Individual Student/Academia/Retiree- Single Chapter Membership	\$20
Individual Student/Academia/Retiree Joint Chapter Membership	\$25

Reach out to the Membership Committee at membership@swepweb.com if you have any questions.

~ Article Contributor: Ammie Martin, SWEP GP Membership Committee Volunteer

SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANTS COMMITTEE



The Scholarship and Grants Committee are thrilled to announce the upcoming launch of our Scholarship and Grant Programs for 2024, as part of our commitment to fostering leadership and excellence among women in the environmental field. These initiatives aim to empower and support individuals and organizations that share our dedication to environmental sustainability and education.

Scholarship Program:

As we gear up for the 2024 Scholarship Application cycle, we are excited to offer graduate scholarships, to exceptional women pursuing studies in environmental careers. The application window is set to open for the Spring semester.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Woman-identifying applicants
- U.S. Citizenship or permanent resident status
- Enrollment in an accredited STEM graduate or PhD program for the 2024-2025 academic year
- Affiliation with the Greater Philadelphia Region, either through the applicant, applicant's program, or place of work.

Grant Program:

In addition to our Scholarship Program, SWEP GP proudly presents our Grant Program for 2024, providing financial support to organizations and programs addressing local environmental needs or promoting STEM education for girls and/or women. The application window is set to open for the Spring.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicants and projects must be located within the Greater Philadelphia Area, including southeastern Pennsylvania, northern Delaware, and southern New Jersey.

We look forward to receiving your applications and supporting the incredible women and organizations contributing to the advancement of environmental initiatives in our region. Stay tuned for more information on our LinkedIn account.

For inquiries or assistance, please contact Laurel Klein, our committee chair, at swep.scholar.phila@gmail.com.

~ Article Contributor: Laurel Klein, SWEP GP Scholarship and Grants Committee Chair

SOCIAL AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS COMMITTEE



Upcoming Events

The Social and Technical Programs Committee hit the ground running in 2024.

We successfully hosted our first sporting event networking night on Thursday, February 8th when we went out to the Rink to enjoy networking, food, drinks, and Flyers hockey! But more on that in a moment. If you missed out on the hockey, we are also hosting a Night at the Ballpark on Thursday June 6th to watch the Reading Fightin' Phils. Registration is opening soon so be sure to watch the website for additional details.

March is a busy month for us. We have at three events already planned.



Break Free of the Winter Blahs! Registration is open for the Happy Hour we are co-hosting with BCONE on March 7th at Lock 29 in Mont Clare. This is always a sold-out event, and I don't think the venue change will make that any different this year. Come out and support a local business while also raising funds for the SWEP GP and BCONE Scholarship Programs by joining us for an evening of great conversations along with some really good food and drinks. Visit the registration page, <https://www.swepweb.com/event-5593678>, for details on sponsoring and attending this event.



On March 8th, our DEI Committee is hosting the first virtual event of the year, SWEP Panel Discussion - Women in the Workforce. Join us for a conversation with guest speakers on their experience as women in the workforce. The discussion will be held in celebration of Women's History Month and will foster dialogue regarding the hardships and experience the speakers have encountered and persevered through as a female in their industry. This event is FREE to all attendees in honor of International Women's Day. Register here to receive the Zoom information: <https://www.swepweb.com/event-5618254>.

And finally (well maybe) we will host our first virtual technical program for 2024 on March 28th. Details on this program will be posted to the website later this month.

Looking forward to those warmer Spring days, we have already opened registration for our first outdoor event, a LEED Horticulture Center and Green Roofs Tour at the Morris Arboretum and Gardens on May 11th. Our hikes were a great success last year and we are continuing to look into offering educational outdoor activities that are fun for the whole family.

Watch the [Event Calendar](#) for more information on these and other upcoming events. If you have any ideas for future events, want to see the return of a past event, or know someone who would be interested in presenting, please contact us at programs@swepweb.com. We look forward to seeing you in 2024!

~ Article Contributor: Ammie Martin, SWEP GP Social and Technical Programs Committee Chair



Night at the Rink – An Attendee's Perspective

GOOOAL! It was a cold, winter night at the Wells Fargo Center. The Philadelphia Flyers were getting ready to face off against the Winnipeg Jets. We got our plates full of salad, cheesesteaks, pasta, pork, broccoli rabe, and popcorn for what we would later call a smackdown on the Jets. As soon as we took our seats we heard both teams starting six booming throughout the stadium. We watched both teams warm up and then we watched Gritty warm up by skating around the ice. After introductions, the teams faced off, the Flyers held most of the possession keeping the Jets goalie on his toes. Then it happened, the moment we all were waiting for, or at least I was waiting for, A FIGHT! Both players slammed their gloves to the ground and started going at each other. The player on the Flyers got a hold of the Jets player and threw him down! The Flyers player definitely won that fight. Immediately after that the Flyers scored their first of many goals! The announcer yelled “GOOOAL FLYERS!” You can feel your seats shaking, you can hear the crowd screaming, yelling, clapping, and shouting. After the first period was over, we went back up to the food and bar and chatted with the other guests. The second period got off to good a good start for the Flyers when they scored another goal against the Jets back-up goalie. The Flyers players celebrated the way they always do by lining up and high-fiving the people on their bench. The Flyers ended up destroying the Jets 4-1 and I thoroughly enjoyed my first Flyers game. Thank you to SWEP for putting together this fun networking and sporting event and for my mom for bringing me along.

~ Article Contributor: Alexander Rodgers, Event Attendee and son of Erin Rodgers, Environmental Standards, Inc.

2024 SWEP GP Outdoor Events (ODEs)

Can you believe we are in February already?!

Good news! That means we are only a few short weeks until we break out of our winter coats and can once again enjoy the outdoors more conveniently!

We are excited to announce our scheduled and planned line-up of outdoor events (ODEs) for the 2024 year. We once again want to thank all the individuals who came out to last year's ODEs.

For 2024, we are trying to set the stage early to give plenty of time to pencil them into your busy schedules. We hope in providing information early more people (families included) will be able to enjoy these activities!

So, mark your calendars and checkout the following lists of 2024 ODEs because this year we have some outstanding events in the works! Don't worry, we'll be moving most of the time!

2024 Scheduled ODEs:



LEED Horticulture and Green Roofs Tour.

- Morris Arboretum and Gardens: 100 E Northwestern Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19118
 - Saturday, May 11th @10am.
 - Rain or shine unless severely storming.

- Check out <https://www.morrisarboretum.org/> for more details.



Social at the Reading Fightin' Phils.

- 1900 Centre Ave, Reading, PA 19605
 - - Thursday, June 6th @7pm vs. Harrisburg Senators
 - Firework Spectacular to follow.

2024 Planned Events*:

Valley Forge Guided Bike Tour.

- Early April. Date TBD.

Introduction to Fly Fishing.

- August. Specific date and location TBD.
- Introduction course to educate on fly fishing and tying flies.

Waterway Cleanup.

- We plan host a river cleanup and a beach cleanup. The beach cleanup will be a joint event with NJ SWEP.
- Specific dates and locations TBD.
- Jess Myers (Environmental Standards, Inc.) will be leading a clean-up crew, while presenting information on microplastics.

Delaware Water Gap Hike

- Late September. Specific date and location TBD.
- Autumn foliage hike.
- Planning to have a Kutztown University Biology (Botany specialist) Professor lead a plant identification lesson during the hike.

*Event details are still being finalized and therefore subject to change.

If you have any questions or suggestions for future ODEs, please reach out to Dwight Hoster on LinkedIn or at dhoster@envstd.com.

~ Article Contributor: Dwight Hoster, SWEP GP Technical and Social Programs Committee Volunteer



Make the Most of Your Cleanup

I spent the last four years cleaning beaches on an almost monthly basis. My graduate research required structured clean ups to collect data, my friends and I would ban together to bag some debris on the weekends. I even *accidentally* attended the biggest clean up in the world. You could say I know my trash. To know why SWEP GP chose to do waterway cleanups this year, I'm going to discuss how cleanups impact the environment, those cleaning, and how we can get the most out of them.

Like most things in life, there is nuance. The goal of beach and river cleanups is to leave the area in a *better condition* than when we found it rather than solely cleaning up trash. Because of this, there is a good chance one should not be picking up every single piece of trash they see. If a piece of debris is in

an area that takes more effort to collect than those just lying in the sand, it is important to stop and assess two things.

1. Your wellbeing – will you be endangering yourself to retrieve this piece of trash?
 - a. If your answer is yes, stop right there. If not, continue to the next question.
2. The surrounding environment – is the debris in a vulnerable or protected part of the ecosystem?
 - a. This question is more difficult to answer without doing a bit of homework. In general, you need to investigate what structures in your environment are sensitive to our footprints. The most notable example would be dunes. Beach dunes are vital to many beach processes. If you must step onto the dunes to pick up trash, don't do it. Additionally, cleaners need to make sure that they shake off as much sand or organic matter as possible and remove any living animals before bagging their debris. For more information on what parts of the environment to avoid, you can ask the beach cleanup lead or do some research about the environment that you'll be visiting.

Cleaning the environment is incredible. If you care about your impact, cleanups result in a positive impact for your local environment. If you want to broaden your impact with the same cleanup, you can contribute your data to a study! Plastic scientists have found that there is a gap in information regarding marine debris because we don't know what and how much was there to begin with. Passing this information onto researchers provides a lot of help and adds the title, *citizen scientist*, to your resume. To do so, you can check if any state or local organizations are accepting marine debris data. If not, for US-based cleanups, you can submit the information to organizations like the US Environmental Protection Agency, Surfrider, or the Ocean Conservancy.

Check with the organization for what information they need before you collect, but in general you need the following:

- When was the cleanup?
- Where did the cleanup take place?
- How many people helped?
- How much was cleaned up?
 - Simplest answer: Get a luggage scale and weigh the bags you've collected and submit the weight.
 - If you want to go one step further, you can break open the bags and categorize the debris into how many bottles, bags, cigarettes, marine rope, etc. you collected. Some organizations,

like the Texas Litter Database have pre-made field sheets that you can fill out.

Cleanups are not the sole solution to the global debris issue that we face. Count for count, we do not have enough people, time, or resources to clean up everything. For these reasons, some say that the impact of a cleanup is small, however, this ignores the psychological impacts for the participants and those they pass along the way. A study by Wyles *et al.* (2016) found that participating in beach cleanups improves one's mood and marine awareness. Additionally, those who participated in a cleanup were more likely to continue volunteering and bring others, resulting in more help for the next one!

Whether it's to better the environment, a scientific study, or your mental health, cleanups do it all. When embarking on a cleanup, make sure you consider these concepts in your planning so that you get the most out of your cleanup.

I hope to see you at one of the cleanups SWEP GP is hosting this year!

~ Article Contributor: Jessica Myers, Environmental Standards, Inc.



Carving Out Time for Professional Development:

Why It's Important and How SWEP Can Help!

“On-the-job professional development is a nearly perfect solution to many of the problems facing companies today.” This is a bold statement, but [Harvard Business Review](#) article author, Erica Keswin, goes on to support the claim by citing evidence that not only do employees want professional development, but that it's also good for business. How exactly is it good for business? And as we set out to make personal and professional goals in the new year, how do we carve out time for professional development?

Indeed.com defines professional development as, “improving yourself through learning and training to advance your career.” In practice, there are a wide variety of ways to engage in professional development, both on a day-to-day basis and as part of longer-term career goals. For example, professional development can take the form of attending or presenting at a professional conference, attending a lunch-and-learn or an industry webinar, watching an assigned training presentation, or reading through a journal article or an

industry-specific newsletter such as those released by [SWEP Greater Philadelphia \(GP\)](#) . Wherever you are in your career, there are numerous opportunities to continue to learn.

Investment in employee learning contributes to a positive workplace culture by building employee morale and nurturing employee loyalty. According to the [2023 LinkedIn Global Talent Trends Report](#), “employees consider career-development opportunities to be one of the top reasons to stay at – or leave – their company.” A [2022 study](#) by the Society for Human Resource Management found that 76% of respondents reported being, “more likely to stay with a company that offers continuous training.” Professional development not only benefits business through increasing employee engagement and retention, but it also expands the employee knowledge base and consequently increases company efficacy. This can be especially relevant to remain competitive in the rapidly changing landscapes of today’s workplaces.

Despite the many ways in which to engage in professional development, and the business-impacting reasons to prioritize it, it can be hard to build into our regular practice. At LinkedIn’s 2023 Talent Connect Conference, an [informal survey](#) of the industry leaders in talent acquisition and development revealed that, “even learning professionals often find that day-to-day tasks take priority over learning.” If the professionals can’t find the time, how do we all make it a priority? It will take intention and accountability, both personally and institutionally. As you create your goals for the new year, build time and opportunities for professional development intentionally into your routine. I am thinking of the public address announcement that I hear each week while I’m grocery shopping that reminds the store employees of the daily morning stretch break starting in 15 minutes in the produce section. I am thinking of the “Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)” days that some of us may have experienced in school when you were encouraged to cuddle up in your classroom with a stack of good books!

SWEP GP can help guide your professional development commitment through the various networking events and lunch-and-learn opportunities provided. SWEP GP takes on part of the scheduling burden by curating your professional development calendar for you! By reading this newsletter, you are taking a stretch break beyond your office walls to the wider environmental community. Read about the work of our past scholarship and grants recipients or get the rundown of the last regulatory update. And keep an eye on our [event calendar](#) for your next “Drop Everything and Learn” opportunity. Professional development with SWEP GP can happen during happy hours, green rooftop tours, and minor league baseball games. When we prioritize professional development, we all benefit. I’m looking forward to the professional development ahead of us this year... and Go Phils!!

~ Article Contributor: Heather Paul, Environmental Standards, Inc.

TOUCHSTONE COMMITTEE



Be sure to put this date on your calendar: **November 14, 2024**

That is the date that we will be back at World Cafe Live (it was so great last year we are doing a repeat performance) to celebrate our Touchstone Recipient, Grant Recipients, and Scholarship Recipients. Put on your thinking caps and start a list of who you think we should honor this year. Nominations have opened so put on your thinking caps and start a list of who you think we should honor this year. Download the form from our website and submit your nominations early for consideration: <https://swepweb.com/touchstone-award-nomination>.

Watch our website for additional details, Touchstone nomination forms, and sponsorship opportunities.

If you are interested in volunteering to help with or sponsoring our 2024 Touchstone Ceremony, please email Ammie Martin at amartin@envstd.com.

~ Article Contributor: Ammie Martin, SWEP GP Touchstone Committee Chair

Did you know that we have a [Useful Links](#) page on our website? Well, Ms. Allison's class does. Ms. Allison contacted us to express her "deep appreciation for the incredible resources on your webpage, which have greatly sparked our students' interest in STEM subjects." We want to shout to the mountain tops our appreciation to Ms. Allison for letting us know that her students found this resource valuable and also send a big thank you to Leslie in Ms. Allison's class for pointing us to this very useful link on [Free STEM Resources Provided By Public Libraries](#). We added this and two other links (one on coding and another on AI) that her students suggested to our Useful Links page. We hope you find this and other links as helpful as Ms. Allison's students have!

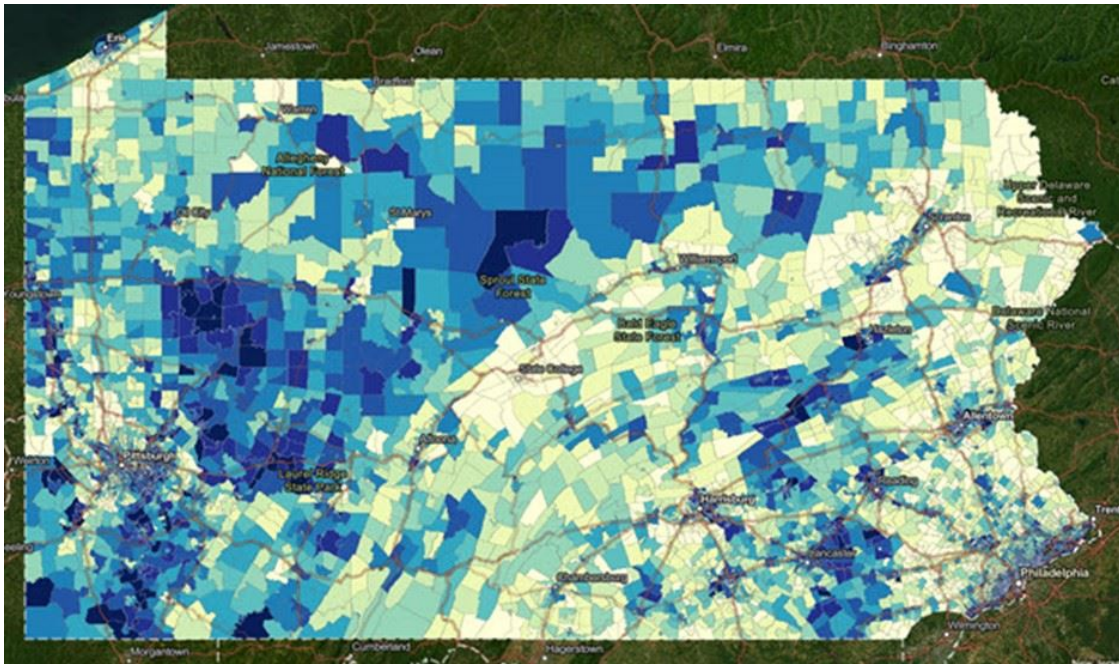
~ Article Contributor: Ammie Martin, SWEP GP Website/Public Relations/Social Media Committee Co-Chair



IN OTHER NEWS

For something new in 2024, we would like to provide you with additional newsletter articles on hot topics in the industry. If you would like to contribute an article to our Q2 newsletter, please email Ammie Martin at amartin@envstd.com.

Our Q1 2024 article focuses on the criteria for identifying Environmental Justice Communities in Pennsylvania, and was provided by Kathleen Buxton, PG, Principal Geologist, and Julia K. Wilson, PhD, PG, LPST, CAPM, Principal Geologist, Operations Director of Roux.



Pennsylvania Broadens Criteria for Identifying EJ Communities

Until recently, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) had two primary Environmental Justice (EJ) criteria for communities regarding inspection and enforcement:

- 20% residences earn below federal poverty line; and
- Above 30% of population is non-white minority.

The PA DEP recently updated its criteria and completed the development of an EJ tool called [PennEnviroScreen](#). The tool was designed to help standardize the assessment of EJ areas in Pennsylvania. While the new version of the EJ criteria is non-binding, the PA DEP has communicated its intent to apply EJ criteria more broadly. Under the new policy, PA DEP staff would prioritize EJ communities during inspection of facilities and distribution of grant dollars. Additionally, it would potentially create higher fines for violations within the EJ community.

The new tool incorporates 32 EJ indicators to identify EJ Communities in Pennsylvania. Utilizing these 32 indicators, EJ communities are established for areas with a final percentile score of 80% or above. Of note, this has caused many rural areas outside of municipalities to now fall under EJ community standards, evidenced by the map above.

There are six main categories which the 32 indicators fall under within the tool. The main categories are Pollution Burden, Environmental Exposures, Environmental Concerns, Population Characteristics, Sensitive Populations, and Socioeconomic Populations. The two main categories associated with environmental concerns are environmental exposures and environmental effects.

Environmental exposures including the following:

- Ozone
- PM2.5
- Diesel Particulate Matter
- Toxic Air Emissions
- Toxic Water Emissions
- Pesticides
- Traffic Density
- Compressor Stations
- Children's Lead Risk

Environmental effects including the following:

- Conventional and Unconventional Oil and Gas Well locations
- Railroads
- Land Remediation
- Hazardous Waste and Storage Sites
- Municipal Waste
- Coal Mining
- Impaired Lakes and Streams
- Flood Risks
- Abandoned Mining Concerns

It's important for industrial facility owner/operators and real estate developers to understand if these new standards alter the EJ status of communities in their vicinity, and what that could mean for altering the course of planning or existing environmental management steps.

~ Article Contributor: Kathleen Buxton, PG, Principal Geologist, Roux and Julia K. Wilson, PhD, PG, LPST, CAPM, Principal Geologist, Operations Director, Roux



Call For 2024 Board of Directors Volunteers

If you are interested in serving as a Committee Chair/Co-Chair, Committee member, or on our Board of Directors, please email info@swepweb.com and provide the position(s) you are interested in. We are seeking nominations to fill a number of positions for the 2024 – 2025 Committee term or 2024 – 2026 Board of Directors term.

Our Board of Directors positions are 3-year terms and are considered voting members of the organization, helping make important decisions to keep the organization running and providing the most benefit to our members.

Elections will be held in mid-2024, with terms beginning in the same month.

Our Mission

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter of SWEP (SWEP GP) was formed in 1995 as a resource for women environmental professionals in the Philadelphia region. The mission of SWEP GP is:

- To encourage and promote the leadership, achievement, and professional development of women in the environmental professions,
- To provide an informal setting for women in the environmental professions to meet, share substantive information and work experiences, and to establish a communication exchange,
- To educate members on new developments and current trends in the environmental field
- To encourage and promote the development of business relationships,
- To encourage and promote public service in the environmental field.

And, if you made it this far, **thank you** and we look forward to seeing you in 2024!

Follow us on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/swep-of-greater-philadelphia/>

Watch our website for the latest information on upcoming events, scholarships and grants, and touchstones: <https://swepweb.com/>

Contact us at info@swepweb.com