



WSEHA NEWSLETTER

WASHINGTON STATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Nancy Bernard

Dear Colleagues,

I want to express my gratitude for all the hard work that went into our very successful joint annual education conference with NEHA in Spokane. Under Tom's leadership, with Megan's incredible organization skills, and a dedicated planning committee, we set a very high standard for collaboration between state associations and the national association. Thank you to the Spokane Regional Health District for taking care of local needs, the social committee for the very popular second annual cornhole tournament, and the International Health Committee for a very successful fund raiser to support Project Ethiopia. Each member of the planning committee rose to the many challenges brilliantly. Thank you!

In my first newsletter as President, I would like to introduce myself. I started in 1975 in environmental public health with an internship for the California Department of Public Health in farm worker sanitation before transferring as a junior to the UW to major in EH. I also took a degree in Health Education because I felt strongly that it was not enough to know the science – we also need to know how to educate and work with communities. My first EHS job was with Bellingham-Whatcom County Public Health where I did living environment programs – including schools, vectors, pools and spas, solid waste, hazardous materials, food, on-site, and drinking water. After three years I left for New Orleans to get my MPH at Tulane and learn more about the field that I am passionate about.

Marrying a Coast Guard Officer, learning to live with chemical sensitivities, and two children took up the next few years. I taught hands-on science in elementary schools, was an active volunteer in schools and with the Girl Scouts and was elected to the Lake Washington School Board – on which I would serve for 20 years. In 2002 I took a temporary position with PHSKC in the local hazardous waste program. In 2003 I started at DOH as the School EHS program manager – where I still am. One of the best parts of my job is being able to work with and support local health jurisdictions – the heart of EPH.

I believe in the importance of professional organizations and their support for professional development. In the next year I hope to continue our work to increase connections between members, grow our education/professional development support, encourage the international committee's work, and support Susan's goal of gathering historical information on our profession. We have a committed and talented board that I hope you will get to know better.

The past few years have been a difficult time for EPH, but also rewarding as our communities saw health departments step up to the challenges of a pandemic and still maintain essential EPH services. Thank you for all you do keep our communities safe! A big thank you to Tom for his stellar leadership through the past three years and Mike for his extended service as past president.

Sincerely,

Nancy Bernard, MPH, REHS, CPSI



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Jesse Smith, Treasurer; Tom Kunesh, Immediate Past President;
Vikki Barthels, Eastern RVP; Ethan Schmidt, Northwest RVP;
Jennifer Garcelon, Secretary; Mike Young, Past-President;
Susan Shelton, President-Elect. Photo credit: San Juan County

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Like [WSEHA's Facebook page](#) ! Stay up-to-date with the goings-on in the field of Environmental Public Health.

Another way to keep up with what we're doing is to join our mailing list. Go to wseha.org to join the mailing list or email Megan McNelly at megan@wseha.org.

Next Newsletter Deadline:

October 31, 2022

The Washington State Environmental Health Association Newsletter is the official publication of WSEHA. Membership in WSEHA includes a subscription to the newsletter. Membership in WSEHA is not required for acceptance of articles in the newsletter.

Opinions expressed in articles published in the WSEHA newsletter should not be accepted necessarily as statements of policy or opinions of WSEHA.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT

By Susan Shelton

Give me 5! We ask five quick questions of local EH staff to show the diverse and dynamic Environmental Health profession in our state. We have two showcases in this edition and will provide more highlights in future newsletters.



Benton-Franklin Health District

Thank you to Rick Dawson, Senior Manager for the Surveillance & Investigation, for introducing us to the current activities at BFHD.

Whatcom County Health Department

Thank you to Sue Sullivan, Environmental Health Manager, for taking us up north and highlighting current activities with WCHD.



EH program summary

The Benton-Franklin Health District (BFHD) is home to approximately 300,000 people with the majority of the population centered around three major cities of Kennewick, Pasco and Richland. BFHD was formed in 1946

serving only 64,000 residents at the time. Over the years not only has the population grown but industry has flourished alongside the original agricultural and military operations. The environmental health staff currently numbers 21 people strong with 14 EHS, 4 EHT and 3 clerks making sure that the work of EH get done. We presently have staff working in On-site Sewage, Solid Waste, Water Recreation, Drinking Water, Food Safety, Schools and Vector programs. Many of our staff are quite specialized with large portions of our staffing assigned to food safety and on-site sewage.

The Tri-Cities region is unique in a variety of ways in that the last free flowing section of the Columbia River bisects Benton and Franklin counties and at one point the Columbia flows east through the Tri-Cities. However on the more unique and environmentally important issues we are home to arguably the largest clean up site in the U.S. with the Hanford site. We are also home to what once was the hazardous waste disposal for the State of Washington at the Pasco landfill site, which unlike Hanford is nearing completion of clean with approximately 35 thousand drums of waste removed over the last 2 years.

What is unique about your area/county/part of the state?

EH SPOTLIGHT continued

What are 1-3 current EH projects or goals for your jurisdiction?

BFHD has a number of new activities that are underway thanks in part to FPHS funding but also a significant effort related to climate change and an algal bloom in the Columbia River. BFHD has partnered with the 4 largest municipalities, DOH, and King County environmental lab to develop a local screening program. This will create on-going monitoring of water quality in the river system both at drinking water intakes but also recreational sites throughout the area. One of the goals of this fledgling program is to find efficient local methods to improve monitoring and thus response to algal blooms.

BFHD like many LHI's is always expanding the reach of environmental health with full implementation of a school health and safety program, efforts to prepare, respond to climate impacts of heat, algal blooms and smoke in our region and coming with the latest round of FPHS funding the ability to actively focus on health in all policies assisting of partners in focusing on the improvement of health across the region.

What would you like others to know more about your EH program?

Why do you work in Environmental Health?

Once upon a time a wise person identified that working at BFHD was an opportunity to make an impact as we were right sized to impact the community, close knit enough but large enough to have resources to accomplish great things. On a personal level just the chance to work in an ever changing field dominated with like-minded progressively working professionals making everyday a learning experience even after 35 years.

WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WITH SUE SULLIVAN



EH program summary

Date agency formed: Whatcom County Health District formed in 1947 and became the Whatcom County Health Department in 1989.

EH Specialists: 21.5 FTE

Quick EH Programmatic Overview: The WCHD's EH program has established programs that include: solid waste, drinking water, food safety, living environment, on-site septic and operations and maintenance and shellfish monitoring. We also provide ad hoc support in such things as lead exposure investigation, drug lab sampling and exposure concerns, and HAB. EH just recently received FPHS funding to develop programs in school safety, climate change, homelessness, toxicology and epidemiology and other programs.

Whatcom County is nestled between Seattle and Vancouver. Depending on where you are, one can view

EH SPOTLIGHT continued

Mt. Baker and the mountain ranges in British Columbia. Bellingham, the county's largest city, is host to our biggest party every Memorial Day weekend, Ski to Sea, a multisport relay race from Mt. Baker to Bellingham Bay. One can cheer on the athletes and participants and enjoy the festivities in Historic Fairhaven.

What is unique about your area/county/part of the state?

What are 1-3 current EH projects or goals for your jurisdiction?

- and an inspection program.
1. School Safety – New FPHS funding has provided our division to more fully develop a school safety program that will incorporate consultations, education outreach, relationship building,
 2. EnerGov – The EH division will be implementing a new software system to replace current systems for inspections, complaints, permitting and other functions.
 3. Educating homeowners for new property owners buying a house served by a septic system.
Food Safety – Training 5 new food safety inspectors and resuming routine food safety inspection work.

The EH division serves our community with over 225 years of combined public environmental health experience. After supporting the COVID response, the EH division is back to performing our typical work and thinking of goals as part of our strategic planning process.

What would you like others to know more about your EH program?

Bellingham Dockside Market serves as the hub for local fishermen in and out of Squalicum Harbor to sell their catch and harvest directly to the consumer. This pop-up market was founded during the pandemic due to the unrelenting advocacy of a local fishing family and in close collaboration with many entities including the Working Waterfront Coalition, City of Bellingham, the Port of Bellingham and the Whatcom County Health Department. You'll find vendors the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month in Squalicum Harbor.

Waste Wise, a new way for residents to learn how to reuse, recycle, or dispose of hundreds of items, is an easily searchable database that provides information about how to get rid of unwanted items, from mattresses to aluminum baking pans to old lawn chemicals.

Septic System Homeowner Training program allows homeowners to become certified to inspect their own septic systems, if their system is eligible. Trainings are currently offered on-line and the team will soon provide in-person training. Operations and Maintenance fees that are included in property tax statements, for those who have septic systems, help fund the personnel required to implement this program and the state regulations.



**2022 Cornhole Champs:
James Hayes, Ed Halasz,
Bill Angel**

Why do you work in Environmental Health?

After on-boarding with the EH staff, there is a theme for their "why". They are dedicated professionals who care for the community they work and play in. While some of them intentionally chose this path since their undergraduate days, many have changed careers to learn environmental health, which is a testament to the incredible growth mindset of this team.

AEC 2022 Wrap-Up

On behalf of your WSEHA AEC Planning Committee I sure hope you found the recent NEHA AEC in Spokane fun, informative and full of chances to network. It is rare for NEHA to bring their AEC to Washington. We left our NEHA colleagues with a great experience. The WSEHA collaboration with NEHA was unprecedented. NEHA hopes to use this model for future AECs. I spoke with three other state affiliate presidents who want to duplicate what we did here in Washington!

We received lots of positive feedback from our members and our guests from across the country. While that's great, we also want to hear about ways we can improve your experience. Watch your e-mail for a post-AEC poll. Share your thoughts honestly so we can use your ideas as we plan for AEC 2023 at the Hotel Murano in Tacoma.

Highlights include:

- A moving keynote from Secretary of Health, Dr. Umair Shah.
- \$4000+ raised for Project Ethiopia by the International Health Committee.
- Examples of best environmental health practice from across the country.
- A really fun social gathering on a beautiful night – with the 2nd annual cornhole tournament!
- After two long years, a chance to once again network with colleagues in person.

The thank yous could go on and on. I am sure I am missing a few folks who pitched in. In short, many people worked together and made this event possible. We will begin planning for the Tacoma conference in September. If you want to be part of the 2023 Planning Committee – no experience required – please join us by emailing Megan McNelly (megan@wseha.org). I guarantee you will find it fun and rewarding.

See you in Tacoma May 8-10, 2023!

Tom Kunesh, WSEHA Past president/Conference Co-chair

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	Greg Tanbara	Crina Curca
	Rob Eastman	Dawn Johnston
		Crisyana Fletes

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

By Layken Winchester

The IHC committee extends a HUGE thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Silent Auction/Raffle a success. Your donations and participation raised over **\$4,000!** 100% of the money raised will be donated to Project Ethiopia and will help villages in the remote Dangla region of Ethiopia, where aid money often does not reach.

This year's AEC also continued the tradition of raffle basket competition. Congratulations to Kitsap Public Health District and DOH Team Food!

Stay tuned for an update from Project Ethiopia! In the meantime, please visit [WSEHA's IHC Webpage](#) for more details about IHC and to read a project report from last year's IHC recipient-Water1st.

Donation Acknowledgements:

- Fremont Brewing
- Laurette Rasmussen
- Ross Lytle
- Specialized Wheel Sport
- Away With Words Book Shop
- Kitsap County Fire Marshal's Office
- Fleet Feet
- City of Spokane
- Victoria Lehto
- Mike LaScuola
- Jennifer Ayrey
- WA Department of Agriculture-Animal Feed Program
- DOH Food Team
- Kitsap Public Health District
- Whatcom County Health Department
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
- Jodie Holdcroft
- Spiceology/Jessica Martin
- K. Shelton
- Susan Camp



Certificate of Awesomeness: Kitsap Public Health District

Certificate of Greatness: DOH Team Food

- Mark Toy
- Seattle Mariners
- King County Public Health
- Snohomish Health District
- Emily Hovis
- K. Pierson
- Thermoworks
- Tom Kunesh
- Milo Durand
- Michelle Smith
- Kalispel Tribe and Northern Resort/Casino
- Halo
- Kerri Wagner



2022 IHC Crew (L-R): Mark Toy, Hayli Hruza, Laurette Rasmussen, Layken Winchester



NATIONAL EPH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

By Emily Hovis

The National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP) is a 400-hour paid internship opportunity that links environmental health undergraduate and graduate students from environmental health academic programs accredited by the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC), with funded internship placements at qualified state, tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) environmental public health agencies. This workforce initiative supports the establishment of qualified applicant pipelines to help meet current and future environmental health professional workforce needs across the nation and encourages environmental health students to consider careers in governmental environmental public health following graduation. To learn how your health department/program could benefit from a NEPHIP intern, review the [Benefits and Guidelines for Health Departments Interested in Hosting NEPHIP Interns](#) webpage.

NEPHIP isn't like other internships. It focuses on building the EH workforce by giving undergraduate and graduate EH students a first-hand opportunity to work on an EH project at a public health department. Consider a NEPHIP intern if you could use:

- **Hours:** 400 hours of an EH student's time
- **Focus Periods:** Dedicated time concentrated on one project
- **EH Educated Support:** An intern who is studying environmental health and planning a career in the field
- **Financial Support:** Interns receive generous stipends from CDC so are able to focus on your project at no cost to your organization

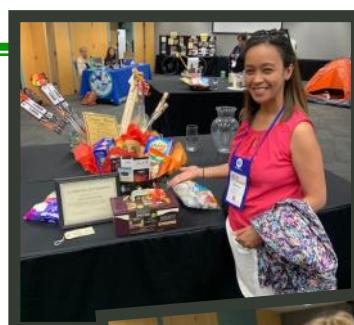
Applications for Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 Health Departments: Open

Health department applications will be accepted on a rolling basis if positions are open and available. Health departments interested in hosting an intern for Fall 2022 are encouraged to submit as soon as possible as applications will be prioritized by date received. The student application deadline is August 8, 2022 and matching is anticipated to be completed by mid-August for the Fall 2022 session. Complete the application here: [Application form](#)

Did you love the AEC?

Volunteer for the planning team!

Did you know you could be a part of the planning committee to bring 2023's AEC to life in Tacoma? Join the AEC Planning Committee and you too could be shaping the speaker list, social entertainment, invited sponsors, and other key activities for the conference. You'll work with excited members from around the state to bring the rewarding and dynamic conference together. The planning committee meets virtually for one hour meetings each month and experienced volunteers are there to help new volunteers learn the ropes. Pay for your dedicated service includes cheers and accolades from the rest of the team and the sheer awe from your coworkers after next year's amazing AEC. Email megan@wseha.org to add your needed skills and enthusiasm to the team.



SOME RAFFLE
WINNERS

2022 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT: KENDALL SANDHOP

By Emily Hovis

This year we were able to award the Cind M. Treiser Memorial Scholarship to Kendall Sandhop during the joint NEHA/WSEHA Award Ceremony in Spokane, WA. She is currently pursuing a BS in Biology with a minor in Environmental Studies from Whitworth University and plans to study infectious disease medicine in the future. According to Kendall's nomination, she is an outstanding student who, "brings a motivated work ethic that is balanced by her desire to serve others and make a positive contribution to the world around her." Congratulations Kendall Sandhop!



Every year WSEHA attempts to identify and reward deserving environmental health professionals through special recognition by their peers. We currently have four awards: the John Nordin Outstanding Sanitarian Award, the Environmental Health Professional of the Year Award, the Rookie of the Year award, and the Jack Hatlen President's Award. WSEHA has been recognizing award recipients since 1962, and the list of professionals who have received these awards is quite significant ([see the award recipient list here](#))!

Unfortunately, this year we did not receive any nominations. Recognition of good work is important to us, and we encourage you to consider nominating a deserving individual for next year. Our work as environmental health professionals is sometimes difficult and often thankless. Recognition by your peers is one way to support those who are making important contributions to our field. We can only recognize those who have been nominated, so please submit your nominees for the 2023 AEC! Additional information can be found in the [Awards Manual](#) and on the [WSEHA Awards webpage](#).



Mike Young
thanking Tom
Kunesh for his
terms as WSEHA
president.



Emily Hovis and Kendall
Sandhop



Emily Hovis speaking at
the 2022 NEHA Awards
ceremony with Mike
Young waiting on the
side.