



WSEHA's 2013 Annual Educational Conference (AEC) At the Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound on May 6 & 7

This year's theme:

"Environmental Public Health – Cornerstone of Public Health"

By Mark Toy, 2013 AEC Chair

"Environmental public health services and sanitation have been the backbone of public health in the United States since 1798. The first laws enacted to protect public health and ensure safety pertained to sanitation. Laws ensuring clean water, sewage management, and food service standards were promulgated 100 years before vaccination of children became law. As a result of proper sanitation, more than 80% of human disease has been eliminated."

The quote above comes from a 2003 CDC document titled *A National Strategy to Revitalize Environmental Public Health Services*. It was written in response to an assessment by CDC and others that there were not enough properly trained environmental public health specialists to adequately implement essential public health services and address new and emerging environmental health threats. The situation since 2003 has not improved. WSEHA membership has been halved since our last AEC in 2006 and the Great Recession. Across the state and the nation the environmental health work force has been reduced as we've faced reduced budgets and a wave of retirement of experienced environmental health staff.

Despite these challenges, the world still needs environmental public health professionals. The need for traditional sanitation based programs remains, and trained professionals are needed to help address evolving and emerging problems. To meet these challenges we need to revitalize our organization and do our part to raise awareness and reinvigorate the environmental public health profession in Washington State. We can't wait.

Our AEC is the main vehicle that WSEHA has to address some of these issues. The stated goals of the AEC include:

- ▶ Providing a variety of educational opportunities to WSEHA members during the AEC,
- ▶ Identifying emerging environmental health issues that will require education and training,
- ▶ Establishing connections among environmental health professionals in all agencies and arenas, and
- ▶ Encouraging professional standards of practice.

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Our AEC committee is making every effort to ensure that the 2013 AEC meets your educational needs. The theme is **“Environmental Public Health – Cornerstone of Public Health”**. In keeping with the theme, we’ll try to balance presentations on core environmental public health topics with sessions on emerging issues. We have been doing outreach with senior State and local environmental health managers to design the conference to encourage attendance, and we will actively solicit speakers on topics we feel are of interest to our membership. We plan to develop separate tracks for drinking water, water protection (onsite sewage, pollution identification & correction), food, living environment, and other disciplines so that even if you can only come for one day, you have a better chance of getting the continuing education you need in your area of interest. We are also actively pursuing certification for continuing education credits from a range of professional organizations.

However, all this work means nothing if you don’t come! So please :

- ▶ Visit the WSEHA website regularly for AEC updates.
- ▶ **Submit an abstract** by December 7th if you have something you think is worth sharing with your colleagues, or **drop us a message** if there’s a topic you’d really like to see presented.
- ▶ Register for the AEC when we send out the preliminary program in the beginning of 2013, and
- ▶ Tell your coworkers who are not currently members of WSEHA that the AEC is coming and that being a part of it is a *good thing*.

See you in May!



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Next Newsletter Deadline: Friday, February 1, 2013

The Washington State Environmental Health Association Newsletter is the official publication of WSEHA. Membership in WSEHA includes a subscription to the newsletter. Manuscripts for publication must be type-written and submitted via e-mail to kerri@wseha.org, or on a computer disk mailed to WSEHA at the address above. 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.

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An Environmental Health Quiz For You...

1. What is the most deadly parasitic disease in the Americas?
A) Chagas Disease
B) Malaria
C) Trichinosis
D) AIDS
2. Which Chinese invention played an early role in improving sanitation and hygiene?
A) Chopsticks
B) Sewers
C) Fireworks
D) Rice Steamers
3. What statistical formula does a researcher use in evaluating the likelihood of someone who would contract a disease after exposure, in comparison with those unexposed to the same conditions?
A) An odds ratio
B) A chi-square statistic
C) An average
D) A relative risk
4. According to many experts, what is the most important measure to take to prepare for disaster?
A) Have a large supply of non-perishable food in-house
B) Own a cellular phone
C) Have access to a battery powered radio
D) Have a family plan

Have some good questions and answers (with sources) that you want to share?
Email kerri@wseha.org.

Answers are on the next page (upside down).

Answers to Quiz...

1. A. Chagas Disease - Chagas is more deadly than any other parasitic disease in the Americas (including malaria), and causes roughly 50,000 deaths each year. An estimated 16-18 million Latin Americans are infected with Chagas, most of whom have no idea they are carriers of the disease.
2. A. Chopsticks. Eating with chopsticks, which were first used around 2,000 BC, provided the unintended benefit of preventing illnesses by interrupting the hand-to-mouth transmission of germs.
3. D. A relative risk. The relative risk is defined as the ratio of those who develop a disease or condition to those who do not when both groups are exposed to a condition.
4. D. Have a family plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so many organizations agree that it is important to create an emergency plan. The plan should include how you will contact one another, how you will get back together, and what you will do in different situations.

SEHA - Student Environmental Health Association

By Anna Fretheim, University of Washington

SEHA has begun again for the 2012-2013 school year after several of us had exciting internship positions. Throughout the summer Momoaka Nakamura interned at the CDC in Atlanta, Ara Jo worked in pool inspections at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and Anna Fretheim interned at the Washington State Department of Health shellfish program. So far this year we've been keeping busy with t-shirt designs and spreading the word about Environmental Health. We've hosted a screening of the movie Contagion (click [here](#) to see the movie trailer) and a career panel is in the planning stages. And far off in May we plan on attending the 2013 AEC together.



Want to Help Out or Lead a WSEHA Committee?

The following committees need chairs and volunteers: Education, Membership, and Awards Committees. Also, the Northwest Regional Vice President's position is currently vacant. Here is more information about these positions and committees...

The Northwest Regional Vice President: This position needs to be filled by a member from the NW region which includes the following counties – Island, King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom. Each Regional VP represents the Board to their respective region and also represents the regional members to the Board. This position should organize and conduct a regular regional business meeting at least once a year in conjunction with an educational event. This position provides articles on regional happenings and events to the newsletter editor and also nominates appropriate individuals from their region for WSEHA awards.

Education Committee: This committee devises, and puts into effect, ways and means of improving the professional standards of sanitarians through continuing education and help enable the members to better educate the public in all phases of environmental health.

Awards Committee: This committee identifies and selects qualified candidates for awards and scholarships (when offered). Final selection of the candidates for the awards of the Association shall be made by action of the Board of Directors.

Membership Committee: This committee conducts an annual membership drive to attract new members, they devise and implement ways and means of increasing and sustaining the membership, and they develop or revise a membership brochure.

Publications Committee: This person is the editor of the *WSEHA Newsletter* and other publications.

More information about the above positions can be found in our Policy and Procedures Manual which is located on our website at <http://www.wseha.org/P&PManual/WSEHAP&PManual.pdf>

If you are interested in any of the above positions or committees, please contact WSEHA's Executive Secretary, Kerri Wagner, at kerri@wseha.org or (360) 738-8946.