

Discussion Paper

Should the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners Change Its Name?

2011 Annual Fall Board Retreat

The NARRP Board convened for its annual fall work session on October 14-15, 2011. During the course of the meeting, there were a number of occasions where Board members would allude to whether the name of the association adequately portrays what we do and who we are. On the afternoon of the second day, as part of the strategic planning discussion, the topic was explicitly addressed.

The Board identified a number of considerations that are included in this discussion paper. It was decided to share this paper with the membership and interested colleagues with hopes in getting feedback. Please read this discussion paper and complete the short survey posted on the NARRP website. You may also wish to call or email any of the NARRP Board members.

Please note that the Board has not made a decision to change the name of the association, but rather feels there may be sufficient benefit to warrant a full discussion.

Brief History of the Association's Name

In 1983, the predecessor to NARRP was formed by the name of the National Association of State Recreation Planners (NASRP). The focus of NASRP was on statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plans as required by the Land and Water Conservation Act (1965).

In the late 80s and early 90s, there was a decline in LWCF funding and support of statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plans. Concurrently, as the result of a number of major federal planning laws, outdoor recreation and natural resource planning was required and commonplace at this time among the federal resource agencies. In response, in 1995 after the first 13 years of the association, NASRP made a strategic move to become more inclusive of all local, state and federal outdoor recreation planners by changing its name to the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners (NARRP).

Concerns with the NARRP Name

1. Planning is not an isolated activity separate from management and research. These three professional activities are synergistic and interdependent. Planning is a bridge to bring the best available science into management; planning is a rational, systematic, public process for making better and more defensible management decisions.
2. There is currently no professional association or society that provides the necessary leadership and services to advance the outdoor recreation profession.
3. Planning is no longer the domain of only “planners,” but rather planning engages multi-disciplinary teams including managers and researchers with different expertise, academic backgrounds and professional experiences.
4. Membership in NARRP has increased 150% in five years since 2006, along with increased professional diversity in the type of members (e.g., planners, managers, academics, students, policy makers, senior executives, consultants, resource specialists). The NARRP name, with the focus on planning, is not inclusive of the many disciplines and job responsibilities reflected in the current membership.
5. The name National Association of Recreation Resource Planners is long and cumbersome; some feel that the acronym NARRP lacks professional appeal.
6. The use of the word “National” (or American) may delimit and discourage international membership and participation in the annual conference.
7. The annual conference is more than a planning conference, but rather includes sessions, exhibits and poster displays on important management issues and science projects related to outdoor recreation.

Concerns with Changing the NARRP Name

1. There would be a cost in time and money to change the name and logo (e.g., bylaws, corporation papers, and website).
2. Name recognition would decline for a few years; there would be some confusion in the profession until a new name is institutionalized.
3. Membership may decline for several years as the association re-establishes its identity.
4. The association's current excellence in planning may be diluted over time.

A Sampling of Names from Other Professional Natural Resource-Related Organizations

- Society of American Foresters
- American Cultural Resource Association
- American Fisheries Society
- Natural Areas Association
- George Wright Society
- American Planning Association
- National Recreation and Parks Association
- Society for Range Management
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- River Management Society
- The Wildlife Society
- North American Lake Management Society
- Academy of Leisure Sciences

Please take a few minutes and complete the linked survey at www.narrp.org. Your input is very important to the Board and our Association's members.

Thank you!!