

Introducing the AMS Committee on Environmental Responsibility

If AMS had a “team color,” you might imagine that it’s blue, given the Society’s blue logo and its scientific focus on the sky and seas. But AMS has been going green. Over the past couple of years, the Society has been focusing on the environmental impact of its activities and trying to have a gentler footprint. The professional staff, elected leadership, and volunteer members are all involved with this green initiative, coordinated by the newly established Committee on Environmental Responsibility. Over the next several months, the “45 Beacon” section of *BAMS* will feature short stories on some of the committee’s activities. This month, we describe the committee’s genesis, a “grassroots” movement, appropriately enough.

For years, AMS member Eugene Cordero, professor of meteorology and climate science at San Jose State University and coauthor (with Laura Stec) of the book *Cool Cuisine: Taking the Bite out of Global Warming*, had been concerned about food service at AMS Annual Meetings. From the amount of wasted food, to the lack of recycling bins for disposable food containers, to the choice of menu items, Eugene saw opportunities for more environmentally responsible choices and raised the issue with the AMS Council. In April 2007, the AMS Executive Committee established an Ad Hoc Committee on Green Meetings, chaired by Eugene, to develop recommendations

for environmentally responsible practices for AMS meetings, including food service. The result was the AMS Green Conference Guidelines, adopted by the Council in September 2007 and implemented at the 2008 Annual Meeting in New Orleans. We’ll report on the specifics of these guidelines next month.

To build on the Ad Hoc Committee’s work on green meetings, the Executive Committee established the Committee on Environmental Responsibility, as a standing committee of the Executive Council, in April 2009. That committee’s responsibilities are “[t]o seek to improve the environmental responsibility of the Society’s operations, to strive to make the Society a leading example of effective environmental stewardship, and to serve as a source of information for others with similar aspirations.” Dian Seidel of the NOAA Air Resources Laboratory currently chairs the committee of 14 members, including two student members. You can visit the committee website for terms of reference, membership roster, and work plan at www.ametsoc.org/committeepges/envres/index.html.

In the coming months, look for more stories in “45 Beacon” on enhancing energy efficiency in AMS office buildings, environmentally responsible investment strategies for the AMS portfolio, greening AMS publications, community outreach at AMS Annual Meetings, and more.