

## **Pleasant J McNeel IV, PE**

Air Quality Specialist – Region 8  
USDA Forest Service  
Jackson, Mississippi / Atlanta, GA

### **Join date:**

1991

### **Section/Chapter:**

Southern Section  
Mississippi Chapter

### **Education and professional credentials**

M.S. Environmental Engineering (emphasis Air Quality); University of California, Department of Civil Engineering, Berkeley, California; 1993

B.A. Theoretical Physics; Reed College, Portland, Oregon; 1988

Registered Professional Civil Engineer No. C 56760, State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors, State of California, 1997.

Registered Professional Engineer No. 16633, Mississippi Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors, 2005.

### **Biographical summary**

I was encouraged to join the Air & Waste Management Association in 1991 by the great Peter Hess. I had recently left the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to pursue graduate school, and the Association was invaluable to me in developing a well-rounded perspective of the environmental industry, from the regulatory, academic and consulting views. I have been continuously active at the local and national level in in some capacity ever since. I have worked in academics (Max Planck Institute for Solid State Research and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory); in consulting (Weiss Associates, EA Engineering, and Woodward Clyde Consultants/URS); running my own consulting company, with state & local agencies (BAAQMD and Mississippi DEQ), and finally with the Federal Government (USDA Forest Service). I believe this provides me with a unique perspective on the various needs of environmental professionals in our field.

In 2000 we moved to Jackson, Mississippi to be closer to my wife's family and raise our two daughters. One of my first tasks was to locate the local A&WMA Section/Chapter, and I quickly learned that the Mississippi Chapter was essentially defunct, and its Board disbanded. I worked with the Southern Section to recruit new board members (including a young Dallas Baker!) for the Mississippi Chapter and rebuild it into a successful Chapter. I served as Mississippi Chapter Chair (August 2001–January 2003) and as a Board member (August 2000–2012). In 2004, I became Chair of the Southern Section.

The Mississippi Chapter hosted the Southern Section Annual Meeting & Technical Conference in 2004. As Southern Section Chair, I served as Conference Chair and Air Quality Technical Chair. After failing to host the Southern Section Annual Meeting four years earlier, the Mississippi Chapter hosted a successful

and profitable Annual Meeting in 2004. Since then, I have managed the budget for the Southern Section Annual Meeting & Technical Conference every year that the Mississippi Chapter has been host (2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016). We have consistently hosted the most profitable Annual Meetings for the Southern Section.

I have served as Education/Scholarship Chair at both the Section and Chapter level for the majority of the last 25 years, and have always served on scholarship committees. In 2016 we decided to honor our colleague Justice Manning for his long service in the Southern Section by creating the "Justice Manning Award for Environmental Excellence." This award goes to High-School Students in the Mississippi Chapter each year at the Mississippi State and Regional Science Fairs. Not only does providing science fair awards encourage the young scientists of the future, our members truly enjoy judging the science fair projects and giving back to the community, and the award creates visibility for the A&WMA in the state.

Since these early successes I have been continuously involved at the Section and Chapter level, and have been impressed with the caliber of professionals (regulators, consultants, industry and lawyers) who have served, working together to make the Mississippi Chapter and the Southern Section among the most successful in the Association. Together, at the Section and Chapter level, we have faced many complex issues including the current global pandemic. I am excited by the opportunity to work with high caliber professionals to do the same on the International Board.

### **A&WMA activities and offices held**

**A&WMA - Golden West Section:** Vice Chairman: June 1998–2000; Board of Directors: June 1996–2000; Student Scholarship Committee Chair: June 1994–June 1998; member: December 1991– July 2000

**A&WMA – Southern Section:** Chair: January 2004–January 2005; Vice-Chair: January 2003–December 2003; Treasurer: January 2018-present

**A&WMA – Mississippi Chapter:** Chair: August 2001–January 2003; Board Member: August 2000–2012; Education Chair: January 2002–2017

**A&WMA – Southern Section 2004 Annual Meeting & Technical Conference, Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, Biloxi, Mississippi,** Conference Chair and Air Quality Technical Chair, August 3-6, 2004.

### **Goals/vision for the organization**

The association has always provided me with valuable professional development, as well as access to other scientists, engineers, regulators and industry. I want to ensure that the Association continues to provide the same opportunities for career growth and technical education to the next generations.

It is vital that we focus on environmental professionals early in their careers, and ideally, while still in school. While I was in Graduate school, I attended every event sponsored locally by the Golden West Section, and benefited enormously from meeting environmental professionals from a variety of backgrounds and gaining an understanding of the world that waited me upon graduation. The technical education and networking provided by the Association has been one of the keys to my own success, and I hope to be able to pass that on.

My emphasis, as exhibited through my consistent work on Scholarship committees for over the past twenty-five years, will always be on finding better ways to bring students and recent graduates into the Association, to begin building their careers as environmental professionals. I am committed to continuing outreach to future members of the Association through scholarship, student chapters, and local programs like providing science fair awards. Also, as a member of the USDA Forest Service, I see significant opportunity to provide more training and research opportunities that are mission critical to Federal Land Managers, as well as provide outreach to air quality professional about the Federal Land Managers' technical expertise and mission. I also will actively work with the prescribed and wildfire smoke management community to continue, and build upon, the Association's emphasis on wildfire and prescribed fire impacts on health and air quality.

If elected, I will focus on four key areas I believe I am well qualified to add value to the Association:

1. Bringing students and recent graduates into the Association, by helping launch their careers through scholarships, facilitating direct interaction with seasoned professionals, and providing opportunities for exposure.
2. Focus on the understanding finances of the Association and assisting with its financial stability, while still meeting the Association's Mission.
3. Leverage my experience with the USDA Forest Service, to continue the Association's recent emphasis on issues surrounding wild and prescribed fire, fuels management, smoke modeling & monitoring, and Exceptional Events Demonstrations.
4. Bring the perspective of the Federal Land Managers to the Association's continued emphasis on protecting Air Quality Related Values at Class I Wilderness Areas in the US, including air quality modeling, & IMPROVE Monitoring, New Source Review and Regional Haze.