

Media Mention: Amy Wang Reflects on Leadership as Outgoing NCBA Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Section Chair

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Environmental attorney Amy Wang recently wrapped up her one-year term as Chair of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Law Section of the North Carolina Bar Association (NCBA).

She recently reflected on this time in a post published on NCBarBlog.com, where she highlights the Section challenges, progress, and support. From the article:

I am honored to have served as the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources (EENR) Section Chair for 2021-2022. As we are set to begin anew next month, it's important that we reflect on the past year and the challenges we faced as a Section.

A uptick in COVID-19 cases forced us to reinstitute various protective protocols among our members' institutions and the North Carolina Bar Association. As a result, our meetings in August, November, January, and May were held virtually. I am proud of the way our Section adapted and continued to provide valuable content and programming to our members. Our meetings included many excellent substantive committee reports. We also benefitted from presentations by Dionne Delli-Gatti, Clean Energy Director for the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), with an overview and update on various energy and climate issues at the global, federal, and state levels; Peter Ledford and Christina Cress spoke about the clean energy stakeholder process surrounding the passage of House Bill 951; and Dru Carlisle and Steven DeGeorge provided a primer on environmental insurance. Thank you to the Programs Committee, Hayes Finely, Robin Smith, and Joe Starr, for their efforts.

Our Membership Committee, led by Greg Icenhour, hosted a virtual event with SEENR members and students at Duke University's School of Law with speakers focused on disparities within the field of environmental law, including diversity among practitioners and environmental justice matters.

On May 3, 2022, we held our Section Annual Meeting in-person for the first time since 2019! It was a glorious day in centrally-located Siler City, one of the diverse environments in our state we rarely get to see, alternating from the coast to Cary to the mountains. We enjoyed networking, cowboy lessons, music, and food, but the fellowship outdoors at the Carolina Morning Stables

made it memorable. Thank you to SEENR member Jeff Tyburski and his family for opening their home to make an in-person meeting and social event possible!

At the Section Annual Meeting, SEENR members approved a slate of new Council members as well as Secretary Mary Katherine Stukes and Treasurer Kym Hunter. Additionally, Jim Joyce will be our incoming Vice Chair, while Karen Weatherly will succeed me as SEENR Chair for 2022-2023. We also proudly recognized three trailblazing SEENR members, inducting them into our Legacy Society:

- Craig Bromby, who retired after early years at USEPA and the State (when NCDEQ was known as the Department of Natural and Economic Resources) before going into private practice;
- Camilla Herlevich, who retired after stints in public and private practice before founding and growing the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, serving as its ED 25 years; and,
- Bill Rainey, who retired after starting in the Environmental Section of the AG's office followed by years of private practice on the coast.

Our year concluded June 16-18 in Charleston, South Carolina, in phenomenal fashion with the revival of the popular Tri-State event with members in the South Carolina and Georgia environmental bars. The pandemic canceled plans for the 2020 reprisal, but our intrepid CLE Committee, led by Kym Hunter, Lisa Rushton, Jeff Tyburski, and Karen Weatherly, joined forces with attorneys in South Carolina and Georgia to organize the event. Everyone I spoke with, whether attorney or consultant, was so pleased with the substance full of federal and state speakers, the format of two half days of CLE with shared experiences and social time, and the location in historic Charleston. I must admit, I was a little nervous about how things would go with a four-year gap, but last week reinforced there are very good reasons for the three states to come together, whether that be EPA Region 4, water basin commonalities, or similar natural resources with opportunities to share legal and practical best practices. Relationships were made, rekindled and solidified.

Thank you to my fellow officers Karen Weatherly, Jim Joyce, and Mary Katherine Stukes, along with Andrea Bradford of the Bar Association, for supporting me this year without fail. I am grateful for the flexibility and commitment of every SEENR member to be there for the Section and for each other. Keep your membership current, participate and volunteer. This year reminded us we are a Section full of unique and valuable relationships between the legal and consulting worlds. We rejoiced in these bonds as they were renewed in person last month, and I am confident that the SEENR culture will continue not only under Karen's leadership, but with members' commitment.

The Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Law Section members represent governmental, nonprofit and private environmental law practitioners, providing a forum for collegial interaction among N.C. environmental lawyers from all three sectors.