

Regional Environmental staff honored for excellence

In June 27, the National Association of Environmental Professionals honored UGP's environmental program with its National Environmental Excellence Award in the Environmental Stewardship category.

This award recognizes the outstanding performance of UGP environmental staff to meet resource issues head-on and go beyond compliance. UGP was specifically selected for:

- ◆ its significant ability to self examine;
- ◆ openly sharing results among numerous stakeholders;
- ◆ measuring effectiveness;
- ◆ and continuously improving.

The NAEP National Environmental Excellence Awards competition recognizes those projects and programs that model excellence, exceed criteria and stand out as significant contributions to the environment.

According to NAEP President Andrew J. McCusker, "The unique and customer service-oriented program, as evidenced by public and private sectors, tribes and public beneficiaries, makes this nomination an

outstanding model of Environmental Stewardship."

This was the third major award recognizing the UGP environmental team in 12 months.

On May 23, regional staff received an award from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Western's support of the Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Program and in 1999, UGP was presented an award for "Outstanding Contribution to the Protection and Enhancement of Fisheries Resources" by the American Fisheries Society.

Since awards to government agencies from environmental organizations and from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are rare, what are the reasons for the recognized success of the UGP Environmental Program?

Nick Stas, regional environmental manager, said the program starts with emphasis by the regional manager on "customer service." Environmental regulatory agencies and environmental groups are important customers.

"We consult with them routinely for feedback regarding environmental issues, as well as on products or reports produced for their use. For each annual performance appraisal cycle all environmental staff are required to submit 360-degree feedback evaluations from both internal and external customers. This has helped to maintain good communication with these agencies," Stas said.

The program's achievements are a direct result of a highly dedicated regional environmental staff. Staff members provide technical expertise and advice, while staying up-to-date with frequently changing Federal and state environmental requirements.

The UGP environmental staff has consistently demonstrated an effective and efficient approach to meeting environmental requirements. Contributing to this success is noteworthy assistance provided by CSO



UGP Regional Environmental Manager **Nick Stas** (left) and **Ted Anderson**, environmental protection specialist, show off a model pallid sturgeon. (Photo by Patricia Dressler)

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–Nick Stas

environmental staff as well as support from other Western regions.

To meet the overall goals of Western’s environmental program, regional staff members have obtained national and state environmental certification and credentials.

Dave Vietti and **Patricia Dressler** are certified hazardous materials managers. **Jimmie Black** is a certified environmental trainer and certified environmental assessor. Fish and wildlife agencies have recognized **Ted Anderson** for his contributions to endangered species and raptor protection.

“Also critically important are the exemplary partnerships that exist within the region with Maintenance, Power Marketing, Operations and Safety. Since UGP has more than 300 substations geographically dispersed across a six-

state region, we rely on the support of electricians, linemen, engineers and managers to maintain our enviable compliance record,” Stas said.

During the past five years the UGP has received numerous state and Federal environmental inspections without violations. This is a noteworthy achievement when compared with other electric utilities.

Achieving superior performance evaluations, actively contributing to both the internal and external environmental communities and consistently striving for excellence beyond the norm make the UGP environmental program a model to emulate. 🏆