

# Sustainability Committee

As we continue to battle our way through the economic recovery, I ask myself has sustainability yet returned to the construction agenda? Balfour Beatty, for whom I work for in the U.K., has recently introduced a sustainability Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to measure how much work they are winning on their sustainability credentials. Last year 20% of Balfour Beatty's U.K. work was on sustainable projects. I'm sure most other major contractors in the U.K. would claim much the same. However, in the deep foundations market, I personally haven't been asked about sustainability for two to three years now. Price and programme still dominate decision making, although often the most sustainable solution is the cheapest and/or quickest anyway. Despite this background, the Sustainability Committee is organising a seminar in collaboration with the BRE (Building Research Establishment) to be held 24 November, 2011 at BRE's offices north of London in the U.K.

BRE has a longstanding reputation for working in sustainability, and the group developed BREEAM, a sustainability assessment tool for buildings. The seminar is designed to bring together all parts of industry that work with deep foundations, from house builders to major civil engineering contractors, from small consultancy firms to major international organisations. Morning speakers include those working with the U.K. government on what should be expected from sustainability, and how this will be relevant to the deep foundations industry. Afternoon speakers will present more specific examples of sustainability in practice. The discussion period at the end of the day is aimed at producing a plan to get foundations included in sustainability assessments in the future. I hope DFI can then play a leading role influencing organisations such as LEED over the coming years.



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Elsewhere, DFI's Energy Piles Working Group is coordinating information transfer and practically-oriented input into university research on the design, construction and use of foundation elements for geothermal heat transfer. Contact Mary Ellen Bruce ([mebruce@dfi.org](mailto:mebruce@dfi.org)) for more information. Principal Investigator Prof. Guney Olgun, from Virginia Tech, provided an update of ongoing NSF-sponsored research at the Super Pile conference. Field test programs and a workshop in Lausanne, Switzerland are planned for 2011 and 2012. Representatives from the Working Group also presented a seminar at the International Bridge Conference to obtain feedback from the transportation community on their interest in using these elements for bridge de-icing and other applications.