

APPENDIX B

Comments about the Conference

This section of the report presents the written comments collected from the training conference evaluation forms that were provided to each participant. A total of 119 training conference evaluation forms were submitted. Similar observations have been combined and paraphrased. Comments submitted by only one evaluator were recorded verbatim.

For some questions, participants were asked to respond by selecting from the following choices:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

When applicable, a pie chart illustrates the percentage of responses.

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Comments on how NARPM training has helped to improve job performance

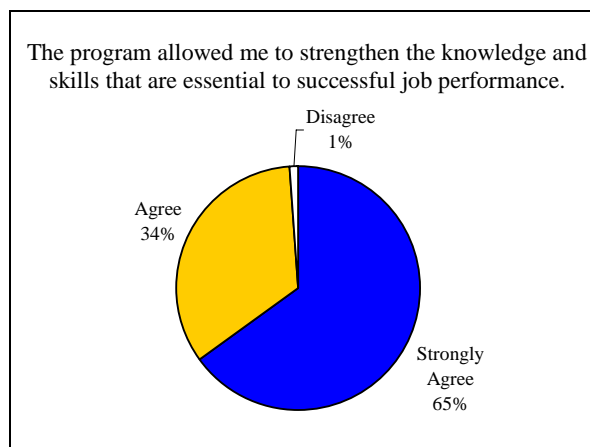
- Provides me new information and continues my education. *(Three responses)*
- Creating contacts and network building. *(Ten responses)*
- Contacts for technical and other support. *(Two responses)*
- Great for discussing challenges and exchanging information. *(Four responses)*
- Connecting names and voices to faces.
- Great technical training. *(Two responses)*
- Improved technical skills and knowledge. *(Two responses)*
- Kinda like going to church. It is good to hear things we know, but might have lost focus on. NARPM helps me regain focus.
- Helps me know about new approaches and technologies. Helps me know how to direct my contractors and potentially responsible parties (PRP).
- Always provided me with the knowledge and tools to carry out my job — especially to learn new tools.
- Can apply new information learned. Improved communication and presentation skills. Improved skills to work with the media. *(Two responses)*
- At every NARPM I have participated in, I always have great application for the training received while in the conference. Networking and seeing what other regions are doing is the best tool to improve my job performance. This year, in particular, my attendance at the contracts training brought a few issues to my attention and I learned about new tools, like QuickPlace and the EPA portal, that will help me improve my time management skills.
- Ideas for how to deal with challenging issues.
- Better training skills, more understanding for what RPMs do. Dare I say inspiration?!!
- Better understanding of the Superfund process and policies.
- By learning about the latest trends and tools, getting ideas for approaches from other RPM presentations about other sites.
- By providing information necessary to aid the formulation of the questions necessary for RPMs to perform their duties successfully.
- By providing technical information to improve my ability to manage sites, and providing opportunities to network with other regions. Also, the senior management perspective is important to me.
- Every class offered at NARPM improves my job performance in so many ways — it is the single most important week of the year in terms of increasing work performance and enhancing job skills.
- Every NARPM has been better and better. There is not such an RPM-specific training like NARPM. I take the training according to the phase of the project I am working on. I stay updated on emerging issues too. For example, one of my projects is on RI/FS. Finally RI/FS training was offered this year. I was able to confirm what I am doing right and what I need to do to improve. I also took the remedy implementation and how to write a ROD. This training was an eye opener to reality and made me think ahead on things I need to consider in my RI/FS reports. VI is one of the issues at my sites. NARPM keeps me updated on where we are with cleanup numbers and what we are doing nationally. I can plan consistently with what other regions are doing.
- Exposure to training and other resources unavailable at the office.
- Gave me perspective on my role in the overall efforts. Provides me with timely information "from the horse's mouth."

- I attend NARPM meetings with the goal of advancing dialogue between RPMs and the Superfund Basic Research Program.
- I have obtained knowledge and experience that has directly impacted some of my sites, helping me clean them up faster, more efficiently, and improve community relations.
- Improved management and keeping up to date on emerging issues.
- Improved morale.
- Improves my understanding of tasks, constraints, expectations and priorities of RPMs. I can better serve my clients when I know what the RPMs expect and what type of information they are exposed to at these meetings.
- Inspired by other projects. Learned about management of sites. Met other RPMs on federal facilities (FF). Being inspired by other people like Eliza, the Waterkeeper speaker.
- It is the best place to get focused information on the current state of "what to do" and "how to do it."
- Keeps me up to date on the latest guidance, policies, training and technologies. (*Seven responses*)
- Last years and this years day-long ground water and geology courses have been extremely helpful to this non-geologist RPM.
- Made good contacts for guidance and ideas on my sites. Learned about EPA resources available for me. Good place to learn about complex technologies without taking a full, 2-, or 3-day class.
- Main source of training on upcoming issues and problems.
- Major portion of the technical training I have had the past 5 years. Always have found a few tidbits to bring back to states and been able to understand my sites better.
- NARPM is extremely beneficial for my work.
- NARPM shows a bigger picture of the program than I see on a daily basis. I also get motivated by seeing what is working at other sites and talking to other RPMs. The training in soft skills is especially useful. A robot can teach me about contracting. NARPM is a way to provide world-class training and instructors, like Dr. Covello, to RPMs. The regions simply cannot deliver the caliber of training that NARPM can.
- Networking with other RPMs who have similar sites, contaminants, etc... has improved my job performance. Sharing real time knowledge and experience with others is the most beneficial form of training.
- New ideas for situation analysis, policy training, and professional networking.
- New information from other regions and headquarters. Contacts with RPMs that work on similar issues, lessons learned, technical improvements.
- Practical, applied science and engineering aspects. Learning what works and what does not across the country. Getting tips and advice from other environmental folks that I can apply in my region.
- Presentations and networking provide ongoing information on recent advances.
- Provided ability to access other EPA resources.
- Provided me information about similar sites in other regions and how they manage their sites.
- Technology transfer, what has worked, what you would do differently.
- The NARPM training conferences have helped me to improve my job performance by strengthening my skills and knowledge that are required in my profession.
- The training sessions are a great tool to improve on existing knowledge or learn about an emerging method to complete a cleanup.
- They are very practical and great for networking.

- They have improved my job performance by acquiring the necessary knowledge so as to know the right questions to ask, locate in-house experts, and obtain information about other [similar] sites and situations.
- They have improved my job performance substantially by making me more knowledgeable, especially on the hot issues, and providing networking opportunities. *(Two responses)*
- They have provided materials that I use as references and contact information for discussing issues. *(Two responses)*
- They have provided new information, new skills and definitely the contacts. Overall, I believe they do improve job performance. It also allows that "breather" time that we sometimes need. This definitely improves job performance.
- Training courses are much better. The variety of courses offered is wonderful and suited, in my opinion, to all levels of the RPM experience.
- Training maintains current skill levels for managing complex projects. Plenary speakers provide current policy information that is important when making long-term planning commitments. Personal contacts with other RPMs provide vital cross-checks on consistent application of technical and policy decisions. Opportunity to present technical papers provides a forum to develop presentation skills. Finally, NARPM provides a forum and the time to talk directly with Headquarters personnel on development and application of policy and technical issues.
- Updated my skills.
- Without a doubt.
- Yes. I learned several ways to save time, work with other RPMs in the same situation, and I do not have to reinvent the wheel. I am helping the younger RPMs get a feel for the history and pride in the job.
- Yes, definitely. *(Five responses)*
- Yes, the practical discussions (i.e., industrial processes) were best.

Comments on strengthening the knowledge and skills that are essential to successful job performance

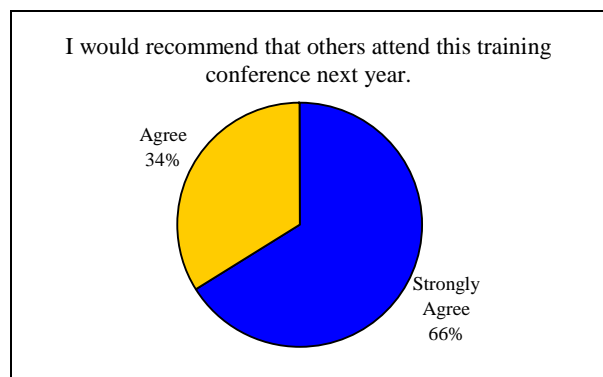
- Enjoyed the networking. Training is a mixed bag.
- A couple of the courses I attended provided me with new information that will be valuable in my site work.
- Add Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) training for Navy Sites.
- Being a non-engineer, I get a lot of valuable information on engineering technologies. From networking, I get a lot of helpful big picture planning tips.
- Community relations, media relations and risk communication trainings were VERY NEEDED and the trainers did excellent jobs.
- DNAPL remediation; breakthroughs of nanotechnology.
- Each of the courses I attended at the conference provided technical information that will help me manage my sites better.
- Emphasis on non-aqueous phase liquids (NAPL), monitored natural attenuation (MNA), and ground water investigation strategies are critical to my sites.



- Gave me a taste of what is out there for training. Great networking experience. Very fun. Opened up my communication skills.
- How else would I learn about how to handle new things, but learn from colleagues?
- I enjoyed the open discussion sessions with examples and questions from other project manager's sites.
- If the courses offered are new to my duties, or provide new information. With 14 years of experience, I will need new and higher end training. Training that new RPMs get will not do much for us.
- It allows me to see where Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) contracts (my department) fits into the CLP and Superfund team.
- More focus on emerging remediation technology and how to integrate it into remedies.
- More involvement by non-RPMs. Having the Regional Sample Control Custodians (RSCC), Headquarter CLP staff, and CLP labs there was very useful.
- The conference gave me information for all aspects of the project that I need to take into account to make sound decisions and produce sound decision making documents.
- The information sessions were fantastic. Great information transfer and sharing. Useful topics.
- The NARPM Annual Training Conference continues to be the most useful source for networking and obtaining training to meet my job's needs.
- This was my first conference and I really enjoyed it. The Branch Chief's meeting and sessions I attended were extremely helpful in my current position.
- Ground water optimization and real estate.

Comments on recommending that others attend this training conference next year

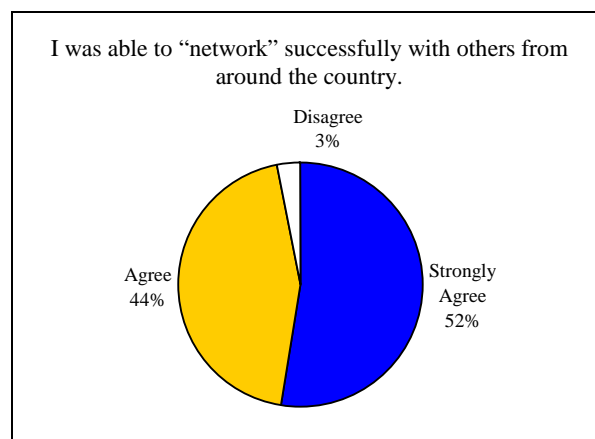
- Great for networking across the regions.
- Depends on course content.
- I really feel strongly about the value of the conference. I felt it was important as a "new" RPM 5 years ago, and I still feel that it is important now.
- I thought input from state RPMs during the sessions added a valuable perspective to the discussions.
- I would recommend it for RPMs. I recommend a 1- or 2-day training for contractors on Superfund projects (environmental construction, investigations, etc.). When entry-level contractors are assigned to projects, the learning curve is long and projects get delayed. When you see what is lacking, it is not technical expertise, but an understanding of how environmental EPA projects work.
- It was really great to meet RPMs from other regions and to see how differently the regions approached issues. It was good for morale to meet more enthusiastic RPMs.
- Need more state attendance.
- Also, it depends on the agenda. Some courses are definitely good. Others, we have taken before.
- Our RPMs need to maintain currency. I cannot think of a more effective avenue. National versus regional and frequency are subject to budgetary constraints; the needs cannot be denied. Perhaps we could save money by having the presenters travel to regional meetings. This would take some of the fun out of it though.



- Overall, very good experience.
- Recommend a survey for training subjects.
- New RPMs, RPMs that have never gone or RPMs that have attended only once or twice should have the first opportunity to attend. *(Two responses)*
- Allow more RPMs to attend that have been prevented from attending in the past. I was never allowed the opportunity to attend before because of the restricted number of RPMs, and listening to the attendees it appears that the same RPMs are allowed to go every year. *(Two responses)*
- The nanotechnology and risk communication sessions were especially worthwhile.
- The NARPM conference is excellent and a great forum for information exchange among RPMs.
- The training conference is an effective way for RPMs to gain skills and knowledge needed to perform their jobs successfully.
- This is a compact, intensive training session that can accomplish a lot during one week. All RPMs should attend this conference at least every other year. *(Two responses)*
- This is the best conference for RPMs.
- Updates on technical impracticability (TI) waivers, and innovative contracting strategies for Triad application and remedial action (RA) construction and long term RA.

Comments on networking successfully with others from around the country

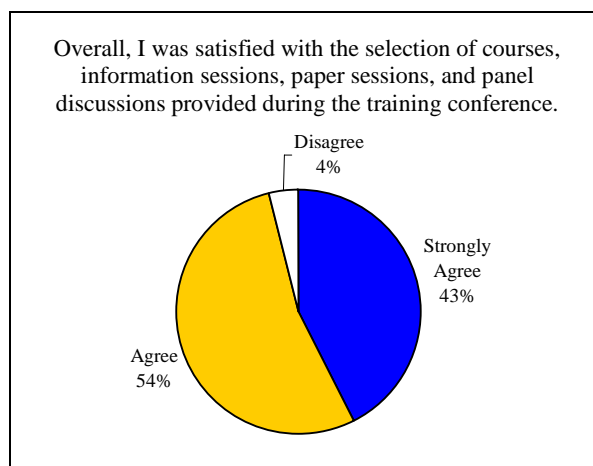
- Good, although I was not able to do that this year, because the courses on the list were those I had taken in the past NARPMs or elsewhere, and I did not stay for the entire Conference.
- Because the venue was split, it was more difficult to network.
- Best opportunity to talk with other RPMs and Headquarters personnel on technical and policy issues.
- Breakfast is a great time for networking.
- Especially good for meeting national technical support persons.
- I mostly stuck with my region, but next time I will make more of an effort to branch out.
- I was able to network with others after the training sessions. However, it would be extremely beneficial and more productive to have a couple of hours during the session itself to network with others. The Forums have business sessions. Such a session could be constructed for the rest of the RPMs not officially affiliated with FF, ground water or engineering.
- I was able to talk to several RPMs who have encountered similar issues at their sites. It is also humbling to learn from their mistakes.
- I would have really liked a session for new RPMs. This would provide an opportunity to network with new RPMs who may be having similar frustrations and experiences.
- It would have been nice if the name tags had a large number attached to the bottom representing the EPA region, or the name tag had been color coded based on a key that identified the region.
- Mostly with others from my state (Region 10), but we do not have enough opportunities to do this, so it was good to have this one.
- One of the conference's strengths.
- I recommend providing a seating assignment with a subject matter expert.



- Region 5 contacts for nanotechnology.
- Since I am somewhat new in my position, it was very helpful to meet people in person at the sessions and entertainment events provided.
- Scheduling was much too tight to allow for much of this.
- Suggestion: Try to have more networking time and space available at future conferences. The agenda is so jam packed, it is difficult to find time to discuss common problems with colleagues. Breakout sessions or roundtable discussions on hot topics, such as sediments, VI, and perchlorate should be considered.
- This was greatly enhanced by many senior RPMs who "made the effort" to bridge gaps.
- Try to allow more "free time." My schedule was very full.

Comments on selection of courses, information, paper, and panel sessions

- A little light on content for me this year.
- Limited class sizes prevented me from attending some of the classes that I wanted.
- I really felt that this year there was not much for me, except for the few new information sessions offered on the first 2 days.
- I think QuickPlace was great!
- I thought there was a good mix of topics for courses, panels, papers and information sessions.
- I was not happy with some of my preferred sessions being "sold out," to the point where I was even asked to leave. However, I understand that the RPMs need first choice. So, call this a whine...
- I would like more basic technical sessions, for example, basic surface water sampling or tidally influenced ground water.
- If anything, there are too many choices to make!
- In hindsight I would have eliminated one. I hoped to attend more than I could. Initially, I was disappointed with offerings but I was very pleased with actual course content.
- It would have been good to have a less formal panel or discussion group of FF RPMs. Also it would have been good to get all the newer RPMs together for a troubleshooting or networking session, a panel or otherwise. (*Two responses*)
- Like at other NARPMs, I wish that I was able to take some trainings that were happening concurrently with the ones I signed up for (*Three responses*), like the risk communication course. I hope some of these are offered again.
- Mostly. I attended one session that was only useful for EPA employees. This was not clear in the course abstract when I signed up for it.
- Needed a little more variety, but good courses were available.
- QuickPlace lab was excellent hands-on training. The ROD class could have given more examples of acceptable ROD language.
- Some courses should be provided with more technical detail. Need more information on innovative remedial and characterization technologies. Case studies using those methods would be very beneficial.



- Suggestion: More practical training on how to get the cleanup done, rather than talking heads or generic courses that are not specifically related to RPM tasks.
- The course selection was very good. Some additional new contracts classes would be good.
- The RI/FS course could have been more advanced!
- There were several classes I wanted to take that conflicted with the classes I took.
- For each training session, allow more time for questions and answers.
- Tuesday was weak for senior RPMs.
- Provide color copies of materials instead of black and white or provide them on a disk.

Comments on organization of the training conference

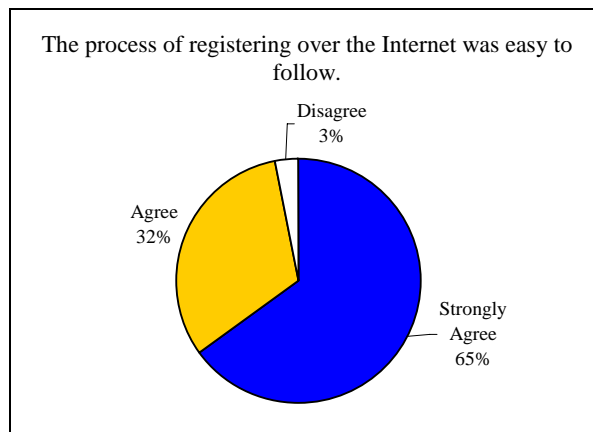
- By Wednesday afternoon I am pretty much PowerPointed out. I would recommend that we have the field trip on Wednesday to give us a break, or provide more interactive classes, like the dealing with the press class. Sometimes the conference trainers get consumed with providing their knowledge and information and they forget about their audience. At some point, I just stop listening. Perhaps they should refresh themselves with Dr. Covello's lunch time presentation and concentrate on three points they want to get across. The DNAPL (all day class) crammed in too much information and some of the presenters just read from their PowerPoint slides. The class was actually painful.
- Coordination was superb. There was always someone around the rooms to direct us and to tell us when we needed to come back to the sessions after breaks. Rooms were easy to find, materials were available, staff was very helpful and proactive. I appreciated it a lot.
- Excellent job!
- Great job, once again. Thanks to all, for making this a fine tuned professional event. And thanks to the ground crew for taking care of the after hours events.
- I really appreciate the good job done by support contractors.
- I was a session chair for the nanotechnology session on Tuesday. I am not sure what happened, but none of our PowerPoints was on the computer at the beginning of the session. It worked out because all our speakers, six of them, had the powerpoints on their flash drives. We were lucky! But it could have been disastrous.
- I really like having courses in actual classrooms. They were much better than having classes in hotel meeting rooms.
- The working lunch should end at 1:00 p.m. It is unfair to not have time to go up to our rooms and use the bathroom.
- A magnitude of preparation is required and obvious. Very successful. We could have used more time for getting to sessions.
- Most of the rooms were too small for the classes. One class had fewer seats in it than there were people registered for the course, and it was a popular course. There were seven or eight instructors and they were using up the seats.
- Need time between courses to get there, an extra 10 to 15 minutes. (*Three responses*)
- Some of the breaks were too short. A lot of the sessions went over the allotted time.



- Try to stick to the schedule. Plenary sessions were too long and adversely affected the first course of the day. *(Two responses)*
- Very good balance of planning and organizing. Perhaps controlling is a bit heavy, but I am not complaining about it.
- Wednesday presented difficult choices. I greatly benefited from last year's geology course and wanted to continue with this year's course. I regretfully was unable to attend the risk communication course.

Comments on process for registering over the Internet

- Best on-line registration yet.
- Could not have been easier!
- I really liked how trainings were classified according to skills. I also liked how it was pointed out that they were new.
- I liked the automatic generation of a personalized itinerary.
- I would have liked more time to go through the abstracts. The finalization came through at the last minute and I was busy getting ready for a public meeting.
- Improved from last year. I liked being able to choose "skip this session" for the occasions where that was appropriate.
- It was a little confusing as I was attending the analytical portion too, but the information was there.
- It was so late that I had serious doubts about attending.
- Much better than past years, especially for technical support program folks.
- No problems.
- Some delays, but no big deal.
- Somewhat confusing only because I did not know whether or not I would be selected to go. Some instructions came to me by e-mail too late to be read because I was scheduled out of the office the last weekday before the meeting. Consequently, I am now preparing my request for approvals to attend the symposium that I attended two weeks ago.
- Still confusing on Technical Support Project (TSP) registration. *(Two responses)*
- The contractor did an excellent job. Was very helpful when I requested a change to my schedule. Good followup.
- The EPA contractor made excellent arrangements.
- Allow more flexibility on attending technical sessions and panel discussions. The lack of flexibility reduces opportunities for networking and locks you into unproductive sessions.



Comments on things to be done differently when returning to the job

- Add any updated information to courses I present.
- Address metals differently.
- Application of Lotus QuickPlace. *(Thirteen responses)*
- Develop and use internet tools such as QuickPlace and web portals. *(Three responses)*
- Application of Triad. *(Two responses)*

- Apply the benefits of networking to gain from others' experience.
- Apply treatment of censored data to background calculations.
- Apply the five-year review concept to Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) site without permits.
- Approach and attitude toward NAPL remediation. (*Three responses*)
- Approach community relations differently.
- Approach to organize communications for the project team.
- Approach to sediment site cleanup levels.
- Ask other regions for input.
- Be better equipped. Have a good idea of who I can turn to for help!
- Be more creative in evaluating extent of trichloroethylene (TCE) contamination.
- Begin early by researching site and technical information to prepare for dredging.
- Being more confident that I can do my job.
- Better equipped for VI issues. (*Three issues*)
- Better interaction with team.
- Better preparation for media presentations.
- Better RI/FS.
- Better RODs.
- Better understanding of DoD munitions cleanup program.
- Better understanding of remedial techniques.
- Communicate more effectively with the public about risks. (*Eight responses*) Try to utilize the 3/9/27 rule effectively. Develop media message maps when appropriate.
- Communicate with program better.
- Communicate with RPM regarding lab issues and turn around time.
- Conduct small group meetings in a meaningful and productive manner.
- Consider energy use in remedy selection.
- Consult other RPMs from other regions or EPA experts. (*Four responses*)
- Continue networking with other RPMs.
- Contracts issues.
- Demand Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) training.
- Do a better job of making sure conceptual site models (CSM) are well done and updated. (*Two responses*)
- EPA and Washington State are very similar in approach. This conference reinforces that relationship.
- Evaluate thermal technology for groundwater.
- Foresee upcoming situations or problems better.
- Get a hydrologist for my site!
- Got number of problems resolved on my agency laptop. Time at internet cafe was very useful.
- Handling censored datasets.
- Have a better understanding of hydrogeology and how it applies.
- Have a better understanding of some Superfund program requirements and how to complete them.

- Have additional contacts on ground water issues.
- Having OSRTI review optimization reports for sites.
- I will complete the contract evaluation form before approving invoices.
- I will contact HQ representatives for assistance with policy and guidance questions.
- I will increase my communication efforts with the Severn Trent Laboratory and technical support centers.
- I will look at restoration potential at several of my sites.
- I will research potential energy savings/emission reductions that can be achieved at my sites.
- I will seek opportunities to use the TAGA unit.
- I am interested in getting the risk management training for my RPMs. I am hoping to get this worked out for our region.
- Implement lessons learned from other RPMs.
- Improve our communication plans using the new risk communication information; review my remedial investigation (RI) report to be sure I have everything I need for the ROD.
- Incorporate "lessons learned" into upcoming construction.
- Incorporate innovative technologies in discussion at my sites.
- Increased efficiency due to gained knowledge and contacts.
- Interact more effectively with media.
- Issues with optimizing two of my ground water sites are much clearer.
- Likely to use Robot ROS in at least one site.
- Look for expertise to select sampling locations in river sediments and ensure all interested parties are involved from the beginning.
- Look for more available "mining sites" training courses.
- Look for ways to use eco-restoration.
- Look into using QuickPlace. (*Three responses*)
- Look up material by the ground water speaker.
- Media relations. (*Two responses*) Prepare for them differently.
- Network more often with other regions and Headquarters.
- Organize projects better as far as priorities.
- Planning an assessment for indoor air/VI issues.
- Provide a more authoritative evaluation and assessment of DNAPL/VI risk and mitigation.
- Provide better service.
- Provide information to RPMs.
- Reassess upcoming in situ chemical oxidation (ISCO) subsurface characterization effort.
- Received tools to be able to ask questions for ground water remedy.
- Reconsider dredging performance monitoring.
- Re-evaluate my approach to sampling.
- Re-examine bioremediation at one of my sites.
- Rely more on other experts for reviews.
- Research guidance documents and participate in online training.
- Review screening criteria for TCE.
- Routinely review Clu-In Web page. (*Two responses*)

- Sharpen up on priorities in my responses.
- Take a fresh look at my data sets as a result of the analytical session I attended.
- Take more pictures for media public relations.
- Take time to look at the big picture and timeframes to identify problems or time delays.
- Talk to colleagues more about sites for advice and available resources. (*Four responses*)
- Think more about remediation strategies available.
- This will help me on Region 3 guidance development.
- Try to better file emails.
- Use lower concentration for TCE in assessing risk from VI.
- Use NARPM Web site.
- Utilize resources which I did not know existed.
- Will handle non-detects in analytical data differently.
- Work on long term contracting strategy with Regions.
- Work with sampling personnel more closely.
- Writing a ROD — what to keep in mind when writing one.

Comments on topics or courses which should be omitted

- Dealing with difficult PRPs and staff.
- DoD perspective.
- DoD's perspective on DNAPLs panel (*Two responses*); was very poor, controversial, and misleading.
- SDERP and the ESTCP frequently asked questions about decision guide. The guide contained some outdated information and caused a heated debate between EPA, DoD, and SERDP/ESTCP panel presenters.
- Generic training that is widely available.
- I attended the MNA course. The presenter was unable to be present physically and I did not think this was effective. I am sure it was a last minute issue, but if at all possible, this should be avoided.
- I would like presenters to try to be more interactive. After two days of PowerPoint, I find I need a break and I start to tune out. I am tired of being talked at.
- No. (*Seventeen responses*)
- No, just not so many all at the same conference.
- No, all the courses I attended are relevant to RPMs and should be continued.
- No, seems we now have both new and experienced RPMs, so topics for folks at different levels of their career can finally be utilized.
- The Turning the Tide on DNAPL: Things You Should Know about DNAPL and Active Remediation. This appeared to be a compilation of data on the defense, to rationalize why the progress on some cleanups is so slow. The reasoning offered was faulty. Successful cleanups need dedication to the task as well as wishing for new technologies; others do succeed with the same limitations. Really!!!
- The media workshop with the consultants should be omitted. We need to get experienced EPA regional or Headquarters spokesperson or public affairs to teach the course because they have more real project experience closer to our jobs as RPMs.

Comments on topics and courses to be added

- I think offering more and expanded communication courses would be great.
- Continued updates on the VI issue.
- "Implementing ROD contingencies — When, Why, and How" and "Beginning Risk Communication" (expanded version of Dr. Covello's talk — alternate years with Advanced Risk Communication. Another variation might be "Risk Communication for Technical Staff.")
- A cross-section of case study presentations should be presented every year.
- Advanced eco-revitalization.
- Always keep communications oriented training (e.g., media training, writing with plain language, public participation).
- Keep the sediment-related sessions and focus on source control. Provide all written materials in electronic format.
- Anyway that a RCRA for RPMs course can be added?
- Bring back emotional intelligence class. Really liked that.
- Brownfields and their role in the whole scheme of Superfund.
- CERCLIS training – hands-on 101, 200, 300, and more levels.
- Contracting topics and credit! (*Three responses*) Emerging technologies — case studies from bench and pilot to full scale. (*Two responses*)
- Perhaps a panel to discuss and ask field questions on technically difficult sites or politically contentious sites. DNAPL — what worked and what did not.
- Expand ecological restoration course to 8 hours (a full day). More information on course content in "brochure" before registration. Lessons learned classes. Possibly something for enforcement issues.
- Preparing and reviewing Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs).
- Conducting PRP searches.
- Annual health and safety refresher course.
- Field analytical methods.
- A gathering for new RPMs. A gathering for FF RPMs.
- Ground water modeling tools — in depth. Data management.
- Human health risk assessment (HHRA) and environmentally relevant activities (ERA).
- How to build in flexibility to RODs.
- How to prepare a good briefing for your boss and stakeholders.
- I believe we should be looking at genomics. I predict that will be the next "nanotechnology." Try Dr. Ruth Richardson of Cornell as one potential source for information.
- I really would have attended more but so many were mutually exclusive with other choices given at the same time. I was very impressed with the quality of most offerings. We were scheduled tightly.
- Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE). Another project "risk" evaluation — how to consider obstacles on projects.
- In general, I was disappointed in the visual quality of presentations given by EPA staff, not the outside professionals/contractors. Very often I heard "sorry you cannot see this" or "I know there is too much on this slide." It was very frustrating and unprofessional. RPMs need a course on how to give effective and informative presentations. This will benefit us "in-house" in terms of briefing upper management and being better representatives of EPA at public events.
- A bigger room for the risk communication course.

- In the sections of IGCE, which I took years ago, give an idea of how much different deliverables cost. How can we find comparables, besides the ones in our regions?
- It was great to have the TAGA bus there. I would like to see them actually collect and run some samples.
- It was very comprehensive. I cannot think of anything else.
- Mistakes and lessons learned.
- MMRP for navy sites.
- More detailed construction management training.
- More half- to full-day training in leadership and the removal process for RPMs. Courses that better utilize the computer and other electronic equipment [i.e., geographical information systems (GIS), field surveying methods, project management tools].
- More on interpreting sampling data and skills needed for the post-construction completion phase of a site.
- More on nanotechnology risk.
- More on toxicology — possibly have a breakout session on this. Chemicals by media — water, air, soil, etc.
- Need the number of samples scheduled at each lab without the lab name, with Performance Scheduling Algorithm available on EPA site.
- No. (*Four responses*)
- No. Expansion of the other courses would always be welcomed.
- Non-detects training needed more time and needed to be example-oriented to show application.
- Not at this time.
- Partial deletion of sites, a new Headquarters requirement. Contact: Mike Hurd and Kate Garufi. Managing Your Manager — Managing Up.
- Presentation skills and public speaking.
- Remedial design (RD), value engineering, RA — cost savings with examples.
- Nanotechnology — very well attended; class overflowing.
- Risk communication for technical experts.
- Risk communication with the same instructor. (*Five responses*) I was not able to attend. (*Two responses*)
- Some of the courses at On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Readiness might be useful.
- Some of the training was excellent, e.g., risk communication and media training. However, more case studies would be helpful. Go back to original conference thrust.
- Something specific to new RPMs. Something focused on FF.
- There was an obvious absence of soil technology trainings. More participatory sessions in the afternoon. This would keep things alive and prevent attrition due to boredom/fatigue in the afternoons.
- TI waivers.
- Tidally influenced groundwater. Sediment characterization.
- Would like to see more complex session on Institutional Controls (IC).
- Creation of a design and construction forum to facilitate that type of information. I would be happy to work on and assist with the formation of this type of forum. — Pauletta France-Isetts, Region 7.

- ICs are becoming a bigger issue and there are numerous unresolved issues. There should be some more constructive efforts to invoke reasonableness into the process because the IC panel has very heavy-handed approaches that are not likely to be successful, but will anger and alienate the public.

Comments on plenary session topics to be added

- Any hot policy issues.
- Bring more interesting speakers.
- Budgetary impacts on program.
- Future direction of EPA and OSWER, etc. More big picture discussions.
- Global issues.
- Susan Bodine should provide information on budget, full-time employees, congressional relations, and the other items that she works on.
- I arrived on Monday and left Friday morning and missed numbers 2 and 3.
- I LOVED the speaker who talked about public communication! More stuff like that!
- Industry representative perspective.
- It would have been nice if we had someone from the State of Maryland or the City of Baltimore to speak.
- It is more about content presented in an interesting and informative manner.
- Keep on schedule so I can brush my teeth prior to my first class.
- Maybe some speakers from outside of the government and their perspective on the future of Superfund. Maybe some additional speakers on revitalization and Superfund.
- More about NARPM as an organization (structure, committees).
- Not applicable.
- None.
- Question and answer session with OSRTI director.
- Resources and science issues facing the agency.
- ROD amendments and ecologically sustainable development.
- Silly things friends and neighbors ask because I am with EPA, e.g., what should I do with this 5-gallon can of stale or contaminated gasoline for lawn mowers? Where can I dispose of my unwanted prescription drugs?
- Who is who in Headquarters, groups and people, and what they can do for you as an RPM.

Comments on plenary session topics to be omitted

- FF-specific material. Should have enough topics to be relevant to everyone.
- Fewer general Headquarters speakers. (*Two responses*) More local government or private sector representatives.
- Not applicable. (*Two responses*)
- No comment.
- None. (*Two responses*)

Comments on improving the format of the opening, morning, and closing plenary sessions

- The closing session should be held on Thursday morning, because most people have left by Friday morning.
- Closing plenary is usually not well attended. Feedback should occur earlier in week. (*Two responses*)

- I suggest that the closing plenary session be more open, in that most RPMs have left by Friday and many of the topics discussed need to be heard by a larger audience. In addition, any speaker who presents is at a disadvantage, speaks to a few folks only, and potentially wastes his/her time. Perhaps Fridays should be field trips only and the closing plenary should be held on Thursday.
- We should not have a speaker at the last session on Friday.
- Could skip outside speakers on the last days, as many people have to leave early.
- If room changes, should be flashed on the two screens, not just shared verbally.
- Do not go over the allotted time.
- Dr. Covello was too short!
- Keep bringing Dr. Covello back. He was great!!! I hope to have the opportunity to attend his all-day session next year. *(Two responses)*
- Efficient presentations.
- Fine.
- Food for breakfast is a great idea. This really helps to get people to the morning plenary.
- I did not attend the closing plenary, but more speakers from the community.
- I found the plenary sessions from Headquarters senior management most helpful. We get updates on the national program, which we never hear in the region because all information stops at the manager's level in the region. *(Two responses)*
- Keep plenary sessions on time and short. *(Eight responses)*
- I thought the morning speakers and lunch speakers did an excellent job and presented useful information.
- The prizes added a lot that I was not expecting. Just more fun.
- Not applicable. *(Two responses)*
- The plenary sessions were EPA focused.
- Slide shows showing sites or work from each region.
- The format of the plenary sessions was fine this year.

Comments on improving the format of the EPA luncheon

- From Wednesday's lunch speaker: restructure public meeting presentation.
- Was not invited because I was a state person. *(Two responses)*
- Acoustics needed improvement; clarity lacking. Maybe delay the clearing of dishes from the table.
- Allow an extra 15 minutes for the speakers to give their presentations, when appropriate.
- Audio/visual (AV) equipment needs to be working.
- Better food!
- Both were great!
- Do a dry run on the sound system.
- Emptied dishes and utensils need to be removed before the clatter competes with speakers and our voices. *(Two responses)*
- End at 1:00 p.m. to give people a break during lunch.
- Excellent.
- Excellent risk communication speaker! *(Two responses)* Great and funny presentation.
- Fine as is. *(Three responses)*
- Having an energetic speaker such as the risk communication speaker.

- I do not agree with the whole idea of a working luncheon. General announcements are fine, but presentations are too much. This could be good networking time or discussion time for participants at each table. Speeches and presentations are too much.
- I liked the format.
- I was surprised with how good the lunch time speakers were... especially the communications training.
- It was fine. (*Two responses*)
- The speaker was fantastic but the overall noise with lunch made it difficult.
- Norm Niedergang gave a great talk (*Two responses*); how will he top it next year? It's very effective to have an upper level person talk when he/she has come through the ranks. (Norm was one of the original RPMs — he's been there!)
- Dr. Covello was also great. (*Two responses*)
- The themes were interesting and I wanted to take notes, but I was eating!!! Please have a one page summary with key points you want us to remember.
- They were better than some I have attended in the past — more entertaining.
- They were both excellent presentations.
- Wednesday's luncheon speaker was excellent. We need speakers like him for future conferences.
- Working luncheons were fine.

Comments on time allowed and information provided to respond to the call for papers

- Better coordination with presenters by e-mail (more frequent updates).
- Do not recall having a lot of time — I may not have been on the distribution e-mail.
- Notice of selection of papers did not occur until March. Feedback was supposed to be provided by January. It was very time consuming to prepare my presentation from scratch in two months given my regular workload. (*Three responses*)
- I do not know what this question is asking.
- Longer lead time.
- Need to have more time to ask questions.
- One thing I did not like is when presentations are longer than the time allowed and then presenters rush through the presentations. The material is so important I really would like them to go through their presentations thoroughly.
- Some better than others, depending on the subject.
- The call came early in the fiscal year which is typically a "slower" time. However, more reminders would be helpful.
- The time was extended for the response to the call for sessions.
- Went very smoothly.
- Yes for abstract, but it is difficult to have panelists and content confirmed.

Comments on organization of the panel and paper sessions

- All classes attended were well organized.
- For the most part. MNA session used a "conference call" to bring in speaker which had a deteriorating effect on the whole discussion, in my opinion.
- Generally, yes.
- Great facilitators (IC panel).

- I might have attended the FF business sessions, but I also wanted (and did) attend the sessions. The conference could be even better if there was less overlap. I generally have not encountered major problems with wanting to attend two sessions at the same time, but the possibility always exists. Could future conferences be devoted to "thrust areas?" That way more people could attend each session.
- I think they were more relevant to the phases I am at in my projects.
- Need to have more time to ask questions.
- Overall, the topics were well organized with various sessions. Some of the panel sessions needed microphones so that all the speakers could be fully heard.
- Quality is highly variable. It is apparent when session presenters did not coordinate or plan until the last minute, if at all.
- The ones I attended went smoothly. (*Two responses*)
- Too many good courses on Wednesday.
- Very much so, lots of preparation time went into all presentations I saw.

Comments on panel and paper session topics to be added

- 1) Phytoremediation: advancements; applicability; case studies. (*Two responses*) 2) Field screening tools for real time data: not theory discussion but actual methods, etc. that have been used either successfully or provided lesson learned. Methods related to metals and organics rather than just metals, which seems to always be the focus. 3) With all the re-evaluation of remedies, a session on explanation of significant differences (ESD)/ROD amendments would be helpful: the criteria for each; good examples; guidance. 4) CLP: new statement of work (SOW) for selective ion monitoring (SIM). It would be good to have an update on sources offered by the lab.
- Contaminant Chemistry — Contaminant Behavior in the Environment: Transport in Soil and Groundwater.
- 1,4 Dioxane treatment; MMRP investigation.
- A session on communication of technical issues to the public.
- A session on risk communication.
- Continue geology and risk communication course.
- Have a section on learning how to use Microsoft project. This will entail small sections, computers, etc. For trainings that are offered every year at NARPM, indicate in the description or in the title how the training is different from previous years. I thought the risk communication training was the same as previous years and I did not sign up for it.
- How to give engaging and informative PowerPoint presentation!
- How to write the perfect ROD — from regional winners not Headquarters!!
- ICs, environmental data management.
- Land redevelopment and how it overlaps with Superfund cleanup. Also, long-term IC issues and how it is being dealt with. It would be good to get more state speakers for this particular topic.
- More on human relationships and their impacts.
- More on RD/RA "how to" and "lessons learned."
- Paper sessions devoted to FF sites.
- Partial deletion. RPM internet tools.
- RPM guidance writing session.
- RPMs working on sediment projects should be lobbied to present more case studies.

- Should add topics on ROD-amendments; ESDs. Continue having EPA-based presentations on emerging contaminants; DNAPLs.
- Vincent Covello — keep him coming back. I would like to be able to attend one of his classes.

Comments on improving after-hour activities

- After-hour activities were announced late. This makes planning difficult.
- If possible, a little more lead time on after-conference activities. Cruise conflicted with previously scheduled ground water forum issues.
- Andy Palestini did an excellent job organizing and executing the after-hour activities. Kudos. Also Gary Turner did a great job with overall organization of the conference.
- Announcing the Inner Harbor Cruise earlier would have been beneficial.
- Baseball games are a plus.
- Big thanks to Andy Palestini and the Region 3 Ground Crew.
- Different and more food for the picnic.
- Do we still need the picnic when we do activities every night?
- Earlier notice of activities would have been nice.
- For the list of restaurants, it would be helpful to see the price range and telephone number next to it.
- Give it to the contractors. They do a better job, as seen by them facilitating the presentations.
- Great activities and a great opportunity to network.
- Great job. It really provided a good outlet to interact and meet my EPA counterparts.
- I thought they were great. It would be nice if people mingled more, but you cannot force adults to network.
- Important for networking.
- Keep the networking opportunities.
- Loved the Wednesday boat trip and the baseball game. (*Two responses*)
- Make part of initial signup and registration.
- Make sure, each morning, to give clear direction for the activity.
- Monday evening is the best after-hour activity since it generally keeps everyone together in a relaxed setting for further discussion.
- Need more people at the picnic!
- Possibly poll attendees to see what they would like to do by providing a list of potentials, then selecting the most popular. Take into consideration "aging" of RPMs and plan events accordingly.
- Recommend not having volleyball next year, but consider having a golf outing; historical walking tour; playing basketball or softball; continue having the hospitality suite for networking purposes.
- Scavenger hunt to facilitate "networking" encouraged RPMs to meet from other regions, Headquarters, and other EPA offices.
- Scheduling, again, was a bit tight.
- Sell baseball tickets by mail.
- Should have a flipchart or bulletin board with information about the after-hour activities. Provide instructions to people for what time to meet, where to meet, etc.
- Stock up the hospitality suite.
- The "hospitality suite" information is known only by word of mouth.

- The "Neighborhood" tours were not organized well. A little more could have been done for that one.
- The ballgame was a great time. (*Two responses*) I also enjoyed the opening night reception.
- They were great!
- Where was the basketball??? Are RPMs too slow and old to play basketball? This is not age discrimination. I am over 60!
- With the exception of the hospitality suite. Maybe "pass the hat" to take a collection for this.
- Worked out well, but NARPM needs to have big event earlier in the week (Monday night) for the opportunity to meet.

Comments on usefulness of information in Resource Area

- Absolutely. A very pleasant surprise. I have already looked into some of the information I found there. The iPod drawing was a great idea; I may not have made time for it otherwise.
- Definitely, especially related to DNAPLs.
- Not applicable. (*Two responses*)
- No. (*Two responses*)
- Not really.
- Schedule was too tight. (*Two responses*)
- Some.
- The information available was very useful and the computer support was fantastic.
- The internet cafe is great. (*Two responses*)
- Yes. (*Forty-seven responses*)

Comments on improving the Resource Area

- A Resource Area near the classrooms where attendees would pass more frequently would be beneficial. The treasure hunt and iPod giveaway was a good idea and encouraged activity in the Resource Area.
- Always like to see new policy, papers, and field studies.
- An abstract from each resource or presenter tailored to NARPM that can be read by visitors when an attendant is not present.
- Continue having a scavenger hunt with a prize for whoever goes to visit all the tables. (*Four responses*)
- Continue to incorporate the area into a function since the days are too full of training.
- For those of us who had exhibits, "the stamp" was an absolutely ingenious addition!!!
- I did not have any free time to visit the Resource Area. (*Two responses*)
- It was a great idea and way for participants to learn about the technical services the Resource Area exhibitors can provide by having a "raffle drawing," and getting stamps from each of the Resource Area participants.
- Keep computers! (*Two responses*) And tell us. I did not know there would be computers to check email and I brought my heavy laptop.
- Maybe tie in a poster session with the Resource Area to highlight applications of technologies, etc.
- More specific handouts for RPMs versus general "public relations" publications.
- Need longer hours for the internet cafe.

- Possible inclusion of vendors that provide ground water treatment, design and construction services.
- Scavenger hunt was a fun way to visit the Resource Area.
- Stamps were a clever addition, but I never seem to get much out of the Resource Area.
- There was no real time to visit the Resource Area.
- Very helpful assistant.
- Was fine. No improvements necessary.
- Thank you for allowing TVA to be a part of NARPM by participating in the Resource Area. We are looking forward to next year.
- Thank you for the invitation to participate in the Resource Area. Looking forward to attending next year.
- It was difficult to utilize the Internet Cafe. Because of the way the conference was structured, I was unable to attend the QuickPlace computer session on Thursday. I did not get a chance to check my work emails at the Internet Cafe until one morning when I had to skip out of class for about 15 minutes. At previous conferences where the Internet Cafe was offered, there seemed to be enough break time built in to check work emails and not miss class.
- This year it was a little more difficult to check email because the computer lab setup was not located in the area where the sessions and courses were held.

Comments on suggestions for improving future training conferences

- Great job by NARPM Committee for putting this conference together.
- Keep NARPM alive!
- Hotel was great — wireless internet worked flawlessly. (*Three responses*) It was fantastic to have free wireless in the room. I was able to work after the sessions. It helped me stay focused during the day, knowing that I have access to e-mail at any time.
- If possible, have the courses within the same hotel where the other activities are taking place.
- All training courses and sessions should be listed chronologically. Such chronological order needs to be maintained in every section of the guide. This will minimize flipping pages back and forth to determine the content (e.g., of "what comes next?").
- Announce agenda earlier. (*Two responses*)
- Be more timely when classes start and end. (*Three responses*)
- Communication. Communication. Communication. Better communication in general, between Co-Chairs and Council is essential. NARPM is an organization made up of 500 RPMs and input from all RPMs should be encouraged to ensure that all RPMs' needs are understood and addressed for the benefit of other RPMs.
- Cannot think of any offhand. NARPM continues to be the little prod that I need to step back, see how I am doing in managing my sites, and either change direction or take a new approach.
- Emphasize resources that are available electronically (i.e., EPA portal, QuickPlace).
- Give Gary Turner a gold medal!
- Great conference, except for the small rooms. You can always count on Gary and Jen.
- Have a field trip Wednesday during the day to break up the course work. (*Two responses*)
- Have more overlap, but not too much, with managers.
- I attended the Superfund and Federal Facilities Cross Program Revitalization Measures course. I think it is a good idea to present this to the RPMs; however, I really think this same presentation should have been provided to the managers.

- I suggest having a group discussion session for regional RPMs and their respective Headquarters representatives. It would give us an opportunity to meet the Headquarters representative in person, to establish rapport and get a heads on our projects. Headquarters representatives usually interact only with managers in the region, not RPMs.
- I truly think that you do an awesome job. I could not do it as well as you have.
- I would suggest that the course descriptions be more descriptive so that senior RPMs do not enroll in a class we have already taken. Also you may want to have a track for "new" RPMs and one for "senior" RPMs.
- It was great!
- Liked the conference facilities. Much better than the typical hotel conference room setup.
- Lunch speakers: rather than having them speak during lunch, let the group finish lunch and have the speaker be an afternoon scheduled 'class.' It was difficult to hear and pay attention to the speaker while eating and being interrupted by the serving staff.
- Give participants sufficient time to get to training sessions, especially keeping in mind older or physically disabled participants.
- More central activities. The Baltimore conference was spread out.
- More central location, Chicago or Kansas City, for example.
- Gary is great, as well as his staff.
- Outstanding conference.
- Perfect as is; leave it alone.
- Recycling of paper, cans, and plastic. (*Three responses*)
- Scale it down. Too many courses and sessions. Too many co-located meetings and conferences. Keep it simple; stay focused on RPMs and their needs to get the cleanups done.
- Shorten to 3 days.
- The full-day sessions are too long and severely limited enrollment in other sessions that were of interest to me.
- More time, like 15 minutes, between exercise in morning (yoga, jogging) and plenary session.
- Training handouts — please ask presenters to give handouts with only a few bullets on each side. Some of them are unreadable with too much information. Example — DoD's Perspective on Recent Advances in the Management and Remediation of DNAPL Source Zone.
- Wider attendance.
- Bigger hotel.
- Training rooms were par excellence. (*Two responses*) It was a wonderful experience both presenting and listening in the rooms at Johns Hopkins University. The seating was much better than the typical hotel conference rooms, and chairs allowed better concentration on the presentations.
- Great conference (*Two responses*), great classes, overall great experience.
- Had a great time this year.
- Name tags were too long. Could not read most when others were sitting at a table. Was very obvious when someone did not remember your name and they glanced at your belly, where tags had often flipped over. On future directory, keep basic information formatted by last name, but I would include a cross list of attendees that is alphabetical by first names or by region and office.
- I only attended the SRMAC meeting. I really did not attend any of the NARPM conference.
- I really like having conferences located inside walkable areas of cities. I dislike being stuck out in a suburb or remote locations that require cars to reach eating establishments. (*Two responses*)

- I want to suggest that the NARPM Co-Chairs actually consider reducing the number of sessions. This is for a couple of reasons. 1) There were times when I wanted to attend a couple of sessions but they ran concurrently. 2) A lot of hours go into planning each session and because of the numerous choices, some are not that well attended. It is a shame this happens when so much work goes into the preparation. If fewer offerings are made, larger groups would attend each session and we would get more bang for the buck.
- Identify RCRA representatives and TSP representatives on first page. Some attendees work on FF and civilian sites.
- In light of the recent (April 2007) legal ruling that only federal employees can receive refreshments at breaks free of charge, it would be helpful to notify state and other non-federal attendees of that position in the course announcement materials and Web site. That would help in preparation for others to either bring funds to pay for items or make other arrangements. Although understandable, the legal interpretation does alienate non-federal employees and contractors. Perhaps charging more for attendance from others, such that others may participate in breaks, etc., may be a solution. This was a good conference.
- Is there one compilation of e-mails for RPMs only who attended the conference? Periodic updates on various issues in the next several months would be helpful. Field trip should be during mid-week, instead of on Friday. Need more time to do extra stuff (e.g., TAGA bus, internet cafe, vendors, etc.) without missing class and lunch.
- Location: Time for one on the West Coast! Timing: Please try not to compete with Battelle's Monterey Conference on remediation of recalcitrant compounds! It is traditionally held the week before Memorial Day in even numbered years (i.e., next year). Besides forcing EPA technical staff to choose between them, it seriously limits the number of invited technical speakers we can get. Audience: I do not know how to do this, but it would be great to get more mid-level regional Superfund/RCRA managers to come.
- Better plan the room set for plenary sessions so attendees can view speaker. With round tables, one-third to one-half of the table has trouble viewing the presentation.
- Outstanding job!
- Overall I think the conference is good. I found Wednesday difficult and I think having field trips on the Wednesday afternoon would be a great change.
- Overall, I still like coming to NARPM; some years are better than others, and some years I do not attend because of my schedule or the "agenda" items are not relevant to my duties now; but, I give kudos to the committees and to Gary Turner.
- Plan and stick with location well in advance! (*Two responses*) Having the Bold and TAGA bus to tour was great!
- Pleasant weather is a real selling point. Texas in July will not draw nearly as many participants. Mid-May is a great time.
- The NARPM conference needs to embrace environmental management system (EMS) and become more sustainable. Close the loop! Recycling availability was very slightly better, but still not adequate. Easily recognizable receptacles are needed in multiple locations to handle more than a couple of "waste" streams, and reminders should be made every day to attendees to use the receptacles appropriately. Some thought should go into making this conference carbon-neutral. Overall, however, it is an excellent conference; well-done by all involved.
- Tetra Tech staff works very hard.
- Excellent, outstanding effort by Gary Turner, Tetra Tech, committee chairs, and everyone else!
- Try to find a Superfund site to visit. I do not remember visiting one for the last three NARPMs. Three or four years ago the FF Forum met in Sacramento and visited two sites. That field trip was very informative.

- State participation is a plus. Would like more Headquarters participation and interaction. Should start Monday afternoon to allow travel on Monday morning, so someone does not have to miss part if they cannot travel Sunday. Consider timing. Perhaps earlier in spring or fall when it is not in high work season. An OSC and RPM joint conference, maybe 1 in every 5 years. The conference would be interesting and provide an opportunity to network with OSCs and learn about tools and resources they use. This was a well organized and informative conference. Thanks!
- Would like the hotel to be located in an area that feels safer to walk around after dark.
- Very impressive conference! Big kudos to organizers, contractors, and support crews.
- Would have loved to see the Bold EPA boat. Suggest that RPMs meet with their regional representative for 15 minutes daily or during a coffee or tea break. Make sure FF representatives come so they can be met by the representatives.
- The conference was one of the best conferences I have attended. The information was relevant and appropriate. Good information transfer. There was good audience participation. The presenters were well organized and had great information to share.
- Very nice job. I enjoyed the conference.