

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Association of Remedial Project Managers (NARPM) promotes the exchange of information among Remedial Project Managers (RPM) from all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regional offices. NARPM also provides a forum where RPMs discuss regional and national issues of concern, identifies ways that RPMs respond to those regional and national issues, and establishes a permanent line of communication between RPMs in the regions and the RPM advisory groups. NARPM is one of the formal mechanisms used to coordinate with EPA Headquarters (HQ) to promote national consistency in the Superfund remedial program. The annual training conference serves as the main tool for promoting an exchange of information among RPMs; making training available about new technologies, policies, and guidance; and providing a forum that enables RPMs to share their experiences.

EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER), Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation (OSRTI), Federal Facilities Restoration and Reuse Office (FFRRO), OSRTI's Environmental Response Team (ERT), the Technical Support Project (TSP) Forums, and many other offices worked as a team with RPMs across the nation to develop and conduct the 17th Annual Training Conference from May 21 through 25, 2007, in Baltimore, Maryland. The training conference consisted of 22 technical, legal, and administrative training courses; 24 panel, paper, and information sessions; daily plenary speakers; a Resource Area that featured 12 exhibits; and three field trips. Meetings and other training conferences were held concurrently with the NARPM Annual Training Conference to enhance networking opportunities for participants. These meetings included the National Remedial Managers, the TSP Forums, the 2007 Superfund Analytical Operations Training Conference, and the Senior Regional Management Acquisition Council (SRMAC).

Overview of Preparations

The five NARPM Co-Chairs, with support and feedback from EPA HQ and the NARPM Council, planned and coordinated the training conference. Preparations for the training conference began immediately at the conclusion of the 2006 NARPM Annual Training Conference. The Co-Chairs reviewed the course and session evaluations from the 2006 training conference to identify courses and sessions that should be offered again, revised, or omitted, and new courses to address topics currently of interest to RPMs. Planning for the 2007 training conference included weekly conference calls, frequent communication with the NARPM Council and committees, meetings of the Co-Chairs, and communication with OSRTI, FFRRO, the TSP Forums, and EPA's regional and HQ management to ensure that the training needs of RPMs were addressed at this year's training conference.

The Co-Chairs' selection of courses and sessions and the development of the agenda are driven by the objective of the training conference — to provide RPMs with opportunities to network and exchange information about policies, technologies, cleanup strategies, and lessons learned; obtain relevant training designed especially for RPMs; and strengthen their knowledge, skills, and abilities essential to successful job performance.

Overview of Activities

The 2007 training conference included plenary sessions, training courses, panel, paper, and information sessions, the Resource Area, field trips, NARPM Committee meetings, various meetings for other groups, and after-hour activities. All of these activities helped to promote training and networking within and between different agencies and organizations. A description for each activity follows:

- **Plenary Sessions:** Plenary sessions at the training conference complement the in-depth training that occurs during the courses and sessions. The plenary sessions provide a forum where information about new policies and guidance relevant to the Superfund Program is presented, along with details about national and local initiatives. The sessions also maintain communication between the regions and EPA's HQ offices. Some of the topics addressed during this year's plenary sessions included the state of the Superfund Program, the importance of teamwork, QuickPlace, feedback on the effectiveness of site remediation cleanup strategies and levels, an update on the Technology Innovation and Field Services Division's (TIFSD) activities and capabilities, and basic principles RPMs can use to clearly communicate risks associated with remedial site activities to stakeholders.
- **Training Courses:** Twenty-two training courses that covered technical, legal, and administrative topics were offered at this year's training conference. Eleven of the 22 were new course offerings. The methodologies for the courses varied and included case studies, lectures, and discussion. Based on topic, the courses were divided into four categories: investigation; design, remediation, and post-construction; technology and contaminant-specific topics; and resources and tools. Some of the courses offered included, Subsurface Characterization for Vapor Intrusion, Remedy Selection, Jump-Starting Ecological Revitalization, Introduction to Contaminant Hydrogeology, Contracts Training, and Basic Project Management Skills for RPMs.
- **Panel, Paper, and Information Sessions:** The NARPM Co-Chairs selected 24 panel, paper, and information sessions which provided opportunities for RPMs and other attendees to participate in interactive discussions and share lessons learned. Some of the sessions offered included, Hands-On Computer Lab, Engineering Forum Remedial Technology Update, Remedial System Evaluation in 2007, Cleanup – Clean Air Initiative, Federal Facility, and Mining.

Descriptions of each training course and session and copies of the materials presented are available on the NARPM training conference Web site at <http://www.epanarpm.org/2007/>.

- **Resource Area:** The Resource Area featured 12 exhibits that showcased projects of interest to RPMs. The Resource Area provided an excellent opportunity for participants to network and learn about new initiatives and resources available to assist them with their jobs. Exhibits included the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, ERT Internet Café, Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer TAGA Bus, and Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
- **Field Trips:** Three field trips followed Friday's closing plenary session. The Baltimore Museum of Public Works described the technology behind Baltimore's infrastructure and concentrated on the operation of a pumping station. The Baltimore Inner Harbor Tour examined areas of redevelopment and sites with contaminants that have negatively affected water quality in the harbor and Patapsco River. The University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute provided an overview of how science and biotechnology are applied to human health, the marine environment, agriculture, and engineering and structural biology.
- **NARPM Committees:** Members of the NARPM Career Development, Policy and Guidance, and Training Committees met during lunch on Tuesday, May 22. Holding these meetings during the training conference provided opportunities for the committee members to discuss committee business, share knowledge and expertise to help enhance the RPM position, network and, in some instances, meet other committee members in person for the first time.
- **TSP Forum Business Meetings:** The business meetings of the TSP Forums also occurred during this week. This is the fourth time the TSP Forums have participated and helped to sponsor, develop, and instruct several courses and sessions during the training conference.

- **National Remedial Managers Meeting:** The EPA's National Remedial Managers meeting was held on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 22 and 23. For the seventh year, the Remedial Managers held their spring meeting concurrently with the NARPM training conference. Some of the topics addressed during their meeting included institutional controls, long-term response actions, Region 9's cleanup – clean air initiative, 5-year reviews, and asbestos.
- **2007 Superfund Analytical Operations Training Conference:** The 2007 Superfund Analytical Operations Training Conference was held Tuesday through Thursday, May 22 through May 24, and provided an opportunity for EPA's Contract Laboratory Program (CLP) personnel to receive program updates, discuss regional laboratory techniques and issues, and participate in individual laboratory and general CLP training. Scheduling both training conferences at a single location provided a unique opportunity for EPA personnel involved in site management, securing analytical services, and contracting laboratories to interact with one another.
- **SRMAC Meeting:** The SRMAC meeting was held from Tuesday through Thursday, May 22, to May 24. The SRMAC meeting provided participants the opportunity to share regional successes and new ideas for managing Superfund contracts, resolve cross-cutting acquisition issues, and promote quality in contracts management. This is the first time that SRMAC held their meeting concurrently with the training conference.
- **After-Hour Activities:** Several after-hour activities were planned by the Region 3 Ground Crew members during the week to bring RPMs together in informal settings. These activities included a baseball game, a sunset harbor cruise, and the annual volleyball game and picnic.

Participants

More than 478¹ people attended the NARPM Annual Training Conference, National Remedial Manager Meeting, TSP Forum Business Meetings, the Superfund Analytical Operations Training Conference, and the SRMAC meeting. Exhibit 1 identifies the overall number of participants by job title.

Attendees for the NARPM Annual Training Conference, TSP Forums, and the National Remedial Managers' Meeting included: 142 EPA RPMs; 112 EPA HQ Representatives; 36 Other EPA Regional Remedial Support Staff (such as Enforcement Personnel and Regional Attorneys); 37 EPA Regional Remedial Branch Chiefs and Division Directors; 4 EPA CICs; 33 State Representatives; 8 EPA ERT members; 24 Other Federal Agency Representatives; 9 members of Academia; 2 Tribal Representatives; 25 EPA Regional Contract Laboratory Representatives; and 46 CLP Consultants. Exhibit 2 on the following page identifies the attendees who only participated in the NARPM Annual Training Conference.

Evaluation of Overall Training Program

NARPM Annual Training Conference participants were asked to evaluate six areas of the training conference on a scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Evaluation forms were collected from 119 participants; 68 out of 119 evaluation forms were from RPMs. Based on submitted evaluation forms, RPMs had an average of more than 11 years experience. More than half of those RPMs indicated they had participated in at least three previous training conferences. In addition, 22 of the 68 RPMs indicated that they had worked on federal facility sites.

¹ CLP consultants are included in this number; however, consultants who helped to facilitate or instruct training courses are not included in the overall number of attendees.

Exhibit 1. Participants by Job Title

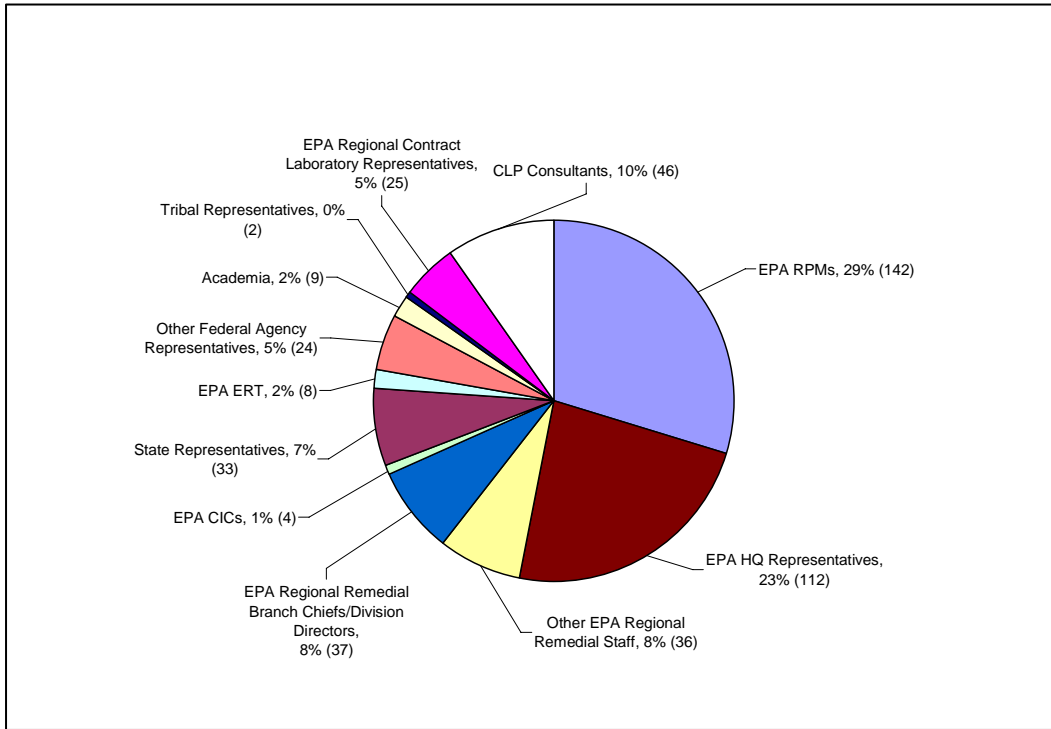
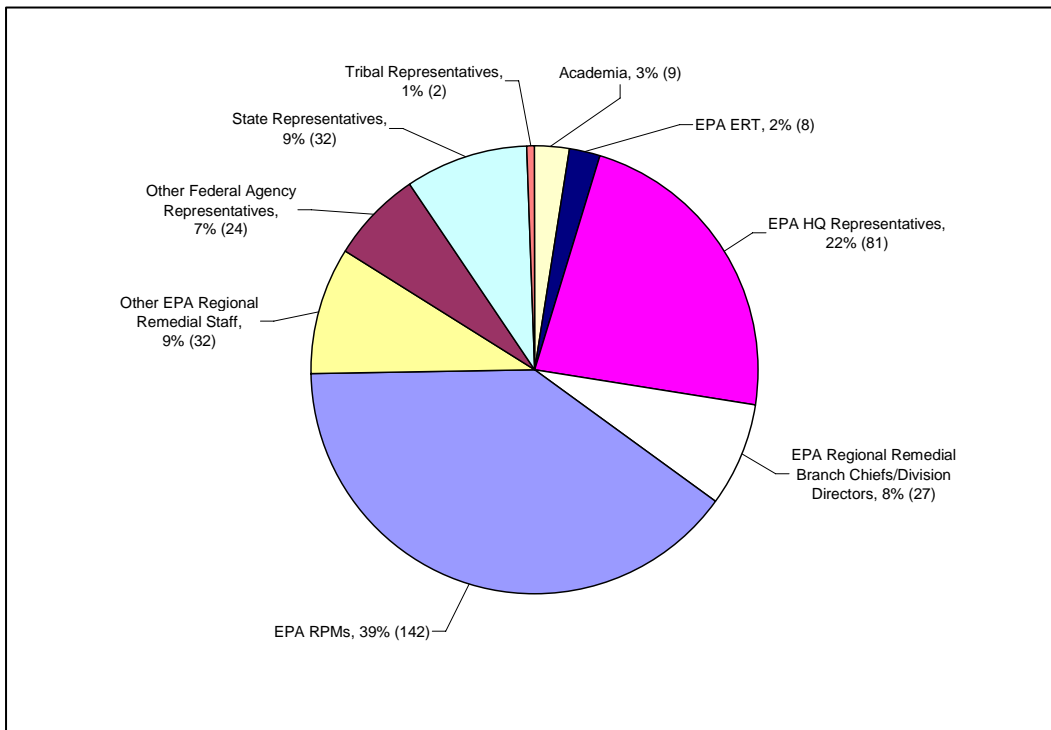


Exhibit 2. NARPM Annual Training Conference Attendees by Job Title



Evaluation of Training Courses and Paper, Panel, and Information Sessions

Participants in each training course, and panel, paper, and information sessions were asked to complete a course evaluation form, which included questions such as presentation materials, handouts, the pace of the session, and recommendations for improvement. Participants also were asked to assign a number grade for each session, with 1 meaning poor and 5 meaning excellent.

A total of 554 evaluation forms for the training courses were collected. Of the 22 courses offered (two courses were offered twice), 6 courses received an average grade of 5, 17 courses received an average grade of 4, and 1 course received an average grade of 3. No training courses received an average grade of 2 or 1.

A total of 260 evaluation forms for the panel sessions were collected. Of the 11 panel sessions offered, all of the sessions received an average grade of 4. No session received a 5, 3, 2, or 1.

A total of 97 evaluation forms for the paper sessions were collected. Of the 5 paper sessions offered, all received an average grade of 4. No paper session received a 5, 3, 2, or 1.

A total of 166 evaluation forms for the information sessions were collected. Of the 8 information sessions offered, 1 received an average grade of 5, 6 sessions received an average grade of 4, and 1 session received an average grade of 3. No information session received a 2 or 1.

Recommendations

Based on observations made during the week and the information collected from evaluation forms, recommendations were made for next year's conference. These recommendations include: keeping the two-hour opening plenary session, which allows for additional paper, panel, or information sessions; reporting the successes, accomplishments and events of the NARPM Training Conference to management; and adding more advanced-level training for experienced RPMs.