

APPENDIX C

Summary of Comments about the Training 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 105 training conference evaluation forms were collected. 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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How training offered at NARPM has helped to improve job performance

Comments related to ground water, surface water, and or hydrogeology topics

- As the senior HQ ground water specialist, there are several training courses, panels, and round table discussions at NARPM on a variety of ground water topics. All help me do my job better
- Helped me understand the many facets of being an RPM. The training of the ground water forum has helped with issues of ground water/surface water interaction, well biofouling, and isotope analysis.
- I have really benefited from the geology/hydrogeology courses offered in past years.

Comments related to technical training offered at NARPM

- By providing technical training and updating technical skills.
- Exposure to new technologies, new ways of doing things.
- I've been able to apply some of the technical topics directly to my remedial sites.
- Made me aware of current technology.
- State of the science training – knowing who and how to get technical help.

Comments related to project management

- Increased skills, more successful negotiations, and better management of sites.
- The information obtained from these conferences helps me with my project management.
- They have provided training on munitions, ground water treatment options and site management that I have used in the management of my sites. They have also provided me the opportunity to hear and learn from case studies of complex sites across the country.

Comments related to training and applying skills to improving job performance

- Learned new information directly related to issues, communication, technologies, policy, and process.
- NARPM has provided updated training in key areas used in my job.
- The Quickplace presentation led me to implement a Quickplace for all the stakeholders. *(Two responses)*
- They provide training on current policy, guidance, and the latest science used in the regulatory environment.
- Tremendous learning experience that is practical and can take back to the field and almost implement immediately!
- Understanding of vapor intrusion (VI).
- Yes. Continual changes in technology, corrective action, and administrative issues demands training for proficiency.
- Yes, particularly with community involvement, leadership skills, media skills, and connections to valuable technical support for projects. *(Two responses)*

Comments related to networking and exchanging information

- Making contacts who I can call to discuss subject matter.
- I have renewed job enthusiasm when I return from NARPM. *(Two responses)*
- Technical information exchange, improved technical knowledge, lessons learned, networking with fellow RPMs.

- Ability to network. *(Two responses)*
- Great for learning about the EPA workforce and its mission as my job interacts with all EPA regions and EPA HQ on a daily basis.
- Networking opportunities with ORD and other regions. *(Five responses)*
- Sharing success stories and learning (lessons learned) from other RPMs. *(Two responses)*
- The conferences provide valuable tools, interaction and contacts with others across the country who are encountering similar problems/situations. *(Two responses)*
- The information and training I've received at the training helps me perform my job in many ways. In general, exchange project approaches with other regional RPMs and HQ representatives.
- The NARPM conferences have provided many opportunities to collaborate with other EPA staff.
- More up to date information and networking with others.
- They have given me a broader understanding of the work RPMs are performing in other regions and training in specific areas of interest. They have given me a network of contacts to rely on when new, or difficult situations arise at sites I am assigned.
- Through networking discussions acquired better appreciation of needs of the RPMs.
- Through networking, I've learned how others work more efficiently and have learned from my peers from outside my region. I've also developed relationships with ERT and the labs by actually meeting my co-workers. It is easier to get work done when you actually know the people you e-mail. *(Two responses)*
- Finally, listening to other RPMs experiences on sites, and discussing issues on sites and policies with other RPMs provided me with fantastic context and preparation for issues on my own projects. NARPM also is an opportunity to interact with many co-workers from HQ and it is important that HQ and the Regions develop close communication and that RPMs are part of the process when developing policies and guidance. The NARPM conference is a place that helps to make that happen. As a Section Chief in the Superfund Program, I wish there was at least an annual Section Chief conference to afford me these same opportunities as a Superfund manager.
- In valuable networking on projects and ability to talk with the experts on your projects. Plus, meeting and networking with EPA staff from around the country. *(Two responses)*
- Yes, the degree of networking, information sharing, and classes has increased my resources and my job knowledge. *(Two responses)*
- Yes. Not only from the technical and policy seminars, but from the networking opportunities you have with everyone there.

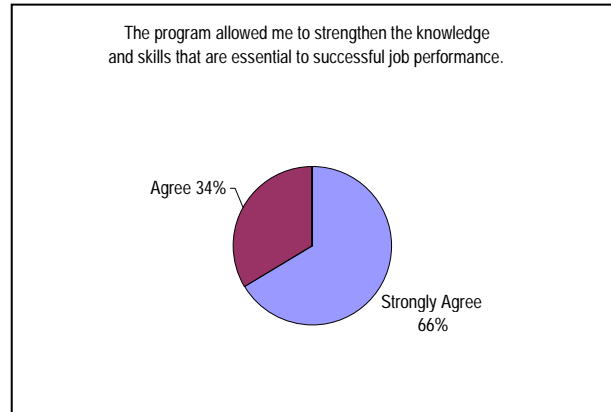
General Comments

- These conferences have become the only opportunity for training in my position.
- Better understanding of resources available to do the job. *(Two responses)*
- I have found potential solutions to problems I have encountered at my site.
- I learn many things at the conference that apply to my work.
- Improved awareness of other topics, good short courses applicable to work.
- Learning about new and better ways to do my job.
- Provided information to perform better as RPM.
- Yes, the past 6 years has been a fantastic progression of better managed and valuable conferences.
- Yes, it keeps me up to speed on HQ priorities and gives me ideas on how to resolve problems at my sites.

Strengthening the knowledge and skills that are essential to successful job performance

Comments about specific course and or session topics

- I learned a lot in most of the sessions including Green Remediation, Virtual Tools, and Optimizing Five-Year Reviews.
- Improved risk communication, enhanced knowledge in dense nonaqueous phase liquid (DNAPL) remediation, optimization, and redevelopment
- Some of the obstacles to reusing Superfund sites also are challenges that RPMs face during cleanup activities. I learn about the different challenges and have overcome the challenges through interactions at NARPM.
- VI panel and risk communication training - very beneficial.



Additional topics to add

- I would like to see more sediment training and open information sharing forums.
- Need expanded training and tools on Remedial Design/Remedial Action (RD/RA) and cost estimates.

Other groups to invite to NARPM

- Invite Sediment Work Group and Risk Assessors National Group. *(Two responses)*
- Include Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) RPMs or have a similar dedicated training for RCRA staff. *(Two responses)*
- Include more state representatives. *(Two responses)*

General Comments

- Always great training courses!
- Good speakers and excellent topics. *(Two responses)*
- In addition the conference provided a broader perspective through exposure to the larger world of EPA site remediation.
- NARPM has created an essential foundation from which I may build upon throughout my career.
- The panels that included HQ representatives and RPMs were especially helpful. We had the opportunity to ask questions that applied to many of us, and listen to the policy experts debate with RPMs. That really helped us understand the problems
- The training presented at this conference is very valuable to me and will directly impact my job performance.

Things to be done differently when returning to the job

Comments related to resources and tools

- Access new online Web sites for additional references. *(Two responses)*
- Be able to call on more contacts to find solutions! *(Six responses)*
- Visit Trainex frequently.
- Employ ERT tech zone at other Superfund venues. *(Three responses)*

- Share information and resources with co-workers. (*Two responses*)
- Use more of the collaborative tools.
- Use Quickplace/Sametime more. (*Two responses*).

Comments related to sampling, analysis, and evaluation of data

- Analyze ground water data smarter.
- Apply some new statistical methods.
- Consider multi-incremental sampling (MIS) for Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) Site Investigations (SI). (*Two responses*)
- Deeper analysis of sites (statistical, capture zone evaluation, etc.).
- Ensure my sampling frequency is statistically appropriate.
- Will look at well analytical data more critically.
- Use real time sampling and data acquisition.
- Statistically demonstrate if ground water remediation has been effective over time.

Comments related to sustainability, reuse, and green remediation

- Integrate sustainable and renewable energy into my cleanups and reuse. (*Two responses*)
- Be mindful of the green remediation opportunities. (*Sixteen responses*)
- Explore reuse and redevelopment planning resources for mine site.
- Will look more closely at alternative energy scenarios for long-term operation and maintenance (O&M) sites.
- Stronger outreach to RPMs to help them incorporate sustainability into their site management. (*Two responses*)
- Try to integrate renewable energy into reuse.

Comments related to community involvement and outreach

- Better community involvement. (*Three responses*)
- Explore whether Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) and Superfund Job Training Initiative (Super JTI) may be applicable to site communities.
- See what the SBRP researchers are doing that can be incorporated into our outreach. (*Two responses*)
- Investigate where TASC could be used for communities surrounding federal facilities.

Comments related to Monitored Natural Attenuation (MNA)

- Apply some of the training in evaluating MNA proposals.
- Collect better data in remedial investigation (RI) to potentially support MNA. (*Four responses*)
- Further look into MNA in my sites.
- New ideas on MNA remedies.
- Review MNA work differently.
- Review natural attenuation conditions at Rocky Mountain Arsenal (RMA).
- Use tools for MNA to establish goals to be met at five year review.

Comments related to risk communication, leadership, and media

- Be more aware of "self-deception" red flags.
- Continue improving communication.

- I will analyze and optimize my leadership skills.
- I will apply "deep" listening as part of my communication skills.
- Risk communication beneficial for us introverts.
- Will discuss risk issues better.
- Speaking to the public.

Comments related to project management and negotiations

- Be sure that I'm representing my own needs fully when negotiating.
- Organize my work area/records more effectively.
- More efficient time management.
- Less e-mail communication, more verbal communication (within the regional office).

Comments related to ground water, surface water, and hydrogeology

- Consider biofouling of wells more carefully.
- Consider the effect of pH on enhanced bio remedies more closely.
- Go through in detail analysis of capture zone analysis in pump and treat using the EPA document. *(Four responses)*
- I can definitely evaluate a ground water pump and treat plan more effectively.
- I will request that the monitoring wells at my sites are rehabilitated.
- I will be able to better analyze plume capture.
- Now able to review ground water reports better.
- Share ground water monitoring well information w/counterparts at the federal facility.
- We are asking John Wilson to do his presentation on MNA as an issue paper for the Ground Water Forum.
- Well development emphasis.

Comments related to professional development

- Consider joining one of the national work groups.
- Encourage coworkers to attend next year's conference.
- Figure out how my work can best support the needs of RPMs and help them accomplish their work successfully.
- Become more involved with Federal Facilities Forum.
- I will actively plan my trainings and request support from my management. *(Two responses)*
- I will not be scared to ask questions from senior RPMs.
- Join the Response Support Corps (RSC).
- I will review many of the links mentioned in the courses I attended or instructed.
- Make better attempts (use of time) to become knowledgeable about new policy/guidance/research.

Comments related to Five-Year Reviews

- Better plan any five-year reviews.
- Evaluating five-year review data couple of years early to evaluate trends and vapor intrusion issues with EPA technical staff so that there are less issues with the protectiveness statement in regards to insufficient data.

Comments related to remedy selection and institutional controls (IC)

- Be more willing to acknowledge that a remedy may not be working.
- Evaluate how my remedies at construction completion site are working.
- I will try to do a better job of active remedy management.
- Use ICs in light of achievable agreement/practicability.
- Revisit current remedy selections.
- Revisit IC monitoring program at my sites.

Comments on remedial technologies, cleanup strategies, and contaminants

- I will look at DNAPL differently.
- Evaluating new remedial technologies.
- More strongly consider source treatment rather than containment.
- Stay awake at the wheel on my O&M sites.
- More focused on site goals/objectives.
- Pay more attention to site characterization prior to design.
- Re-think cleanup approaches to my sites.

Comments on Outreach, Partnering, and Networking

- Have more contact with the Hanford EPA staff.
- Help keep up the TSP / NARPM connection. *(Two responses)*
- I have more regional and lab points-of-contact.
- I will approach recruiting NARPM members for RSC differently.
- Include CERCLA staff more.
- Work more closely with regional staff.
- Work more closely with the state.

General comments

- Have better technical knowledge to apply to my sites.
- Have better understanding of issues with my projects.
- I now know some of the people to call with questions on reuse and asbestos.
- Address a few RCRA issues that were raised.
- Incorporate more of a watershed approach.
- Plan my vapor intrusion RA. *(Two responses)*
- Pursue changes to national asbestos strategy.
- Update my FFA Schedule.

Recommending that others attend the training conference next year

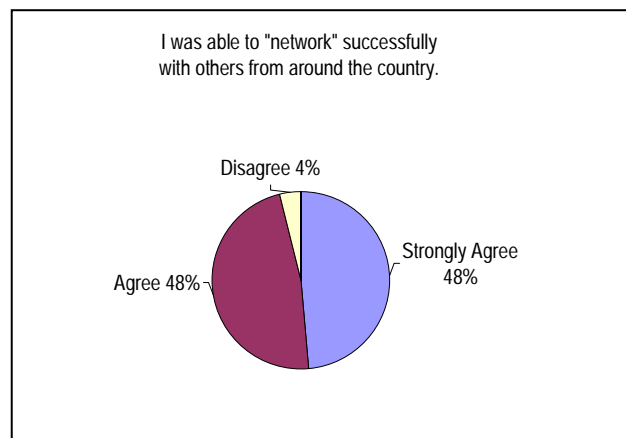
- Although I enjoyed attending NARPM and learned a great deal, I think it would be better to have our site project managers also attend to benefit from this excellent conference.
- Great chance to really listen to our peers; make contacts; deepen our knowledge.
- I bring a selected few along to assist/learn.
- I hope that many more RPMs from my program will attend next year, as the training was excellent.
- I think it will benefit all RPMs.
- I wish my management would allow me to attend annually from now on.
- If there is a sediment session.
- NARPM is a great forum for project managers to learn about how others are doing cleanup activities throughout the nation.
- With limited funding, this is a centralized tool for those with limited training funds to effectively receive training.



Networking successfully with others from around the country

Comments on how to improve networking

- Could use some topic-focused network time to get people together with similar concerns.
- It seemed that people overall interacted with those they knew beforehand, or had worked together. I could have made a better effort but I was a bit inhibited.
- It would have been useful to have meetings or other opportunities to meet with other state RPMs without having to go around looking at people's name tags to find out where they are from.
- Last year I met a lot of people after class at the hospitality suite. This year I did not have that opportunity, which made it difficult to meet new people. Maybe there should be more "ice-breaker" activities. Also, I think there should be an informal lunch/gathering for people with fewer than 5 years of experience as an RPM.
- Region 9 actively participates on EPA's cooperation with China and I would like to see if we can invite a few China Ministry of Environmental Protection staff in attending future NARPM. We should explore if other foreign government would be interested in attending.



Comments on successful networking opportunities at NARPM

- After (evening) activities were great for mixing with other regional RPMs.
- I liked the classes where they made us change groups.

- Aside from the information value of the training, face-to-face meeting with other colleagues is more satisfying than just phone and web communication.
- There were many opportunities to network both during and after hours.

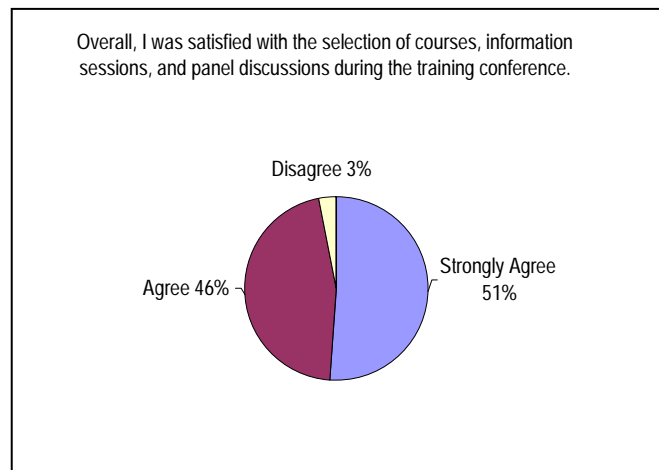
General Comments

- As always, hard to "meet" people with so many.
- I met so many people (RPMs, HQ representatives, states, and contractors) from all the regions. *(Two responses)*
- I was able to meet a colleague "face to face" for the first time - we had worked together for two years but had never met.
- In general but not this year due to lack of sediment sessions.
- Information exchange and lessons learned are wide spread at NARPM.
- Necessary as all EPA Regions perform their duties in unique ways.
- Thanks so much for the opportunity to have a booth at the NARPM conference. The support prior to arriving and on site was excellent.

Selection of courses, information, and panel sessions

Comments related to sediments

- I thought the selection of courses was very disappointing this year. There were only a few courses that I felt would be useful to me. I was particularly disappointed that there were no sessions related to contaminated sediment sites.
- Could have used some more on sediment sites.
- Maybe include sediment training for RPMs who don't have mega-sediment sites but still have sediment issues.
- No sediment session while the conference is in Region 10. This region is a leader in contaminated sediments sites and the field trip (Portland Harbor) is a sediment site.



Comments on specific courses and or topics

- Ground Water/Surface Water, Well Biofouling, Case Studies, and MNA training courses are very useful
- Most of the coursework was pertinent to the issues I am dealing with on my projects, well capture, DNAPL source treatment, biofouling, and MNA. Excellent sessions on these topics!!!
- Some of the courses had too much information for the time allotted. In particular the sessions on MNA and In Situ Bio could be lengthened. However, be careful about having vendors do presentations. We do not need commercials or sales pitches.
- With the new work assignment manager (WAM) and Contracting Officer Representative (COR) minimum training requirements, I'd like to see contract courses offered.

General Comments

- A wide variety of both fundamental and timely topics were presented. *(Three responses)*
- Always a great variety...only problem is, you can't attend all the sessions. *(Two responses)*
- Decent variety.
- Day 2 - little weak.
- Day 3 - would have liked to attend/participate in multiple courses.
- I am very pleased with the quality of courses that are being offered year after year at NARPM.
- I felt the sessions were technically weak, and did not meet my expectations for a national conference.
- I wish I had been able to spend additional time in courses, but the one I attended was very good.
- I would like to see more courses geared towards new RPMs.
- Keep up the coordination with the TSP Forums.....they provide a good balance of technical courses.

Topics or courses which should be omitted

Comments on Federal Facility Remediation Short Course

- The federal facilities short course was misleading; was a good course, with multiple steps in the remedial process outlined. Was organized similar to Superfund 101 training; topics I already knew a lot about, which I had not expected.

Comments on Contracts Training

- Omit Contracts - leave for regional training.

Comments on the Rapid Assessment Tool (RAT)

- RAT - It was a 3 hour plug for software. It could have been 1 hour.
- The RAT training was not what I thought it would be and extremely boring.

Comments on Multi-Incremental / Decision Unit Sampling

- The Multi-Incremental was not what I thought it would be and extremely boring.

Comments on Working Redevelopment and Reuse Into the Superfund Process

- Reuse and Redevelopment could have more of an RPM slant or maybe be offered only occasionally.

Comments on Be Prepared: Know What to Say and How to Say It

- The media training by the consultants. These courses should be delivered by EPA media professionals. Leo Kay from Region 9 delivered one at NARPM in Baltimore and was a great success.

Comments on Nanotechnology: Practical Considerations for Use in Ground Water Remediation

- Unless our knowledge of the subject and possible impacts (or lack thereof) improves by next year, Nanotechnology should be dropped.

General Comments

- All were good (that I attended) and worth repeating. (*Twenty-four responses*)
- Every class I went to was great.
- It seemed to be a good mix of technical and admin topics. I wish I could have attended the contracts training coursework session.
- That is hard to do since so many people have so many different interests. However, there should be some feedback based on how many people sign up for topics and how many make it to the end. If either is low I would reconsider another offering. Also the feedback may give you a better clue, but many people did not seem to do it at the meeting.

Topics and courses to be added

Comments on partnering and outreach

- A course or topic about the interaction between EPA and state RPMs. How well (or not so well) they work together on sites. Include case studies on states that are the lead and EPA is the support agency.
- How to interact with tribal nations.
- Superfund technical support offices and staff expertise available to RPMs.

Comments on sustainable energy, reuse, and green remediation best practices

- Remediation System Optimization with regards to decreasing overall energy costs, as energy costs are skyrocketing.
- Economic and social benefits and deterrents to using biofuels for green remediation.
- More reuse.
- More on green remediation.
- Real Estate Development for RPMs.

Comments on Five-Year Reviews, ICs, and Post Construction

- A longer five-year review class should be offered. The technical discussion got cut off as it got interesting.
- Purpose and success of five-year reviews.
- Innovative technologies, examples of optimization of remedies in five-year reviews (especially in times of budget constraints).
- Long-term monitoring.
- More training on ICs and post-construction completion issues.

Comments on communication, leadership, and media

- Additional classes for handling conflict and dealing with hostile communication.
- More negotiation, interpersonal skills. (*Two responses*)
- How to speak with the public and media.
- I understand the value of a workshop based negotiations class, but you can cover more material in a lecture style or panel style class.
- More media training, a couple of introductory courses to serve any new RPMs that come on staff.
- More leadership training.

Comments on contaminants and remediation

- Always try and have some "emerging contaminant" type training. *(Two responses)*
- Getting to "yes" when evaluating alternative cleanup strategies with larger up-front capital outlays versus perpetual O&M scenarios.
- Chemical oxidation stories (successes and failures). *(Two responses)*
- I find technical remediation case histories very informative - what approach worked, what didn't and why.
- Innovative methods of vadose zone remediation.

Comments on removal process and program

- Examples or lessons learned in integrating removal and remedial programs.
- More interaction with OSCs (OSC view of oversight, possibly).
- Coordination between RPM and OSC. *(Two responses)*

Comments on ground water, surface water, and hydrogeology

- I would like to learn more about hydrogeology.
- Karst hydrogeology.
- More time and more topics about ground water investigations and technologies.
- Tidally influenced ground water (more focus on seawater instead of rivers, ponds).
- The basic Hydrogeology course to help people understand the picture of underground plume, structure different layer, for example, fractured rock, alluvium.
- Technical impracticability (TI) waivers - low concentration plumes - notable to meet applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARAR) and source areas.

Comments on project management and policy / guidance

- Microsoft Project training.
- Project management certification.
- More contracts training. *(Two responses)*
- Cost estimates for Independent Government Cost Estimates (IGCE).
- Performance based contracting.
- More on guidance available and that are new. This will be useful for new RPMs.
- More policy and regulatory updates should be added.
- RPM 101.

Comments on RD/RA

- Remedial oversight/project management.
- Remedial design.
- Possibly EPA/USACE Interagency Agreement (IAG) Training. Ed Hanlon, the EPA/USACE Liaison will be formulating a training module to be submitted to the NARPM Co-Chairs this fall (including monthly reporting requirements/standards).

Comments on sediments

- More sessions for RPMs to trade advice/discuss issues related to dealing with contaminated sediment sites. *(Three responses)*
- Sediment removal training focusing on heavy metals. Open discussion forum after the sediment removal training.

Comments on technical and technology topics

- VI.
- Setting cleanup goals for sites with lead and arsenic and how that differs across the nation.
- More on AMD technologies.
- Emerging technology and its successes, such as phytoremediation, electrokinetics, and enhanced attenuation.
- Site characterization -- Field Methods (e.g., membrane interface probe [MIP], x-ray fluorescence [XRF], aquifer tests).

Comments on Response Support Corps

- If the NARPM Co-Chairs agree, we would be willing to provide training for two groups of RPMs at NARPM; one for members who would like to be RSC members in the field, and another for RPMs and attendees who would like to work in the Regional Emergency Operations Centers. Would like to also solicit new members with session and booth.
- RSC training.

General Comments

- More information on technical tools and resources. *(Two responses)*
- Pitfalls of the Munitions Response Site Prioritization Protocol (MRSPP) Scoring Munitions and Explosives of Concern Hazard Assessment (MECHA) Training.
- Mega Site Management (panel, training).
- Skill set to help RPMs deal with challenges from limited resources and changing managers/difficult work situations (policies, managers, HQ).
- Specific courses that address large-scale mine cleanups.
- Still think a basic soils course would be good.

Courses to be offered again next year

- All. *(Two responses)*
- A Systematic Approach for Evaluation of Capture Zones at Pump and Treat Systems
- A Year in the Life: Project Management for RPMs.
- Awake at the Wheel - Active Remedy Management. *(Two responses)*
- Be Prepared: Know What to Say and How to Say It. *(Four responses)*
- Beneficial Uses of Mining and Mineral Waste Panel Session. *(Three responses)*
- DNAPL Source Zone Treatment. *(Four responses)*
- Federal Facility Remediation Short Course.
- Green Remediation: Opening the Door to Field Use. *(Ten responses)*
 - Alternative energy options at O&M sites.
- Ground Water / Surface Water Interaction. *(Two responses)*

- Institutional Controls: Current Issues Panel Session
 - Should be on the table every year. *(Six responses)*
- Know What to Say and How to Present It. *(Two responses)*
- Monitored Natural Attenuation for Inorganics. *(Two responses)*
- Monitored Natural Attenuation and In-Situ Bioremediation for Organic Contaminants. *(Four responses)*
 - Enhanced bioremediation.
 - More focus on application of EPA policy and guidance.
 - Would be good to offer again, as that was the best course I took all week.
 - Course was excellent, should be repeated and recorded to make available in the Web. *(Three responses)*
 - MNA was really good, repeat in future NARPMS, the Regions and record and post on the Web. Many consultants, states, potentially responsible parties (PRP), Federal Facilities, EPA RPMs are not that familiar with this remedy and the monitoring that is required and how to evaluate if MNA is working or how to prepare a long term monitoring plan.
- Leadership is an Inside Job. *(Six responses)*
- Multi-Increment Sampling / Decision Unit Sampling. *(Two responses)*
 - Make sure all speakers are well versed in the technology.
- Nanotechnology: Practical Considerations for Use in Ground Water Remediation.
- Negotiations – You Can Do It, We Can Help. *(Two responses)*
- Optimizing Five-Year Reviews Panel Session. *(Two responses)*
- OSC / RPM Interactions Synergy Panel Session.
 - Revamp format of RPM/OSC interaction course, but do offer again.
- Passing the Baton: Better Documentation Management During Site Transitions Panel Session.
 - Should be improved upon during the year and offered again with specific recommendations. *(Two responses)*
- RPM Case Studies. *(Two responses)*
 - I really enjoyed the case studies that were presented by other RPMs. It was really nice to hear about other sites and what obstacles came up and how other RPMs dealt with them.
- Remedy Rescue Panel Session.
- Response Support Corp -- RPMs in Response Information Session.
 - Should target non-RSC members.
- Risk Communication. *(Four responses)*
- Vapor Intrusion Panel Session. *(Eight responses)*
- Well Performance Problems due to Biofouling. *(Two responses)*
 - Recommend training SHOULD be offered at the regional offices!
- Working Redevelopment and Reuse Into the Superfund Process. *(Two responses)*
 - Courses related to facilitating reuse of Superfund sites, and an even stronger focus on how EPA can encourage sustainable redevelopment at contaminated properties.
- Working Together: Aligning Communities, Academia, and EPA Panel Session. *(Five responses)*
 - Really appreciated having the opportunity for the SBRP to have a session on building partnerships in the community. Those that attended the session seemed quite interested.
- Virtual Connection: Tools and Strategies for EPA Employees Information Session.

Organization of panel and information sessions

- A good cross section of issues is offered. My only complaint is that there are too many conflicting items to see them all!
- Discussion was encouraged and stimulating.
- But there generally was not enough time to hear all panelists and ask questions. (*Three responses*)
- Case studies on VI were interesting.
- Some panels promoted a good amount of dialogue.
- Speakers were well-prepared and a sufficient number of handouts were provided to attendees. (*Two responses*)
- The discussions were outstanding from a learning perspective to learn what works and how to handle technical and public issues.
- Good variety of speaker perspectives (especially, regional and HQ representation.). (*Six responses*)
- I really enjoyed the shorter panel sessions and the question exchange with the audience. (*Two responses*) I heard a lot of good information from the audience and I didn't reach a saturation point with information.
- Moderators did a pretty good job of keeping things on schedule, keep it up! (*Six responses*)
- Some panel sessions had too much presentation and not enough time for discussion. (*Five responses*) Should really limit the number of panel members to 4 or 5.
- Well done, but may want to work more on some general type of flow where people who have interest on some overlapping topics and attend a series of presentation without having to choose one or the other. Recommend working with the Ground Water Forum, Engineering Forum, and Federal Facilities Forum, Sediment Forum to group topics and schedule accordingly.
- Could be improved. Some of the sessions were very basic or introductory. It would be better to state that during registration the level of intensity of the course, for example, entry level, mid, advance.
- Except that speakers need to continue to be strongly encouraged to use microphones. Many claim their voices carry well enough then only project for first 5 minutes, turn from audience and speak toward screen, or don't account for large room size or ambient noise interference.

Panel and information session topics to be added

- None. (*Four responses*)
- Any draft or new guidance from HQ - overview of all or detailed depending on how significant the effect of the guidance is on the RPM's job.
- Reoccurring issues between EPA and states.
- Commonalities for remedies that failed - lessons to be learned.
- Cross-program interaction.
- Five-year reviews, Record of Decision (ROD), ICs.
- A session for RPMs only on federal facilities without managers or EPA HQ.
- Interactions with communities on large controversial actions, especially when large numbers of citizens are involved.
- More career development. (*Two responses*)
- Green remediation.
- More on how to have better communication between regions and sharing important information.
- More reuse with regional experiences.

- More media courses. "Working with others" courses, see samples at: <http://www.gpsadvantage.com/workshops/professionalskillsoverview.html>
- ROD Amendment versus explanation of significant differences (ESD) budget development.
- RPM tools, communications in an effective manner.
- Sediments as they relate to other topics, such as remediation, ground water, and risk.
- Success stories.

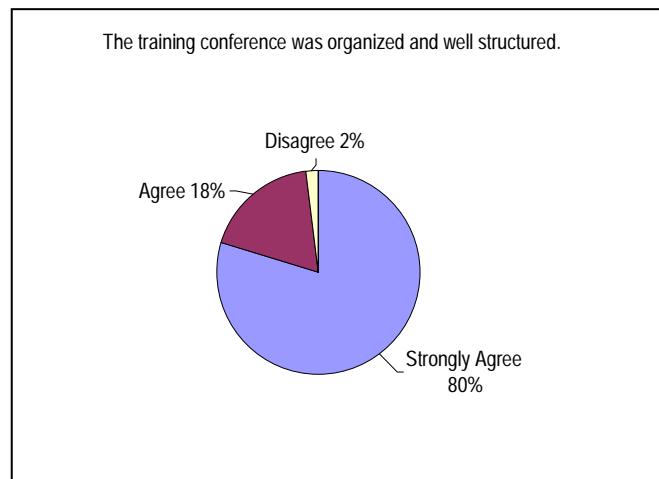
Panel and information session topics to be omitted

- ERT session should be offered as a plenary.
- None. (*Five responses*)

Organization and structure of the training conference

Comments on program agenda

- I missed some training that would have been very useful in my job because the course was only offered once and it directly conflicted with other offerings that were needed.
- One of my problems was having multiple sessions that I wanted to attend all scheduled at the same time, which is a good problem to have. (*Two responses*)
- Allow more time to have open discussions and one-on-one conversations with the presenters. I realize the sessions are full of information to be presented in less than ample time, but maybe it can be incorporated somehow.



Comments about courses or topics

- Some of the courses were too packed with too many presenters and not enough time for questions from the audience. After a certain number of presenters your mind gets too saturated to comprehend the information and you lose the audience.
- Some of the training sessions/classes were considerably better than others.

Comments on after hour activities

- After hours activities were well prepared and I continued to network after the day time presentations and panels were over.
- Also very enjoyable with lots of extra-mural activities.
- Ground crew did an excellent job as well.

General Comments

- All in all, I thought this was expertly carried out. The list of contact names was great, as was the internet cafe (I never used the internet cafe, as it was too busy, but it was a great idea). The choice of hotel was excellent, as was using Portland, as it is pretty far ahead of the rest of the country in terms of sustainability. The avoidance of bottled water also was great.
- As always conference organizer did a great job in organizing the conference. *(Three responses)*
- Much more organized than any other conference I've attended.
- Organization and planning could not be better. *(Three responses)*
- You can tell that lots of hard work went into planning this conference.
- Could be better. The previous ones are better.
- Done very well.
- Excellent! I don't think I have ever attended a conference that was better organized in all areas in almost 30 years of professional experience.
- I found out about the conference and registered about two weeks before. Consequently some of the more relevant sessions were "full." I don't know what the solution is, but "full" shouldn't happen.
- Would include states in planning for future events.

Recommendations to improve the overall conference

Comments on outreach and partnering

- Better coordination between the NARPM Co-Chairs and the TSP Forums.
- The Co-Chairs communicate to RPMs during the year (between meetings) in an effective manner (such as newsletters, Web site).
- Include states and tribes in training development.

Comments on course and session structure and scheduling

- 8 hours is too long, 2 hours is too short. Increase the 4 hour courses.
- Limit courses to half day; didn't find the full day courses helpful.
- Need to work harder at attempting to avoid courses and topics which would appeal to the same group being offered at the same time.
- Offer more courses twice.
- I didn't like having to choose between 2 good trainings with no backup provided.
- Several people in my course were only there because they had no other option; probably should limit how many small classes are given and try to balance general interest versus technical/specific.
- Some of the courses were packed with examples and presenters; no time for questions from the audience and that exchange between the presenters and audience.

Comments on course and session content

- Re-implement categorizing the courses by Superfund work phase - it was implemented last year and lost this year.
- Breakdown courses as beginner, intermediate, and advanced -- especially the process courses. The leadership and negotiations classes were too basic for senior RPMs. Work with EPA's Mediation Center to improve these courses.
- Technical courses should be more interactive, not just lectures.

- If possible have the presentation slides posted ahead at the NARPM site to the extent possible.
- Involving the consulting community more on technological tools and approaches.
- Significant difference in many presentations' slides color/contrast between slide on laptop screen and what was projected onto screen. Many slides didn't transmit needed information because of poor color and or contrast when projected. Improvement here would contribute to attendee's comprehension of information presented.
- Provide materials in color and readable scale.
- Several courses/sessions had too much content for time allowed - Nanotechnology, Risk Communication, and Remedial Design.

Comments on training conference structure

- Have a field trip mid-week, if possible, to break up the week of sessions. By Wednesday the training starts to feel a little like overload!

Comments on networking

- A bit more network time...it always seemed to get cut short!
- More interaction/attention to state and tribal participants.
- Make sure there are lots of networking opportunities.
- Network time should be expanded and topic-specific areas established. An expert in the topic should be available during these focused sessions. This would facilitate the sharing of ideas and experiences.

Comments on training conference logistics

- Offer free wireless Internet 24 hours.
- Internet access in the training rooms would have been very nice for staying in touch with the office. Yes, we were able to use wireless in the lobby, but that isn't nearly as useful as being able to sit down at a desk.
- It really is well planned. *(Four responses)*
- Give notebooks or writing pad in the welcome packets.
- More space for popular courses, and courses not being limited to a finite number of attendees. Seemed like the capacity of the Doubletree facilities for the number of attendees was almost exceeded. *(Two responses)*

General comments

- No changes necessary. *(Eight responses)*
- I thought it was excellent, so no comment.
- Ground rules for picture taking with flashes.
- Wish they were not so rushed! Consider sending training to the regional offices so more participants can get the same training in person.

Improving the Resource Area

- Better separation; there was at least one unmanned table which contained information on 3 separate programs. It was very confusing and I couldn't figure out where one ended and the other started.
- Great to have the breaks near the resource area! Thank you! *(Two responses)*

- Have the resource area participants provide a 5-minute talk during plenary session - 3 or 4 per day.
- I simply didn't spend time on these and that could have been my loss.
- I think the activity was a good idea. However, I would require answering questions from every booth to ensure everyone actually saw the information presented. I saw too many people just collecting their stamps and not paying any attention to the information at the booth.
- Love the wireless modem in the resource area! (*Two responses*) Maybe extend it to the rooms too (that's a tough one, I know)!
- Need to open the Resource Area to RPMs for project posters. It's a great opportunity to have project information in addition to just the vendors/service booths.
- Put them in the plenary session room.
- The only resource area I found informative was the RSC booth.

Plenary session topics to be added

- None. I thought it was very well done. (*Five responses*)
- Suggest keeping speaking slots for OSRTI and FFRRO directors, and a regional division director. Those are very informative and it is important to hear directly from the bosses. (*Two responses*)
- Add a state representative plenary session for state representatives, and discuss some of the coordination issues between EPA and state programs. (*Two responses*)
- Budget (Agency budget versus new emphasis). (*Two responses*)
- Discussion of the RPM tools such as ERT, Radiological Emergency Response Team (RERT) that are essentially "in-house" unbiased EPA consultants with no vested interest in a technology or profit; and their capability.
- EPA in a leadership role.
- EPA interactions with cleanup in other countries. Maybe a speaker from another country about cleanup and the process in that country. (*Two responses*)
- Focus on energy improvement methods and techniques.
- Future of Superfund. (*Three responses*)
- RPM careers.
- Case studies of nationally significant sites. (*Two responses*)
- "Cutting edge" technologies. (*Two responses*)
- Professional "motivational" speaker. (*Two responses*)
- Highlight the good work/good news stories from the previous year. (*Two responses*)
- Presentations of local/regional nature; municipalities have interesting offerings (e.g., Phoenix).
- Every location has a geologic setting for the local ground water/hydrologic issues. Invite a plenary speaker from USGS or a local geology professor to present on the local geologic.
- Industry/responsible party perspective.
- ICs.
- Inter-relationship between OSC and RPMs.
- Presentation by SERDP/ESTCP about collaboration opportunities.
- Presentation from HQ promoting Superfund Reuse.
- Provide a non-EPA speaker, but with a perspective on the environment. (*Two responses*).
- Retirement.
- Status of the regions - number of RPMs/workload issues.

- State of the art work practices that make our work more sustainable, such as digital signatures, use of shared drives, ftp sites, videoconferencing, electronic document filing. *(Two responses)*
- Report outs from moderators and forums on any significant issues or key to most RPMs that would be of interest.

Plenary session topics to be omitted

- No suggestions. *(Seven responses)*
- Long presentations involving too many slides.
- No sales pitches.
- Too much "cheer leader type" talks.

Improving the format of the opening and daily plenary sessions

- None. *(Eight responses)*
- Well organized and presented! *(Three responses)*
- Ask attendees to stop talking when speaker begins presentation, better audio system. *(Two responses)*
- Choose known dynamic speakers for the early-morning sessions. *(Two responses)*
- Seating in ballroom should be reconfigured by having the speaker and slideshow along the middle portion of the side wall; current configuration makes it very hard for the people at the end to see the screen and the speakers.
- Prefer the shorter welcoming plenary rather than having it take the entire morning. *(Two responses)*
- Don't want all of my lunch periods taken. It's usually the best time of day to "check in" with the region or my site. If there are important plenary discussions beyond what can be covered in the mornings, then lunch plenaries can be added.
- Really like the "Morning Break" and morning plenary combination.
- Plenary sessions are good, because it brings everyone (at least most) together before kicking off the morning sessions.
- Invite a dynamic speaker for the closing session; attendees will stay for the entire conference.
- More visuals in the presentations - keep it engaging early in the A.M.
- Shorten plenary sessions - maybe schedule additional lunchtime talks.
- Try to stay to the prescribed time and not run into the class times.
- First day speaker, Mr. Opalski, was very good.

Improving after-hour activities

- Since this was my first NARPM I thought the after hour activities were a great way to meet other RPMs from other regions.
- The after hour activities were planned very well and there was a wide variety of options. *(Seven responses)*
- Well-organized, advertised at conference, but not well-advertised prior to conference (hadn't heard of several events until announced at conference that they were full). Please send such advertising to all registered attendees prior to conference or direct regional NARPM reps to do so (not just to RPMs).
- The evening reception the first night was great because most people attended the reception and again it was an easy way to meet other people at the conference.
- Add nature hikes - Rose Garden in Portland. Add state and national park visit if nearby.

- Add more!
- Bike trip was not well organized. I signed up early and did not receive confirmation. Plans were made for the evening prior to "re-announcing" the bike ride and missed the chance.
- Bring back the real Hospitality Suite!
- Continue to "luv" and support our ground crews - it's a lot of work. (*Two responses*)
- Hard to improve. Seems a lot of effort went into this.
- Having activities that are geared to the "older" or less physically capable RPMs.
- Helpful if social activities are listed in packets.
- Need a clear schedule posted from the beginning would help; only ~25% attendance at picnic because costs seemed high and transportation complex.
- I didn't feel that they were well advertised. I remembered seeing something about them, but there wasn't much information in that advertisement.
- I like sporting events because it's more relaxed.
- I liked how many of the activities were repeated on different nights.
- Limited opportunity to participate. If you didn't sign up way ahead of time there wasn't an opportunity later.
- More choices although Region 10 had several choices for several nights.
- Provide alternate in-house designated location for people to meet and network that aren't going on activities.

Suggestions for improving future training conferences

Comments on communication and outreach about the training conference

- Need regular communication between Co-Chairs/Council and RPMs through newsletters and Web site.
- There are many branch chiefs that do not allocate funding for NARPM for RPM to participate and they deny any travel/funding request to all RPMs to participate because of "funding" problems! Can HQ be available to motivate these branch chiefs in believing in NARPM?
- As mentioned previously, it would be good to have a separate meeting for State folks to be able to get together and discuss differences/similarities in state programs (federal Superfund or federal sites programs funded by EPA or DoD) to discuss issues such as: How much input does the State have in the Superfund program?; Are any states the "lead" for Superfund sites?; How do states deal with funding of long-term O&M (for pump & treat scenarios, or other remedial actions)?; How are relations with EPA counterparts - do the EPA RPMs listen to and give opportunity for meaningful involvement by the State RPMs?
- Thanks for extending the invitation to tribal nations.

Comments on training conference location

- The location for the conference could hardly have been better. The MAX line right across the street with access to the airport and downtown made it a snap to get almost anywhere you wanted to go. The hotel and facilities were excellent and met our needs very well. A huge variety of restaurants, brew pubs (the most important thing), after-hours activities, stores, transportation, were all readily at hand. Great job on finding and landing this spot.

Comments on training conference management and logistics

- The management of the conference was astoundingly superb. The coordinators had thought of virtually everything and of contingencies for everything that could go wrong. Everything was so well-oiled and smooth it is hard to come up with anything to nitpick. The internet cafe was wonderful; snacks and meals were right on time, every day, and were very good to boot; breakfast menus were well-designed for a wide variety of diets and tastes; all room locations and traffic patterns were well marked and the signs were changed right on time, the materials provided participants were colorful, well organized, all A/V facilities were excellent and any problems were very promptly addressed. Timing and scheduling were spot on; extra after-hours activities well-coordinated. Sending home materials...coordinating hotel stays....availability of staff (Jen, good grief - available to the max). I have to give very high marks to all Gary, Jen, Co-Chairs, and all those who worked to coordinate the conference.
- Conference guide was very well-designed and colorful. The overall agenda for the week on the inside of the cover was extremely well organized, clear, good use of color, etc. One nit pick is that I found particular courses pretty hard to find in the course descriptions in the back. They were organized by category (training, panels, etc.) and alphabetically beyond that, but I found myself having to look for a particular course in all three or four categories on many occasions. Part of the problem I think is that the distinctions between panels, trainings, and information were blurred. I would consider listing everything in alphabetical order and putting a color coded bar at the top right hand corner ("PANEL" or "TRAINING") etc.
- I also liked that the timing of the breaks was published in advance, so instructors could work around them and attendees could plan.
- Please try to provide all or as much as possible conference material/handouts in electronic formats like CD ROM, diskettes etc. Just keep one hard copy at the time of presentation to be retained at the rooms for all participants.

Comments on organizing courses and sessions

- Content Categories: The distinctions between panels, trainings, and information were blurred. Some "panels" were really more like training, for instance - such as when a "panel" of people was giving training-like talks. Or it wasn't clear why one segment was "training" whereas another was an "information session." I'm sure that this was thought out behind the scenes at some level, but it was not apparent to me. This could be somewhat improved through some quality control - not accepting what presenters themselves call it (panel, training, etc.) but really looking at it from an overall conference-specific basis. These distinctions are important, because people usually come to "panels" to hear an interchange of ideas (interactive with audience) and significant discussion from a variety of persons with knowledge on the topic, whereas with a "training" one expects to hear presentations with Q&A but not necessarily working through issues with as much interaction. "Information Sessions" is vague and I wasn't sure how to distinguish it from the other two.
- Limited Attendance Courses: The extended media course appeared to be very good, but as only 15 or 20 people could attend, the opportunity to attend was limited to perhaps 5% of attendees. It would be good to be able to have multiple sessions of these so that more people could attend.

Comments on course and session content

- Need EPA media expertise to teach (recommend EPA Region 9 media experts who deliver media training to EPA Region 9 on a regular basis).
- Need to have a meeting dynamics/teaching training (EPA Region 9, Regional Facilitator, Lori Lewis, delivers workshops at Region 9 and external clients on a regular basis).

- Sediment session/sediment forum (ask Bonnie Elder, Region 5 for details).
- Content Overall: I attended some very useful and interesting sessions at the conference. I also attended a number of sessions that I did not find useful, or were dull and unpolished.
- Panel Issue Discussions: This year there seemed to lack sessions with just discussions among participants on issues (there were case study breakouts, which is different). Many of the panels contained presentations that used up the vast majority of the session time, leaving little time for discussion. Getting "structured discussion" sessions back into the conference is one component you might want to consider.
- A perennial problem with conferences, in many cases the content of some (certainly not all) sessions differed or did not match up to the content described in the session abstracts in the guide. In such cases, the abstracts overstate or mis-state what the course really provides. I think that presenters understandably want a lot of people to come to their session, so they want to make it look "sexy." Often, promises that will be made include "new techniques and innovative approaches" or "comprehensive - this course has it all!" or "this will teach you how to solve this problem once and for all". Then when the course actually comes together, it doesn't really provide these things. This is a problem because people can waste their time attending something that won't help them, while missing something else that would have been useful. For instance, "Best Practices for Post-ROD Community Involvement" describes past efforts at community involvement to be "amorphous" and unstructured, and that current (presumably new) approaches would be presented that were effective. The course really did not do this. Those looking for something new would not find it. The "RPMs and CERCLIS" session sort-of implies that changes to CERCLIS (the future), and ways in which there would now be movement on well-established problems with confusion, data entry inconsistencies, underutilization, etc. would be discussed. This really didn't occur. More control by the Co-Chairs could help in this regard. This would indeed require some content monitoring, but it would be reasonable to ask presenters "do you actually address new or improved" approaches per your abstract? What are they? Is your treatment really fully comprehensive? Or are you focusing on one particular thing? Do you really present and outline a whole new approach? Or do you just provide case studies of existing approaches? Do you address actual issues and present solutions? Or do you lay out the issues and let it go at that?
- Experience/Technical Level: It makes sense that the conference should provide something for new as well as experienced RPMs, as well as for technical novices and technical gurus. I would recommend, though, that the intended experience/technical level of the sessions be indicated in course description - perhaps at the top. A level of 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 or just "Basic," "Intermediate," and "Advanced," would help participants decide what they want to attend. For instance, I initially attended the "Ground Water Capture Zones" session - it was perfectly good but it was designed for a far more basic audience than what I would benefit from. I am aware of a number of people who left the session, saying they thought there would be some new technical approach or information presented. This is one course that could have benefited from a "Basic" label.
- Content Quality Control: Presenters pretty much control their own content, but I am aware of sessions where a group of presenters on a panel (for example) never even call each other in advance nor coordinate their presentations before the conference. It might be advisable to have the organizers contact presenters in advance to monitor whether sufficient progress is being made to pull the panel together in a coordinated fashion. If not, alternates should be available. We did have a Tetra Tech representative on the phone for a number of coordinating calls on our NAPL session - Again, the content of the conference is only as good as the presentations, and I wouldn't be afraid to exert some quality control on material - people shouldn't just get carte blanche space in the conference because they've volunteered to speak. In some cases, this would have helped the content of what was otherwise not.

- For all case studies, NARPM committee may want to add one short discussion section at the beginning of the case studies. This short discussion section should provide rationale for remedy selections, the limitation of treatment technologies, and how the cases will be successful and how the cases may be failed. It will provide a clear picture for RPMs to evaluate the case studies during the training.
- Please bring the Green Remediation course to the regions and to the OSC Readiness training!

Comments on the Resource Area

- As a participant in the Resource Area I found the NARPM Meeting to be very beneficial. This meeting provides the opportunity to meet and talk with RPMs from all over the country in one location. The conference was well organized and seemed to be well received by the attendees. Thanks for allowing TVA to participate and looking forward to attending next year.
- Thanks for including the SBRP. It was a great opportunity for us. I hope you will consider us again next year. We would be pleased to participate on any number of levels - we have strong research expertise in many areas, e.g., DNAPLs, bioavailability, arsenic, PCBs, as well as community based activities and research translation. The meeting is a great opportunity for our program investigators to learn about issues of importance to you and to network.

General Comments

- Excellent job by the ground crew. Great activities, well organized, recycled the relevant picnic wastes, and good "hosting" in general.
- Excellent Job!
- Great conference...everyone worked hard and it showed. That includes the co-chairs, Gary Turner, Tetra Tech and all the instructors. Nice location too!
- Great job; good variety; level of expertise on training is very good; easy to recommend this conference for all of the above reasons; well done! (*Seven responses*)
- I thought the sessions were very good. Very experienced presenters.
- Please institute a term limit on the Co-Chairs. We appreciate all the great work the experienced Co-Chairs are providing to the NARPM conference, but other people need to have a chance to be exposed and trained in the leadership position of the Co-Chairs. We need new blood in the Co-Chair positions please!
- If possible, cover one or two topics on state's perspectives on specific issues of interest from state representatives. This is my first time to attend the NARPM. I'm really impressed by the enthusiasm, friendliness, and collaborative attitude throughout the conference. I would like to attend it again next year. Best of luck for the future. Great job!
- Organization planning, advertisement, etc. is near perfect. Extra activities well done. I appreciate very much printed directions to music on Wednesday night and picnic on Thursday. I hope that the conference can continue in the same form - 4 full days and optional field trips. Only issue I am concerned about is the "overpacking" of the individual class content. I see little point to rushing as much as occurred in several classes. I appreciate the shipment of class literature back to our offices. The internet cafe is extremely useful and convenient. A few more computers would be helpful. Remind presenters to ensure that displayed graphics can be read.

- There seems to be an increase in taking pictures and video of the sessions. This is okay but can be distracting so it may be a good idea to set-up ground rules for how and when pictures can be taken, by whom, etc. More attention to balance new RPM versus experienced RPM tracks (based on data from who comes to the conference and how experienced they are). Question on evaluation form should be added to ask what type of site they work on so we can see whose coming and what training they might need.
- This was the best NARPM that I have attended thus far.
- This year the courses were very good topics and a good variety of topics. The process that the NARPM Co-Chairs use to select topics is working well and each year is better than before. Several ideas for topics: 1) Motivational team building speaker and course; 2) Review and discussion of NCP regulations (RD/RA, Construction completion, how to move sites to completion, case studies). I would move the picnic to Tuesday night.