

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 serves as a formal mechanism used to coordinate with EPA Headquarters (HQ) offers to promote national consistency in the Superfund remedial program. The annual training conference serves as the primary 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 and lessons learned.

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) and other offices, including the Office of Research and Development (ORD), worked as a team with RPMs across the nation to develop and conduct the 18th Annual Training Conference from July 7 through 11, 2008, in Portland, Oregon. In addition, the Technical Support Project (TSP) Forums developed and supported several training courses. The training conference consisted of 24 technical, legal, and administrative training courses; 20 panel and information sessions; daily plenary speakers; a Resource Area that featured 13 exhibits; and two field trips. The TSP Forums meetings were held concurrently with the NARPM Annual Training Conference to enhance networking opportunities for participants.

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 2007 NARPM Annual Training Conference. The Co-Chairs reviewed the course and session evaluations from the 2007 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 2008 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 2008 training conference included plenary sessions, training courses, panel, and information sessions, the Resource Area, field trips, 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, an update from the Assessment and Remediation Division (ARD) as well as the FFRRO, information on the Puget Sound Partnership, and the role of the NARPM Co-Chair.
- **Training Courses:** Twenty-four training courses that covered technical, legal, and administrative topics were offered at this year's training conference. Eighteen of the 24 courses were new offerings. The methodologies for the courses varied and included case studies, lectures, and discussion. Some of the courses offered included DNAPL Source Zone Treatment, Green Remediation: Opening the Door to Field Use, Leadership is an Inside Job, Monitored Natural Attenuation for Inorganics, Risk Communication, Multi-Increment Sampling/Decision Unit Sampling, and Be Prepared: Know What to Say and How to Say It, An Advanced Media Course.
- **Panel and Information Sessions:** The NARPM Co-Chairs selected 20 panel 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 Developments in Remedial Design, Virtual Connection: Tools and Strategies for EPA Employees, Beneficial Use of Mining and Mineral Processing Waste, OSC/RPM Interactions Synergy, Vapor Intrusion, and Permeable Reactive Zones.

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/2008/>.

- **Resource Area:** The Resource Area featured 13 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 Technical Services and Internet Café, Region 10 Dive Team, and the Superfund Basic Research Program.
- **Field Trips:** Two field trips followed Friday's closing plenary session. The Portland Harbor tour showcased a Superfund sediment site, including sources and affected sediments, and helped participants understand the complexities involved with a multi-party and multi-million dollar investigation, extensive tribal engagement, natural resource damage issues, and an active public. The Portland Wellfield – Cascade Corporation tour provided participants with an overview of the geology of the area as well as a tour of an active cleanup area where remedies such as phytoremediation and biostimulation are being implemented.
- **TSP Forum Business Meetings:** The business meetings of the TSP Forums also occurred during the week. This is the fifth time the TSP Forums have participated and helped to sponsor, develop, and instruct several courses and sessions during the training conference.
- **After-Hour Activities:** Several after-hour activities were planned by the Region 10 Ground Crew members during the week to bring RPMs together in informal settings. These activities included a bike tour, Chinatown dinner and Underground tour, Willamette River kayaking tour, summer ice skating, and the annual volleyball game and picnic.

Participants

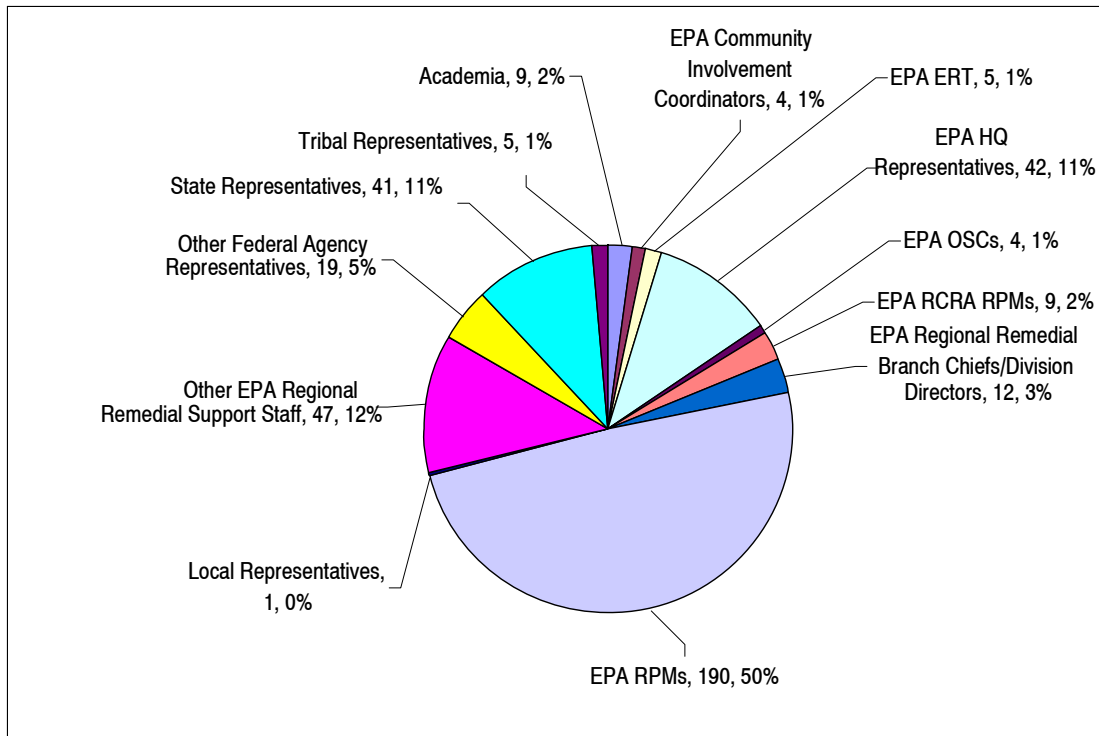
Approximately 383¹ attendees participated in the NARPM Annual Training Conference and the business meetings of the TSP Forums. Exhibit ES-1 identifies the attendees who participated in the NARPM Annual Training Conference.

Attendees for the training conference and TSP Forums included: 190 EPA RPMs; 42 EPA HQ Representatives; 47 other EPA Regional Remedial Support Staff; 12 EPA Regional Remedial Branch Chiefs and Division Directors; 4 EPA Community Involvement Coordinators (CICs); 5 EPA ERT members; 4 EPA On-Scene Coordinators (OSC); and 9 EPA Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) RPMs. In addition, 19 other federal agency representatives, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tennessee Valley Authority, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), DoD, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); 9 members of academia; 41 state representatives; 5 tribal representatives; and 1 local representative attended the 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 105 participants; 65 out of 105 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 two previous training conferences. In addition, 21 of the 68 RPMs indicated that they had worked on federal facility sites.

Exhibit ES-1. NARPM Annual Training Conference Attendees by Job Title



¹ Consultants who helped facilitate the training conference and instruct training courses are not included in this number.

Evaluation of Training Courses and Panel and Information Sessions

Participants in each training course, and panel 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 605 evaluation forms for the training courses were collected. Of the 21 courses offered (three 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 356 evaluation forms for the panel sessions were collected. Of the 14 panel sessions offered, 1 session received an average grade of 5, 11 sessions received an average grade of 4, and 2 sessions received an average grade of 3. No session received an average grade of 2 or 1.

A total of 108 evaluation forms for the information sessions were collected. Of the 6 information sessions offered, 2 received an average grade of 5 and 4 sessions received an average grade of 4. No session received a 3, 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 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.