

**APPENDIX G**  
**Detailed Recommendations**

This section of the report presents the detailed recommendations identified by the NARPM Co-Chairs and Tetra Tech.

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## Recommendations from the NARPM Co-Chair “Hot Wash” Session

Recommendations from the NARPM Co-Chairs were identified during a “hot wash” session held on Friday, June 23, after participants returned from the community service project. The session, which included Mr. Turner and a Tetra Tech representative, was used to solicit immediate feedback, impressions, and recommendations. The Co-Chairs offered feedback on the success and lessons learned from the week-long program during the “hot wash” session. The following recommendations were made during the session:

### Comments and Recommendations about Plenary Sessions and Working Luncheons:

- Consider shortening the opening plenary session to enable the conference to include an additional paper, panel, or information session on Monday morning.
- Limit the opening plenary session to an introduction and welcome by Mr. Turner, followed by administrative remarks, a regional welcome, a speech by the Assistant Administrator of OSWER, and remarks by two EPA office directors.
- Invite Division Directors to speak during the two working luncheons.
- Schedule the closing plenary session on Thursday afternoon to allow a full day on Friday for field trips and community service projects.

### Comments about Individual Courses and Sessions:

Name of Course or Session	Comments
<i>Training Courses</i>	
Close-Out Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course was well received.</li> <li>• Positive comments about quality of materials and how the course was led.</li> </ul>
Conflict Management – Crucial Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some negative comments about the use of a lengthy videotape.</li> <li>• Course did not appear to have been well planned.</li> <li>• Revise the format of this course before it is offered at future training conferences.</li> </ul>
Documenting the Systematic Planning Process in a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course was well conducted.</li> </ul>
Facilitative Leadership – Managing Productive Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course was well conducted.</li> <li>• For future offerings, include a group exercise to provide participants hands-on training.</li> </ul>
Five-Year Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course was well received.</li> <li>• Positive comments about the quality of materials and how the course was led.</li> </ul>
Introduction to Real Estate for Government Regulators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive comments about how the course was conducted.</li> </ul>
Long-Term Ground Water Monitoring Optimization Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider offering this course as an 8-hour course as there was too much material to cover in 4 hours.</li> <li>• Explore options to revise the course to provide more hands-on, computer-based training.</li> </ul>

Name of Course or Session	Comments
Project Management Skills for RPMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course was well received and well conducted.</li> </ul>
Remedial Action (RA) Contracting and Construction Cost Estimating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course was not well received.</li> <li>• Negative comments about the quality of the materials and the course in general.</li> <li>• Insufficient material for a 4-hour course.</li> <li>• Absence of case studies was noted.</li> <li>• No RPMs participated, either as instructors or as part of the training team.</li> </ul>
Remedial Technologies Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course was not well received.</li> <li>• Some negative comments from participants.</li> <li>• Presentations were not considered of good quality.</li> </ul>
Risk and Crisis Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider offering this course as an 8-hour course as there was too much material to cover in 4 hours.</li> </ul>
Visual Sample Plan (VSP) Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course was well conducted.</li> <li>• Explore options to revise the course to provide more hands-on, computer-based training.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Panel Sessions</i></b>	
Design and Construction Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Session was not well received in general.</li> <li>• Session was not conducted in a typical panel format with several speakers to discuss specific topics or areas of expertise. The session might have been better categorized as an information session.</li> </ul>
Partial Deletions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some negative comments from participants.</li> <li>• It was noted that the instructors did not appear to know the subject matter well.</li> <li>• Consider including more information about relevant policies.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Paper Discussions</i></b>	
Ground Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive comments about how Judy Canova presented her material.</li> </ul>
Triad Case Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitators did their jobs well.</li> <li>• Kira Lynch should be an integral member of any new Triad session that might be offered at the 2007 NARPM Annual Training Conference.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Information Sessions</i></b>	
Financial Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course was well conducted.</li> </ul>
National Hurricane Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitators performed well.</li> <li>• Session was well received.</li> <li>• Positive comments about quality of materials and how the course was led.</li> </ul>

**Comments about On-site Logistics:**

- Emphasize the role and responsibilities of Tetra Tech facilitators to ensure a consistent approach. The Co-Chairs commented that some facilitators played a more active role by reminding participants about signing the attendance sheets and completing evaluation forms, but other facilitators focused their attention mainly on the audiovisual equipment.
- Start planning field trips and community service projects earlier.
- Transportation to and from the picnic was problematic. It would have been preferable to select a location for the picnic that was more conveniently located to the hotel.

**Comments about Issues Related to the TSP Forums:**

- Resolve the registration issues related to registration of TSP Forum members. Many members experienced difficulties when they tried to register for courses and sessions, even though the online registration system was updated mid-way through registration to allow for TSP members to register for courses.
- Improve the communication among the Co-Chairs and heads of the TSP Forums to ensure smoother integration of the TSP Forum meetings and courses.
- Strive for a greater balance between the more technically advanced courses that the TSP Forums wish to sponsor and the beginner and intermediate courses that newer RPMs are interested in taking.
- The Co-Chairs welcome suggestions from the TSP Forums about courses or sessions they wish to sponsor.

**General Comments:**

- The new NARPM Admin Web site developed and maintained by Tetra Tech was highly commended. The Co-Chairs noted that it made planning transparent and easier for them to manage instructors and presenters more effectively. The site should be enhanced to include improved tracking of requests for travel and lodging.
- Make information available early in the planning about how requests for travel funding will be handled for courses and sessions.
- Increase the involvement of RPMs in the development and instruction of courses and sessions.
- Consider how to improve the performance of moderators; for example, conduct a Web-based training course or plan a conference call to discuss in detail the responsibilities of the moderators.
- The ERT Internet Café was again very well-received by participants.
- Eliminate the postcards used to promote the welcoming reception, volleyball game, and picnic. Consider a one-page insert to identify all after-hour activities.

## **Recommendations Collected During the Closing Plenary Session**

During the closing plenary session on Friday, June 23, the NARPM Co-Chairs facilitated a group discussion to collect immediate feedback from participants about the training conference. The participants were asked to provide input on what went well, what would be good to change, and suggestions for courses to be offered at future training conferences. The comments were captured on flip charts by the Co-Chairs as follows:

### **Comments about what went well**

- Organization
- Location was good for pedestrians (not isolated)
- Good courses
- Local event speakers
- Contracts training
- UFP QAPP – good course
- Good to have post-ROD courses all together
- Facilitative Leadership/Crucial Communications good (professional and personal)
- Good balance
- Internet café (strong group agreement)

### **Comments about what would be good to change and/or courses wanted:**

- Morning plenary is long – have alternate activities.
- Provide more information on courses before registration.
- Titles should reflect level of the course.
- Keep 8-hour courses all on one day.
- Group courses by phase of job (RI/FS, RD/RA, etc).
- Tracks by “type of site”.
- Communicate tracks and phases better.
- Progressive tracks (Basic to Advanced) in training.
- Courses available to all.
- Presentations before conference online.
- Add:
  - Geophysics
  - Rapid Assessment Tools
  - IC Comprehensive Implementation
  - Federal Facilities UXO
  - Brownfields-related courses.
  - More advanced hydro course
  - Longer Mining Paper Session
  - More advanced level of Sediment Remedies
- Keep contracts training to meet new training requirement.
- More Project Management (continue – more case studies – longer).

- More Case Studies coupled with More RPMs (presenting the studies).
- Ready for Reuse (look at first year offered).
- RA Cost Estimation – original impression it would be more advanced.
- Condensing the VSP Presentation made it “too fast” – needed computers (needs 8 hours).
- More or better seeking of Co-Chairs (what Co-Chair does; lead time and advertising).
- “Too much” intro discussions – get to the topic.

## Recommendations from Tetra Tech

Tetra Tech developed recommendations for improving the 2007 NARPM Annual Training Conference based on observations made during the week and discussions among members of the Tetra Tech team who supported preparations for the conference and provided on-site support.

### Comments about Courses and Sessions:

- Consider the importance of increasing the involvement of RPMs as either instructors or members of the training teams. For example, RPMs participated as instructors or as members of the training team in 27 percent of the training courses. RPM involvement as presenters, panelists, and moderators — ranging between 70 and 86 percent — was much greater. The involvement of RPMs as members of the training team for the sessions was more varied, ranging from 14 percent for the panel sessions, to 100 percent for the paper discussions, and 43 percent for the information sessions.
- Decide whether it is feasible for the NARPM points of contact (POCs) for individual courses or sessions to be responsible for reviewing training materials before they are final. As in previous years, participants expressed frustration about poorly formatted slides or handouts that were illegible or poorly written. A final review by a NARPM POC or designee would likely reduce these types of errors.
- Consider how to encourage presenters to provide materials in advance. Only about 30 percent of the presentations were submitted in advance of the conference to Tetra Tech, despite frequent e-mails sent to instructors and members of the training teams. Most of the last-minute audiovisual “glitches” resulted because the presentations were not available in advance to ensure that they were compatible with the laptops used at the conference.
- Adhere to a “drop dead date” for canceling courses or sessions if it is determined that progress is not satisfactory in developing the course or confirming the instructors.
- Consider how to encourage all instructors to bring an adequate number of copies of handout materials. In many instances, copies of presentations and handout materials were not available to all participants.
- Develop an online tool for submittal of course and session abstracts. This online tool would be more efficient for the authors who submit abstracts, reduce the effort required of Tetra Tech to keep track of multiple iterations of abstracts, and allow the final, edited abstracts to be available to the submitters before the conference brochure is finalized.
- Evaluate how to make more clear to training teams the options for contractor support in development of courses; for example, whether Tetra Tech EM Inc., EMS, Inc., or Tetra Tech NUS can support the teams.
- Set the morning and afternoon break times early in the planning stages to assist the training teams in developing agendas that reflect the break times.
- Make available on the NARPM Web site a PowerPoint template and images for instructors and presenters to use when preparing their presentation materials.

### Comments about On-site Logistics:

- Suggest that all plenary speakers be introduced by the Co-Chairs. This role would enhance the visibility for the Co-Chairs and ensure a variety of speakers for the audience.
- Continue to conduct a “hot wash” session with the Co-Chairs immediately after the end of the training conference.
- Conduct a debriefing session on Friday to collect immediate feedback from the moderators.

- Prepare a “cheat sheet” for each course and session to be used by instructors, moderators, or Tetra Tech facilitators to identify location of emergency exits and restrooms, confirm the break times, remind participants to sign the attendance sheet, and complete an evaluation form. These administrative remarks would also make clear the role of the Tetra Tech facilitator.
- Arrange for microphones to be provided as standard equipment for larger classrooms or classes attended by more than 40 people if costs are not prohibitive.
- Continue to use ribbons for nametags to identify Co-Chairs, instructors, TSP Forum members, state and local agency representatives, and Tetra Tech staff.

#### **Comments about Registration:**

- Significantly enhance the registration process using participant data from the 2006 NARPM Annual Training Conference. For example, use the final 2006 participant data to “pre-load” individual registration data. Registrants for the 2007 NARPM Annual Training Conference would review contact information, make changes as necessary, review a list of the courses they took in 2006, and select courses for the 2007 training conference. The benefits of this approach include less time for participants to register, as they would not be required to re-submit contact information; better tracking of registrant data; and significantly less time for Tetra Tech to review registrations to correct errors and standardize the data.
- Revise the roles used during registration to include, at a minimum, new roles for plenary speakers, Ground Crew Member, and consultant support.
- Add to registration a question to require that EPA registrants identify their immediate supervisor.
- Add to registration a function that allows TSP members to sign up for specific TSP Forum meetings. Collecting this data will facilitate better tracking of the number of participants at these meetings and more readily identify the size of the rooms needed.
- Consider a paperless-based confirmation process. For example, develop an online tool to allow participants easy access to confirmation information, course schedule, and details about the hotel and travel instead of preparing confirmation packages that are mailed to each participant. Preparation of the confirmation packages requires significant effort and cost for photocopying and mailing the packages. Providing the confirmation information online would be less costly and would also respond to participants who requested a more paperless process.

#### **Comments about the NARPM Admin Site:**

- Develop one central Instructor Page to post deadlines, administrative information, and details about standard audiovisual equipment to be provided, as well as additional audiovisual equipment that may be requested. Links to the individual Instructor Report pages would be available from this page, similar to those used for the 2006 training conference.
- Make available the online Instructor Report pages as soon as the training milestones are established and the training teams are identified. Include general tips to develop presentations that are legible and easily read; these tips may help address the many comments submitted by participants about materials that were difficult to read.
- Considering adding a Moderator Page to provide tips to successfully facilitate a session.
- Develop a “page” for each NARPM Co-Chair to facilitate easier tracking of courses and sessions when they are the POC.

#### **General Comments:**

- Since the primary audience for the annual training conferences is RPMs, consider how to encourage their increased participation. Approximately 28 percent of RPMs (140 of 500)

attended the 2006 NARPM Annual Training Conference, a rate that is consistent with previous years. Consider efforts to assess why more RPMs do not attend and how to increase their participation at future training conferences.

- Plans for field trips and community service projects should be established by the time online registration begins so that participants can sign up during registration.
- When a community service project is planned, the responsibility for coordinating logistic details should be assigned to a Co-Chair and/or contractor as early as possible.
- Revise the session evaluation form to include questions related to the moderator. Eliminate the moderator evaluation form.
- Revise the evaluation forms to eliminate the option of assigning letter grades. Provide participants the option of assigning a numerical score on a scale of 1 to 5 or 1 to 10.
- Make available during the training conference the conference evaluation and evaluation forms online on the NARPM Web site. Set up a link to the online forms at the ERT Internet Café.
- Rename “paper discussions” to “paper sessions.”
- Identify on the conference agenda when awards will be presented.
- Note on the conference brochure and Web site linkages between panel and paper sessions.
- Ensure that the business meetings of the TSP Forums are scheduled so that they do not coincide with the plenary sessions.