

The Institute Review

www.nelac-institute.org

Third Quarter 2011



Editor-In-Chief
Gary Ward

Oregon Department of Health

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2012 Forum on Laboratory Accreditation

By Lara Autry, USEPA and Jerry Parr, TNI

Registration is open for the 2012 Forum on Laboratory Accreditation to be held at the Hyatt Regency in Sarasota, FL from January 30 – February 2, 2012. The 2012 Forum will focus on implementation of recommendations from the Accreditation Body Task Force (ABTF) and TNI's new National Environmental Field Activities Program (NEFAP).

The Forum will feature open public meetings of all TNI committees to allow quality professionals, chemists, analysts, microbiologists, engineers, and managers from federal and state agencies; commercial, municipal, state, and federal laboratories; and many others who are actively involved and interested in accreditation issues to review what has been done and participate in the efforts to establish a national environmental accreditation program. The 2012 Forum will include:

- ◆ Meetings of all TNI committees;
- ◆ Discussion of best practices for instrument calibration developed by the Environmental Measurement Methods Expert Committee (EMMEC);
- ◆ Meetings of three task groups focused on audit consistency, cryptosporidium analyses, and support for Accreditation Bodies (ABs);
- ◆ A meeting of EPA's Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB);
- ◆ A general session with updates about TNI programs;
- ◆ A training course on wet chemistry methods; and
- ◆ A training course on accreditation of Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations (FSMOs).

For more information, go to the 2012 conference website at <http://www.nelac-institute.org/meetings.php>.



Continued on next page



2012 Forum on Laboratory Accreditation (cont.)

Preliminary Schedule

MONDAY, JANUARY 30

8:30am — 12:00pm

- ▶ EPA's Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board
- ▶ Training Course: Wet Chemistry Methods
- ▶ Stationary Source Audit Sample Committee

1:30pm — 5:00pm Concurrent Sessions

- ▶ Training Course: Wet Chemistry Methods (cont.)
- ▶ General Session

5:30pm — 7:00pm Reception

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

8:30am — 12:00pm Concurrent Sessions

- ▶ Proficiency Testing Expert Committee
- ▶ Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee
- ▶ Environmental Measurement Methods Expert Committee
- ▶ Technical Assistance Committee

12:00pm — 1:30pm Lunch Provided

12:00pm — 1:30pm Information Technology Committee: Working Lunch

1:30pm — 5:00pm Concurrent Sessions

- ▶ Proficiency Testing Executive Committee
- ▶ Laboratory Quality Systems Expert Committee
- ▶ Accreditation Body Task Force
- ▶ Laboratory Accreditation Body Committee

5:30pm — 7:00pm Reception

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

8:30am — 12:00pm Concurrent Sessions

- ▶ National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program Accreditation Council
- ▶ Field Activities Committee
- ▶ Policy Committee

12:00pm — 1:30pm Lunch Provided

1:30pm — 3:00pm Concurrent Sessions

- ▶ National Environmental Field Activities Program Executive Committee
- ▶ Consensus Standards Development Program Executive Committee
- ▶ Advocacy Committee

3:30pm — 5:30pm TNI Board and Chairs

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2 – 3

8:30am — 5:00pm

Training Course: Accreditation of Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations

8:30am — 5:00pm

Training Course: Radiochemistry for Laboratory Assessors



Training Courses Offered at the 2012 Sarasota Forum

Basic Chemistry and Operation of Currently Approved Wet Chemical Methods

Interact with your peers, share information, and learn secrets and shortcuts for analyzing some important analytes by approved methods. We will cover fundamentals of the chemical reactions, and basic "theoretical" operation of the analyzers used to perform the methods. This course is designed with the analyst in mind.

Assessor Training: Radiochemistry

This course provides examples of the assessment process for radiochemistry technologies, based on the 2009 TNI Standard. The emphasis of this course is sample preparation, common instrumental techniques and an overview of performing assessments for other radiochemistry technologies.

Accreditation of Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations

This one-day course will provide introductory training regarding the 2007 TNI National Environmental Field Activities (NEFAP) Standard and procedures for field sampling and measurement organizations (FSMO) to gain accreditation. It focuses heavily on specific requirements and additions to ISO/IEC 17025 in the NEFAP Standard for field sample collection and measurement organizations. It is designed to help FSMOs develop systems, practices, and procedures to prepare for NEFAP accreditation.



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Bellevue Environmental Measurement Symposium — A Great Success!

By Steve Arms, Florida Department of Health

The 2011 Environmental Measurement Symposium was held during the week of August 15 — 19 in Bellevue, Washington as the 5th annual combined meetings of The Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC), and the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB). More than 450 attendees were treated to some of the finest weather the scenic Pacific Northwest had seen all year. They were also treated to a wide variety of interesting and informative sessions on topics ranging from Accreditation to Analysis and from Emerging Contaminants to Emergency Response. An extensive array of posters, three (3) training courses, and the largest vendor exhibition ever added to the meeting's success.

The theme of the NEMC this year was "Monitoring Response to Environmental Disasters." Over 100 individual presentations were made at twenty (20) technical sessions covering subjects of interest to scientists, regulators, and policymakers alike. Presentations and posters given at the NEMC are posted at <http://www.nemc.us/program-2011.php>.

At ELAB's meeting on Monday morning, the federal advisory committee discussed on-going environmental laboratory issues related to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) measurement methods, monitoring, and regulations. This included their recommendation to EPA to use The NELAC Institute (TNI) Standard as the quality system base for the Manual for the Certification of Laboratories Analyzing Drinking Water. ELAB is also preparing a report to EPA assessing the "Health of National Accreditation," which will use input gathered from all interest groups.

The Forum on Laboratory Accreditation turned its focus on the implementation and improvement of the TNI Standard. The committees that comprise the various TNI programs met in concurrent sessions, during the week, providing opportunities for feedback from stakeholders. Committee meeting minutes are posted on the TNI website. TNI program highlights included:

- ▶ **Great News from The National Environmental Field Activities Program (NEFAP)!** NEFAP announced its preliminary approval of four (4) Accreditation Bodies (ABs) to accept applications, firmly establishing this exciting new program whereby Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations (FSMOs) can obtain accreditation. The ABs are ACLASS, American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), Laboratory Accreditation Bureau (L-A-B), and Perry Johnson Laboratory Accreditation, Inc. (PJLA). AB evaluations are still ongoing and final approvals will be given after NEFAP observes the assessments done by the candidate ABs.
- ▶ The **Environmental Measurement Methods Expert Committee (EMMEC)** discussed an outline of a draft standard for calibration with a goal to have a working draft standard within the next few months. The group recognized that some details will need to be worked out to resolve potential conflicts or overlap with the existing Quality Systems standard.
- ▶ After a lengthy discussion, the **Proficiency Testing Expert Committee (PTEC)** voted to rewind the Standard to again require laboratories to report PT results to the TNI Proficiency Testing Reporting Limit (PTRL) rather than to the laboratory's Limit of Quantitation (LOQ). Since few committee members were present, additional discussion on this controversial subject may ensue. Mitzi Miller was elected as the new chair of the committee, replacing Kirstin Daigle.
- ▶ The Proficiency Testing Program Executive Committee (PTPEC) is recommending to the NELAP that chloral hydrate be dropped from the **Fields of Proficiency Testing (FoPT)** tables due to the shipping issues raised related to U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) regulations. They also discussed the non-potable water (NPW) FoPT table that will be effective Oct. 3. Work continued on the FSMO FoPT table and footnotes. The PTEC has set a goal to incorporate technology into the FoPT tables.
- ▶ The **Stationary Audit Source Sample (SSAS) Committee** announced that the EPA has granted approval of the program. This speaks highly of the tremendous progress the SSAS program has made in a short period of time.



TNI to Launch New Mobile App

For the next Forum on Laboratory Accreditation being held in Sarasota, FL this winter, TNI will introduce a new mobile app to provide conference attendees with a convenient way to review the technical program and agendas, locate meeting rooms, and obtain useful hotel and area information.

Our goal is to put important information within easy reach to help make the most of your time at the Forum. All you'll need is a Smartphone with web access. The mobile app will be available at <http://m.nelac-institute.org> starting the week prior to the Forum in Sarasota, and will be updated for the duration of the meeting.



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Bellevue Environmental Measurement Symposium (cont.)

- ▶ The **Quality Systems Expert Committee (QSEC)** presented its Working Draft Standard (WDS) and heard comments from attendees. The committee recognized that several clarifications are still needed. Public comments were due by early September.
- ▶ Because their charters both govern AB activities, the **Onsite Assessment and Accreditation Body Expert Committees (ABEC)** held a joint meeting. The committee made plans to merge under a single charter to more effectively develop consensus standards.
- ▶ As the “rolling” implementation of the 2009 TNI Standard takes place, the **NELAP Accreditation Council (AC)** reported that five ABs have begun implementing the Standard (i.e., FL, UT, TX, LADHH, and OR). Ten (10) ABs are still using the 2003 NELAC Standard with staged implementation ahead. PT reporting continues to be an issue because of the significant PT scoring differences between the NELAC Standard and the TNI Standard. The AC has asked the PT providers to annotate electronic reports that include LOQ reporting with PT providers indicating that this is doable. Renewal of NELAP-recognition for several ABs is underway, and all evaluation teams for the current round of renewals have been staffed.
- ▶ The **Accreditation Body Task Force (ABTF)**, which was chartered in June 2010 by the TNI Board of Directors, presented their final report at the Technical Assistance Committee (TAC) Assessment Forum. The report outlines eight (8) recommendations to improve the effectiveness of NELAP in the face of dwindling resources. Each of the task force’s recommendations have been assigned to the appropriated bodies in TNI for consideration, and the various groups discussed these assignments during their meetings at the Forum. A separate meeting was held to discuss the implementation of Recommendation 8, the use of non-governmental ABs. The task force decided to form subcommittees to tackle this complicated and controversial issue.
- ▶ The **Consistency Improvement Task Force (CITF)**, also commissioned by the TNI Board, gave presentations reviewing progress and draft recommendations. They reported plans to have their project completed by the end of October.
- ▶ The **TAC Mentoring Session** provided training on internal audits, and the Assessment Forum focused on the value of Demonstrations of Capability (DOC), as defined by the TNI Standard. The TAC received comments on the Small Lab Handbook and received good input on training needs.
- ▶ The **Advocacy Committee** met twice. At the first meeting, members got updates from the Small Laboratory Advocacy Group (SLAG) and a report on the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) task force. At the second meeting, participants reviewed a new database of state accreditation programs and discussed how to best use the information. They also discussed the new TNI brochures and decided to let each program review and edit their program information.
- ▶ The **Policy Committee** held a working meeting to prepare the Complaint Resolution SOP and flowchart for the TNI Board’s approval. They also took comments on the policy on training materials, and reviewed draft NEFAP policies and SOPs.
- ▶ The **Information Technology (IT) Committee** held a lunch meeting with ABs to discuss the Laboratory Accreditation Management System (LAMS). TNI staff is working diligently with ABs to help ensure successful implementation of this long-awaited national database.
- ▶ The **TNI Board of Directors** met on Thursday to hear reports on the week’s events and expressed its sincere appreciation to all who worked so intently to make the meeting a tremendous success.

As if the beautiful weather had been conjured up just for the Symposium, clouds returned to the sky as the attendees began returning to their homes. We turn our sights now toward sunny Florida, where the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation will meet in Sarasota from January 30 – February 2, 2012. The Forum will include a meeting of ELAB, TNI committee breakouts, progress reports on the ABTF recommendations, and several training courses. As the important work of establishing a true national accreditation program continues, this will be a meeting not to be missed!



Laboratory Accreditation Management System (LAMS) Launched

The TNI Laboratory Accreditation Management System (LAMS), aka the national database, is now available for use by the public. Log in is only required for Accreditation Body administrative functions. General users can access the list of accreditation bodies and contact information, search current analyte and method tables, and view technology and matrix tables at <http://nelac-institute.org/lams>. To ensure that only the most up-to-date information is available, these tables will no longer be kept updated elsewhere in spreadsheets on the website. Users can also search for labs using a variety of filters including Name, TNI Code, State, or Accreditation Body (AB). Filters can be added to search for accreditations using multiple combinations of Matrix, Method, and Analyte. While not all Fields of Accreditation have been migrated to LAMS, the ABs are working toward that goal. The spreadsheet lab list will shrink as the data is migrated. Select “contact” at the top of the page to submit questions or comments.



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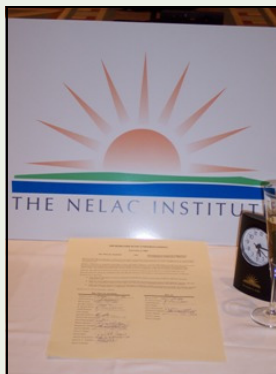
TNI Celebrates 5th Anniversary

By Steve Arms, Florida Department of Health

November 6, 2006 marks the day that a “giant step towards achieving the long-term goal of the environmental laboratory and monitoring communities to have a national accreditation program” was taken. That was the day when the Directors of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) and the Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA) took action to form TNI.

Due to the tireless efforts of TNI Staff and hundreds of volunteers, much has been accomplished in these five (5) short years to move that dream towards reality. Here is a sampling:

- ▶ New standards developed, approved, and adopted.
- ▶ Membership increased from approximately 500 to over 800 individuals.
- ▶ NELAP-recognized Accreditation Bodies increased to fifteen (15).
- ▶ National Environmental Field Activities Program (NEFAP) established.
- ▶ Activities funded through EPA cooperative agreements.
- ▶ New Environmental Measurement Methods Expert Committee (EMMEC) founded.
- ▶ Broad consensus participation accepted.
- ▶ Adequate staffing to carry out our mission appointed.
- ▶ Strategic Plan formulated.
- ▶ Web-based Standards Interpretation Request system developed.
- ▶ Educational Delivery System/Training Program developed.



We can and should be proud of our past, but new and unsolved challenges still lie ahead:

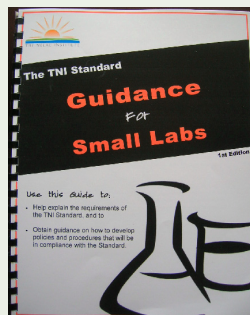
- ▶ State government resource issues;
- ▶ Uniform and consistent standards implementation;
- ▶ EPA drinking water program equivalency;
- ▶ Perception of the value of accreditation by some labs; and
- ▶ Updating and refining the consensus standards.

As we celebrate our achievements and contemplate the future, the Board of Directors sends out a huge “Thank You” to all have contributed to TNI’s success. Happy Anniversary and Congratulations TNI!!!

Announcing the Small Lab Handbook!

By Keith Chapman, City of Salem

The official title for this new TNI laboratory resource is “The TNI Standard: Guidance for Small Labs”, but the working title has long been “The Small Lab Handbook.” Credit for its creation goes to a number of TNI members. The initial inspiration came from Len Schantz, TNI’s first Small Laboratory Advocate. The first working draft was provided by Tom McAninch who volunteered his manual for Laboratories Seeking NELAC Accreditation, a guidance document he had created for Texas laboratories. Gary Dechant then reorganized the document to match the 2009 TNI Standard, after which it was reviewed by members of the Small Lab Advocate Group (SLAG). Final editing and formatting were done by Jan Wlodarski before a review by members of the Technical Assistance Committee. So, there are many TNI members who have been instrumental in bringing this resource from idea to reality!



The contents of the Small Lab Handbook match the TNI Quality Manual Template outline and together, these two documents assist any lab, large or small, in becoming TNI-accredited. Many years of NELAC experience is compressed into 91 pages in hopes that the small laboratory will be spared a fair amount of learning from others’ mistakes. It should also benefit the assessors by making the laboratory more prepared for their first assessment. Look for it on the TNI Website (<http://www.nelac-institute.org>).



Call for Papers DoD Environmental Monitoring & Data Quality Workshop

The DoD Environmental Data Quality Workgroup has announced the 9th annual DoD Environmental Monitoring & Data Quality Workshop will be held March 26 – 29 in La Jolla, CA. Abstracts are being solicited for the following topics:

- DoD Emerging Contaminants
- Air/Vapor Intrusion
- Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP)
- Laboratory Analysis and Performance
- Data Management and Sharing
- Project Planning/Implementation of UFP-QAPP
- Data Quality and Usability
- Field Sampling and Analysis
- Quality Systems for Environmental Monitoring
- Environmental Monitoring for Remedial Technologies
- Innovative Methods for Chemical Sensing and Monitoring Technology

Abstracts for technical presentations and posters will be accepted through **January 13, 2012**. Abstracts should be 1 page and in Microsoft Word format. Submit the abstract via email to: EMDQWorkshop@geologics.com. Website: www.navylabs.navy.mil/DoDChemistmeeting.htm.



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Accreditation Body Task Force (ABTF) Update

By Judy Duncan, ABTF Chair

Judy Duncan, Chair of the Accreditation Body Task Force (ABTF), presented the final report of the task force at the Environmental Measurement Symposium in Bellevue, WA. A key recommendation of the task force was to develop a process to allow non-governmental accreditation bodies (ABs), also called third-party ABs, to offer accreditations that would be accepted through reciprocity by the existing NELAP-recognized ABs. Following the Bellevue meeting, the ABTF has established subcommittees to begin exploring how this recommendation might be accomplished. Some key activities of these subcommittees will include:

- ▶ Ensuring that any non-governmental ABs have the ability to operate a NELAP accreditation program according to TNI expectations;
- ▶ Determining if any changes are needed to the existing process by which TNI recognizes NELAP ABs in order to recognize non-governmental ABs;
- ▶ Developing a process by which a state agency can recognize a non-governmental AB to accredit labs in their state;
- ▶ Exploring the feasibility of a process that would allow a NELAP AB to accept the accreditation of a laboratory that is accredited by another state-recognized non-governmental AB;
- ▶ Initiating a dialogue with the Office of Water to discuss this option relative to the drinking water certification program; and
- ▶ Determining if the TNI Standard (Volume 2) and Bylaws need to be clarified or revised to allow for non-governmental ABs to offer accreditations to laboratories.

In addition to exploring this recommendation, other recommendations of the task force have been assigned to TNI committees and programs for development of implementation plans. A status report on all recommendations of the task force will be presented at the 2012 Forum on Laboratory Accreditation in Sarasota, FL.

Consistency Improvement Task Force (CITF) Update

By Alfredo Sotomayor, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The Consistency Improvement Task Force is preparing their final report following presentation of draft recommendations at the Bellevue meeting. Areas of focus for their recommendations include:

- ▶ Laboratory Assessments
- ▶ Accreditation Body Evaluations
- ▶ Laboratory Services or Operations
- ▶ Training, Outreach, Additional Tools
- ▶ TNI Operations

Once the CITF completes their report at the end of October, it will be sent to the TNI Board for approval. The CITF and TNI Board will then identify parties responsible for implementing recommendations. The final report will be reviewed at the Sarasota meeting.

Specific draft recommendations presented for discussion at Bellevue included:

Laboratory Assessments

- ▶ Develop a uniform, accessible, electronic survey form for assessments.
- ▶ Use "Assessment Blueprint" during assessment planning process.
- ▶ Explore the use of third party assessors in promoting consistency.
- ▶ Use the corrective action cycle as a tool for improving consistency of laboratory assessments.
- ▶ Explore the use of third party ABs in promoting consistency.
- ▶ Require ABs to report on practices implemented during each two-year cycle to ensure consistency of assessments.



Removal of Chloral Hydrate from Proficiency Test (PT)

By Eric Smith, TestAmerica

Recently, a Proficiency Testing (PT) Provider received the following notice from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA): "To be able to produce a product containing chloral hydrate, the provider must have a manufacturing license from the DEA to produce an exempt chemical preparation. Anyone that makes a product containing chloral hydrate and provides it to a laboratory without a manufacturing license and approval of each formulation of a product (different concentrations) by the DEA is in violation, as is the laboratory."

The PT Provider subsequently approached the TNI PT Executive Committee (PTEC) to request a review of the need for a chloral hydrate PT. Upon review, it was determined that chloral hydrate was part of the Information Collection Rule (ICR) and was not incorporated into a National Primary Drinking Water regulation. The USEPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW) Technical Support Center (TSC) had originally implemented a PT program for chloral hydrate as part of the ICR, but since its completion, the TSC no longer needed PT samples for that analyte.

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Consistency Improvement Task Force (CITF) Update (cont.)

Laboratory Services or Operations

- ▶ Provide "Laboratory Bill of Rights" to laboratories at each assessment.
- ▶ Use corrective action cycle as a tool for improving consistency of laboratory operations.

Training, Outreach, Additional Tools

- ▶ Develop sampling tool for assessments (laboratories) and evaluations (ABs) that factors risk.
- ▶ Create Webinars that focus on consistency.
- ▶ Establish a master assessor program.
- ▶ Publish a periodic "E-column" for assessors.
- ▶ Insist that training related to assessments or analytical techniques include a consistency component.
- ▶ Design a peer-mentor program for assessors coordinated by TNI.
- ▶ Evaluate the level of consistency achieved by commonly used tools.
- ▶ Require refresher training for assessors specifically tailored to improve consistency.
- ▶ Standardize, as much as possible, the content and appearance of applications, assessment reports, certificates, and forms used by ABs.
- ▶ Develop a "range of possibilities" tool that identifies most common responses and labels outliers.

TNI Operations

- ▶ Establish an Office of Consistency with an officer, overseer, or ombudsman.
- ▶ Roll over some of the CITF projects into an extended cycle of two-year intervals.

Proficiency Testing Expert Committee (PTEC)

Activities

By Kirstin Daigle, TestAmerica

The Proficiency Testing Expert Committee (PTEC) provides review of standards interpretations and authors the Proficiency Testing (PT) requirements for environmental PTs. The PTEC does not manage the Field of Proficiency Testing (FoPT) tables; this is done by the Proficiency Testing Program Executive Committee (PTPEC). The PTEC worked to address questions from the Accreditation Bodies (ABs) related to the recently implemented 2009 TNI Standard PT Volume. The primary concern of the ABs related to the new 2009 TNI Standard was changing the evaluation criteria of the PT. The NELAC 2003 Standard did not include any requirements for the level to which PT samples should be evaluated or reported. The 2009 TNI Standard includes these specifications as requirements to assure consistency in implementation of the Standard between laboratories and ABs. The ABs' concerns with evaluating the PT at the LOQ included difficulties in changing databases and other details of implementation.

Reporting to the LOQ was originally proposed because some PTRLs were well below the typical reporting limits used by laboratories supporting some industries. This resulted in select laboratories having to run special calibrations as low as the PTRL. It also resulted in some laboratories railing PTs if the special calibrations were not performed. The PTEC has pointed out that the real solution is to develop different concentration levels for PTs for similar technologies. Multiple concentration ranges would allow laboratories to select the range appropriate to their testing needs.

The PTEC presented approaches for two types of scoring at the 2011 August TNI Meeting. Scoring to the PTRL and scoring to the LOQ, as well as various specific details related to each scoring option were presented. In general, the attendees agreed to return to PTRL reporting. However, the attendees of the PTEC meeting were not represented by many ABs due to meeting conflicts. The PTEC plans to present the approach to the AB Committee and obtain their feedback. The PTEC also plans to use feedback from the PT Providers (PTPs) first use of the LOQ scoring from October to December. Based on this information a draft standard for the PT Standard will be presented at the January 2012 meeting.



Removal of Chloral Hydrate cont.

During the Environmental Measurement Symposium in Bellevue, WA in August of this year, the TNI PTEC discussed this issue further with members of the TNI community, including PT Providers and Accreditation Bodies (ABs), to determine the need for a chloral hydrate PT. Discussion was unanimous that chloral hydrate should be removed from the TNI DW FoPT table. Since the Symposium, the TNI PTEC has removed chloral hydrate from the next official TNI DW FoPT table, which is scheduled to take effect January 3, 2012. The TNI PTEC will post the new TNI DW FoPT table prior to its effective date.



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Call for Papers



Collaborative Opportunities for Meeting Environmental Measurement and Monitoring Needs

The 28th Annual National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) Washington, DC August 6 – 10, 2012

Organized jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and The NELAC Institute (TNI), the 2012 Environmental Measurement Symposium, a combined meeting of the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) and the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, is the largest conference focused on environmental measurements in North America. The conference brings together scientists and managers from federal and state agencies, the regulated community, academia, and laboratory and engineering support communities. NEMC features presentations, posters, training, exhibits, and networking opportunities.

Do not miss the opportunity to network with other industry leaders at NEMC 2012. Make an impact by sharing your work at the most highly regarded technical conference in the environmental monitoring industry and be prepared to discuss policy and technical issues that affect all environmental media (i.e., water, air, soil, and wastes), across all environmental programs with other attendees.

To ensure the NEMC portion of the Symposium is cutting edge and meets the educational needs and interests of each attendee, the NEMC Steering Committee is inviting abstracts for oral or poster presentations in these specific topic areas:

- ◆ Collaborative Efforts to Improve Environmental Monitoring
- ◆ Creative Solutions in Academic Research
- ◆ Laboratory Accreditation
- ◆ Perchlorate
- ◆ Topics in Drinking Water
- ◆ Analysis of Metallic Species and Organometallics
- ◆ Innovative and Emerging Technologies for Environmental Contaminants
- ◆ Field Measurements, Sensors, and In-Situ Monitoring
- ◆ Operational and Advocacy Issues Impacting the Laboratory Industry
- ◆ Current Topics in Microbiology
- ◆ Air Methods/Monitoring
- ◆ Contaminated Sediments
- ◆ Topics in Shale Gas Exploration
- ◆ Passive Sampling methods
- ◆ Forensic Chemistry
- ◆ Advances in Sample Preparation/Cleanup
- ◆ Analytical Electronic Data Integrity
- ◆ Data Management and Usability

In an effort to broaden our outreach to the academic community, the NEMC Steering Committee is offering awards this year to both students and academic professionals. Details regarding these opportunities are available on the NEMC website under Technical Program – Academic Call for Papers.

Please provide your abstract by March 1, 2012. Abstracts received after the deadline are not guaranteed to be reviewed due to the number of available time slots and the high number of quality and timely submissions received.

More information and submission instructions are on the NEMC website at www.nemc.us.



Upcoming Meetings of Interest to Members

Midwest Environmental
Laboratory Summit
December 8 – 9, 2011
Chicago, IL
www.iaetl.org

FORUM ON LABORATORY
ACCREDITATION
January 30 – February 2, 2012
Sarasota, FL
[www.nelac-institute.org/
meetings.php](http://www.nelac-institute.org/meetings.php)



If you know of any upcoming
meetings of interest to
environmental laboratory
professionals, please contact
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Update from the NELAP Accreditation Council (AC)

By Lynn Bradley, TNI Staff

The renewal cycle for Accreditation Bodies (ABs) continues with nine evaluations now underway for CA, FL, KS, LA DHH, NH, NJ, PA, NY, and UT. All active teams are fully staffed and the modified Evaluation Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) (SOP 3-102) has been sent to Policy Committee for approval. The minor modification made to the SOP was to permit the AC to accept "equivalent" qualifications for evaluation team members; this became necessary when one of the originally designated state evaluators was not able to fulfill their commitment to a team.

The AC reports twice a year to the TNI Board regarding the "rolling implementation" of the 2009 TNI Standard and the status of individual ABs. This status was discussed at the AC meeting in Bellevue and is shown in the table below. If there are any questions, labs should check with their primary AB. The commitment to maintain reciprocal recognition, regardless of which Standard is in use by any individual AB, remains as does the commitment to preventing the dual standard usage from causing any problems for the laboratories.

STATE	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS
CA	Currently using the 2003 Standard. Will shift to 2009 Standard over the next few months.
FL	Uncertainties slowed rulemaking, and then the new governor froze rulemaking. The AB is implementing the 2009 Standard for its operations, as much as possible, and adapting to circumstances where labs have implemented 2009 Standard and 2009 PT requirements. Can only enforce to 2003 Standard. Earliest implementation date will be 2012, but no timeline exists at present.
IL	Presumed unchanged, no update. (Not implementing 2009 at this time.)
KS	Remains with 2003 Standard for labs. Regulation needs to be developed, but in-state circumstances prohibit setting timeline at present.
LA DEQ	Draft rules to implement 2009 Standard have undergone public comment and public workshops are underway. Timeline uncertain.
LA DHH	Rulemaking to implement 2009 Standard nearly complete.
MN	State shutdown and consequent staff departures resulted in delay until probably January 1, 2012 for implementing 2009 Standard.
NH	Presumed unchanged, no update. (Not implementing 2009 at this time.)
NJ	Presumed unchanged, no update. (Not implementing 2009 at this time.)
NY	Enforcing 2003 Standard; at least 1 year before 2009 can be implemented.
OR	Implemented 2009 Standard on August 9, 2011; changing over checklists, etc.
PA	Moving towards Fall 2011 implementation of 2009 Standard.
TX	Implemented 2009 Standard on July 1; rulemaking completed in 2010.
UT	Implementing 2009 Standard in Fall 2011, after completion of comment period for regulation.
VA	Will initiate rulemaking for 2009 Standard on January 1, 2012.

The AC was assigned Accreditation Body Assistance Task Force (ABTF) Recommendation 5: Use of Assessments by Other Organizations and has been discussing this with the intention to determine whether it will be workable for the NELAP Program. Since the Laboratory Accreditation Systems Executive Committee (LASEC) is also exploring some aspects of this issue, and other NELAP groups are exploring other ABTF recommendations, the AC intends to work cooperatively with all other parts of the NELAP program in this information-gathering phase, for recommendation 5, as well as the other recommendations.



Updated FoPT Table for Non-Potable Water Accreditation

xxxx

An update to the Non-Potable Water Accreditation Fields of Proficiency Testing has been approved. This table is effective October 3, 2011. Changes to the table have been color-coded to make it easier for the user to determine what updates have been made. Several new analytes have been added to the table including:

- Bromide
- Acidity, as CaCO₃ Color
- Settleable Solids
- Silica as SiO₂
- Turbidity
- Volatile Solids, Total
- Naphthalene
- 1,2,4-Trichlorobenzene
- 2-Hexanone
- Methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE)
- 1,1-Dichloroethane
- cis-1,2-Dichloroethene
- cis-1,3-Dichloropropene
- Gasoline Range Organics (GRO)
- 2,6-Dichlorophenol
- Endrin Ketone
- Low Level Polyaromatic
- Hydrocarbons

<http://www.nelac-institute.org/fopt.php>



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Member Spotlight—Debra Waller

By Kirstin Daigle, TestAmerica

Debra hated that Logic class in 1975 and needed a replacement in her college schedule. She found that the only class that would fit was the first ever course in Environmental Science offered at Burlington County College (BCC) in Pemberton, NJ. The class was split into two semesters. The first semester was “Principles of Environmental Science.” The second was “Methods of Environmental Science.” She was the student technician for the class, and she and her professor would work out the details of a test one week and then teach the class how to run the test the next. It was during those two classes that she got her first real sense of the passion that was to be a life-long career, now in its 37th year.

While attending college, Debra worked as a teaching assistant in the biology, microbiology, and anatomy/physiology department laboratories. She also ran the microbiology laboratory at Mars Hill College near her hometown of Asheville, NC, while she briefly attended school there. Once back in NJ, she returned to BCC to take a couple of classes to round out her Associate of Arts (AA) degree in Biology and answered an ad on the BCC job board in 1980 for a part-time laboratory technician at the Mt. Laurel Municipal Utilities Authority (MUA), a drinking water and wastewater facility. When she arrived for the interview, a former classmate from that original environmental science course hired her on the spot. Debra continued to focus her laboratory skills in environmental microbiology and wet chemistry testing. The MUA allowed her to change her work schedule, so she could work and go back to college to finish her BS in Environmental Science degree at Stockton State College in Pomona, NJ. She also became actively involved with the South Jersey Water Environment Association (SJWEA) and she served as the editor of the SJWEA’s newsletter, Clean Streams.

In 1985, Debra left Mt. Laurel and started working for the East Windsor MUA where she learned metals testing. While she was at East Windsor, her superintendent, recognizing the important connection between the laboratory data being generated and the operations of the plant, offered Debra the opportunity to qualify for and obtain her sewage treatment plant operator license.

In 1990, Debra left East Windsor to take a job that was closer to home with the Evesham MUA. Evesham offered Debra many opportunities. In addition to operating and managing the MUA’s laboratory, she was also the back-up to the plant supervisor for three distinctly different types of treatment systems. While at Evesham, she learned about biological assessments/ammonia toxicity studies of discharge waters, storm water monitoring, biosolids, critical balances of nitrogen and phosphorous in discharges (nutrient balance), beneficial reuse of plant effluents, spray irrigation processes, and advancements in drinking water treatment. She also reviewed permits, prepared the monthly discharge monitoring reports, helped supervise the union workforce, developed budgets and a purchasing contract with the State of NJ, gave plant tours to school age children, and made presentations at local school science fairs and in science classrooms.

So, did starting a family slow her down? No way! In the eighth month of her pregnancy, she put on her yellow rain slicker, donned a face mask, and set out to collect storm water samples, grit and screening samples, cleaned bar screens, monitored chlorination systems, managed the removal of underground storage tanks, and withstood vicious attacks of NJ mosquitoes in the Pine Barrens collecting monitoring well samples.

In her career, Debra also became actively involved in the Water Environment Federation (WEF) at the state level and she was the first female President of the SJWEA. Wastewater labs take note – Debra coached, and then became, the first female state champion team member for NJ in the WEF’s Operations Challenge, competing nationwide with the Evsham Pioneers. She was also the unofficial liaison between other permittees and the NJDEP for laboratory and operational issues. She asked the questions and made the calls that others were afraid to ask or make and in doing so brought the issues to the forefront. She then worked to foster a team-approach working relationship between the regulated community and the regulators.

Other Accolades: Debra served for two terms as secretary and then as the Chair of the NJDEP’s Environmental Laboratory Advisory Committee (ELAC). She has written articles about laboratory and operational concerns for environmental newsletters and spoken at seminars and conferences on these issues. She actively served on the SJWEA and NJWEA’s



Recent Outreach Efforts

TNI would like to recognize the following individuals for providing information about TNI at several recent regional and national meetings:

Richard Burrows, TestAmerica; TNI’s Environmental Measurement Methods Expert Committee, EPA Region 6 QA Conference, Dallas, TX

JoAnn Boyd, Southwest Research; The Benefits of a Field Sampling and Measurement Organization, EPA Region 6 QA Conference, Dallas, TX

Jack Farrell, Analytical Excellence; Update on Activities of TNI, Department of Energy Analytical Services Program workshop, Pleasanton, CA

Shawn Kassner, ERA; The Changing TNI/NELAC PT Program, EPA Region 6 QA Conference, Dallas, TX

Jerry Parr, TNI; Update on Activities of TNI, EPA Region 6 QA Conference, Dallas, TX and Florida Society of Environmental Analysts, West Palm Beach, FL



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Member Spotlight (cont.)

Laboratory Procedures Committees, where she is currently the NJDEP committee representative.

In 2000, Debra was offered a position with the NJDEP's Office of Quality Assurance (OQA). She serves as the main contact for microbiological and nutrient testing for the office. In 2001, she became a NELAP-approved assessor. She serves as the Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) for the NJ BEACH *Enterococci* testing laboratories and as the QAO for the ambient lakes monitoring efforts for the NJDEP. Debra also serves as the NJDEP QAO for EPA Region 2's effort to develop a rapid testing protocol (i.e., qPCR) for the detection of *Enterococci* bacteria in NJ bathing beaches. She is the OQA's liaison for the US EPA's Method Update Rule and other new laboratory regulations, a US EPA- approved Laboratory Certification Officer (LCO) for microbiology and chemistry, and she is the Rule Manager of the regulations updating NELAC to TNI. She recently completed her US EPA training to be an LCO for cryptosporidium and giardia.

Debra first became involved with NELAC during the development of the 1999 Standard. From the perspective of a permittee, Debra submitted comments on the 1999 NELAC Standard because she had concerns about the potential impacts on small laboratories. She welcomed the chance to have a national set of standards for all laboratories to follow. By continuing to participate with TNI, she actively promotes the generation of consistent, reliable, and legally defensible data for both NELAP and NJ state certified laboratories.

It is no wonder with her extensive background and expertise that she is often asked to speak at industry conferences and seminars and to provide training for field testing, sample collection, and quality control (QC) procedures. She also provides technical assistance to other NJDEP programs on microbiological and chemistry requirements.

Debra's goal, with the laboratory community she serves, is to foster a cooperative environment where laboratories strive for excellence in providing data, not because they have to, but because it helps to improve treatment techniques, provides a foundation for sound, scientifically-based environmental decisions, all while protecting the health and welfare of the residents of NJ. She believes that all laboratories, small or large, have the ability to produce quality data. Her heart will always be with the same small laboratories that she worked for during her career and looks forward to working with TNI's Small Laboratory Advisory Group in the future.

In 1994, Debra, along with two other NJDEP staff members and one staff member from the federal Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), were part of a drinking water delegation that went to New Delhi, India to help the laboratory develop its capabilities and refine the Quality Assurance/QC plans for future laboratory testing. The picture of Debra featured here is from that trip.

Debra lives with her husband Tim and their two sons, Timothy (25) and Dylan (19), in Moorestown, NJ, where she enjoys sports, outdoor activities, and musical interests with her family.



New Delhi, India Drinking Water Delegation, 1994



TNI MISSION

The NELAC Institute is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization whose mission is to foster the generation of environmental data of known and documented quality through an open, inclusive, and transparent process that is responsive to the needs of the community.



VISION

All entities generating environmental data in the United States will be accredited to consensus national standards.



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