



THE INSTITUTE REVIEW

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Environmental Measurement Symposium

By Lara Phelps, USEPA and Jerry Parr, TNI

Organized jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA or the Agency) and The NELAC Institute (TNI), the 2016 Environmental Measurement Symposium (the Symposium), a combined meeting of the 32nd Annual National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) and the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, is the largest conference focused on environmental measurements in North America. The 2016 Symposium will be held at the Hyatt Regency Orange County in Garden Grove, CA from August 8 – 12, 2016. This year, the Symposium's theme is "**Technology Innovation, Citizen Science: What's Next?**"

Register Now

Deadline for Early
Registration is
July 17, 2016.

[Register Today!](#)

Some of the highlights for the week include:

- ◆ A special half-day general session focused on the conference theme, with presentations on Citizen Science, Technology, and Crowd-sourcing Communities;
- ◆ Over 175 oral and poster presentations on a variety of cutting-edge environmental monitoring issues;
- ◆ Meetings of The NELAC Institute (TNI) Committees to further TNI efforts on environmental laboratory accreditation, proficiency testing, and accreditation of field sampling and measurement organizations;
- ◆ An exhibit program showcasing the latest innovations in environmental monitoring;
- ◆ Four special keynote presentations on topics of general interest;
- ◆ A training course on implementing the TNI laboratory accreditation standard; and
- ◆ An open meeting of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (US EPA's) Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board.

National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC)

The NEMC portion of the meeting is organized into thirty (30) breakout sessions:

- ◆ Academic Research Topics in Environmental Measurement & Monitoring
- ◆ Advances in Sample Preparation & Clean-up
- ◆ Air Methods & Monitoring (2 sessions)
- ◆ Applications of Quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction (qPCR) Methods for Microbiological Contaminants
- ◆ Best Practices for Reference Materials
- ◆ California Efforts in Revitalizing the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program
- ◆ Changing the Paradigm for Water Pollution Monitoring
- ◆ Citizen Science
- ◆ Collaborative Efforts to Improve Environmental Monitoring
- ◆ Contaminated Sediments
- ◆ Current Trends in Laboratory Information Management Systems
- ◆ Data Quality, Management, and Validation (3 sessions)
- ◆ Forensic Chemistry
- ◆ High Performance Liquid Chromatography in Environmental Monitoring

Innovative New Technology Showcase

By Lara Phelps, USEPA

On Tuesday, August 9, 2016 from 3:00 – 5:00, we are pleased to offer an exclusive opportunity this year at the conference site for twelve (12) organizations to showcase innovative new technology – sensors, apps, and personal monitoring devices among others – and network with several hundred managers and senior staff from commercial laboratories; the regulated community; state compliance officials; tribal nations; the international community; the exhibitor community; and others involved in or affected by the Agency's policies and procedures.

Attendees of the Innovative New Technology Showcase can expect each organization to have a poster board and table set-up in a walk-in reception style setting; a 5-minute platform speaking opportunity from their display area for all attendees to hear about each technology opportunity; and networking time with the organizations.

We look forward to seeing you in August!!!



Environmental Measurement Symposium cont.

- ◆ Metals and Metals Speciation Analysis in Environmental Samples
- ◆ Non-Targeted Compound Screening
- ◆ Operational & Advocacy Issues Impacting the Environmental Laboratory Industry
- ◆ Overcoming Legacy Obstacles with Innovative Approaches
- ◆ Review of Data for Chlorinated Dioxins, Furans, and PCB Congeners
- ◆ Sensors and Field Analytical Chemistry
- ◆ Topics in Drinking Water
- ◆ Topics in Shale Gas
- ◆ Use of Continuous Monitoring for Compliance Monitoring

The titles of each presentation and an abstract can be found on the NEMC website at <http://nemc.us>.

Forum on Laboratory Accreditation

The NELAC Institute's (TNI's) semi-annual meeting is an integral part of the Environmental Measurement Symposium (Symposium). Highlights from this summer's Forum include:

- ◆ An Assessment Forum and Mentor Session;
- ◆ A special session on changes to the TNI laboratory accreditation standard;
- ◆ A training course on accreditation of Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations; and
- ◆ Meetings of the TNI executive committees that manage TNI's Proficiency Testing Program and National Environmental Field Activities Program.

As these sessions become further developed, additional details will be available on the TNI website at <http://www.nelac-institute.org>.



Tulsa Meeting Recap

By Carol Batterton, TNI

Over 250 people attended TNI's Forum on Environmental Accreditation in Tulsa, OK, January 25-28. The meeting was packed full of information and updates on TNI activities.

Highlights of the meeting included announcements that the 2015 TNI Standard was essentially complete, and that evaluations have begun to recognize non-governmental accreditation bodies (NGABs) to accredit laboratories to the TNI Environmental Laboratory Standard. In addition, EPA Office of Water officials announced plans to secure proficiency test samples for asbestos (see separate article by Dan Hautman).

Expert Committees

On behalf of the **Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee (CSDEC)**, Bob Wyeth expressed appreciation to the expert committee chairs for their hard work in getting the 2015-2016 standards complete. He announced that an asbestos committee would be formed and possibly meet in Orange County. The CSDEC is considering creating a glossary of terms which will resolve differences in the Standard. The CSDEC is working to insure implementation of SOP 2-100, which requires advertising proposed changes and soliciting comments to the standards before they are initiated. Contemplated changes will be posted on the TNI website. Bob also announced that the proposed changes for Stationary Source Audit Sample (SSAS) had been accepted by EPA.

The **Chemistry Expert Committee** reviewed progress on development of training on their new standard and received comments. They are soliciting comments for the 2020 Standard.

The **Quality Systems Expert Committee** focused on some of the Standards Interpretation Requests (SIRs) they had been assigned and solicited audience participation to clarify some responses. They will continue work on the Small Laboratory Handbook.

The **Radiochemistry Expert Committee** reported that their final standard was approved in October, and their focus now is on training and tools. Three training subcommittees have been formed: ABs and assessors, labs, and assessment checklists. Training on the new radiochemistry standard was offered on Thursday morning.

The **Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Committee** held their first face-to-face meeting in Tulsa. They reported that the committee had voted not to accept the 2012 Standard, but to retain the 2009 until members had adequate opportunity to review 2012. The committee has prepared a white paper with a recommendation to EPA about DMR/QA PTs for WET testing, which can be found on TNI's website.

The **Proficiency Testing (PT) Expert Committee** is beginning to work on training for their new standard. PT Modules 1 and 2 of their standard have been sent to the Laboratory Accreditation Systems Executive Committee (LASEC). Modules 3 and 4 will be sent by April.

The **Microbiology Expert Committee** is preparing a response to comments on their interim standard, which will be finalized at their next conference call. They are also coordinating with Quality Systems on the Small Laboratory Handbook.

The **Laboratory Accreditation Body (LAB) Committee** reviewed a live demonstration of the online generic application for laboratories. With a few minor modifications, this application should be ready for use soon. The LAB Committee also announced they will be doing outreach and soliciting comments in preparation for revisions to V2.

The **Field Activities Expert Committee (FAC)** discussed the subcommittee that was established to produce a guidance document for scope of accreditation. They reviewed changes to the 2014 Standard and also received an update on the ANSI process.

Accreditation Programs

The **Laboratory Accreditation Systems Executive Committee (LASEC)** reviewed the requirements for determining standards suitability. They received the modules with LOD/LOQ revisions and will review them. They also recommended adoption of three modules to the NELAP AC.



Tulsa Meeting Recap cont.

The **NELAP Accreditation Council** received updates on the status of re-evaluations of ABs and received an update from EPA on the status of asbestos PTs. They also voted to accept the calibration standard and held a joint meeting with the LASEC.

There were approximately forty (40) people in attendance for the **Assessment Forum**, which focused on helping Oklahoma labs as their state approaches becoming a NELAP accreditation body. The group proposed good suggestions for topics for the next meeting.

Alfredo Sotomayor reported that evaluations of three **non-governmental accreditation bodies (NGABs)** will occur this quarter. It may be possible to announce recognition of the NGABs for accreditation of laboratories to the TNI Environmental Laboratory Standard at the summer meeting. The NGAB Working Group also discussed the draft white paper recommending organization placement of the TNRC.

The **National Environmental Field Activities Accreditation Program Executive Committee (NEFAP EC)** established a nominating committee to look for new members since they will soon have three open slots. They heard updates from the mobile lab subcommittee and received an update on implementation of the new standard. The NEFAP EC also endorsed the strategic marketing and advocacy plan.

Proficiency Testing

The **Proficiency Testing Executive Committee (PTPEC)** focused on brainstorming efforts to prepare for the next round of FoPT table updates. The chemistry subcommittee met about 1000 times, for about 2 hours each time, for 7 years to complete the review of the entire chemistry FoPT table previously. PTPAs provided reports on pass/fail rates of analytes of concern. V1M1 and V2M2 will be completed and final in the next two weeks. The committee has 2 SIRs to address. They have also begun putting together a training presentation on the changes to their standard.

Administrative Committees

The **IT Committee** discussed three areas of focus: LAMs, the TNI website, and the online generic application. They received positive feedback on the generic application.

The **Advocacy Committee** discussed notice of public scoping from Alaska proposing to require NELAP or DoD ELAP approval for labs in their UST program. It was agreed that TNI should respond indicating that we have resources available to help laboratories achieve accreditation. Advocacy also discussed the questions posed by Kentucky as they considered becoming a NELAP AB. Advocacy will prepare a response.

For the summer 2016 meeting in Orange County, Jerry Parr proposed that the meeting be 4½ days, concluding at noon on Friday. On Monday and Tuesday, the TNI sessions will be training on the new standards. There will be a session for California labs will be on Thursday and Silky Labie will teach a training course on Friday called "Demystifying the TNI Standard".

For the winter 2017 meeting, the Advocacy committee determined that TNI should seek bids south of the Mason-Dixon Line and east of Albuquerque, NM.

Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board

Patty Carvajal reported that ELAB was soliciting new members to be installed in October. If you know of someone who might be interested, please contact Patty or Lara Phelps. Patty also mentioned that ELAB would be reviewing the WET Expert Committee's white paper for possible submission to the FEM.



Results are in for the 2016 Board of Directors Election

By Jerry Parr, TNI

Balloting for the 2016 Board of Directors concluded on February 15, 2016 with the full slate of candidates being elected by a large majority. The results of the election are as follows.

1) Shall the proposed nominees be elected to serve as Directors of The NELAC Institute for the term beginning March 9, 2016?

Yes: 63

No: 9

2) Of those who voted “No” to question #1, votes for individual candidates:

Steve Arms (Yes=7; No=2)

Daniel Lashbrook (Yes=6; No=2)

Judy Morgan (Yes=6; No=2)

Scott Siders (Yes=7; No=1)

Alfredo Sotomayor (Yes=7; No=2)

3) Write-In Candidates:

Christelle Newsome: 1 vote

Louis Wales: 1 vote

4) Shall the proposed ex-officio directors be ratified to serve as Directors of The NELAC Institute for the term beginning March 9, 2016?

Yes: 64

No: 4

In an effort to improve voter turnout, the election was held earlier than in prior years so that it coincided with the winter meeting in Tulsa this past January. The membership was able to meet the candidates in person, and a kiosk was provided for them to cast their votes electronically or by paper ballot. The statistics show that the new process was a success in increasing participation.

Votes cast on-line: 39

Votes cast on-site: 34

Total votes: 73

For comparison:

Total votes in 2015 election: 37

Total votes in 2014 election: 15

Directors need a broad understanding of issues facing TNI and must uphold the Institute’s mission, goals, priorities, and Code of Ethical Conduct. Each has demonstrated a strong commitment to TNI by a significant contribution of time and talent. They deserve our congratulations and gratitude!



The 2016 TNI Standard

Ken Jackson, TNI

Several TNI Expert Committees have been working hard for the past five or more years revising the 2009 Environmental Sector Standard. This was done in response to changing needs, principally in quality systems, proficiency testing, microbiology, and radiochemistry. As this work nears completion, it is now safe to label the new standard the “2016 Standard.” This article summarizes the progress made to date and the work still needed to complete this project early in 2016. Standards development has followed the procedure described in SOP 2-100, that was approved for TNI use by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). This systematic process requires membership approval at several stages of standards development, where a two-thirds positive vote of Expert Committee Members is required, and all persuasive comments from the TNI voting membership must be resolved. All four volumes of the Standard are affected.

Volume 1: Management and Technical Requirements for Laboratories Performing Environmental Analysis.

In 2012, the Quality Systems Expert Committee revised the following modules in this volume:

- ◆ Module 2: Quality Systems General Requirements;
- ◆ Module 3: Quality Systems for Asbestos Testing;
- ◆ Module 4: Quality Systems for Chemical Testing;
- ◆ Module 5: Quality Systems for Microbiological Testing;
- ◆ Module 6: Quality Systems for Radiochemical Testing; and
- ◆ Module 7: Quality Systems for Toxicity Testing.

These revisions, though quite extensive, were mostly for improving the clarity of the Standard. The resulting “2012 Standard” was put on temporary hold pending anticipated further changes to Modules 4, 5, and 6. It was then realized that quality systems had reached the stage of becoming too wide-ranging and complex for a single committee to handle, and each of modules 4, 5, and 6 was assigned to a new expert committee.

The Chemistry Expert Committee (Module 4) evolved from the Environment Measurement Methods Expert Committee that had been put together about a year earlier to work on an EPA Cooperative Agreement. The EPA had specifically included the request to develop “measurement tools for the calculation of limits of detection, limits of quantitation, calibration curves, and other related values with the most common and diverse techniques.” This part of the Standard is complete, with new sections in Module 4 on Calibration and on Detection/Quantitation having been approved by the TNI membership. These new sections are being merged into the 2012 version of the module to produce the 2016 Standard. The committee is now working on a guidance document to accompany the Standard.

Module 5 has been re-written, has passed through the voting process, and the Microbiology Expert Committee has produced it as a Final Standard.

The Radiochemistry Expert Committee has taken its re-written Module 6 through the voting process and has already finalized its standard. The committee is now providing training on the revised requirements.

The most extensive revision in this volume is in Module 1: Proficiency Testing. The module has passed all the voting stages, and the Proficiency Testing (PT) Expert Committee has released it as a Final Standard.

The only module in Volume 1 that will be carried through without modification from the 2009 Standard will be Module 7 (Toxicity). Recently, a Whole Effluent Toxicity Expert Committee was formed, and it decided not to incorporate the 2012 version. A new Module 7 will be prepared for incorporation into a future update of Volume 1.



The 2016 TNI Standard cont.

In summary, the 2016 Standard will incorporate the new Module 1, the 2012 revised Modules 2 and 3, the new Modules 4, 5, and 6, and the 2009 Module 7.

Volume 2: General Requirements for Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Environmental Laboratories

Volume 2 consists of

- ◆ Module 1: General Requirements;
- ◆ Module 2: Proficiency Testing; and
- ◆ Module 3: On-Site Assessment.

For the 2016 Standard, only Module 2 was revised. As with the PT module in Volume 1, this module has undergone extensive revision and has now been released as a Final Standard. A future standard to be presented to the membership will be a proposed merging of Modules 1 and 3.

**Volume 3: General Requirements for Environmental Proficiency Test Providers; and
Volume 4: General Requirements for an Accreditor of Environmental Proficiency Test Providers.**

The PT Expert Committee has re-written both of these volumes, and they have reached the last stage of standard development, having recently been voted on by the membership as Interim Standards. These volumes are expected to be released soon as Final Standards.

Summary and Conclusions

The development of the 2016 Environmental Sector Standard has been a tremendous undertaking by the Expert Committees, whose members are to be complimented for their diligent and tireless effort. Most of the work was done through conference calls held every two weeks, or even more frequently at times. At the time of writing this article, only the PT Volumes 3 and 4 have yet to be completed, and it should be remembered the PT Expert Committee had the extensive workload of completely revising two modules and 4 volumes for the 2016 standard. Throughout the standard development process, the Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee (LASEC) reviewed and commented on the draft standards and will subsequently review the completed final volumes and modules, so they can submit their adoption recommendations to the NELAP Accreditation Council. It is expected the 2016 Standard will be designated by ANSI as an American National Standard, as was the 2009 Standard.



California ELAP Begins Implementing Expert Review Panel Recommendations

By Jerry Parr, TNI

Following a comprehensive program review in 2015, an Expert Review Panel made formal recommendations to the California State Water Resources Control Board Members for reforming California ELAP and re-establishing a respected accreditation program. The California Water Board Members have embraced the report and are supporting program management as California ELAP travels down a path of reformation.

The program has been working diligently to improve relations and provide better service to all its stakeholders, in addition to laying the groundwork for implementation of the Panel's recommendations. The program believes it's made promising progress. California ELAP accomplishments include:

- Reorganization of the program to separate certification operations from program development and reform initiatives
- Adoption of TNI Volume 2 as the internal management system
- Reduction of backlogged applications
- Revitalization of California's Environmental Laboratory Technical Advisory Committee (ELTAC)
- Implementation of a strategic communications action plan, including the release of an inaugural program newsletter, *The Lab Report*
- Revision of all Drinking Water and Wastewater Field of Testing lists (currently under review by ELTAC)

California ELAP is also making advances in other areas identified as critical in turning the program around:

- Research, evaluation, and stakeholder outreach on laboratory accreditation standard options
- Procurement of an auditor training contract
- Exploration of a new fee structure

Although significant changes have been made, California ELAP has a long journey ahead with many programmatic obstacles along the path to reformation. However, the program is hopeful for the future and fully committed to working collaboratively with the entire laboratory community to build an efficient and sustainable program to effectively evaluate the competency of organizations generating environmental and public health data.



Laboratory Certification for Asbestos in Drinking Water

By Daniel Hautman, USEPA

The EPA, Office of Ground Water & Drinking Water (OGWDW) Technical Support Center (TSC) recently learned of the difficulty some laboratories were having acquiring asbestos proficiency test (PT) samples appropriate for analysis in drinking water. This article provides an update on the anticipated availability of an asbestos PT and alternatives for laboratories to demonstrate their ongoing capability using EPA Method 100.1 or 100.2.

The previous sole commercial PT provider for drinking water asbestos PTs discontinued their program in 2014 leaving the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) as the only remaining source. In a letter issued February 11, 2016, NYS DOH clarified that they will only be able to serve as the PT provider for laboratories they accredit to “perform analyses on NYS environmental samples.” The TSC anticipated the formal announcement from the NYS DOH and began to pursue alternate providers in late 2015. In January 2016, RTI International informed TSC of their plans to establish a PT program for asbestos in water by late 2016. This was welcome news as the annual analysis of a PT sample is required for EPA or State certification per CFR 141.23 (k)(3); however, the Fifth Edition of the Manual for the Certification of Laboratories Analyzing Drinking Water (EPA 815-R-05-004) allows for interim certification status, if the laboratory has satisfactorily analyzed asbestos proficiency test (PT) samples when they were last available.

RTI International is planning to conduct a Round-Robin study in the coming months as part of their preparations to establish a PT program for asbestos in water. While a fully operational PT program for asbestos in water is expected to be available later this year, laboratories seeking interim certification or wishing to maintain their accreditation status should participate in this Round-Robin study to demonstrate their ongoing capability. EPA is asking certification authorities (and accreditation bodies) to encourage asbestos laboratories they certify to participate in this upcoming RTI coordinated Round-Robin study for asbestos in water.

States and laboratories may follow-up with RTI International by contacting **Sara Harrison** (by phone: 919-541-6484 or via email: seharrison@rti.org), the RTI lead for developing the PT program for asbestos in water.



TNI Ambassadors Reach Out to Non-NELAP States

By Steve Arms

The 2015-2020 TNI Strategic Plan included a high-priority objective that the Advocacy Committee should expand outreach to states that have not become NELAP Accreditation Bodies. This included the establishment of “Ambassadors,” whose principal tasks are to:

- keep state accreditation/certification programs informed about TNI activities;
- serve as a conduit for information to TNI about state program developments;
- find out what the state program’s needs are and ask how TNI can help (resource issues, training, technical information, database, etc.);
- clear up misconceptions about how national accreditation works; and
- identify any barriers the state may have in establishing an accreditation program consistent with national standards.

The committee chose eight states for a pilot, which began in September last year. These efforts have been successful so far due primarily to the dedication of our ambassadors, who are Theresa Coins (Arkansas), Andrea Teal (Georgia), Zonetta English (Kentucky), Devon Morgan (Nevada), Bob Pullano (South Carolina), Judy Morgan (Tennessee), Lee Wolf (Washington), and Paul Junio (Wisconsin).

Some highlights of their accomplishments and feedback to date:

- Zonetta English met with Patrick Garrity and Frank Hall of the Kentucky laboratory certification programs, who have expressed a strong interest TNI, with the possibility of becoming a NELAP accreditation body. They submitted a number of excellent questions, which Zonetta transferred to TNI for reply. Responses were formulated and delivered with additional dialogue to come.
- Teresa Coins met with Penny Semberski, the QA person at Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Penny told her that the DEQ is trying to change some things in their own laboratory to get more in line with the TNI Standard.
- Bob Pullano has had several phone calls with Carol Smith at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). Carol has indicated to Bob that the DHEC is using the TNI Standard in many ways, but they disagree with some aspects and do not feel they have the administrative staff to be a NELAP accreditation body.
- Lee Wolf has reached out to Allan Rue, of the Washington State Department of Ecology, and he was open to increasing dialogue. Lee remains in communication and is brokering Allan’s attendance at the upcoming Oregon Annual Environmental Laboratory Workshop, where information on the TNI Standard will be presented.
- Paul Junio reports that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is changing some of their regulations, and Paul is trying to help them use language from the TNI Standard. He is also getting questions about consistency in NELAP assessments.

Given the success of the pilot, plans are to expand, with the goal to have TNI Ambassadors for every state.



TNI Outreach Activities

By Steve Arms

To expand TNI's efforts to promote the benefits of accreditation to stakeholders and cooperate with regional organizations, TNI members and staff will be presenting information and updates on TNI's activities at the following regional meetings:

- **Texas Water**
Fort Worth, Texas
April 22, 2016
Jerry Parr and Carol Batterton

- **Kansas Laboratory Education Association**
Manhattan, Kansas
May 3, 2016
Robin Cook

- **Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Trade Fair**
Austin, Texas
May 3–4, 2016
Jerry Parr

- **Oregon Environmental Laboratory Association**
Salem, Oregon
May 11, 2016
Jerry Parr

- **Florida Society of Environmental Analysts**
Sand Key, Florida
May 25–27
Steve Arms

- **New York and Pennsylvania Association of Accredited Environmental Laboratories**
State College, Pennsylvania
July 17–19
Martina McGarvey

If you know of any upcoming regional meetings where TNI could provide an outreach presentation, please contact Steve Arms at arms.steve@comcast.net or Carol Batterton at carol.batterton@nelac-institute.org.



Small Lab Handbook Update

By Paul Junio, NLS Lab

TNI offers guidance to help laboratories comply with the requirements of its standards. Among those guidance documents is Edition One of “Guidance for Small Labs”, aka The Small Lab Handbook. The Handbook was written by a group of TNI volunteers to aid in the process of complying with the 2009 TNI Standard. Since we have just about completed revision to what will be the 2016 TNI Standard, the Quality Systems Committee felt it was within the realm of their Charter to review and update the Handbook. Actually, we (the Quality Systems Committee) have been attempting to review and revise the Handbook for some time now. As we have spent a fair amount of our effort on the current revision of the Standard, as well as responding to Standard Interpretation Requests, we haven’t made a great deal of progress. We anticipate that will change as revisions to the Standard won’t be consuming our efforts.

Among the things that we hope to do in this revision are:

- 1 – Bring the Handbook into compliance with the 2016 Standard.
- 2 – Provide a single voice to the document. Although it will be a group effort to re-write the Handbook, our intention is to make the transition from one “author” to the next seamless, which is something that the First Edition didn’t always do.
- 3 – Offer assistance that might be applied to MORE than just “small labs.”

Frequently, TNI membership has debated what makes a lab “small.” That definition is one that is variable, but might be summarized by something like “anyone my size or smaller.” If you are in a 4-person laboratory, you can’t comprehend a 10-person laboratory being considered small. However, to that 30- or 100-person laboratory, the scale of a small lab changes.

That said, if we can include valuable guidance to labs of any size, maybe the Handbook will be used by more members. We aren’t going to try to make it all things to all people, and we certainly don’t want to ignore the smallest of our members, but our hope is that we have guidance available that labs of ANY size might see fit to use.

Our calls are scheduled for the 2nd Monday of the month, from 1:00 PM Eastern until 2:30 PM Eastern. If you are interested in contributing, please feel free to contact me (paulj@nslslab.com).



Member Profile:
Steve Arms on Staying Involved

You won't meet a friendlier guy in the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation business than Steve Arms. His approachability, professionalism and sense of humor have contributed to a successful career within the environmental laboratory industry, and his impact and influence within the national environmental laboratory accreditation program and his advocacy can be felt from coast-to-coast. Steve's career has spanned across three decades and has included several different leadership roles within the Florida Department of Health and the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program.

Steve has always loved science and the state of Florida. Growing up in Jacksonville, he first aspired to be a garbage man or an astronomer, but quickly realized the limited opportunities for advancement and the pay might not meet his needs or career aspirations. He attributes his career path to the microscope that Santa bought him for his 9th Christmas, which was his initial introduction to microscopy and increased his love for science. He grew up, moved to the University of Florida, where he obtained his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry with honors and hoped for a career in the clinical laboratory. Steve then went to work for the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (now Department of Health) in 1981 as a clinical analytical chemist. *"I thought I'd work for a few years, get some experience, and then get a job with a hospital or in a clinical setting, but then I was blessed with so many opportunities within the State of Florida, that I ended up an environmental guy for 33 years,"* Steve stated. Over the course of his career, Steve held several roles with the State of Florida, including environmental analytical chemist, Organic Chemistry Unit Supervisor, Environmental Chemistry Program Administrator, and recently retiring from the Environmental Laboratory Certification Program Administrator.



While in these roles, Steve became active in the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program within The NELAC Institute (TNI). The State of Florida Laboratory Certification program took an active role in establishing the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) and Program (NELAP), becoming one of the first of thirteen (13) Accreditation Bodies in the U.S. recognized under the program in 1999. Steve is a great representative of The NELAC Institute and advocates for TNI in many ways. He is friendly and willing to assist other States with environmental laboratory regulatory questions and the accreditation body implementation process and procedures. Even though he retired his role with the State of Florida, he is absolutely staying involved with TNI. Steve's comment on his retirement says it all: *"I did retire my role on the TNI Accreditation Council, but other than that, I plan to continue everything else regarding my roles and goals for TNI. I feel there is much left to do in establishing a true national program, and I've invested way too much of my life to throw in the towel now."*

In retirement, Steve will be continuing his involvement with TNI and will be working part-time as a consultant for a Florida company that provides data validation, training and consulting services. When he is not busy consulting or advocating for TNI, he will be traveling with his wife and putting his new smartphone to use.

Steve recently took time out of his busy retirement and travel schedule to answer a few questions:

- 1. Where is your most favorite place you have visited?** Tuscany, Italy or Hawaii — it's a toss-up, but I am headed to Israel in a few days. CC and I are both retired now and plan to travel more to see family and friends.
- 2. When did you first attend a TNI meeting?** My first meeting was in 1998, and the location of the meetings all run together over the years.

Member Profile: Steve Arms on Staying Involved cont.

3. **How many TNI meetings have you attended? And do you have a favorite meeting memory?** I have attended maybe 30 meetings, and the best meeting memory has to be in Crystal City. This meeting is where we did the take-off on the Johnny Carson show to celebrate TNI's 20th anniversary. I loved playing "NELAC the Magnificent"; I guess I'm a ham at heart.
4. **What is your most noteworthy accomplishment in your lifetime to date?** That would have to be raising two boys to become fine men. Parenting is the highest form of on-the-job training, as there is no Quality Manual, so you figure it out as you go. If the product turns out to have met the Data Quality Objectives (DQOs), then I guess you can say you did something right.
5. **What drives you towards success?** I think success is just something that happens while you are doing the right thing and taking pride in your own accomplishments.
6. **What is the best part of your career?** Having gained the respect and friendship of so many fine people, from co-workers and colleagues to lab managers and QA officers, and with the regulators, data users, vendors and consultants.
7. **Do you have any insight or wisdom to share with other chemists or people starting out in the environmental or quality assurance/control field/accreditation field?** Be willing to start at the bottom, work hard, do more than is expected, and take every opportunity to learn something new, lose the "it's not my job" mentality, and be helpful to others.
8. **Do you have a smartphone and if so, what is your favorite app?** Up until a few weeks ago, I think I was the last person left on the planet without a smartphone. CC got tired of me borrowing hers, so I broke down and got one. I've found, like most everybody, that it will be an essential tool and sometimes I feel like our grandparents must have felt like and thought about when getting their first television – its magic! You talk to it and it talks back. Eventually, no one will have to learn to read, write, spell, do math, or learn a foreign language. I wish I could say my favorite app was something noble or educational, but really it's a word game.
9. **Do you have anything else you would like to share with the TNI members?** Only that they should stay involved in doing the good work we've started together. Never expect that someone else will do it.





TNI Educational Activities

By Jerry Parr, TNI

Over the next three months, TNI is sponsoring three educational events — one webinar and two on-site events. More information can be found under News on the TNI website.

**Scared Straight - Ensuring Competency for Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations
June 13, 2016**

This webinar demonstrates that Field Sampling and Measurement Organization (FSMO) Accreditation under the TNI National Environmental Field Activities Program (NEFAP) and the Accreditation Body activities are nothing to fear. The webinar provides the attendee with basic information to define the quality assurance necessary for field activities to demonstrate the competency of the field sampling and field testing organization.

**Basic Assessor Training
August 22-24, 2016
Austin, Texas**

This course provides examples and a basic understanding of the assessment processes, within the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) framework. The basic principles for assessing environmental laboratories are presented. A summary of the 2009 TNI Environmental Laboratory standards and practical examples for implementation of assessment techniques are an integral portion of this training course.

**Assessing Asbestos
August 25-26, 2016
Austin, Texas**

This course provides examples of the assessment process for asbestos testing laboratory technologies, based on The NELAC Institute (TNI) Environmental Laboratory standard. The principles for assessing specific technical disciplines within the laboratory operations are presented.



Upcoming Meetings

Florida Society of Environmental Analysts

May 25–27, 2016

Clearwater Beach, FL

<http://www.fsea.net>

Oregon Environmental Laboratory Association

May 11, 2016

Salem, OR

<http://oelaonline.com/>

Pennsylvania Association of Accredited Environmental Laboratories

July 17–19, 2016

State College, PA

<http://paael.org/>

Environmental Measurement Symposium

August 8–12, 2016

Garden Grove, CA

<http://nemc.us/>