

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Teleconference
January 17, 2007; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT**

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) meeting was held via regular teleconference on January 17, 2007 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT. The agenda for this meeting is provided as Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. Action items are included in Attachment C. The official signature of the Chair or Vice-Chair is included in Attachment D.

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Lara Autry (USEPA/ORD) welcomed Board members. Ms. Autry then handed the meeting over to the ELAB chair, Mr. Robert Wyeth (Severn Trent Laboratories), who took a roll call of the Board. There were no guests that participated in the call. Ms. Autry noted that Versar will be taking notes at the meetings and providing technical support, as needed, to the Board.

AGENDA ITEMS

APPROVAL OF OR CHANGES TO PREVIOUS MEETING/CALL MINUTES

Minutes from November 15, 2006 meeting – Ms. Autry indicated that she had e-mailed the minutes to the Board members prior to today’s meeting. Mr. Wyeth asked members to review the minutes and e-mail him their comments or corrections. He will finalize the minutes based on input received.

Minutes from December 20, 2006 meeting – Mr. Wyeth asked the leaders of each workgroup to provide input for the section on Work group reports. He indicated that he will ask Mr. Banfer to provide information related to the discussion on the Web site. He also noted that more information needs to be added to the discussion on the FACA on Detection and Quantification. Dr. Pletl indicated that he will provide information for this section.

ACTION: Board members will provide comments and/or corrections to the November 17 meeting minutes. In addition, Board members will provide input to complete the minutes from the December 20, 2006 meeting. Mr. Wyeth will send the final draft minutes to Board members.

WORK GROUP CORRESPONDENCE TO FEM

Performance Approach

Ms. Autry noted that the FEM had postponed the discussion on Performance Approach to March. She indicated that the FEM wanted to make sure that the proper groundwork was done prior to the discussion, which was not possible during the past month due to the holidays. She noted that this discussion will probably take place the week of March 5th or at the latest the week of March 19th. It is going to be a half-day session that will include representatives from the entire Agency including the Enforcement Office. She noted that various FEM co-chairs have indicated that the FEM will send a letter to the Board after that meeting and that they believe that ELAB can be a true asset in helping the Agency to achieve success in implementation of the Performance Approach. The letter will ask for ELAB’s help in this area.

Ms. Autry stated that she will have an update for the Board at the face-to-face meeting at the end of January on how the Board can help with the upcoming half-day session on Performance Approach. She also indicated that she will probably be interviewing some of the Board members to gather information in preparation for the half-day session.

Mr. Wyeth asked about the status of the pilot projects that Ms. Autry was working on related to Performance Approach. Ms. Autry noted that the rules that were associated with two of the pilot projects that were targeted were signed before the pilots started, so now they are tracking the use of those rules to see if they are making a positive difference. The only pilot that will go forward is the one with the Office of Water in the state of Florida. However, the pilot is on hold right now waiting on the results of the half-day session on Performance Approach.

ACTION: Ms. Autry will have an update for the Board at the face-to-face meeting at the end of January on how the Board can help with the upcoming half-day session on Performance Approach.

WORK GROUP REPORTS

Monitoring Work Group

Ms. Morgan noted that the work group has written a document describing the task and what they intend to do with it. Ideally, the workgroup will have a draft letter ready by the time of the face-to-face meeting in Denver.

Mr. Lowry noted that the Measurement work group has set up a meeting in Denver with Ms. Lynn Bradley to talk about a methods index. He noted that it appears that NEMI has been dropped as the venue for this method index. He indicated that in the document prepared by the Monitoring work group it looks as if they have reached the same conclusion regarding a methods index and a mechanism to communicate problems and/or issues on methods. He suggested that members of the Monitoring work group participate in the Denver meeting with Ms. Bradley. Ms. Morgan stated that she will be willing to take part in that meeting. Ms. Autry indicated that these two issues, the methods index and a communication system for problems and questions, have been merged as one issue by the FEM. Mr. Wyeth suggested waiting until after the meeting with Ms. Bradley to draft the letter about the methods index.

A Board member asked who would be the Agency person in charge of addressing questions on methods from different Programs. Ms. Autry noted that the intent is to have a centralized location to receive and process all questions related to methods. The centralized system will keep records of questions that are asked and will have up to date contact information for experts on specific issues. Ms. Autry noted that the MICE line is being used as a model in the development of this centralized system.

Mr. Vitale asked whether the repository of information will be an open database that the public can search by keywords for information on a specific topic. Ms. Autry indicated that the information will be available in an open database searchable by keywords. Mr. Vitale asked whether there would be a sounding board to check that questions were properly answered. Ms. Autry stated that issues specific to a given Office will go through that Office for review. She noted that a mechanism will be in place to make sure that questions are properly addressed and answered. She suggested that Board members present their concerns to Ms. Bradley so that they can be addressed in the development of the system. Mr. Lowry suggested that this issue be discussed during the Open forum. Ms. Autry suggested sending an e-mail to Ms. Bradley to notify her of the Board's plan to address this issue during the Open forum. Mr. Lowry stated that he will send an e-mail to Ms. Bradley.

Mr. Vitale suggested drafting a flow diagram detailing how such a system can work. This would include describing the process for withdrawing answers and re-posting corrected answers. He noted that more information is needed about how the system will work in addition to indicating that answers are received, answered by experts and added to a database. He noted that in the MICE line there is no record or

accountability and no way of notifying people that they received incorrect answers to their questions. Mr. Wyeth noted that one issue to consider is the time it will take for an answer to be approved.

Mr. Wyeth invited all Board members to participate in the discussion of this issue at the face-to-face meeting in Denver.

ACTION: Mr. Lowry will send an e-mail to Ms. Bradley to notify her of the Board's plan to address the method index issue during the Open forum.

Laboratory Management Work Group

Dr. Flowers stated that the workgroup did not meet this month. He noted that the members have discussed some issues via e-mail, but have not reached a consensus yet. He also indicated that he had received the information related to legal defensibility from Mr. Wyeth.

Measurement and Technology Work Group

Mr. Lowry stated that the workgroup will have a meeting with Ms. Bradley on January 31st. Other members of the Board will also participate in the meeting. He noted that Ms. Bradley wants the discussion to focus on the methods compendium only. Ms. Autry noted that Ms. Bradley is working very hard on setting up a methods compendium system and would like to hear their input on this issue. Mr. Lowry indicated that he will prepare a draft agenda for that meeting.

Mr. Lowry noted that Mr. Dechant had sent an e-mail regarding the ELAB Web site. He indicated that workgroup members agreed that the Web site should be one of their top priorities. Ms. Autry noted that there have been talks about updating the Web site for a while now. She indicated that the Web master is ready to help with making updates to the Web site. She stated that she can post the materials the Board has provided into a generic Web site, but if the Board wants to have an input in the design of the Web site she needs to hear their ideas soon. Mr. Lowry suggested updating the existing Web site with the materials and making the design of the Web site one of the workgroup's tasks. Ms. Autry stated that it is possible that some information can get lost when transitioning to another Web site in the future. Mr. Wyeth stated that it is better to work on the design of the Web site before posting materials. Mr. Dechant suggested modifying the existing Web site by keeping only the membership list, workgroups information and charter statement. Mr. Scot Cocanour suggested that what is needed is an FTP, a file transfer protocol, since Web sites are not meant to be a document repository. It was noted that it is difficult to go through the EPA's firewall to access an FTP site.

Ms. Morgan asked whether the Web site has to reside on the EPA server. Ms. Autry indicated that if the Web site is on a private server, it will not have the support of the Agency for maintenance purposes. Ms. Autry noted that in the original Web design created by Mr. Banfer the only issue was the creation of an open forum type of system, due to management issues not related to firewall limitations. She stated that she believes that everything else in that design is doable. She indicated that Board members in charge of the Web site can meet with the Web master to discuss their ideas on the Web site design. Mr. Dechant, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Cocanour volunteered to participate in the meeting with the Web master. Mr. Wyeth noted that he will ask Mr. Banfer to participate in the meeting.

Board members agreed to ask Ms. Autry to post the membership list, workgroups information and charter statement to the existing Web site.

ACTION:

- Mr. Lowry will prepare a draft agenda for the meeting with Ms. Bradley.
- Mr. Dechant, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Cocanour and Mr. Banfer will meet with the Web master to discuss the ELAB Web site.

- The Board will ask Ms. Atry to post the membership list, workgroups information and charter statement to the existing Web site.

PENDING AND NEW BUSINESS

TNI update(s)

This topic was not discussed during the meeting.

Open Forum and Denver Face-to-Face

Mr. Wyeth discussed the schedule for the open forum and face-to-face meeting.

Web Site Work Group

This topic was discussed under Workgroup reports – Measurement and Technology workgroup.

Letter to Dr. George Gray

Mr. Wyeth noted that he had sent Board members a copy of the final draft letter to Dr. Grey. He noted that the letter had been approved at the last meeting but there were some additional comments from Ms. Atry, which he incorporated into the draft. In addition, there are some editorial changes that were suggested but not included in the version sent to Board members. These changes include: 1) adding “municipal/local governments” after “states” in the third paragraph; 2) changing wording in fifth paragraph to read “Agency’s support”; and 3) adding “and time” after the word “date” in the last paragraph. Mr. Lowry also suggested two additional changes to the letter in the fourth paragraph and last paragraph.

It was agreed that all letters from ELAB should be sent using ELAB letterhead. Mr. Wyeth will create a letterhead for all ELAB correspondence.

Mr. Wyeth asked Board members to review the letter to Dr. Grey and send comments as soon as possible.

ACTION: Board members will review the letter to Dr. Grey and send comments to Mr. Wyeth as soon as possible.

FAC on Detection and Quantification

Dr. Pletl indicated that Ms. Thomey gave a report on the results of their meeting at last month’s Board meeting.

Issues Spreadsheet

This topic was not discussed during the meeting.

COMMENTS AND/OR ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Mr. Wyeth discussed ACIL’s comments on the sampling and analysis manual for the Office of Homeland Security. One of the comments was about the construction or outfitting of new laboratories even though the private sector can offer everything they need. ACIL also suggested that they consider the use of a performance approach for sampling and analysis.

It was noted that there is a letter from the Water Environment Federation stating their opposition to NELAC. Mr. Wyeth indicated that there is another letter regarding this issue. He will send a copy of the letter to Board members. It was noted that it is within the purview of the Board to respond to these letters.

Mr. Vitale noted that New York City DEP has issued a solicitation for evaluation of all the city's laboratories against the NELAC standards.

OPEN DISCUSSION

No other comments were provided.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Wyeth adjourned the Board meeting at 3:00 p.m. EST.

AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

January 17, 2007; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT

Conference Call

Call in number: 1-866-299-3188; code 9195415544#

	Topic	Individual Responsible
1	Opening Remarks	DFO
2	Role Call for ELAB Member Introduction of Guests	Chair
3	Approval of or changes to Previous Meeting/Call Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 15, 2006 • December 20, 2006 	Chair
4	Work Group Correspondence to FEM/Response form EPA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Approach - FEM Response to letter; to be finalized 	Chair DFO
5	Work Group Reports – Definitions and assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Work Group • Laboratory Management Work Group • Measurement and Technology Work Group 	Chair Morgan Flowers Lowry
6	Pending and New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNI update(s) • Open Forum and Denver Face-to-Face • Web Site Work Group • Letter to Dr. George Gray • FAC on Detection and Quantification • Issues Spreadsheet <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corrections and/or updates to spreadsheet 2. New issues 	DFO Chair Banfer/DFO Chair Pletl/Thomey All
7	Comments and/or Additional Issues	All
8	Open Discussion and Comments from Guests	All
9	Adjourn/Closing Remarks	Chair/DFO

MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS
ELAB MEETING
January 17, 2007; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Mr. Robert (Bob) K. Wyeth (Chair)	Severn Trent Laboratories Representing: ACIL
Y	Ms. Lara P. Autry, DFO	US Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
Y	Mr. Gerald (Gary) Dechant	Analytical Quality Associates, Inc. Representing: DOE Analy. Mgmt. Pgm.
N	Mr. Paul Banfer	EISC (Environnemental Info. Sys. Corp.) Representing: Information Systems
Y	Mr. James (Jimmy) Jordan	Bechtel Jacobs, Inc. Representing: Large Go's Contractors
N	Ms. Nan Thomey	Environmental Chemistry, Inc. Representing: Small Laboratories
Y	Mr. Rock Vitale	Environmental Standards, Inc. Representing: Third Party Assessors
N	Mr. Eddie Clemons	Golden Specialty Laboratory Representing: INELA
Y	Mr. Scot Cocanour	Promium Representing: Lab. Customers of Information Technology
Y	Dr. Jeff Flowers	Flowers Chemical Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Elected Officials for Local Gvt
Y	Dr. Reza Karimi	Southwest Research Institute Representing: Non-profit Research and Development Organizations with Academia
Y	Mr. Jeff Lowry	Environmental Resource Associates Representing: Proficiency Testing Providers
Y	Ms. Judy Morgan	Environmental Science Corp. Representing: Commercial Env. Lab.
N	Mr. Joe Pardue	Parallax, Inc. Representing: Clients of QS Services
Y	Dr. Jim Pletl	Hampton Roads Sanitation District Representing: Municipal Env. Lab.
N	Dr. Albrecht Schwalm	Oglala Lakota College Representing: Academic & Indian Nations

ACTION ITEMS

1. Board members will provide comments and/or corrections to the November 17 meeting minutes. In addition, Board members will provide input to complete the minutes from the December 20, 2006 meeting. Mr. Wyeth will send the final draft minutes to Board members.
2. Ms. Autry will have an update for the Board at the face-to-face meeting at the end of January on how the Board can help with the upcoming half-day session on Performance Approach.
3. Mr. Lowry will send an e-mail to Ms. Bradley to notify her of the Board's plan to address the method index issue during the Open forum.
4. Mr. Lowry will prepare a draft agenda for the meeting with Ms. Bradley.
5. Mr. Dechant, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Cocanour and Mr. Banfer will meet with the Web master to discuss the ELAB Web site.
6. The Board will ask Ms. Autry to post the membership list, workgroups information and charter statement to the existing Web site.
7. Board members will review the letter to Dr. Grey and send comments to Mr. Wyeth as soon as possible.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that these are the final version of minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisor Board Meeting held on January 17, 2007.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert K. Wyeth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

Signature Chairman

Robert K. Wyeth

Print Name Chairman