

Focusing on New Jersey's LSRP Program: A Growing Environmental Success Story

"There are more contaminated sites being actively worked on today than ever before because of LSRPs," says NJDEP Commissioner Bob Martin.



BY ROSEMARY DREGER CAREY
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE New Jersey Licensed Site Remediation Professionals Association (LSRPA)—held on Jan. 25, 2017, at the National Conference Center, Holiday Inn in East Windsor, New Jersey—brought together more than 184 LSRPs and partners from the engineering, science, technology and government sectors, including state regulators and key policymakers.

Founded in 2009 by a group of consulting engineers and scientists to help shape the implementation of the Site Remediation Reform Act (SRRRA), the LSRPA was established during the sweeping regulatory overhaul prompted by an unprecedented New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) backlog of contaminated properties that needed to be remediated and returned to the market as usable land.

The LSRPA also provides a forum for continuing education and knowledge sharing, and the development and dissemination of standards of care, and ethics and judgment when performing the work of an LSRP. Here are just a few LSRP success stories:

- A small tool and die shop in Monmouth County was able to retain an LSRP and have due diligence investigations performed, including a Preliminary Assessment (PA) and a Site Investi-



gation (SI). Soil samples were taken and evaluated, and it was determined that no contamination existed in excess of soil standards. An Unrestricted Remedial Action Outcome (RAO) letter was issued within six weeks of bringing on the LSRP; and this quick turnaround supported a fast-track property sale.

- A hospital client in Hudson County had been going through a petroleum Underground Storage Tank (UST) remediation for a UST discharge since 1998 under traditional NJDEP case management. The client was going through the typical former process of submittals, lengthy NJDEP reviews, more field work and reporting, and then more NJDEP reviews. Upon signing on an LSRP, a PA and site-wide geophysical surveys were conducted to look for any additional

uses, and additional ground water Remedial Investigation (RI) sampling was done—resulting in the completion of the remediation within six months and issuance of a site-wide RAO several months later.

- A truck terminal site was having soil contamination issues associated with a leaky spill bucket from an underground diesel UST. Once the UST system was repaired, the LSRP discovered that the soil contamination extended beneath an adjacent building on the site. Since the property was being sold, a \$250,000 escrow account was being held for the site, which was in the “old” NJDEP program for two years and never even had a case manager assigned to it. The seller requested expedited cleanup under the LSRP program so they would be able to release escrowed monies upon completion of the cleanup. The LSRP was able to close the case in less than two months with an unrestricted use remedy using a site-specific Impact to Ground Water (IGW) standard and the LSRP-prepared RAO.

In his remarks at the Annual Meeting, NJDEP Assistant Commissioner Mark Pedersen, who by statute serves as chairman of the New Jersey Site Remediation Professional Licensing Board, gave a statistical snapshot of the SRRRA's successes during its seven-year history. Looking at the number of closeouts of cases pre- and post-SRRRA, Pedersen explained:

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“Not only are cases getting closed faster—twice as fast—but more complex cases are being closed out at an even greater rate.” He pointed to statistics from 2009-2016 which include cases involving ground water contamination, multi-phase remediation and multiple areas of concern. Contrary to widespread opinion, he said, “It’s not just the simple

cases that are getting closed. The number of complex cases closed has gone up 40 percent versus about 25 percent in the years before the SRRA.”

New Jersey Site Remediation Professional Licensing Board Member Lawra J. Dodge, P.G., LSRP—president of Excel Environmental Resources, Inc.—detailed the board’s committee structure, which includes audit, continuing education, bylaws, finance, outreach, licensure, professional conduct and rules, and other ad hoc committees as needed. Emphasizing the rewards and benefits of working in close collaboration with industry colleagues, Dodge urged new members to get involved with board work. And she urged everyone to use the tools and resources available online. “This is your board. Our work is to represent the LSRP profession and to ensure we are improving constantly.”

Outgoing LSRPA President, Mark Fisher, LSRP, CHMM—owner/managing partner of The ELM Group, Inc.—highlighted five

of the major accomplishments of the LSRPA in 2016, including creation of the LSRPA Foundation and a successful golf outing; implementation of a strategic communications plan; completion and updates on three Technical Guidance Documents; the continued growth of the LSRPA Sounding Board, a forum for peer-to-peer counseling; and the advancement of connectivity between the LSRPA and the Licensing Board.

LSRPA Vice President John J. Oberer, LSRP—associate principal at GZA Geo-Environmental, Inc.—detailed the LSRPA’s plans for 2017. A big emphasis on college outreach, he said, will give students a better chance to get to know LSRPs and what the profession is all about. The recent hiring of a new publicist will help get out the good message through traditional and social media; and a big thrust of the Association will be educating both the public and stakeholders.

At a members-only business meeting, LSRPs discussed and voted on many items, including a change in the number

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of trustees to enhance diversity, and a new clause to help LSRPs avoid conflict of interest in their fiduciary and professional responsibilities. The Association also voted on and approved a slate of proposed candidates for the Board of Trustees of the LSRPA for 2017. Five trustee positions expire in 2017.

New Jersey State Senator Bob Smith (D-17) offered the perspective of someone who originally sponsored the landmark SRRA. Praising the LSRPA community for its significant accomplishments, Senator Smith said: “You are the con-

taminated waste Samurai that roam the state of New Jersey and do an amazing job.” He credited the group for producing approximately 8,500-plus RAOs and called the LSRP program “one of the two most important environmental programs in the state” along with the Environmental Infrastructure Trust. He also commended the LSRPA Board for its exemplary self-policing policies and actions. “When there is a real issue, they take action. It’s a shining example of how government and industry can work together.” ■

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