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Working with an Environmental Analytical Laboratory: Nathan Siria (FTN Associates) Arkansas Environmental Federation Convention Presentation

Arkansas Environmental, Energy, and Water Law Blog

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Nathan Siria undertook a presentation at the October 6th Arkansas Environmental Federation Convention titled Working with an Environmental Analytical Laboratory.

Mr. Siria is a Project Manager with FTN Associates.

The presentation addressed a variety of issues that arise in the use of an analytical laboratory for environmental purposes.

The topics included:

- Planning and Managing a Project/Compliance Needs
- Project/Data Objectives
- Procedures and performance criteria
- What makes an Environmental Testing Lab Good?
- AR Certification Overview
- QA/QC of Sample Collection and Lab Reports
- Accurate and Precise Results
- Complete Laboratory Reports and Easy to Understand
- Explaining Reporting Levels
- MDL/MQL/RL and Why You Should Care?
- How to Hints
- Ordering Lab Analyses Shipping/Receiving Basics
- Reviewing the Laboratory Reports

Mr. Siria also noted key objectives when utilizing a laboratory:

- Obtain Cost Effective Laboratory Results
- Meet Regulatory/Permit Conditions
- Defensible Results (Cheaper is not always better)
- Obtain Accurate and Precise Laboratory Results
- Your Entire Work Plan for Environmental Regulatory Compliance, Improvement Projects, Cleanup Projects and Corrective Actions are Driven by the Site Water, Soil, and Air Analytical Data.

Data quality objectives are stated to be potentially driven by:

- Permit Limits
- Permit Compliance Schedules
- Cleanup Levels
- Investigations

Also discussed was quality assurance planning which document/integrate the planning procedures, implementation, QA/QC activities and assessment procedures for a particular project.

Mr. Siria states that a good environmental testing laboratory has:

- AR certification
- QA/QC of Sample Collection and Lab Reports
- Accurate and Precise Results
- Complete Laboratory Reports and Easy to Understand Reports
- Turn Around Time – Reasonable

The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality Laboratory Certification program was discussed along with an overview of “accuracy” and “precision.” Further, Mr. Siria explained reporting levels (including detection limit implications).

“Helpful How-to Hints” were identified:

- Ordering lab analyses, shipping/receiving basics
- Use COC to order bottles
- Shipping
- Reviewing the Laboratory Reports
- Develop a system to review laboratory reports
- Data Management
- Electronic files from the lab
- Graph data as it is reported

Steps involved in the inspection of a laboratory report was also addressed.

[A copy of the slides from Mr. Siria's presentation can be downloaded here.](#)