NOTE: Specific content related to the abstracts and presentations at the Eighth International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant will remain strictly embargoed until the day of the scientific session.

Gary Bigham and Betsy Henry
Exponent, USA

Session S-RE-5: Bases for Remediation Decisions at Mercury-Contaminated Soil and Sediment Sites

Meeting Rooms K-Q
Tuesday, August 8, 2006
1:20 – 3:20 p.m.

Bases for Remediation Decisions at Mercury-Contaminated Soil and Sediment Sites

Exponent Scientists Gary Bigham and Betsy Henry will be chairing a special session titled Bases for Remediation Decisions at Mercury-Contaminated Soil and Sediment Sites at the 8th International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP), to be held this year in Madison, WI, August 6–11. The ICMGP is the premier conference on all aspects of mercury in the environment.

This session will focus on the issue of determining the extent of remediation (cleanup) at mercury-contaminated soil and sediment sites. Site assessment and remediation of mercury-contaminated sites continues to be a problematic situation both in the U.S. and in other countries. Although the production and use of mercury has decreased since the late 1970s, import and use are increasing in some countries (e.g., China, India) and residual contamination poses ongoing risks to human health and the environment. Sites contaminated by mercury in Europe and North America from historic mining and operation of mercury cell chloralkali plants as well as other sites will be addressed. Each presentation will present a brief overview of the problem, the extent of the cleanup (planned or completed), and will focus on describing how the extent of the cleanup was decided. The combination of science, policy, and socioeconomic factors that influence cleanup decisions will be highlighted.

Presentations will contrast cleanup approaches that range from sitespecific risk-based approaches to use of generic cleanup values to approaches where socio-economic considerations are most influential. The presentations will also highlight the uncertainty inherent in determining cleanup levels for mercury in soils and sediment. The sites addressed will cover a range of the nature of contamination (elemental mercury and mercuric sulfide), extent of contamination (relatively small industrial sites to regional), contaminated media (soil, sediment, groundwater, surface water), and populations at risk (terrestrial and aquatic ecological and human receptors). Remediation technologies will also be identified. Publication of an overview of the papers and posters presented at the conference is planned.

Exponent is a leading engineering and scientific consulting firm dedicated to providing solutions to complex problems.