

28th RAILROAD ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE



PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

28-29 October 2026



AREMA



ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN RAILROADS



American Short Line and
Regional Railroad Association

NURAIL
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Director's Message

Members of the Railroad Environmental Community,

The Rail Transportation and Engineering Center (RailTEC) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is pleased to host the 2026 Railroad Environmental Conference (RREC). This year marks the 28th annual RREC, and we are honored to have played a role in its development from the small gathering of 150 people and five supporter companies in 1999 to its present scope. Interest and attendance at the conference has grown considerably in the years since then, and it has emerged as the principal annual gathering of the railroad environmental professional community. Last year around 400 people attended from throughout North America and abroad, including railroaders, consulting engineers, environmental control equipment suppliers, regulators, industry attorneys, academics and other rail transportation professionals.

The vitality of the conference program benefits from the excellent input provided by representatives from the railroads, environmental engineering, and supply firms who participate in the RREC Planning Committee. Each year this group considers topics of particular interest to the railroad industry, reviews the submitted abstracts, and selects presentations based on their quality, timeliness, and relevance. The goal is coverage of the broad array of current and emerging subjects of interest to railroads. An important criterion is innovative new ideas and results with potential to benefit and improve railroad environmental practice. The RREC organizing team has strived to achieve the proper balance with this year's selection of presentations in the following topic areas:

- Compliance for Operating Facilities
- Environmental Management Systems
- Environmental Permitting and Planning
- Incident Management
- Remediation
- Sustainability
- Wastewater

The RREC provides a forum for attendees to meet with colleagues, clients, regulators, researchers, and other members of the railroad environmental community to learn about new techniques and technologies, exchange views, catch up on regulatory and legislative developments, and generally stay in touch with the direction of the railroad industry's environmental programs. It is also an excellent opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new contacts in the ever-changing railroad environmental arena.

On behalf of RailTEC at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, I would like to extend an invitation to everyone interested in railroad environmental performance, practices, and engineering to attend this year's conference. I hope you can attend and look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,



Chris Barkan
Professor Emeritus
Director, National University Rail Center of Excellence
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Overview

Meeting Location:

[iHotel Illinois Conference Center](#)
1900 S First St, Champaign, IL 61820

Registration Fees:

Registration (paid before 10/16)	\$525
Onsite Registration (paid after 10/16)	\$725
Speaker and Moderator Registration	\$325
Student Registration*	Free
AREMA Committee 13 Banquet	\$70

*Proof of full-time student status required.

Register today at rec.railtec.illinois.edu/registration

Poster Presentation Reception

Wednesday, October 28th

All conference attendees and guests are encouraged to take the opportunity to meet and discuss ideas with the poster presenters at the Poster Reception that will be held on Wednesday, October 28th immediately following the conclusion of the concurrent sessions.

AREMA Comittee 13 Banquet

Wednesday, October 28th

AREMA Committee 13 will host the Conference Banquet, which is open to all RREC attendees. The Banquet Program will begin immediately following the reception in the iHotel Illinois Conference Center. Additional ticket purchase required.

Women's Networking & Outreach Luncheon

Thursday, October 29th

The Women's Networking & Outreach Luncheon will provide a networking opportunity for women professionals and students at the Railroad Environmental Conference. The lunch will be held on Thursday, October 29th. There is no additional fee for the luncheon, but advance registration is requested to ensure adequate space.

Presentations

Conference Keynote Address:

John Lovenburg

Vice President, Environment & Sustainability
BNSF Railway

Compliance for Operating Facilities

Adapting to Increased Politization of U.S.EPA's Approval of California's Zero Emission Vehicle Rules - Looking Beyond California and the Current Administration

Thomas Cappucci - Union Pacific Railroad
Allan Dally - Trinity Consultants

Risk Based Stormwater Management Upgrades in an Active Rail Yard: CN Stuart Yard, Hamilton, Ontario

Jason Blenkarn - GHD
TBC - CN Railway

SPCC and FRP Compliance Trends Following EPA's Extensive 2025 Headquarters and Regional Retirements

John Carroll - Witt O'Brien's, LLC, part of the Ambipar Group

Unlocking Compliance: Navigating EPA HFC Refrigerant Rules for Railroad Facilities - Are You Prepared?

Anne Walsh - Union Pacific Railroad
Kim Ayotte - Trinity Consultants

Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing - A Solution to Upstream Dilution Water Toxicity

Nicholas Gier - TRC

Environmental Management Systems

Building a Rail Bridge in 16-Knot Currents: How CN Used Adaptive Environmental Management to Maintain Schedule and Compliance

Dragana Jaksic - CN Railway
Geoff Rousseau - Stantec

Environmental Management of Complex Railroad and Subway Programs: Lessons from MTA Capital Delivery

Frank Urilov - WSP USA Inc.

Presentations

Environmental Permitting and Planning

CREATE Program Environmental Challenges and Successes

Sam Tuck - IEI

Laura Jack - Kaskaskia Engineering

Railroad Maintenance: A Case Study for When the SHPO Declares Your Rail Line Historic

Andrea Buggy & Nikki Waters - Hanson Professional Services Inc.

The Bat Signal: Updates You Need to Know

Jessica Casey & Paige Anderson - Olsson

Incident Management

Common Operating Picture (COP) Dashboard (Including Real-Time R-SCAT data) to Enhance Awareness and Decision Making

Becky Rewey - Union Pacific Railroad

Frances Kaler - GHD

Environmental Unit Leader (EUL) Panel

Panelists to be confirmed

Finding a Nurdle in a Haystack- The Challenges of Recovering Plastic Pellets after a Derailment

Kelsey Baker - TRC

High-Resolution Water Level Data Collection in a Dynamic Incident Response and Restoration Setting - East Palestine Train Derailment

Alex Simpson & Colleen Barton - Arcadis, U.S. Inc.

How Can GIS and Databases Help During Emergency Response

Marie Weber-Goeke & Sofie Weber-Snapp - WSP USA Inc.

Susquehanna River Seep Response – Enola, Pennsylvania Rail Yard

Christopher Hunsicker - Norfolk Southern Railroad

Justin Gaudi - Arcadis, U.S. Inc.

Use Attainability Analysis for Incident Response

David Czayka - EnviroScience Inc.

Jamie Krejsa - Onteris

Presentations

Remediation

A Novel Approach to Identifying a Mystery Petroleum Hydrocarbon Product at a CN Railway Site

Ethan Cobb - CN Railway

Francine Kelly-Hooper - GHD

A Return to Nature: Completion of a Multi-Year Large-Scale Riverfront Restoration Along an Environmentally Impaired Shoreline

Mike Makerov - Union Pacific Railroad

Donna Laudermilch - Jacobs

Investigation/Delineation of PCBs and EPH in Active Railroad Environment: NJ TRANSIT Former West End Substation, Jersey City, NJ

Charles Stebbins & Kruti Oza - Dewberry

Long-Term Sustainable Pilot Remediation Technology in Remote Locations

John De Jong - Union Pacific Railroad

Josh Lee - Arcadis, U.S. Inc.

Optimizing Remediation of Soil at a Former Rail Wood-Treating Facility

Barbara Oslund - TRC

Redeveloping Legacy Railyards: Integrating Vapor Intrusion Mitigation into the Sacramento Railyard Transformation

Jacob Clark - ERM

Scott Selken - Union Pacific Railroad

Rethinking Site Closure: Using the Right Tools to Get There Faster - Without Compromising Protection

Dan Murray - GHD

Sustainability

Advancing Climate and Nature Resiliency: Shifting from TCFD to TNFD for Sustainable Railroad Operations

Camila Adams & Kim Grubert - TRC

Carbon-and-Water Trade-off of Alternative Energy in Short-Haul Freight and Commuter Rail Service

C. Tyler Dick - University of Texas at Austin

Evaluating Energy Efficiency and Cost Impacts of Advanced Locomotive Powertrains on the BNSF Southern Transcon Corridor

George Burke - Argonne National Laboratory

Presentations

Laying the Tracks to Net Zero: Norfolk Southern Decarbonization Planning with Net Zero Catalyst

Savannah Rodrigue & Amber Jiang - Arcadis, U.S. Inc.

Norfolk Southern Hiring Goats to Clear Kudzo: Not a Baaaaaad Idea!

Nathan Williams - Norfolk Southern Railroad

Pioneering Biodiversity Enhancement in the Freight Rail Sector: A CN Railway Pilot Study

Kari Harris - CN Railway

Camila Plana - TRC

Quantifying the Impact of Grade Frequency and Magnitude on Electrified Locomotive Performance

Michael Iden - Tier 5 Locomotive LLC

Garrett Anderson - Benchmark Data & Control

Recent Learnings on Right-Sizing Battery Capacity and Capability for Rail

Mark Gibbs - Aether Limited

Neil Grennan-Heaven - Carrickarory Consulting

Salmon Return – Restoring Fish Passage and Protecting Rail Crossings Using Natural Channel Design in Canada

Kari Harris - CN Railway

Lucas Warner - 5 Smooth Stones Restoration Inc

Sustainability and Operational Implications of Truck-to-Rail Mode Shift on the Los Angeles-Chicago Southern Transcon

Md Rakibul Alam - Argonne National Laboratory

Wastewater

Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Advancing Field Based Problem Solving

Divya Malyala - Arcadis, U.S. Inc.

Terri Allen - Norfolk Southern Railroad

Enhancing Railroad Infrastructure Resilience - Industrial Wastewater and Stormwater Operations and Maintenance Program

James Conlon & Beau Perry - WGA

Extending Asset Life and Cutting Capital Costs with Targeted, Small-Scale Upgrades: Case Study at the BNSF Barstow Yard

Kalin Ojert - Arcadis, U.S. Inc.

Daniel Sanchez - BNSF Railway

Poster Presentations

Environmental Permitting and Planning

A Targeted Approach for Maintaining Railroad Right of Ways for Construction Access and Environmental Permitting Effectiveness

Damon Greer - Benesch

Clean Water Act Sections 404 and 401: Navigating the Evolving Federal/State Permitting Divide

Michael Robson - Benesch

Remediation

Custom Modifications and Temporary Retrofits Used to Recover a Highly Viscous Sticky Synthetic Polymer from a Creek

Becky Rewey - Union Pacific Railroad

Risk-Based Total Petroleum Hydrocarbon Assessment

Joe Ruiz - Weston Solutions

Wastewater Management

Wastewater System Cleanout - Lessons Learned After 30 Years

Craig Borgmeyer - CPKC

2026 Railroad Environmental Conference



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