Message

From: EPAResearchCompass [EPAResearchCompass@epa.gov]
Sent: 2/28/2018 7:24:23 PM
To: ORD-ALL Feds and NonFeds and RSLs [ORDALL_Feds_and_NonFeds_and_RSLs@epa.gov]
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Subject: Weekly Compass: February 28, 2018

EPA

WEEKLY compass

Weekly Update: 2/28/2018

Welcome to the Weekly Compass, your gateway to information about recent and upcoming ORD activities. If you have ideas for the Weekly Compass, please send them to the editors. To see past issues, visit the Weekly Compass archive on ORD@work.

Weekly Note from Jennifer

ORDers - Thank you for joining us at last week's Town Hall. As you heard, we announced phase one of a plan to be more responsive to Agency priorities and funding realities that have occurred over many years. As part of that effort, we are initiating a process to establish a new office, the Office of Resource Management, by consolidating OARS, OPARM, and the administrative/grants/contracts management functions of NCER. FOIA, records management, and budget formulation functions from other ORD organizations will also be moved into this new office. At the appropriate time, the science staff currently in NCER will be redeployed to the ORD labs/centers/offices matching their expertise to organizational needs. Staff in the affected organizations will retain the grade and career ladder of their position of record, while some change in functions could occur.

ORD is committed to providing the scientific foundation for many of the Agency's policies, actions, and decisions made on behalf of the American people. To do that, we must rethink what we're about, how we support the EPA mission, and how we can be more efficient, effective, and impactful in our research. While we have significant challenges before us, we also have a tremendous opportunity to strengthen our organization and increase our resiliency and sustainability.

Please share your ideas with us on the best organizational structure for our core science functions and the draft vision statement by March 9 via the Suggestion Box. We will take all of your suggestions into consideration and keep you posted as we move forward.

This week, Richard Yamada and staff from ORD, Region 9, and OAR-OAQPS will meet with representatives from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Maricopa County, Arizona State University, local stakeholders and potential funders to scope out an air sensors project in Phoenix. The project aims to advance understanding on the quality of data from sensor technologies and how they can be used to address air quality priorities. On March 1, Richard and others from ORD will attend the Health Effects Institute annual sponsors meeting. I, along with members of the Cross-Agency PFAS Committee, will provide an EPA PFAS Plan briefing to OMB. Bruce Rodan will visit Gulf Breeze at the end of this week to meet with the staff and learn about their research.

Thank you for all of your hard work. I look forward to hearing from you. – *Jennifer*

Quick Updates

- Don't forget to check out the open opportunities on Talent Hub!
- Abstract Extension 3/7 for the 2018 International Decontamination Conference
- Goodbye Reservationless Plus, hello Office 365 dial-in conferencing
- February is Healthy Heart Month. Learn more about research to protect heart health.
- You can read the This Week @ EPA newsletter here.
- Upcoming webinars:
    - Water Research Webinar: Village Blue Project: Real-Time Water Quality Monitoring in the Baltimore Harbor: Wednesday, February 28, 2-3 pm ET
    - Internal SSWR Research Project Update Monthly Webinar Series: National Water Quality Benefits–Water Quality & Home Values: Monday, March 5, 1-1:30 pm
    - ACE Connections Call: Wednesday, March 7, 11:30-12:30 pm ET

Faces of ORD: NCER's April Richards

In the Lab:

State Case Studies Demonstrate Utility of New Version of WMOST

More than 250 state representatives and others registered for EPA's February Tools and Resources Webinar on WMOST. WMOST is a publicly available Watershed Management Optimization Support tool that can be used to simultaneously screen a wide range of options, including stormwater, drinking water, wastewater, and land conservation management for cost-effective water resource management. NHEERL researcher Naomi Detenbeck shared the newly available version 3 of the tool, which a water quality module has been added to and presented case studies of how WMOST is being used. The Maryland Department of the Environment is using WMOST v3 to identify cost-effective stormwater management practices. In Massachusetts, a consortium of organizations in the upper Taunton River watershed is using the tool to determine the most cost-effective options to meet water quantity targets, reduce flooding and impacts of combined sewer overflows, and support land conservation goals. WMOST aids in

evaluating the environmental and economic costs, benefits, trade-offs and co-benefits of various management options and can help evaluate options that are suitable for projects using State Revolving Funds.

Fire Lab Testing on Impacts of Wildfire in Radiologically-Contaminated Forests

NHSRC researchers, Drs. Sang Don Lee and Paul Lemieux, in collaboration with OLEM, OAR, and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), are investigating the potential impacts of a wildfire in a radiologically-contaminated forest or other biomass-laden outdoor areas. This study was inspired by Dr. Lee's visits to Japan to assist in the efforts to cleanup areas contaminated as a result of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident, approximately half of which is forested areas. Experiments were performed at the USFS Fire Lab in Missoula, MT, using a non-radioactive isotope of cesium to assess the partitioning of cesium between the ash that remains on the forest floor and the coarse, fine, and ultra-fine particulate matter that gets lofted into the air during a fire. Results from this study will be coupled with scenarios based on previous emergency preparedness exercises, and representative biomass loading estimates from the USFS, and then incorporated into air models by OAR to help assess potential exposures of the public and firefighters.

Supporting EPA Region 2 Superfund Work

ORD's members of the Superfund's Contaminated Sediments Technical Advisory Group (CSTAG), Lawrence Burkhard and Barbara Bergen (NHEERL), will participate in the group's review of Region 2's Lower Passaic River Study Area 17-Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study this week. CSTAG was established to address a small number of the largest, most complex, or controversial contaminated sediment Superfund sites by helping remedial program managers and on-scene coordinators investigate and manage these sites. The remedial investigation collects data to characterize site conditions, determine the nature of the waste, assess risk to human health and the environment, and conduct treatability testing to evaluate the potential performance and cost of treatment technologies. The feasibility study develops, screens, and evaluates alternative remedial actions.

Briefed New Acting AA of Office of Homeland Security

Last week, Greg Sayles and Shawn Ryan, gave an overview of ORD's homeland security research to the new Acting AA of EPA's Office of Homeland Security (OHS), Ted Stanich. OHS' responsibilities include coordinating the Agency's HS components, which reside in every program office and region, and to be the EPA's national security liaison for to White House. NHSRC supports OHS, in addition to carrying out our research, by providing technical expertise when OHS participates in National Security Council activities and when intelligence needs a scientific interpretation.

Unilever to Visit RTP

On March 6, representatives from Unilever will visit ORD's RTP facility to discuss the ongoing research collaboration between Unilever and EPA NCCT to incorporate new chemical evaluation methods into risk assessments. During the visit, project teams will provide updates, the group will discuss the upcoming Society of Toxicology annual meeting, and Unilever will receive a tour of the EPA RTP facility.

American Heart Month Activities: NEHA Webinar and NACCHO Blog

As part of National Heart Health Month, the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) offered a free webinar today on the health impacts of air pollution with tools and approaches that its membership can use to educate the public. NHEERL's Wayne Cascio, OAR's Susan Stone, and Executive Director of the Million Hearts Initiative of the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Janet Wright, presented the webinar for interested NEHA members and others. NEHA, the national professional society for environmental health practitioners, manages the Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian credential and currently serves 5,000 members. Additionally, Wayne Cascio and Janet Wright co-authored a blog *post What Health Professionals Should Know About the Cardiovascular Risk of Air Pollution*, which was published on the NAACHO Voice blog site. ORD also published an article in Science Matters on how people can protect their hearts from air pollution exposures.

NHEERL and NCCT Collaborate to Advance Alternative Methods

Developmental neurotoxicity (DNT), the study of adverse effects of chemical substances and physical agents on the developing nervous system, is important to the Agency and the public, yet large numbers of chemicals are not evaluated for this effect because of the time and costs of guideline studies. New EPA research in this area shows promise to support Toxic Substances Control Act implementation. To advance an *in vitro* assay that rapidly screens chemicals for adverse effects on neural network formation, NHEERL scientist, Tim Shafer, has teamed up with NCCT scientists, Imran Shah and John Wambaugh, to develop a computational approach that determines the critical concentrations of chemicals that disrupt network formation and compare those values to *in vivo* concentrations that cause DNT. The "tipping point," or chemical concentration at which the developing network could no longer tolerate chemical exposure without permanent alterations in function, was determined. This research has demonstrated that a subset of chemicals had tipping points consistent with blood concentrations that caused DNT *in vivo*.

Hurricane Response Deployment

March 13-29, NHSRC's Ramona Sherman will be deployed to Region 2's Emergency Operations Center in Edison, New Jersey to work as Situation Unit Leader assisting with Hurricane response. Her duties will include delivering daily Unit briefings to the Command Center and general staff, and gathering updates to submit daily management and Situation reports. This position helps ensure that the Command Center has updates from staff deployed in the field. This will be Ramona's second recent deployment.

Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Stakeholder Meeting

Today, NHSRC's Dr. Hiba Ernst and Steve Clark, and OW's Debbie Newberry are representing EPA at the Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience subgroup, National Science and Technology Council, of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. The event, planned to support infrastructure resilience, will highlight infrastructure successes, especially government and private sector collaborations. Information will be shared among critical infrastructures (including transportation, electric, water and others) to improve infrastructure resilience; discuss any emerging opportunities and hope for research collaboration among government and private sectors.

ERIS State Science Contacts Call

On February 23, ORD participated in the ERIS State Science Contacts call. Ohio EPA Director Craig Butler reported out on the Region 5 states' visit to Cincinnati. ORD's Blake Schaeffer provided an overview of the Cyanobacteria mobile app and the opportunity for states to participate in beta testing. Lisa Matthews provided an overview of ORD's collaborative work with ERIS – including EPA research to support states, tools webinars, and bimonthly ECOS-EPA PFAS calls.

ECOS-EPA PFAS Call

ORD coordinated this week's ECOS-EPA PFAS call. The purpose of this bimonthly call is for EPA and state partners to share information on PFAS toxicity, methods and treatment work. Agenda topics include ORD's research on human health/toxicity for PFAS, report out on the Federal Information Exchange on PFAS, and fact sheets and training developed by the ITRC PFAS team.

EPA National Remedy Review Board (NRRB) Meeting

NRMRL's Ed Barth and Chunming Su participated in the NRRB meeting on the Mississippi Phosphates Corporation Superfund Site located in Pascagoula, MS. The site is a former diammonium phosphate fertilizer plant that generates ammonia, fluoride, and phosphorus-contaminated precipitation and leachate. This is one of the EPA Administrator's 21 priority sites targeted for immediate, intense attention. The expected cost of site cleanup may exceed $70 million. The NRRB meets quarterly to review and provide input to decision-makers on Superfund remedial actions projected to cost more than $50 million. The NRRB is comprised of one representative from each Region, one representative each from the Office of General Council and Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, and two representatives from ORD.

Technical Support to Region 8, Rawlins, WY

Since March 2017, NRMRL's Nick Dugan has been working with Region 8 and OW Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water's Standards and Risk Mitigation Division to help correct deficiencies in the Rawlins wastewater treatment plant that are causing issues with effluent water quality. Nick has also been helping OW with developing a Demonstration of Performance protocol for the plant. In order to gain knowledge to use as a baseline for the Rawlins plant, Nick will visit a neighboring community with an identical treatment facility that produces a higher quality effluent. In Rawlins, Nick will interview plant staff, examine log books and data, and inspect the plant's hydraulics. The goal of this trip is to recommend practices that would improve Rawlins' effluent water quality.

Presentation to Region 4 Waste Managers, Chattanooga, TN

Yesterday, NRMRL's Thabet Tolaymat and David Carson participated in the 2018 EPA Region 4 State Managers' Meeting, where state waste managers convened and addressed pressing issues related to waste management. Thabet presented the interim status of EPA's ongoing research on elevated subsurface temperatures in landfills. This work is conducted under SHC and, while the meeting is focused on Region 4, the landfills research is applicable nationwide.

PFAS Meeting at Calgon Carbon, Pittsburgh, PA

Tomorrow, NRMRL's Craig Patterson, Tom Speth, and Jonathan Pressman will meet with Calgon Carbon, a manufacturer of granular activated carbon (GAC), to discuss PFAS removal and disinfection byproduct reduction capabilities using GAC. Calgon Carbon manufactures GAC systems for municipal drinking water treatment. Calgon will share data on GAC treatment of PFAS in drinking water. These data will be considered for use in EPA's treatability database and cost models for evaluating PFAS treatment options. OW and consultants from ABT Associates will also be in attendance.

TSCA Support

- Alternative Toxicity Testing Strategy Paper: A draft of the strategy document was delivered to OPPT management on Friday, February 16. A public meeting will be held approximately 30 days after the release of the draft report. The team also plans to discuss the draft strategy document at a TSCA Special Session during the Society of Toxicology Meeting. Formal intra-agency review is planned for May 15 and the release of the completed final document planned for June 22, 2018.
- Chemical Pre-Prioritization: A draft of the white paper is expected in March. In the spring, the white paper will be reviewed with OMB and likely undergo interagency review before

release in June. ORD welcomes this opportunity to work with OPPT to develop future pre-prioritization approaches for TSCA.

SHC Grantee Publication

Recent results from an SHC-funded study were published in the *Journal of Asthma*, in the paper Atopy, but Not Obesity is Associated with Asthma Severity Among Children with Persistent Asthma. Researchers from the Johns Hopkins University Children's Center examined the relationship of obesity and atopy to asthma severity among children and adolescents. An analysis of predominantly low income, minority children and adolescents with persistent asthma living in inner cities revealed that atopy was strongly associated with measures of more severe asthma, while weight status was not. These results contrast with those in adult populations, which suggest obesity is a major risk factor for more severe asthma. The difference may be due to the fact that atopy is a less prominent feature of asthma in adults than children. A better understanding of the risks on asthma severity in this high-risk population will inform public health approaches to reducing asthma morbidity. For example, instead of interventions aimed at obesity, a more effective approach to reducing asthma severity may include targeting atopy through interventions aimed allergen exposure reduction or medication.

NC BREATHE 2018

On March 8, Air & Energy Team members will participate in NC BREATHE, a conference organized by Clean Air Carolina. This meeting will create an interactive forum for North Carolinians to share the latest research related to air pollution's impact on human health, the environment, and the economy, and to discuss the critical role of policy-making. This conference will bring together a broad range of stakeholders including Federal, State, and local air pollution agency staff; academics, elected officials, public health organizations, and environmental advocacy groups. Wayne Cascio (NHEERL) and Bryan Hubbell (IOAA) will give plenary talks, Gayle Hagler (NERL) will participate as a panelist in the "Health and Air Monitoring Data Needs" breakout session, and Beth Hassett-Sipple (A&E Science Associate) will exhibit. Ellen Kirrane (NCEA) served on this year's planning committee.

Discussions on a Collaborative Air Pollution Sensor Project

Yesterday, NERL's Tim Watkins and Gayle Hagler (ACE) joined Richard Yamada (IOAA), and staff from OAR in a meeting with representatives from Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and Arizona State University. They discussed plans for a collaborative project for evaluating and advancing the understanding of the role of air pollution sensors in air quality management activities at the federal, state, and local levels.

Management Standards for Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals

Jace Cujé (OSP) is leading ORD's review of the preamble to a final rule to establish new regulations for healthcare facilities and reverse distributors managing hazardous waste pharmaceuticals. Susan Glassmeyer (NERL), Marc Mills and Thabet Tolaymat (NRMRL) are also reviewing the preamble.

Addition of Nonylphenol Ethoxylates to the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Final Rule

Walter Cybulski (OSP) is leading ORD's review of the final rule (and response to comments document) to add 13 nonylphenol ethoxylates to the list of chemicals reportable to the TRI. OCSPP is adding these chemicals to the TRI because they degrade in the environment to produce shorter chain nonylphenol ethoxylates and nonylphenol, which are highly toxic to aquatic organisms. Mike Lewis (NHEERL) and Eric Weber (NERL) are also reviewing the materials.

Water Reuse Research in Region 7

On February 22, Region 7 hosted staff from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas State University and community partners for a brown bag presentation and tour of the Region 7 laboratory, as part of the Region 7 Year of Science Program. Amy Shields (Region 7 RSL) and Rob Weber (OSP) worked with regional staff to organize this event, which featured water reuse research conducted as part of the Region 7 NetZero Fort Riley RARE Project, as well as other Regional/ORD research conducted at the Region 7 lab.

Superfund & Technical Support

On February 21, Jonathan Essoka (OSP) and Region 3 Superfund staff met with local stakeholders from Hatboro, PA, to discuss remediation challenges at the Raymark Hatboro Superfund Site and nearby properties where EPA is investigating potential vapor intrusion of trichloroethylene from the site.

On February 23, Rob Weber (OSP) met with Region 7 Superfund staff and Engineering Technical Support Center Director, John McKernan (ORD/NRMRL), to discuss progress made on a watershed modeling effort at the Madison County Mines Superfund Site in Fredericktown, MO. Historic mining operations have resulted in widespread heavy metals contamination at the site.

NACEPT Meeting to Review Report on EPA Use of Citizen Science

Today, National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT) is meeting to review the final draft of their report on EPA's use of citizen science. The council will discuss draft findings and recommendations, which focuses on how to better use citizen science information for actions and decisions. A final draft is expected to be transmitted to the EPA Administrator in April.

Environmental Impacts from Releases of Engineered Nanomaterials

Environmental impacts can result from releases of engineered nanomaterials (ENMs) that occur during the use of nano-enabled products. Studies quantifying these impacts are limited due to the uncertainty surrounding ENMs release under realistic environmental exposure conditions. Science To Achieve Results (STAR) researchers developed a method that enables robust characterization of ENMs release from multiple representative product matrices under real outdoor climate conditions. In addition to measuring release, the methodological design allows for the preservation of the weathered sample for characterization and efficacy testing throughout the weathering period. This approach allowed the researchers to collect weathering data over a 13-month period demonstrating the utility and value of the methodological design to capture information useful to inform what governs ENMs release as well as improved environmental impact characterization.

In the Office:

NERL Director Visits Las Vegas

Today and tomorrow, NERL Acting Director Tim Watkins will visit the NERL facilities in Las Vegas, Nevada. He will meet with NERL-Las Vegas staff and further discuss plans moving forward. Earlier this month, Watkins announced that all ORD operations in Las Vegas will end by September 30. This decision was made to reduce ORD's leased space and operational costs.

Information Regarding Iowa State University Survey Emails

Some EPA employees have received emails from Iowa State University asking them to participate in a survey from the Union of Concerned Scientists regarding scientific integrity. Agency ethics guidelines do permit employees to take the survey, as long as they follow the guidelines below. For additional information, please see OGC's quick ethics tip on answering surveys from outside EPA. Please note:

- You cannot use government time to respond to the survey.
- You should not use your government computer to respond to the survey.
- You can't divulge nonpublic information in completing the survey.
- Pay attention to how the survey identifies you. The access code in this survey is linked to your EPA email address. But, you aren't representing EPA but rather sharing a personal opinion. Remember that you cannot identify yourself solely by reference to your EPA title or position (The ethics rule is that mention of EPA affiliation is permitted as one of several biographical details, if given no more prominence than the others).

Timely Travel Claims: New Concur Report

In an effort to assist travelers and travel authorizers in complying with Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) travel claim requirements, OCFO has implemented a new reporting feature within Concur. Effective immediately, travel authorizers will receive weekly reports from Concur listing their travelers who have not completed their travel vouchers and have a travel end date at least three days from the report issuance date. These weekly reports will serve as a reminder to travelers and travel authorizers to submit travel vouchers within the five business day FTR requirement.

Federal Employees with Personal Social Media Accounts

Read these two new helpful documents about the Hatch Act and Social Media from the Office of Special Counsel. The Hatch Act revolves around federal employees from some forms of political activity. The guidance documents from OSC does include PERSONAL use of social media. The Hatch Act Guidance on Social Media includes real world examples to illustrate how social media and the Hatch Act intersect. In general, all federal employees may use social media and comply with the Hatch Act by following three prohibitions:

1. On Duty or in the Workplace Prohibition – Employees may not engage in political activity while on duty or in the federal workplace.
2. 24/7 Prohibition – Employees may not knowingly solicit, accept, or receive a political contribution for a political party, candidate in a partisan race, or partisan political group.
3. 24/7 Prohibition – Employees may not use their official authority or influence to affect the outcome of an election.

Check out the Social Media Quick Guide, a handy reference chart.

Accolades:

Weekly Wow: NRMRL's Eben Thoma & Libby Nessley

Deb Thomas, the Deputy Regional Administrator in Region 8 sent a note expressing appreciation of the outstanding technical support ORD provides in Region 8. She highlighted NRMRL's Eben Thoma and Libby Nesley and their help with the Colorado Pneumatic Controller (PC) Study, which builds upon ORD and R8's RARE project in the Uinta Basin which developed measurement methods for pneumatic controllers and emissions measured. After reading the paper on this work, Colorado's Air Pollution Control Division approached Region 8 requesting technical assistance to help them better understand PC emissions at oil & gas production facilities in the DJ Basin, an ozone nonattainment area.

Dr. Eben Thoma led the RARE project working with Region 8 staff as well as the stakeholder team including the Utah Division of Air Quality and the Ute Tribe. ORD created a robust Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for that effort, which Region 8 has leveraged for this Colorado project. Eben is serving as the technical advisor and ORD's Libby Nessley provided outstanding support leading to the timely approval of the QAPP. Eben has mentored Region 8's Mike Stovern, the technical lead, and Colorado staff who are involved in the planning and field implementation of this project. The Region greatly appreciates Libby's QA guidance to help ensure this collaborative state research project is of the highest quality. ORD has also provided a detailed QAPP and ongoing technical assistance to a testing program of the performance of Optical Gas Imaging (OGI) camera operators at DOE's test facility at Colorado State University. This should help in future considerations when reviewing alternatives to OGI in demonstrating equivalent emission reductions. Colorado is very keen on this work as they have requested a streamlined way to approve alternatives to OGI for leak detection at oil & gas sites. Deb finished her email by saying "It's great to have yet more examples of the great work that gets accomplished when ORD, Region 8 and state/local partners come together to answer complex scientific questions to ultimately facilitate compliance with environmental laws."

If you have someone you would like to nominate for a future "weekly wow", please email the editors.

NRMRL Scientists' Paper Wins American Water Works Association (AWWA) Award

The paper titled, "Scale Formation Under Blended Phosphate Treatment for a Utility with Lead Pipes," was selected as the winner of the 2018 AWWA Water Science and Research Division Best Paper Award. The authors of this paper include Simoni Triantafyllidou, Mike DeSantis, Mike Schock, and Lauren Wasserstrom (former EPA contractor). This study, using a proprietary blended phosphate chemical, identified the solids that formed on the interior surface of a lead service line and galvanized steel pipe excavated from a drinking water distribution system.

EPA's National Stormwater Calculator Highlighted by Gulf Tools Website

The National Stormwater Calculator is highlighted on a new website called the Gulf Tools for Resilience Exploration Engine (Gulf TREE). Gulf TREE provides a list of useful tools based on user feedback regarding needs for resilience planning, similar to EPA's Green Infrastructure Wizard (GIWiz) tool. The Stormwater Calculator is listed on the website as a tool for stormwater management planning.

American Water Works Association (AWWA) Selected ORD Paper

Simoni Triantafyllidou, Mike Desantis, and Mike Schock's (NRMRL) co-authored paper with Denver AWWA and Trinity Consultants, *Scale Formation Under Blended Phosphate Treatment for a Utility with Lead Pipes*, was selected as the winner of the 2018 AWWA Water Science & Research Division Best Paper Award. The award will be presented at the AWWA Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada in June, and a plaque will be presented to Lauren Wasserstrom, senior author, and Michael Schock.

In the News:

EPA Scientist Interviewed about Pet Health Survey

Dr. Megan Mehaffey was recently interviewed on Pet Life Radio about her work on the Pet Health Survey and how people can help safeguard the health of pets, people, the ecosystem, our economy, and the planet.

Buzzfeed Article Highlights NCEA Paper

A paper came out last week, authored by NCEA scientists titled Disparities in Distribution of Particulate Matter Emission Sources by Race and Poverty Status in the *American Journal of Public Health.* The NCEA authors responded to an inquiry from *Buzzfeed's* Nidhi Subbaraman, and the story ran on 2/22.

In the Community:

EPA-RTP STEM Outreach Program

- Yesterday: the Program will host 40 students from Woods Charter Middle School on the EPA-RTP campus for a day of activities, tours, and speed mentoring.
- Today: the Program will participate in a Career Conversations Fair at Athens Drive High School in Raleigh; lead hands-on STEM activities with students at Easley Elementary School in Durham; and host 15 educators from Durham County for an afternoon of tours, lightning talks, and career explorations. This is a part of STEM in the Park's Educator ExternTrips, short immersion trips in which educators visit local STEM companies during their teacher's workday.
- Tomorrow: the Program will host 25 students from Grady Brown Elementary School in Hillsborough for a day of tours and hands-on STEM activities; lead its 5th monthly hands-on STEM activity for the afterschool program at Holt Elementary School in Durham, and present its 1st session for the spring apprenticeship for Citizen Schools at Lowes Grove Middle School in Durham.
- Friday: the Program will host 25 students from North Carolina Central University's TRiO-Student Support Services Program for a day of lightning talks, building tours, lab tours, and speed mentoring.

Faces of ORD: NCER's April Richards

Name: April Richards
Job/Position: SBIR Program Manager and P3 Team Lead
L/C/O or Program: NCER

1. When did you start at EPA? 2001! I had my orientation at Waterside Mall (but never actually worked there).

2. What's the most interesting thing about your job? For SBIR, I love getting to work with the small business community and see cool technology ideas that may ultimately become marketable products. For P3, I am inspired by the student teams' enthusiasm and optimism in how they approach solving environmental problems.

3. What's the most interesting thing in your workspace? Mushroom materials! (see my profile photo)

4. What's your favorite thing to do (besides come to work)? Attend kids' sports.

5. What's your favorite lunch spot? Many of the fun people in my office dine right outside my door in a small conference space. That's the most happening spot. I don't eat there enough…

6. If you could have one superpower, what would it be? To pause time. Would just get a few more things done and then fire it back up again.

7. Describe any steps you take in your daily life to protect the environment. The most impactful step is certainly taking metro to work every day rather than driving, but I do love to garden so I do my share of kitchen composting.