

2007 New England Private Well Water Symposium
December 3 & 4, 2007
Newport, Rhode Island

Final Report

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Introduction

The 2007 New England Private Well Water Symposium was held December 3 & 4, 2007 at the Hyatt Regency in Newport Rhode Island. One hundred and twenty-three people attended the program representing a diverse audience of Federal, state, and local agency and organization staff, university researchers, Extension faculty and staff, graduate students, private non-profit organizations, and private sector professionals. The majority of participants came from the New England states. In addition, professionals attended from across the nation, including New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, California, Ohio, Alaska, and Texas.

This final report contains information for the Symposium, including the evaluation summary and a list of attendees. The Symposium Program is attached, containing program agenda and presentation abstracts.

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The goal of the 2007 New England Private Well Water Symposium was to bring together professionals working in the field of private well protection and provide the opportunity to communicate current research, share programming and educational approaches and materials, and to interact with each other in an effort to reduce the risks associated with groundwater use to private well water users. The Program Planning Committee sought to integrate research, Extension, and education interests in a two-day format to enhance the protection of private drinking water supplies throughout New England.

The Program Planning Committee anticipated that the symposium would result in:

1. A greater exchange of ideas among scientists, regulators, technical professionals, and risk communicators about private well water concerns;
2. An increased knowledge for participants about current contaminants of concern, contaminant analysis, water treatment systems, best protection practices, epidemiology and effective risk communication strategies;
3. A list of experts identified within the region on various private well water issues;
4. Within one year, a better integration of current research into education programs for private well water users; and,
5. A gauge of the usefulness of this type of gathering as a regular event.

Evaluation

The Program Planning Committee based the success of the Symposium on evaluation results that the participants completed. There was a 46% return rate on evaluations. The post-workshop questionnaire was designed to capture the following information and measured against the following objectives:

1. At least 85% of respondents will agree or agree strongly that the symposium provided an effective avenue for exchanging ideas about private well water issues.
 - a. **As shown below in the evaluation summary, 100% of the survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.**
2. At least 70% of respondents will report a significant increase in knowledge in at least one of the symposium topic areas.
 - a. **One hundred percent of the survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.**
3. At least 30% of respondents will report that they anticipate contacting at least one expert/colleague they identified through the event within the year.
 - a. **Eighty-nine percent of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.**
4. At least 60% of the respondents will report the integration of some knowledge gained from the symposium into their educational efforts within one year.
 - a. **Ninety-one percent of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.**

5. At least 90% of the respondents will express a positive opinion about the utility of this event as a regular event in the future.
 - a. **Ninety-eight percent of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.**

In addition the evaluation results serve as a needs assessment for future program planning, asking participants if this type of event should be held more regularly and what additional topics and items should be included in such an event.

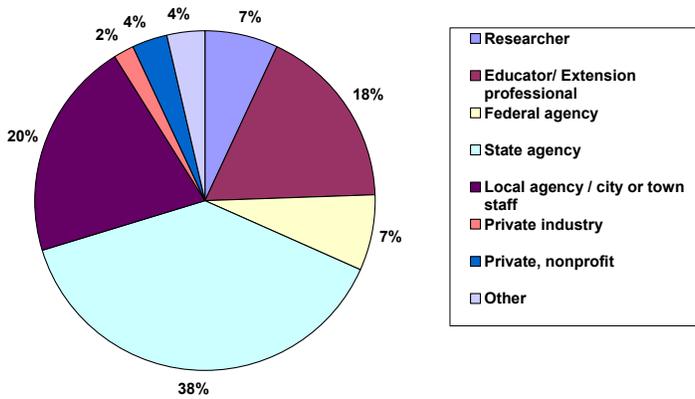
Program Evaluation Summary

Attendees: 125

Number of evaluations returned: 57

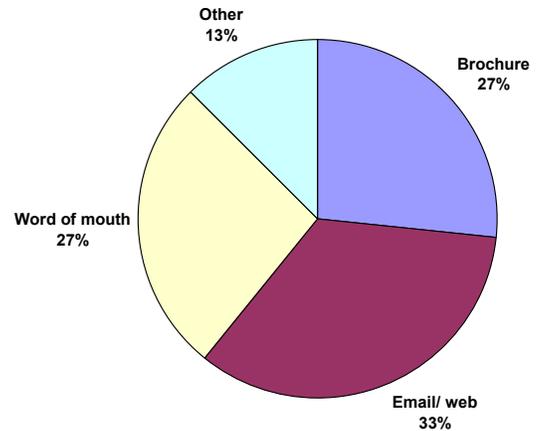
Percent returned: 46%

Symposium Participants' Profession



How did you hear about the program?

Other includes: contacted by member of planning committee; MA DEP press office.

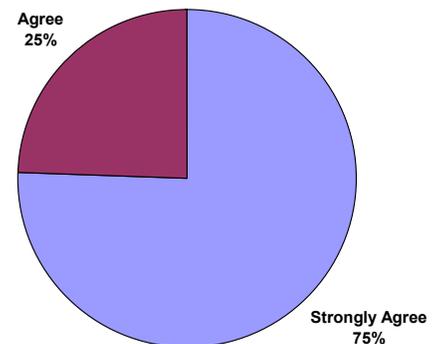
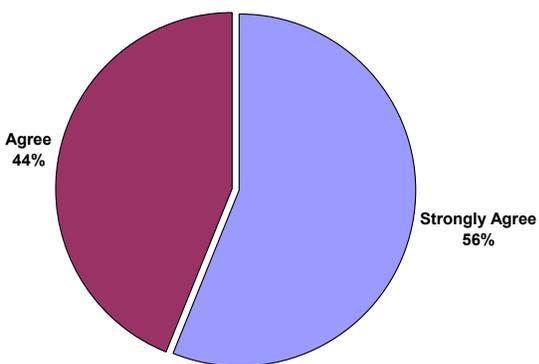


1. For the following questions, participants selected from the following scale:

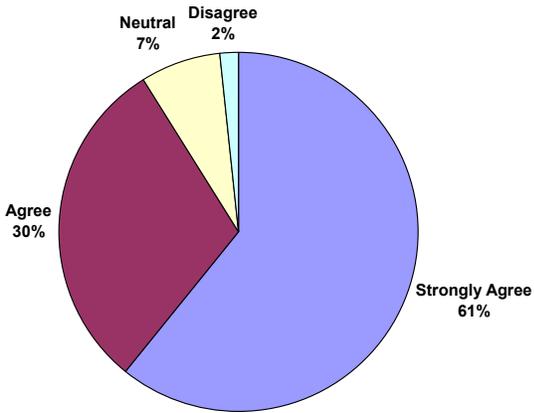
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

The symposium provided an effective way to exchange ideas.

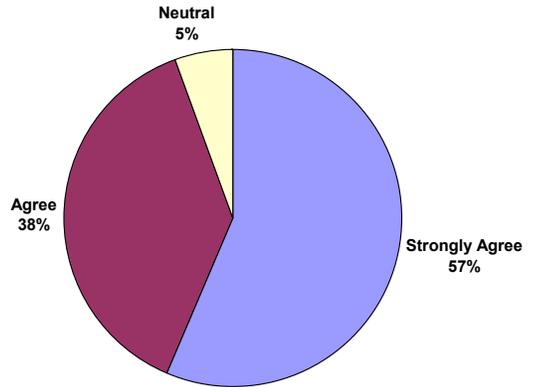
I gained knowledge in at least one of the symposium's topic areas.



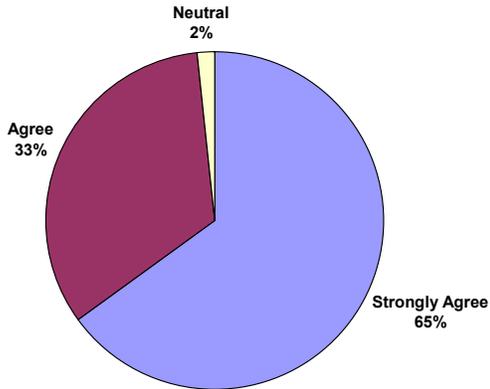
I anticipate contacting at least one person that I learned about at the symposium, within the next year.



I will be able to use what I learned at this event to improve my work with private wells or their owners.



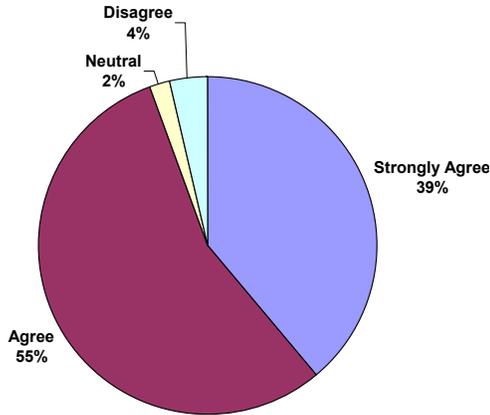
This event was worthwhile and should be held as a regular event in the future.



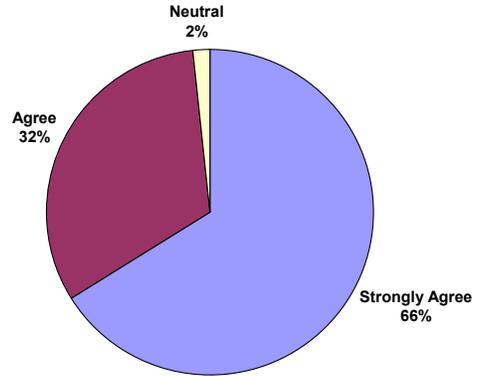
2. For the following questions participants selected from the following scale:.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

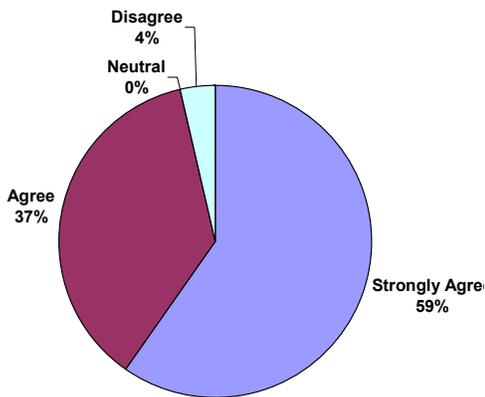
The pre-symposium materials adequately described the program.



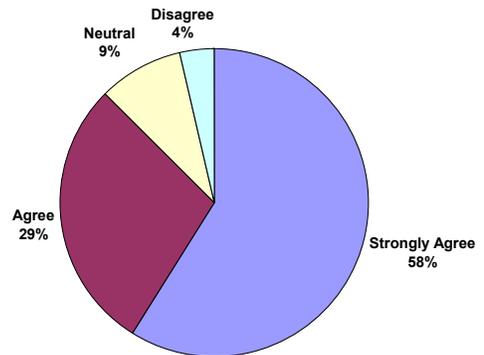
Program content was relevant.



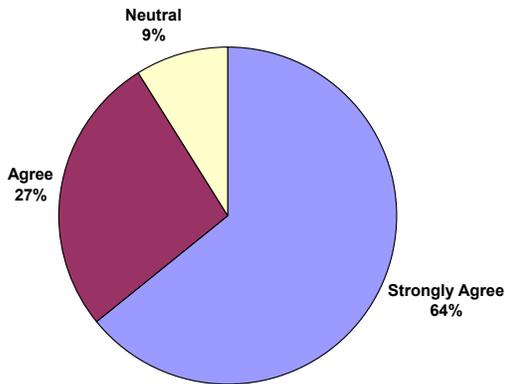
The program was well organized.



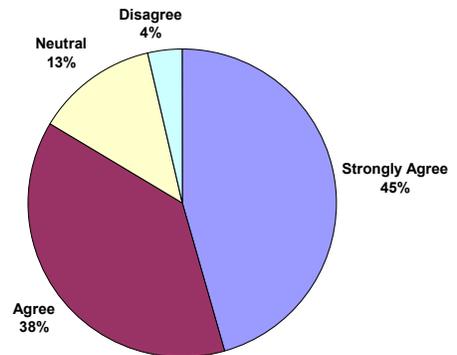
The two-day format was appropriate.



The location and facility were good.



The registration fee was reasonable.



3. Please check and rate each session you attended. Participants selected from the following scale:

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor

Opening Plenary

(Kevin McCray, Robert Varney, Leslie DeSimone)

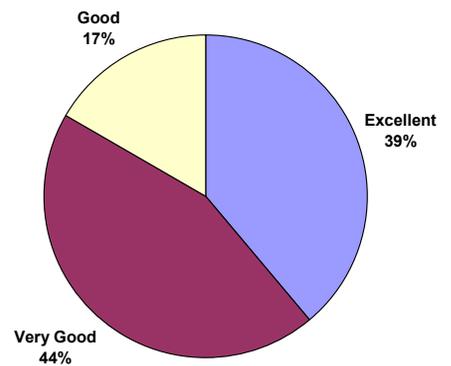
48 evaluations



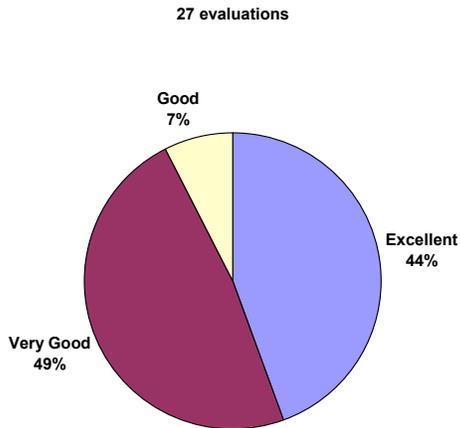
Session 1: Land Use and Nitrates

(Art Gold, Kelly Warner, Lorraine Joubert)

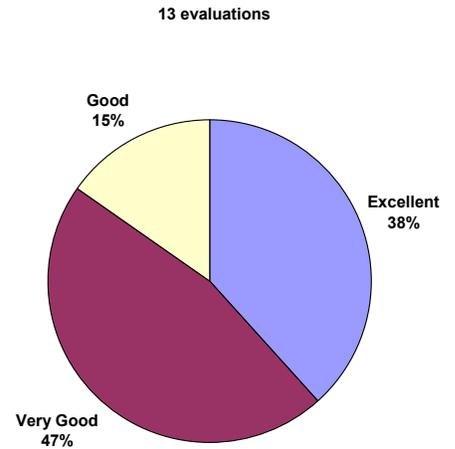
18 evaluations



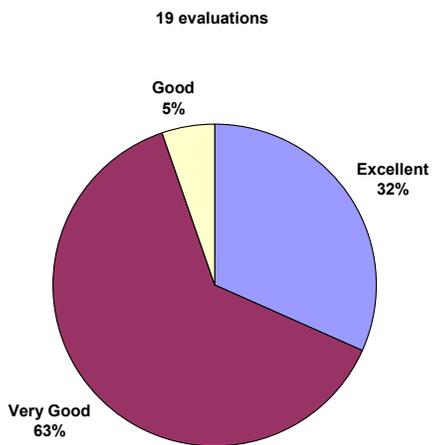
Session 2: Education & Risk Communication
 (Barbara Liukkonen, Andrew Stone, John Peckenham)



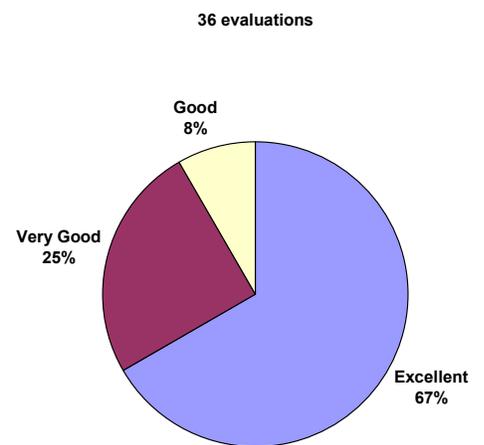
Session 3: Legal & Regulatory Issues
 (Jesse Richardson, Wendy Hiegner-Bernays, Kenneth Pelletier)



Session 4: Focus On Arsenic
 (Chris Paulu, Joe Ayotte, Yan Zheng)

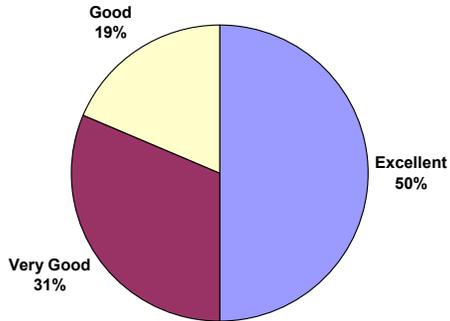


Plenary Workshop: Writing to be Read
 (Eleanor Ely)



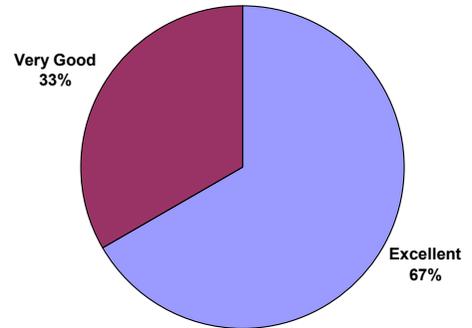
Session 5: Focus on Agriculture
(Jeff Comstock, Jonathan Kim, Kira Jacobs)

16 evaluations



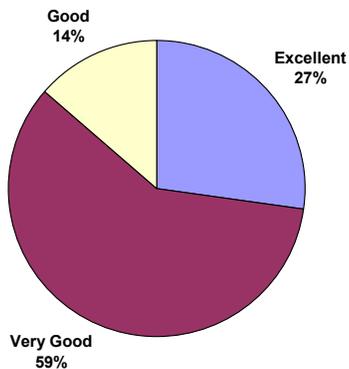
Session 6: Education and Risk Communication
(Bryan Swistock, E. Glynn Beck, Paul Vendrell)

12 evaluations



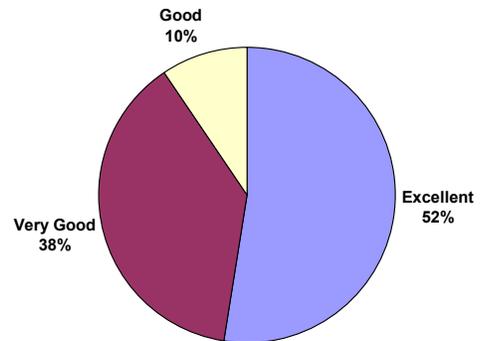
Session 7: Policy
(Gary Robbins, Catherine Skiba, John Chambers)

21 evaluations



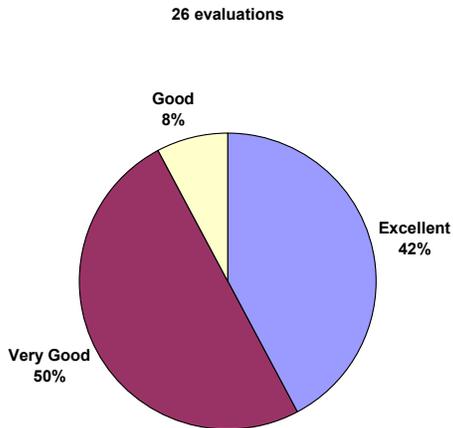
Session 8: Focus on Radon
(Paul Smitherman, Zoltan Szabo, Eric Frohberg)

21 evaluations



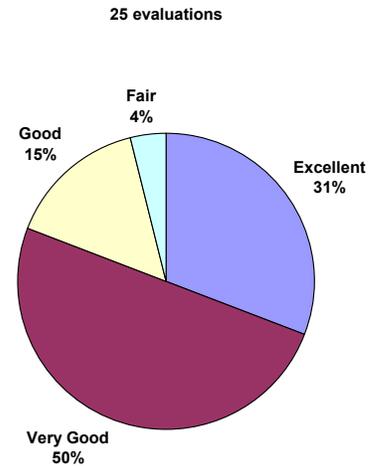
Session 9: Use of GIS

(Meredith Metcalf, Gary Robbins, Suzanne Robert)



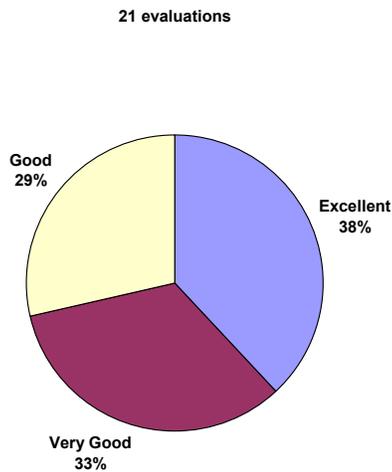
Session 10: Treatment

(Dave Purkiss, Garrett Graaskamp, Kathleen Bell)



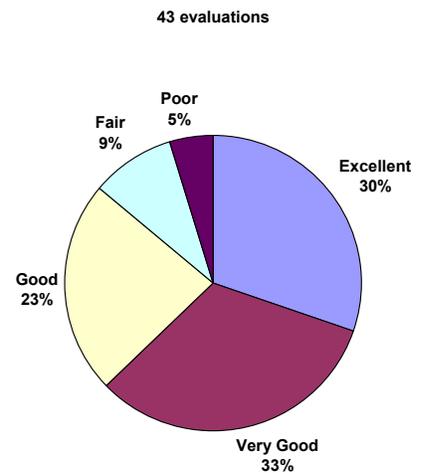
Session 11: State of the State

(David Wunsch, Patrick Craft, George Heufelder)



Plenary Workshop: Public Health Outreach-Social Marketing a Tool to Influence Behavior

(James Lewis)



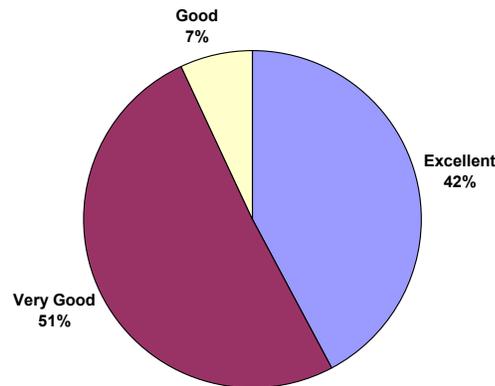
4. Additional comments:

The most frequent comment was there were too many concurrent sessions from which to choose. Participants found it difficult to choose among many interesting topics and felt there could have been more time for discussion during the sessions. There were several comments related to the workshop presentations, and, generally, participants felt the workshop topics were very valuable. Although, several felt the topic of social marketing is too big to address during a 2-hour time period.

5. Which term best describes your overall experience with this symposium?

Participants selected from the following options:

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor



6. What was the most important thing you gained from the symposium?

The most frequent responses to this question include:

- The opportunity to network and interact with other professionals.
- The chance to learn about private well regulations throughout the region on both the state and the local level. Gaining a perspective of what is happening in other states in terms of private well protection, regulation, and education.

7. Please use this space for additional comments and suggestions on any aspect of this event (content, format, facility, etc).

Common themes that participants mentioned here:

- Too many concurrent sessions.
- More time for sessions and to move between sessions.
- Participants appreciated the time built into the schedule for networking and breaks.

Program Sponsors

Funding and support for this program provided by:

- ▲ The New England Regional Water Program
- ▲ The New England Private Well Initiative
- ▲ USDA Healthy Homes Program
- ▲ US Environmental Protection Agency – New England
- ▲ University of Maine Cooperative Extension
- ▲ University of Massachusetts Extension, Barnstable County Cooperative Extension
- ▲ University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension
- ▲ University of Rhode Island, College of the Environment and Life Sciences & Cooperative Extension
- ▲ Dartmouth Toxic Metals Research Program

Program Committee Members:

- David Chase, Radon Control Program, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
- Dr. Stewart Chute, State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health
- Marie Esten, Program Assistant, University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension
- Eric Frohberg, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- Kira Jacobs, Source Water Protection Team Leader, US Environmental Protection Agency – New England
- Ted Lavery, Drinking Water Source Protection, US Environmental Protection Agency – New England
- Marilyn Lopes, Extension Educator, University of Massachusetts, Cape Cod Extension
- Alyson McCann, Water Quality Program Coordinator, University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension
- Alison Milliman, Program Assistant, Cooperative Extension, University of Rhode Island
- Julia Peterson, Extension Specialist, University of New Hampshire
- Laura Wilson, Assistant Scientist, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

Symposium Exhibitors:

Commercial:

- Radon Away, Ward Hill, Massachusetts

Educational:

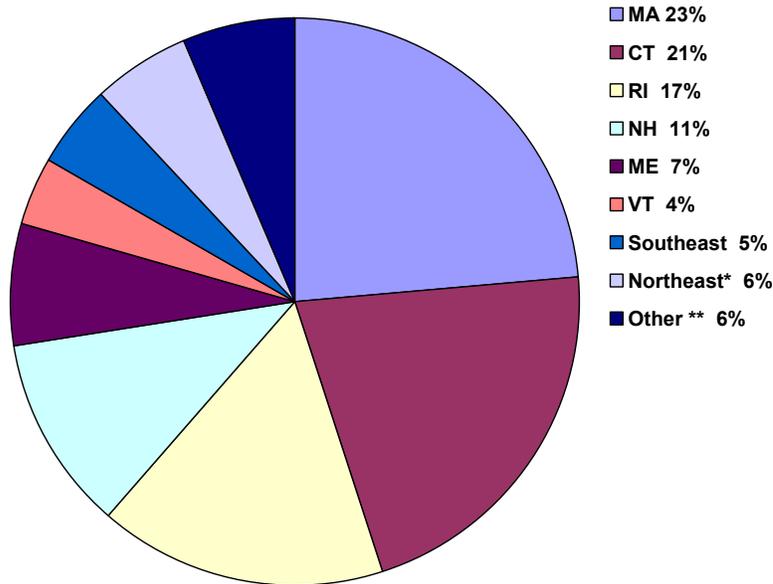
- American Groundwater Trust, Concord, New Hampshire
- Cape Cod Cooperative Extension, Barnstable, Massachusetts
- Division of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control, Augusta, Maine
- National Groundwater Association, Westerville, Ohio
- U.S. E.P.A. Region 1, Boston, Massachusetts
- RI Private Well Protection Education Program, URI Cooperative Extension, Kingston, Rhode Island

Scholarships

With a grant from USDA Healthy Homes Program, we were able to provide 25 scholarships to participants from throughout the New England region to attend the program. In addition, this funding provided for the Symposium's keynote speaker and the two workshop presenters.

Program Attendees

The following pie chart summarizes participant distribution.



* Northeast: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania

** Other: Alaska, California, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Texas

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