**Defining Background Criteria for Environmental Risk Assessment**

An understanding of background levels of potential contaminants in soil or groundwater is critical for both identifying contamination and putting risks into perspective. This 20 slide presentation is suitable as a refresher for an experienced environmental risk professional or a "101" course for a new researcher. The presentation will include understanding current guidance and literature, how to define a background dataset, utilizing the USEPA risk assessment software ProUCL, analyzing distributions, and using statistical techniques to properly develop, propose and defend site-specific background criteria.

Tetra Tech R&D has successfully utilized this approach in risk assessments at sites ranging from wetlands, agricultural land, ports, industrial and civil infrastructure projects, military bases, on and offshore oil & gas facilities, and mining facilities, and it is applicable to compounds found in soil or water sources.

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