

# NEMO University 7

## Conference Report



Portland, ME  
September 29 - October 1, 2010



# NEMO U7

The National NEMO Network held its seventh conference, NEMO University 7 (U 007), in Portland, ME September 29-October 1, 2010. The National NEMO Network is a confederation of 30 educational programs across the country that educate local officials about the connection between land use and water

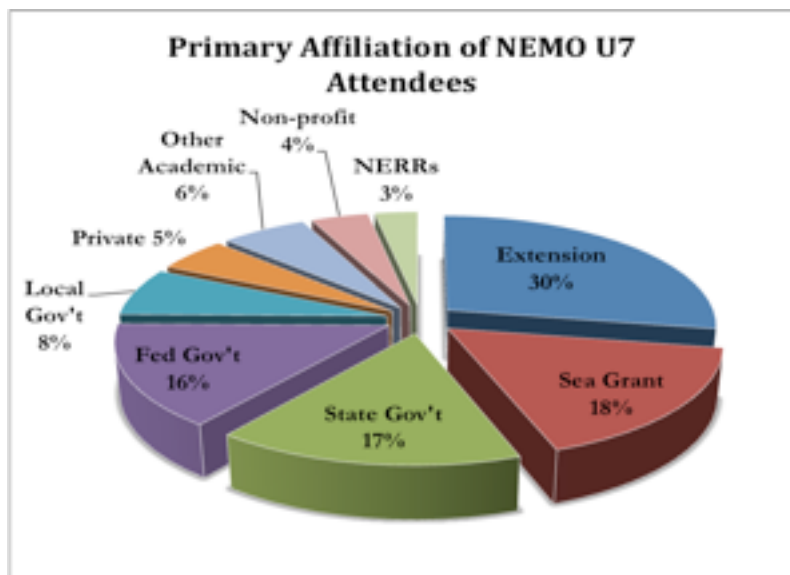
quality. Each of these programs is modeled after the original NEMO program at the University of Connecticut Center for Land Use education and Research (CLEAR), which serves as the coordinating “hub” of the Network and organizer of the NEMO University conferences.



The purpose of the conference is to:

- highlight **innovative practices and tools** of programs from around the country;
- provide a **forum** for resource and idea sharing;
- facilitate **interaction between programs and across networks**;
- provide **training** opportunities to enhance program capacity;
- generate discussion of **new topics** and challenges; and,
- form the bonds of collegiality that make the Network unique and effective.

Both qualitative and quantitative measures indicate that all of these objectives were met.



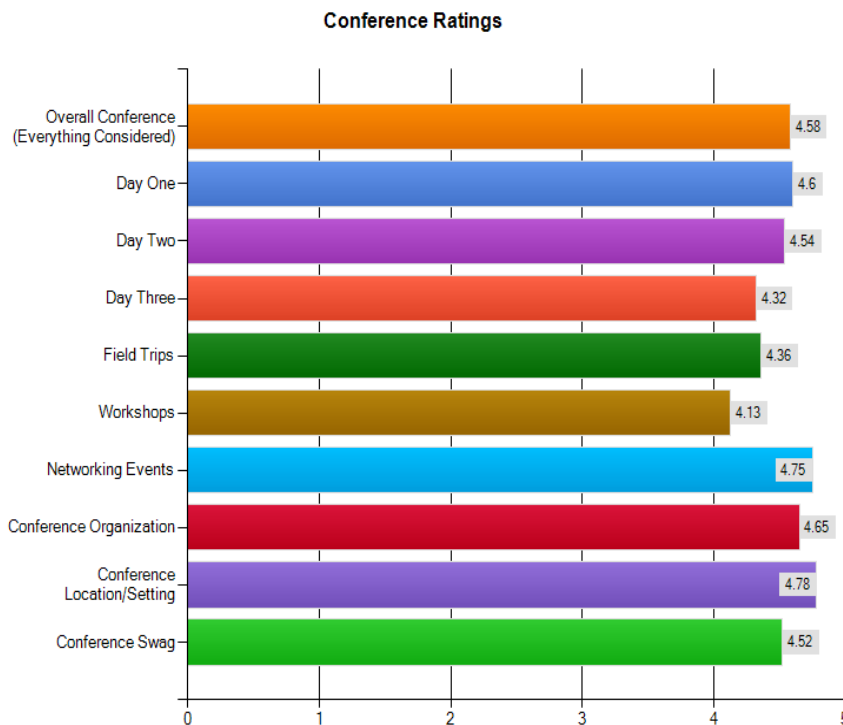
## A Network of Networks

Despite travel bans and tough economic times, the conference was very well attended with **over 100 registrants from 24 states**. Demonstrating the multi-disciplinary interest and participation in the NEMO Network, attendees represented many diverse organizations and national networks (*see chart, left*). The two primary leaders of NEMO programs, Sea Grant and Extension, both piggy-backed additional meetings on the conference.

## Varied Conference Sessions

The agenda was almost as diverse as the participants, featuring a balance of plenary sessions, concurrent sessions from programs around the country, field trips, workshops, and networking events. Highlights of the conference included:

- A plenary focused on **climate change** that explored how climate change adaptation and planning can fit into the NEMO approach of working with local land use officials, with examples of early adopters;
- Four **field trips** – a smart growth and Low Impact Development (LID) walking tour of Portland; a trip to the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center; a tour of the Long Creek urban LID retrofit project; and a conservation walk at the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR);
- A symposium/keynote on hybrid approaches to local planning & design by **Randall Arendt**, a nationally acclaimed expert in innovative community design and conservation planning;
- A 3-hour networking boat tour of Casco Bay;
- A plenary focused on **urban stormwater retrofits** that featured the Long Creek Project (above) and the first impervious cover TMDL project in the country, currently the subject of a project led by the CT NEMO Program;
- 20 presentations from around the country on **innovative outreach strategies**, technical tools, and land use/water quality programs; and
- A lobster-bake networking event.



## Attendee Evaluations

The post-conference evaluations were overwhelming positive. **100% of respondents indicated that they took away new ideas or resources that would help their educational programming back home.**

This metric alone indicates success to the UConn Hub. However, in addition to this “bottom line” objective, the post-conference survey also revealed very high ratings for the individual components of the conference. On a scale of 1 (why bother?) to 5 (truly splendid), all components of the conference received an

average rating between 4 and 5; with an average combined rating for all components of 4.5. (see graph, previous page)

Here are just a few of the comments we received from participants:

- *One of the best conferences I've ever attended. Extremely well organized, excellent speakers and topics, and fun!*
- *An essential and inspiring conference - a do not miss for watershed and stormwater technical educators!*
- *Never before have I met a more supportive and energized network of environmentalists. Everyone is willing to share their successes and failures in hopes that another program may benefit and in turn find our own success.*
- *Best U to date. Venue rocked, sessions were applicable to my work, networking opportunities were excellent, speakers were inspiring, I can hardly wait for the next one.*
- *I have attended tons of conferences and trainings focused on watershed issues, but NEMO U is truly one of the most valuable and educational, full of practical and helpful information. Great discussions, and of course, lots of fun! Keep up the great work!*

**In sum**, by any measure NEMO U7 was a successful event that helped to reenergize the NEMO Network. In addition, for the first time NEMO U provided a forum and venue for other, related networks to participate and add their ideas and expertise to the mix.

Many thanks to our conference sponsors for making this unique and worthwhile event possible:



*The National NEMO Network is a group of affiliated projects that educate local land use decision makers about the relationship of land use to natural resource protection. The Network is coordinated by the University of Connecticut with funding from USDA NIFA. The National NEMO Network is a program of the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR). Land, Sea and Space Grant collaborating.*