BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Book review: Chemical analysis of contaminated land¹

Edited by K. Clive Thompson and C. Paul Nathanail

The two editors and twenty additional contributors have put together a book focused on the analysis of soils for the presence of anthropogenically-contributed constituents, inorganic and organic. This team of people is from five countries — from universities, analytical laboratories, government agencies, and private practice, and as such, offer a diverse range of expertise and viewpoints.

The impetus for the book comes from the growing acceptance of risk-based approaches to the management of contaminated sites. As the editors' note, "Measure if you can, model if you must." The move to a risk basis adds a modeling component and another level of uncertainty and, as such, there is a need to remove analytical uncertainty.

The focus of the book is on analysis of appropriately-collected samples. Beyond recognizing that there can be enormous variability in solid samples collected and illustrating how very little ground is actively analyzed, the appropriateness of sample selection and collection is for others to ponder.

This is a book that is a significant contribution when read in its entirety. It is not intended as a reference book. It puts in context the large number of issues that abound in analyzing soils modified by human actions and natural process. This is particularly pertinent for those who have acquired their formal training in the water and air mediums. The style and empha-

sis of the chapters are different. This is most noticeable in the five middle chapters that deal with various chemical groupings. Those who have been in the business for a number of years, particularly in North America, will find some valuable insights into what is going on elsewhere in the world, as well as the realization of commonality. The first two chapters set the stage for the book and reinforce the context. The last two chapters "Leaching Test" and "Ecological Assessment and Toxicity Screening in Contaminated Land Analysis" are useful because they connect the contamination — both process and impact.

This is not a book that the reader curls up in front of the fireplace and reads into the wee hours of the morning, but there is real value here for the time invested reading it. The editors and contributors should be pleased with their efforts. They have clearly accomplished what they set out to do, "to produce a book that will prove useful to laboratories working on the chemical analysis of potentially contaminated land and their direct and indirect customers".

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