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Ramapo College to Host Environmental Cleanup Panel Discussion Oct. 4

(MAHWAH, NJ) – Ramapo College will host “Why is Environmental Cleanup So Slow?” a panel discussion that will focus on the Ford Motor Company’s contamination of the Ramapo area as well as polluted regions in New York and the Ringwood Superfund site.

The event will be held Tuesday, October 4 in Friends Hall (SC219) from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. The event is sponsored by the Ramapo College Institute of Environmental Studies and is open to the public.

The regional head of the US Environmental Protection Agency’s Superfund program, Walter Mugdan, will speak, along with Ramapo College professors. Other panelists include Adjunct Professor Jan Barry Crumb, who teaches environmental writing; Adjunct Professor Chuck Stead, who teaches courses in environmental investigations; and Professor of Environmental Psychology Professor Michael Edelstein, the panel chair

The panel will discuss why environmental cleanups at Superfund sites often take decades, with a focus on the Ringwood Mines Superfund site in New Jersey and sites near the Town of Ramapo landfill in Rockland County, New York. These sites were all contaminated by paint sludge and other industrial waste from the former Ford Motor Company plant in Mahwah, NJ.

Panel Chair, Michael R. Edelstein, Ph.D. Professor of Environmental Psychology, Ramapo College of NJ. He is author of *Contaminated Communities*, 2nd Edition (Westview 2004) and lead editor of *Cultures of Contamination* (Elsevier, 2007). Edelstein has a perspective on cleanup activities that stretches back to research done at Love Canal in the late 1970s. He has studied Superfund communities and testified in administrative hearings and toxic torts, not only about the consequences of living in contaminated communities which have not been addressed, but also about the impacts of cleanup itself.

Walter Mugdan, Director of the Emergency and Remedial Response Division at the Region 2 office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), located in New York City. He heads a staff of some 220 employees responsible for the Region’s “Superfund” toxic waste cleanup, emergency response and brownfields programs. Previously he headed the Region’s Division of Environmental Planning & Protection, where his staff of about 180 scientists, engineers and planners managed the Region’s air, water, hazardous waste and environmental review programs. Prior to that appointment, he served as Deputy Regional Counsel and then Regional Counsel for Region 2, where he headed a

staff of 80 attorneys. He joined EPA in 1975 as a staff attorney, and subsequently served in various supervisory positions in the Office of Regional Counsel, including Chief of the units responsible for Superfund, RCRA, TSCA and the Clean Air Act.

Jan Barry Crumb, Journalist, Adjunct Professor, Ramapo College. He is the author of *A Citizen's Guide to Grassroots Campaigns* (Rutgers 2000). During an award-winning career at The Record of Bergen County, NJ, Jan Barry intensively reported on the Ford contamination issues and their impact on the Ramapough Indians. His work with an investigative team of reporters and editors led EPA to reopen the closed Superfund project in Ringwood. The Record's Website www.toxiclegacy.com documents this effort.

Chuck Stead, Social Ecologist, Adjunct Professor, Ramapo College and Cornell Cooperative Extension. A native of Hillburn, NY, he is a local historian, activist and place scholar who has worked for years on the Ford contamination. Ramapo students, under his supervision, have helped him identify areas of contamination in New York State that have never been addressed previously. These hazardous waste sites are now the subject of cleanup efforts under the New York State DEC. Mr. Stead is in the process of erecting an education center dedicated to the contamination cleanup efforts in the Ramapo Mountains.

For more information about the panel discussion or future programs sponsored by the Ramapo College Institute of Environmental Studies, please contact Professor of Environmental Psychology Michael Edelstein via email at medelste@ramapo.edu or by phone at 201.684.7745.

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as fifth in the Best Regional Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers five graduate programs as well as articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.