Summary

At the outset of the development of a major new branch of environmental assessment, only a few things can be demonstrated: (1) that a methodology producing a totally different kind of important information can aid in management decisions, in this case, for hazard assessment; (2) that this methodology is not only an idea but a working hypothesis with techniques already in place; (3) that it does not have a high site specificity—it will work in more than one part of the world; (4) that it is quantitative and, therefore, as easily utilized as the more conventional information, although it is qualitatively different; and (5) that there are some case history illustrations of how the method has been used.

After demonstrating that a new field has emerged which might be of value to readers of ASTM publications, it then remains for the following steps to occur: (1) collection of evidence on other methods not included in this volume; (2) wider use of the methods that seem the most suitable for management and regulatory decisions; (3) identification of the strengths, defects, and operating conditions for the methods; (4) organization of a task force or task forces to prepare one or more of these methods as candidate standard methods; and (5) processing of methods in the usual fashion. Undoubtedly, additional summary volumes will be necessary at various stages of this process and even after some of the functional tests have become well-established standard methods. The main purpose of this specific special technical publication is to raise the level of awareness about the potential future utilization of such methods and to act as a focal point for further efforts. It is by no means a definitive volume but rather a catalyst for further action.

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