AIPG New Mexico Section Newsletter – Spring 2021

AIPG New Mexico is moving forward in 2021. Your officers have had a few zoom style meetings, but all recognize that due to COVID, 2020 has been pretty much a bust. We would like to start informing NM AIPG membership periodically, by emailed newsletter, as to the activities and events anticipated and scheduled for 2021.

AIPG Field Trip, White Mesa, San Ysidro, NM:

In 2020, we had planned a field trip to White Mesa, near San Ysidro, NM, but COVID stopped that. We would like to tentatively re-plan the same trip for September 2021. In essence, the primary objective of this trip will be to learn and share information about the unique geology associated with White Mesa, and to have a NM AIPG mentor program designed so that students can meet up with industry members, to discuss and learn about various facets of geology careers in the private sector. We feel it is especially important that students realize that although academia is a wonderful fun part of geology, the career of a working day to day geologist can be extremely rewarding both intellectually and financially. If you have a mountain bike, bring it, and if you want to hike, bring your hiking boots. Geologists, friends of geologists, and anyone interested in geology, is invited. We plan to have a few graduate students from UNM giving poster sessions at various locations along the trail. This will be a combination, hiking and mountain biking field trip. We will meet in the morning at the trailhead for orientation, coffee, and burritos, and then finish later that afternoon with green chile cheeseburgers, chips, beer, and fellowship. More information will follow.

Following is a letter AIPG received a from a student, who shared his first experience with AIPG:

Ok, here goes. I became aware of AIPG at the 2017 NMGS Spring Conference, when I stopped by the table. Kate (I think) was running it, and I began talking to her as I leafed through the brochures. At this point I had a vague idea I wanted to work in geohazards assessment someday but was in the dark as to my precise career path and thought I would have to become an academic. From talking to Kate and reading the literature, I learned about the world of professional licensing and consulting and realized I had discovered my dream job. Upon joining the organization and exploring the website, I discovered the page describing how to start a student chapter, and thought it sounded like an attractive idea, since the existing professional organizations with student chapters at NMT were more narrowly focused. I got in touch with you in early May of 2017, and attended my first state section meeting in July, further cementing my belief that I had found my place. We established the chapter in October 2017, and by the time I stepped down a year and a half later, we had grown our membership from the initial 4 members to well over 70. At first there were some rough bumps to get over, but we did, and I handed things over to Ashley Torres confident that the chapter would last. To my mind, the highlights of my time were our guest speakers (Steve Raugust, Rhea Graham, Ray Irwin, and Deb Green), the joint section/chapter meeting in April 2018 with Doug Bartlett, followed by the field trip to the Lemitar Carbonatites, and our student field trip to the Harding mine. As far as my own benefits, I received invaluable career advice and networking opportunities, and AIPG was
also how I got to know Ginger and eventually do research under her. As far as others, I think I achieved my desire to introduce them to the same benefits of career and networking that I derived from membership.

Pretty cool that the tables at the NMGS conferences can be meaningful! Good job Kate!

Relative to AIPG business for 2020:

AIPG National Bylaws were amended in February 2019, and in March of this year (2020) the section membership voted unanimously to approve comparable amendments to the New Mexico Section Bylaws. Many of the amendments concern the format of section correspondence and are simple updates that allow certain items of section business to be conducted by email. This includes the announcement of section meetings, the solicitation of member’s opinions, and decisions by the membership that require a majority vote. In situations where member confidentiality should be maintained, Article 3.3.4 preserves the use of in-person or mail-in ballots. Amendments to Article 3.3 also define a Voting Member and require that person to be either a Certified Professional Geologist or a Professional member whose practice is conducted primarily within New Mexico. Several of the amendments concern the Early Career Professional, a category of AIPG membership created in the 2019 National Bylaws for recent geoscience graduates practicing in the initial stages of their career. The New Mexico amendments include the Early Career Professional as a voting member of the Section Executive Committee and outline the duties and responsibilities of that office.

The 1991 Bylaws outlined the duties and responsibilities of the Section President, Secretary and Treasurer, but did not describe the duties and responsibilities of the Vice-President/President-elect and Past President. Amendments to Article 4.4 corrected these omissions. Amendments to Article 5.1, Regulation and Legislation Committee, change the title of the committee to Legislative Affairs Committee to describe committee functions more accurately, and outline the responsibilities of the committee. Article 5.4.3, Procedure for Proposing and Adopting Position Statements, outlines how the NM Section would go about responding to state or federal legislation affecting the profession of geology in New Mexico.

Though perhaps not as fun as climbing over outcrops, your thoughtful review and approval of these amendments completed a key aspect of the section’s business and responsibility. The Executive Committee is grateful to the membership for this important contribution to the profession of geology in New Mexico.