

Spring Newsletter

2024

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Wisconsin Section - AIPG



President's Message

Happy 2024 Wisconsin AIPG members!

Your Wisconsin AIPG Executive Board members are working with National and other Sections to bring some field trips and educational opportunities to our State this year. We are also reaching out to geology departments in Wisconsin to see what geology students need to assist their entry into geoscience careers.

I had the privilege of speaking at UW Milwaukee last month and met the professors and students involved in their outreach program Let's Geo <https://sites.uwm.edu/lets-geo/> which prioritizes outreach to students who have never considered a geoscience education. I have asked them to submit a news article to *The Professional Geologist* for the summer issue.

Recently, I attended UW Oshkosh's presentation "Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings" by Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer. This presentation brought into focus our continued need to look through not only the science and technology lens, but also the natural world and indigenous people's wisdom lens. Learning from plants has brought fresh innovation into the water treatment and energy industries. A visit earlier this year to the [Waupun Wastewater Treatment Plant](#) demonstrated the success of an Advanced Biological Nutrient Recovery (ABNR) system. The ABNR is a biological wastewater treatment solution that uses algae to consume overabundant nutrients and achieve ultra-low nutrient levels.

I continue to serve on National AIPG's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Standing Committee. It is important to learn how to make our industry welcome and equitable for all people. One tool that may help us make decisions and strategically plan activities is an [Equity Road Map](#). Equity in our industry matters. Equity is a commitment to ensuring that the people in our industry have what they need to thrive. Equity drives diversity and inclusion and disrupts social injustice.

Please reach out to me with any ideas or recommendations you have for our Section. I look forward to talking with and meeting you in 2024.

Sincerely -- Chris Lilek

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Introducing the Wisconsin Section Executive Committee

In addition to an introduction, each member provided a response to the question, “What do you see as the biggest challenge today to having a career in a geologic field?”

President

I currently work as an Environmental Health Training Specialist for the WI Dept of Health Services and Chairwoman of the Lake Sinissippi Improvement District. My previous work history includes Hydrogeologist for the WI Dept of Natural Resources in the Solid and Hazardous Waste and Wastewater programs (1985 – 2016); Environmental Project Manager with MSA Consulting (1993 – 1996); Environmental Project Manager for Wisconsin Electric Power Company (1991 – 1993); and Sewer & Water Utility Board Director for the Village of Cottage Grove (1985 – 1992). I received my B.S. in Geology and Environmental Science from UW-Milwaukee in 1981 and my M.A. in Environmental Ethics and Stewardship from Edgewood College in 1995. I am a licensed hydrogeologist in the State of Wisconsin and a Certified Professional Geologist through the American Institute of Professional Geologists. In my free time, I educate and entertain kids of all ages about nature as a Wisconsin Master Naturalist.

MY CAREER FLEXIBILITY OVER THE LAST 30 PLUS YEARS HAS HELPED ME FIND GEOLOGY RELATED JOBS IN INDUSTRY, CONSULTING AND REGULATORY AGENCIES. THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE WILL INCREASE THE NEED FOR GEOSCIENCE CAREER FLEXIBILITY FOR OUR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS. WE NEED TO HELP THEM FIGURE OUT HOW THEY CAN FIT IN WITH THE EVER-CHANGING WORLD.



Christine Lilek C.P.G.
(she/her/hers)

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Vice President

Micheal (yes, this is the correct spelling of his name!) holds B.S. and M.S. degrees from UW-Stevens Point and a Ph.D. from Ben Gurion University, Israel. Mike (most people don't misspell this) is Senior Scientist at Oakridge Engineering, Inc., where he provides environmental expertise for Wisconsin dairy farms, landfills, non-metallic mines, and various other private and public entities. His experience blends knowledge of soil, hydrogeology, wastewater, and agricultural sustainability, which gives him a unique perspective as he serves clients in Wisconsin and surrounding states. He is passionate about biologically and geologically healthy soil; in his spare time, he uses compost and rock dust to rebuild a healthy ecosystem on the previously degraded Eau Claire County farm where he has made his home.



ONE OF THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES (CHALLENGES) FOR GEOLOGISTS IS BUILDING COLLABORATION WITH THE BIOLOGICAL AND SOIL SCIENCES TO ESTABLISH ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF MINERAL DENSE, HEALTHY FOOD.

Micheal Travis PhD, MEM-3561

Secretary/Government Affairs

Heather is a Hydrogeologist at Foth Infrastructure & Environment in Green Bay. She leads the hydrology/geology discipline at Foth and provides support to a range of projects from landfill and mine project permitting/compliance to environmental remediation. She previously served as president of WGWA after moving to Appleton from Albany, NY where she worked for CDM Smith.



I SEE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO FINDING A CAREER IN THE GEOSCIENCES TODAY IS FINDING A JOB THAT PROVIDES THE RIGHT WORK/LIFE BALANCE FOR YOU. A LOT OF CAREERS IN OIL/GAS AND MINING REQUIRE RELOCATING OR TRAVELING WHILE FIELD WORK IN OTHER INDUSTRIES REQUIRES LONG HOURS AND TRAVEL AS WELL. I HAVE HAD TO ADJUST THE FOCUS OF MY CAREER SOMEWHAT TO PRIORITIZE MY FAMILY.

Heather Hallett P.G., C.P.G.

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Treasurer

Andrew is a Project Manager at TRC Companies, Inc., with over 30 years of experience, currently specializing in the development of renewable energy projects. Previous positions: Realtime Utility Engineers, Inc; IEA/RMT; Vierbicher Associates



THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE I SEE IS ANTICIPATING AND PLANNING FOR CHANGES IN MARKET DEMAND FOR GEOLOGICAL SERVICES.

Andrew Graham P.G., C.P.G., P.E.

Member Screening

Steve has a professional background addressing hydrogeology, planning, renewable energy, and air transportation decarbonization topics. His 30 years of experience includes addressing environmental science issues in a consulting, industry, and regulatory capacity.

IN THE TIMES THAT WE ARE IN, I REFLECT ON HOW GEOLOGY FITS WITHIN THE STEM WORLD EMPHASIS, ESPECIALLY THE ENGINEERING ASPECT AND THE WAY THAT THIS FIELD IS EMBRACED BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO ADDRESS ISSUES. TO MANY, THE TERM "ENGINEER" MEANS THAT A PERSON WITH THIS BACKGROUND CAN SOLVE A HOST OF PROBLEMS, SO THAT TYPE OF THINKING CARRIES THE DAY, AND OTHER SCIENCE DISCIPLINES ARE PERCEIVED AS LESS INFLUENTIAL IN ADVANCING A SOLUTION. YES, THE GEOLOGIST VS ENGINEER SKIRMISH HAS BEEN AROUND A LONG TIME, BUT WITH MORE HEIGHTENED AWARENESS OF STEM, AI, CO₂ SUBJECTS IN SOCIETY FOR CAREER EMPHASIS, I DO THINK ABOUT THE GEOLOGY SIDE OF THINGS AND HOW THIS FIELD IS RECOGNIZED.



Steve Sletten P.G., C.P.G.

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I grew up in Minnesota and decided I wanted to be a geologist when I was in 4th grade. That's also when my collection of Lake Superior agates exploded, and I learned rudimentary washing machine maintenance due to all the rocks that didn't make it out of my pockets before laundry day. I went to North Dakota State University where I completed my B.S. in geology with a minor in soil science. I stayed at NDSU where I then received my M.S. in soil science. My first job out of college has been with WSP in Madison, WI. I was hired on as a geologist/soil scientist, but my official title is Assistant Environmental Consultant. I spend a lot of time working on river restoration projects, water resource management problems, PFAS and PCB contaminated sites and more.

It is hard to think of a non-geology issue I deal with daily because in my mind, they all go back to a geologic origin in some way (except for IT issues, which seem to bother me every day). PFAS is the 'new' contaminant of concern and the group I work with strives to become experts on the subject. It's been really rewarding to be a part of PFAS projects where I can educate community members and be a leader in the world of PFAS reclamation.



I MAY BE TOO NEW TO THE FIELD TO ANSWER THE QUESTION ABOUT THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES WORKING AS A GEOLOGIST, BUT I HAVE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE THAN I DID BEFORE GRADUATING COLLEGE. BEING A GEOLOGIST IS MORE THAN LOOKING AT PRETTY ROCKS ALL DAY (WHICH IF THAT JOB EXISTED, WHO WOULDN'T BE A GEOLOGIST). BEING A GEOLOGIST REQUIRES BEING WELL ROUNDED IN FIELD PROCEDURES, CLASSIFICATIONS, ANALYTICAL METHODS, AND OTHER TECHNICAL SKILLS TO PROVIDE SOLUTIONS TO REAL LIFE SCENARIOS.

Annalie Peterson ECP

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Paula is a not so recent graduate of the University of North Dakota (B.S. Geology) and San Diego State University (M.Sc. Geological Sciences).

Currently, she is Principal Geologist/President of HydroGeo Solutions LLC, with over 35 years of experience as a consulting geologist, much of that time dealing with the geology and hydrogeology of landfill sites. She has completed projects involving landfill siting, soil and groundwater contamination, compliance, and site restoration for both private and government clients. She has extensive experience in the characterization of site geology and hydrogeology, and development of monitoring programs. In addition, she manages the groundwater databases for several landfills, which includes validating and interpreting the data, and preparing statistical analyses.

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE I SEE FACING GEOLOGISTS TODAY IS
UNDERSTANDING THAT WE ARE UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO BOTH FIND A
RESOURCE AND RESPONSIBLY MANAGE ITS EXTRACTION AND USE.



Paula Leier-Engelhardt
P.G., C.P.G.

Wisconsin Regulatory Updates

Legislative and Regulatory Update

Heather Hallet

Wisconsin Regulatory Updates

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Groundwater/NR140.html>

- Cycle 10 - The DNR submitted a list of substances designated "Cycle 10" to DHS in March 2018. These substances included PFAS, metals, pesticides, bacteria, dioxane, and others. On Feb. 23, 2022, the Natural Resources Board considered and did not approve this rule. Bacteria standards were carried over to a new scope statement.
- Cycle 10 Bacteria - Rule changes to amend ch. NR 140, Wis. Adm. Code became effective August 1, 2023, to replace the existing total coliform bacteria standards with new state groundwater quality standards for Escherichia coli (E. coli) bacteria. The rule also transitions total coliform bacteria from a public health groundwater quality standard to an indicator parameter.
- Cycle 11 - The DNR submitted a list of substances designated "Cycle 11" to DHS in April 2019. DHS responded with recommendations to DNR in November 2020. December 19, 2023, DNR halted rulemaking to implement Chapter NR 140 groundwater standards for 16 per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and 6 pesticides after determining state law requires legislative action to adopt the standards as proposed.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) on November 3, 2023, announced the [results of a study](#) conducted to understand the extent of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination in shallow groundwater throughout Wisconsin. 450 samples were collected voluntarily from private wells distributed throughout Wisconsin. Most private wells that were sampled had PFAS concentrations below current Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services' (DHS) health recommendations, and overall, the number of areas in Wisconsin with significant PFAS contamination were limited. The WDNR's groundwater study shows roughly 7 in 10 private wells contain one or more PFAS, but only 1 in 100 contain PFAS above DHS' current health guidelines.

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/84721>

The WDNR announced the release of a new [water use StoryMap](#), showcasing water use in Wisconsin over the past decade, and the [2021 Water Withdrawals Report](#). Over the past decade, Wisconsin cities, agricultural operations, businesses, and industries withdrew on average 1.9 trillion gallons, equivalent to 1.6 inches of water covering the surface of Wisconsin. The biggest withdrawers use water for power production and municipal water supply, withdrawing 84% of the total water in 2021.

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/77486>

Federal Updates

Federal Updates

The EPA announced April 10, 2024, it is issuing a national regulation limiting PFAS in drinking water. \$1 billion in funding was announced to help implement testing and treatment of public water systems, part of a \$9 billion investment through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help communities with drinking water impacted by PFAS and other emerging contaminants. EPA summarized the rule as follows:

- For PFOA and PFOS, EPA is setting a Maximum Contaminant Level Goal, a non-enforceable health-based goal, at zero.
- EPA is setting enforceable Maximum Contaminant Levels at 4.0 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS, individually.
- For PFNA, PFHxS, and “GenX Chemicals”, EPA is setting the MCLGs and MCLs at 10 parts per trillion.
- EPA is also setting a limit for any mixture of two or more of the following PFAS: PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and “GenX Chemicals”.

The final rule requires:

- Public water systems must monitor for these PFAS and have three years to complete initial monitoring (by 2027), followed by ongoing compliance monitoring. Water systems must also provide the public with information on the levels of these PFAS in their drinking water beginning in 2027.
- Public water systems have five years (by 2029) to implement solutions that reduce these PFAS if monitoring shows that drinking water levels exceed these MCLs.
- Beginning in five years (2029), public water systems that have PFAS in drinking water which violates one or more of these MCLs must take action to reduce levels of these PFAS in their drinking water and must provide notification to the public of the violation.

On April 19, 2024, EPA designated the two most studied per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances—PFOA and PFOS, including their salts and structural isomers—as hazardous substances under CERCLA, also known as the “Superfund” law. For “state lead” cleanup programs, such as Wisconsin, this federal rule development represents one of the strongest enforcement tools available for compelling action to address PFAS in the environment. The effective date of this federal rule is to be 60 days after publication in the federal register, anticipated in June 2024, absent any legal challenge.

The impact of regulating PFOA and PFOS under CERCLA will be wide-reaching. For one, the Wisconsin DNR may refer entities recalcitrant to perform cleanups including PFAS in Wisconsin to EPA Superfund program (EPA Region 5) for enforcement under CERCLA. (see [Memorandum of Agreement between the WDNR and EPA, known as the One Cleanup Program](#)).

Far From Boring, and Not so Close to Home

After 42 years of marriage to a geologist and unwittingly becoming the best sample Sherpa ever, my husband knows there is no hope in dissuading me from any geology-related project I cook up. So, when I announced that as a long-term goal, I was going to collect a rock from each Wisconsin county (there are 72, in case you were wondering), he put his head in his hands and said, "When do you want to start?"

What neither of us counted on was finding hidden treasures that the average Wisconsinite may not realize exist in the state. So, allow me to introduce you to some of the places we have discovered, and some of the people we have met along the way.

In case you were wondering, as of January 1, 2024, I have visited 30 of the 72 Wisconsin counties.

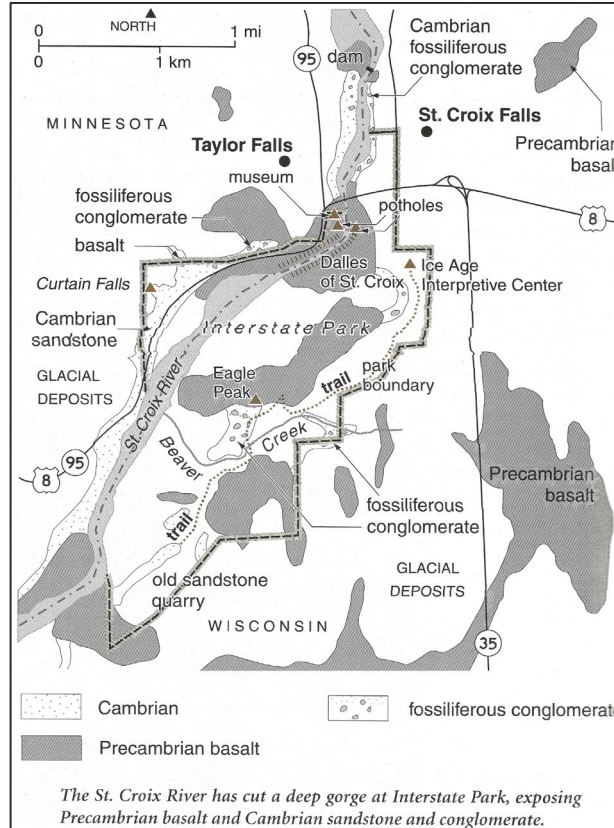
Two States and Two Counties – 2-Fers Everywhere

Paula Leier-Engelhardt

We had to make a trip to the Twin Cities to bring a gift for delivery to my brother in North Dakota (the husband nicknamed the trip *A Mission from God*, but that's another story for another time). Relatives were found, visiting and eating commenced, the gift was presented for delivery, and the mission was completed. On to our next mission - Interstate Park on the Wisconsin/Minnesota border, and Polk and Barron Counties in Wisconsin to find the Barron Quartzite.

In a fit of cooperation which today seems unbelievable, the state of Minnesota and the state of Wisconsin agreed the area around Taylors Falls, Minnesota and St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin was so unique and scenic that it deserved preservation. The states jointly created Interstate Park in 1900, with the center of the parks around the Dalles of the St. Croix River. St. Croix Falls is also the terminus of the western end of the Ice Age Trail, the area is a unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve, and this portion of the St. Croix River is within a National Scenic Riverway. Thank goodness this area is preserved!

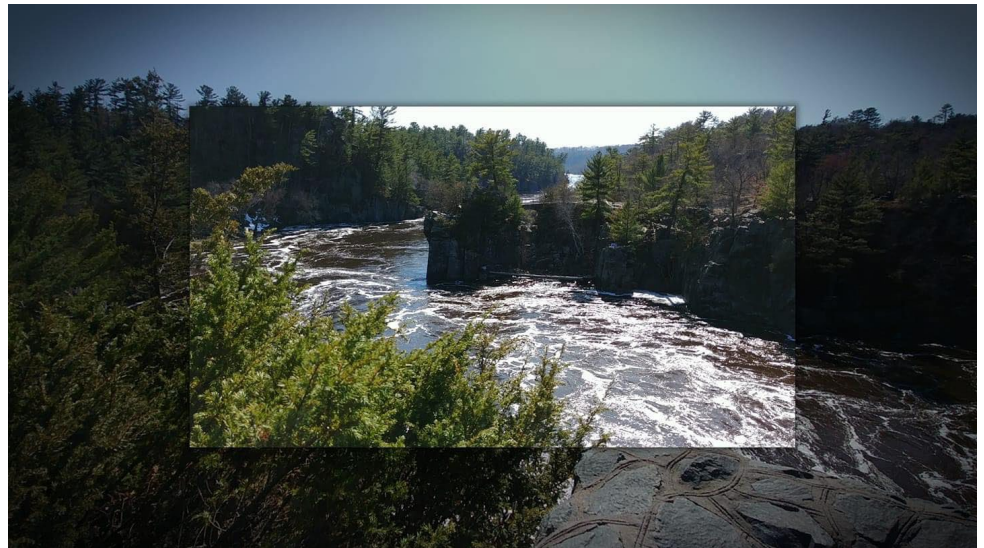
The park is located on a raised fault block exposing 1.1-million-year-old basalts of the Chengwatana Volcanic Group, erupted on to the Earth's surface as part of the Midcontinent Rift. On the Minnesota side, ten separate flows have been identified.



... Just island- hopping in a warm Cambrian sea, me and the trilobites. . .

When the Cambrian sea flooded this part of Minnesota and Wisconsin, a line of basalt hills estimated to be a few hundred feet high became islands. In the park, conglomerates outcrop consisting of basalt boulders within a matrix of silt and sand. Bits and pieces of brachiopod shells and trilobite fragments are also found within this matrix, suggesting basalt fragments fell off cliffs along a marine shoreline, eventually rounded and smoothed by wave and storm action against the cliffs. As you travel the hiking trails, imagine you are island-hopping on that warm Cambrian sea. On the Wisconsin side along Beaver Creek, you move away from the edge of the islands and their conglomerates and move up section into Cambrian sandstones.

Polk County, WI once had a shallow ocean lapping against a trilobite's island paradise, but glaciers played the starring role in creating the spectacular scenery of these parks. The present-day St. Croix River looks nothing like its ancestor. When the Superior Lobe began to retreat (12,000-9,000 year ago) ice covered the outlet at Sault Ste. Marie, forcing the level of Glacial Lake Duluth (ancestral Lake Superior) to rise and find a new outlet. There is evidence of at least two drainage events which carved the valley the St. Croix River now occupies. The surging floodwaters eroded through fractured and broken rock to form a crazy 90-degree bend in the river, the Dalles of the St. Croix (*dalles* has a French origin, describing a river running through a narrow gorge).



The Dalles of the St. Croix -- cue the glacial floodwaters. Photo: Paula Leier- Engelhardt

However, the most impressive features in the parks are the potholes, where pebbles/cobbles/boulders swirled about in eddies, abrading the rock until the water subsided. On the Minnesota side, there are more than 80 potholes as much as 100 feet above the present St. Croix river.

The deepest one accurately measured is the Bottomless Pit, just under 60 deep, although a nearby pothole is thought to be over 80 feet deep. The widest pothole measured is The Cauldron at 20 feet wide.

Water is indeed an immensely powerful agent of change.



One pothole tried to swallow all 5'4" of me.
Photo: Steve Engelhardt

Water is indeed an immensely powerful agent of change.



We could have used more time to explore these parks, but we headed east on Highway 8 toward Barron County to find some more islands in that Cambrian sea, this time formed by the Barron Quartzite.

The Barron Quartzite is analogous, both age wise and depositional history, as the Baraboo Quartzite 160 miles to the southeast in Devils Lake State Park, and the Sioux Quartzite in Minnesota. These formations speak of the erosion of the Penokean Mountains, spreading a blanket of quartz-rich sediments 1.7-1.6 million years ago (mid-Precambrian time). When the Cambrian sea moved across the continent, it lapped against islands of resistant Barron Quartzite. The Blue Hills of Barron, Rusk, and Sawyer Counties are underlain by Barron Quartzite, and one can find Cambrian sandstones lapping up on the quartzite, sometime incorporating quartzite pebbles as a basal lag deposit.

Quartzite, although resistant, is quite brittle, and most commonly occurs here as a coarse, blocky talus, especially on south-facing slopes. That is how we found our outcrop of Barron Quartzite by a wayside on Highway 8 on the southern edge of the Blue Hills.



There are better outcrops of this quartzite to be found, and just how did the Blue Hills get their name? This trip left a geologist with more questions than answers. . .

Typical blocky talus of the Barron Quartzite at the wayside. Unfortunately, not quite the standard of care seen at state parks. Photo: Steve Engelhardt

Geology in the News

Geology in the News

Elements of energy: Mining for a green future

The world's clean energy future relies on ancient elements still in the ground. *On Point* from WBUR in Boston did a special series exploring environmental and human cost of mining for those elements — and asks what it would take for the U.S. to meet the Biden administration's green energy goals. The series looks at lithium, copper, cobalt, and nickel.

<https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2024/03/07/elements-of-energy-mining-for-a-green-future>

Geology in everyday life

Let's face it, the public is challenged to get as excited as we are to see how geology impacts our daily lives. The American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) Women's Network in association with [Midwest GeoSciences Group](#) has produced several webinars on such topics as *Geology of Wine and Cheese* (complete with cheese/wine recommendations), *Geology of Beer* (have some fun and learn at the same time), *Geology of Coffee*, and the latest one, *Geology of Pigments: Our Colorful Earth*. Check out the [AAPG YouTube channel](#).

Iceland

[Yes, it is still erupting.](#)

Geology and a vacation?

Geologists have been known to mix geology into a vacation whenever possible (much to the chagrin of long-suffering families) but this promises to be a vacation many will appreciate. AIPG is teaming with *Down to Earth*, a small company based in England, to offer an international geology field trip next year to [Cornwall, England](#), May 8-16, 2025.

The field trip includes rocks from the Devonian and Carboniferous periods that have been metamorphosed and spectacularly folded and faulted in the Variscan Orogeny. There are several large granite plutons, some of which have been chemically altered to kaolinite (China clay). There are also numerous hydrothermal veins and old mines for tin, copper, lead, and zinc. Down on the Lizard Peninsula is a well-documented ophiolite complex with serpentine.

For more information, there will be an AIPG webinar on May 8, 2024. No registration is required. Zoom link is available on the AIPG website calendar.

AIPG National Conference

Durango, CO

Technical sessions
and field trips

Your Path to Becoming a CPG Just Got Faster and Easier

Annalie Peterson

Interested in furthering your career by becoming a Certified Professional Geologist (CPG)? Check out the new online application process through the American Institute of Professional Geologists. First, go to the AIPG homepage then click the CPG Electronic Application in the navigation bar and simply follow the steps for applying for CPG detailed on the AIPG CPG membership application page.

This new application process can be done completely online, eliminates messy paper trails and expedites the approval process. Becoming a CPG is easier than ever as applications can now be reviewed within a month of applying. Advance your career today by applying to become a CPG.

AIPG 61st Annual National Conference – Durango, Colorado.

This year, AIPG will be holding its conference in the foothills of the magnificent San Juan Mountains of Colorado! You cannot miss this spectacular geologic opportunity!

The conference will be held at Fort Lewis College in Durango from August 10- 13; a perfect place to escape the heat for those of us that live in hotter parts of the country. The theme of the conference is “Resources of the West” and will include two days of field trips and a day of technical presentations.

We have organized three field trips on Sunday, August 11 and two trips on Tuesday, August 13 that include an opportunity to ride the historic Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad train between Durango and Silverton. We also have trips to the La Plata Mountains, the mine remediation activities of the Bonita Peak Mining District near Silverton including an underground tour of the Old Hundred Mine, and a field trip to spectacular exposures of Mesozoic sedimentary formations in the vicinity of Durango. Another field trip on Tuesday will be made to Sand Canyon, about an hour west of Durango. Sand Canyon has exceptional exposures of Jurassic dune deposits that have been sculpted by wind and rain to form arches and alcoves used by ancient native societies for dwellings. For those who can't get enough of this area, we have also organized a post-conference, two-day field trip to Ouray, Colorado also known as the “Switzerland of the U.S.”

Plan to make your hotel reservations as soon as possible. August is peak tourist season in Durango and Ouray and hotel rooms fill up fast.

Please plan to join us for what will undoubtedly be a very memorable event! We look forward to seeing you in August.

Doug Bartlett, CPG

Chair, Organizing Committee

https://cdn.ymaws.com/aipg.org/resource/resmgr/documents/publications/tpg_2024-2033/2024_tpgaprmayjun.pdf
